Katie Gwyn

Honors 100

Assignment 1

“Everett man born, Everett man till I die,” opens our alma mater. On June 14, 2014, I graduated from Everett High School, just as my great grandfather in 1933, my grandfather in 1958, and my mom in 1989. And in my family as well as most of my community this is the norm. Few people move away.

I have never understood this fascination with my city. Everett is a never-ending suburbia. Nothing exciting. We have some restaurants, a movie theatre, the high school stadium--none of which has ever convinced me that this average town is where I would be content to spend the rest of my life.

Thankfully, I have been granted opportunities many of my neighbors have not. The summer after eighth grade, I traveled in a student group to China. Under the Washington Cultural Exchange program, I visited Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Xi’an, and Beijing over two weeks. Completely torn from all access to my family and my life back home, I was thrown into an entirely unfamiliar situations and a resulting new perspective of society. I discovered a possibility to expand my knowledge and understanding of the world I lived in through travel and experience. I gained more insight into other cultures after spending two weeks in another country than I ever had in a single history class. This trip expanded my expectations for my own future, as well. I could go to college with everyone else from my school, obtain a degree in a chosen major, live my life ten minutes from the house I grew up in…or I could grow through experiences and let passions motivate my choices on a larger worldwide scale. It was truly eye-opening to live within another culture. I discovered that although I could do well sitting behind a desk every day, that alone could not be completely satisfying. My visit to China sparked a new curiosity within me, which has motivated me to learn continuously through life experience.

This experience proved that there was so much beyond Everett city limits for me to experience. While Seattle is not far, it does provide a completely different and stimulating city for me to experience. I am undecided thus far as to what I want to do with my life. I change my mind constantly, but I know that staying in one place will never help me come to a decision. The more of I get out of my comfort zone and experience, the more I will be able to learn about the world around me as well as about myself. By that train of thought, I decided to pursue the Honors program. I knew that by choosing this I would be able to experience a more holistic education and be given many exciting opportunities.