

I am a veteran of LEGO League and volunteer to help other schools create LEGO League programs. I have also participated in programs such as Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth (MITY), a summer program to help middle and high schoolers learn more about their interests, and Wolf Ridge, an environmental learning center.

Values are broad ideas that a person put value in, they affect their actions and judgement. My four major values are Family, Creativity, Learning and Adventure. These were developed by my closeness to my family and friends.

Family can mean people you are related to or people you have known for a long time that you are good friends with. I often consider my neighbors a part of my family. I have known them since I was one and they are around for every one of my and my little brother's birthdays. They are an example of family that isn't blood family. In his TEDxAmericanUniversity talk Deon Jones, a media creator who uses his talent and influence to address current problems, was talking about the lack of mentors for young people and the response he got from one he did mentor. "He said thank you for accepting my collect calls, for sending me books, for being here for me, for never leaving my side, for taking care of my mom, he hadn't seen her for over a year, for never seeing me as a monster... second what he was saying was that you are the first person see and treat me as a human being." He acted as a mentor figure for this young adult and was the first. This call shows the importance of family to not just this one person but the impact a person such as a family member can have by just caring at all.

Creativity is the forming of original ideas. Things like problem solving and making art are creative things. I have done many things like LEGO League to work on my problem solving and brainstorming skills. LEGO League is a program run by FIRST, a robotics focused community that helps youth gain skills for the future. According to the first website 97% of kids that participate in LEGO League became better problem solvers. Through things like LEGO League, FIRST shows that they believe in the value of creativity. Creating art and just thinking can help calm me or distract me from a problem I am facing.

Learning means gaining knowledge or ability through being taught, personal experience or both. Sometimes you learn when you do things you haven't done before or when you go to school. During the summer I do programs like MITY summer camps and Wolf ridge. They have helped me to learn about concepts I wouldn't learn in school about things like telling the weather through clouds and how to read electrical diagrams. Others also value learning and because of

that they support things like MITY. In 2019 the Ecolab Foundation, the Tennant Foundation, the Hormel Foundation and 4 other major corporations donated large sums to keep MITY running. By doing that they show their support in the teaching and learning of kids. I always seek out learning opportunities because the more I learn, the more I can help others.

An adventure is leaving your comfort zone and trying new things. Adventures can be things like trying new foods or going into the wilderness. One of the reasons adventure is important to me is that through adventure comes growth. Once in 5th grade I was at a water park with my family. After going on a water slide there I thought would be terrifying I learned that it was actually really fun and I've kept trying waterslides since. Going down a water slide that time led me to be a much more adventurous and open person.

One of the most common values in the United States is competition. One may think that competition is one of my major values and that thought would be enforced by studies done by Boston University and Andrews University. The studies found that one of the most common cultural values in the US is competition. Although as a part of the US I do value competition I believe that family, creativity, learning and adventure are more important than competition.

These four things, family, creativity, learning and adventure, are very important to me. They affect who I associate myself with and what I do every day. Knowing what my values are and what they mean helps me to identify myself as who I am. These are my values but what are yours?