

The Holocaust Documentation & Education Center, Inc.
Presents the 2019 Winning Entries of the

Annual
Olga & Eugene Guttman
Visual Arts & Writing Contest
2019 Theme: We All Must Stand Up & Speak Out
Against All Hatred, Prejudice & Bullying

The Holocaust Documentation & Education Center, Inc.
Presents the 2019 Winning Entries of the

Annual
"A Simple Act of Kindness"
Visual Arts & Writing Contest



HOLOCAUST
DOCUMENTATION AND
EDUCATION CENTER, INC.

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The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Overall Art Winner

By: Jeremy Volpe

Grade 12 – Charles W. Flanagan High School, Pembroke Pines, FL



The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Art Entries
First Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Analays Gutierrez
Grade 5 – Dante B. Fascell Elementary, Miami, FL



The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Art Entries
Second Place Winner – Elementary School Division

By: Janelle Felix

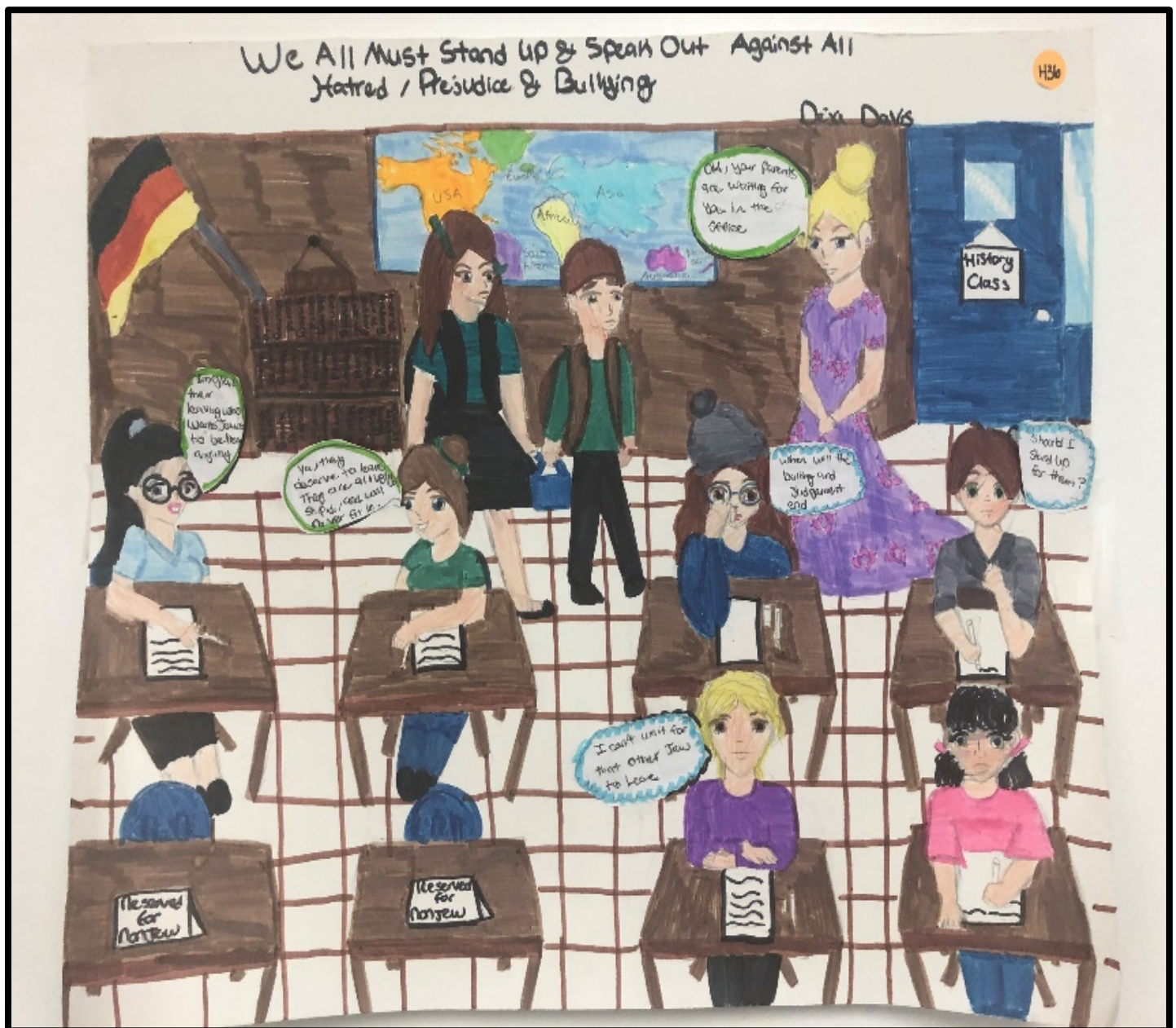
Grade 5 – Sandpiper Elementary, Sunrise, FL



The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Art Entries
Third Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Christina Walker
Grade 5 – Sandpiper Elementary, Sunrise, FL



The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Art Entries
Fourth Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Lucienne Wadsworth
Grade 4 – Everglades Elementary, Weston, FL



The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Art Entries
Honorable Mention – High School Division

By: Deja Davis

Grade 10 – Charles W. Flanagan High School, Pembroke Pines, FL



**The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Art Entries
Honorable Mention – High School Division**

By: Gianna Ubiera

Grade 10 – Cypress Bay High School, Weston, FL

The “Olga & Eugene Guttman” Writing Entries
First Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Kieran McManus
Grade 5 – Everglades Elementary, Weston, FL

He was just a little boy
In the sandbox, playing with a toy
And building castles in the sun
Oh! How much fun!

They decided he wasn't the same
So, they called him a name
They thought they were so tough
They went over to him to be rough.

She wasn't going to standby
Even though she was always very shy
She said “We are all different, yet the same,
Why can't we all get along and play a game.”

We may have a doubt
But it's always important to speak out
The world can only change by one action at a time
Those changes must be yours and mine.

The “Olga & Eugene Guttman” Writing Entries
First Place Winner – High School Division
By: Lily De La Rosa
Grade 10 – Cypress Bay High School, Weston, FL

Kindness

We all must speak out against hatred, prejudice and bullying. How many beautiful lives must be stolen, dreams shattered and hopes destroyed until we realize the effect animosity has on this world?

In recent years, hundreds of stories on hate crimes, acts of terrorism and violence have constantly flooded the news. It seems that media outlets purposely paint a pit of despair and hopelessness in our hearts to overwhelm us, or to make us believe that our species is a lost cause. I say they're wrong. Our society is extremely far from perfect, in fact, it's flawed down to the bone. However, I refuse to let a sickening sense of failure drag me down. I find my faith in humanity in a smile from a stranger, a small display of affection, or an unlikely friend. No matter how desolate the news depicts us to be, kindness still lives on.

When my community experienced the massive tragedy that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas, every soul was in its wake. The loss of seventeen young lives shook not only my state, but my country to a standstill. In the midst of all grief, many strong individuals rose up to fight against the hatred that had transpired. I found that an impressive amount of these people were not much older than me, and their undying efforts to make change after what happened touched millions of lives across the nation. I personally participated in the March for our Lives demonstrations, and to be part of such an adamant cause simply took my breath away. Never had I witnessed so many young people coming together to rise above an unimaginable loss, and to succeed nonetheless. The fact that people saw this movement as a sign of hope will resonate with me forever. As tragedies continue to unfold around the world, it is comforting to know there will always be those who will overcome and stifle the evil with love.

The atrocities that occur often originate from prejudice, close-mindedness, and fear. While it is unrealistic to believe that discrimination will ever disappear, there are other ways in which people of all races, religions and cultures may accept each other. One's tolerance and empathy depends on how open they are letting people into their lives, even if considered foreign or unfamiliar. In this day and age, our society has grown strikingly diverse, and it would do many Americans good to accept things they don't quite understand yet. By putting yourself in other people's shoes and taking the time to educate yourself about them, many conflicts we face today could be avoided.

In the end, it's important to consider the concept of respect. Though it would be nice if everyone were more considerate, many may not change their way of thinking, nor will they ever do so. Instead of being angered by people's tenacity, our society should make it a priority to build a kinder and more compassionate future. Through kindness and communication, many amazing feats have been accomplished, and there are still many more to come.

The “Olga & Eugene Guttman” Writing Entries

Second Place Winner – High School Division

By: Ashley Borges

Grade 10 – Pinecrest Preparatory Middle-High School, Miami, FL

As much as “America the Great” has modernized and revolutionized from the 15th Century to today, the hatred and prejudice from the past is still apparent in our society. Over the past year, I have witnessed the effects hatred has had on humanity as it creates a sense of prejudice on other cultures and ethnicities.

America has its reputation of being the “Promised Land” where one’s dreams can become a reality, but how has this image been upheld when we let our prejudices define a population based on their appearances, nationality, or religion? America’s foundation was built upon the migration and hard work of foreigners, as they were the only ones willing to work under harsh conditions to escape the cruel treatment of their respective countries. Keeping these values in perspective, the preconceived opinions our government has decided to instill about the immigrants trying to come to the United States, is no better treatment than the one they are trying to escape. As a society we have to come together for the causes that are impacting us daily, especially through our exercise of the first amendment. We are the citizens of the United States of America, we live in the country where Lady Liberty stands tall, we are the ones with the ability to use our voices for those who are unable to.

Hatred is one of the strongest and most overwhelming emotions that has caused unfortunate events, and for families and communities to break apart. In the past year, the anger that some individuals felt toward a certain group of individuals has led to the culmination of tragedies and victims of failed systems. The strong sense of hatred, as seen in the recent events of the New Zealand shooting and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, has brought a greater awareness to the public. The occurrences of situations like these has caused society to become mindful of its surroundings, as these events could happen anywhere and at any time. In a way these unfortunate events has brought together different cultures, religions, and nationalities to bring the change the world needs in order to progress.

One of the worst things about the progression of technology in the 21st Century is the increase of cyberbullying. The classic movie-like-scene, where the “popular” individual ruins someone’s “reputation” with just the click of a button has transferred from the screen to reality. Nowadays anyone just goes online to start spreading horrific rumors about someone, without thinking of the consequences – whether it causes the bully to ruin their own future or cause the victim to harm themselves. Although schools are starting to get more involved in situations like these to bring a stop to it, society as a whole has to become more mindful of the actions that are decided to be taken or not. For example, we should follow the “see something, say something” rule of thumb, but most people cower to the fear they may get outcasted or picked on in return.

Overall, no matter where we come from or who we are in society, it’s our responsibility to stand up and speak up to prejudice, hatred and bullying. As we are taking the right steps toward this goal with protests like March for our Lives, our perspectives should shift in a way where we acknowledge that we are all equal. Kindness and positivity will take us farther in to the future, where we won’t have to worry whether we will come back home to our families or if it was the last time that we’ll say “I love you” to our families.

The "Olga & Eugene Guttman" Writing Entries
Third Place Winner – High School Division
By: Deynisha Marquez
Grade 11 – Golden High School, Golden, CO

The Hate You Give

A single act of hatred, prejudice and bullying that you receive
Lasts longer than it seems.

The toxic words they spit on you, it stings.

But you don't show it.

The ones who know you,

They can see it, almost feel it.

Those unpleasant words, let alone actions,

Leave you nothing but a scar

Physically, mentally and emotionally.

So you hold all the anger within you,

Feeling distant, lonely, especially broken.

Trying to bury it all within you hurts,

It sucks out your energy.

Deprives you of feeling whole

You put on a mask

Before you walk out of your comfort zone

That doesn't even feel comfortable anymore.

You've become a victim.

For you, the perpetrators,

The hate you give,

The nasty opinions you blurt out,

The ugly things you say

The rumors you spread,

The physical acts of bullying

You do to hurt someone,

Change your perspective.

You are more powerful than your hate

You can do something to prevent these things

You can feed the fire and cause it to spread.

Or extinguish the flames of hatred forever

The evil things you do now will come back

To haunt you in the future.

Do not follow the path when you know

It leads to nowhere good.

Always choose the brighter path.

Be smart, be kind,

You will never regret making that choice.

It makes a difference in your life

And in all the lives you touch.

The “Olga & Eugene Guttman” Writing Entries
Fourth Place Winner – High School Division

By: Adrian Diaz Alejo

Grade 12 – Pinecrest Preparatory Middle-High School, Miami, FL

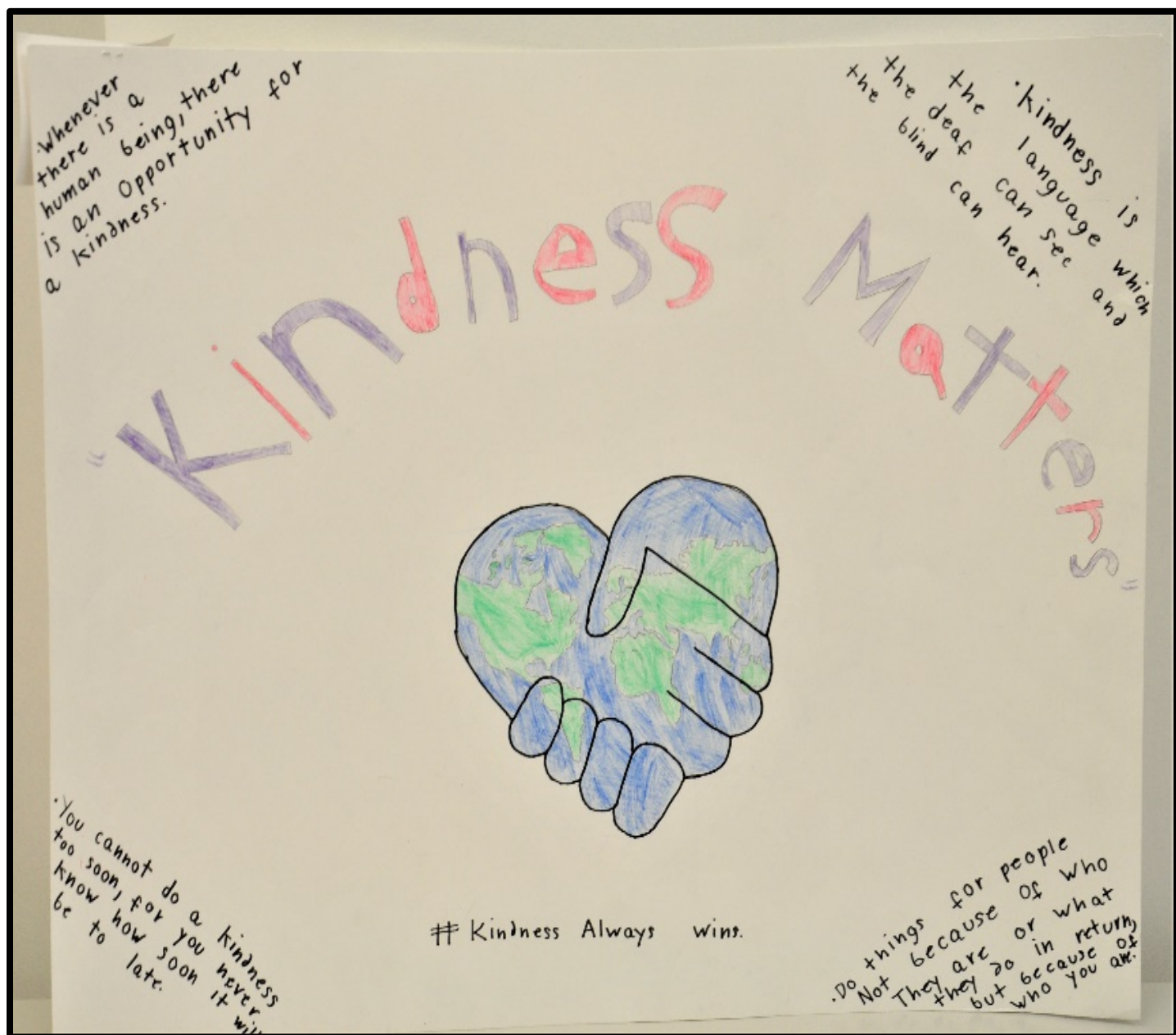
Embers of Compassion

The late Martin Luther King Jr. once claimed that “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” His words and the words of many others still to this day leave an essential goal for us to achieve: finding peace and love despite our differences. I myself am compelled to follow these words and execute them onto my community for others in an effort to push for that goal of achieving a more positive environment for my school and others. It is a natural thing for everyone to feel pain and to feel hurt, and it is just as natural to feel down or cry to express that pain and ask for help; I myself understand this throughout my experiences and that of others.

When I was growing up as a young child, I've had to deal with the fact that I have two different families – my parents divorced when I was barely months old – and to this day I still struggle to follow both families together at once. My kindergarten and elementary years were not the best either; it is easy to get picked on for being overweight or for having a liking towards superheroes and video games instead of sports and cars. I was bullied like many others and it took time before I developed confidence and hope for myself. But as I grew, I also was able to get to know others who have had harsh lives. There are too many to count, but the ones that have opened my eyes were of some friends, some few are of the LGBTQ and their consistent struggle to express their feelings while masking it to their families, one whom had his father leave one night, another hospitalized for his weak lung, one whom has worked tirelessly this past making his own income because his parents couldn't afford his college future, another who never had a father in his life, and one who nearly committed suicide because he was denied friendship by so many. Life is hard, and like mentioned before, it is normal to feel down or cry over such hard lives, but it is wrong for anyone to suffer.

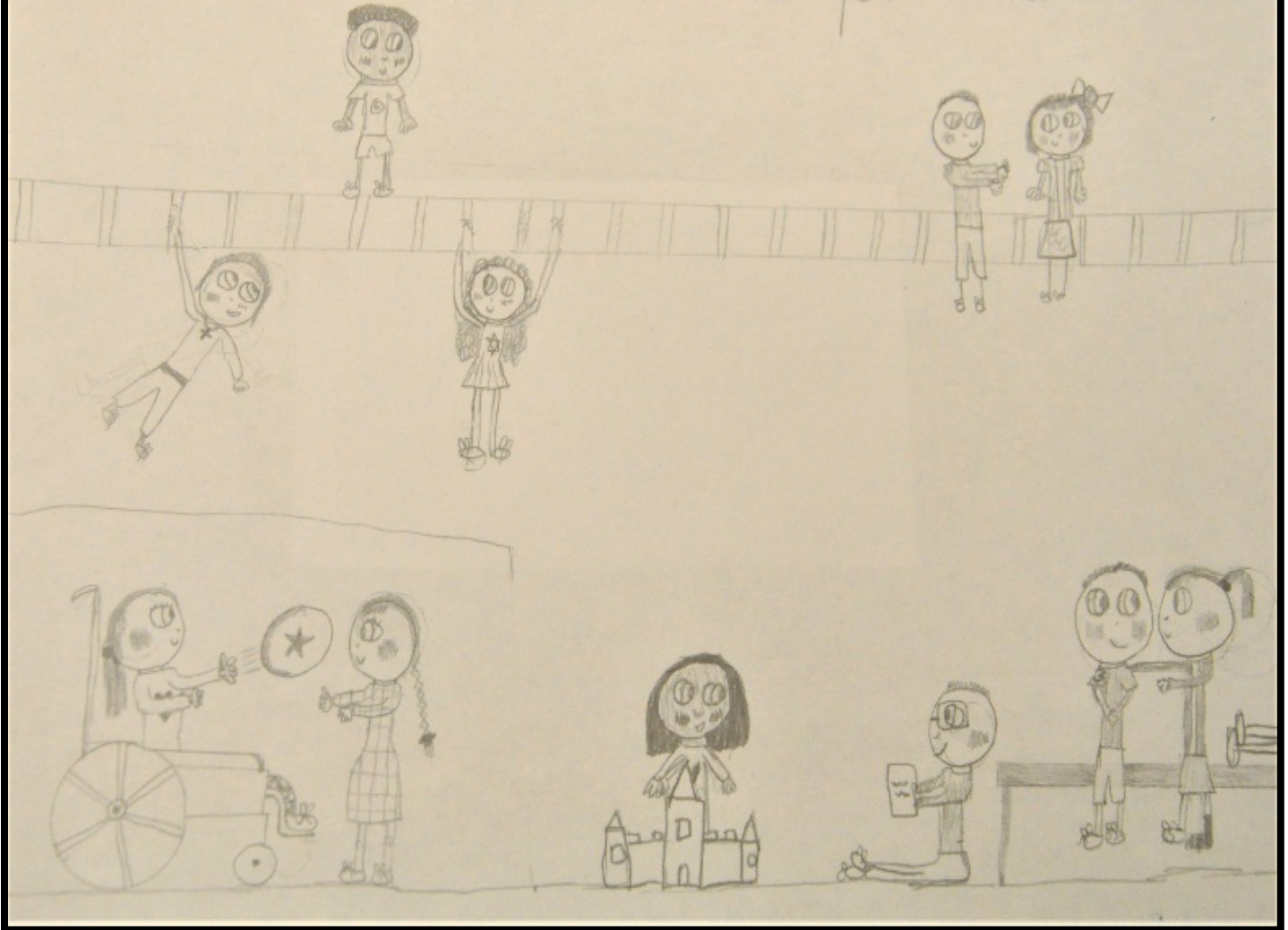
All these stories and more are from one school alone; one could only imagine how many more stories lie within our community or our world. And yet, despite all that, all of these mentioned above, including myself have become friends, the best of friends, because of empathy, compassion, and kindness for each other. Simple acts such as comfort, hanging out over weekends, telling jokes, or just eating a snack together, were just the first few steps and actions towards enlightening our lives and radiating a positive image on others.

The power that kindness offers is one that is truly lifechanging. Sticks and stones may break us physically, words can break or make our souls. The quality of being friendly, generous, or considerate is enough to make a change for the better for others. Like actions, and reactions, when one spreads kindness, it opens the eyes of those who are helped; they feel value and compassion. Most people wouldn't want others to suffer the same pain one feels, hence why through generous acts, others are compelled to do the same for others. I continue to express these ideals as much as I possibly can through my words and speaking, as well as through gifts, art and offers. I hope for my own future to make digital entertainment to always make others smile and feel positive through entertainment. I to this day, continue to hone myself for this while still making smiles and offering my care for others because everyone deserves a chance to feel loved and encouraged. As the quote mentioned before, for us to progress, we must drive out hatred through love.



The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Art Entries
First Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Hayden Lah
Grade 5 – Sandpiper Elementary, Sunrise, FL

Everybody is different but that doesn't
matter what does matter is that you be nice to them



The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Art Entries
Second Place Winner – Elementary School Division

By: Sofia Fernandez

Grade 4 – Everglades Elementary, Weston, FL



The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Art Entries
Third Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Harry Balanta
Grade 5 – Sandpiper Elementary, Sunrise, FL



**The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Art Entries
First Place Winner – Middle School Division**

By: Sabrina Martinez

Grade 8 – Archimedean Middle Conservatory, Miami, FL

The “A Simple Act of Kindness” Writing Entries
First Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Liam Hipolito
Grade 5 – Sandpiper Elementary, Sunrise, FL

Kindness

Kindness is free
Kindness can make you feel very good inside
Sometimes kindness can grow like a tree
Kindness is healthy and 100 percent pure
Kindness has no hatred, to hate is terrible
These things are like mold
They can grow on the nicest of souls

Yet, kindness the sweetest honey of the world
Can clear the yuckiest of mold away
With just one act, just one
And free the souls covered in mold.

Bullies are mean, nasty people,
But they are people and they don't
Treat us equal bullies might be alone
Or sad, or somebody could be bullying them
So reach out be a friend
Pay it forward cure him like a doctor cures you.

Prejudice are people being judged
Without reason, such as Hitler
He judged Jews and committed genocide
Prejudice can make people monsters.

Don't let anything bad deform you
Be full of kindness be 100 percent pure.

The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Writing Entries
Second Place Winner – Elementary School Division
By: Valeria Soto
Grade 4 – Everglades Elementary, Weston, FL

One can make a difference no matter how small,
Once can make a difference once and for all.

Tall, long, happy, sad, no matter how bad, there is a solution.

One does not need to be smart nor older to change the world,
A simple word can make someone's day.

Just try to make them smile, laugh, have fun in any way,
I know you can do it because everyone has a heart,
Somewhere you care, regardless of how you look on the outside,
Regardless of what people *think* you are like, if only you tried.

And if you can sing and can dance and have fun, it's not such a pain to just add one.

Integrity is when you make a good deed when no one happens to be watching.

Integrity is what you should do every day,
Even when things seem grey.

YOU CAN DO IT! I KNOW YOU CAN!

The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Writing Entries
First Place Winner – Middle School Division
By: Nikos Zentefis
Grade 8 – Westglades Middle, Parkland, FL

One Small Act

One small act of kindness can make someone's day

A simple smile or pat on the back

With each act hatred is frightened away

No matter what happens, kindness is never a setback

Who to say why someone is feeling blue

The best one can do is be by their side

Or smile and say, "it will be over soon"

Hate is unwelcome, but good will never be denied

One small act can change someone

It is spoken everywhere

It is understood by everyone

Remember kindness, as it should always be there

One small act to help someone off their feet

One small act to stop defeat

The "A Simple Act of Kindness" Writing Entries

First Place Winner – High School Division

By: Rachel Alexander

Grade 11 – Cypress Bay High School, Weston, FL

I will always know how to treat other people with kindness. I was always raised to be kind to everyone no matter what because our peers are always going through something. Kindness goes a long way in an individual's life which is why it is something I value immensely. Today, people often get so wrapped up in their own lives that they forget how to treat other people. No matter how stressful my life can get, I always will remain kind to my peers. I believe everyone in the world deserves kindness and it has the ability to change a person's life tremendously. The impact something so tiny has on a person amazes me every day.

Personally, to spread kindness, I have dedicated a majority of my free time fighting for inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through the non profit organization called Best Buddies, I have worked to ensure that students at my school with disabilities are treated equally. I was inspired to become involved with the organization because my brother has Autism and he is my hero; he has always showed me that with hard work anything is possible. Because he is often viewed as less by others in the world just because he can't verbally express his feelings, I decided to get involved and show everyone that individuals with disabilities simply have different abilities. The mission of the organization is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with disabilities. To spread kindness, I have become as involved as possible with the chapter at my school; I am going to be the President next year which will allow me to use my leadership skills to motivate others and spread kindness.

Because students with special needs are different, it does not make them less than anyone else. I use that phrase to motivate my classmates to include everybody as we are all unique in the world which is why it is such a special place. I spread kindness to the amazing students with my disabilities, showing them that having a disability does not define them. Spreading kindness through the organization I am most passionate about has taught me numerous life lessons. Creating awareness and promoting inclusion changes the lives of people who are often left in the dark. Best Buddies has truly changed my life and without it, a piece of my heart would be missing. It is vital in the world today to spread kindness through our passions, and I could not be more lucky to have found mine. I will continue to spread kindness through Best Buddies, and in all other aspects of my life as it is the only cure to the horrible things that occur in the world today.

The “A Simple Act of Kindness” Writing Entries
Second Place Winner – High School Division

By: Rebecca Lebrao

Grade 11 – Cypress Bay High School, Weston, FL

Kindness... something we expect everyone to have and spread yet that's not the reality of it all. People who do not value simple acts of kindness exist all over this world but that should not stop a single person from being kind, spreading love and generosity throughout society. I never let the negatives of life and other people restrict me from sharing the care I have to give.

Sure, I hold doors open for strangers and give out regular compliments here and there; but I always want to do more. I constantly think what else could I do to improve someone's day or really make a difference. I, a 17-year-old girl, with little life experience felt the need to go above and beyond giving back... I wanted to change the world. The little acts of kindness simply did not satisfy my desire to help those around me and improve their day. As a matter of fact, those simple acts went unacknowledged by many soon enough leading them to be simple actions I would execute throughout my everyday life rather than an “act of kindness.” I stayed up at night staring blankly up to my ceiling wondering what I could do to make an impact, leave a mark. I would doze off into a deep sleep mid-thought always ending up with no conclusion. This promptly turned into a vicious cycle. Soon enough I developed a trait where I felt the need to help everyone and anyone I could. I wanted to change or “fix” people in a sense – even if I had not been asked to do so. Anyone who seemed to be struggling or going through a hard time came off as a green light for me to do what I believed was best and help. I began to help others and would often put their needs in front of my own, some may view this as “sticking your nose where it doesn't belong” or “unhealthy” but I viewed it as my acts of kindness, my own way of giving back. I would go out of my way to be there for anyone I possibly could and at times even keep people who did not value my assistance close because I felt as though it were my responsibility to glue the broken parts of others back together. Soon enough, caring about others left little time for me to care for myself.

This eventually left me with little value for my own struggles and hardships in life because in my eyes, those of others were most certainly more important to me. This quickly led me into a downward spiral, I unintentionally fell down the rabbit hole with no sight of an end. My lack of self-love and confidence continually dropped as I wondered why my efforts seemed to not be enough or would often go unnoticed. My rhetorical question about my attempts to help those around me circled and at often times drained me, once again I was left at a dead end. That is until one day, amidst my time of falling down the rabbit hole of hopelessness I finally began to see the bottom! A stranger saw me struggling to open door as I began to lose grip of the items which inconveniently occupied both of my hands. She rushed to grab the door handle and held it open for me, I thanked her and she proceeded to compliment me on my outfit. A smile grew on my face as I thanked the kind girl once again. As simple as this may have been, it unexpectedly seemed to brighten up my gloomy day, the simple gesture served as a pick-me-up. I continued that day feeling more confident than ever all thanks to a stranger who decided to old a door open and compliment me. Right then and there a lightbulb went off in my head, I began to realize that those simple acts of kindness I saw as insufficient were indeed sufficient and had the power to turn someone's whole day around. I then stopped trying so hard to directly be the light at the end of everyone's tunnel and went back to holding doors open, smiling at people I see in the halls, and complimenting anyone I got the chance to. These are the simple acts of kindness I do today and every day. No one has to bend over backwards in an attempt to be a superhero because it's the little things which may seem to go unnoticed or underappreciated such as a simple gesture that truly has the potential to change a life.

The “A Simple Act of Kindness” Writing Entries

Third Place Winner – High School Division

By: Hana Kim

Grade 9 – Golden High School, Golden, CO

I was having a really hard time thinking of what I wanted to write. Just thinking about what I wanted to share out was pretty hard. This just started as a small assignment. In 2019, it's pretty hard to see people doing nice things for others, or you're just too busy to find nice things to do. Sometimes, there is someone in your life that you will find will be nice to everyone they see, no matter how busy they are. Sometimes I honestly think the reason why some people are nice to others is self-pleasure. Yeah, it sounds harsh but it is mostly true. Most people donate to people who don't have a chance in society, to look like a good person, or to feel good about themselves. But you know what's magical? There may be a person in your life, that has a truly pure soul and good motives for helping others and you might not even know it.

There was someone in my life that I will never forget. She was a teacher and it's kind of funny how she was teaching my least favorite subject. She truly had a pure soul. When I first walked into her classroom on the first day of school, I was a seventh grader, young and dumb. I thought she was just going to be another ordinary teacher in my life, but I didn't know then she would be stuck in my deepest memories. I don't think many people liked her the first year, but I for one didn't mind her. The second year I had her, I felt more comfortable talking to her and just hanging out in her room. I remember how she would always be helping us with other classes as well. I can't really say it was an act of kindness, because it happened over a long period of time and was more than just a single act. She would serve our class tea, and snacks and would always listen to our opinions. It was rare for me to meet a teacher like that.

She helped me realize things other teachers didn't. She helped me to see the best in me. I first started seventh grade with a horrible attitude because I had gotten a lot of bad reports in elementary school. I had plenty of shortcomings, and most teachers just looked at them and saw me as a person with many flaws. Now that I'm in high school, I've realized that sulking over your shortcomings will only make your life *hard*, and it makes you look like a complete idiot. There are girls in my class that always complain about things they can't do and feed other kid's bad vibes. It's better to take your shortcomings and make something great of them, but of course that is obviously easier said than done. However, it will make you a better person if you do.

I'm not really the type of person who does nice things for others, it's just not my thing. But I realized something over the past three years. That not being nice and helping others won't do you any good. Acts of kindness produce positive vibes, and when you are going through hell thinking positive really helps. I mean, who doesn't hate middle school? I had a really hard time making friends when basically everyone was doing drugs or smoking vape pens, or engaged in endless drama talk. My mind always went into a dark place, and it wasn't fun, I cried a lot and negative thoughts ran through my head.

However, when I was in my favorite teacher's class, I just forgot about all the bad things in life. Well, don't get me wrong you still have painful memories but after the two years of constant hell, I realized that high school isn't much different, but if you always keep positive thoughts in your head, you'll get through it. It may sound really stupid but I write through experience.

As life rolls on, there will always be people trying to hurt you or things life throws at you, but you just need to remember that doing small things for others will help filter positive thoughts through your head. Just keep smiling, hold your head high and don't let those bad vibes hit you. Be kind and see what difference it can make in your life.

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