

Personal College Essay Example

Before I came to America, I drank Puer Tea with my father every morning in my bedroom, sitting cross-legged on Suzhou-silk mats beside a view of the Lakeside reservoir. Beside a dark end table, we picked up teacups as the mild aroma greeted our noses. As we faced the French window, my father would share the news he read in China Daily: the Syrian civil war, climate change, and gender equality in Hollywood. Most of the time, I only listened. With each piece of news, my curiosity piqued. Secretly, I made a decision that I wanted to be the one to discuss the news with him from my perspective. So, I decided to study in America to learn more about the world.

After one year's extensive research and hours of interviews, I came to America for 9th grade and moved in with a host family. But, my new room lacked stories and cups of tea. Fortunately, I found Blue House Cafe on my walk home from church, and started studying there. With white walls, comfortable sofas, and high stools, Blue House is spacious and bright. Hearing people's stories and looking at their warm smiles when they taste various pastries as I sat by the window, I watched as a production designer scouted locations for his film, or a painter took notes while brainstorming for his freehand brushwork of Blue House. With a cup of coffee, I dig into differential and parametric equations for my upcoming AP Calculus test, learn the nuances of public speaking by watching Michael Sandel's Justice lectures on my laptop, and plan fundraising events for my non-profit.

I've also learned by watching leaders host meetings at the rectangle conference table at the back of the cafe and I learn from the leaders of meetings, watching as they hold the edge of the table and express their ideas. Similarly, as president of the International Students Club, I invited my teammates to have meetings with me at the cafe. Coordinating the schedule with other members in Blue House has become a frequent event. Consuming several cups of coffee, my team and I have planned Lunar New Year events, field trip to the Golden Gate Bridge, and Chinese lunch in school to help international students feel more at home. Straightening my back and bracing my shoulders, I stood up behind the conference table and expressed my creative ideas passionately. After each meeting, we shared buttermilk coffee-cake.

In my spot next to the window, I also witnessed different kinds of people. I viewed visitors dragging their luggage, women carrying shopping bags, and people wandering in tattered clothes --the diversity of San Francisco. Two years ago I saw volunteers wearing City Impact shirts offering sandwiches and hot chocolate to homeless people outside of the cafe. I investigated more about City Impact and eventually signed up to volunteer. No longer was I a bystander. At holiday outreach events, I prepared and delivered food to homeless people. While sharing my coffee, I listened to a story from an older Chinese man who told me, in Mandarin, how he had been abandoned by his children and felt lonely.

Last summer, I returned to Xiamen, China, and taught my father how to drink coffee. Now, a Chemex and teapot are both on the end table. Instead of simply listening, I shared my experiences as a club president, a community leader, and a volunteer. I showed him my business plan and prototypes. My father raised his cup of coffee and made a toast to me, "Good girl! I am so proud

of you.” Then, he patted my head as before. Together, we emptied our cups while the smell of coffee lingered.