When I first joined the Key Society, a group of juniors and seniors who represent BC through tours and events, I had to answer two simple questions. The answers would go on the back of a "business card" that I would hand out to prospective families.

1) What are my favorite activities that I've been a part of at BC?
2) My BC is [pause]? (blank)

So, question one: my favorite BC activities. Seems pretty simple, but I found it **almost impossible.** When looking back at my high school experience alone, I saw an **endless** number of options to choose from.

Firstly, I have always been a math person. One of my proudest moments of my entire life was being the first in my 4th grade class to learn long division. I know, pretty life changing stuff. So, when it came to choosing my STEM classes, I **needed** to make the right choices. My standards were high, and they were **not only met, but exceeded**. Differential Equations and Advanced Chem II were especially highlights for me because although they are **extremely** challenging, overcoming the hurdles of dimensional analysis and partial fraction decomposition are rewarding in the same way that long division was. I was able to consistently improve in something that **I loved**, and learning new topics was not only **hard, but also exciting**.

As I have continued to foster my love of science, I took advantage of pursuing an independent study, a personalized and application based class for one. Independent Studies are available to all juniors and seniors with a specific interest they would like to learn more about, and mine started as a random idea in the library. "What if I did an independent study about neuroscience, but not?" Over time, with the help of Ms. Marriot and my study advisor Dr. Triplett, that very vague, honestly bad question, developed into something like this: How does a neuropsychological understanding of a neurodivergent brain allow neurotypical people to better

understand the life experience of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder? I developed this course, the Neuropsychology of Autism, to dive into my own interest in physiological brain function and social perception of neurodivergent people. Through just one quarter, I've already learned so much about typical brain function, which has prepared me to hopefully become a neuroscience major in college.

But being in high school is about **so much more** than taking your favorite classes, it's also about challenging yourself to expand your world view. For me, that has been anything humanities. In 10th grade, I used the opportunity to choose humanities electives to expand my knowledge on **my culture**. I absolutely loved taking classes like 20th Century Black Literary Aesthetics, Africa and the West, and Cultures of the Caribbean, which helped me better understand my racial identity within the larger context of global history. This year however, I wanted to learn about life experiences **completely different from my own**, by taking classes like History and Literature of the American West, and Asian American Studies. Through these, I have been able to make connections between an even wider variety of human experience. And this spring, I'm lucky enough to be traveling to Vietnam as an extension of my Asian American Studies class, an opportunity to travel to Asia that I might have **never had at this age without BC.**

Ultimately, what I love about learning at BC is that it doesn't look like just one thing. It can be expanding on aspects of my own identity, or growing my knowledge of completely new perspectives.

Honestly, I'm not quite sure how I only picked **just** a few subjects for my business card, **but** I somehow made it work. I landed on the classes I am the most excited to show up for **everyday**, and those are Math, Chemistry, Orchestra, and Chamber.

Next, question number two: what is **my** BC? I played around with **a lot** of different ideas, but what I always came back to was **the people**. Maybe a little cliche, but also the thing that's **never** changed.

I started BC in September of 2020, and a global pandemic is definitely an atypical way to start a new school. All of the people that I met were on a zoom screen: **11 students, and 2 teachers.** And for a previously anti-social child, this was honestly **perfect** for me. Middle school me was **absolutely convinced** that the **worst** part of school was speaking to other people. But, I am glad to report that the small class, affectionately referred to as a "pod" brought me out of my shell in ways I wouldn't have expected. Everyone in my pod made an effort to get to know me in and out of the classroom, by making class group chats and having Among Us facetime calls. Some of my strongest friendships that **I still have today** were formed in that very class, and every other **student and teacher** I've met since is an **extension** of the kindness that I was given as a new student.

A space that felt so new and confusing became **warm, secure, and safe**, **so safe in fact** that I was able to try new things, like joining Key Society. This **definitely** assisted in my transformation from **shy to slightly more social**. Something else that I was able to try is an **entirely new** instrument. In 5th grade, before starting BC, I learned how to play the flute. I also learned that it was **definitely not for me**. So, when deciding how I might want to fulfill my instrumental music requirement, thinking about being behind my peers who started a year prior, my top 3 instrument choices were as different as possible from the flute: all strings. And when I received my viola (the less cool version of a violin) I absolutely **fell in love** with it. To learn something brand new at an accelerated rate on zoom was **no easy feat**, but Ms. Mollica was

there every step of the way. She taught me how to hold my viola, how to pluck a string, how to use a bow, **all without** being directly in front of me.

I look forward to orchestra and chamber so much every day that I **hardly consider them typical school classes** -- in spite of the fact that they teach me so much about leadership, communication, discipline, and practice. What I look forward to the most is being with the members of the orchestra that I've ultimately grown up alongside, and that quality time during rehearsals or pre concert hangouts will be something I will truly miss.

And this holds true for all of my BC classes that I've taken. What will make my high school experience so special looking back will be **the people and memories I will carry with me**, something I've been thinking about as a senior. I am getting ready to leave a place that has watched me evolve and prepared me to succeed no matter where I may end up next.

Here's what my business card ultimately reads: "BC is like a second home to me. I feel consistently supported **not only** by my close friends and peers, but also by the teachers and faculty each day. This was especially true when I first joined during COVID, as I was able to connect with new friends and classmates months before ever meeting them in person. Those connections from middle school have remained strong, and the people I've found here are some of the most supportive that I know. I can always count on feeling secure in any BC space. **My BC is … safe**."