**PROMPT 1:**

EXPLAIN HOW YOU RESPONDED TO A PROBLEM AND/OR AN UNFAMILIAR SITUATION. WHAT DID YOU DO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME, AND WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE? (MAXIMUM 1500 CHARACTERS)

It wasn’t until I felt tons of Catholic eyes staring at me that I felt the anxiety. My body vibrated in the cold frigid room. How was I, the only Muslim, supposed to lead the daily prayer in a Catholic school? standing in front, I felt like a total stranger. My trembling mouth didn’t allow me to speak. It was my worst fear coming into this school.

I took a deep breath, hoping maybe the spotlight would fade. Instead, it shone brighter. “God” was the only word that my shaky throat could come up with. Then, I said to myself: ignore the eyes and let it flow. I just mentioned the things that happened that day: how stressful the test that morning was, how refreshing PE was, how fun chatting with my friends throughout the day was. Halfway through, I didn’t even notice I was in a cold room. I was floating, following the wave of my heart, reliving the day in my mind coated by the sudden warmth in the room. Without realizing it, I closed the prayer and took a deep breath.

I opened my eyes to a bunch of gasps. The teacher approached me with a smile. She said it was such a beautiful prayer. Despite our differences, I delivered a touching prayer. That was the first time I had firm belief that tolerance in our country was possible. The way they could appreciate my prayer brought me closer to them. That moment made me realize that nurturing diversity is a powerful weapon in bringing us closer together.

Hi Danendra,

This is such a great story that really answers the prompt well. I was imagining the situation as I was reading your story. It must not have been easy for you, but you did great! Also aside from that, I’m glad diversity was encouraged and nurtured in your school.

All the best!