I see education as the most beautiful thing in the world because it empowers everyday people to become extraordinary. By spreading knowledge we are passing along skills that allow individuals all over the world an outlet of expression. Too often people don’t fully understand what a privilege it is to have such wide access to education in our country. While reading The Promise of a Pencil by Adam Braun, I was able to reflect on my personal journey through the education system and how it molded me into the student and person I am today.

Being diagnosed with dyslexia at a young age, I made it my mission to read and write until I no longer had to struggle. I took full advantage of the education I was being given and pushed myself to not only be on par with the students in my class, but to excel ahead of them. I went from being in remedial English classes to advanced placement and honors courses in just a few short years. It empowered me to give back to the community and help others going through similar circumstances.

I learned from this experience that if you try hard enough and believe in your mission you can make a difference. You can then take what you’ve learned and share that knowledge with others, much in the spirit of Braun’s own experiences. I became a part of Big Brothers Big
Reflexion on “The Promise of a Pencil” by Adam Braun

Sisters of America, Boys and Girls Club of America, and participated in a program that helped children learning English as a second language.

Many of these children were from disadvantaged backgrounds and had learning disabilities themselves, such as ADD and dyslexia. In the same way that Braun was inspired by the children before the first classroom was built in Laos, I, too took inspiration from the light in the eyes of the children I taught as they learned new words. I saw how excited they felt figuring out a new math equation. My own difficulties provided me with the strength and determination to give back to my own little community. I was able to grow from helping others, and, more importantly, watch their growth under my influence, which was an extraordinary development to witness.

When asked why I am pursuing a college education, I respond by explaining that it is an opportunity to better both myself and the causes I care about. A large reason I committed to St. Bonaventure University was because of the university’s involvement in community service and its genuine interest in the betterment of the world.

The Promise of a Pencil sparked a revolution in my thinking that woke me up to the issues in the world outside of my comfortable American lifestyle. It made me reflect on all the times I took my access to education, extracurricular activities, and after-school help for granted. The ability of an abundance of small actions to create an organization like Pencils of Promise inspires me in the deepest way. Multiple times I’d jump up while reading the book and say, “This is the type of organization I have to be a part of.” The passion of individuals such as Adam Braun has given me faith in humanity and shows what people can accomplish when they join
Reflection on “The Promise of a Pencil” by Adam Braun

together. I hope to one day make a difference in a cause I care about, whether it hits the worldwide scale or one closer to home, because every action makes a difference.