

Sample College Application Essay



There is something oddly wonderful about 7:00 AM on a Sunday morning. The highway I take is always abandoned at this early hour, and I like it best that way. I blare the radio and quickly roll down my windows a crack, even when the weather outside is frigid. With my car accelerating, Springsteen howling, and the wind whipping through the windows, my surroundings are hardly calming. Despite this lack of serenity, I am easily comforted. I am completely alone on the ride, and this brings me a moment of peace that I embrace wholeheartedly, knowing that soon I will be immersed in a more hectic environment.

Mrs. Reicheld is already waiting in her car as I pull into the parking lot. I wave to her and run to the doors, unlocking them for her as she follows me inside. She takes her usual stool at counter seat number one and I pour her a cup of decaf and hand her two creams. Her order is always the same, the quiche of the day with a side salad and blue cheese dressing. Apparently, salads are appetizing to some at 8:00 in the morning. I wait until the clock ticks to 8:01, and then put the order in to Mike, the head chef. He refuses to cook for customers until after 8:00, which is the time Captain Mardens is scheduled to officially open its doors on Sunday mornings. Mike is a young, fiery, and particularly vocal cook with a sarcastic personality and an avid love for the Red Sox. He keeps all of us on our toes. On my first day of training two years ago, he called me an incompetent idiot when I dropped a plate of eggs benedict on his foot. Fortunately for me, he got over this incident, and while he still tells me with a smirk that he merely tolerates me, his actions speak otherwise. After all, Mike doesn't make his delicious banana and chocolate chip waffles for just anyone.

No Sunday morning shift is complete without the frail, white haired gentleman who comes in at 9:30, on the dot. We affectionately call this older man Mr. Flannel, partly because of the red and black checked flannel jacket he never takes off, but mainly because we do not know his real name. After so many years, it does not matter what Mr. Flannel's real name is: he's still part of the family and the day would not be complete without one of his visits. Every Sunday he waits patiently for his usual stool at counter seat six. Unfortunately for anyone already sitting there, Mr. Flannel does not wait in the designated bench section; he waits right next to the person dining in his beloved seat. Of course, he never has to wait very long. When he is actually seated, he slips a joke on a scrap of paper to all the waiters who stop by Mr. Flannel's chair. Needless to say, Mike the chef and Mr. Flannel get along famously.

I have found it increasingly difficult to explain to my friends what exactly draws me out of bed at 6:00 AM every Sunday morning. Even my closest friends simply smile to humor me, and then shake their heads doubtfully. Yes, my job is a great way to make money. No, that is not why I return day after day. Work for me is a haven. It's a place where I can succeed simply by making people happy. I love the hectic atmosphere, the screaming infants, and even the smell of that terrible coffee we serve. By accepting the chaos in that wonderful little restaurant, I let myself live a little, something that is easy to forget how to do when immersed in a high stress environment such as high school.

The truth is, work is about becoming a part of something. It is watching a customer smile and feeling satisfaction knowing you put it there. It is cheering people up and making someone's day or seeing a child grow delirious with happiness when you spray more and more whip cream on top of their waffle. Customers become a part of my life, and I am a part of theirs. They know when I've been out late, if I've gotten a bad grade, and unfortunately, whether I have a boyfriend or not. While this may seem like intrusive behavior to some, I find it comforting. I go to work and I hear stories, I relive memories, look at pictures, and meet grandchildren. Not only is there a support system there for me, but also there is a sense of belonging. This feeling of connectedness in an unlikely setting is one that I will strive to preserve for as long as possible, and if that means waking up a few hours earlier on a Sunday, then so be it. I encourage you to visit me any Sunday morning at Captain Mardens Restaurant and catch a glimpse of the colorful, but loving characters that come in and out. I suggest not taking counter seat six if you plan on staying a while. You also might want to try the banana and chocolate chip waffles; they come highly recommended.