

## The Nine Musketeers

One of the most important things I have learned during my time at Goshen is to have a growth mindset. A growth mindset gives me the opportunity to experience and accept the differences of others. I try to incorporate this in all aspects of my life. I enjoy that Goshen provides countless activities including sporting events, musicals, the arts, and special days to allow us to include and celebrate our differences.

Let me show you how this happens in my ordinary school day.

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My alarm buzzes; I bolt awake. I quickly get out of bed, rushing to change, fix my lunch, and practice violin before school.

Today is a block day, so I only have half of my classes. I'm lucky enough to have three of my best friends in my first period. On the way to lunch, I find Haley, whose family is from Mexico, my best friend and soccer teammate.

"Hey, yesterday I was talking with my dad about the origin of our last name. Ours came from a valley in Wales, England. But my dad doesn't know where the Spanish got their last names from," I said. Haley looked thoughtful.

"I know my last name means rose branch," she replied. Before I could follow up, more friends sat down. We started to talk about our health project. I'm working with Haley and Elana. Elana is one of my best friends whose family has a different religion than mine. We are working on making our own restaurant, and they were kind enough to allow me to have my own VIP spot in the project even though I missed our first planning day because I was sick.

Kate, Rylee, and I begin discussing the musical. Kate is diabetic, so she has to think through everything she eats. We have so many friends in the musical that the three of us are planning to go over to her house beforehand.

Thursday and Friday lunches are my favorite because all my friends have the same lunch period. We call ourselves the nine musketeers; different families, different religions, different ethnicities, and different challenges, and they are all my best friends.

I have math class with one of the musketeers before heading to sit by Haley in science class. We've walked to seventh period together since the

beginning of the year. This trimester it is PE. I love PE class. Today is another cardio day.

Soon, we are warming up. We team up and head to do push-ups and curl-ups first. And boy we are bad at them! We laughed, struggling to get our bodies off the floor. We could barely do any because we kept collapsing in laughter. That was the most fun I've had during gym. Out of breath, we finish and head back to the locker rooms.

All of us girls laugh in the locker rooms as we talk. Haley and I quickly changed for soccer.

The championship tournament is soon, so Coach M switches up practice and gives us a big inflatable soccer ball. We just relax and have fun. Coach M is from an island nation and has brought his passion for soccer to us to share.

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What I love about my ordinary day is that over time it becomes extraordinary. My best memories at Goshen are ordinary ones, celebrating the diversity of the nine musketeers. We don't have the same cultures, religions, or skin colors. But, the growth mindset that we share makes my life extraordinary, builds bridges and I get a front row seat to cheer and celebrate our diversity of differences.