



As a young adult, you face many changes. How has being a JROTC cadet helped you handle and navigate change?

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The first day of high school is the most surreal and possibly uncomfortable experience one might face in their time as a young adult. At least that's what I've been told. For me, it was a little bit weirder. I spent my first day of high school from the comfort of my computer. I've changed a lot since then, and so has everything else in the world. I've faced many challenges and gone on many adventures. I don't believe I would have been able to enjoy it as much without JROTC as my anchor.

Being in JROTC has helped me change by teaching me techniques for problem-solving, observation, and targeting a problem. Through JROTC, I have been able to learn how to work through a problem and approach it with recommendations rather than a full solution. I feel that some of the mentality that we're taught in our unit is that one person trying to solve 100% of a problem won't do anything, but if we all work together with 1% of the solution, a problem gets solved faster and more efficiently. Through JROTC, I have accepted that asking for help is part of solving a problem. Whenever something needs to be done, asking someone around me is one of the first steps. I mostly learned this by observing the chain of command and structure of the cadet corps and how effective they are in working through problems.

One of the more personal challenges I have faced throughout my time as a young adult is dealing with anxiety and doing tasks under pressure. I have been given numerous opportunities within JROTC, such as commanding honor guards and giving speeches, to combat my fears and doubts and step up to the occasion when needed. Earlier this year, I was asked to step in to perform our national anthem for a valley-wide event hosted at my school when, due to unfortunate circumstances, the school choir was not able to perform. As I entered into Honor Guard, before I could even sit down. My instructor asked if I could do the performance, and I exclaimed, "Now!?" to which he replied, "Yes, you have 2 minutes to get to the gym!" At least, that's how it felt. I was immediately hit with a wave of anxiety, but also a sense of comfort, as this would not be the first time I had done this. That was the day I recognized how far I had come within JROTC and how the program has shaped my mentality about anxiety and pressure and opened me up to see what I can accomplish when I leave those feelings behind. I know that I am not the only cadet who may feel this way, and I think that one of the things that helped me in this particular example was being able to have a whole class of people who support me and who are there to say, "You've got this!" That community is the greatest part of the program.

I have been in JROTC since my freshman year of high school in 2020, and between being online and in the classroom, it hasn't changed much. The feeling of community and being included would help any new high schooler, and it especially helped me. I have seen cadets who were in the corps my freshman year have to move away and come back, and JROTC provides a tether and a sense of comfort that sure helped me deal with the changes of high school. No matter what happens to me or others, I know there is always a place that I can come back to that will support me and make me laugh. Even if times get tough or I'm having what feels like the worst day of my life, there is nothing better than having that comfort in this program, the people, and myself through JROTC.

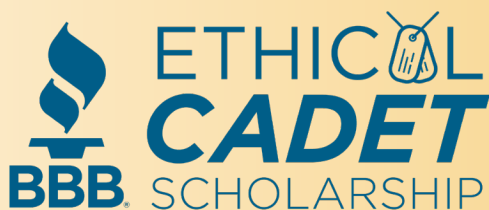
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