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As I began my journey through high school, I stepped back and evaluated the decisions I would have to make to become a success. Webster defines success as: a favorable or desired outcome. So I had to ask myself, "what is my desired outcome?" I had to think about what I wanted out of life and how I was going to accomplish it. Learning how to cope with and overcome negative situations, gave me mental strength; however, I was looking for strength on a deeper level!

Until I was 7 years old, I grew up in a single parent home developing and growing under the guidance of my mother. Although I know now she was doing the best she could, I realized then, that I wanted to do and become more. When my stepfather entered into my life, he provided that strong male role model that not only I wanted, but also what I needed. With my parents' combined guidance, I started to see direction and started becoming more in tuned to what may be my desired outcome.

Upon entering high school I searched for character and social building experiences. I wasn't interested in sports or drama, however, I did know that I wanted to be part of a team. During my search, I found the Navy Junior Reserves Officers Training Corps. I became very excited about the challenge, so I **decided to take a chance!**

When I first joined JROTC, I first thought it was a program that raised little soldiers. As I began to become more involved, I realized it was so much more. Once I started to fully participate in the journeys of the unit, I began to love it and respect it more and more. I began to embrace every aspect of JROTC, from the uniform, to the discipline and my assigned responsibilities.

The superior leadership of Captain W. Wilkerson and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. L. Cox, encouraged me, to be the best "me" I could be. They held me accountable, when I wanted to give up! To both of them, I sincerely say, "Thank you and I am forever grateful". If it had not been for them I wouldn't be in the position I am in now. Leading our unit in victory as a drill team commander and leaving my mark on what I call a momentous chapter in my life.

Leadership was one quality that I feel I have developed over these four years. To me, being a leader is ushering by example. I have developed my leadership skills with much trial and error, but through it all, I feel I have achieved a personal success for my 18 years. I learned that to be an effectual leader, you have to take responsibility for your actions and your decisions. I've learned that in order to succeed, sometimes you have to fail and when you fail you have to identify what made you fail and then start building from that point. I know that the skills that I have learned thus-far, will allow me to set a foundation, and build from there.

In 2008, I was awarded a certificate for Character. My sponsor told me, that what really made me stand out, was the confidence, professionalism and the poise of a leader that I possessed, when I had on my ROTC uniform. I always cloth myself with pride when I wear my uniform.

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From the creases in my pant and shirt to the shine of my shoes. It give me a sense of pride, structure, commitment and the dcsire to do and be my best!

In conclusion, JROTC has help me set a solid foundation for my future. As I continue on my journey of my desired outcome, I know without a shadow of doubt, that a strong foundation will help me to stand!