

NBCA Scholarship Essay

I've been coming out to the North Fork since I was born so my summers have always been filled with sunsets and swimming. However, I never knew that a tiny hamlet named Northville Beach would become such a special place to me.

The best way to describe this place is that there is a strong sense of spontaneity and joy; the generations have changed but the essence of Northville remains. It's a place where time stands still. Being out here means you have a circle of friends that you only see for three weeks out of the entire year but every single time you see each other, it's like nothing has changed. Spending your summer in Northville means playing late night board games and laughing with your friends until you can't breathe. It goes from seeing how many people can get on an inner tube before it flips to seeing how many of us could sit on a sunfish before it sinks. It's sitting around a bonfire and looking up at the stars. It means catching your first fish and having everyone on the beach cheer for you. It means playing hide and seek with glow sticks around your neck.

My parents explained to me that they originally purchased our cottage because they wanted me to be in a place where I could have a childhood like they remember. To understand this, I've only known play dates - a structured playtime that only happened when parents communicated with each other. Here, the Northville magic strikes again; there is such a sense of freedom and safety. We can run outside on a moment's notice and spend the entire day; the next thing you know, your parents are calling you up for dinner and you promise to come back down to watch the sunset. Now that I'm older, I realize that part of that freedom and safety comes from the community because there were always "eyes on the beach" watching the little kids play, ready to rescue us at any moment. Growing up, we just never noticed.

About eight years ago, a friend and I coined the term SBFF, meaning summer best friends forever. We painted that phrase onto two pieces of driftwood and they now sit in our respective cottages to this day. This is the best way to describe Northville Beach. How often you see a friend doesn't determine how close you are. The memories you make together aren't defined by the quantity of time you spend together, but by the quality of that time.

To circle back, there is something magical here because I am now part of the next generation who is witnessing the joy of the babies now growing up on the beach. Going off to college is a big change, but I know that I will always be able to come back to such a special place. With so much uncertainty in the world, it's reassuring to know that our little slice of heaven will forever be filled with laughter, joy, and summer magic.