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Prompt 3

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### What it is like living in a tight knit community

The backstretch is considered a place of work to many but can be considered a home to others. The backstretch is a community like no other, bringing multiple families together in a place of work that feels more like a home. This community brings friends together, activities for the youth, and life long memories. Growing up in the backstretch also came with its challenges. For example, getting to school everyday or on time, and moving from one track to another. Despite the challenges everyone always looked out for each other in the best way they could, making this community different from the rest.

This community felt like no other due to everyone knowing each other. Whenever people see each other for the first time of that day they would be greeted with a good morning and if it was possible they would catch up within that moment. This created lifelong friends, from sharing one's happiest moments to sharing some of the worst. Not only would this community create lifelong friends but would help the youth stimulate their brains throughout the summer. Providing its own mobile library, where the youth were able to pick out books once every week and return them once they were done reading them. Mobile libraries don't go around every town, making this a unique feature within our community. Showing that this community is different compared to the others because they cared to provide the youth with books during the summer.

Another example on how this community is different is because of the extracurricular activities provided to the youth. There was a camp that kept the kids busy during summer break.

This camp consisted of learning how to crochet, work a computer, interact with other kids, etc. Other activities were the soccer and basketball leagues. Where those who lived in the community were able to form their own teams and compete. This makes the community unique as not many other communities provide these types of extracurricular activities for their youth. These activities were not only intellectual but created lifelong memories for those who participated. Although some of these activities occurred a couple years back, they are still a fun topic of conversation. Mentioning to family and friends if they remembered a certain event happening creates a joyful reminiscent feeling that will be held on for a lifetime.

Although there were many benefits that made the backstretch unique this community also had its challenges. Getting to school on an early bus and coming back home on a beaming hot bus was one of the biggest challenges. Getting up everyday at six am to get ready, get food, and ride the bus for an hour to get to school was challenging. It was not uncommon for a kid to sleep past their alarms and miss the bus, causing them to miss a whole day of school only because they were a few minutes late. There were higher risks of accidents occurring due to traveling everyday to and from school for an hour. There were incidents where a bus would be in an accident and a different bus would have to go back and help to get kids back to school on time. This wouldn't always work out in our favor and would cause more kids to be late for school. Another challenge people who lived in the backstretch faced was moving from one track to another. This process would occur from moving from Hawthorne racetrack to Arlington racetrack. Every time moving occurred everything had to be moved from one place to another. The process of deep cleaning dorms, getting rid of any Pests living in the dorms, and moving belongings from one place to another was a challenge in itself.

The backstretch had its disadvantages but it only made the community grow closer. The backstretch created life long memories and friends, had unique extracurricular activities, and

created a safe environment for everyone. This community was like no other community, having residents that would look out for each other and bond on experiences previously lived. Although the backstretch can be thought of as a place of work, for many people it was a home that brought people together from all over the world. The diversity in the community is what makes this place unique and allows people to express themselves freely.