

What CELA Means to Me

Choosing to go to the Christian Education Leadership Academy was the best decision I have ever made. I had no idea how it was going to turn out, but I chose to put my trust in God, knowing that God works for the good of those who love Him. I have been at CELA since the very beginning and from the very beginning, I knew that CELA was going to change me forever. CELA has had a profound impact on me. CELA has helped me reach further than I ever expected in my academics. CELA has shaped me into a leader who is willing to take on challenges and keep working towards my goals. But most of all, CELA has helped me create a deep relationship with my Lord and Savior.

At CELA, I was given so many opportunities to grow in my education. I can now say that I love to learn! Each and every teacher at CELA finds a way to connect with every student on a personal level to find what learning style works the best for them. There was not a class that I didn't enjoy. I have a special relationship with each of my teachers. The staff here at CELA invest so much into the students and the students see this. I was inspired to continually strive for my best. We are encouraged to grow beyond the core academics. A few examples that I participated in include, Battle of the Books, Math Team, individualized projects and extension worksheets, and plenty of different elective options. I feel very confident going into high school, and I know that that confidence is thanks to CELA and its staff for all they have done to prepare me for the road ahead.

Before CELA, I would have considered myself a Christian and I knew all the well-known Bible verses. But I wouldn't say I had a personal relationship with Christ. Once I came to CELA, that all changed. Jesus became a priority, and He became my friend. In CVLD, we are taught how to live like Christians and how to be servants of God, sharing His word in all we do. Every time I did a service project, prayed in class, or sang in Chapel, I felt that God was by my side. The atmosphere of CELA helped me become more open and has helped me to encourage others to live their lives for Jesus. Psalm 25:5 states, "Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation, for you I wait all the day long." CELA has taught me to walk in the truth and to turn to God in trials and in triumphs. CELA has made an eternal difference in my life and I will forever be grateful to CELA for bringing me closer to the One who gave His life to save me from my sins.

The biggest change I have seen in myself since going to CELA is my confidence and my ability to lead. CELA does a phenomenal job giving their students multiple opportunities to lead. I remember giving my first presentation at CELA. Boy, was I nervous. But, now I look back and I

see how far I have come. I have participated in all three musicals. I have done both talent shows. I have helped lead chapel and chapel choir. I have spoken at many different ceremonies. I participated in competitive forensics. And the list could go on and on. One opportunity I am especially grateful for is the opportunity to try new sports. Most middle school students would not be as open to trying new things, but at CELA students are supported and encouraged to find and develop all God-given talents. I played soccer for my first time and I had so much fun. The environment here is so welcoming and amazing when you try something new. Everyone is kind, whether it is your first time playing or you have been playing for years and I know that this is something that makes CELA unique. CELA has helped me gain a new found confidence and has made me open to trying new things.

CELA has made me a leader - a leader that takes on challenges and is not afraid to be different and bring about change. CELA has been amazing and has placed me on the right path for the future ahead of me. At CELA, each older student is paired with someone from a younger grade. We call these relationships "chapel buddies." This has been the best part of my CELA experience. My chapel buddy, Magen, and I have grown so close. I consider her a little sister. As a chapel buddy, I am there to be her mentor, but the relationship goes both ways. Magen always brightens my day and makes me feel so loved. She helps me always stay positive and see the good in things.

I wouldn't trade anything for my experience here at CELA. The Christian Education Leadership Academy has changed me in ways I never thought were possible. I have grown tremendously in my academics and I have developed a love for learning. Because of CELA, my relationship with Jesus has never been stronger. He is my rock and my fortress. I have become a leader that is going to accomplish wonderful things and is going to help make the world a better place. CELA graduates are going to do great things. As one of my teachers always said, "We will be world changers." And yes, we will be! Thank you CELA for changing me forever.