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Kiwanis Essay Contest

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Spring to me is throwing all the windows open and welcoming the intermittent breeze, it means seeing the once barren branches of the roadside trees blossom with fruits and the meadows turn gold. Spring is the sweet melody of birdsong filling the air and if you listen closely, they sing 'We made it! After all those times the cold in our bones felt so permanent, the sun will thaw it once more.' It's not just a season, it's an eternal comfort—a sigh of relief. You look outside and know that if you inhale deep enough you will remember the world like it's always been dipped in honey. I won't care that winter is inevitable, instead I look forward to seeing children riding their tricycles as their parents cheer them on, the bunnies coming out of their burrows, gathering in back gardens to smell the smoke from the open barbeque; simple pleasures that seem mundane but I won't mind because one day I will beg for it again.

Like spring, growth is about rebirth and being made anew. I remember the first week of April, when the sun was high and the lake by our house was still, my whole family gathered our fishing supplies and casted our lines into the water. We had just moved to rural Pennsylvania that year away from the hustle and bustle of New York and the one thing we knew for sure was that fishing is a must. So, we invested in the best bait, the best hooks and read about the best techniques to catch the biggest fish. Now, watching your parents effortlessly reel in several bass on their first try and your younger brother cast bait with no prior experience got the competitive fire in me ablaze. I made it my goal that day to catch the most fish out of everyone so we spent that whole spring afternoon casting and reeling back our lines. Everyone was successful, except for me. Not only did I not catch a single fish in the clear waters of Beaver Lake, I had managed

to get my fishing line and hooks stuck on the powerlines twice! I wanted to throw in my towel and just head home. The sun was slowly descending from the horizon and everyone was satisfied with their catches. The kids wanted to have celebratory ice pops and my parents wanted to fry their catches, so who was I to deny them? I told them I'd finish up and not to wait for me. I had a flashlight, I had my bait, I would not walk home until I had a fish in my bucket. The bugs were starting to bite and the evening breeze turned chillier. I was by myself and my family merely a speck from where I saw them. I had made the goal for myself, I knew I had to commit to it. There was no one to help me but myself so I casted my line several more times, each one more calculated than the last. I stood in the silence of the spring evening, the fire in me that I once identified as competitiveness has turned to determination. After several more tries, the line tugged, so lightly I was unsure if I imagined it. But then it tugged harder, I saw my line go taut and I found myself fighting against a fish I could not see nor comprehend. I pulled and pulled, bending the fishing pole with all my might. As I dragged my catch closer, I was half way convinced it was a sea monster in weight and strength. I saw that I was not just dragging one fish but the sea weeds and the lily pads that stuck to my line as well. I yelled out to the direction of my parents, "I caught one! I finally got one!" over and over that I was sure I had woken up the whole neighborhood. My brother was the one to arrive first, running with a bucket in hand, cheering on. My parents followed the moment I finally got the fish out of water and it was the most beautiful sight I'd ever held. It was a 12 lbs. almost 2 feet long white bass. I held it in my hand and stared into its big white eyes, a moment of respect to the creature and I felt proud it was that fish I caught. I may not have caught the most fish, but I arguably reeled in the best one. I felt proud of myself for committing to my goal and seeing it through. I admire those who have a natural talent for certain things but I aspire to be like those who work hard and put in all of their

effort to reach their goals. I would always remember that spring evening as the time I grew to be more resilient and persevered in the face of adversity.

I believe that the BENV Kiwanis Club is an organization that not only creates a better community but also provides hope for the youth to understand that despite the hardships life throws at us, there are still those who will support you and help you reach your goals. The Kiwanis club could further aid the community's growth by reaching out to students who are struggling to provide them with the help they need whether it's academically, socially or personally. Some of the ways the Kiwanis club can help is teaming up with students in career planning, job experience or mentorship. I know first hand it's daunting to be a part of a new community so finding a way to welcome and leave a lasting impression would be a way to provide a more comforting environment for everyone such as public events and activities. I believe that this generation is made up of strong willed and passionate individuals that could benefit with the guidance of trusted, charitable people such as members of the Kiwanis Club. Like the trees and flowers of the spring season, our community grows with the helping hands of the Kiwanis members.