

Entry #6

On the first day of school, I got out of the car with jitters skittering down my spine and my heart skipping and stumbling. I was greeted by the din of cawing roosters and a nice, deep chicken hole, and I considered my initiation as a Kaiser student complete. Going into high school, I expected to be suffocating from an unceasing stream of homework, tests, and projects, which was thankfully not the case. What I didn't expect, however, was just how much I would grow and change.

Freshman year was one of new beginnings. I timidly endeavored to make friends at the start of every class and practice, soon concluding that people were not as scary as I made them out to be. By the end of the year, I beamed with pride at the signatures I got in my yearbook: most were from fellow freshmen, but some were from sophomores, juniors, and even seniors who I'd befriended.

A year later, I was no longer a high school novice, but I was still searching for my niche. Sophomore year was one of exploration: I discovered my inclination toward graphic design, reaffirmed my love for being active through sports, and developed new leadership and teamwork skills through video production.

Junior year was one of change: I had to find my own ways to keep healthy after resigning from sports, I started my two-year journey in IB CP, and my career prospects veered drastically from a creative field to a medical one. Participating in Kaiser's college-level classes required me to adapt my mindset and how I interacted with my teachers. Planning for college constantly coerced me out of my comfort zone—reaching out for help, asking questions, doing research. Then, there was the pandemic.

The world was catapulted into the unknown, compounding the general uncertainty I had regarding my post-high-school goals. Senior year quickly became one of choices. What am I doing next year? Is it even worthwhile to study? How do I stay motivated? Every day, I've been met with the choice between stagnation and persistence. Admittedly, it's a struggle to choose the latter, but I've learned how to persevere and resist slipping into apathy and hopelessness.

None of this, however, would be possible without Kaiser. Without its plethora of athletic and creative opportunities, I would've never unearthed my affinity for running, graphic design, and video production. Without its array of challenging academic programs, I would've never discovered my interest in physiology, or developed the grit I'll need, not only in college, but in life. Without its support and guidance systems, I'd be flailing in indecisiveness and confusion as to my post-high-school plans. Without the commitment of its teachers and staff, I'd be completely unmotivated and wallowing in self-pity at not having a "real" graduation.

My years at Kaiser have easily been the most transformative ones of my relatively short life. Thus, to me, Kaiser truly is exactly what a school should be: a place to learn.