

A Letter from Ava

The letter below was written by a new student to MKA as part of a 6th grade writing assignment.

Feeling like you belonged. What a hard thing to do. To be somewhere where you feel safe and unstoppable, and who knew that you would find that place in a simple old school? Three letters M-K-and A. The day I toured that big beautiful building would be the day that changed my life forever.

I was always a unique person, a girl who plays football, soccer, lacrosse, and I was extremely creative. At my school, there was no freedom what so ever. Everywhere you went, there was always a teacher right there, watching you constantly. I always was picked on for my petite figure (as I like to call it) but for most people I was Elf, shortie, shortstop, and tons of other names that made me feel smaller than I already was. I didn't let my height stop me however, I was a tough little girl with big dreams and great grades. My parents knew that at that school I wasn't able to be who I wanted to be. The real Ava. The one who lives inside me. My mom decided to look into private schools, and found tons of different ones in the area. I took tests, wrote essays, and worked for months.

The first school I toured was Montclair Kimberley Academy. When my mom and I arrived at the school we were amazed. We had never seen a building this stunning before. "Wow!" I said to her. She held my hand as we walked inside, at the door a tall lady named Alyson Waldman greeted us. "Hello!" She said with a huge smile on her face. "Welcome to M.K.A!" She held out her hand for me to shake it. "Hi I'm Ava." I told her, I was so nervous I almost forgot my name! She shook my mom's hand, I gave my mom a kiss on her cheek, and the tour began.

The first part of the tour was me meeting my tour guide. She was a 6th grader who went there. She had long blonde hair that reached just past her shoulders and a kind voice that made you think you had known her forever. "Hi!" She said, "Nice to meet you! You're going to go to a few classes with me to see what a day here is like." "Ok!" I said not knowing what else to say, "So, our first class is English. Do you like English? I do!" She seemed very excited, where as I was standing there confused and nervous. I knew that she was going to ask me a bunch of questions to break the ice in an attempt to make me more comfortable. However, let's be honest, we both know it only makes it more awkward. "Yeah." I said, "I love English."

She smiled and opened the door to what had to be the smallest amount of people in a class I had ever seen. In that moment, the second she opened that door to a happy teacher and a small class of smiling kids, I knew it was where I wanted to be. The rest of the day, we played fun activities. Together, we went from class to class. The most surprising thing for me was that not one person said a thing about my height. No one, not even a word! To tell you the truth there was no point in the rest of the day, I already knew I wanted to go there. The rest of the tour was pretty much just plain fun. Yes, I know what you're thinking, how is school 'fun' but it was! Or at least to me! Anyway, I played with them during recess, had some delicious lunch, and after that Ms. Waldman was waiting for me to come back. I said goodbye to all the new faces that had welcomed me so warmly.

Ms. Waldman took me back to her office where my mom was waiting for me. We talked for a little bit, about my interests, and whether or not I liked my tour. I said, "I loved it! My tour guide was so nice. I think this might be where I belong." With that, the tour was over. On the way home my mom asked me tons of questions about what happened and if I liked it or not. "I'm going to go there." I told her, "That is where I belong, that is where I will grow into the true Ava that lives inside of me." "Remember Ava." She said, "It is only the first school you toured, you might feel the same way about the other ones." Little did she know when I opened the acceptance letter I would find the true Ava. The one who lives inside me.