A TAB Member’s Unbiased Perspective on Why You Should Join TAB

Thinking of joining the Troy Teen Advisory Board, or TAB? You’re in the right place! As a member of TAB for my second year running, I was once in your shoes. Read more for my retelling of how and why I joined TAB, and why you should too!

It all started back in August 2019, the glorious final month before school started back up again. I was a rising freshman attending Troy High and did not have high expectations, to say the least. My older sister, Shifa, had told me countless intimidating tales of crowded hallways, detention, vaping in the restrooms, among other high school stereotypes, which in hindsight, I recognize was quite hyperbolized, but at the time, I was quite antsy with anticipation, as you can imagine.

That summer I had been trying to find student groups to join in order to meet new peers and increase my involvement in the Troy community, and couldn’t wait to try new clubs at Troy High, in hopes of finding the ones I was most passionate about, which ended up being Entrepreneurship and Courtyard Club. These two clubs resonated with me because they aligned with my passions, and I was ecstatic to meet like-minded students through attending meetings, participating in events and competitions, etc. In fact, I am still an active member in both to this day.

Back to how I joined TAB.

Although I do not remember the exact moment or catalyst that compelled me to join, I presume I was browsing the teens section in the library, when I noticed a brochure advertising TAB. Out of curiosity, I picked it up and thought the group looked interesting, and it was feasible for me to commit to attending meetings on the first and third Mondays of every month.

Reflecting on that decision in retrospect roughly two years later, deciding to show up at a TAB meeting for the first time definitely stretched me past my comfort zone as I am naturally introverted and prefer staying in my shell and among my close friends, though with time and practice, have become more comfortable in public speaking, and TAB was instrumental in this transformation.

Back then, I must have thought, if nothing else, I would at least get free snacks. I’ll repeat that - If nothing else, do it for the snacks (when we’re in-person). This mindset will get your foot in the door and give you a reason to look forward to your first meeting if nothing else about TAB excites you. Although, I am confident TAB will genuinely excite you if you give it a shot!

So, I took a leap of faith, and the rest is history.

If you are considering joining TAB yourself, here are three reasons you should, according to my own unbiased perspective.

1. Meet new people - Open to all Troy teens, TAB has an amazing synergy of folks from Troy High, Athens, International Academy East (IA), and even homeschoolers. TAB is a fabulous way to get out of your comfort zone (like I did!) and develop the social interpersonal skills required to succeed in today’s professional world. It is truly fascinating to hear and learn from new perspectives and ideas coming from students from diverse backgrounds and schools, and being able to collaborate in the welcoming
and inclusive environment the group radiates from the very first time you step into the meeting room. Join TAB if you want to break the bubble of your limited circle of friends from your own high school and meet students with similar interests and ambitions.

2. Volunteer - Volunteering has numerous health benefits and is known to make you feel satisfied, clearer about your purpose, and more aware about the challenges others face in the world. No wonder it is also mandated for membership into prestigious school clubs like the National Honor Society, as well as colleges. Through TAB’s sponsorship, you can even earn the Presidential Volunteer Service Award by recording and submitting community service hours to our point secretary, Shaarav, in May. Examples of volunteer activities through TAB include writing and packaging gifts for children nationwide during the holidays on behalf of the USPS Operation Santa program, giving advice to middle school students in the “High School Hacks” program, or even planning for and acting as a character in a (virtual) escape room.

3. Leadership Opportunities - Want to strive for the betterment of Troy through teen and youth involvement, and ensure every teen’s voice is heard? A leadership position serves as a gateway to spearhead and advocate for events, technology, and programs available to Troy’s youth, and is a good experience that will serve you well in the future for job and college applications. Serving on TAB gives you a medium to speak up and advocate for the teens of Troy - but you do not need a leadership position for that (it’s a given for participating in TAB!). Our group speaks on behalf of all teens of Troy and makes recommendations for future programs, resources, events, and technology which benefits you and your peers. For example, throughout the year, the library partners with Benihana to offer a free sushi rolling workshop which is personally one of my favorite programs from the library. As an avid library cardholder and member in TAB, I can speak up about its continuation to have it as well as other similar programs in the future. In TAB, we vote for the continuation and termination of programs like this, and suggest ideas for future programs that would appeal to students in our own demographic. I am also passionate about spreading knowledge of entrepreneurship among Troy teens through partnerships with local businesses and the Troy Chamber of Commerce, and creating a compost to collectively reduce Troy citizens’ landfill waste, so I can increase interest and eventually implement the idea (post-quarantine, of course) with TAB’s support.

I hope this article got you thinking about the benefits of joining and contributing to TAB, and regardless of your intent, I sincerely would love to see you at our virtual meetings! To learn more information and receive Zoom information for our meetings on the first and third Monday of every month, email teenadvisoryboardtroy@gmail.com. Also, check out our Facebook and Instagram, where we post weekly content and host competitions to win prizes like Amazon gift cards!

Aleena is a sophomore at Troy High School passionate about reducing food waste and increasing interfaith empathy in society. She is interested in a career in creative advertising and communications. When she is not doing schoolwork, or reading up on marketing, you can find her raving about her new favorite memoir, roller skating, or on the tennis court.