

Julien Kaykas-Wolff

I build communities one person at a time

St. Vincent de Paul College Preparatory • Petaluma, CA
National Honor Society • Class of 2027

Who I am

I love talking to people

It's my favorite thing. I want to make an impact on specific people. I'm not saying I have to change the world, but I hope to change a couple of people's perspectives on life or school or anything like that. I'm good at helping impact people's lives on a smaller level.

I get to know people deeply through one-on-one conversations. My personal time is centered on friends, family, and teammates. I think lasting change happens through deep connections.

How I show up for people

Usually I make a more quiet impact when I'm showing up for people, but I'm always there. I'm doing stuff in the background. I'll always make sure my friends can be in the best position possible for certain things, and I always do what I can to make sure that everybody's working to their best abilities no matter what they're doing.

I have a pretty strict moral code. It's really anything that would put me as well as the other person in the best position possible, and make sure that we both get something out of it. My kindness and my courage to stand up for people guide me.

Standing up when it matters

When my sister needed support coming out to our parents, I was there for her. Even though that's not a super popular thing to do, I thought it was the right thing to do. That's who I am: I show up for the people I care about, especially when it's uncomfortable or less popular.

Doing the right thing even when it's harder or less popular. Prioritizing sibling relationships despite family living across the country and Germany. Being accountable for your actions and cleaning up your mess.

What drives my curiosity

I'll go down rabbit holes for hours and hours just to find out new information about stuff that I think is pretty cool. Recently, I've been fascinated by U.S. President's foreign policy decisions and our global relations (Greenland, Iran, Latin America). It's super interesting to me how historical events shape modern society.

I love learning even when there's no grade attached. History is easily the most entertaining thing that humans have ever done. When something interests me, I'll research it for hours without stopping.

How I lead

"I lead by empowering others to shine. I make a quiet impact by making sure everyone's in the best position to succeed."

Boy Scouts of America – Life Scout

4 years

Student → Co-Leader → Treasurer → Mentor

20

Scouts mentored

\$1,500

Monthly budget managed

- As Troop Treasurer, managed \$1,000-\$1,500 monthly budgets so everyone could focus on learning
- Led 20 scouts (2-3 years younger) at Marin Sierras by teaching, not directing
- Set up systems so teammates could excel
- Multi-day expeditions across Florida Keys, Sierra Nevada, Mount Diablo

All 20 participants reported better understanding of scouting mission through hands-on mentorship, not top-down instruction.

~200

Sea turtle eggs protected

1,000 lbs

Trash removed (single day)

11

Team members

- Constructed 20 nesting sites protecting ~200 endangered sea turtle eggs
- Removed 1,000 pounds of roadside trash near Liberia in single day
- Assisted local water treatment facility serving surrounding communities
- Collaborated with 11-person team from four regions

From local helper to national coordinator to international conservation.

What you can see on my transcript

Advanced Placement & Honors Coursework

Current: All A's

Junior Year: 4 AP Courses + Honors Chemistry

- AP English Language and Culture
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP U.S. History
- AP Precalculus
- Honors Chemistry

Honors track since freshman year: Algebra 2, Geometry, English, World History

Academic recognition

3 years

- National Honor Society
- California Scholarship Federation
- Honor Roll (three consecutive years)

What I'm exploring in college

Communications • Political Science • Psychology

I'm interested in how people communicate, make decisions, and build communities. Historical patterns and modern governance fascinate me. Long-term, I want a career combining communication strengths with community impact.

I'm planning to take a community college cooking class for life skills.

Building community through service

Long-term commitment

4+ years

- The Salvation Army (4 years) – Distributing essential supplies to community members in need
- Redwood Food Bank (100+ hours) – Warehouse operations supporting families facing food insecurity

"I enjoy helping my community and seeing the real impact my work has on people's lives. It's rewarding to know my time makes a difference."

Thanksgiving outreach

Annual tradition

Tenderloin District, San Francisco

40

Meals prepared & distributed

3

Volunteer team

- Prepared and distributed 40 Thanksgiving meals to transition housing residents
- Direct engagement with San Francisco's most vulnerable communities
- Witnessed urban poverty challenges firsthand

What I'm working toward

The affordable housing crisis is one of society's biggest challenges. I want to contribute by building relationships and supporting systemic change.

I want a small, intimate college environment where I can have one-on-one conversations with professors. What excites me is being part of a community with people from all over the world who are there to learn and pursue being better people.

The challenge that shaped me most

COVID hit me hard. I got extremely obese and wasn't confident in myself. For the past couple of years, I've been really working hard. I've been going to the gym, playing basketball, been really active just so I can lose that weight and return to the confident self I was before. That experience really taught me that you can let yourself go way quicker than you thought. But I'm coming back better than I was before.

Building back from setbacks takes consistent effort. I'm learning what I need to work on (confidence, independence). I thrive in competitive environments where I can push myself. I'm trying to learn from mistakes and stay out of bad cycles.

Beyond academics & service

- Point guard/shooting guard on school basketball team (3 years)
- Pop Culture Club member (30+ members)
- Fitness training, pickup basketball, online gaming community
- Prioritizing sibling relationships despite distance

What college means to me

I'm hoping college helps me become more independent. I will say I rely on people too much for stuff, so hopefully that'll help me in these transition years. I want to leave with specific skills (obviously being more skilled in my field, but also being a better cook, better at basic home chores, just grown as a person mentally and physically).

Building independence while maintaining collaborative strengths. Learning from mistakes, breaking bad cycles, becoming a better version of myself. Having a good group of friends and building that net of people around me.

"That first chance is really the only thing I need. After that first chance, there's gonna be no reason they wouldn't want to have me there. There's so many special, unique things about me: my intellect, my emotional intelligence, my communication skills, my independent work, and my personality."