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| Sree Sarvepalli | Sophomore at Tesla STEM High School |
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| Dear Ms. Murphy,When I first joined Science Olympiad in sixth grade, it seemed to be yet another vaguely intriguing club. I had moved from Portland to Redmond that summer, so I knew nobody. I couldn’t form a robotics or Battle of the Books team – but Science Olympiad had no such barrier to join, so I applied. Not long after (while it may sound cheesy) my life was permanently altered. Through Science Olympiad, I’ve made some of my best friends, realized my love of biology and engineering, and become more connected to my local community.I vividly remember my first-ever team meeting. It was in a small room in the Redmond Library. It was Timberline’s opening year – although we didn’t have a SciOly team prior, some people had experience having transferred from Evergreen Middle School. Our head coach was one such person. She opened her speech to the parents with, “We need to thrash them”. What did I just sign myself up for? I wondered. Luckily for us, she was dramatically exaggerating. That first year in SciOly was filled with balsa wood, macroinvertebrates, and clouds – not to mention the close friendships I formed with my partners. Unfortunately, it was quickly cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic.If anything, that only motivated me further. I was assigned to Heredity, which remains my favorite event of all time. I realized how intrinsically beautiful biology is, which set me on an entirely different course in life. As the pandemic continued, SciOly allowed me to connect with my friends despite lockdown measures.When the pandemic ended, I was a freshman at Tesla STEM. This time, I joined SciOly because of the sheer volume of wonderful memories I had made. With that, I ended up being roped in even further. Now that SciOly was finally in-person, I could form more connections with my teammates, beyond just a couple of partners. I met a multitude of exceptional people this way, who helped me to finally crack out of my shell. Eventually, I was nominated to be on the board of our club. Our club’s culture is by far the most welcoming and loving that I’ve seen in any club, and I was committed to keeping it that way. I directed our first in-person invitational, which was a fantastic experience for everyone in the club but also many competitors and volunteers. I also organized many competitions, bonding events, and outreach events. These helped members of our club to connect, especially underclassmen and upperclassmen. Additionally, I’ve developed many personal leadership skills, such as time management, organization, and communication.As a student advisor, I will build on my past five years in SciOly to help others form such memorable experiences. Having participated at both the state and national levels, I can bring a unique perspective that can help make the organization more engaging for all. I hope that I may encourage a passion and love for SciOly across Washington like I have helped form within TSSO. This community has given so much to me, and I believe it is time for me to give some back.Thank you for reading this (admittedly long) letter and for your consideration.Sincerely, Sree Sarvepalli. | |