

Georgie Smigel Group Real Estate Scholarship

Essay topic: Why do you love living in your community, how your community/school has impacted your life, and the benefits of living in it? Your community can be defined as your neighborhood, township or mailing address.

Growing up in my community has shaped who I am in ways I didn't fully understand until I got older. Living in a smaller town means you can't go anywhere without seeing someone you know—and while that might sound ordinary, it's actually one of the greatest gifts. My community has given me connection, opportunity, and a true sense of belonging.

One of the things I love most about living here is how people show up for one another. Whether it's school events, local fundraisers, or community drives, there is always support. When someone is in need, people step in without hesitation. I've seen neighbors organize donations, volunteer their time, and quietly make sure families have what they need. Being surrounded by that generosity has taught me the importance of compassion and service. It has shown me that a strong community isn't built on buildings—it's built on people who care.

My school has also had a major impact on my life. Because it is smaller, teachers know students personally. They don't just see grades; they see potential. I've had teachers who pushed me to work harder because they believed I was capable of more than I realized. They've stayed after school to help, offered advice about my future, and encouraged me to take on leadership roles. That support has built my confidence and motivated me to set higher goals.

Beyond academics, my community has provided opportunities to get involved and grow. Through volunteering, I've helped stock shelves, sort donations, clean, and organize items for families in need. Experiences like these have opened my eyes to both the challenges and strengths within my town. They've taught me responsibility, empathy, and the value of hard work. More importantly, they've helped me understand that even small actions can make a difference.

There are many benefits to living in a close-knit community. The safety, familiarity, and encouragement create an environment where young people can thrive. I've grown up surrounded by role models—teachers, coaches, and local leaders—who demonstrate dedication and integrity every day. Seeing their commitment inspires me to give back in the future. I don't just want to succeed for myself; I want to contribute to the place that helped shape me.

Living here has taught me that community is more than a location—it's a foundation. It has supported me during challenges and celebrated my successes. It has shown me what it means to belong somewhere and to be surrounded by people who genuinely

care. As I prepare for the next chapter of my education, I carry the lessons and values this community has given me. No matter where life takes me, I will always be proud to call it home.