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### The GGBC Experience

One day when I was in the fifth grade at All Saints, a couple of kids and I stayed after bell class to help pack up in the auditorium. Mr. Meyer, the bell director, pulled me aside and asked me to sing a couple of scales for him. Knowing that I am Italian, he asked me, "How would you like to go to Italy?" He handed me a packet of information and asked me to talk about the choir with my parents. I had no idea that from that moment on, I would be a part of an organization that would change my life.

The Golden Gate Boys Choir and Bellringers has provided me with many unique experiences that will stay with me forever. Being in the choir since 1999, I have had the opportunity to go on seven tours: four national tours to Minnesota (2000), Los Angeles (2001), Minnesota (2002), Orange County - Los Angeles (2003), and three international tours to Italy (1999-2000), Germany/Austria/Slovakia/Czech Republic (2004), and Italy (2005-2006). I have been able to sing, ring bells and even direct in front of amazing audiences in breath-taking atmospheres.

This past tour to Italy was the most significant for me because I was old enough to understand and appreciate all that was around me. Things that I learned about Rome and Catholicism in my theology classes came alive when I stepped into the enormous St. Peter's Basilica. Seeing the Pope was an overwhelming moment for me. We also had the privilege of being the only choir to perform for the Vatican Radio. Our 60-minute set was aired nationally on New Year's Day. Staying with two host families in Monte San Giusto and Pordenone enabled me to see how teenagers live in Italy. I was impressed at how well they were able to speak English. In Italy, most of the students learn up to four languages. Their country really sets them up to be global citizens. We got a tremendous applause from the audiences at every concert we performed. I was able to enjoy many experiences I would not have had as a tourist.

Being in the choir has not only made me a better musician, but it has also helped me prepare for the real world. While I have become a better public speaker, more organized, and more independent, I have developed friendships and learned many lessons. Mr. Meyer's intuitive lectures at rehearsals teach important values. Many of the people I have grown up with in the choir are like family.

The choir has given me the confidence to achieve my goals. In my junior year, I am able to say that I will pursue music in college without any hesitation. If I had not been in the choir, I do not know what direction I would have gone. I feel that the choir has given me the determination and most of necessary tools to have a successful career in music. I look forward to many more memories with the choir. I hope that others can take advantage and benefit, as I have, from the Golden Gate Boys Choir and Bellringers.