

Darija Stosic- college essay, Class of 2014

“Why am I in resource?” I had finally mustered the strength to speak up and ask my teacher why I was being pulled from my regular class each day to go to a different room. “Because you are a special education needs student, basically special ed.” Like a kick in the stomach upon hearing the news, I felt winded and speechless. I had always questioned why I was tested for things that my other classmates were not. Why was I ushered in and out of my classes throughout the day? The answer was right there, coming out of my eighth-grade resource teacher’s mouth. She wasn’t trying to make me feel bad, she was being honest with something that other teachers didn’t talk about to me. Now in the 11th grade, I have become acclimated to test after test and being pulled out of my classes for my IEP/Speech services. At this point, it’s a part of me that I’ve accepted. The only hassle is to walk up the five long flights to the resource room.

Since no one told me why I was in resource, it became the mysterious norm for me, and eventually I became comfortable with it. There would be times where I would get a packet to read for school and just be lost. What followed was a decrease of motivation and an increase in self-doubt. My family, especially my mother, would never let me use my services as a crutch to excuse my school work or “studies.” Time and again she would purse her lips and say, “Resource kid or not, you still have to work hard. You might have to work a little extra to keep up but that’s ok – that’s life.” With my mom’s words and support from my teachers, I put in my best effort and started working.

Arriving at my first SAT exam, I was ready to work but was stopped in my tracks when I signed in: “I’m sorry honey, if your name is not on the list you do not get the extra time.” My face turned into a bright red lobster. I don’t think I was ever so mad in my life. I tried not to take it out on the woman signing me in. “What do you mean I don’t get extra time, I’ve been given the option of extra time on tests since the second grade and I expect to get extra time for the SAT!” Pause...breathe, I thought. “Would you please check one more time if I am on the list?” “I’ve checked. I’m sorry if you are not on the list I can’t give you extra time.” I took a deep breath, waved my white flag, and walked into my assigned room. I then took the SATs to the best of my ability. In this case, there wasn’t much I could do – it was an error in my registration. I’ve learned to balance working hard and advocating for myself. If I don’t understand something I won’t just sit and wait for someone to notice that I need help.

Lately, people have been asking me what I want to do in college or what I want to be when I’m done studying. I feel certain that I want to become a high school guidance counselor. I simply enjoy helping people, especially adolescents. I’ve volunteered at the Boys and Girls club, helping with students’ homework and answering any questions they had. I enjoy seeing someone understand something after I have explained it. I would especially like to work with high school students because I know the amount of stress teenagers go through and I feel like adults forget that. I will help them, but also make them understand that you have to work really hard to get what you want, something I’ve been doing for a very long time.