



All Because of You
By: Genevieve Gray

My heart is beating erratically. My breath becomes uneven as I sprint to hit the ball. "Get your hips set!" Mrs. Skeen shouts as my ball ricochets off my hands and hits the ceiling. I sigh and roll my eyes dramatically as I run to the back of the line. I am in sixth grade right now, and I have no idea how much this person throwing volleyballs at me would change my life. In the three years that I have known and played for Mrs. Skeen, she has taught me what discipline, team work, and good character mean, and it has made a difference in my life.

It is sixth grade still and I am working as hard as my little body can. It is the 2008 volleyball season and Mrs. Skeen is my coach. Every day she makes us run laps to the pines. This confuses me. Why do we have to run a mile if the most we run in volleyball is ten feet? The reason was to teach us discipline. Even though we do not run that much in the actual sport of volleyball, we needed to learn how to obey and respect others' orders. It is true that volleyball is only a sport, but this particular skill we learned there is one we can use throughout our entire life. Now, as I am in eighth grade, I know what it means to be disciplined. Mrs. Skeen showed me this in the three years I played for her, and it truly changed my life. I have taken this wisdom and applied it to life outside of volleyball. When a teacher tells me to do something, I am quicker to respond and I am more focused on the project. If I get in trouble, I am more cordial about the punishment, because I know that is what it means to be disciplined.

The second reason Mrs. Skeen has changed my life is that she taught me what team work means. I thought it meant to show up to practice and play. Mrs. Skeen really whipped me into shape with this one! We had to act like a family. She told us everyone had to love each other and work together. This was really hard at first, but then we made some extremely strong bonds. We started to work together and use each others' strengths. We paid more attention to our teammates, realizing that some could not do certain things that others could, and some were remarkably good at doing specific jobs. Once we all figured out our specific responsibilities, we started functioning more efficiently. This knowledge about what it means to work as a unit can unquestionably be used in later life. In any potential job, family, or class that we have, we can use this intelligence. Moreover, we can use this with people we might not interact with for a long time. Even if we do not develop a permanent relationship, we should still be as friendly as possible, and we should accept them into our group. This lesson that Mrs. Skeen has taught me will stay with me forever, and I know it will affect my life here after.

Having a good character is another thing that Mrs. Skeen has taught me is an important asset. No one likes a stuck up person. Some people are naturally more talented than others, but it is best to be modest. Even if you are not the best person on the team, do not look down on yourself. These are important things Mrs. Skeen has taught me during my time as her volleyball player and gym student. Having a good character is important in volleyball and in life. The West View Lady Indian 2010 volleyball team was undefeated, 21-0. But we were not boastful about it. In fact, at the finals, we gave the other team their trophy,

cheering their team on. Though we were thrilled we won, we were still happy for the other team's victory. Mrs. Skeen's lesson regarding good character is relevant to all situations. If we expect to get and keep a job, we need to have a good character and be able to handle promotions, pay losses, job cuts, and unfair treatment with grace. I know I will take and keep this with me for the rest of my life, and I will use it. I realize that I do not constantly have the greatest character, but I know I will apply this to the rest of my school career and into my adult life.

It is eighth grade and I am at the 2010 volleyball banquet. Mrs. Skeen is in the front of the cafeteria almost in tears as she tells our families how much we love each other and how much she loves us. It is a bitter sweet moment as she hands me my plaque and gives me one last hug as my volleyball coach. Discipline, team work, and good character all make good volleyball players. They also make us good people. Because Mrs. Skeen has taught me this, she has made a difference in my life. With her I have learned more about myself and what I can do. She has really made a difference in what I believe and in how I approach things. She has been a wonderful coach, gym teacher, and mentor, and I owe her the world for being there for me. Though the going was tough, she helped me through it, giving me advice the whole way. My life has completely changed because of Mrs. Skeen, and I am glad it did. Thank you, Mrs. Skeen. This was all because of you.



West View Assistant Principal Scott Bolton, Competition winners Aleia Williams and Genevieve Gray, Utrust Administrator Dan Tollett, Coach Rebecca Skeen and English teacher Rolanda Ryans