Something that is very meaningful to me is politics and the importance of being politically aware. Political activism peaked my interest in the 8th grade with the 2012 election. In fact, it got me thinking that I might want to be the President of the United States one day. I found a candidate that I could get behind in Mitt Romney and I supported most his ideas on how to change the direction of the country. When he lost to President Obama, I was disappointed, but realized that I need to get involved if I ever wanted to see real economic change in our country. Today, many of my family members and friends come to me in search of political advice and ask my opinion on how they should vote on certain propositions and political offices.

One of the first things I did as a freshman in high school was create a club called Valhalla’s Young Republicans. This was an opportunity to share ideas and help others develop political opinions. I considered the club a success because there has been good political debate, even if others think differently than me. Many seniors at my school joined my club to hear what I had to say about politics and that created a solid membership base. I have continued the club for the rest of high school, achieving my goal of getting people to think about politics.

Throughout high school, I found myself being bullied by kids that I thought were my friends because of my political beliefs. I was known as the Republican kid or Mr. President. They called me these things to patronize me, giving me a hard time for believing in something that may have seemed very adult to them and hard to relate to. My beliefs have even been attacked based on how the media portrays the Republican Party. People who believed that stereotype treated me harshly even though I was nothing like it. Everyone assumed that I was closed-minded without even having a real conversation with me over politics to find out what I actually believed in. Most were too busy attacking and condemning my beliefs before even finding out why I feel the way I do.

Things got a lot better for when I became an intern for a California State Senator Joel Anderson. In Senator Anderson’s state office, we focussed on community outreach. I helped write some of the senate certificates of recognition that were given to people who had done exemplary work in the community. I also had the opportunity to write a press release for a bill that the senator had brought forth to the senate floor. These opportunities really helped to open my eyes to the importance of community outreach as a key aspect of political office. Still there was so much more I wanted to learn about the election process and running for office. I also volunteered on Senator Anderson’s re-election campaign. In this capacity, I mapped out the areas to target during our community walks to encourage people to vote for Senator Anderson. I also helped put up campaign signs and assisted with other tasks around the office. The Senator won re-election by a very large margin--and I was proud of be part of the team. Now, the Senator is running for County Supervisor, so I have jumped at the opportunity to work in his campaign office.

I have discovered the value of politics is sharing a vision and taking action to make it happen. I look forward to more opportunities to get involved.