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## City of Long Beach, City Auditor



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City Auditor

### A Student Who Inspires Me

You never know what children are going to say. Children can be random, hilarious, on-point, or even wise beyond their years. Recently, I listened to a young, vibrant and intelligent student, Avianna (Avi) Christensen, speak about life's challenges. What she said really struck me, and I was very impressed with her maturity, calmness and reassurance that everything was going to be ok. I had the chance

to interview her and would like to share her words of wisdom.

Avi, 9, is in Mrs. Barragan's 4th-5th grade class at Minnie Gant Elementary School. "Fun facts" (that's what she called them) about Avi include her favorite:

Show: "American Ninja Warriors which I want be on one day. I built my own obstacle course where I dropped from my bed to the curtains to a swinging chair until I ripped the curtains."

Sport: "Taekwondo. I'm a second level red belt, and I love the Taekwondo values: integrity, perseverance, self-control, curiosity and indomitable spirit which means always doing your best and never giving up! All of them are equally important."

Club: "Robotics."

When I asked Avi what she likes best about school, she exclaimed, "There are lots of great things - the teachers are nice, I love the library, and they have Chromebooks!"

Her favorite subject is Reading. "I'll explode if you ask what my favorite book is," she jokingly threatened. "My favorite authors are Rick Riordan and J.K. Rowling. I love how authors invite us into their worlds. I'm writing a book about three sisters who discover their family members are mythical figures when they stumble upon a portal in their house that leads to another world." She's proudly written chapters 1, 4 and 5.

Posed with the question of what she wants to be when she grows up she recounted, "At first, I wanted to be a princess, and then an expert ice-cream taster (her favorite flavor is watermelon). Now, I want to be an author and use my imagination to bring others to different worlds with me. I want to be a writer/adventurer/engineer. I like to create things that make people happy and help people who may need it."

I asked Avi her secret when speaking to large groups, "I speak from the heart," she answered. "I have good charisma," she added with a sweet smile.

Finally, I asked how one could help a classmate. Avi thoughtfully answered, "If you see others having problems or are lonely, be their friend and remind them of their strengths. Think of the Taekwondo values and speak from the heart."

Not only is that on-point, it is also very wise. Wise words to inspire us all.

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