

Ross Carley

Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: St Paul's Episcopal School, Mobile, AL

Educator: Karen Duren

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The Little Guy

The group slowly dwindles as the teams are picked. The bigger and more athletic kids go first. Next are the kids that have their place on the court and don't put the team at a disadvantage. Then, the uncoordinated kids with size. Finally, there's me. The small kid that brought nothing to the table. P.E. was everyone's favorite class, except mine. I was relatively athletic and loved to play sports, but my size was an immediate deficit on the court. Me trying to play with significantly larger people was like a mouse trying to cross Time Square.

Every day in P.E. held a different embarrassing moment. Whether it was being picked last every single time or missing my shot when I was finally given my chance. My least favorite was when I would get the ball and they would say, "Let him shoot." Moments like these made me feel like I was unwanted and a charity case. I needed to show everyone else that was not what I was. I began practicing on my free time. I focused on the things that didn't require size like shooting, dribbling, and passing. I practiced and practiced until I could finally hold my own. However, I did not work this hard just to be merely accepted on the court. In middle school, athleticism was what it meant to be cool. If I could hold my ground playing sports then I could be a part of the 'cool group,' and that's really all I wanted.

After a year or two of trying to fit in athletically and being perpetually disappointed, I realized that conforming to the patterns of social status will only earn you superficial acquaintances. I finally started acting like the funny, open-minded, and outgoing person I was. Eventually, that group found its way to me and so many great things followed. Some of the group's members are among the most genuine friends I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

Eventually, I found the sport I was born to play and fell in love with it. That sport is lacrosse, and it has changed my life. Lacrosse is a sport where size doesn't mean a thing, and individuality is encouraged. Ever since I found it, I have been a huge contributor to the growth of the sport in lower Alabama. I have been instrumental in starting the first club team, school club team, and many post-season select teams in Mobile. Now, I am the team captain at my own school's inaugural club lacrosse team. For six years I was the only person in my class that played lacrosse, but I still remained friends with those 'cool guys' from middle school that thought I wasn't good enough. These guys are now my best friends and I wouldn't trade them for anything.

After realizing that being myself is the way to live life, nothing has been the same. It changed the way I look at some of my characteristics. For example, I am a total music and pop-culture junky. Some people may find it weird that a seventeen-year-old boy can name every rock album that has debuted at #1 on Billboard while catching up on the latest Kardashian drama. After embracing this quality of mine, it has opened me to whole new friend groups because of my relatability. It has also made me more active in my school and community. I am now Key Club Vice President, Founder of Puppy PARvention, and member of SGA. In conclusion, it matters not what people think of you, whether it be your size or quirkiness; if you choose to embrace your true self, you will find the life you were meant to live.