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New Lancer Days

New Lancer Days and the Honor's Retreat brought forth positive changes in my attitude towards the individuality and opportunities that college allows me, as well as the so-called "re-birth" that starting over can bring.

College, so far, seems like a mixture of self-assurance, risk-taking, and time-management. The ropes course we tackled during the Honor's Retreat demonstrated the first two right off the bat. My life at home was never very risky. The town I lived in before going off to college offered little in terms of excitement, unless one wished to join a hunt club (which had never really held any interest to me). I'd had plenty of exposure before I had moved *there*; however, that was years ago. The closest I'd been to adventure in the past five years was an eight mile hike I made with friends at the beginning of this summer.

It'd been a while since I had done anything daring, and I'll be honest: The ropes course intimidated me. I was scared almost all throughout it. I remember cursing about how much I regretted trying the obstacles once I stepped foot on the ropes... but I tried them nonetheless. I took a risk first on the green—the easiest— level with shaking legs and a grimace, but felt amazing afterwards. That's when I decided to challenge myself. *If I can make it through the green course, I can complete one step up—the yellow— just fine.* I assured myself that I could pull through. Then, I climbed up. I went from cowering on the green course to shaking on the yellow, and from the shaking on the yellow to only muttering my regrets on the blue— and I even went on to black, the hardest level. Throughout the course, while I did constantly question myself, I made it a point to repeat four specific words: *You can do this.* Those words worked; *I* worked. I took on something that seemed so daunting to me at the beginning, and worked hard to overcome my fear of falling so that I could truly enjoy the experience. I took the risk, and so my "re-birth" began.

Then, there are the friends that I made during the retreat. While most of the people I met were outside my major, I made some amazing connections while acting out Shakespeare and sharing challenge statements (what we hoped to improve or accomplish during our time here at Longwood) alongside fellow honors students. Friendships can make or break you those first few

weeks of college as I've come to learn, and having the genuine support of others can truly make school feel like home. I felt the difference each day I made friends compared to those where I felt that I hardly knew anybody at all. Now, I'm becoming even better friends with most of the people I had the amazing opportunity to meet.

In terms of the actual New Lancer Days that followed the Honor's Retreat, it was one of the seminars that really inspired me to make a change and take charge over the personal responsibilities that come with the individuality college pushes you into. Procrastination was a *large* contributor to my senior-year experience. Between juggling college classes, high school classes, a job, and a few clubs on top, I was stretched for time— and I let that become my excuse for avoiding my work. It didn't matter if it was due the next day, a week later, or months later; I left everything until one to two days before the due date, regardless of the project size. It was less than ideal to say the least, and it was something I'd been wanting to change for a long time. Lanceronomics, while about financial responsibility, influenced my decision to alter my bad academic habits. My mother isn't here to hold my hand every step of the way or scold me for putting off my work— I have to make my own decisions, juggle feeding myself next to cleaning on my own, and make sure to get my assignments done on time (because these classes cost *a lot* of money, a point that the speaker made sure to drive home). This isn't high school; these classes aren't free. These books aren't free. My living isn't covered by my parents— it's dependent on my scholarships, which for the most part ride on my grades. The seminar is what drove me to that epiphany. Procrastination, while it's not something I will truly be able to tackle quickly, deprives me of my true abilities, and therefore, my true potential. While my grades could always be *okay* with last-minute work, great grades will hold more weight with my current and possible future scholarships.

I've already seen many of these qualities and learning experiences from the retreat and New Lancer Days reflect in my everyday life. For one, I am less likely to shy away from a challenge or from new people. I speak louder, I make myself talk to strangers in my classes, and have already made a great group of new friends because of it. I take more risks, sign up for courses that I otherwise would be too worried or self-conscious to sign up for, and am working hard to improve my procrastinating tendencies (though I do need to lend more energy into

tackling that particular obstacle). I know that I have to be the one to make the change in myself that I would like to see, and both the Honors Retreat and New Lancer Days have reinforced this. I didn't used to be confident, but now I'm comfortable to stand up, speak up, manage my time, and hold myself accountable.