As I rushed onto the McCarthy campus with my heavy, bright orange backpack, I suddenly found myself swallowed up by the current of middle schoolers making their way into school. I stopped dead in my tracks when I peared upward and saw the three red words that would change my life forever**:** ‘McCarthy Middle School’. All the excitement that had coursed through veins mere seconds ago instantly turned frigid. It was my first day of seventh grade and my mind raced with the fathomless possibilities of what I would find on the other side of the towering building that stared me down. With my stomach knotted with trepidation, I let out a shaky breath and forced my weighted feet to cross this portal to another world.

The overwhelming feeling of consternation coursed through my veins as I stared down at the schedule in my sweating palms. I weaved my way through the swarm of middle schoolers I saw a young man walking jontally to the entrance of a classroom. A wide grin took over his face and he began waving at students. I couldn’t help but thinking that the exuberance that radiated from him didn’t belong in a middle school. My body calmed down and I waved at this strange man as I found my first class.

As soon as I knew it, the day had flown by and the final bell released me from the gruesome work my teachers had thrust on me. I hitched my backpack higher on my shoulders and made a beeline for the exit. Just as I reached the exit, a voice called out to me. I turned around and standing in front of me was the the man I saw earlier the same morning. He introduced himself as Mr. Guerra, a new eighth grade teacher. He told me he was starting a McCarthy Science Olympiad team. I immediately told him I wasn’t interested and in a swift motion, I opened the exit door and scurried out.

Was was most astounding about Mr. Guerra was his tenacity. Day after day, he would see me walking down the hallway and he’d repeatedly ask for me come to a science team meeting. I always objected. I told him that science was my worst subject and I hated it. Upon hearing this, Mr. Guerra launched in a diatribe about how anyone could excel in science. He proceeded to make the decision, for me might I add, that I had to check out one science team meeting. I agreed, hoping to escape another one of his science tangents.

The next afternoon I dragged my feet in the direction of that repugnant club. My heart raced as I approached his room. I felt a tug pulling me towards the school exit and I was seriously considered making conciliatory escape home. I was not and never would be proficient in science. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get an A. I was frustrated and couldn't understand why I wasn't able to live up to my own expectations. I question why I has even agreed to go. It was a ludicrous idea. I would have left then and there if Mr. Guerra hadn’t found me in the hallway and given me an encouraging smile.

The moment I stepped into the room, I saw that the classroom was packed. The club was led by this new teacher who looked like he was just out of college. I snorted, letting my mind wander as I awaited the impending monotonous drone of a lecture. This was a science club were nerdy students probably gathered to discuss some boring, arbitrary, scientific concept with pedantic lexicon that only they could understand. What was the point of even being here? I wasn't even good at science.

This new teacher introduced himself as Mr. Guerra and beamed as he projected his love for science. He announced his new club as Science Olympiad and began to explain that we would be forming a team to participate in a major statewide science competition later on in the year. He described events that spanned anywhere from crime scene investigation to playing music, explaining that you didn't even need to be good at science to be a part of the team. I was dumbfounded by how much I wanted to join the club and I could stop myself from breaking into a grin. I didn’t have to be scientist in this club. I realized that I could be a detective, musician, artist, or athlete to excel in this club. Mr. Guerra became my mentor from that day onward. He guided me through my events, filling in any blanks I had pertaining to the subject. He became my confidant, engendering my confidence and proficiency at science. I began to open my mind to the possibility that maybe I wasn't a lost cause in science and soon enough I started earning A's in science. As the years progressed, I began to fall in love with science. Mr. Guerra has elicited a spark that turned my world upside down. Passion and motivation to pursue science flowed through my veins, as though a switch had been flipped inside me. Mr. Guerra had taught me to never give up on myself, instilling a tenacity that resonated from within me. He changed my life and I could never repay him for that. I decided that I wanted to give back to the community and do the same for someone else, opening doors of possibility and opportunity for them. Ever since the beginning of my freshman year, I have been a mentor to the middle school science team, attending just about every one of their meetings and competitions. Through this, I was able to expand my knowledge and develop leadership skills that I will carry for the rest of my life. My heart swelled as I saw that I was able to make the same difference in some else's life that Mr. Guerra made in mine. I watched these middle schoolers began to grow in self-esteem and intellect, through their engendering love for science. I aspire to be just as inspiring, considerate, and devoted as Mr. Guerra. He instilled in me the belief that I am going to change the world through my passion and motivation for science, just as he had.