*Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. \* Min: 100 / Max: 300*

Lucas was welding the chassis, Albert was building a quickshift powertrain, and I was porting the cylinder head. These were the things the mechanics from Engine+ - an auto repair shop - and I were doing on weekends.

Despite their rough exterior, Lucas, Albert, and the others were friendly. In our first meeting, the 12 year-old me was intimidated when my dad brought me here to learn about cars. To ensure I feel comfortable, they cracked jokes, taught me the engine’s basics, and showed me how engine components work firsthand. These led me to want to learn more about engines, resulting in my 3 - 4 days a week visit to Engine+.

After years of learning, I finally became their apprentice last year and joined their race car team for the annual ISSOM event. The team has six divisions, and I was in the engine division. With limited budgets, the development was challenging, but we made things work and custom made everything ourselves.

Seven weeks in, the chassis division didn’t make the chassis stiff enough and failed to maintain precise control over the suspension geometry, which led to a big argument. As the youngest, I knew it wouldn't do any good participating in the argument. Instead, I tried to find ways to make the chassis stiffer without adding much weight.

Seeing my efforts, Lucas and Albert set aside their arguments. The tension quickly loosened as the team was focused on my solution.

Obstacles and arguments are not unusual in collaborative work. However, once we got through them together, we learned new things and gained collective experience that makes us a better person and team. I have learned a great deal about collaboration from them and my time with Engine+ will forever live in me, even after I pursue my degree at UMich.

Comments:

I really enjoyed reading this. It flowed really well and had a strong narrative style, and you could tell that this was a fond memory being re-examined. There was a clear structure throughout as well.

That being said, please consider these points to make this essay stronger:

* Elaborate further on how you got through the obstacles in collaborative work. Were there high stakes at hand?
* What were the new skills that you learnt after working together collaboratively?
* How will your degree at UMich relate to this experience? What certain aspects of the program will engage with the skills you’ve learnt from this experience?
* How has this experience influenced your goals overall?
* Has this role changed over time?