
A Bond for a Lifetime: College Admission Essay Sample

My clammy hands trembled as I prepared to meet my camper for my very first day as a volunteer at Muscular Dystrophy Association summer camp. I had no idea how to instantly connect with him, but as Sebastian raced towards me in his Formula red wheelchair, he made the connection - with my foot. Shaking off the pain, I witnessed Sebastian's boundless energy as he raced around the campgrounds, affably calling me "lazy" as I hobbled to catch up to him. As we maneuvered through the activities that week, my camper propagated that excitement, that enthusiasm to other people in a way that I admired and respected, and I matched his vitality with all my heart.

However, even in paradise we experienced tragedy. 10 P.M. My camper broke into tears, from frustration, from homesickness, and from the gnarled, metallic bedsprings that thwarted his sleep. I had never before felt the pressure of being responsible for a child's life, and as my desperation increased, a familiar friend that I had haphazardly shoved into my backpack rescued me. Relying on pure instinct, I opened to the first page of my childhood Garfield comic book, and I began reading. Eyes still soaked from crying, my camper's lips creaked into a little smile from Garfield's silly antics that had once given me immense joy as a child. As I hobbled back into bed that night, I wrapped my grey sweatshirt around him, smiled, and drifted into sleep.

1 A.M. I woke up to cries of "Austin, help!" Groggily rushing to my camper's bedside, I helped him sit up through a hug and some well-placed leverage. Frustrated with his inability to free himself from his uncomfortable sleeping position, Sebastian almost broke down again. I realized that his condition even perturbed his sleep, something that I took for granted every day. Trying to shift him into a comfortable position was an awkward, complicated process, and Sebastian's frustration only seemed to mount in intensity. Drowsily assuring him that I would do everything in my human limits to make him happy, I took his hand again and shifted him back and forth for another half-hour until he fell asleep. We were in this journey together.

2 A.M. 4 A.M. 5:30 A.M. 6 A.M. 6:30 A.M. 7 A.M. I would wake up seven times that night. Cracking my eyes open each time, I would rush to Sebastian's side, flipping him and covering

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his little toes with his blanket when they got cold. After hundreds of tosses and turns, the nightly flippings became a ritual, and with each repetition I learned exactly how he liked to sleep through simple “Yes” and “No” exchanges typical between two lethargic humans in the early morning. As the days went by, I realized the pureness and sanctity of our journey, the ability to understand each other that one can really only comprehend through living together.

As the week went on, our personal spheres, the distance that we kept from others, melded together. As he invited me into his world, sharing his emotional and physical limits, I let him into mine, revealing the empathetic element of me that I don't share with everyone. Through each of turbulent trials and our moments of shared pride and humor, my reassuring smile only grew stronger. I've used that smile to teach my seventeen-year-old friend how to ride a bike, to reassure my volleyball teammate after a humiliating game, and to pacify the kids in my environmental program after they fell into the mud. My experiences at MDA have helped me to realize that all I would ever need to be a good person for the rest of my life would be an encouraging smile and the ability to make silent sacrifices.

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