**8. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California? (350 words)**

As I finished my junior year of high school, I had to make a difficult decision. My sister, Kelly, had just got accepted to NYU. While we were all excited about the news, we were also concerned about the Asian hate that had exponentially risen since the pandemic, such that Kelly contemplated gapping. Being a younger sister who has seen how much my elder sister had dreamed of attending the school, I felt the responsibility to go with her and reassure everyone it will be alright. But I was faced with my own dilemma.

In my last two years in high school, I was beginning to make a difference in my community– I was fundraising to help disadvantaged kids get the education and vaccines they need. My friends needed me– I was their rock during times of need, and they would come to me for suggestions. So, I was torn about leaving, as I had personal missions that I wanted to see through to the end.

On the other hand, Kelly had always been there for me through thick and thin since the beginning of time, lent me her shoulders to cry, and had my back whenever I needed it.

I lost sleep, tossed around in my bed. After much deliberation, I mustered the courage to tell my parents, “I will go with her. I’ll go to high school in New York.” I realized that life is not all about me. I refrained from choosing my desires over family. At first, I perceived this as a sacrifice. Every night, I lay awake in bed "What if I've made a mistake?". However, the more I thought about it, the more I recognized something crucial: while it's necessary to follow my heart, responsibilities must take precedence.

I had to stay up late at night due to the 12-hour time zone difference to fulfill my commitment back home. But I’m happy that I could be there for my sister. My shock is fading with time. The effects of my decision, however, will not. So will I regret it? Never.