

**A. Describe how your personal goals, challenges, or commitments exemplify or have been inspired by Michael Rothberg's legacy.**

I would first like to share with you a poem which I wrote about myself.

“Harmony of Me”

Oh, Bernstein, embrace your orchestra with exploding passion.  
I open my mouth in praise and absolute joy, a tingle of electric charge,  
which starts in my feet and reaches my mind.

And not only you, but Martin Luther King calling upon humanity to unite in  
a "symphony of brotherhood,"

And my heart responds to both of you with the affirmation that what you  
speak of is the real thing.

Only being real, sharing my true emotions and realizing these emotions, can  
I flourish. My feeling of awe and amazement of what my oppressed people,  
the Jewish People have accomplished, fills me with a sense of survival and  
pride

A will to enjoy all life has to offer because others died for this and six  
million never received these opportunities.

I am a cat staring outside the window at a falling leaf.

People think I am crazy, but this falling leaf represents an entire season, a  
change, I can feel it coming.

My favorite chords on the piano make me feel so many different emotions I  
cannot explain- connections I do not even understand.

I think about people in far away places and yearn to travel and learn.

I am on the path in Israel through the trees, leading somewhere in brightness,  
I cannot see where.

As a proud American, I am born with a natural passport which I use to visit  
history and other countries.

I am free and it is my obligation to people who worked hard for my rights  
that I use them, Because Yes I Can.

In this poem, I express my optimism for the future and for change, and feeling that I want to and will make a difference. Michael believed in social justice and he always believed in a cause. I find that my actions are driven by causes. I love the thrill of having a goal that is not for myself but for others. In fact, I am driven so much more in this way because I know that the others will be affected and that they deserve to have the rights and opportunities that I have.

I also mention that I have a will to enjoy life because six million never received these opportunities. That size million was referring to the Holocaust, but it really can apply to any life that ended too soon. It might sound like a paradox, but with people like Michael who die at such a young age, I am inspired to live life the way I want to, doing the things that may seem impossible at first.

I am constantly aware and influenced by the fact that no right or privilege or even experience can be taken for granted because our country's progress has stemmed from people who fought and gave all their effort for us to have these rights, and I believe that Michael felt a duty to help the world too.

**B. How have acts of terrorism around the world affected your own life and your outlook on the future?**

No one deserves to live a life with fear lingering in the background. Although the United States has experienced terrorist attacks, I do not live my life thinking in the back of my mind that my country could be targeted for a terrorist attack. As a person whose future goals will include international relations in some way, as I am especially interested in global service, I will be traveling to different countries.

I have seen America improve its security in places like airports and several buildings. I see the future as positive both for our security and for America in general especially with amazing advances in science, technology, communication, internationalism in general and so many other categories. The one thing about Americans is that although we have been attacked in the past, we do not live life focusing on the terrorism. Instead, as an American, we often choose to focus on improving our own society and helping those in need. Terrorism has made me realize that all of my actions, and life could be swept away from me due to the hatred of one person or several people.

I was in Mrs. Toussaint's fifth grade class at Height's Elementary School on September 11, 2001. She told us that something horrible had happened to our nation. We were sent home and I turned on the television, and I heard the word terrorist for the first time. I needed to ask my mom what one was. I was already in the fifth grade and was not familiar with this term, when people in other countries grow up with it.

Mrs. Toussaint was my favorite teacher in elementary school, and she actually told us that she had a friend who died as a result of the attacks. She had the class make cards for his family, and I remember sitting there thinking about what I could write to a family who had experienced such a loss. Now, I realize that my fifth grade teacher was so wise in deciding that the best way for fifth graders to be introduced to the idea of helping others was by making cards. In fifth grade, I remember that feeling of having the blank piece of construction paper in front of me after being introduced to the story of the victim's family who we were writing to. That was one of those earlier times when I thought critically about so many things at once. I thought about what had happened, wondered why the terrorists attacked, and most of all I wanted to write a message to the family that would let them know that I cared. The situation was just so foreign as a fifth grader.

Today, I would be interested to see the cards that we made. Since September 11th 2001, Americans have definitely come to each other's aid in so many ways, whether it be after a hurricane, or a loss, or something else. More than ever, we need each other.

Writing that card in fifth grade, my mind was opened to the curiosity of our country's affairs and future and a drive to help those in need and ensure that all people are allowed to live up to their highest potential.