Los Angeles is a city of great diversity. Living in this city, idolized by many as the city of dreams and bright sunny days, I have been exposed to various cultures, ethnicities, languages, customs, and social interactions. The exposure I have received has shaped me to become a conscious individual. Based off of my experiences I have become conscious that my beautiful city can also be a pitch-black terrorizing nightmare. A nightmare filled with gangs, drugs, violence, and poverty. One of the things that most impacts my life are the influences and the effects of my peers in my community.

Throughout my high school years, I have witnessed how my peers are not encouraged to pursue higher education. Everyday I see how students of color are pushed out of schools primarily because schools lack the resources to educate their students and prepare them to go on to institutions of higher education. Within my neighborhood and the neighborhoods that surround me the lack of resources is inevitably noticeable. However, I do not let these factors prevent me from striving to better myself and influence my peers to do the same.

As a conscious individual I have been volunteering at my inner city community church in which many of my peers attend Sunday school. I am a church peer mentor and lead discussions on the effects drugs and gangs can cause on my peers. I have been able to gain their trust and in doing so I have been able to encourage them along with myself to avoid gangs and drugs. We all try to pursue our dreams and aspirations of having a wonderful career in the future by not allowing our limiting resources to be a burden holding us back. Instead it is a motivation to strive and accomplish our goals to better ourselves and better the community.

These experiences have made me conscious about the respect that we all deserve regardless of backgrounds and the beliefs we hold. I am proud of this quality of consciousness because through my accomplishments of volunteering at homeless shelters and being a peer mentor at my community church, I feel I have made a positive impact on someone’s life. As a leader one is selfless and respectful of all, which I feel are extremely important factors in an individual and something I feel relates to the person I am today.