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ELA

Mrs. Little

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### What CELA Means to Me

Before I came to CELA, I was not a strong leader. I was scared to public speak and was not doing well academically. When I toured CELA everyone welcomed me with open arms, and it felt like family. In fact, I noticed all the kids hugging the teachers at the door during morning drop off. During my tour of the classrooms I noticed all the fun and complex things they were learning, and I wanted to learn that too. The choice was easy, I was going to transfer to CELA in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. As you know, CELA prides itself on three pillars: academic excellence, strong leadership development and comprehensive Christian values. These three pillars have been the basis of my education in middle school and shaped me into the person I am today.

CELA's teachers have the highest expectations of any teachers I have ever had. They are also the most caring teachers too. They care about you as a person and about your academics. They are always willing to help whether it is before or after school. One of the hardest teachers I have ever had, pushed me the farthest, held me to the highest standards and always expected excellence from everyone, is Mr. Hays. I would like to say thank you for continuously pushing me to be better over the last three years, believing in me and helping me to achieve my goals. Mr. Hays teaches social studies at CELA, but he would take off points for misspelled words and poor grammar in his essays, on tests or homework. It did not take long to realize that Mr. Hays expects excellence, and I would always need to be on my "A" game if I wanted to be successful in his class. I knew I was on the right path when I received "mastery" and a "good job!" written across the top of my first social studies test. Thank you for making social

studies interesting, having stories to help us remember the facts or to help us see the cause and effects for certain things that happened. I know I will be well prepared for Catholic Memorial High School because all the teachers at CELA have pushed me to be my best. I recently took a placement test for CMH and placed into the accelerated core classes! The CELA teachers have taught me things I never thought I could comprehend and believed in me when I needed it the most. For this I thank you all.

At CELA we have Christian Values and Leadership Development class (CVLD). One week we have a student led chapel and the next week we have a teacher led chapel. We discuss and present a new Christian value every two weeks. At chapel you sit with your chapel families and chapel buddy. Having a chapel buddy is one of my favorite parts of CVLD. As Chapel buddies we have a chance to be leaders to younger kids in the school by leading them in prayer on announcements and doing service projects with them. This year, I was assigned to my first 3k chapel buddy Matthew. I really enjoyed my time with him and will miss him next year. Over the last three years my faith in God has become stronger, I have learned more about the Bible and heard new Bible stories. My most impactful CVLD was my very first CVLD lesson, when we were learning about growing in faith. We made a little necklace that had a tiny little mustard seed in it. The mustard seed was to represent faith as small as a mustard seed will grow and can move mountains. This has stuck with me the last three years which has helped me grow in my faith and I hope to move mountains when I leave CELA. (Here is my mustard seed necklace we made on my first CVLD at CELA.)

We are a leadership academy, so this means that we are given opportunities to be leaders in school. When my family came to the school cookout before the first day of school for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we met Mr. and Mrs. Nahey. I will never forget what Mr. Nahey, said to my parents, "every child is a leader, it's up to their institution to bring that out of them." He continued to talk about classes offered at CELA like public speaking, leadership class, morning and afternoon announcements and leading of prayer during lunch. Listening to him speak, I never thought I would be confident enough to do this all. Well, I am here

today to tell you, that I am confident in my public speaking, and I will volunteer to help fill in for prayer or announcements when my friends are not able to. If you would have told my 6<sup>th</sup> grade self, that my 8<sup>th</sup> grade self was doing this, I would not believe it. Again, I must thank the amazing teachers for giving me the tools to use to become the leader I am today.

When I was asked what does CELA mean to me, I thought of many examples of how I was pushed to be my best even when I thought I couldn't be pushed further. Unfortunately, I could not share them all. However, I hope you were able to see how much CELA means to me. I look back on the last three years and wish I had started here when CELA opened, but so thankful for the opportunity to be here for the last three years. I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Nahey for their vision of CELA. If it wasn't for that, this beautiful and amazing school would not be here today. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for their support, encouragement, late night study sessions and allowing me the opportunity to attend CELA. Middle school has been very challenging but very rewarding. I have made some amazing friends that I know I will be friends with for life. I am sad to leave, but excited to show the world that I am ready to move mountains with faith, leadership and my academic excellence. Thank you.

