

Trees. The lungs of the earth. They provide the foundation of every living thing. For me, a tree does many things. A tree provides me with paper to do homework and write papers, it gives me a break from the heat on a hot and sunny day, and most importantly it gives me life. One of the most important things a tree provides is oxygen. Oxygen allows all living things to breathe. Along with producing oxygen, trees absorb carbon dioxide emissions. By removing carbon dioxide from the air, trees create healthier air for me to breathe and help counter global warming.

In the 1930's one of the world's toughest times hit, and the cause of it was unhealthy soil. The Dust Bowl created a very hard time for Americans. There were no trees or plants that held the soil together and the dirt blew powerfully and endlessly. People lived in and inhaled dirt for many years which caused them to get sick. Today, because of trees, I no longer have to worry about a second Dust Bowl occurring. I have taken for granted the clean air I am privileged to breathe. I am able to exercise and enjoy my time outdoors because trees were planted to restore the soil.

Because trees restored the soil, they also restored plants. As a young woman living in South Dakota, a lot of my food comes from plants. We grow a lot of produce in city gardens and personal gardens that provide food. This food is important to families and also brings joy to those who watch the food grow. In our state, we also plant food that helps sustain people around the United States. On my grandfather's farm in the fall, I would go with him in the combine to get the corn. The first time he let me drive by myself was the best feeling in the world. I was doing something important that would help not only me and my family but also other farmers and the animals on the farm. Food is a necessity of life, and without trees to keep the soil prosperous a lot of food would not be available to me. Trees also grow foods like apples and oranges that provide food for many people in the world.

Plants not only give me food but also sustain animals. Farmers grow corn and beans and also plant hay that is used to feed their livestock. Cows, sheep, chicken, and many other animals provide me with meals. My family gets beef from my grandfather who runs a farm in Castlewood, South Dakota and we also get meat from grocery stores and restaurants. Trees are in all the memories I have many with my grandpa on the farm. When calves were born I would get to go out and help feed them. Their huts were in a tree shelterbelt, and once they were older we would get the feed and hay and bring it out to the cows. Trees also provide a living space for animals. The cows at the farm looked for shelter under the trees when it rained. They looked for shade from the trees when it was hot.

Trees are good for our emotional health. When I was younger my father built a treehouse in our backyard. I spent countless hours in the tree just imagining what it would be like to live up there. I brought chairs and snacks into the treehouse and watched squirrels and birds live their lives in the tree. Not only are trees a habitat for animals, but they also allow me and many others to observe animals and see their daily routines. Now that I'm older, I enjoy running through our state park. I'm blessed to live by 2 of them where trees are kept in abundance.

As a future civil engineer, I plan to make sure our road development honors our natural habitats, and value our trees. This is important because trees cool streets and cities. Without trees, cities have grown increasingly warmer and trees can cool a city by up to ten degrees

Fahrenheit. Trees protect children from harmful ultraviolet ray in our local parks. Neighborhoods that have flush trees on the streets also have lower crime rates than those without. These neighborhoods typically have high property values which are important to city growth. As a civil engineer, I will be conscious of putting trees into all of my developments.

As a civil engineer, I am also passionate about cleaning up water pollution. Trees serve as an excellent tool to prevent water pollution. A tree grabs the water and sucks it into the ground. This prevents runoff water from entering our drain system and public waters. Clean water will then do it's part to then support the growth of trees. Trees save water for us. When trees cover lawns less evaporation occurs saving the water in the ground.

In conclusion, I believe trees give us life, and I will do my part to give life to trees.