Bleeding to Leading

One experience that has had a significant impact on who I am today was becoming involved with the American Red Cross and organizing blood drives through my school. It started as a simple volunteer opportunity but quickly became a leadership role that challenged me to step outside my comfort zone, develop confidence, and discover the importance of serving others.

When I first joined the program, I started by helping with small tasks such as greeting donors and assisting in drive setup. I then transitioned into a more involved role and began taking on greater responsibilities, including recruiting donors, coordinating volunteers, promoting blood drives, and ensuring that events ran smoothly. The success of each drive depended on the efforts of our team and our ability to encourage both students and community members to participate. I learned that leadership is not simply about directing others, but about communication, organization, teamwork, and a willingness to serve.

One of the most challenging aspects of the experience for me was overcoming my social anxiety and awkwardness. Recruiting donors often meant approaching people I did not know and speaking in front of large groups of students in order to ask them to support our cause. Many people declined and were hesitant, and I even had a few mock the whole program. At first, these interactions were discouraging and made me even more nervous about approaching others to contribute. However, over time I learned to view each conversation as an opportunity to learn and improve both my confidence in speaking publicly and in my sharing of the Red Cross's mission. This helped me to become more confident in speaking with others, advocating for a cause I believe in, and building connections with other people from different backgrounds. I have met some wonderful people in the community through this experience and will continue to stay connected with them as I continue into the next chapter of my life.

Through this experience, I have also gained a deeper appreciation for the impact that small actions can have on others. I have always believed that community was the backbone of society, and that in working together and supporting each other, we can make our world even the slightest bit better. Every donor represented the potential to save lives, and every successful blood drive demonstrated the power of our community coming together for a common purpose. Seeing the physical results of our efforts reinforced the importance of service and showed me that meaningful change often begins with simple acts of kindness and commitment.

Additionally, this experience has shaped my future goals in profound ways. The key piece that it has taught me is that I find fulfillment in creating positive experiences and helping others. That lesson has influenced my decision to pursue a career in hospitality, an industry centered on service, connection, and creating meaning moments. Whether I am welcoming a guest, managing a team, or operating my own business, I hope to apply the same leadership skills, compassion, and dedication that I developed through community service.

And as I move forward in life, I will continue to draw inspiration from this experience. It has shown me that leadership is most effective when it is rooted in service, and that even small contributions can make a lasting difference. The lessons I have learned through organizing blood drives about perseverance, communication, teamwork, and compassion, will continue to guide me as I pursue higher education, develop my career, and strive to make a positive impact in the lives of others.