**Drawing**:

Ever since I could hold a pen, before I could even write, I’ve always been doodling something, be it on sheets of paper, notebooks or receipts. Up until now I’ve only drawn for my own pleasure, but recently I was given the opportunity to work on my most ambitious project: a game for Android devices. I managed to convince a couple of friends, some really good programmers, to sign up for a game design competition: *Gamecelerator 3.0*, created by Ubisoft and Junior Achievement Romania. Our task was to design and then create a game from scratch, on any platform desired. I was in charge of the management of the team as well as all graphic aspects, as I was the only artist and game designer, while the other two members were programming the game. The task of drawing an entire game by myself in a few months seemed overwhelming at first. We tried to be realistic and decided our goal was to challenge ourselves, rather than seek perfection. We toiled for two months, but all the hardships paled when we first saw people playing an early version of our work and enjoying it. Though we weren’t numerous, we managed to win the first prize: a two week internship at Ubisoft during summer, where we had to finish our game. It was the first time I had the chance to utilize both my creative, analytical and leadership skills in a single project. We were lucky enough to talk to professionals in each of our fields. I still value and use skills learned from the graphic designers and game artists at Ubisoft.

Here’s the game: -link-

Poze: finala, ubisoft, ss game.

**Movies**: Movies have always been a big part of my life, especially the Hollywood ones, the great *American beauties,* as I like to call them. In 6th grade, I decided I wanted to become a movie director, although back then I didn’t really know what that meant. *It happened one night* as I was watching a movie, something I used to do every day back then. All I knew was that I wanted to live on *Sunset Boulevard* with the other stars. Though I tried making some short films before, my greatest achievement in this field is becoming the technical director in our *high school’s musical* theatre group. After seeing one of their shows, the musical after The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, I knew they would only perform quality classical plays, no *pulp fiction*. They were so passionate about *singing,* that they would do it at any given time, even *in the rain*. My informatics teacher invited me to one of the rehearsals and I immediately hit it off with the actors as they were all such nice *guys and dolls*. At first, I reckon I looked more like a *stalker* as I was watching what everybody else was doing and as I only had really small tasks to accomplish, trying to learn my part. Gradually, I started doing crucial jobs like work with the actors on deciding the certain dynamic of a scene or checking if the microphones and lights were working properly. During the play, I would be the one working with the technicians from the theaters we were performing in, telling them when the music would start or when a type of lighting was needed to create a certain *mood*, usually of *love*. I always had to make sure the technical part worked like *clockwork* for the success of the play. Although that was my main concern, I would do anything that needed to be done before the show from setting up the props to ushering important guests. Unfortunately, this took a lot of time and my mother was concerned for my grades and me becoming sleep deprived. So although I was a *rebel* in 9th grade in my endeavor to balance both school and theatre, I had to give it up for other, more ambitious projects due to the lack of time. Every musical that I see now acts as a *memento* for that time in my high school life and I’m glad I got to be a part of it even for a year.

**Sports**-

“Mens sana in corpore sano”

I, like most people, used to believe that you can either focus on academics or sports. Up until high school, I had managed to stay physically active, while also striving for a high GPA. When high school started, I decided it was time to focus on studying and neglected all the activities I once enjoyed and needed, as I later found out. Needless to say, after two years of intensive studying, I realized there is one small thing I can do to improve most aspects in my life: get back to sports. I started with swimming, then gradually added cycling and rollerblading into my weekly schedule. This was also the time I started experimenting with other different sports such as volleyball and handball at school, during school year, and snowboarding in winter. As I expected, not only did my GPA and learning capabilities improved, but also my health and energy levels. Swimming, in particular, is the best escape when I’m overwhelmed or have a lot of things on my mind. The balance between body and mind is essential for reaching my full potential not only as a student, but also as a human being.

Poze/desene: swimming, cycling, and playing volley ball/handball.

**Cooking:** a matter of loaf and bread (life and death)

Cooking and the planet

Ingredients:

-3 to 4 large documentaries;

- a pinch of ethics;

- 1/2 touch of compassion;

-1 lifetime of need to eat for survival;

Step 1:

-chop up a few documentaries on global warming and animal welfare;

Step 2:

-add morals and compassion to taste and realize that going vegan is the kind and ethical thing you can do both for the planet and animals;

Step 3:

-let ideas rise in a warm place, I used my head in this case, while you research a healthy way of aligning your behavior to the values you stand for;

Step 4:

-roll the now formed dough onto a flat surface and knead it until you learn how to cook your favorite meals and it becomes an enjoyable hobby;

Step 5:

-place the mixture into a pan and cook it in the preheated oven for a few years or until golden brown.

Step 6:

-take it out of the oven and voila: you are now an almost-adult who can keep themselves alive thanks to this minimal skill.

Best enjoyed when sharing it with friends.

**Researchers for Humanity:**

In 10th grade, our teacher told us about a project, *Research for Humanity*, which brought together students and scientists for a better future. There were only 4 spots on the team for the whole high school, so competition was remarkably high and I was lucky enough to secure a spot through my persistence and academic performance. In collaboration with the anthropologists from “Francisc I. Rainer” Anthropology Institute of the Romanian Academy, our goal was to conduct our own study over the course of 10 months, learn to process data, and manage our own booth at the Researchers Night 2015, where we had to inform people about our findings. I slowly fell in love with the methods used as well as the interaction with our mentors and subjects, as we got to know them better. There is something satisfying about knowing that your efforts supplied people more information about how a competitive nature manifests among high schoolers and how that affects their social skills.

**Giving Back to the Community:**

RMM: My high school has given me the opportunity to be the guide and newsletter journalist for all the editions of the Romanian Masters of Mathematics/ Physics, a couple of international contests, held during my time there. As a guide, I had to befriend contestants from the participating countries (such as the UK, USA, Kazakhstan or Bulgaria) and show them around the city, as well as make sure they would stick by their schedules. Everyone's favorite time was when we got the chance to eat together, since that was the time all the funny and intriguing stories about each country got shared. As a newsletter journalist, I was assigned to write about the events of the day, take interviews and photos to be posted on the official website.

Engleza pentru Viata:

The time I have spent teaching at *English for life* has in turn taught me the importance of an opportunity. I've always loved learning English and it has opened a myriad of pathways throughout my life, from being able to read the original versions of classical novels to being able to apply to a university abroad. The children we were teaching came from rough backgrounds, living in heartbreaking circumstances, but they were just as smart, compassionate, innocent and creative as any other kid. Everyone treated them with pity and sympathy because of their circumstances, but they didn't let that define them. What they needed was empathy, attention, love and an opportunity. Seeing their potential, I happy to work with them, knowing that our time together could be the first step in improving their life further down the line.

**Projects for next year:**

I would like to start a film club in my high school where we would meet once a week, watch a full movie and then have a short discussion or even debate on the questions raised by the film. I also hope that from time to time I could ask some Romanian directors or critics to come to tell us about movies and much more.