

Why College is Important to Me

By Aleena Khoboyan

I joined a local group for teens wanting to run their own nonprofits a few months ago. It was incredibly educating, and I learned much from being around like-minded individuals. Yet, it was there where I first began to notice a pattern.

The first time the group got together, the leader mentioned just how amazing it would look to be able to put “Founded my own nonprofit” on a college application. A few days later, while talking to some other members in the group we discussed college again. “There’s no point starting a nonprofit as a senior,” they said, “To colleges, it just looks like some last-ditch effort to make yourself look good.”

When I secured my first major donation, my mom made sure to take a photo of me holding the check. “Maybe you could submit this with the application? It would look great!”

These moments made me look back on my high school career. Every award I had gotten, any honor I had gained, had turned into stepping stones to the final goal. After all, what’s the point of a 4.0 if not to qualify for an Ivy League? An award if not for a UC? A nonprofit if not for Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, or Yale?

This is when I realized that the way many view education is deeply flawed. I did not start a nonprofit to look good on a piece of paper, and I did not go to high school to ‘make it’ to college.

I did these things for my own well-being. I founded a nonprofit so I could improve the world, and improve the lives of those in my community. I want to graduate from highschool, achieving everything I can, because anything less would be a disservice to myself. I refuse to

look around and say “This is enough.” *It's not*. By doing everything I can, I am allowing myself to grow.

I know that I am a very ambitious person. It may be my fatal flaw, like Achilles' heel. Probably not as dramatic though (hopefully). I just don't want all of my achievements to end up becoming bullet points on an application.

I know what you're thinking. What does any of what I just said have to do with why college is important to me?

To some it may be to secure a good job in the future. That's completely fine, there's nothing wrong with working towards a goal. But for me? I want to go to college to go *to* college. I want to be able to experience everything I can, to continue growing and become a better person. To achieve higher education, not just to apply to a good job, but to *be* educated. I want to learn everything I can, and, as corny as it is, make the world a better place.

College, to me, is a place where I can become better, do better, and make my family proud.