

Dear Fairview Agricultural Society,

I truly appreciate the opportunity to express my ideas of what leadership can do for the youth of today. My name is Garrett Dechant, and I am the team captain of the Saint Thomas More Sr. Boys basketball team, and the coach of the Kodiaks grade 5-6 Slam Jam team. Basketball has been a major influence in my life, in a multitude of different ways. It's given me a whole new outlook on what it truly means to be a leader, and just how much of an influence a coach or a team captain can have on a group of players, both on and off the court.

I have been playing basketball ever since I was in grade 5. I first fell in love when my father and brother took me down to the Fairview High School outdoor court, and we played a game of 21. As I continued playing basketball year by year, I eventually got to Junior high. After Covid canceled the 2021 season, basketball started back up in 2022 and I was named team captain. It was a challenge guiding the large group of players from grade 7 and 8, but we ended up winning gold in our first tournament, and we won bronze in our zone. I was also invited to play up with the Senior high team for a few tournaments. This year, I've been named team captain and won multiple MVP's, and we won consolation at our last tournament.

I never really understood what leadership meant until this year. At one of our tournaments, we were losing by a lot, and the whole team looked defeated. Then my coach pulled me aside and said to me, "as a team captain, you have to have good energy, the guys feed off of that." That was when I finally understood what leadership

meant. The next game, even when we were down, I kept a positive energy, and talked to the team more than I ever have. We ended up coming back from a 20 point deficit and took the game to overtime. Even though we ended up losing, I've carried that lesson over to other games and it's led us to some wins. Sometimes, being a leader isn't always about offering a solution to everything the team is doing wrong, or going out and scoring 50 points, but just being a positive influence on the team.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If I win, I would put the money towards joining the Warriors U17 team so I can learn more skills that I can pass onto the next generation of players through my coaching. I hope this letter helps someone out there get a new outlook on leadership.

Sincerely,

Garrett Dechant