In a time when our country is in economic turmoil and at war, happiness comes at a premium. After this Winter Olympics I hope the United States and a majority of Americans have gotten that skip back into their step and confidence back in their country.

Sports have a way of uniting people during tough times, and the games in Vancouver were no exception. The Olympics beat out American Idol in the ratings, showing that the American people found inspiration in competition. I know I did.

There is no way that I could even get strapped onto a snowboard or downhill skis but every night I found myself surprisingly glued to the television screaming for Shaun White and Apolo Ohno to win. I really did not expect to care about winter sports, especially since I have never played one, but a sense of true, raw pride for our country was inspiring to me.

The pride that I had for the USA was teetering on radical as I came to the realization that during the Olympics I bordered on prejudice against all countries that do not don the red, white, and blue.

I swore off of Canadian bacon and refused to eat Swiss cheese. I always saw the Americans as superior in all things, including the opening and closing ceremonies wardrobe (USA was looking good in Polo Ralph Lauren).

Every time I saw an American athlete receive a medal I felt a sense of pride and love; I hope that many other Americans did as well. The United States took 37 trips to the medal podium which was a winter games record. I am wishing that I was not the only person who felt touched and moved by the American flag being raised. It was a feeling that I have not felt in awhile.

Although winning the most amounts of medals won’t fix the credit crisis or healthcare problem I hope that what went on in Vancouver will make a difference in our country’s morale and outlook on the future. I was really inspired by the Olympic Games and I hope that the fight and passion that each athlete competed with will carry over to our everyday lives.

I now have a restored sense of love for my country. It never went away but was bombarded by the negativity we hear about the situation we are in everyday. We constantly hear “Devastation in Haiti and Chile” or “Senate divided on healthcare” all of these negative statements instead of the positive.

I pray that the positivity of the games has had an effect on more people than just me because I think it is a sign that our country can come back and this can be our starting point on our way back to the top.