To me, diversity means a union and mutually beneficial relationship of a large group of people, despite and often because of their differences in backgrounds. At my school, I have come to know and befriend people from many different cultures. When I think of diversity, it reminds me of my multi-cultural fair from 2nd grade. I live among a community of friends from China, Japan, India, Korea, Europe, Russia and the Middle East. We are Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu. We speak over 50 languages in my small town. As I mature, I am learning that this diversity in a small community is not very common and I would not want it any other way.

It has become my expectation that my friends bring a different perspective on life and education in all that I do with them. Religious customs, language in the home and holidays differ greatly among those with whom I share my days. To be honest, if we were all the same, I think I would find it boring. Therefore, even though I may not share anything in common culturally with my neighbor at my lab table in Physics or my partner on my Science Olympiad team, we come together as equals. We are just teenagers trying our hardest and doing our best as we navigate High School. Despite all of our differences and because of them, we come together in one High School building to learn and prosper together.

For instance, my Science Olympiad Team has a majority of its participants of East Asian descent. So, as a fun team activity, every year we have a dumpling competition, in which everyone brings some sort of food, and our coaches decide which dumpling brought was the best. It is a fun and enjoyable event, and it would not be possible without diversity. I very much appreciate that my parents chose to live in my very culturally diverse community and I feel privileged that I am learning so much about the larger world within which we all live all in my very small suburban town in the Midwest. If accepted to the University of Michigan’s summer program, I would be so excited to experience more and different types of diversity to enhance my experiences and understanding of the world.