

McKenzie Elim

I believe that there is nothing more valuable than an education and a desire to learn. Too often, children and adults believe learning and fun are two separate entities. I admire the mission of the Children's Museum of Richmond because it encourages children to learn while having fun, innovative experiences. I adopt this mission in my own life by demonstrating creative problem solving every time I teach a lesson or tutor someone. In order to create an interesting lesson and establish an engaging environment, I must be aware of the interests and personalities of my students. I must then incorporate what captures their attention into my lesson, so the information is not only heard but is also committed to memory. If I am helping a visual learner, we will create a study guide, and I'll instruct them on how they can use their strengths to picture where the information is on the sheet and, therefore, recall the information when necessary. Furthermore, if I am helping my third graders, I have discovered that it is very effective to weave the information into an amusing story that involves them. In addition, I love learning languages, but often times, I do not know the exact word that I would like to use in that situation. As a result, I have to creatively problem solve with circumlocution, which involves using the words I do know to describe the word which I do not, or even charades in order to communicate my message.

I strongly believe that if service is below you, then leadership is beyond you. A leader must be willing to do everything she asks of her followers, and she must always look to put the needs of others before her own. In addition, a leader must be respectful of her followers and other bystanders in order to gain their respect. She must be open-minded and willing to listen to others' ideas. Furthermore, a leader must be courageous and willing to take risks in order to challenge the system and create a better result for underrepresented individuals. A leader stretches herself beyond her comfort zone in order to inspire others. Above all, a leader must exhibit an unwavering commitment to her goal and her followers. I believe I possess all of these qualities - service, respect, courage, and commitment - and I believe I am a leader in every activity in which I participate, whether I am directing and organizing volunteer events within the Specialty Center or simply leading by example by showing up and putting forth full effort on the field, in the classroom, or in the community. In particular, I believe I assume my greatest leadership role every time I step on the football field. Playing football is a constant challenge because I am always extending myself outside of my comfort zone. However, I know that my courage to play inspires countless individuals, particularly women and girls, and provides them with the courage needed to pursue their own dreams.