

2022 Lorain County Toni Morrison Essay Contest

Topic: How has your environment made you who you are?

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The definition of environment is the surroundings or conditions in which a person lives in or operates. In this essay I will tell you about how my environment has made me who I am today. Just a little spoiler, my environment has made me a very good person.

I have been going to St. Paul Lutheran School Westlake since pre-K and all the way to fifth grade. My school has had a big impact on who I am today as a Christian, a person, a student and an athlete. As a Christian, my school has made an impact on my life through daily lessons and Chapel every Wednesday. We also have National Lutheran schools week. During that week, we read Bible verses and listen to Christian music. I make friends that are Christian and learn with them. St. Paul educates me about having a respectful personality while doing what Christ would want me to do. At St. Paul, I learn confidence in myself by presenting speeches. As the only Black girl in my class, my speeches have been about Harriet Tubman, John Lewis, Ruby Bridges and others who encourage me. And as an athlete, I become more like Christ by praying before the games. I also learn to be good, to put in the work and keep pushing myself. Although I never wanted to try basketball, my school provided me with an environment to play. Now, I really enjoy playing on the basketball team. My school environment develops my intelligence and confidence and allows me to try new things.

Another environment that has made me who I am today is my church, Temple Baptist Church. I have gone to this church since I was a baby. This church has given me a lot of biblical information and confidence. During children's church, I was given the opportunity to present a lesson. And for Black History Month, I was given another opportunity to participate in a speech contest. I won third place! Out of all the things that this church has taught me, I think it has mostly taught me about Jesus and how to be a Christian.

The environment where I spend most of my time is my home. I have been raised in a very good environment which helped me to become a lot of who I am today. At my home I have learned many things like the importance of getting good grades (which I do.) I have learned to listen to my parents and be respectful because they have been where I am. I have also learned

to be nice to my sibling, even if he is not nice to me, because he is family. And I have learned many life lessons such as stir the mac and cheese or it sticks to the bottom of the pot. But out of all these lessons, mostly I have learned to put family first.

I know I have described so many environments but my sports outside of school will be the last one. I play a few sports outside of school. I used to take swim class but the time changed to six am. I was not doing that! In swimming, I had to learn the basics then work my way up. I wanted to quit in the middle of the session. But my mom said I couldn't quit because we aren't quitters. Now, I'm trying roller skating. Surprise, surprise. I wanted to quit that because the beginner's class was easy, but the advanced classes were hard. I kept going and it got easier. I also play tennis and soccer as I learn what I like best. I have to play through the heat and that can be challenging. What sports taught me was that you have to push through and work hard.

All this has made me who I am today, an intelligent, hardworking, Christian who loves her family.