



Hendrickson High School 20th Anniversary
Celebration
Notable Writing Contest Entries

What does it mean to be a Hendrickson Hawk?



Essay Winner:
“Soaring Together: A Reflection on 20 Years of Legacy at Hendrickson High School” by
Jawaad Merali

Dear fellow Hawks, faculty, guests, and friends,

As we gather here today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Hendrickson High School, we are not merely celebrating the passage of time. We are celebrating a legacy, a spirit, and a symbol that unites us all—the Hendrickson Hawk. The majestic creature that soars in the sky and persists through difficulty. But what does this truly signify for us, the proud members of the Hendrickson community?

When we envision a hawk, we see a creature that defies gravity, effortlessly navigating the vast expanse of the sky. It's more than a representation of flight; it embodies the boundless possibilities and aspirations that define our journey at Hendrickson High School. We are Hawks not merely because we occupy a space, but because we transcend it, reaching for the heights of knowledge, excellence, and personal growth.

A hawk, in its natural habitat, is a fierce competitor, agile and strategic. Similarly, as Hendrickson Hawks, we embrace the challenges that come our way, whether in academics, athletics, or personal endeavors. We understand that competition is not just about winning but about pushing ourselves beyond our perceived limits. It's about the pursuit of improvement and the courage to face adversity.

Persistence is a quality inherent in every Hawk. In the face of difficulty, a hawk doesn't waver; it persists. This persistence resonates deeply within the halls of our school. Year after year, we continue to challenge ourselves and continue to be better today than where we were yesterday. It

signifies our commitment to overcoming obstacles, learning from setbacks, and emerging stronger each time.

We recognize that the path to success is rarely linear, but it is the tenacity to endure that sets us apart. So, what does it mean to be a Hendrickson Hawk? It means understanding the symbolism behind the wings that carry us to new heights. It means recognizing that victory is not just about individual achievement but about lifting each other up as a community. Hawks are known for their keen vision, and as members of this illustrious school, we develop a vision that extends beyond the present—a vision for a future where we make a positive impact on the world.

Our journey as Hawks is not solitary; it's a collective endeavor. It's about fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie that defines our school culture. We are a community that supports, uplifts, and encourages one another—a community that understands that true strength lies in our ability

to stand together.

As we reflect on the 20 years of Hendrickson High School, let us carry forward the spirit of the Hawk. Let us soar to new intellectual heights, compete with integrity, persist through challenges, and embrace the unity that defines our community. The legacy of the Hendrickson Hawk is not just etched in our mascot; it's woven into the very fabric of who we are.

Therefore, I'd like to conclude by stating that being a Hendrickson Hawk is not a mere symbol; it's a way of life. It's about spreading our wings, conquering the skies of knowledge, and leaving a mark on the world. So, let us continue to soar, compete, persist, and unite, for the next 20 years and beyond. Thank you.

Poem Winner: "Found" by Kayla Terry

Rustling through the hallways
People laughing
Students talking
Bags being zipped up
Someone speeding past you so that they can make it to class on time
You close your eyes
Take a breath
1.. 2... 3... 4... 5...
You count to yourself
You open up your eyes
You see something new
Something strange
Something real
You see two people joking with each other about something going on in their lives
Different, everyone's life is different, you think to yourself
You see a person who looks like they needed that hug
You see a teacher talking to a student, trying to figure out a way to make things work
You see everything, everywhere all happening at once
You've never quite seen it like this before
Someone returning their wallet that they dropped
Someone carrying their bags for them because they're on crutches and can't do it themselves
Someone bringing their friend a Starbucks drink because it's their birthday
You see so much that you have never seen before
And you know
You know this is how it's supposed to be
You close your eyes
You take another deep breath
1... 2... 3... 4... 5...
You count to yourself
You open up your eyes
You take a look around
Finally, you take a step
Walk to the next class sitting on your schedule
Take a seat
Sitting right there next to you
Is a friend you'd never thought could mean so much to you
Someone who makes all the bad days good
Someone who you know will be there, because they always have been
And you know
You know this is how it's supposed to be
At Hendrickson High School

To Soar High by Advait Mannepalli

Conventional knowledge says that hawks soar high above the ground. But being a Hendrickson Hawk is much more than that. Being a hawk involves flying high and low, succeeding and failing, and most importantly, challenging ourselves. Being a hawk is a commitment to principles - a commitment we will abide by till we exit these doors for the last time.

Being a Hendrickson Hawk is a community. Our school has an amazing community, one where we support each other. Hawks unite under a common ideal of inclusivity, which then translates into an environment where students feel cared for, comfortable, and supported. This ideal also goes beyond the school walls, spreading inclusivity throughout Pflugerville, and acting as a role model for other schools and students. This sense of community leads to many friendships and systems that will last years for the students who take part in it - the students who are proud to call themselves Hendrickson Hawks.

Being a Hendrickson Hawk is school pride. Through our pep rallies, our clubs, and our sports, Hawks are proud when representing Hendrickson. Our mission is to fly high in our extracurriculars, and in that same spirit, help others fly high as well. Our achievements represent us as a school and us as a team - helping to inspire everyone in our school to get out there and compete. And through our achievements, we show what it really means to be a Hendrickson Hawk - to be proud of what we have done.

Being a Hendrickson Hawk is academic excellence. By no means is it easy, on the contrary quite difficult. But Hawks welcome these challenges. We welcome struggle, and by doing so, we welcome victory. By doing so, we improve ourselves, pushing ourselves to be better versions than we could ever be. This school is full of people with so much talent. Businessmen, entrepreneurs, engineers, programmers, scientists, doctors, athletes, and so much more. Every single person here has the potential to succeed - everyone.

Being a Hendrickson Hawk is humility. We may succeed, but we also may fail, and we understand that. We understand how important it is to stay humble. While we are not perfect, we realize the importance of improving ourselves - because none of us are perfect. Within each one of us lies areas underdeveloped, and to develop these areas, we must first accept the mere fact that we have weaknesses as well as strengths. By being modest, Hendrickson Hawks have achieved a good name, a name well deserved. Our commitment to humility allows every student who calls themselves a Hawk to shine. As Hawks, we understand the importance of that - giving each person a chance in the spotlight. It is key to who we are.

A Hawk is one who soars high. We excel in our clubs, and we take on challenges. But what most people forget is that a Hawk can't fly forever. They have to land so that someone else can take off, and so that someone else can fly in the spotlight. Being a Hendrickson Hawk involves not only lifting yourself up, but lifting up others. We will take off together, we will fly together, and we will land together - not as students, but as Hawks.

Hawkwarts: A Magical School by Waleed Haider

I need to admit something. Attending Robert E. Hendrickson High School was never my lifelong goal. When I was a towering, five-foot and three inch, one-hundred pound tree branch of a ten-year-old, I patiently awaited my letter of acceptance into the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Then .. I grew up. Much like the middle-ages of adult life, the thoughts of my middle-school years were full of disappointment and cynicism. “I didn’t get into Hogwarts!”, “Algebra is dumb!”, “Am I going to live behind a screen forever?”, “I’ll never see my friends.” And I know I’m not alone - every student in this school’s 20th generation came to Hendrickson just as they were picking up the pieces of a life shattered by the pandemic.

The way we have soared to meet the challenges we’ve faced since have shown what it means to be a Hawk - a special group of teachers, students, and staff who took flight twenty years ago and will continue to soar for decades.

Now that I’m not a ten-year-old, I’m starting to think the horrifying thought that I actually might not grow up to be a wizard. But even though Hogwarts was cool, Hawk-warts is where I really belong, because I know that Hawks are accepting. Following my pandemic-induced isolation, I felt an even more frustrating confinement after transferring here as a sophomore. Having heard of the great teachers and awesome extracurriculars, I knew that I wanted Hendrickson. But I wasn’t sure that Hendrickson wanted me. I was wrong. For people like me who come from different cultural backgrounds and who are interested in different things, this school is a sanctuary where we celebrate our differences instead of hiding them. We know that we’re one student body - we rise for the same pledge, fight the same battles, and celebrate the same wins. We know that our differences don't divide us, but uplift us.

Because I, the next Harry Potter, was robbed out of my trip to Diagon Alley by the Hogwarts admissions board, I never got to buy my owl Hedwig. But maybe I’m lucky .. because we have Hawkwig. See, Hawks aren’t any old birds. To be a Hawk also means to soar with excellence. When I initially joined Hendrickson’s Speech & Debate Team, I was immediately impressed by the amount of engagement my teammates had with both the activity, and each other. I was more impressed by the dedication that every one of my classmates have to their passions. In academics, sports, and fine arts alike, we’re determined not to let each other down. And let’s not forget the most excellent people: the silent army of administrators, teachers, counselors, custodians, and families who make up the backbone of this school. Thank you. You set the example for what it means to be a Hawk.

It’s easy to wave a wand and make magic happen. If I knew how to do memory spells, my math teacher would never know about all the homework I didn’t do. But instead of making the easy kinds of magic, Hendrickson High School has become a magical school. For two decades, Hawks young and old have been imbued with an acceptance and excellence which has let us soar to new heights. As us Hawks continue to navigate through skies rough and smooth alike, I know that our future will be spellbinding

The School Across from Stonehill by Adedayo Johnson

What does it mean to be a Hendrickson Hawk, as reflected upon by a transferred student.

I live in Hutto, and I'm within walking distance from the high school. For a reason that, explained, would well exceed the two page maximum, I decided the school wasn't for me. Not too long after this realization, the other HHS, Hendrickson, became an option. I didn't know much about it though.

"Hendrickson?" I questioned my mom, "like the school across the road from Stonehill?"

And that was all it was known to me at the time. A distant building...always with an empty parking lot, since I saw it only on weekends. My perception of the building only changed once I actually stepped inside, which was near the end of the summer going into my Junior year. I was instantly met with the kind ladies in the front office, and they would direct me to the library for further information. After exiting the front office, I looked down the main hall for the first time, this time gaining a better understanding of the building. It was like how in games, there's a world or a part of the world blocked off, and you're only allowed access once you've achieved something. That was this moment to me. I had finally arrived at Hendrickson.

This all would paint an interesting backdrop over my perception and experience at this school. All my friends, the amazing teachers, and unique experiences that I cherish...all of this was something that originally wouldn't have belonged to me, if it weren't for the leap of faith of transferring.

During the first semester of my Junior year I didn't have a car so I found myself waiting after school often. This led me to discover, attend meetings, and join an interesting multitude of clubs and organizations, such as BSU, BPA, LSU, and FFA. During the time though, if you asked me, more than anything, I would've told you how I just wanted to go home immediately after school. What I didn't know was, this circumstance caused me to meet a lot of new faces throughout the school. People that I either still talk with today, or at the very least, smile and wave to in the hallway. This experience was a nice way to attempt to understand how massive our student body is at our school, and how truly, you can meet someone who might have just been waiting your whole life to become friends with.

So what does it mean to be a Hendrickson Hawk to me? It means hope.

Though what we may be going through seems impossible to overcome, or even to escape, we must remember that if we are patient, and hold on to at least a little hope, day by day, we will continue to see that our story is long from over.

What Makes a Hawk? by Austin Johannesen

As 20 years of high school education passes through Hendrickson High School, and as students enter, as they graduate, and as time passes along infinitely without any care, the identities we forge within here will be everlasting. We are living through this journey, all the good and bad, the happiness and the pain; from all our experience we become new people.

Through all the roaring cheers at football games, or through all the endless nights of studying, our struggles and successes change us, and create who we are in this school as students. To the student who comes to school everyday prepared, the one who holds true enthusiasm in all that they do here at Hendrickson, and who genuinely cherishes all the moments they have lived at this school, you are a hawk. All of the after-school practices, late night cramming for tests, or trips far away to represent your school in competitions miles away have constructed your identity here at Hendrickson. Your work ethic and your absolute dedication, pride, and passion for your school has undoubtedly branded within your heart an association with Hendrickson, and one that will last with you forever when years from now you reminisce on your high school career and can confidently say to yourself that you truly did treasure these days. The people you've met along the way, some you will keep in touch with until you grow old, and some you will drift away from, and that's ok. Every choice you've made, every experience you've basked in, all of it changes you as a person, it makes you who you are. The memory of all these moments, all these people, that is what creates your identity, and that is what makes you a hawk.

To the person who showed up late to class, the one who wakes up and wishes they could be anywhere but here, and the one who can not wait to graduate and leave this place, you are also a hawk. Even though your high school career may be something that you look back on in disdain, or painfully recall, despite that, you still came here. Sure you may have come begrudgingly, or you may have skipped a few classes, or... a few days, but in the end, you toughed it out and made it through. Your identity here may have been one of resentment, pain, and struggle, and that's ok. I stand here and say that I wish your time here could have been better, but a future stands brightly across the horizon as you walk towards that stage to shake all the hands that lead to your diploma, and your escape from this place. Through your experience you've learned about what pains you, about the struggles of life, and you've learned what you want far from you in your life in the future. The memories made in this school, though you may denounce it and wish to forget it, they forged your identity here, an identity that may have been created on anguish, unending toil, and melancholy. But these traits still made you a hawk.

No one student is the same, and no one's experience in these doors is identical. Our identity here is made by what we lived here. Some of us take immense amounts of joy and pride in what we did, and some of us utterly despise what it did to us. Some of us felt alive cheering at football games and pep rallies, while some of us felt cold and dead coming to school every morning and seemingly rotting away at a desk. Either way, whichever type of student you are; if

in the future you wish you could come back to these days and relieve it all, or if in the future you wish you could throw away all the bitter memories that plagued you in the past, you are still a hawk, because it isn't the school that makes you a hawk, it is you and all your experiences and memories, however amazing, glorious, serene, or agonizing, painful, and tumultuous they may have been. You are still a hawk. So to answer the question of what it means to be a hawk? You, you and all the things you do here, that's what makes a hawk, and what it means to be a hawk.

Life is a wounded hawk who learns how to fly by Le-anh Nguyen

When they said
High school was where you change
Academically and socially
They were not joking
When they said
That your high school years will be some of
the hardest years
When they said
This is where life starts getting real
Junior year hits
It's taking all the energy you can give
And putting it to good use
Success after sacrifices will not heal you
You will forever be someone with scars
Success will not heal you
But getting the chance
To be a part of this Hendrickson community
Knowing the relationships you have built
Throughout this community
Will lend you a helping hand
Everyone together in this school
Will be your shoulder to lean on
If you ever consider healing yourself
And perhaps
Assist you
Teach you
Motivate you
That you can stay strong enough
To hold out until you reach your goals
Long enough
For you to laugh at your failures from the
past
Being a part of the Hendrickson community
Shows you how to accept yourself for who
you are
Regardless of
If you don't know your dreams yet
If you know your dreams

If you can hold on to your dreams
Or even if you're struggling to hold on to
your dreams
Being a Hendrickson hawk,
Means being able to explore
The world
And who you are
And to fly freely

the adolescence pattern by Lucas Nguyen

what it means to grow:

I trudge to the entrance of the school,
holding a simper meant for an eighth grader.
My palms burnt with excitement and passion;
A stomach hungry for experience.

Appearing before the library, I continue to walk
down the main hallway.
As I pass C hall, my hair grows longer,
and I grow older, but my eighth grade face stays constant.

I look towards E hall and suddenly I know more
of how to live, love, and cry.
Bonds broke as time passed,
but the important ones stayed.

I enter the cafeteria and I see the door
leading to the end of my flight.
I hold the graduation cap on my head,
And get ready to throw with an arm so full of persistence.

The doors open and the sun hits my face
the same way it had always done.
I hold the fire lit within my hands as
I exit my highschool with

my stomach still hungry,
my same eighth grade face,
important bonds that stayed,
an arm full of persistence,

and a fire neverending.

The Hawks Who Soar by Giovanni Haddid

To be a hawk, a student bold
Is to be fearless, brave, and bold
With wings spread wide, we soar high
Guided by our spirit, we reach for the sky

We are the Hawks of Hendrickson
Proud and strong, our journey has just begun
With sharp eyes and keen senses
We navigate through any defenses

We strive for excellence in all we do
With grit and determination, we see it through
Like a hawk, we have laser focus
On our goals, we never lose our locus

We soar through challenges and obstacles
With grace and poise, we conquer all hurdles
Our feathers may get ruffled at times
But we never let it dim our shine

As hawks, we are part of a flock
Each one is unique, yet we never mock
We support and uplift one another
For we are all sisters and brothers

And when the winds of change blow strong
We adapt and adjust, we never go wrong

For we are hawks, we are resilient
Our spirit and strength, are forever brilliant

So let us spread our wings and fly
With pride and honor, we reach for the sky
For to be a hawk, a student's true
Is to embody all that is Hendrickson, through and through.

What It Means to be a Hawk by Siddharth Rajen

What does it mean to be a hawk?

Does it mean to be a bird flying in the sky?

Does it mean to know what's bad and right?

What does it mean to be a hawk?

To be a hawk should I have feathers,

should i have talons,

should i have claws,

Should I be blue?

What does a hawk do?

Does a hawk sit and learn, even when times
are tough?

Does a hawk not know the word "giving
up"?

Will a hawk find happiness in everything,
And bring positivity and cheer, spirit lifting?
Will a hawk stand up against bad,
Against hate, separation, things that are sad?

Should a hawk be studious, straight As?

Should a hawk have fun, have fun in
learning?

Is a hawk tall? Is a hawk short?

Is it a bird, resilient, agile, one who never
fails?

Does the bird tell its story, it's a hendrickson
tale?

What does it mean to be a hawk to you? Or
to her? Or to him?

What does a hawk mean to your teachers
and friends?

What does a hawk mean to your dad, mom,
or dog?

What does a hawk mean to your sister,
brother, and pet frog?

When I get asked this I often ponder..

Am I being a good hawk? Should I be
smarter? Stronger?

But I think a hawk is all of these traits,
not one over the other, but smart and brave!

I think a hawk is smart, but won't study all
day

Or will be strong, but still get good grades!

I think a hawk is caring, sweet, and kind,
And will always accept you, in your darkest
moments,
then you'll find it!

And I think that's the most important part!

Cause hawks fly together, not apart!

A hawk will always be there for you when
you need it.

And together let's all be hawk-like students.

Hendrickson Hawks By Guinevere Thomas

As I walk through the halls of Hendrickson
High,
My heart swells with pride, my spirit takes
flight.
For here I am a Hawk, a part of this clan,
A student of the best, in this very land.

With every stride, I feel the echoes of the
past's call,
Of those who came before, who left their all.
Their legacy lives on, in the walls and the
floors,
Their spirits guide me, as I open new doors.

To be a Hendrickson Hawk means more
than just a name,
It's a symbol of strength, a beacon of fame.
We soar above the rest, with honor and
grace,
Our determination, we never misplace.

Our teachers, our mentors, they light our
way,
With knowledge and wisdom, they pave the
pathway.
They push us to be better, to reach for the
sky,
To spread our wings and never be shy.

In the classroom, we strive for excellence,
With every assignment, we give it our best.
We question, we learn, we grow every day,
And with each success, we proudly say,
'I am a Hendrickson Hawk, and there's
nothing I can't do,
For I am part of a community, strong and
true.'
We bond through sports, clubs, and events,

Together we rise, with each
accomplishment.

And though we may stumble, and face some
trials,
We never give up, we go the extra miles.
For we are resilient, we never back down,
We fight through the storms and wear our
crown.

To be a Hendrickson Hawk, is to be a part of
history,
A legacy that never fades, a story of victory.
So hold your head high, and spread your
wings wide,

For we are the Hendrickson Hawks, and
we'll always rise.

So here's to the navy blue and the silver, the
colors we wear,
To the memories we make, and the future
we'll share.
For we are Hendrickson Hawks, forever and
always,
And nothing can stop us, in our own unique
ways.

Hawk Ya! (to the tune of Hey Ya! By Outkast) by Kevin Brettfleean

One two three *hawk sound*

Us Hawks don't mess around
Because we love Mr Grebb
And this I know for suree *hawk sound*

But do we really got it
Can we really wait to get out
The door? *hawk sound*

Don't try to leave at lunch
Without leaving your ID right at
The door *hawk sound*

Thank god for all the staff
For keeping us together
When we don't know how

Hawk ya! Hawk Ya!
Hawk ya! Hawk Ya!
Hawk ya! Hawk ya!
Hawk ya! Hawk ya!

I think we've got it
Oh the hawks have got it
But got it just don't get it till the
Hawks are on top * hawk sound*

We hawk together
Oh we hawk together
But hawking's always better

When there's ID's involved! *hawk sound*
If what they say is "Hawks Don't last
Forever"
Then what makes, then what makes
Then what makes, then what makes
Then what makes us the exception?

So why oh why oh why oh why
Oh why oh
Are we so in denial when
Graduation is here?
Yall don't wanna listen you just wanna
prance

Hawk ya! Hawk Ya!
Hawk ya! Hawk Ya!
Hawk ya! Hawk ya!
Hawk ya! Hawk ya!

(fade out) * hawk noise*