

Kaleb Phillips

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Essay Contest



Every individual will always encounter setbacks throughout their lives; however, it remains the responsibility of the individual to overcome these obstacles in order to positively transform their circumstances. My name is Kaleb Phillips, and I am sixteen years old. I am an upcoming junior at DeSoto Central High School. My setbacks started early in my life. I was diagnosed with Developmental Delay, ADHD, and ADD, which adversely affected my education. I experienced difficulty maintaining concentration and satisfactory grades. On one Saturday, I was on route to a golf event with my grandfather to volunteer, at which time I was introduced to Ms. Peggie, who serves as the Executive Director of Family Biz Builder. Family Biz Builder (FBB) is an organization dedicated to assisting children in improving their academic performance and life skills while instructing them in tennis skills. I was introduced to both facets of the program, wherein I also encountered one of my admired mentors, Mrs. Powers. I collaborated with Mrs. Powers digitally three times per week, and she taught me effective study techniques, such as highlighting key words, rereading formulas, and citing resource pages. Eventually, my grades began to improve, along with my tennis skills. In 2023, my

grandmother and I attended an NJTL Leadership in Columbus, South Carolina, where I first encountered my impactful coach, Lance Hickman, who offered to provide my brother and me with tennis instruction for a year. Coach Lance shared his methods to enhance our tennis and critical thinking skills, which had a resulting impact on my academic performance. In 2024, I began receiving mentorship from Ms. Megan, Mrs. Toni, and Mrs. Lawanda through a learning program known as Windward Academy. I met with them three times a week, during which time they instructed me to exercise greater caution in my decisions. Their platform advances significant academic improvement, as I transitioned from a barely passing student to one recognized on the honor roll. In remembrance, as I consider the path of my life to this point, I have demonstrated resilience and resolve, enabling me to conquer my setbacks and bring positive self-improvement. While I anticipate encountering further obstacles, with the support of God, my family, Mr. Hickman, FBB, and others in the future, I am confident in my capacity to overcome these challenges and gain personal growth from them. My grandmother gave two Bible verses which embrace me from day to day. This verse comes from Psalm 118:24 and it says, "This is the day that the Lord has made, and we will rejoice and be glad in it," the second verse comes from Philippians 4:13, and it says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,". With these Bible verses I know that I can do anything I put my mind to.