



*- a further look  
at dylan -*



Dear readers,

Hi! My name is Dylan and **hopefully this** magazine will give you a little insight into **who** I am. Before you get to **the** actual magazine I wanted to talk a little bit about myself just so you **have** some idea. I'm **14** years old and **this** is my first project at SLA. I'm a very passionate person and my friends mean absolutely **everything** to me. I try my best to spend as much time as I can with **them**. **Another thing that's** important to me is music, as I'm sure you'll **gather** from **this** magazine. I listen to music during pretty much **everything** I do- my **homework**, taking **the** train to **school**, reading, and most **other things**. I'm interested in a lot of **things** and in past years I've spent a lot of time doing extracurriculars like student council, softball, and **choir**.

Some aspects of **this** magazine were **challenging** because it was **hard** to really **think** about certain **things** and **the** way **they** have impacted **the** person I am now. However, **this** project led me to some really interesting realizations about myself **that** I'm grateful for. I **hope** you enjoy reading **this** magazine as much as I **had** fun creating it.

Sincerely,

Dylan Paul

2022



### *My Passion:*

I've always liked to argue and have meaningful conversations- my parents would most definitely vouch for that. So it's honestly no surprise that one passion that is most significant to me is debate. I first joined debate in sixth grade with my best friend at the time. We were both opinionated people that really loved to talk and debate seemed perfect for us.

The very first meeting was incredibly packed full of experienced seventh and eighth graders so it was a little intimidating but that was where we learned the basics of debating and found out our topic for the next couple of months. The topic was about whether or not the government should ban the use of animal testing in the United States and it was really interesting to learn how to research and write cases on both sides of the topic. It helped me to work on seeing both sides of an argument, which is a very beneficial skill.

The practices continued to go well and they all led up to our first competition where we competed against multiple teams from schools across the city. It was a completely new environment and it honestly was really thrilling getting to debate kids that I had never met before in a school I'd never been in. It was an interesting experience and we ended up winning three out of the three debates that we participated in. We went into the competition with absolutely no belief that we would win the debates, so it was really surprising and exciting that we did.

My partner and I continued to debate together for the entirety of middle school, even throughout the pandemic where we competed virtually. Over the three years we debated together, my partner and I won every single debate we had competed in and won many awards for our school. Our school continued to be very proud of us throughout the years and having such a successful debate career really encouraged us to keep debating after middle school.

In eighth grade, we received an invitation to apply for a scholarship to attend an overnight debate camp at Bryn Mawr College. We both ended up receiving the scholarship and in July of 2022 we moved into the Bryn Mawr College dorms. For two weeks we were able to learn from older, more experienced debaters along with other kids our age. It was a different style of debate than I was used to so I felt a little behind for some of my time there but overall I learned so much from being there and I wouldn't have had such an amazing opportunity without the experiences I've had with debate. Towards the end of the camp they held a camp-wide tournament which is when my partner and I had our first loss. Well, first five losses. Losing wasn't something we were used to, but I'm honestly so glad that we were able to experience what that feels like before splitting up and going to high school debate programs at our separate schools.

I think debate will continue to be one of my passions because I still love having actual conversations with people, especially about important issues that need to be talked about, and I hope that the things I've learned from debate will be beneficial to me in the future.



*Here's a playlist I made  
of songs I connect to right now!*



### *Educational Experience Vignette:*

"We're moving you to Mrs. Bucklen's room for math class with the fifth graders." Fourth grade me stared blankly, I didn't want to do class with the fifth graders- I didn't know any of them.

I anxiously picked up my math book and plastic pencil case that I'd drawn all over and headed down the hallway towards Mrs. Bucklen's classroom.

Mrs. Bucklen greeted and introduced me to her class as I awkwardly stood at the front of the perfectly arranged rows of desks with all eyes on me. I'd always been uneasy towards new environments, and this classroom was no different. "This is Dylan, she's going to be doing math class with us every day." I waved, overwhelmed by all of the attention. A few of the fifth graders waved back but the rest ignored me as best as they were able.

Mrs. Bucklen placed me in the 3rd row, in between two students named Hunter and Anna. Hunter was always sleeping in class and I didn't think he liked me very much. Anna was sweet but quiet, so I spent the rest of class sitting there uncomfortably, unsure how to start a conversation.

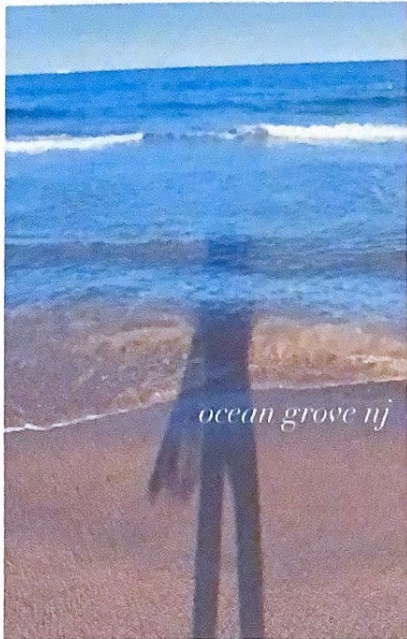
Class the next day started off just as awkwardly as the last. I sat silently at my desk doing the classwork on my computer when someone tapped me on the shoulder. I pulled my headphones out of my ears and turned around to see a smiling girl behind me. "Hi! Do you mind if I work with you?" Her enthusiasm intimidated me a little bit, but I smiled and nodded as she pulled up a chair.

We turned out to be able to work really well together so we ended up finishing the work quickly. With nothing else to do, we turned to asking each other questions. Her name, I found out, was Cassie and she liked a lot of the same things I did- like reading and Disney movies. We became friends quickly and she was even eventually able to switch seats so she could sit next to me in class.

Being in a new environment such as Mrs. Bucklen's classroom was so incredibly scary for someone like fourth grade me whose biggest fear was not being liked, so meeting Cassie was such a relief because I never expected to be able to bond with someone that quickly. I think becoming friends with Cassie completely changed my viewpoint on experiencing new environments because she made me feel like I wasn't alone in feeling isolated, and really made me feel so much more comfortable. Cassie helped me to understand that new environments will always be unnerving, but there will most likely always be kind people that understand how anxious you're feeling.

This mindset has impacted my identity as a learner because it has made me more open minded and allowed me to feel less alone in unfamiliar settings where previously my anxiety may have prevented me from branching out and doing the best work that I possibly could.





*Ocean Grove, New Jersey is my family's favorite place to go on vacation- we've been going for years and it's always so much fun. The town is so pretty and there's a lot of things to do, especially at the boardwalk!*

*Here are some posters that I made of some artist's I listen to a lot- their music is really important to me.*





