

2024 Scholarship Essay Winner - Ava Grant

Living in Barrington all of my life, the Barrington Public Library has remained a constant throughout my childhood and teenage years. From a young age, my mother would bring my siblings and me to the library every single week in the summers. On the Library Playground, we would challenge each other to see who could climb the highest on the rope structure and who could swing the highest on the swing set. It was from moments like these that my siblings and I developed our competitive yet close-knit relationship.

The summer reading program at the library has also been of long-standing tradition in my household. My mom, as a school librarian, has always emphasized the importance of reading to our family. The summer reading program allowed me to read many different books while keeping it fun. I remember coming to the library to pick out new books for the upcoming week and talking to a volunteer in order to receive my prize from the following week. These summers fueled my love of reading. Whenever my mom couldn't bring us to the library, my grandparents would. My grandmother had a rule that I could only check out as many books as I could carry. So of course, nine-year-old me brought a large tote bag to store more books than I could ever hold in my hands. My older sister also loved the library, and as soon as she was old enough, she began volunteering there. I looked forward to visiting her while she volunteered, as it gave me an excuse to pick out new books. Not only has the library reinforced the importance of reading into my life, but also, it created special moments with my family that I will always treasure.

As I have entered my teenage years, I have transitioned from the playground rope structure and the upstairs children's room. Now, the Barrington Public Library has become a space for me to study for any midterm, final, or AP exams that I might have; and when I go check out a book, I have moved into the teen room that I always wished to explore when I was younger.

To join the National Honors Society at the high school, I chose to begin my volunteering hours at the public library, just like my sister had. I was able to shelve books and prepare for children's events which allowed me to feel a lot closer to the Barrington community. The Barrington Public Library has been a constant in my life, strengthening my relationship with my family and friends, my community, and my love for reading.