

Ash Dillon
Achievement Award
Freestyle Academy
May 2025



Over the past two years in my English class, Ash Dillon has grown from a somewhat reserved student into one of the most confident and engaged voices in the room. In our regular discussions about art, current events, and literature, she consistently contributes insightful perspectives and speaks her mind with clarity and conviction. Her ability to reflect deeply on her learning and engage meaningfully in all aspects of our class has made her stand out, earning “Exceptional” assessments on reading and discussion assignments during the recent Worldbuilding Project. For this project, students read *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler as the core text, and Ash brought our conversations to life by asking thoughtful questions, referencing the text specifically, and offering a wide range of interpretations of its figurative elements. She even chose to read the sequel, *Parable of the Talents*, on her own. Now, she is bringing the same passion and curiosity to our study of Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*. It has been a joy to work with a student so committed to developing her thinking. Ash’s growth has been both steady and remarkable, setting an example for her peers through her dedication and enthusiasm. She truly embodies what we hope all MVLA students will become: a lifelong learner.

~Jason Greco, Freestyle Academy English Teacher

At Freestyle, we talk about having grit = passion + perseverance to be successful in anything. For the past two years, Ash has shown tremendous grit and that’s why Freestyle Staff has recognized her for this award. Not everything comes easy for Ash but her grit, tenacity, and willingness to do the work is a personal trait that will no doubt allow her to be successful beyond Freestyle. She has produced some very impressive pieces of media that is a testament to her blossoming deep engagement and exploration of complex ideas - particularly her Documentary Project media and her Narrative 2 media productions - Ash’s Website: <https://freestyleacademy.rocks/~AshD> . Her recent Senior stacked wood art piece "[Paradox of Humanity](#)" is stunning and deep. We asked her to create a duplicate of her amazing piece so that we can display it at Freestyle forever. It will always remind me of someone who has proven that grit truly is a step towards success and hopefully inspiring future Freestyle students. She will prove her grit again when she comes back and tells her success stories at Chapman University studying Animation, VFX, and Biological Sciences and also beyond college IRL (as you young people call it).

~Leo Florendo, Freestyle Academy Program Coordinator and Digital Media Teacher