



## What does leadership, character, and service mean to you?

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Something one of my JROTC instructors said a while ago stuck with me. We had just finished watching Apollo 13 and were talking about what we could learn from the situation. From there he ended up referencing a phrase in Latin, “Aut inveniam viam aut faciam,” this translates to “I will find a way or I will make one.” This is what I believe a leader does. No matter the odds, no matter what bad could happen, a leader will make sure that no matter what, they will find a way. The dictionary definition of leadership according to Oxford languages is the action of leading a group of people or an organization. However, I believe there is a lot more than that, to be a leader you have to do more than just be in charge. Leadership is taking on the responsibility to help others, and guiding followers in the right direction, not just telling people what to do. Your job as a leader is to help others get where they want to go. It isn’t just believing you are always right. What makes a leader is a person who recognizes others’ importance and what others can bring to the table, along with taking into account others’ opinions and criticism. To me, leadership can be as simple as speaking up in a group of people who are quiet or taking charge in a group project where no one knows each other.

When I was very young I was always taught the “golden rule” which was to treat others the way you want to be treated. I feel as though that phrase encompasses almost all of what character is. That being, integrity, and trustworthiness, having good character means that if someone needs your help you will be there for them and would drop whatever you’re doing

to help a friend. Character is the ability to accept responsibility and make the right choices even when no one’s watching. Character to me is the idea that someone can be kind, caring, trustworthy, and respectful without sacrificing the things that make them who they are.

Service is what helps to build one’s character and is needed to be respected in a leadership role. Service is helping those who need help and spending your time to positively impact those around you. Like taking time out of your day to volunteer at an animal shelter or food bank. When doing that you are actively serving your community and helping others. Service is doing your best and always trying to help whilst expecting nothing in return. JROTC has helped me realize that service, leadership, and character are more than what meets the eye and to be a good leader you must have good character and provide service to your community.

When it comes to the question of whether I embody these traits, my immediate answer is not yet. I am a freshman in high school and only recently discovered what it means to be a leader and gained the confidence to try and take charge to be better in my community. So, I have not yet had the opportunity to learn and grow these characteristics. With that being said I do not believe I show no signs of leadership, character, and service; it’s simply that compared to other cadets in the program I have to work on those traits to be able to say I embody them. However, through JROTC and the friends I’ve made, I hope to learn said traits

and I fully believe JROTC is helping me get there. Through volunteering at a variety of places and having the opportunity to sing the national anthem at many events such as our 9/11 ceremony, I hope to build leadership skills and provide a service to my community. My corps is led by people whom I believe embody those characteristics and without my involvement in the JROTC program at Basha High School I would not have had exposure to those kinds of role models.

I joined JROTC because I saw the impact it had on people, namely my sister. I remember her being timid

and unconfident but even after a year in the program I saw that girl, who had trouble making friends, grow into the person I always believed she could be, I saw her grow into a leader. I saw her build her character, so even though I don't believe I embody these characteristics, I know JROTC helps people embody these characteristics because, after 3 years in the program, she does. And overall I'm excited to see the further impact AFJROTC has on both of us as a whole.

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*2023 BBB Ethical Cadet Scholarship Recipient*



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