

## Taking the plunge: life in a British boarding school

I remember when my last physics teacher drew two circles on the whiteboard: one small and one big. He told us that the small one represents the known part of our life, everything we know. On the other hand, the big circle represents the unknown, everything that is still a mystery. 'You are fool if you think you know everything because there is always something more out there that you have no clue about' – these were his words. 'So, explore, discover, seek knowledge and experience! Try! Learn by trying!'

So, I tried, I tried applying for the HMC scholarship and now, I am living my dream at a British boarding school, my life sometimes seeming more similar to a movie than to the reality. Sometimes, I feel like the main character, the protagonist, other times, I feel like a secondary character, someone who is in the background, but I am always so present, so aware of everything and everyone that is around me.

The truth is this experience gave me more courage than anything else, courage that I can do whatever I want, that I can be whoever I want and that I am more powerful than I thought I am. I gained confidence and I redefined my limits since the first day I came into this campus. From going water rafting even with a big fear of drowning, from singing my lungs out with new friends around a fire pit on a typical night or at karaoke to learning and actually dancing traditional Scottish dancing at my first Kayleigh dance, to trying out skating by myself for the first time or planting trees on a quite rainy day, my life in Dollar Academy has taken a shift from what I knew before.

Since August, I am in a journey in which each day I experience something new and I learn something unique about myself and about others. Each day, when I wake up and go to school, it still feels like a dream. From hating wearing skirts to actually starting to enjoy my kilt, from not knowing anybody's name to making friends, from not quite understanding the Scottish accent to now learning completely in English, from not ever seeing a rugby game to seeing it every Saturday morning when I wake up, I changed. I want to believe that I changed positively, that I became somehow better, more mature and more confident in who I really am. This confidence took me to New York, at my first MUN (Model United Nations), program in which I applied independently from school, but one that I loved immensely.

In the same time, I am so grateful for the knowledge that I acquired here through the classes, with the help of amazing teachers that are very passionate about the subject they teach. Here, I discovered my passion for Business Management, did more experiments for Chemistry than ever before and learnt Accounting which I never taught I will learn. Also, I redefined my already existent passion for languages by doing French and Spanish as additional subjects, by trying to learn Mandarin and by starting to learn Italian.

Overall, I feel enormously grateful that I had the opportunity to have this experience that, I believe, shifted my perspective about life and about what I want to do and who I want to be in the future. I realised that, here, the culture encourages more trying and failing than not trying at all. So, my physics teacher was right: 'Always learn by trying!'.