

Hometown Greatness

- Grace Perry

On a bus ride to a field trip, I had 45 minutes to interview some of my peers to reflect upon growing up in Marblehead, MA and what makes it a great place to live in. Seeing as we were headed out of town, I figured it was ironic because most of us will in fact be leaving for college in a matter of months.

To tell you a little bit about myself, I am Grace Perry, Co-Editor-in-Chief of this school newspaper. I am proud to say that I am what some may call a small town girl. Born in Salem and raised in Marblehead, I know what the true meaning of tradition is. I am a townie. Generations of my family members have lived in this town, some have even lived in the same house I currently live in. My great grandfather was a true Marbleheader and was born in the Mary Alley Hospital. I have been born from Marblehead blood. Each of my ancestors attended Marblehead High School and raised their own families right here in town. When I say I am a small town girl, I believe my small town roots have molded me into what I am today. And I realize I am not alone. As seniors at Marblehead High School, we have observed this town and have found its greatness to stem from its sense of community, historic feel, and summertime beauty. Marblehead has a sense of community like no other place I have experienced. Our town has 4.4 square miles of land, but we have thousands of people living in it. Neighbors are family, and your friends are the friends you have known since pre-k. Gossip may spread like wildfire, but for the most part, we are a community that cares about one another. Emma Oliver, a senior at MHS, is a great example of someone who has seen this sense of community up close and personal. Oliver notes: "When I organize my team for the MS Walk, so many people willingly offered to help. So many people reached out and it felt amazing. I am so proud of our tight knit community." Oliver organizes a Walk for MS, which raises money for Multiple Sclerosis. She is currently preparing for her MS walk this April and will be attending Alfred University in the fall.

Suzanne McCarthy, also a senior at MHS, believes Marblehead's greatness is because of the community alone. She said in our interview, "My favorite thing about Marblehead would have to be it's tight knit community. I've seen it through the football games and there is a shared united spirit. The spirit is contagious." McCarthy has lived in Marblehead her entire life and currently lives in the same house her mother grew up in.

Along with the sense of community, Marblehead's greatness lies inside of its capability to preserve its history. If one takes a walk downtown, he or she is bound to stumble upon something historic. Visit marblehead.com puts it perfectly, "Steeped in history, Marblehead is alive with over 200 homes and buildings that predate the Revolutionary War. Tour several historic mansions with tales of rugged fisherman, intrepid mariners, enterprising merchants, skilled craftsmen, self reliant women and courageous seamen—all of whom played a crucial role in America's struggle for independence." Yet, seniors at Marblehead High School believe it is not only Marblehead's historic places; it is the feel these places give off. Although the historic places are equally as significant, Marblehead has maintained the ability to preserve its local businesses and keep out

commercial business and chains. McCarthy believes the one thing that makes this town special and or different from the rest is its ability to keep big business out. She notes: "There aren't a lot of commercial business here in town. Our only major chains are Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts, small scale compared to what could be present." McCarthy is unsure of where she will be attending college in the fall, and says, "Get back to me in two months," with a smile. By keeping large-scale commercial business out, Marblehead is able to preserve its historic feel and local business, which contributes to what makes it such a great small town. Adler Smith, another senior at MHS, shared, "Marblehead has such a quaint nature. It has an old historic feel with a modern twist." Smith has also lived in Marblehead his entire life. He plans on attending Cornell University in the fall to study engineering.

Along with its sense of community and its historic feel, Marblehead in the summer time is also what contributes to make it such a great small town. Marblehead is drop dead beautiful. We have the land and we have the sea. What more could you want out of life? Paul Elder, also a senior at MHS who has lived in Marblehead his entire life, believes the best thing about Marblehead is the outdoors, "The ocean is nice and the summer time is the best. A typical day in the summer for me involves being a camp counselor at the Tower School summer camp, where I am constantly outside." Elder plans on attending the University of Michigan in the fall to study economics.

Lauren Nohelty also agrees that summer time is best thing about Marblehead. She notes about the town's safety, "The best thing about Marblehead is that for the most part, it's safe. You don't have to be nervous about locking your doors. And the summertime is absolutely beautiful." Nohelty plans on studying business at Babson University in the fall.

All in all, Marblehead is a great place to live. It is not perfect, but it sure is a fantastic place to grow up. I encourage all who are reading this article to recognize its greatness. Don't just take it for granted. It has so much to offer and you have so much to gain. And to the seniors reading this article, I encourage you especially to appreciate the wonderful town in which we live. You will be leaving in a matter of months, so live in the moment and explore Marblehead to every end, one last time.