**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)**

‘Check out Ms. Loner; always to herself’, sniggered my classmates as I walked up to take my seat in class. I couldn’t deal with mediocrity and had to rise above the rest. From an introvert who walked the school corridors unobtrusively, to the girl, juniors looked up to, my teachers had 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 gathered myself with traits of grit and resilience. Pride eventually found its way in me when my work got noticed and appreciated. I always derived satisfaction when I made others proud of me but it wasn’t till August 15th, 2017 that I realised, perhaps pride isn’t the greatest satisfaction after all. 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”. 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 sensed a spirit of contentment, 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 blistering hot summer day under the sun, I grip my racket tight. I stroke my hand and relieve all my stress on the ball, as I win the point a smile flashes over my face. Tennis - a game that taught me to stand on my own. On a slightly cloudy day, I juggle the ball off my stomach, as my teammates watch me, with an adrenalin rush, return the favour by smashing it back to the other side. Throw ball - a sport that taught me teamwork. On a cold winter day, I pace across my school corridor; co-ordinating with teachers and students, together we work to make the event (crisis management) a success. Leadership - a trait that built my confidence. I’ve always had this keen eye on success, carefully treading on paths that brought pride to my parents. They have sacrificed a lot to lead me to the path I am on 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 my 100%. Be it Tennis, Throw ball, or an event conducted at 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, Tennis infused a certain passion in me. Losing a match never killed this passion; it only got stronger. 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 tested my stamina and sportsmanship, and also my ability to think fast. Representing the school team in inter-school and state level Throw ball 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 work that much harder the next time. The field has always been a home away from home, where I could truly express myself, and become friends with the sun - the hardest opponent of all. Sports taught me to be independent, but also made 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 on the Panel for the event. Spending sleepless nights on creating the “perfect” crisis, paid off eventually 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 oratory 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; the ones that helped build my resolve to work on myself and to discern that opportunities could sometimes be complete strangers knocking on my door.