



## What challenges have you faced as a young adult and how has being a JROTC cadet helped you navigate them?

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**A**s a cadet of Queen Creek High School's Army JROTC program, leadership, character and service are highly valued and taught to us on a regular basis and explained thoroughly. There are many exercises, classes, tests, and even field trips that revolve around these three categories.

JROTC relies heavily on leadership due to it being cadet led. Newer cadets are taught by squad leaders, who are taught by Platoon Sergeants and so on. The program has taught me to realize that everybody has some sort of leadership in everyday life, whether it's conducting yourself to do something or others to do something. Leadership means to take control of others or yourself in the sense of trying to better help them or yourself to be proactive and to learn. Since it's mostly a cadet-run program, there are many tests of leadership and communication from the battalion staff. The leaders of the battalion are responsible for organizing events and must communicate with others to ensure that everybody knows what's going on and supposed to happen. Since joining the program, I've used leadership often to teach others a few things, control teams, and even make a list of things I need to do. Leadership is a very important skill in life due to its consistency in many situations.

As a character building program, JROTC teaches not just what character is, but how to improve it. Character (to me) is the quality of people or their personality that makes up who they are. JROTC has taught me to have good character around everyone and embrace qualities that are good for you. One of

the Cadet Creed lines says, "I do not lie, cheat, or steal, and will always be accountable for my actions and deeds." The main purpose of this line will help develop good morals and character for someone who follows it. I've embraced and thought about who I want to be most of my life and people's perspective of how they see me. When I joined JROTC, that awareness was taken to another level. Instead of just thinking about it, my character was, in a way, tested. Things like Service Learning Projects and my communication skills with the leadership team helped me to build a better character of myself.

Service is helping or assisting others because you want to. If you don't want to, then why are you helping? When I was first introduced to Service Learning, it sparked my interest and made me realize that I should help others because it makes them feel good and I feel good. Service goes along with character development, because your attitude towards service can determine your character and how people perceive you. Service comes in many forms from joining the military for your country, to making dinner for your family at home. Volunteering and service are two different things. Volunteering is helping a community to get better results for themselves. Service (or Service Learning specifically) is helping you more than volunteering does. You often are given a hands-on project that needs to be done, and it benefits the people you are doing it for, and yourself. For example, I had a Service Learning Project where I had to make individually wrapped candy bags for a senior living community. At first, I thought that I wouldn't like

it, due to me never having done it before. But once I began making the bags, I realized that people would be seeing the work that I put in and that would reflect either good or badly on myself. So, I put a good mindset on and began to enjoy what I was doing. Every time I see a veteran, I say "Thank you for your service." They served our country because they wanted to. They served our country because it gave them a sense of purpose. Service isn't just doing work for someone else. It's doing what needs to be done and doing it the right way.

Army JROTC has taught me to focus on who I am as a person and my overall being. This knowledge will help me later in life, whether I'm making a difficult decision or just trying to organize my life. The teaching to embody certain values has helped me, not just to improve who, but to improve how I am.

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*2023 BBB Ethical Cadet Scholarship Recipient*



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