**UBC Essay**

**"Tell us about who you are. How would your family, friends, and/or members of your community describe you? If possible, please include something about yourself that you are most proud of and why.” (250 Words)**

“Is she the same girl who never played with the other kids?” my classmates would whisper among themselves as I walked up to take my seat. I had two options, either to be where they are or to rise above them. While they were forced to present, I was asked to judge. From the girl who walked the school corridor with her head down to the girl juniors looked up to become, my teachers changed the way they saw me. Being known as a wallflower had its benefits, I could achieve in silence and let my success do the talking. Disappointment in me wasn’t an option to my parents anymore. I drew a blueprint and worked on it, I built myself with a strong enough foundation and a tough ground to stand on. Pride has always found its way to me when my work was noticed and appreciated. I always derived a satisfaction when I made others proud of me but it wasn’t till August 15th 2017 that I realised perhaps being proud of myself is the greatest satisfaction I’ll ever derive. It is not a secret that there are children out there who aren’t half as privileged as I am, so I participated in an Initiative called “5K Smiles” where a group of 5 students and I, set out to deliver McDonalds Happy Meals to 5000 orphans across Bangalore. The two months we spent collecting donations and collaborating with McDonalds was not only worth it but also received National Media coverage. On Independence Day, I truly understood the meaning of independence as I watched the kids take a bite of their burgers, some of them perhaps for the first time and at that moment I realised what being proud of myself finally felt like.

**What is important to you? And why? (maximum 250 words)**

On a hot summer day, under the glazing sun I grip my racket tight. I stroke my hand and relieve all my stress on the ball, as I win the point my mouth takes the shape of a smile. Tennis, a game that taught me to stand on my own. On a slightly cloudy day, I catch the ball as it hits my stomach. I return the favour by smashing it back to the other side, my teammates eagerly watch me as I build our adrenaline. Throwball, a sport that taught me teamwork. On a cold winter day, I pace across my school corridor. Co-ordinating with teachers and students, hand-in-hand we work to make the event (crisis management) a success. Leadership, a trait that built my confidence. I’ve always headed in the direction of the goals I have set for myself and on this road to success what’s most vital is that I take paths that make my parents proud. My parents have sacrificed a lot to lead me to the path I am taking today, and I strongly believe that it is my responsibility to give back to them. My parents have given me the freedom to pursue what I’m passionate about as long as I am determined and give in my 100%. Be it Tennis, Throwball, or even an event conducted by school, I always put in my best efforts to make sure that I’m following the “yellow brick road”. Nothing is more important to me than chasing my dreams while giving back to my parents my success that they dream of.

**Tell us more about ONE or TWO activities listed above that are most important to you. Please explain the role you played and what you learned in the process. You will be asked for a reference who can speak to your response. (maximum 350 words)**

From learning to hold a racket to breaking a few rackets, Tennis provoked a hidden passion. Losing a match never killed this passion, it only acted as a fuel to the fire. Losing only made me want to try more, to become better. I spent 7-8 years improving my game, participating in national tournaments and bagging till the quarter-finals and Semi-finals. Tennis is a challenging sport, it not only tested my stamina and sportsmanship, but also my ability to think fast. Representing the school team in inter-school and state level Throwball tournaments has always been a matter of pride. “Winning isn’t all, play your game well” my coach would say as we dusted sand off our hands, bringing home medals felt good but coming home empty handed only acted as a spur to hard work. Being out there on the field has always been a home away from home, where I could truly express myself, and to become friends with the sun - the hardest opponent of all. Sports taught me to be independent, but also making me realise that sometimes teamwork is vital. While sports challenged me to learn more, Crisis Management – an event conducted by the commerce department of my school changed the way I looked at myself. Drowning in work, yet I was asked to be the judge (Panel member) for the event. Spending days and sleepless nights on creating the “perfect” crisis paid off on the day of the event as not only was it challenging but it also brought out creativity of both, the participants and the judges. Concocting a crisis improved my critical thinking skills. Asking participants questions without second guessing myself helped me build my confidence and speaking on a stage in front of an audience not only helped me get over my stage fright but also enhanced my public speaking skills. Besides the improvement in the way others saw me, the event was the birth of an eloquent me. These activities were once the blueprint of the person I am today, they only helped build my resolve to work on myself and to discern that opportunities could sometimes be complete strangers knocking on my door.