

Applicant's Name: Antonio Salafia

Applicant's SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last 4 Digits)

## ESSAY PAGE

### Turning Challenges into Opportunities

For as long as I can remember, challenges in my life have risen throughout my childhood and high school years. These few challenges have created golden opportunities to learn as grow as an individual and the ability to give back to the community in small ways.

One of the biggest challenges that I faced was when my father was transferred to another base. My parents were confronted with a decision that split our family in two for about nine months. My brother was in his last year of high school and my parents wanted him to graduate before leaving. I moved with my dad while my mom and brother stayed behind. This was extremely hard because I was still very young. Knowing that I would be lonely, my parents kept me busy involved in a traveling Pop Warner football team. Football gave me passion, dedication, and discipline which carried through to varsity football, basketball, and soccer. These traits strengthened and prepared me academically for college.

The next challenge occurred when we moved, it was across the country away from all the family and friends I'd ever known. As soon as we arrived at Altus AFB in Oklahoma, my parents purchased a membership at the Youth Center. Through the Youth Center, I participated in sports and community events. I was recognized for my outstanding participation as Youth of the Year. As Youth of the Year I traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet other youth that were selected from other other bases for the same recognition. The move to Altus broadened my educational and cultural experiences.

My greatest challenge happened in high school during my senior year in football. Since the second grade, I had always been chosen by coaches to play in the quarterback position due to the strength of my arm. As a Bullpup quarterback in a Pop Warner league our team won all eight games and in ninth grade I led our football team to the Great Plains Conference Championship. Every year in high school, I strived hard to do my best during our summer pride workouts. The day of our first game my senior year, I was told by the coach I would not be playing in the quarterback position because the back-up quarterback was not athletic enough to play in

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another position. I was truly devastated. The position I dreamed about all my life was taken at a moments notice. I was handed the receiver position and decided to give it my all. This challenge brought about an inner soul filled with a burning desire to achieve. This mind set proved that anyone who works hard can accomplish great things. I broke a twenty-nine year old school record by catching eleven receptions in one game. I was also chosen as the receiver of the year in Class 5A-1 division.

In turn, I assisted coaching a brand new Pop Warner league in our community. I encouraged many football players from our team to mentor these young players, some who never even touched a football. Through all these challenges, great opportunities from various colleges rose. Now I realize that these challenges came about because my desire, determination, and discipline. Colleges have looked at me for my strong academics and my athletic abilities. Overcoming challenges has definitely led to positive opportunities.