Katelyn Adams Northville Beach Civic Association Scholarship 2024

While most people consider going to the beach a short-lived vacation, I think of it as a second home. I was born and raised in the bustling town of Huntington, but the place where I did the most maturing was on Northville Beach. Otherwise known to me simply as the beach house, Northville is a rural setting along the rocky shores of the Eastern Long Island Sound. Here I learned what my core values are, and how to apply them into my daily life.

Ever since my childhood, I've spent summer after summer relaxing and reflecting on the hecticness of the previous school year. Inhaling the smell of low tide in the air, skipping rocks, and enjoying the feel of sand under my bare feet. This is the ultimate break from home. Life in Huntington, and as a teenager in general, can be overwhelming. Spending countless hours on social media and choosing which latest fad to imitate next is exhausting.

However, in Northville, it's the opposite. Neighborhood bonfires provide intimate stories and crying-out-loud laughter. It's as if I went back in time, before cell phones dominated life, and lived in the moment. It's innocent, pure and I love it. These bonfires are where I can attribute most of my personal growth. I learned who I was and what I valued most. The importance of being confident, relaxed and calm was essential when I headed back to my busy life back in Huntington. The pure joy and serenity of these experiences made me acknowledge how superficial my digital persona truly was. I realize now that these moments are more meaningful than anything my personal mirror could provide.

Furthermore, I developed true friendships with my beach neighbors and fellow bonfire fiends. These relationships taught me the meaning of loyalty. I could be vulnerable, empathetic, or downright silly, while knowing I wouldn't face any judgment. No make-up, no outfit for the day, no stressing about what is to come. It's freeing. This feeling of independence taught me how to be a better person and leader both on and off the shore. I try my best to make others (whether it is friends, teammates, or total strangers) feel this same level of comfort.

Additionally, Northville has the most beautiful sunsets. My family, friends, and I always go down to an old wooden beach deck to watch the sun disappear into the horizon. The fiery colors overtake the sky and dance over the water. An overwhelming feeling of peace and reassurance always washes over me as I sit with those I love the most. It is a reminder of how precious this beach is to me.

I am so thankful for all my summer memories spent at the beach house and all the lessons I learned on its rocky shore. I hope to share this special place with my children one day, and pass down the wonderful love for Northville Beach.