

Alyse

Stanford

Freshman Application

9 November 2012

Personal Statement

“This year the Silver Arrow Award goes to...” These words thundered in my head as I debated which deserving girl would be announced. I looked at all the “staffers,” reflecting on the outstanding week of camp and the year of planning that we had shared together. Little did I know, I was about to join a group of special young women.

“Alyse.....!” I jumped to my feet and headed toward the stage, my body shaking and tears streaming down my face. The silky blue ribbon slipped over my head and the small, handmade, sterling silver arrow gently tapped my chest, near my heart. Mary, a close friend and previous Silver Arrow recipient whispered in my ear, “You deserve it!” Those three words launched me into a whirlwind of self-reflection.

Initially, I denied being worthy of such a prestigious award. Girls whom I admired had earned this award. Had I truly embodied the spirit of Girl Scouts and the significance of the arrow? I questioned whether I had exhibited the principles of “courage, confidence, character” and the commitment to “making the world a better place.” I doubted that I, myself, was a role model for others. In my mind, I was still that insecure girl at the bus stop, the girl who dreaded going to school.

I loved to learn, but I hated going to school. My daily excitement came to a screeching halt when I arrived at the bus stop. I saw the other kids and wondered, “How will they make fun

of me today?” The torturous day often ended with me sobbing in my mother’s arms. Sometimes I refused to board the bus, because everyone knows that bullies loom in the back.

After six years of daily harassment, I found an escape after seventh grade at Camp Artemis. This residence camp teaches girls outdoor and leadership skills and provides a safe environment for self-expression. I found pride in personal achievements, and I developed true friendships, relationships I had come to doubt even existed. After two years as a camper, I was selected as one of thirty girls to collaboratively plan Camp Artemis. I made this yearlong commitment because my heart is forever invested in this life-changing program. I want to help Artemis have the impact on other young girls that it continues to have on me. I strive to provide a safe haven for these campers, and I encourage them to grow into confident women of society by teaching invaluable leadership skills like communication, resourcefulness, and group awareness.

Throughout this journey, I have discovered who I am as a person – my strengths and my weaknesses. I realize now that Silver Arrow recipients are young women who dedicate themselves to the Girl Scouts and Artemis to positively influence another girl’s life. My silver arrow reminds me of the obstacles I have overcome, the courage I have gained, and the impact I have had on others. It hangs around my neck, close to my heart—a reminder of my journey.