
Common App Essay: College Admission Essay Sample

I felt an unequivocal sense of community when I gazed at my dinner plate one night at Chewonki and acknowledged that the beets, potatoes, and lettuce on my plate were plucked from the earth by me and my best friends. The hours that we expended on the farm were not comprised solely of plowing our shovels into the earth, planting lettuce seeds into rows of soil, or running from the menacing chickens that traced our every step. These hours were also spent learning about Karl's home school, establishing which color yarn to purchase for the next hat we would knit, or speculating what we would have for dinner that night. Each bite I took, there was love. There was a memory. There was a sense of community.

One autumn day after harvesting, my class discovered that a group of us would be taking heaps of our fresh produce to a local church that, on a weekly basis, set up a food pantry to provide free organic produce to local families that face food insecurity. Though I had donated cans for canned-food drives at my school before, I never had the opportunity to see and to meet those receiving the food. I wanted to witness the full cycle: from earth to hands to plate. After strategically fitting different-sized crates full of tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, squashes, and zucchinis into a puzzle of produce in the bed of the farm truck, four of my friends and I drove with a faculty member to the church. Upon arrival, a young woman who facilitated the weekly event thanked us for our contributions and guided us to the tables on which we would put the produce. My friends and I took turns carrying the crates inside and began organizing the vegetables into distinct sections. After a few hours of unpacking and setting up, families began arriving and deciding which foods to take home to their families.

Smiling up at her mother, a young girl pointed to a bundle of carrots that we had harvested. "I want these," she said. The girl's eager anticipation was more gratifying than a thank-you letter from some distant national organization. I left the church with a sense of gratitude that I, along with the families that visited the church that day, would return home to create a fresh, balanced meal. However, with that sense of gratitude came an intense anxiety and distress because I recognized that one in six Americans would still be going to bed hungry that night. With my heightened awareness of the local food insecurity, I found myself distant, my mind deviating from the regular supper-time banter. I wanted to help. I wanted to do more than simply provide produce to needy families in Maine.

As the carrots' roots grow from the soil on our farm, the roots of national food insecurity begin in our local communities. After developing such an intimate connection to my food at Chewonki planting the seeds, harvesting the mature crops, and eating them at each meal, I have a greater drive to help others spend less time worrying about where their next meal will come from and

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more time making valuable memories together, as we do in the garden. Every time I sit down for a meal, the food on my plate serves as an explicit reminder to be grateful for my meal while simultaneously renewing my drive to serve those who are food insecure in our own country.

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