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When I was living in Woodstock, NH, I went to Lin-Wood High School. As I went through middle school and high school, I never seemed to try new things like sports or community-service groups. There was this one teacher, who was also our guidance counselor. He noticed me in the gym playing basketball one time and came over to teach me how to dribble without looking down at the ball, and also how to shoot properly. Turns out, he was also the girls' basketball coach (Coach). He asked if I wanted to join, and I did, but I was super nervous. First practice came and it was hard because every time I didn't understand something, we stopped and went through it until I got it. After practice, I stayed a little longer and Coach showed me how to do layups and other drills. After that, when we played games, I was on defense. When the season was over, I tried out for every sport and Coach was always there to teach me how to play.

Around the same time, a group of girls that I was friends with asked if I wanted to join Interact Club. It's a community-service organization where we go out and do community-service projects. They told me about all the fun things they did, like traveling to the Dominican Republic and other places. I was so excited! We went on hikes to clean the trails, did food drives, set up stands for 5ks and Halloween parties, and after we had saved enough money, we would go on trips. Then I was asked if I wanted to join this other older girl at RYLA, which is this thing where they take kids from Interact Clubs or other community-service groups and bring them to a college for the weekend to show them the value of helping others. I didn't want to go at first, but for some reason the chief of police at the time (he's retired now) really wanted me to go. He even pulled my mom over twice just to give her the paperwork on it. I think it was because he's helped us out with the community projects so much, he thought it would be a good experience for me. I did end up going and I had a blast, and made so many new friends. After a year went by, I gave two public speeches about it, and talked about how it changed me in a positive way, and about the true meaning of community service. If it hadn't been for the girls at school and for Coach, I don't think I would have become the fun, exciting, adventurous person that I am today.