

James Beckman

12th Grade

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Malnourished and poor, the inhabitants living in the village of Boukeron, Haiti are fighting an everyday struggle for their lives. With 78% of the population living on under one dollar a day, it is clear that the people of Haiti have been dealt a bad hand; however, four years ago, things started to look up for this humble village. In January of 2011, a teen-led initiative was established by a local group of teenagers wanting to make a difference; Sustaining A Village Every-day (S.A.V.E.) is a global charity run by a Board of Directors composed completely of Rutherford County teens. Never in a million years would I have envisioned myself, at the age of 17, becoming the Director of Haitian Relations for a government recognized 501c3, but life always tends to choose its own route rather than follow what one predicts is going to transpire. Luckily for me, I was more than prepared for the challenges that would arise. Helping manage a six-figure budget as a teenager may seem like a daunting task to many, but I charged into it more than prepared thanks to my schooling and passion for Haiti. Whether it was helping run numbers for a SAVE sponsored event such as a 5K or whether it was the ability to predict with a reasonable amount of accuracy the number of people who resided in a specific area of Boukeron, math has become a crucial part of daily operations for the board, and personally a crutch for me to lean on and rely upon as I strive daily to work alongside these beautiful people of Haiti. In conjunction with the extreme usefulness of math varying in difficulty anywhere from basic arithmetic to in-depth statistically analysis or complex variable functions, possessing skill in written English has become an omnipresent necessity in my life as well. Between designing and writing PowerPoints to be showcased among multiple countries and writing professional-grade blog posts for SAVE's website, having a well-established English literature and composition background is vital in the world that encompasses me. Having been taught in two outstanding Tennessee schools growing up, however, I am overly-prepared for any situation which may present itself, and could not be more grateful to my teachers. Teachers who not only helped me to retain necessary Math and English skills with such ease, but also helped make learning these real-world skills extremely engaging and fruitful.