Community to me is a group of people who have each others’ backs in times of crisis, celebration, and more. The people within a community support each other regardless of the differences they may have. I have experienced being a member of a community before on several occasions. While some of these communities made me feel supported, there were others that began to feel toxic. At UMD, I have been a part of the scholars community where I get to interact with my intelligent peers and take specific classes with them. This community fostered a family dynamic which allowed the people in the program to open up. In freshman year when most students feel alone and lost, this program helped members including myself feel as if we had people who cared about us. While this community fostered the right kind of environment for me, I’ve also been a part of my town’s Indian community which had a more toxic dynamic. Within the Indian community we have an Indian association that develops events for us to attend to celebrate various festivals and special occasions based on our culture. While growing up, I made efforts to belong to this Indian community in order to experience the culture and meet people from all parts of India. However, as I grew older I realized that even within the Indian population there was tension due to people coming from different regions of India where different languages are spoken. Each region has its own unique culture beyond what is known to be generally Indian. The biggest divide has always been between north and south India. Since the organizers and attendees of these events were majority North Indian, the cultural representation tended to skew in that way. Being a South Indian, I noticed how the North Indians gathered together and did not really interact with the South Indians that much due to difference in culture. Growing up while attending these Indian events such as Diwali I would think to myself, “why are they speaking a different language than me? Why do their indian clothes look different? Why is the food different from what I eat at home?” It occurred to me that my South Indian culture was getting no love or respect from the rest of the Indian population in my town. We were a “community” but my South Indian friends and I always felt different. As we grew up, we began to distance ourselves from the community and interacted with each other instead. We ate South Indian food and watched South Indian movies. We learned to build our own small community where we felt important to the other people within the community. Overall, community is a general term that can apply to any group of people that you feel comfortable with. If a person does not feel welcome, then that community is not truly a community for them.