

Maggie Musto -- Blog 1

I do my hair and put blue sparkly eyeshadow in the corner of my eyes. The fall air fills up my nose and blows between my curls. A feeling so familiar, opening a little memory that sits dusty in the back of my mind. My father used to bring me to all of the big football games at the high school, but I didn't understand the rules. I would sit and eat a churro in the bleachers, being introduced to all of his friends that would watch me grow to be their students one day. I was half asleep until the halftime show. I watched in awe every time without fail, the various formations and the accents of movement to the beat of the music.

Little did I know that I would actually go to pursue dance in high school as a member of the team. In fact, I succeeded in doing almost everything I aspired to in elementary school. Whenever my dad brought me to the high school, he would remind me that wic was filled with "the smartest people in the school," so I got myself elected as vice president. However, it had me questioning if these were things I was passionate about, or if I was just pursuing a childhood fantasy.

I did mathletes, theater, jazz band, and countless other extracurriculars before I was able to hone into my interests. The concept of having a teenager decide what their future career may be is faulty in so many ways, and I believe the idea of pursuing one career is just as unimaginable.

Despite being welcomed with open arms, I was filled with constant anxiety when I first joined the team. I couldn't relate to any of my teammates, and I realized that being on the team was so much more than going out on the field. That same year I started to get more serious about WIC and developing a stronger speaking style. Though the 2 seem unrelated, my growing

confidence in the committee really helped me develop a personality/dancing style. Even at my dance studio I started to see serious improvement, and I would go on to win at all of my competitions that year.

“You have to quit the dance team.” Those words filled me with confusion and heartbreak. But why? I didn’t even like it in the beginning, it wasn’t as though I had made a lot of friends. I realized that I had actually fallen in love with performing. Being in front of hundreds of kids, strangers complimenting your dancing. I also felt like I was representing a larger group of students, because the team was normally filled with a specific demographic of people at the school. So, I very ironically used my MUN skills to fight my parents on this.

With my strong and possibly manipulative tactics I was able to win them over. I would spend my junior year proving that I was serious about dancing, so they couldn’t regret their decision. To me, dancing in the front like at a football game and winning in a committee for women's representation was all for the same cause. Whether it was a victory on the field or at a conference, I felt like I was making a difference for all young girls of color out there, because I had to be my own role model at their age.

It didn’t matter in the end whether or not I actually wanted to join WIC or the dance team, because I was able to allocate my skills in both to what I was truly passionate about. Through Empowering Education I have been able to continue these interests. Over the summer I developed a passion project that allowed me to share my love of dancing with children in the community. I also have allocated the leadership skills that the fellowship works on towards mentoring our middle school students. I want to lead; to fight for the rights of underrepresented groups in the future. Maybe 3 years from now that idea will be totally different, but I am content

with the fact that I have pursued it throughout high school. Being a senior leaves a lot of questions unanswered, still, I am optimistic that I will find a path for myself in the future.