

From a young age there exists a curiosity of aspiration and dreams of the future. What are you going to be when you grow up is a question I personally heard more times than I can count. The answer changed just as often. As a naive six year old I went with the obvious choice of becoming the President of the United States. Then, it was a vet because of my love for animals. A few years later I dreamed of becoming a NBA basketball player. I had won the MVP ball while on the U12 YMCA basketball team after all.

As adulthood looms closer the expectation is to choose a safe, mundane career path. Being part of the Youth Leadership program opened my eyes to new possibilities of life past high school. As Ferris Bueller once said, "If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." And, I did. I had no idea there were such diverse occupations in my own backyard of Sarasota. Being exposed to professions beyond the norm from an improv studio to a digital stock company and an insider look behind the scenes of a news station. It proved to me that settling for a mundane career was not the only choice.

Sitting in my first year of film class my sophomore year I could tell most of my peers in the room were there just to watch movies. That was my intention as well but I was quickly captivated by the progression of film and the ability to travel in time through a movie. Considered by others to be a storyteller and creative writer, I had found my ark of disbursement in film but was unsure my passion could be a career.

That is why our visit to ABC 7 was one of my favorite tours. Journalists are some of the biggest storytellers - sharing vital information with the public every day. Chronicling the lives of people in our own community plus reporting stories from across the country and around the world. As the bus approached the news station large satellites surrounded the building like they were trying to reach out to another planet. Inside, there was a palpable energy. The station was filled with reporters perfecting their story before going on air.

The news floor seemed to be a huge hit for everyone else. A chance to see how you would look on TV. My classmates flocked to the green screen, acting out the role of meteorologist. The production control room was where I was drawn. I found myself in front of enough TVs to watch every channel at the same time. We were shown how producers keep control of the broadcast, editing on the fly and knowing when to tune to a commercial break.

Youth leadership taught me to keep my six year old mentality and dream big. No matter what I pursue, I can use my love of film and storytelling abilities. Mundane is not inevitable - my future can be extraordinary and imaginative.