


Connecting through the Music

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I've always been more of an introvert when it comes to dealing with other people, and I find solace in quiet places where I can think about things by myself. Not too long ago, the thought of making relationships with the members and teachers of my guitar Required Extra Curriculars (REC) at school seemed pointless, an aspect of life that I deemed unimportant. I never realized the good that can come out of initiating connections with my recmates.

As I reflect on it, my REC classes were filled with dull silence and awkwardness. Outside the classroom, seeing them in hallways became a labyrinth of uncertainty—should I offer a greeting, or would looking the other way be the safer option? I definitely felt a lack of clarity surrounding my standing from the perspective of my peers.

Maybe it was the pivotal moment of the Talent Fest that sparked change. Finally learning the names of my fellow performers, sharing the stage, and feeling the joy of a good performance as a group set the stage for a change in my outlook. Being fully immersed in the warm and jazzy music showed me how connecting through music can feel idyllic. I felt further bonded to them when I realized we were all working toward the same goal, practicing and worrying until the performance together, playing the same song over and over again, and hitting all the notes at the same time. Feeling the guitar's vibrations and fingers stinging from hours of practice added to the vivid experience. High adrenaline fueled our synchronized performance under the bright, glaring lights, with the audience watching our every move. It was all beautiful. I enjoyed every second of the performance. It was just that vibrant, growing



feeling about the melody and accompaniment coming all together that made me want to continue this bond with them even after.

I realized that if I wanted to make connections, that would mean stepping out of my comfort zone. I started initiating short, casual conversations with my recmates whenever the opportunity came up. Being in the same center provided a natural starting point for connection. It helped that we had the same goal of learning the songs for the performance because it created an environment that encouraged a lot of communication and collaboration. These small interactions, albeit that will be all it will be, I know I was able to establish a connection where we could go to each other if we were in a room full of unknown people.