

C. Essay:

**My Lahaina, Your Lahaina, Our Lahaina**

I was born to two immigrant parents who came from the Philippines to West Maui in the early 1990's. What I didn't know, was that I would be born into a society where *who* you were and *where* you came from didn't matter. Everyone in the community was and are filled with so much passion and dedication in each other and the symbol of their community that it didn't matter if you were Hawaiian, Asian, African American, or Caucasian. This was especially true for the Lahaina community of West Maui.

On top of Lahainaluna Road, sits a high school that was first established in 1831. This high school, which all other Maui high schools fear, is one that is unique in preserving the pride and spirit of not only their school but also that of the Lahaina community to which they serve. When this high school gains excellent recognition in academics and sports, the whole town cheers and celebrates along with them. In my opinion, Lahainaluna High School is and has been the history and culture of West Maui.

I say this because Lahainaluna High School goes back to the 1830's, making Lahainaluna High School the oldest school west of the Rockies. Lahainaluna carries a history, not only of when it was established, but it also carries a history of all the students who went there. If you were to ask some random local in Lahaina town, what school they went too, it is most likely that they say, "Lahainaluna!" (And sometimes you'll get the local who went to Baldwin, lying and saying that they went to Lahainaluna.)

It's important to both the community and I to preserve and perpetuate the history and culture of West Maui through Lahainaluna High School because we each carry apart of this high school wherever we go. (If you don't believe me, then please explain the 25 and more students who carry Lahainaluna High School draw-string bags around their mainland college!)

Lahainaluna is not only built upon pride, spirit, and tradition, but it is built upon the people who attended there. We each leave a mark on the school whether it was through underclassmen, teachers, or even faculty; we are each remembered and recognized through the school. Leaving a mark such as a painted mural, being a part of the winning MIL Water Polo team, or being one of the very few to get a "5" on the AP Calculus exam, we each leave a mark at the school, which is basically leaving a mark in the West Maui community to which we all lived and grew up in.

So whether you leave the islands to get an education on the Mainland, or whether you take a trip to the East Coast, always remember to carry that Lahaina spirit, the spirit that lives through the symbol of our hometown; the history and culture that is *Lahainaluna High School*.