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THAT ONE TIME

I OVERCAME STRUGGLING WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY TO FIND SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

“ I THINK MY FRIENDS DO HAVE TO WORK JUST AS HARD, JUST IN DIFFERENT WAYS. I DON'T BELIEVE LEARNING IS EASY FOR ANYBODY.”

- RUBY SECREST (10)

IVY: When did you learn that you had dyslexia?

RUBY: The last week of 8th grade.

IVY: What was it like not knowing you had a learning disability like dyslexia in middle school?

RUBY: I already knew I was struggling differently than the other kids in my class. Especially when I compared myself to my best friends. The hard part was that I didn't get any extra help with it other than a tutor that the school had. I didn't get any help on tests, as I do now. The teachers didn't help me like they do now. They would treat me like any other student, even though I wasn't. If I did ask for the extra help they would act like I was stupid, which really bothered me. Most things that were difficult in school for other students were really easy for me and the things that were easy for others was difficult for me.

IVY: What were your coping mechanisms in middle school to work with your struggles?

RUBY: I worked really hard and it would take me hours so a lot of the times I would stop putting in the effort. I'm a perfectionist and so when I turn something in I want it to be perfect no matter how long it takes me. I didn't really have any coping mechanisms.

IVY: What were some of the biggest challenges for you in middle school?

RUBY: I was one of the last kids to learn how to read and so when I would read out loud I would count ahead pages so I could read my page ahead of time.

IVY: So what was it like transitioning from that to a unsupportive system in middle school to a more

more supportive high school?

RUBY: At first when I met with my IEP counselor I thought I didn't need any help. Once I started using the help I understood what I was doing, which I had never really experienced before.

IVY: Does it frustrate you to know your friends don't have to work as hard?

RUBY: I think my friends do have to work as hard, just in different ways. I don't believe learning is easy for anyone. I have friends who find science really easy which I don't, but they struggle with history which I understand. Of course, there's a jealousy factor, but I don't really mind it too much. I'm getting the help I need.

IVY: Has your experience with dyslexia changed your perspective of yourself?

RUBY: I don't know. It changes the way I think about school but not the way I see myself. My learning disability and myself are very different things.

IVY: Recently you lettered in academics. What emotions did you feel?

RUBY: I wouldn't say that I felt like I had accomplished anything, but that felt significant. For once it was easy for me to get there. For once it wasn't difficult. For once I wasn't crying over homework. It felt simple, and it wasn't as hard as it would be a year ago.

IVY: Is there anyone that inspires you to try harder?

RUBY: Well, my big sister. When I found out that I had dyslexia, I would get really frustrated about homework. She would come in and tell me, "Okay, what don't you get? How can I help you?" She makes me want to accomplish great things.

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