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I still remember entering the doors of JROTC with Sergeant Graham yelling about where his keys were clutching his cereal and feeling pretty out of place. It felt like a new world with a sense of discipline I was not accustomed to and it was different from any other class I had ever experienced. This discipline was not present in my other classes and I did not expect someone to come after my actions with such severity like that. I felt this accountability of my actions when I left out my uniform and got intense physical training while being yelled at for it I thought it would be harmless to leave my uniform on the rack behind the JROTC building and after that experience I realized how serious JROTC was and learned to take better care of my possessions.

I use to hate this discipline since it felt like my leadership hated me and were trying to come after me. Then slowly I came to realize how my leadership only disciplined me because they truly cared about me and the way people can perceive me when I make mistakes in the outside world. They wanted the best for me and wanted to prepare me for the less forgiving world where people can steal from and hurt you if you mess up.

Through this discipline and care from my superiors who helped me through my confusing and sensitive high school experience, I was molded like a true artisan would do with clay. Sergeant Major saw this improvement in me and gave me the chance to use it through being the Golden Bear S-1. The day before Golden Bear, a text was sent from the Golden Bear S-4 of a bottle of empty Tylenol. I immediately understood that this was a plea for help. I didn't have time to wonder if this was legitimate and, without thinking further, called emergency services. I saved that cadet's life that day.

This traumatic experience allowed me to realize that the degradation of mental health can cause someone to live in a manner where they are constantly trying to escape reality. So as I worked my way up to Golden Bear Executive Officer in the North High School JROTC I kept this in mind. I wanted to make my cadets feel at ease in knowing that they could communicate with me. I did this by taking on the role of a mother figure, by taking interest in their lives by asking them about their grades and even about their homes and personal lives. I heard many heart-wrenching stories in this process which allowed me to understand their behaviors and not judge them when they lashed out. This environment allowed us to have mutually expressive and honest relationships where the difficulties in our lives could be talked about instead of bottled up.

I furthered this support system by teaching them cooperation which helped me become a leader. One example of how I accomplished this was by facilitating teamwork-focused games, such as my own version of musical chairs. Instead of the traditional one person per chair, we all had to fit in that one remaining chair. This prepared us to work together instead of against each other since everyone would learn the pain of what it felt like to be squished by everyone else and learn to prevent it. I felt the uncomfortableness and the pain along with them which made me more emotionally connected to them. This led me to lashing out at them less and understanding how they worked as a staff. Then using that new knowledge to work with them to use them at their full potential and at a rate where they would also be happy.

I also later saw a change was achieved through this musical chair game when I saw them letting the smallest person on top and looking out for each other instead of thinking of just the selfish desires of getting on the chair. I saw the same progress in their work habits. We all worked together instead of being scared of the judgment of our peers to communicate like

before. They also didn't blame each other and took responsibility for their actions and tasks. The staff group became a family instead of individuals. North High School JROTC gave me a family and leadership skills.