



# Bailey Allen

## RSPA Scholarship Program Application Essay

“The Climb” by Miley Cyrus is a fairly exact depiction of how I feel regarding struggles in my life. Struggles in life are inexorable, at each stage one passes, there will be different obstacles, and all you need to do to overcome such struggles is approach them with the right mindset. To achieve a healthy mindset, one must accept the fate of facing conflict in their life. It’s so important to learn from and overcome arduous struggles in life. I don’t want someday be one of those people who lets all the negativity in the world, and in my life bring me to be bitter. It is a hard task, however, in this world where every day on the news there are new stories on shootings, storms, or just tragic accidents; you need something that gives you light. I like to go on hikes as a way to feel happy.

I began hiking amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Mount Beacon Overlook Trail was supposed to be a path that beginners should complete with little difficulty. To say that I was out of shape is a vast understatement. Going up that mountain wasn't fun, I was out of breath, and had nearly finished all my water before I even reached the top. I bear in mind my desire to turn around and just go home. I did not think I could make it to the top, however; I was with my mother, and I did not want to disappoint her. After an abundance of internal complaining we in the end made it to the top, it was there that I recognized the true beauty of the Hudson Valley. The hike then seemed entirely worth the endeavor. Soon I began seeing the hike as a pivotal challenge that I ought to overcome.

Time and again, I would hike Mount Beacon. I would hike it until I could go all four miles to the water tower without being out of breath. The lure of hiking up that mountain wasn’t simply the view at the top, but the hike itself. It felt exhilarating to push myself, the climb was a challenge, however, it was also gratifying. Being surrounded by nature with the solitary sounds being birds and random critters jostling about the forest gave a sense of tranquility. My continued hiking made me realize that most precise matters require focused work, and if you approach that work in the right mindset, work may become less strenuous. I learned to revel in the struggle of getting to the final destination, both on my hikes, and in my day-to-day challenges however I still had to look further, I still had to climb down.

Life and hiking have plenty in common. Life requires you to put extraordinary work into it to reap positive results. Struggles, setbacks, and afflictions are always going to be part of life, but as long as you persevere you will get through it all. My favorite hike was part of the Appalachian Trail. It was 10 miles long, and the trail trekked over some huge, ragged rocks. The trail wasn't always the most clearly marked either. Despite all this I continued forward and pushed to the end. The journey was beautiful and exhilarating. The Appalachian trail taught me that just because something is new and arduous does not mean that it is vexatious. Just because it is difficult does not mean you should abandon its premise. Hiking is my escape to a happier place, and the principles I find in it are the same I apply to my overall life.