



BECAUSE OF WINN DIXIE

A NEW MUSICAL

ESSAY CONTEST

**WINNER: SCOUT FISHKIND
GREENWICH ACADEMY**

A True Friend

“One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and be understood,” said Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Everyone could use a friend. In the book Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo, Winn-Dixie is Opal’s lifelong friend. I even have a Winn-Dixie too. My Winn-Dixie is my pen pal and camp counselor. Her name is Emily. I met her during my first summer at camp. I remember all the hardships I had to face and how she helped me not face them alone. Emily helped me adjust to camp, encouraged me to make friends, and told me to take risks. She is my “Winn-Dixie” because she taught me to be a stronger person like Winn-Dixie did for Opal.

At camp when I felt homesick Emily helped me adjust. When camp first started, I missed my family and she helped me focus on the bright side. For example, I would think about all the fun things we were doing each day like Color Wars and swimming. This is similar to how Winn-Dixie helped Opal overcome the sadness of her mom’s death. Opal was feeling sad because she did not know a lot about her mom. Emily helped me overcome the sadness I felt when I missed my family. Emily helped me enjoy life in the moment in the same way that Winn-Dixie helped Opal feel like her mom was still nearby. Since Emily helped me adjust to all the new changes at camp, I had a really fun and memorable experiences.

At camp, I was also having a hard time putting myself out there so Emily said to be confident. I did what she said by being confident and I ended up having a lot of more fun. For example, instead of feeling shy during sports time, I went for it. I played soccer, tennis, baseball, and lacrosse. I was so proud of myself for acting confident even when sometimes I didn’t really feel that way deep down. This is similar to Winn-Dixie helping Opal make friends and put herself out there in the Naomi, Florida community. Winn-Dixie helped Opal feel confident meeting Gloria Dump, who everyone thought was a witch. Also, Winn-Dixie made Opal feel more comfortable around Otis because he made friends with Gertrude the parrot. Emily is my Winn-Dixie because she helped me make friends too. I was doing a group project and I didn’t have the guts to start putting my ideas out on the table but I thought of Emily and knew she would say to be confident. This helped me become more social with my friends. I made a new friend named Sarah who I will always be lifelong friends with. By putting myself out there, I made many new relationships, just like Opal.

At times, I was scared to take risks but Emily said to go for it. One time I was nervous to take part in a swimming event but she said, “What do you have to lose?” It was a relay competition and I didn’t want to enter because I thought I’d bring the whole team down. Emily said to go for it and that it would be ok. I did, and I ended up enjoying it. When Opal was planning her party, she was inspired by Winn-Dixie (since the theme of the party was dogs), and she took a risk by inviting people she didn’t think she would have a fun time with just like I took a risk by entering the competition. Opal took a risk by inviting people such as the Dewberry boys, and in the end they became friends. Winn-Dixie helped Opal take these risks because he always encouraged her to meet new people. I took risks, too, and I ended up liking things I never would have thought I’d like, just like Opal.

Emily is my “Winn-Dixie” because she helped me step out of my comfort zone. She helped me be confident, take risks, and make friends. When I first met her I was scared to push my limits, but through my relationship with Emily, I became the person I am now. Just like the quote, “One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and be understood” by Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Emily showed me what a true friend can be because she knew my limits and helped me expand them in a way that no friend has done for me before.