

Hi,

I want to start by thanking you for scouting the DDF team for article material: I think that a lot of us feel like the activity is occasionally marginalized a bit. That's too bad, because it really is one of the most incredible experiences I've ever had.

DDF has given me friends--the wackiest, smartest, funniest, most charismatic, and most dramatic people are all attracted to acting and debate. DDF has guided my intellectual development, hooking me on politics, policy, rhetoric, philosophy, and current affairs by wrapping heavy topics in the fun of competition and camaraderie. DDF has even jump started that sense of social injustice that most kids don't get to develop until college. Having debated so many interesting controversies and examined so many advocacies, I can get outraged about anything from military spending to nuclear energy. Of course, the switch-sides format means that I can also appreciate the importance of U.S. Hegemony and the energy independence. In short, DDF has given me the information to really care about issues, but also the flexibility to criticize my own beliefs.

Of course, DDF has also given me a horrible, confusing loss. When I mention the social aspect of the team, I don't know that I can actually capture the transformation that we underwent in my first two years. Speaking for myself, DDF created an environment where competitive trust (working together to find evidence, prepare arguments, scope out competition, ect.) and cooperation quickly developed into personal trust and friendship. And with all the stress of competition, we learned to blow off steam with stupid adventures. That meant playing sardines (a game like Hide and Go Seek) in schools between rounds, racing around the mall in our hotel at Harvard trying on ridiculous clothes, and pranks. So many pranks. I'm sure you'll hear about them. In particular, you should ask about the Dylan red bull story, the Tavish subway misadventure, and the Constipation Crisis kit. Anyhow, the point is that a group of debaters crystallized into the closest group of friends I'd ever had. Corey was at the center of that. We went sledding at her house after Winter Dance last year. We baked at her house over the summer. We made stupid movies, planned a going away party for Claire, bounced on trampolines and went sunbathing. We did all the usual things that High school kids do, and some unusual things, but mostly we just hung out.

Corey enriched us. She liked to push us a bit: going out to Chugiak for a party or making people ask each other to dances--but she was still one of us, so we could laugh at drunk people or the disgusting couples. She held on to all the best qualities of our little group and still helped people leave their shells. Personally, Corey was a new type of friend for me. She was someone to talk to, gossip with, and confide in. I'd never before had a platonic girl friend that close. She coached me through my first serious relationship. In the middle of all the drama and hormones and decisions that come with being a teenager, she was uniquely easy to talk to. That meant a lot to me.

I was in the car driving back from a college visit when Dylan called me with the news. The next couple of weeks we were all reeling. To be honest, I'm not really sure how everyone has gone about coping. Guys don't usually talk about emotions. I'm not sure how everyone has been doing. I know that you write stories, and I imagine it can be kind of hard to see one clear plot line in all

of this. Its probably easy to see the "And then they came together as a team" story, or the "And they all learned a horrible lesson about grief" story, or even the "And knowing her had changed all of them for the better" story. Those stories are all true. I've spent a fair amount of time crying on shoulders, and a lot of time thankful for the two years I had with her. She was an incredibly complex person. Insightful, compassionate, adventurous, occasionally sarcastic without the cynicism. She was blunt, clever, and loyal. She was an incredibly complex person, and her legacy is equally complex. I have no idea what the ultimate narrative is. Pain, love, and growth? I'm sure that it is different for all of us.

I'm leaving this year, I'm off to college and no longer technically enrolled on the South DDF team. I'm not sure it will evolve in the next years, but it has a lot going for it. There is the obvious capitol, the wonderful coaches, supportive parents, and generous memorial fund to support travel. And of course, there is the intangible closeness of the team. I'll still be a member. She will too; We love her, and we miss her more than I can express.

Thank you again for all the attention you've given us, and your sensitivity in covering this story.

-Kenneth Hubbell