



FRESHMAN YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL

WINNER

WHY JJ LOVES ARIZONA

WRITTEN BY JOSHUA, A FRESHMAN AT PUSCH RIDGE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

My name is JJ Arnett. I live in Tucson, Arizona, and attend Pusch Ridge Christian Academy. I am a tri-sport athlete and play basketball, baseball, and football. I love Arizona for many reasons. It means so much more to me than great weather and scenery. Arizona symbolizes freedom, a fresh start, a new life, a new chapter. Arizona represents freedom.

I was born in New Mexico and when I was 5 years old my biological mother was arrested for drug use, distribution, and probably a lot of other things I didn't know about. I spent the next 6 years in different foster homes. My experience while in foster care was terrible. I often felt as if the only reason my case went on for so long was that the people working on it would make a lot more money if they let it go longer. When I moved to Arizona it signified, I was no longer part of the system, but rather I was a human. It's almost as if I had been bound by chains and had suddenly broken free with my new family.

A fresh start! I felt bound by chains for so long and never I really knew what it was like to be a kid. I lived with constant stress there might not be a tomorrow, I was never guaranteed to stay where I was. I told so many stories when people asked about my (foster) family because I was so embarrassed to not have a real family, and I look nothing like my brother and they were an older couple. When I moved to Arizona, I had an actual family and I didn't have to make up things. I didn't have the constant stress of people finding out. I wasn't embarrassed to have this family.

A new chapter! Arizona represents a new chapter in my life, one free of constant worry, embarrassment, stress and, and exposure. I know my family loves me, cares about me and, cherishes me. The last chapter of my life in New Mexico had been written. I was no longer just another foster child. I was a son, brother, and most of all, JJ Arnett. Arizona is a reset button on my life, and I don't worry about what was in my rearview mirror but rather on the road ahead. For the first time in my life, I feel like a normal kid.

Permanency! Arizona represents permanency. I know my family won't give me up, not want me anymore, or simply just give up on me. I know my family loves me and no matter what I do, and they won't give me up. When I grow up and get a job, they will still be there.

All the reasons above are why I love Arizona more than any other person in the world. Because to me, Arizona means more than just the Cardinals and hot weather, but it means something to my life and the whole course of it. Thank you for reading my essay.