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Oratorical Contest

If you could add one value to the core Key Club values of caring, leadership, character building, and inclusiveness, what would you choose?

Since my freshman year of high school, Key Club has instilled a love of community service in me. I'll admit that at first, like everybody, the opportunity to join first appeared to be a supplement for my college application and a chance to do something else that my cool brother had already done first. However, another dimension was added to my view of Key Club with a new role of leadership; my advisor, Mrs. Tyler, offered me the spot of 9th grade director (chiefly because of my connections), and I, ready to flesh out my high school experience, eagerly accepted. As I rose to club treasurer, vice president, and now newly elected president, I obviously learned plenty about leadership in setting an example, organizing events, and the like. Accompanying that knowledge was a heightened grasp of caring and character building, two more Key Club values that I began to deeply appreciate as I participated more and more in activities to better my school and community. Lastly, Key Club taught me the value of including all, as I met different people outside of my group in both my club and my community.

So as I sat down last night and thought on what attribute the Key Club values glossed over, I was stumped. I felt like my growth in Key Club was paralleled closely by a growth in these four values, but none other came to mind. It soon came to me that though these four values accurately represent Key Club, they are all unachievable without another trait: diligence. Caring means nothing if you don't put hard work into meeting, greeting, and sympathizing with others. Leadership by speech and persuasion holds no value without leadership by example; ordering or assigning tasks has no backbone if you as a leader refuse to participate yourself. It's impossible

to achieve any improvements in personality or character without diligent actions. You get the picture – diligence is the clockwork behind the system, the gears that turn all the other values.

In middle school, I was a slacker. I had the ambition to get good grades and the desire to get involved, but hey, it was only middle school, so I relaxed and took an easy ride. I got by solely on talent and no hard work at all. Needless to say, this caught up to me in high school, where the workload doubled (at least) and the opportunities to get involved became far more prevalent and diversified. Key Club helped me gain a newfound hard work, a commitment to excellence. Diligence was getting up earlier to make the Tuesday morning meetings. Diligence was sacrificing my Friday nights to do Saturday morning car washes and beautification days. Diligence was showing up every morning for four weeks straight to count change for UNICEF. Now, diligence is staying up an extra hour and getting up half an hour earlier to write and edit my speech.

This hard work in Key Club reflected into different aspects of my life – I worked harder on schoolwork and at my job, even helping out around the house. I began to value each challenge as an opportunity to overcome an obstacle, an opportunity to demonstrate my newly appropriated diligence. It is this diligence that Key Club should exemplify and include. This commitment to excellence, this dedication, this hard work is the value that Key Club fails to recognize. Without diligence, there is no leadership, no caring, no character building, or no inclusiveness. Diligence is a crucial attribute to all success; it's not what you do or what you value, but how you do it – with hard work and dedication. I think Vince Lombardi sums it up best. He once said, “The price for success is hard work”, and I like to think that everything Key Club does is a success.