



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

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**L**eadership, character, and service are fundamental qualities that define who I am and who I strive to be. These qualities are not natural but developed over time through experiences, challenges, and mentorship. My journey in the army JROTC program has shaped my understanding of these values and given me opportunities to embody them in meaningful ways.

During my freshman year of high school, I struggled with confidence and was hesitant to take on leadership roles or join any extracurricular activities. I was afraid to use my voice, especially in larger crowds. Speaking up made me nervous, and my lack of self-confidence hindered my ability to lead effectively. Group work was particularly difficult, as I was unsure of how to contribute or take charge when necessary. However, JROTC provided me with an environment where I could grow. One of the pivotal moments in my leadership development was during a Raiders challenge event. Our team faced a task where no one was stepping up to lead. I recalled an essential lesson from JROTC: "In the absence of leadership, take charge." Summoning my courage, I took control of the situation, guided my team, and successfully completed the challenge. This experience was a turning point, reinforcing my confidence and showing me the impact of decisive leadership.

JROTC has instilled in me the importance of character, particularly through the seven Army values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. While all of these

are important, Honor resonates with me the most because it encompasses all the other values. Living honorably means being honest, acting with integrity, and demonstrating courage in the face of adversity. These principles guide my daily actions, influencing how I lead and interact with others.

Along with JROTC, I have also embodied these values through my involvement in National Honor Society. It emphasizes character, and I believe character is a reflection of one's values and actions. Being part of it is not just about community service; it is about personal growth and making a difference in the lives of others, which I believe is what service is about. Volunteering has taught me that leadership is not just about taking charge but also about knowing when to be a good follower. Whether assisting at community events or tutoring peers, I have learned that service requires humility and a willingness to support others. Together all of this has helped me strive for excellence in all that I do.

Service is a critical component of leadership. Being part of something greater than oneself requires sacrifice and dedication. Through JROTC and other clubs such as NHS, I have had the opportunity to serve my community in meaningful ways. Whether through organizing events, mentoring younger students, or participating in service projects, I have seen firsthand how acts of service can positively impact others. True leadership is not about authority. It is about inspiring and uplifting those around me.

Over the past four years, JROTC has become more than just a program to me. It has become my family. The experiences, challenges, and camaraderie I have shared with my fellow cadets have shaped me into the person I am today. Through dedication and perseverance, I have risen through the ranks to become the Battalion Commander, the Raiders Captain, the Commander for Color Guard, and the leader in charge of drill. Each of these roles has taught me invaluable lessons about responsibility, teamwork, and resilience. Now with my knowledge and experience I can pass it on to my younger fellow cadets and set them up for success. The bonds I have formed with my peers and the mentorship I have received from my instructors have reinforced my belief that leadership is about fostering a supportive community and empowering others to succeed.

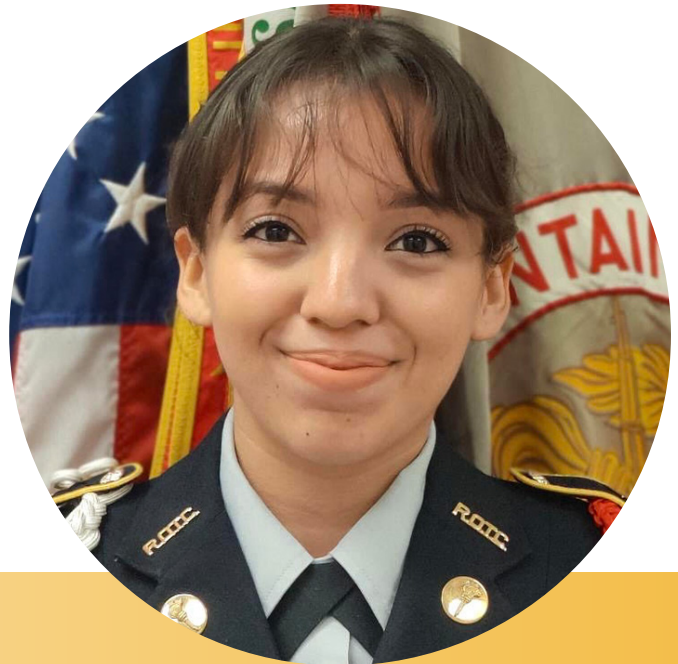
A key aspect of leadership is personal responsibility. As a leader, I am accountable for my actions and the actions of those I lead. Trust is crucial, without it, leadership loses its effectiveness. I have learned that to gain the trust of others, I must be honest, reliable, and consistent. My time in JROTC has also helped me understand different leadership styles, including authoritative, delegative, and participative leadership. Over time, I have discovered that I am a participative leader, someone who values collaboration and inclusivity, leading from the front and working along with my team. While I naturally gravitate toward this style, I continue to work on developing the other leadership approaches to become a well-rounded leader.

Leadership, character, and service are interconnected qualities that define who I am. JROTC has played a crucial role in shaping my leadership skills, instilling strong values, and teaching me the importance of serving others. I have learned that a leader is not just a person who gives orders but someone who provides purpose, direction, and motivation. My goal as a leader is to continue growing, to lead with integrity, and to inspire others to reach their full potential. The lessons I have learned through JROTC will continue to guide me as I strive to be a leader who serves with purpose, integrity, and heart.

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*2025 BBB Ethical Cadet Scholarship Recipient*



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