

### What Running Means to Me

For the past four years, my life has been based around track and more importantly running. Prior to high school, I didn't think of running as a sport, just as a punishment for not performing well in basketball and baseball. I decided to sign up for cross country at the end of eighth grade simply because my friends were signing up and told me to join; I didn't have a clue what this sport actually entailed. I quickly found out in the blazing days of August that in fact cross country was the most difficult sport that I have ever participated in. In the 90 degree humid days of the summer, we had to run 3 grueling miles that consisted of pounding the pavement and usually involved dehydration, ending with me walking when coach couldn't see. No other sport has ever drained me like cross country did, but I liked this feeling. It made me feel accomplished, like I was working hard to get in shape. So, when all my friends ended up quitting in the beginning of the season, I decided to stick with it, and I started becoming pretty good at it, as I got on varsity in indoor track of my freshman year.

I look back at it now and can easily say that deciding to sign up for cross country has been the best decision I could have made during high school. I currently am infatuated with running, rarely ever taking a day off. Running provided me with lifelong bonds that will extend into college even though me and my friends are choosing different paths. Running has allowed me to be in the best shape I can be. Running has brought out a fierce competitiveness that I would have never thought I could have had being extremely shy most of the time. I live for trips to Maudslay State Park for the 15 milers. I feel the most comfortable running than at any other time, as I can release all my stress that builds up during the rigorous school day. Running will always remain a part of my life, and I can't wait to run cross country for Syracuse University next fall.