

When I first got to Philips Andover Academy, I admit that I wanted to go home. It was hot, I knew no one, and I felt almost like an outsider. I did not see where I fit into the world of Andover. We also had a very long quarantine period that took up my first week and a half here. Although I dreaded the constant masking and distancing, through the process I got a lot of time to think about and realize my purpose here. Throughout my first few days here, I did not enjoy my time. I stayed in my room a lot and did not interact with many of my dormmates unless I had to. I also overslept on my first day of dance class because I was not feeling well. I tried to go and then got LOST. I tried to talk to the people in my dorm, who are all very nice and welcoming, but I did not feel any initial connections between us. I had to get out of that feeling. My next few days were starting to become nice. I got into a routine, the homesickness went away and I started to make friends. I felt more a part of my dorm than I did within the last few days which was so nice. Although we all talked in the common room with masks on and distanced relatively far apart, we still had very fun conversations that allowed me to learn more about them, their interests, and their life before Andover. I began to also branch out and find new people on campus away from my dorm. I found a group of black students that made me feel very comfortable within this space. We met at the first dance in our program. Almost a home away from home. Getting to learn from students of other cultures will always be a top priority, but finding other black students helps build bonds that other students cannot give me. Among these good things, there have also been some bad during my quarantine. I have felt very secluded some days. This alone time was great in some aspects but lacking in others. I enjoy being able to be alone, recharge, and nap for short spouts because I have a lot of introverted tendencies. On the other hand, being in my room for the majority of the day makes me think frequently about home and want to leave. I also got time to look at the news and I was so sad about what I saw. While I

was going about my day, I found out that one of the black women who qualified for the Olympics, in track, Sha'Carri Richardson, tested positive for marijuana in her system. I didn't know whether to feel disappointed in her or angry with the Olympic rules. I also found out that the use of a larger swim cap (mostly used for afros) was banned in the Olympics as well and that just made me angrier the more I thought about it. The more I looked at current news, I felt a theme of antiblackness in the world. All the bad aside, I truly have gotten to understand my purpose here at Andover during my quarantine. I am here to learn, make new friends, and further myself. Whether I am feeling like a social butterfly or a loner on a particular day, I have to realize my purpose at this camp.