A major tenet of my life philosophy is that every person has an ethical responsibility to help others to the best of his ability. As an applicant for a 2013 scholarship, I discussed how sustainability, collaboration, dissemination of information, and creation of tools and experiences were all ways in which designers possess the potential to improve environments. Now I’d like to investigate the growth of these principles in my practice and how they affect my ability to help others as I move forward in my design career.

Sustainability is a cause that will continue to inform my projects. A novel experience that has augmented my understanding of urban sustainability was a course entitled “Walking Places” taught by LA artist and writer Ken Ehrlich. The course analyzed the act of walking in the context of an aesthetic practice that informs creative work by focusing on the planning and navigation of urban spaces. A work entitled “Crowds” arose from my walks, with the intent of promoting heightened social and sensory awareness of constructed environments. Learning from this experience and the insights into design methodology that have constituted the focus of my second year, I am working to broaden my process with strategies that draw attention to things that would normally go unnoticed in order to send impactful messages.
Regarding collaboration, I’m privileged to work with many people whose efforts benefit their environments. Getting involved with the creative community at CalArts has provided me with many growth opportunities. Assisting with design department fundraising events and speaking to and offering advice on issues that concern students has elicited nominations for me to replace our graduating representative on student council. As a senator, I would take pride in fulfilling my ethical responsibility to help others by improving the institute and securing resources for design education. For the duration of my career, I hope to not merely practice, but to be an active participant in thought, discussion, and advocacy with respect to design issues. Collaboration and community involvement at CalArts will go a long way in driving me towards that aspiration.

Becoming an active thinker in the design community adds skills such as writing, editing and teaching to the professional practice of design. An experience that exposed me to these skill sets in a design context was an assignment to develop an interactive didactic tool for the world of graphic design. Work on this publication has increased my already elevated interest in digital media as a mechanism for disseminating information through engaging experiences, and has encouraged me to declare the Digital Arts Minor in its first year at CalArts. Groundbreaking educational models and cross-disciplinary experiences offered in specialized courses are augmenting my technical skills (e.g. complex programming knowledge and heightened consideration of other media) and positively contributing to my education in ways I wouldn’t experience within the design program alone. Continuing down this path will reinforce my practice with processes that enable me to extend design beyond the ways in which it is conventionally encountered in order to teach, inform, persuade and help others.