

WRITING

Unexpected Opportunities

by Brandon R., 826LA

TYPE

MEMOIR
NARRATIVE

GENRE

GRADES 11–12

When I first started running track and cross country two years ago, it was because I wanted to do a sport in order to look good for college. After doing some research, I determined that track was a sport that I wanted to do because of my previous enjoyment of running during middle school. I enjoyed pushing myself every week to lower my time, and seeing my improvement made me feel great because it showed me what I was capable of. I loved the sense of accomplishment that I would feel every time after a run, and that the more tired I felt meant the more effort I had actually put in. It was so difficult at first. I was not a natural, and the first race was a sign of it. The starting gun went off and everybody took off. I saw my own teammates ahead of me as well as those of the competing school. I felt the adrenaline rush pushing me to try and keep up and go even faster. After I had completed the mile, I was exhausted, and I checked my time and was met with a surprise. I had dropped my time from a 7:30 mile to 6:11. I thought

to myself that if I was able to drop my time this much with little training, that I would be able to drop my time by even more if I became really committed.

Since then, I have been committed for about two years now and have been going to every single practice, eventually becoming the captain of the team. I was chosen to be captain of the team because of my commitment and leadership skills that I had demonstrated by trying to help everybody get to practice, be cleared for competitions by the school, and better themselves in running.

Normally, I run in the afternoons around Griffith Park after my classes are over. I want to be prepared in case we have a cross country or track season, as well as wanting to keep myself in shape. It is a skill that did not come natural to me but rather I had to develop over time with hard work and commitment.

As a result of running, I got to meet all of these people such as my teammates, my coaches, and runners from other schools. Some are old friends who I knew before and went to other schools. It has given me an opportunity to see people again, but in a competitive spirit. I likely would have never met them or come to rely on them or them on me if I hadn't started running.

Our coaches have taken us to many different places to train. Once, he took us to the Rose Bowl. Another time, to a random park. We developed a sense of running on

different terrain. I got to see different places, especially during competitions. I know I would never have been able to go and see these places otherwise.

Running has allowed me to be more organized with my time and develop my leadership skills. I did not expect that joining track would give me so many opportunities, especially since I joined with a mindset of doing it just to have something on my college resume. As a result of it, I got blessed with a lifelong love for running, new skills that I can use in everyday life, companionship, and memories. I am thankful for this unexpected opportunity.