

NCLA Student Ambassador Program Essay

Caroline Sartain

2/21/19

“The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library,” Albert Einstein made this remark about 100 years ago, but the quote stands true today. There have been many people, places, and things throughout the duration of my 16 years of life that have come and gone, but the constant has always been the library. As part of a family of people who act more like nomads than stationary beings, we have moved many times but all within the state of North Carolina.

When I walk into a library, I never know what kind of story will walk out with me. It may take the form of a movie, it may be a young adult novel, it may be nonfiction, it may even be an audiobook, but I know for a fact that I will walk out with a story. Sometimes the stories are people-based. One time my mom, brother, and I went to the library and a little boy came up to my brother and said he was going to read to him. We did not know who the little boy was, but he found that he had to read to my little brother. This is what the library means to me; a sense of community.

My friends and I gather at my school's library on occasion for many reasons, including social time, research, a break, and even a cup of coffee. The library provides the research for all of that. This is what the library means to my friends.

Throughout the upheaval of my life in these last few years, a library has been my constant. It may not always be the same library, for sure, but there is always a library somewhere that I can go to, whether to clear my head or to write a paper that I waited too long to start on. My mother is a librarian, so I basically grew up in one. She instilled in me a love and appreciation for libraries that I know that I will nurture for my entire life.

There have been several instances in my life when the library has helped to shape my way of thinking. For example, in eighth grade, I got a really bad concussion. Due to this, I couldn't partake in my computer class, so instead I helped out in the school library. This allowed me to see several different aspects of how the school library works and the ability to see the variety of people who come into the library on a daily basis. I remember one time, the special education class came into the library and as a library assistant, I was able to help this sweet girl find a book to read. After we found a book she wanted to read, I read it to her, and it absolutely made her day.

Libraries are the hub and heart of the community. The library offers many services beyond just books. For example, one can apply for a job, get help writing a resume, get help in spanish class (I tutor in the library at my school for someone in my spanish class), and sometimes you can even read with a therapy dog. Those are the best days in my opinion. Libraries will always be relevant because there will always be someone looking for a job, someone needing access to a community service, someone needing to be in a social group (like a

book club), and that is why libraries are important for the future of North Carolina, and in extension, for the world.