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For as long as I can remember, libraries have been an integral part of my life. From Story-Times, programs, and the annual event that is the Summer Reading Program. My parents had me involved in libraries from the start. By the time I was six, I knew I loved writing stories. I started writing for a children's newspaper in South Florida. Since then, I've gone on to win numerous writing contests. In 2013, at the age of 9, I started as a kid reporter for the local Fayetteville Swamp dogs' baseball team and I go back every year. I love the process of interviewing and then putting it into words for everyone to read. In 2015, at the age of 11, I entered the Barnes & Noble: My favorite Teacher Essay. I wrote about how my teacher (My Mother) has influenced my life and why I appreciate and admire her. I was stunned that my essay out of a lot of entries won for the local level.

When my family and I moved from South Florida to North Carolina in the summer of 2012, we searched for our local library. The people, culture, & lifestyle might be different in another state, but a library remained the same. We ended up at our local library, Hope Mills Branch library. Libraries are most important to me because I love to read. As I think about the true importance of a building filled with books, and great information, I begin to appreciate all that this wonderful place has to offer me, my family, my friends, and my community.

There aren't many outside resources available for a student's academic success, but there is a link between libraries and student achievement. When I walked into the library, my librarian welcomed me by my first name because we go on a regular basis and the entire staff is always helpful. When I needed to complete projects, write essays, obtain a book for my debate & speech tournaments, the library was my one and only source.

As I have grown older, I've begun to appreciate the library, resources, and librarians more, as they helped contribute to my success. The library has impacted my life. Not only does the library help students academically, but the library provides opportunities for students to be exposed to extracurricular activities. They provide classes, story time, computer training, volunteering opportunities, programs, movie, & game nights to all.

As we continue to grow, we must not forget the importance of our libraries in North Carolina and the great impact that they have on our community. It is important that libraries continue to strengthen our communities. In my twelve years of life, the library has been an important part of my childhood and academic development. I always feel like this is my second home. Libraries have, and always will hold a special place in my heart for everything that they have helped me in succeeding in my life.