Starting a new school in your 7th grade year is tough, not only do you have to get to know the school and the teachers, but you also have to get to know the people, and where you fit in. That is exactly what I went through, and unfortunately, I got off to a bad start. I was at an all-time low, depressed and in trouble all of the time. The announcement came that applications were being accepted for the FMS Robotics team. I had heard that it was an award winning team, and every year at our school people challenge and go against one another to fight for spots, there’s only room for 10 and at least 60 people try to get one of those spots. I had zero experience in robotics, didn’t think I’d even have a chance, but I had to do something better than the direction I was heading.

I was actually serving detention when the coach came to talk to me about my application. She told me that she was impressed with my writing and knowledge and she wanted me on her team, but it would have to be probationary because of my grades and detention status. That conversation was just the turning point I needed. The best part for me it was finding a group of friends that I actually fit into. I had so much potential that I wasn’t recognizing, and being a part of the VEX Robotics team made me understand this. It’s more than just building and programming, around these people you have shoulders to fall, on people to cheer you up and friendships that I hope will last a lifetime.

In our first year, I learned that I loved being a part of the team. It took dedication, ingenuity and spirit. We worked diligently, trying our hardest to get the highest ranks (against high school teams) to make it to the next level of competition. Finally, through TSA-VEX, we did just that! As a first year team with a first year coach, we made the TSA Nationals in Orlando, FL.

The success of the team only played a small part in my decision to remain on the team this year. It was the good times that we all experienced getting to that greatness. We have all shared so many laughs, and good times that it is very hard for me to picture myself in High School next year without these people surrounding me. Being on this team gives me self confidence that I use very day. It has opened my mind to so many career options I hadn’t previously thought of. It has put me on a better track both academically and socially. I don’t want to think about where I’d be if I hadn’t decided to fill out that application last fall.