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First Place
Seventh Grade
St. Francis de Sales
Flirtisha Harris, Coach

Recognizing a Leader of Faith and Character Who Also Lights the Way, Coach Harris

What makes a leader? Is it someone you can count on? Someone you can trust? A friend? I think a leader is a person who will show you the right path and help you get on it. Leaders are people who help others whenever needed. I think a leader is a person who guides you and that you can really look up to. A leader is a person who knows what to do at all times and will always be there to help. Someone I think deserves to be a leader is Coach Harris.

Flirtisha Harris is the girls' coach at St. Francis de Sales School. Coach Harris has been here for over a year now, and she always has the same expectation. It is that we try our best in everything we do. I first met her in sixth grade; at first I thought she was going to be a hard coach. We worked exercise after exercise. Honestly, sometimes I really didn't know if she really cared about what we did, as long as we did it right. Some of the girls were worried that we weren't going to learn to understand the sports and exercises, but she forced us to keep going until we get it right. which we thought would be hard. The problem is, that's just exactly what she was supposed to do. Her job was to push us and prove to us that we can do anything we set our minds to. Everything we think negatively is just mental; it's not really that hard if you look at it the way it was. We could accomplish anything. Many girls in this school. including me. are very proud to have her coach us.

Coach never stops believing in us. When we feel like giving up. she's always right there on the side. cheering for us to keep going. All she wants to show us is just how much we can do. During P. E., when we run the mile or learn a new sport, she works with each of us to help improve our skills. To our surprise, we realized we improved greatly. Coach Harris is someone the girls can relate to. Lots of girls feel so open to Coach Harris, talking to her freely. She is just like one of our own friends. She's always trying to bring out the best in everyone. She treats everyone fairly and loves us all. Coach Harris displays leadership by showing us the right way

and being able to listen. We feel comfortable talking to her because we know she cares. She has big expectations, but that's only because she believes in us.

Let's see maybe we should bring this essay back in time a little. It was the hardest game of the season. The memory of this game just keeps coming back to me. St. Peter's team; these people were tough. Just a look at them gave you feelings of loss. We started our game like any other. In this game, we were doing horribly. I guess it was just one of our bad days. It was halftime, and Coach Harris asked us what we were doing out there. We were speechless. We knew we were doing really badly. That made us all the more determined to put ourselves together and work as a team. In the second half we did much better. Shots were going in, and our defense was strong. Even though we lost, Coach Harris's words still haunt me. "Walk out of here with your chins up and your heads held high," she said.

At times, I may feel like whatever Coach Harris is telling us is useless. Maybe we think it doesn't make any sense. We're wrong. I understand that some coaches discipline you; they may shout or talk to you privately. Sometimes, people are even scared of coaches; but they are just here to help. Coach Harris is kind and loving in her own way. She gives us help and attention when we need it, so we should give the same back. Nobody's perfect, and sometimes Coach makes mistakes, but we still trust her. Coach Harris is a leader inside our school, or anywhere else. We're happy to have her here. She is a great teacher and coach; she always will be.