

How John Adams Academy Changed Me

When I came to John Adams Academy EDH in 4th grade, I noticed a change in my education that I was not used to. I was learning in portables instead of buildings, the teachers were caring, and everyone was focused on the great classics and history of America, not on each other. This was a small shift, given that I was young and unaware of a lot of things, but still a noticeable one. I felt as though my presence was wanted, that my mentors and friends cared about how I was doing academically. This was due to the Core Value, “Building a Culture of Greatness,” that JAA embodies. I noticed that the Ten Core Values were all pushing towards having a culture that stands out amongst other schools' cultures. To me, John Adams Academy has a culture built on servant leadership, classics, and the heritage of the United States of America. Having this knowledge in mind, I knew I would remain here as I watched the culture of JAA grow and prosper.

Building a Culture of Greatness never stood out to me as a very impactful Core Value, but what I have learned from my experience and education at JAA is that peers and mentors should be helping each other pursue greatness in all aspects of our lives. As a 10th grader, I was unaware of the consequences of using A.I. to write my honors essay, so I took the risk. I had very little time left to write and felt flustered. What I did was not great, honorable, or authentic. I sat with my caring mentors who wanted to see me succeed as they told me to “own up to it and view your mistake as a learning experience.” I remember telling my parents that I had messed up, that this was not a step to pursuing greatness. I apologized to the mentors whom I respected and thanked them for helping me evade a dangerous path. The only thing left to do was to try and

strive for greatness the rest of the year. I told myself to take ownership of my work and show accountability. I started to see a change in my morality for the better. Because of the culture that JAA strives to build, I was able to grow and learn from my mistakes, as well as receive support from my mentors. I have also become more responsible through my time at JAA because the culture of greatness makes it easy for everyone to hold each other accountable. My friends want to see me succeed and I want to see them succeed.

Some people describe me as an “easygoing, chill, go with the flow” type of person. With this description, one can imagine that I would have easily accepted a conveyor belt education that local public schools offered. However, I chose a John Adams Academy education that has shaped my soul to hopefully one day become great. Rather than being taught what to think, I was taught how to think with the principles of truth, wisdom, and virtue from great authors like C.S. Lewis, Dostoevsky, and Orwell. This education allows me to be more prepared for important decisions that I will have to make when I am an adult, a husband, a father, and a leader. I chose to not be stuck on the conveyor belt of education, but to step off and take my own path.

I have also learned to be a humble servant leader because of the culture that is being built by the American Classical Leadership Education provided at John Adams Academy. Through great novels and philosophies I would not have otherwise read, I have learned how to discover truth by wisdom and how to be virtuous with that wisdom. My view of leadership has changed since I have been here. I used to think a “leader” meant someone who was in charge of other people or a project. Now I know that being a true servant leader requires virtue, wisdom, service, and truth on top of being responsible.

Throughout my years, I have noticed many leadership opportunities come my way, more than I would find anywhere else. I found that scholar government was a very important part of my life. Being a senator in middle school, running for vice president twice, and being the treasurer in the cabinet have pushed me to serve others with the knowledge this education gives. Having a leadership position in an education system that teaches me how to think and become great has positively shaped my soul immensely. I was also impressed with the leadership class that everyone has to take in secondary because not a lot of other schools have that in their curriculum. That class has changed me to be more grateful for the freedoms we enjoy in this country. Many times a year we have lessons about veterans, those who acted bravely during the tragic events of 9/11, and figures in past wars that virtuously acted in the fight for something greater than themselves. These lessons have inspired me to fight for something greater than myself! I now realize what I should do on top of what I want to do to serve my country.

As I go off to college this fall, I will carry with me the culture and mission of John Adams Academy, which has taught me diligence, respect, service and virtue. Instead of focusing solely on myself, the lessons I have learned will help me serve others and help to foster a similar culture of greatness! I could have become a regular high school student, but I am proud to have become a scholar. Reflecting on the past nine years, with all my mistakes and flaws, it was the JAA culture that pushed me towards becoming a humble servant-leader pursuing a noble soul.