

Why College Is Important to Me

by Kaitlyn Hyun

It starts off as a plain black screen with dull gridded lines. But soon, pieces appear and begin to fall into place. They fall faster and faster, flashes of tangerine and magenta tumbling into a disarray of mismatched colors and shapes before my eyes.

The longer I stare at the pieces coming together the more I start to recognize how the last four years of my life have essentially been an ongoing Tetris game beginning on a seemingly unordinary September day. There, the first pieces of the game began to appear.

I couldn't control what came next. I couldn't foresee my development of cholinergic urticaria and my decision to quit art, but I also couldn't predict my successes: winning the tennis state championships, creating and coordinating an ensemble that regularly visits nursing homes, and being crowned Miss Teen of Virginia. I couldn't predict what pieces ran down the screen. The only thing that I could control was my dedication and how I reacted. Life sometimes piles up like a jumble of multicolored Tetris pieces and I learned how to fix it and move on before the next piece occurred.

Sometimes pieces don't fit together correctly. But there were always ways to be creative with fitting them together. I grew up watching various friends move away because of their parents in the military. One day while coaching tennis, it struck me how I could simultaneously share my passion for tennis and give back. I started a tennis racket collection for military families and collected over thirty rackets. I distributed them at Andrews Air Force Base where I was also able to coach. Additionally, I led my tennis team to Honor Flights at the airport in which we greeted veterans as they disembark the airport for a day of touring Washington, D.C. The pieces simply fell into place and the gaps disappeared.

As I grew more experienced I got better at the game. I could fix more complicated setbacks through trial, error, and an all-encompassing desire to find the solution. When I started The Oakton Musical Ensemble, a community outreach high school ensemble, it was a quartet. I quickly realized that

expansion was necessary after a last-minute cancellation from our violinist. Now the ensemble is composed of almost twenty musicians and I've learned how to schedule performances, organize music, and communicate with every musician. Likewise, Tetris is a game of continue learning, a game where new situations are constantly adapted to and skills are gained.

In the end, the board is filled up with an eruption of color. It started off a blank canvas, but by the end of the game it has become something uniquely mine, filled with mistakes, successes, and every influence on my life taking the shape of a vibrant block. Even though this particular Tetris game is over, tomorrow I know I will start a new game, marveling over what combinations and experiences this seemingly straightforward game of seven blocks and a black screen has to offer. That is why I want to go to college.