**Prompt #7 - What have you done to make your school or your community a better place? (350 words)**

The walls are stained with a brown line marking the height of water the week prior.

Recent news prompted my visit to a neighborhood in Jakarta’s eastern region which had been impacted by flood. Nearby residents informed us regarding adjustments to their living situations. Thankfully, enough funds were gathered through a garage sale. With the money, I purchased mature plants, fertilizer, gardening tools, and food to provide for guests.

In a densely populated city, pollution paired with extreme rainfall makes flooding almost inevitable. Trees are proven to reduce the effects of flood by acting as an interception that slows down and re-evaporate rain, as well as increasing soil capacity and permeability to store water through roots.

The people gathered with us for a gardening activity—planting in an empty lot while simultaneously discussing the expected outcomes. However, the interactiveness of the workshop meant we observed the positive reactions, yet skepticism for our action.

I established “Plan(t) for Tomorrow” with several of my peers in hopes to promote reforestation; rebuilding greener communities in Jakarta. I not only aim to tackle flooding, but to increase overall environmental awareness through simple initiatives such as planting.

Though the people were always immensely welcoming, it was their questions, critical in nature. *“Why plant trees when they will die as water accumulates?”*. Though initially stumped and blanked out, I remembered my teacher’s lectures in plant biology: that trees have a mechanism when soil becomes saturated. Due to this blockage, they will carry out anaerobic respiration in the absence of oxygen. Consequently, most trees are able to withstand up to a week of flooding. In addition, the pros also weigh the cons when the hygiene, safety, and finances of the people are compromised.

Through my work in the organization, and encounters with members of a community impacted by climate change, I figured how teaching simple facts about planting significantly changes their perception of the environment.

I hope to resume my involvement despite being in a nation whose conditions are directly opposite. Interestingly, trees may still be the answer to the cries of a drought-prone land.

Hi Calysta,

I’m glad to read about your project for your community! I can see that you are very passionate about the project.

However, I think there are a few things that you could do to better your essay. Firstly, I think the structure of your paragraphs needs to flow better so they would be cohesive. Because right now the timeline in your essay feels a bit too random and scattered—making it a little bit difficult for me to read and understand your point.

Second, with supplemental essays and remembering how you only have limited word counts, I think it would be really good to be direct and concise with what you have to share. I noticed that you were sharing quite a bit about your knowledge of plant/trees biology. However, I think it’s much more important for you to share the reason behind your passion. Also, what happened to the community afterwards? What kind of impact did that leave on them? How did you tackle their scepticism towards planting trees?

Hope that helps and all the best with your application!

Best wishes,

Johana