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

During Junior year, I visited my neighborhood’s community garden for the first time. I was shocked to be greeted by a mess of withering stems and shriveled leaves. Envisioning a space for community interaction through gardening, I gathered several friends from the neighborhood and went on a mission to restore the community garden.

We started with removing the dead plants and re-tilled the soil, tirelessly planting new seeds and taking turns carrying buckets of water from the nearest water source about 100 meters away. Our trips to the garden inspired donations of seeds and fertilizers from delighted neighbors. After several weeks, the garden took an unprecedented form - promisingly tall sprouts ubiquitously shot up, their leaves unfurling, beckoning the daylight.

However, the responsibilities of Junior year soon caught up to us. Examinations and competitions were underway, and we skipped designated days for gardening. When I returned after a month, the garden’s vibrant greenery had dulled. The plants were showing signs of wilting.

I knew the problem was our lack of time and energy. The inconvenient location of the nearest water source meant several round trips hauling buckets of water - an instant motivation crusher. Thus, I designed and implemented a rainwater harvesting system within the garden. Though infrequent, Jakarta’s rainfall is notoriously heavy. A few days of rain filled up the tank, storing up to two months’ worth of water. Eliminating physical exhaustion from fetching water strengthened our resolve to complete our mission.

Months later, the once dilapidated land was bustling with excitement as community members flocked to the garden. Incentivizing the community by promising freshly grown vegetables in exchange for helping to tend to the plants, the garden quickly became a community hotspot. I return to the community garden every few weeks, volunteering and fostering connections.

The success of the rainwater harvesting system inspired me to conduct research on the feasibility of implementing them to households. The benefits are significant - reduced water wastage and bills. I know it is ambitious, requiring considerable time and resources, but my desire to further improve my community sustains my motivation.

Hi Brian,

Nice revisions to this draft! You are focusing on the community impact more with the story. This can be done to your last paragraph as well – instead of saying reduced water bills, you can turn the benefits to the community (locals, planet, etc). This will tie in well with your story and essay prompt.

C.G.