

ESSAY

"Excel" is a camp that I will never forget. It is a basketball camp which not only teaches athletic skills, but it teaches skills in excelling in life. The camp influenced my life by reaffirming my values.

The camp's name came from the director's philosophy, "Anyone can be average or good, but it takes someone special to excel." This idea helped me realize that to excel you have to put forth a lot of time and effort in an area. I learned that it is important to set realistic goals and strive to achieve them. A goal I set was starting on the varsity basketball team as a sophomore. At the end of my freshman year I realized that I had a good chance of doing so, but I knew I had to work hard in the off season. During the summer I went to the basketball courts just about everyday to work on my skills. Some days the temperature reached in the 90's, but I knew that if I was to start on the varsity team I had to pay the price.

At camp everyone learned how to improve his basketball skills, but a meaningful part of camp was listening to the different coaches give lectures not only about basketball, but also about how to be a good person, how to become a better person, and how to succeed in life as an individual. My first summer at "Excel" I was 12 years old, and at that age some of my peers' attitudes changed. Many altered their values and gave into peer pressure. I decided not to follow them, and as a result I was not in the majority group. The coaches' talks helped me to realize that I was doing the right thing.

As a result of listening and incorporating the ideas of the "Excel Camp" for the past five summers, I believe I have been able to set a good example as a student-athlete at New Providence High School. I have attained good leadership qualities both on and off the court. As I was growing up I looked up to a couple of athletes, but could not say I actually respected them as students or individuals. Now younger athletes look up to me. With this in mind, I try to set a good example, and hopefully, they will respect me as an athlete, a student and an individual.