



giving back

Trinity Walker

College Freshman



Trinity Walker is a senior in high school this year, looking forward to attending college next year to study subjects that will support her goal of becoming a physician's assistant in the public health field. She started attending the GEMS Camp in the summer before 7th grade. Her mother found out about the GEMS Camp from a flier at their local library. Trinity's mother, a one-time math teacher and now counselor, encourages Trinity and her sister, Gabrielle, to take advantage of opportunities to learn. Trinity has always been interested in science and knew something about engineering before the camp because her cousin and his wife are both engineers. She was able to improve her science and math skills at the GEMS Camp and to learn more about the particular areas that interest her. Having people come in and talk about their careers has helped her think about her own path.

For the last two years, Trinity has been a mentor to younger girls at the GEMS Camp. She has learned much about herself through the leadership training. Trinity has gained valuable skills for working more effectively with others. She has learned that others come to a group with different ideas and skills and that everyone processes things differently. Working with other mentors to make decisions has helped her to be more flexible and to tackle problems more effectively as part of a team.

Much of Trinity's GEMS learning has carried over to her school year. She has improved her discipline since the GEMS Camp activities move really fast. Assignments are due the next day and you have to find time to complete them AND work on your team project. It has helped with her ability to get work done in school and is good preparation for college. Trinity has learned to have high expectations for herself, mainly due to the influence of Ms. Saki. She is more open to taking rigorous courses

because she knows she just has to put the time and effort into it and she can do it. Trinity learned that she worked better under pressure than she thought she would. She usually likes to have things planned out, but she was able to figure things out when she needed to. A personality trait assessment helped her to understand the why behind the things she does and how she can interact with others of different personality types.



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GEMS has helped her be more comfortable asking questions in the classroom. In her physics class, having that mindset has been great, being able to ask about and understand why things are the way they are. The problem-solving skills she learned at GEMS were very helpful too. At first, she noticed some of the boys seemed to know the answers right off the bat. Over time, she let her interest in physics drive her efforts. She realized her classmates were not rivals but part of a team who could help each other. She was able to ask her peers how they got to an answer or to explain to her what the teacher was saying. One of the GEMS exercises that taught about the psychological effects on performance helped her to see that any doubts about her abilities could be overcome.

During a trip to Dubai in summer 2019, Trinity learned about the history and architecture of the city. She and her fellow GEMS travelers also heard from women with careers in STEM, including an OB/GYN who further sparked her interest in healthcare. They visited the sites, including the Expo 2020 site where they saw different inventions from around the world. She saw so many things she had not even thought possible. They went to the Dubai mall, visited the Burj Khalifa, and tried many different foods for the first time. It was a very immersive experience and even though she was in a group setting, it tested her individual capabilities. She had to be at specific places on time and needed to be cognizant and respectful of the local customs. Prior to this trip, she had only been to California and places near her home in Dallas. The trip was very transformative. Now that she has experienced travel, she definitely wants to do more and learn about other places.

Among Trinity's service learning projects was one that involved going to a retirement home and helping the residents learn more about technology, like how to use SKYPE and how to check their e-mail. She thought it was fun to bridge the age gap. Her favorite service learning project, though, was hosting a STEM fair at the local library. The mentors did much to set it up, but every grade was involved in the fair. Trinity enjoyed seeing the young children from the community participate in the fair activities. Knowing that she was giving back by sharing one of her passions was fulfilling and a good preview of how she can share her gifts in the future.



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One of Trinity's good friends at GEMS Camp is Kennedy. They were in the same school but didn't really know each other well before GEMS Camp. Trinity got to know Kennedy in a new light, they did everything together and got to see each other grow. They also had a good relationship with the girls in the grade above them. The older girls really helped them out by giving advice and guiding them.

Trinity has become very attached to the girls she mentored. At first, it was hard to work with them but once she was able to get them to all work together, everything fell into place. Her group's presentation ended up being judged as the best one that summer. Trinity was very emotional seeing them present, especially the ones who were shy. Two of "her girls" even won awards at the GEMS graduation ceremony, it was an emotional time for her. She enjoyed seeing them grow over the two weeks of camp.

Commenting on the family feeling the GEMS Camp provides, Trinity says that Ms. Saki reminds her of her mom. The GEMS Camp founder knows every camper well, enabling her to recommend plausible paths to pursue their life goals. She knows what they are capable of and she holds them to that, while she is very loving and caring. Everyone at GEMS Camp is intentional about forming relationships with the campers. Trinity was close to every mentor she had and it felt like family to her. GEMS Camp is not just about learning, it is about belonging.

My favorite service learning project was when we hosted the STEM fair at the local library. You got to see kids and how interested they were. I was surprised at how engaged they were with all the activities and how little kids didn't want to go to the slime exhibit but they wanted to learn more about coding. Some of my little cousins attended so it was fun to see your worlds come together. That was my favorite service learning project because we got to interact with the community. It felt like I was putting something I was really interested in into practice.



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One of the biggest things is what we learned in leadership activities. It helped me to see the other perspectives of my peers and how differently we process things. You have a problem and you have to work with your team to find a solution. One girl might think about something completely different than I have ever thought to address it. It helped me to learn different ways to see the world but also how to accept everyone's perspective and just work with it.

I always knew I wanted to be in science and that I wanted to work with people directly. When I was younger though, I never wanted to be a doctor. But when we went to the UAE, I met an OB/GYN. She talked to us about her work day and all the people she gets to interact with and I thought, "that is what I have been looking for this whole time." That's what got me interested in becoming a doctor specifically. Miss Ivette, who works with the GEMS Camp, is a registered nurse. She's talked about what she does. That's what inspired me to go into healthcare because I can be around people and not have it be less hands on. Right now, I want to be a physician's assistant.