

“Humanity” by Kennya Molina

As most students learn in 1st grade social studies, or in 7th grade civics, citizenship is being part of a community and taking action within it. It's following the rules, taking responsibility, and learning tolerance. Yet we were never taught to what extent that applies to. It certainly isn't only within school grounds, or even a country for that matter.

Let's build on what we were taught as little kids: Collaboration . As a student in a classroom, this could be done by helping clean up garbage, staying quiet to reduce distractions, or helping a classmate with homework . In a neighborhood, it can mean weekly park cleanups, and not taking up each other's parking spaces. But what about in the world? Every culture exchanged, every language learned, every tradition shared, brought back to one thing. Humanity: The very thing that connects us all. As a part of humanity, we all hold the common responsibility of working together as a whole. Take world issues, for example. No issue, whether it be economic, political, or social, can be solved by a singular person. As a citizen of a country, one has a responsibility to vote, but as a citizen of the world, it is about thinking outside of political or geographical boundaries. It is about thinking outside of ourselves.

Personally, global citizenship is something I have had to think about since I was a little kid. As the daughter of two immigrants, I have seen so much of how different people can be. My mother has said to me before, “Respect, responsibility, and compassion are the most important things humans can have for one another.” Growing up, I was never taught to believe that anyone was inferior or superior. This has allowed me to grow as an open-minded, collaborative person. It has allowed me to be able to do my part in the world, and advocate about things I am passionate about.

For people with different experiences, global citizenship may not be something they have thought about. They may think that it doesn't involve them. But this affects all of us. Take the thousands of students around the world on strike from school in protest of global warming, for example. To them, worrying about their future doesn't seem to be in the books. They believe that we have no future, if we as a civilization don't work together to save our one and only home. One cannot continue to have hope in a world that is not working towards a better future. But no matter how big or small you may feel in this world, you matter. You are a part of this, and you can make a difference. You can do your part, just as we always have. From the beginning, humans have been working together to get to where we are today. Without everyone doing their part, we may have never become the shoe-wearing, phone-using, house-living people we are today. Nobody is perfect. I can't claim to be the best world citizen, and neither can anyone else. We can, however, keep doing better. Everyday, we can do better.