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Ana Lavalley,
11th grade,
South Lakes HS
Sculpture

Reston
Children's
CONNECTION

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and

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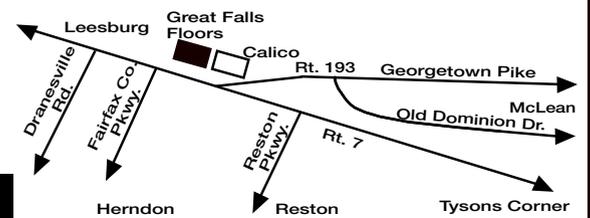
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CHILDREN'S ISSUE



Abby Ackerman, 8th grade, Langston Hughes Middle School

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Reston Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students of its communities.

We asked principals and teachers from local schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response this year was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2009 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection. Please keep us in mind as your children

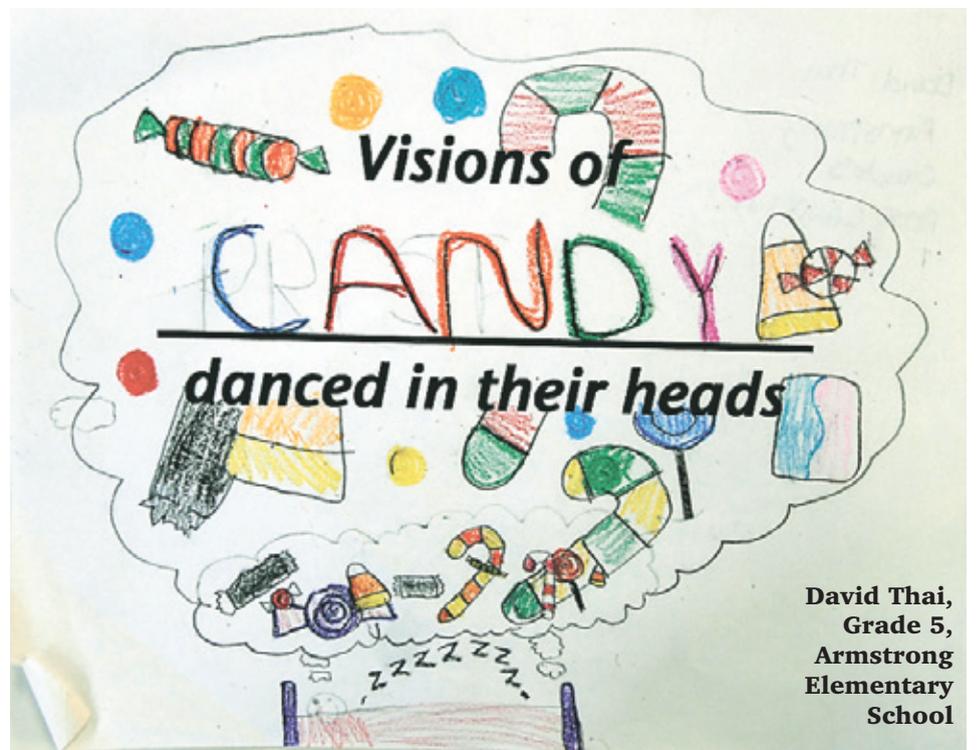
continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to mclean@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 7913 Westpark Drive, McLean VA 22102 or by fax at 703-917-0991. Call 703-917-6428 with any questions.

EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC

Connection interns Janelle L. Plummer and Danielle Landau provided valuable editorial assistance in putting together this year's Children's Issue.



David Thai, Grade 5, Armstrong Elementary School



Christine Nolan, 12th grade, South Lakes High School



Adriana Trigo, 5th grade, Hunters Woods Elementary



Kayla Cummings, Grade 6, Terraset Elementary School



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Camille Milligan, Age 10,
Armstrong Elementary School

My Favorite Senses

Armstrong Elementary first-graders reflect on what they like to see, hear, smell, taste, touch.

— STEVEN BROWN

My favorite thing to see is a flower. My favorite thing to hear is the rain. My favorite thing to smell is chocolate. My favorite thing to taste is apple or pumpkin pie. My favorite thing to touch is a silky soccer shirts.

— JACKSON BURNS

My favorite thing to see is my mommy. My favorite thing to hear is a horsey. My favorite thing to smell is pizza. My favorite things to taste are chocolate chip cookies. My favorite thing to touch is my stuffed horse.

— ALEXANDER AMIOT

My favorite thing to see is a giraffe. My favorite thing to hear is [my teacher] Mrs. Burns. My favorite thing to smell is pumpkin ice cream. My favorite thing to taste is a brownie with ice cream and whipped cream. My favorite thing to touch is my stuffed animal named Wa.

— ZOEVY BIRMAN

— GAGE DARLING

My favorite thing to see is my mom. My favorite thing to hear is music. My favorite thing to smell is food. My favorite thing to taste is lollipops. My favorite thing to touch is leaves.

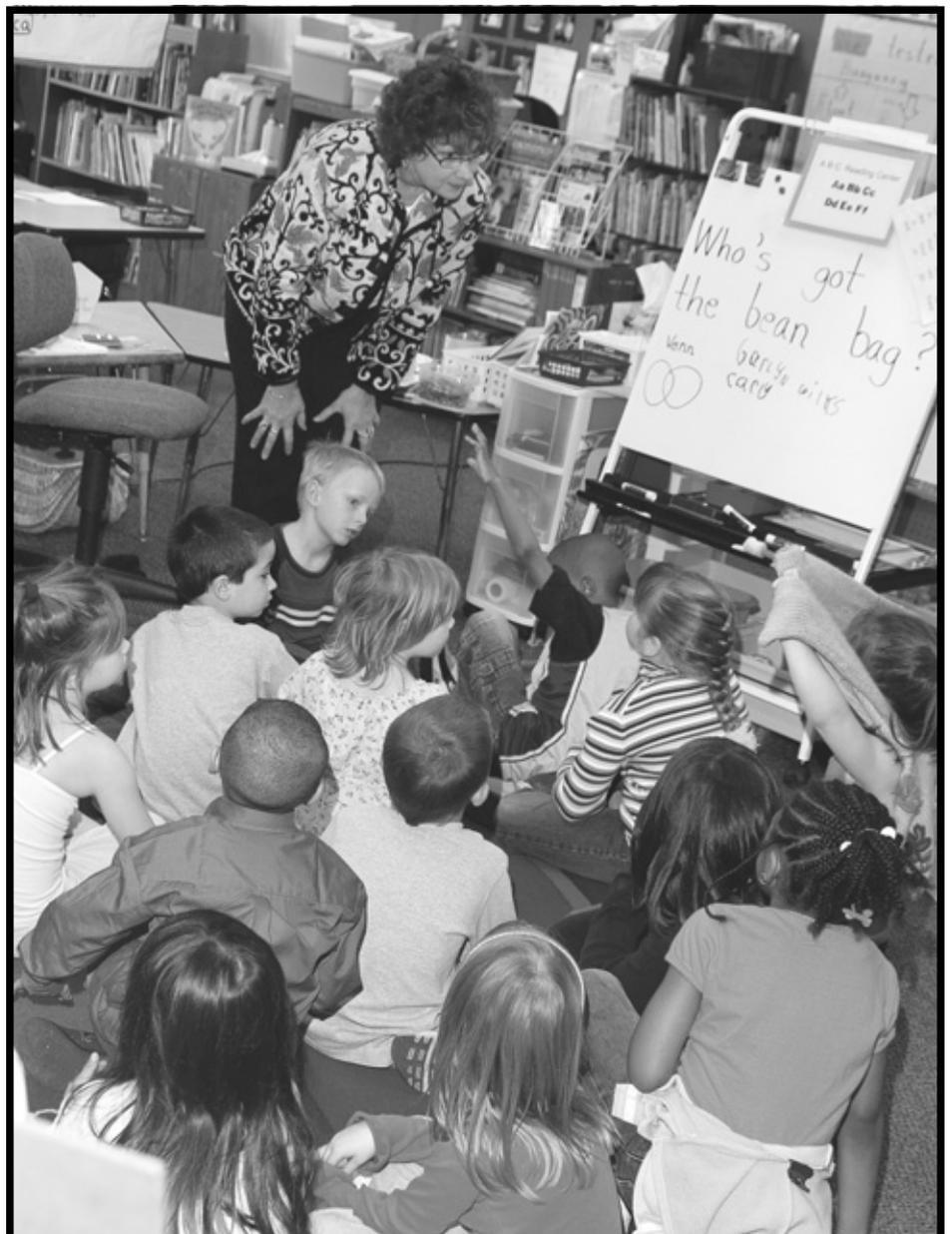
My favorite thing to see is TV. My favorite thing to hear is music. My favorite thing to smell is snow. My favorite thing to taste is popcorn. My favorite thing to touch is my mom and dad.

— EMMA FINCH

My favorite thing to see is a movie. My favorite thing to hear is music. My favorite thing to smell is peanut butter. My favorite thing to taste is my dad's chili. My favorite thing to touch is a cat.

SEE SENSES, PAGE 9

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Fairfax County Public Schools Budget Cuts Are They Educationally Sound?

Fairfax County Public Schools are making major cuts in vital areas that will directly affect your child. Next year the children will go to school with an increase of class size, less staff and fewer programs to support their educational needs. All instructional staff will be heavily impacted. Students will have less individual help. Facilitating learning will become more difficult. Parents, imagine how your life would change if triplets were added to your family and your income reduced.

The Superintendent and the School Board have made many of these cuts, but need to continue to look for other ways to trim the budget that does not directly affect your child's classroom instruction and education. Tell the School Board that the cuts must come from non school-based positions, programs and items.

The Fairfax County Federation of Teachers urges you to become involved by making calls and sending emails to School Board Members and the Board of Supervisors. Even if you do not have children, your community will be affected with this erosion of the school system. Our message must be heard to save the quality of the education we provide to all of our students in Fairfax County. Your children's future depends upon it.

- **Public Budget Hearing: January 21 & 27**
Register January 9, 2009 at fcps.edu/schlbld
- **Email School Board Members at fcps.edu**
- **Email Board of Supervisors at fairfaxcounty.gov/government/board**
- **Visit FCFT.org for more detailed contact information**

A well-educated child is a successful child.

Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, 7011 Calamo St, #101, Springfield VA
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Just for tonight

Just for tonight
 Let's stop the clock
 At exactly 11:11
 Because I feel extremely wishful
 And for how many countless nights in a row
 I'm still wishing for you
 And as the rest of the city sleeps
 Let's drive straight into the darkness
 And we can only hope
 That we reach the stars together
 Because when we're here
 In your car
 I'm safe from the outside cold
 Because when I'm with you
 I'm safe
 And nothing else matters
 Let me be your energy
 As we race to the end of the world
 I'll jump off if you do
 Let me be your high
 As we spin so fast we take flight
 We'll defy gravity
 It'll never be enough to pull us down
 Let this be your lullaby
 As the moonlight sings you to sleep
 And we can stay out
 Under these glittery skies for eternity
 Time stops for us

— JENNY ZHAN, GRADE 11

When the Preacher Came to Town

When the preacher came to town
 In sooty robes and greasy gloves
 Blowin' hot air, fanning his sweaty brow,
 We knew he was a fire hazard.
 He pointed, and shook
 And rattled an' railed,
 Against the sinning, and the stinking,
 And the taxing and the all-around-corruption,
 And don't forget those whores-o'-Babylon.
 So Mama wraps her arms 'round her chest
 And gives him a stare.
 This ain't Babylon, sir, she says politely,
 You took the wrong train.
 And everyone nods, and before he can sputter,
 He's back on the train again.

— RACHEL MIDURA, 12TH GRADE

If I Were a Geisha

If I were a geisha, I'd
 Have no time to cry.
 If I were a geisha,
 No one would hear me sigh.
 But if I were a geisha, I
 Would have a place.
 If I were a geisha
 I'd have a pretty face
 And if I were a geisha, I'd
 Be graceful through and through. I
 Wouldn't trip over my own two feet
 And hear laughter come from you
 If I were a geisha, I
 Wouldn't be on the floor. I
 Wouldn't be here hoping
 Someone will open the door
 If I were a geisha, I



Carmen Judy, 11th grade, Sculpture

Wouldn't have the bruises.
 If I were a geisha, I'd
 Be the one he chooses
 If I were a geisha, I
 Wouldn't be so alone. I
 Wouldn't be here waiting
 On the phone.
 Yes, if I were a geisha, I
 Wouldn't have to cry.
 If I were a geisha, I'd
 Be a butterfly.

— ANNA CHIARAVALLE, 9TH GRADE

Rainy Days

The condensation on my windowsill
 I draw figures with my finger on it
 The most depressing days of the year
 Rainy Days
 What else to do but sit still
 Watch the rain
 Drip, Drip, Drip
 It's almost by coincidence that I'm usually home alone on these days
 Either after-school, or whatever situation it may be
 The rainy days find me and trap me at home
 Secluded
 Isolated
 Separated
 What choice do I have but to ask the heavens?

Stop sending the parade of tears down on me
 Causing darkness and distress in the house
 Until it finally stops
 The sunshine peers out from behind the clouds
 And I hear the key enter the door and the lock turns
 The door opens
 I'm not home alone anymore

— SONYA WALI, 9TH GRADE

Again

Kjdfgjsdkfghskhgkjsfjksdfhsdkjhjksdf.
 I slammed my head down on the keyboard.
 Writer's block.
 ...I hate it.
 And I have it, too.
 Maybe, if I think hard enough
 My headache will go away
 It'll be daunted by my fierce concentration
 No, no, no
 Oh my God.
 Again.
 I still can't think.
 I can't see my imagination
 So I can't use it
 All the words I've typed I've backspaced
 They make no sense.

Who would read this crap anyway?!
 Seriously, I sure wouldn't
 So no one else will either
 They'll never know I had
 Writer's block—
 What an awful two words—
 All they really do
 Is make me more aware
 Of all the things I can not do.
 I'm wondering
 Did I really just write this?
 Did I try too hard?
 God, I shouldn't ask so many questions.
 Maybe that's what writing is about.
 Letting it annoy you so much
 So that there's nothing left to write about
 Other than how it makes you feel.

— EVAN HALL, 9TH GRADE

Freebird

To be strong is to be faithful,
 To have faith, you must be able to trust those around you,
 To trust those around you, you must trust yourself,
 To trust yourself you must be confident,
 To have confidence, you must let go,
 To let go is to be free... I am free.

— CASSIE MILLER, 11TH GRADE

The Running Shoes

Abandoned, worn, faded, left forgotten
 They lie, a pair, each other to relieve
 To face the dark, empty, endless future
 They hope, in vain, both able to believe
 White, clean, fresh in the once glorious days
 They were guardians, once served of great aide
 Safe, smooth, comforting to the world around
 Until one gloomy day, down they were laid
 Muddy creeks, rocky paths, scratchy tall grass
 They conquered in the name of one more stride
 Open fields, busy streets, secretive trails
 They traveled through swiftly, no time to bide
 Around the circles, loops, and routes throughout
 They went faithfully, with no turning back
 Silence, obedience, solemn pursuit
 They were used to cross the line, without slack
 Pounding, enduring, following rhythm
 They bore so much, yet complained so little
 Sunny summer, sharp winter, blooming spring
 They answered their call, let their strength whittle
 Ignored, unthanked, unappreciated
 They silently obeyed their harsh commands
 Broken, overused, distorted from wear
 They endured, but now cannot meet demands
 Were replaced, interchanged, substituted
 They rest with memories, their saddened blues
 Remembering swift runs, long jogs, races
 They are buried, my poor old running shoes.

— ALLISON WHITLOCK, 12TH GRADE

The Silent Storm

It was coming. My skin tingled as another flash split open the sky. I had been in Africa for over a week, on the Serengeti Plain for less than two days. The sun had not yet risen, but I felt as alert and awake as ever. I looked across the barren earth as yet another cruel dagger cut into the sky, leaving a scar burnt into my retinas. This harsh lightning was eerily silent, as if someone had pressed the mute button. I could see the purple clouds brewing ominously on the horizon like a pot coming to a reluctant boil.

We got in the car for a day of travel. It could have been hours, or only a few minutes, for if the sun had risen I couldn't tell. The storm was gaining on us, nipping at our heels like a pack of angry wolves. I felt oddly serene, as if I had been sleeping and was not yet fully awake. We pulled into our lodge, but the storm had beaten us here. I hardly slept that night, with the torrential rain and the distant laughter of the hyenas.

This experience was like nothing I had ever had before, since, or likely to have in the future. It



Dylan Katz, 8th grade, Langston Hughes Middle School

was such a magical time. I remember it very clearly, though it was many years ago. If I live to be one hundred, I will never forget that

magical day.

— MELANIE PILLER
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If I Could

If I could
I would drain the oceans that
Keep us apart
Cannon ball into the water
Swim into the depths
Strain my muscles but
You would be my motivation
And maybe I would stop
Missing you
Have them see
Through your eyes
Hope, magic, miracles
Every day
Life has no illusions

And maybe they would
Finally believe
Save a penny for
Every time
You crossed my mind
And by the end of the day
I could buy
All the wonders
Of the world
And maybe there would be
Change

— JENNY ZHAN, GRADE 11
SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL



Omar Dueño, Grade 2,
Terraset Elementary School

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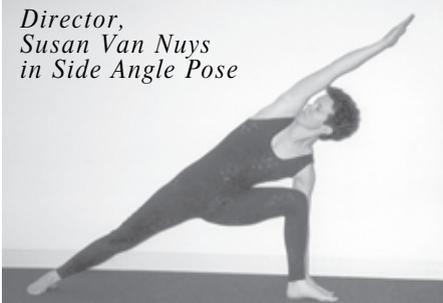
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**Arlet Ortega,
Grade 2,
Terraset Elementary School**

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This is Who I am

This is who I am
A girl who is from a place that is cold
This is who I am
A girl who has a loving soul
This is who I am
A person from out of town
This is who I am
A person who goes around
Wondering how I got this way
And how I became who I Am today
This is who I am
A spirit that lives
Throughout the day
This is who I am
A spirit who cried and lied and
Prayed that everything would
Stay the same as yesterday
This is who I am
A kid who laughs and plays
All day!

— NAOMI RICHARDSON,
5TH GRADE
SUNRISE VALLEY ES

drops. I heard the pitter-patter sound of the rain and the squeaky boots and jacket. I felt the mucky mud on the ground and the fuzzy cattails. I felt wind rustling past my face. I saw the puddles and slipped in them. I tasted the rain-drops. They tasted like fresh water. The sticky mud made my boots icky and gross. After a while, I heard a little rumble of thunder. Then, after 10 minutes, I heard a voice. It was my mom. She said, "Supertime!!" So, I started home.

—PRIYA SINGH,
ALDRIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Flow Of My Life

The flow of notes across the page
Like little tadpoles in a daze
Who knew a black and white paper

Could be so colorful to the ears
Its sweet lullaby chases away my fears

The beat is inside my heart
This rhythm is inside my soul
Music fills my life's hole.

—BY LANI TRAN, GRADE 7
LANGSTON HUGHES MIDDLE

The Walk

One spring morning I took a walk to the marsh. I saw a turtle. His shell was black and yellow. He was walking slowly in the mud. It smelled like fresh grass and rain-

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Senses

FROM PAGE 5

ball soup. My favorite thing to touch is the water in my pool.

— MEGAN GOLINSKY

My favorite thing to see is a snow globe. My favorite thing to hear is my mom saying I love you. My favorite thing to smell is a cake in the oven. My favorite thing to taste is candy. My favorite thing to touch is a snowflake.

— BROOKE HARRISON

My favorite thing to see is my mom and dad. My favorite thing to hear is a bell. My favorite thing to smell is a rose. My favorite thing to taste is an apple pie. My favorite thing to touch is my soft sweater.

— WHITNEY HOSKINS

My favorite thing to see is my bulldog. My favorite thing to hear is a siren. My favorite thing to smell is cinnamon. My favorite thing to taste is chocolate ice cream. My favorite thing to touch is the water in a pool.

— CLIFFORD MARTIN

My favorite thing to see is a horse. My favorite thing to hear is Santa's bells. My favorite thing to smell is carbonara. My favorite thing to taste is pumpkin pie. My favorite thing to touch is my alligator pillow.

— EMILY MCKNIGHT

My favorite thing to see is birds. My favorite thing to hear is dolphins flapping their tails. My favorite thing to smell is a cake baking. My favorite thing to taste is a sweet apples. My favorite thing to touch is a horse.

— MAXIMUS NASTA

My favorite thing to see is a gingerbread man. My favorite thing to hear is a cat purring. My favorite thing to smell is my Grandma's chocolate cake baking. My favorite things to taste are sherbet and chocolate. My favorite thing to touch is my friend's cat.

— BRIDGET NEELY

My favorite thing to see is my dog. My favorite thing to hear is my dog barking. My favorite thing to smell is popcorn. My favorite thing to taste is pizza. My favorite thing to touch is a stuffed animal.

— MATTHEW PERLISH

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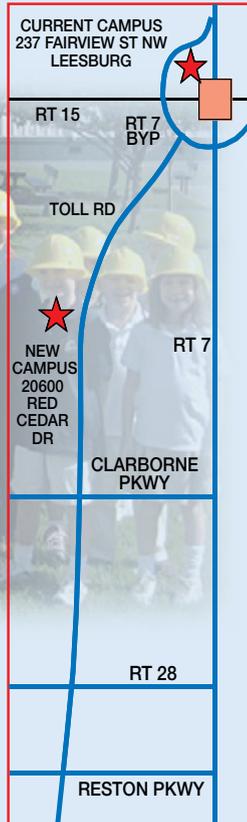
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LAKE ANNE NURSERY KINDERGARTEN



Mariella Silvia, age 4

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Avery Linn, age 3



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All Alone in the Woods

BY GARRET SHAPIRO
 GRADE 8, LANGSTON HUGHES MS

All alone in the woods	The earth is brown with
Trees as far as the eye can see	Dirt, twigs, bark.
Branches reaching toward the sky	A tiny ant scrambles by
A fallen leaf flutters in the wind.	Searching for another meal.
Surrounded by shining blue	All alone in the woods
The sun glows dazzling orange,	A rainbow of colors all around.
Bright crimson, fading yellow.	Up, down, left, or right
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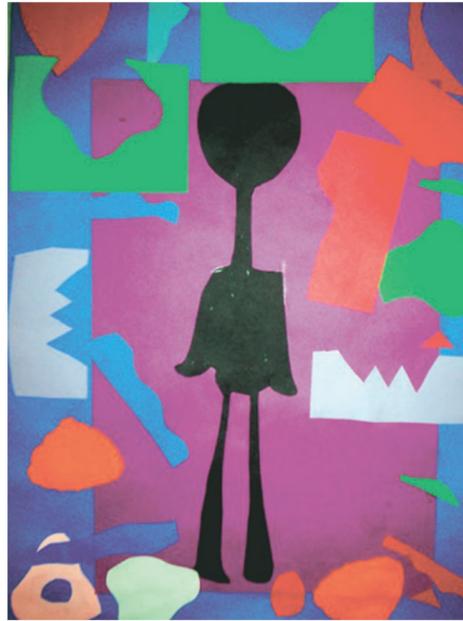
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Calysta Tichenor, Grade 4

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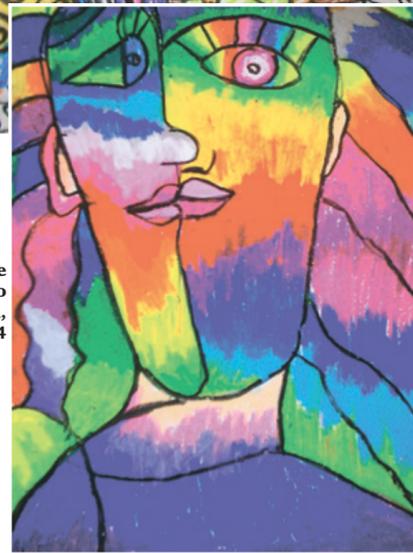
Deja Rothschild, Grade 1

Namie Yamamoto Gongora, Grade 4

ART TEACHER: GRETCHEN HARRIS

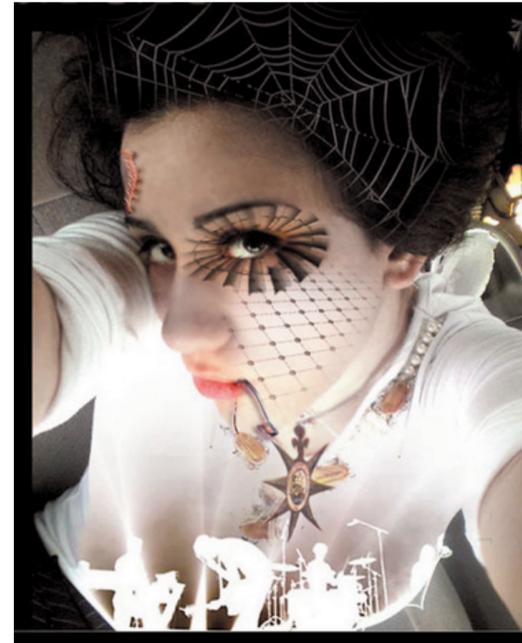


Emanuel Mehari, Grade 6



Allie Palmer, 10th grade, Drawing

SOUTH LAKES HIGH GALLERY



Sanaz Sattari, 12th grade



Carmen Judy, 11th grade, Graphics



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Jaden Whaley, Grade 2, Terraset Elementary School

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Landscape by Edison Turner, 5th grade,
Hunters Woods Elementary



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the Holiday Season
and the New Year.

Ken and Jane Plum

The Best Time of Day is Twilight

BY MIM SHARNA
GRADE 7, LANGSTON HUGHES MIDDLE

Dark comes and so does twilight
Then a sleepless night
Bella's face peers into my own
The loving glow in her eyes
The Sweetness of her smile
Beckoning me closer
Against my iron will
A beguiling siren
Bells in my head ringing
Warning me, cautioning me
But I cannot stop
My lifeless heart
I cannot stop loving
She looks straight at me,
Scorching me with her
Chocolate brown eyes
A fire of defiance
Melting the resisting force in me
Just as my stone heart starts to beat
She is my life
I imagine the future with her
A fantasy never to come
Because she'll hate me for making her one of us,
A creature like me
But a future without her
Will condemn me to be
The sinful monster that I know
I am

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Sunday, January 11
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Little Lost Ant

One day a farmer was mowing on top of an ant hill. So the ants thought that it was a thunderstorm. It was the loudest one that they heard! Then they tried to run away from the mower. But one baby ant could not run that fast. The mother of the baby ant was trying to find her baby. She looked and looked. But she could not find her baby. And she started weeping. She was so sad that she was not in a mood to talk to her hus-

band. But her husband kept asking questions. She did not answer. The baby was in the mower looking but he could not find his mother. He was brave but still he started to cry because he could not find his mother. The mother didn't know that she was in the mower too. The baby pushed a piece of thick grass. The mother crawled over it. And they found each other! The mother and the baby hugged. The mother asked what happened. The baby said that it's a long story, I will tell you later. Later baby told every-

thing to his parents. When he got little older, he would always read books. He knew how to read since when he was in preschool. He knew so much that he skipped middle school and high school and he went to college. He was also so smart that he was #1 in his class. One day mother told him not to read and he got angry. But then he remembered how he missed his mother when he was lost in the mower. He was not angry anymore.

— ESHA SAINI, GRADE 2,
LEARNING FUN SCHOOL

Sand and Stone

Once there lived two friends named Jack and Joe in a small town. Jack slapped Joe one day for some reason and immediately Joe wrote on sand, "Today, my best friend slapped me on my face". A few days later Jack rescued Joe from drowning and this time Joe carved on stone, "Today, my best friend saved my life".

Jack was puzzled and he asked Joe the reason behind writing on sand, when you slapped me I wanted the incident to be erased by the

wind of forgiveness and hence wrote it on sand, today when you saved my life I wanted to remember this forever and hence I carved it on stone so no wind can erase it". This left Jack speechless.

Don't you think this world would be a better place to live if we all learned to forgive our friends like Joe did and remember only the good things that happen to us?

—NIGAM KADAMBI,
3RD GRADE, LEARNING FUN SCHOOL

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Gift of Believing

BY SARA GUGLIEMO
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,
7TH GRADE

The greatest gift I have gotten is not an object at all (unlike many kids). This may sound crazy or weird at first, but in the end you will get it. It is believing. You are probably thinking that's not a gift, but it is and most people do not see that. It is gift that you get when you are born. You can make a choice to keep that gift or tear it down as you get older. You have to believe in yourself or you will not get anywhere in life. You have to believe that people will help you and are not always against you or you will not be able to work with a group of people. Many people tear this gift apart during their teen years, it's called low self-esteem. They may think they're too fat, not strong enough, stupid, or bad at sports and that causes them to stop believing, sometimes it gets so bad they never recuperate and just stop believing all together. Horrible, right!

Believing has helped me in so many ways. It has helped me through family problems like the loss of loved ones which is always a sad thing. Believing has helped me become more faithful in God and believe me it helps to know that God is watching over you. It has opened my eyes to many things that I did not see before. It has helped me through tough times at school like a fight with a really good friend or a bad grade. Believing has not only made my self-esteem higher, it has changed the way I look at things. I used to get negative, thinking everything would turn out badly, but I have started believing things will be okay even if they seem really bad. It is better to be positive, trust me.



Samantha Devers, Grade 12, Oacrest School

Believing has done so much for me. It has helped me get good grades at school which please my parents and me. It also made me work harder in sports that I think I am not good at, which makes me improve in that sport and that makes me better at them. Believing has expanded my imagination making me more creative. It has made me wonder about many things, which expands my knowl-

edge and makes me a more intelligent and interesting person. The best thing believing has done for me is it made me more high-spirited, which really makes my life easier and less stressful. Believing has made me believe that I can do things that I thought I could not do. If you start to believe it will help you in so many ways just like it did for me, I just know it will. Give yourself a chance to believe.

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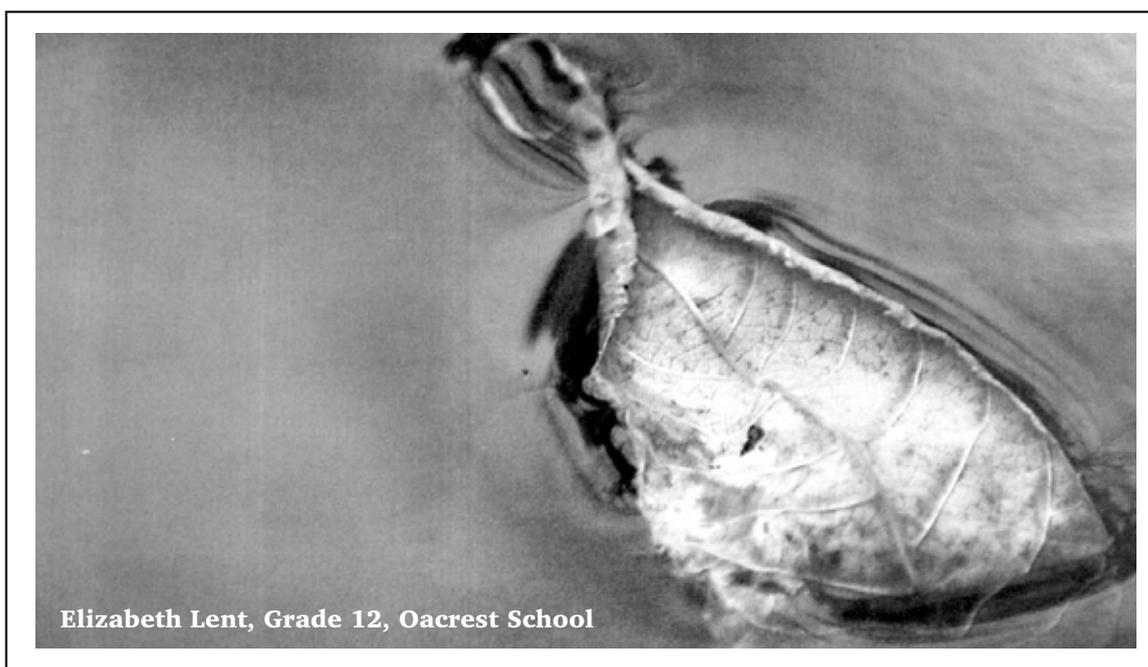
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Elizabeth Lent, Grade 12, Oacrest School

September 11, 2007

BY PHIL NOVACKI
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,
8TH GRADE

REMEMBERING PETER CHOO

Almost everyone in the U.S. remembers Sept. 11, 2001. It was a day that will be remembered forever. On that day, terrorists hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners and crashed them purposely. Two of them hit the twin towers in the World Trade Center located in New York City. Another plane hit the Pentagon in Washington, DC while the final one crashed in Pennsylvania. It was a horrid day.

But that is not the Sept. 11 that I am talking about. It is a long story but let me start from the beginning. As a boy growing up at the age of two, Peter Choo, a small Korean boy was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a type of cancer. But Peter didn't let this stop him. Peter went to school at Great Falls

Elementary until third grade. That was when he was moved to Colvin Run Elementary school. I myself met Peter when we were in fifth grade. Ever since then we remained good friends. Since Peter had cancer, he would miss much of the school year. Whenever he was at school he would always be very happy and never get in trouble. Everyone in Colvin Run knew Peter. Whenever they saw him they would give him high fives. On sixth grade graduation, I remember hearing his name called for the diplomas and people cheering louder than ever. I also remember seeing adults crying tears of joy. Mrs. Choo, Peter's mom, was one of these adults.

The next year was seventh grade. I was looking forward to seeing Peter at Cooper. But unfor-

tunately, on Sept. 11, Peter passed away due to his cancer. I remember when my friend called me to tell me this. I was nearly crying and I couldn't finish my homework. My family did their best to try to make me feel better. The following weekend, there was a funeral service in honor of Peter. I remember seeing almost everyone from Colvin Run. Most of the people there were crying. Fortunately, I was able to keep my tears in. It was a wonderful service, but it made me miss Peter even more.

About a month after the funeral, some parents that knew the Choo family decided to organize a 5K run. The results were great. Almost everybody I remember from Colvin Run was there. They even decided to make it an annual event. I decided that I will go every year in honor of Peter. I hope that one day, we will find a cure for cancer so no one will have to go through what Peter went through.

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My Hero

BY GRANT GRIECO
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,
8TH GRADE

Who is your hero? Do you have more than one hero? Why is he/she your hero? My hero is one of my best friends ever. Peter Choo! Peter Choo was diagnosed with neuroblastoma at the age of two in 1997. Neuroblastoma is a form of cancer that forms in your nerve tissue. It usually begins in your early childhood which is what it did in Peter's life. Peter passed away from cancer on Sept. 11, 2007. He was 13 years old.

Peter is my hero because no matter what bad news he got, he always kept an upbeat attitude. He influences me to always work hard just as he did even while he was

diagnosed with cancer. Peter was always nice and respectful to everyone he met. He wasn't at school very often but when he did come he was embraced by everyone around him. Since he couldn't go to school because of his cancer a teacher came to his house and would teach him all the things that he missed. This shows how much he cared about school and his grades. To me, it also showed that he never used his cancer as an excuse to not do something.

Whenever I encounter something that I don't want to I think of Peter and all that he went through and that is what makes me work hard. Whenever I play hockey or any other sport I think of Peter and I play for him and work hard for him. Peter influences me to try my hardest and get

good grades. Whenever I think of Peter it makes me sad and happy at the same time. It makes me sad because he passed away and I'm never going to see him again unless I go to heaven. It also makes me happy to know he put up a great fight against cancer even though he lost. It also makes me happy to know that he's in a better place now where he is free of cancer. Maybe, when the time comes, I will hopefully see him again up in heaven.

Peter has definitely been one of the biggest influences of my life. He will always be in my thoughts and prayers and maybe in other people's thoughts and prayers too. I will never forget him and he will always be in my heart. That is why I chose Peter Choo as my hero.

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Gumming Up the Future



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

With respect to the importance one gives their teeth; their appearance, their color, their together-ness, their bite, etc., I have been very lucky. Lucky in that doing little, other than brushing regularly, visiting (I use that term loosely) my dentist semi annually — at a minimum, and wearing braces as a child, has resulted in a lot of nothing. Thank God! Nothing as in, as of age 54, other than the standard and reasonably expected cavities and crowns, I have had no extractions (wisdom teeth or otherwise) and no root canals; in fact, I've had no periodontal work at all and no dental plates, partial or otherwise as well; nothing really to complain about, all potential dental procedures considered.

However, during my most recent dental appointment, my dentist, Dr. Janowitz and my long-time hygienist, Sandy, both gave me the word, words, actually; unless I floss and "sulkabrush" my teeth and gums and the spaces in and all around my wisdom teeth, I will be in for periodontal pain and suffering (and that doesn't even include the cost). Now whether the pain and suffering would be permanent, or just chronic — or whether it would be merely temporary, so long as the pain management — Novocain, gas, pills, paste, gel, etc. — works, was not discussed, but the message was nonetheless made very clear: take care of your teeth or your teeth will take care of you, to the tune of years of discomfort and thousands of dollars. The former being something I don't want and the latter being something I don't have (dental insurance notwithstanding and/or not reimbursing beyond a \$1,000 maximum, that is).

And so I got the message, loud and clear, along with a "goodie" bag filled with the usual amenities — dental floss, toothbrush, mouthwash, sulkabrush, etc., that it's time to finally accept what's good for my gums/teeth and integrate their care into my daily routine. Otherwise, the warning shot fired across my forehead by my team of dental professionals will have served no productive purpose other than as fodder for a not-healthy and not-fit column. And since teeth don't exactly regrow, though they certainly can be replaced (for a substantial price), it would seem prudent that I care for what God has given me and try to avoid what man and machinery can provide in their absence.

Given all that we can't control concerning our own health and welfare, it seems foolish to not try and control what little we can control. And though dental is not as life threatening as medical, dental still significantly contributes to one's overall health and well being, and being well is its own reward. And despite the fact that you can't spend your health, you can certainly spend a lot of money trying to maintain it. Moreover, if maintenance of your health, and by association, your teeth and gums, is somehow, somewhere, within your reach, you should grab it and understand that what's been given to you can certainly be taken, especially if you act as if it can't.

It's said that fame is fleeting. Heck, good health is fleeting. Just because you feel good — or look good today, means nothing so far as tomorrow's health is concerned. Nothing is guaranteed. Well, not exactly nothing. If I don't follow my dentist's orders, my teeth and gums will be in worse condition in six months than they are now. And that's a guarantee I can take to the bank (because I'll need the money) and to the periodontist.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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The Day that I Broke My Arm

On Tuesday, I was walking home from school on the walkway with Adam and Nadim and my brother. Nadim and I said, "Let's race. Then we ran like Cheetahs racing for their food. Suddenly I tripped. I hit my right arm. It stung like wasp and bees stinging and stinging me. I was crying like tears from the sky. I got

up. I couldn't twist my right arm. I was in pain. I came home and I said, "I broke my right arm." My parents didn't believe me. Neither did my brother. I felt Riley sad like a baby crying. At last we finished dinner. I went upstairs. I went to bed but couldn't sleep. At last at 1:00 I fell asleep. The next day I couldn't write that well at social studies. I came to the office after they called me down and my mom was waiting for me. Me and my mom Emily went to a hospital. When we got there I had to wait in a special room.

It had a cool fish tank in it. Then somebody came to get me to take some x-rays of my arm. Can you believe it? I really did break my arm!

Ian Dermott Smith, 9
Grade 3
Teacher: Susan Shahidi

Wave

One day at the Rehoboth Beach I walked into the water. Look! A giant wave! I panicked. Maybe it looks big out in the ocean but when it gets closer it will get smaller. I'll go over the wave. I almost yelled for help. I did not. The life-guard might think I'm drowning. So I just stood there trying to think of what to do. I finally chose to go under. "Here I go!" GULP. I took a breath of air. I went

down, down, down, to the bottom. I tried to grab sand with my toes on the bottom. I pushed up and soared like superman. I could feel the cold water rushing through my hair. I squinted. I started to float up. I popped out of the water and started to swim. "Swim faster! More waves are coming!" I was afraid that a wave would hit me from behind. I stood up. I did not realize I was one foot away from the sharp rocks. "OW! OW! OW!" I ran across the beach and leaped the last step ... I headed straight for the sand, sat down and buried my feet in the sand to stop the pain in my feet. I stood up limping over to my mom and dad eager to tell them.

Rachel Dennis, 8
Grade 3
Teacher: Susan Shahidi

Door

Open
Close
Open
Close
"Ow — got my finger"

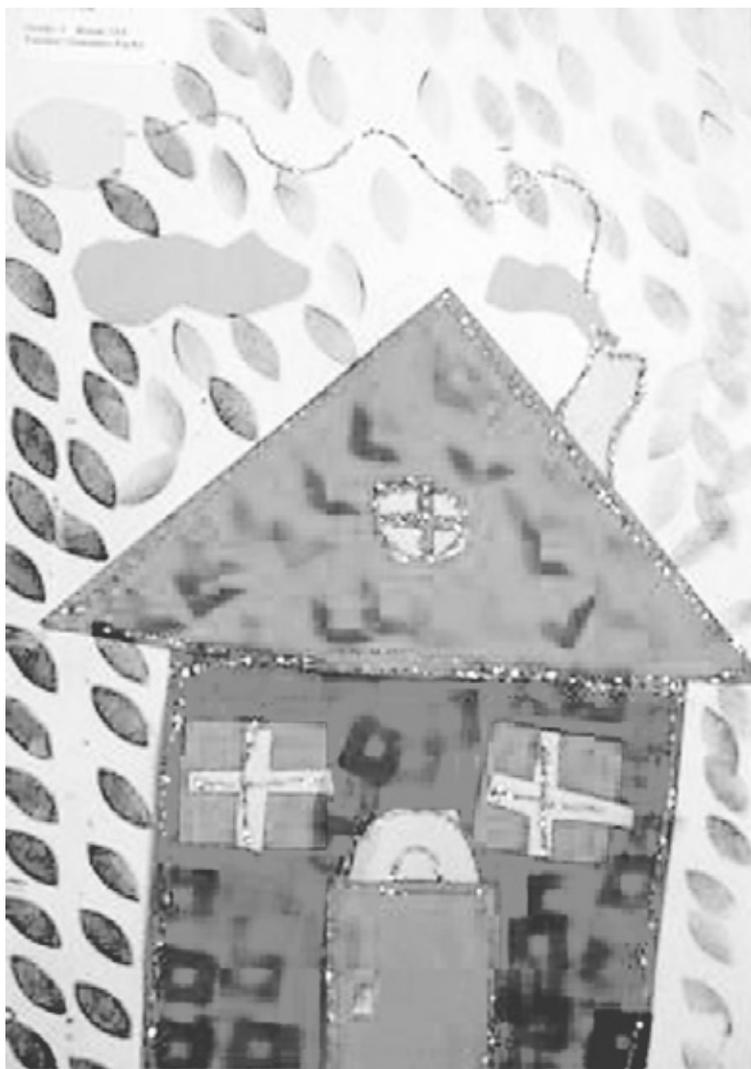
Katherine Henriquez
Grade 4
Teacher: Melanie Bukartek

Tooth

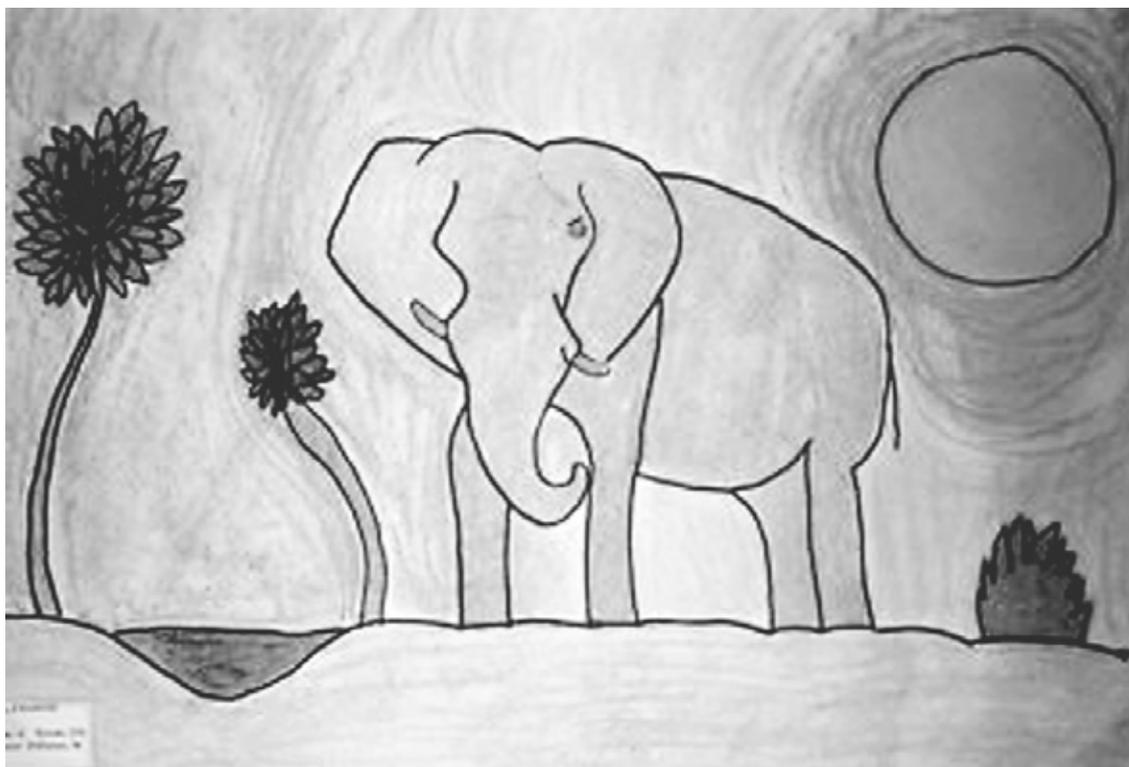
Carrots
Apples
It's almost there
I just want it to clean

Ricardo Benavides
Grade 4
Teacher: Melanie Bukartek

ART GALLERY



Jordan Killian, first grade, teacher Anne Nagy.



Elizabeth Pater, sixth grade, teacher Anne Nagy.



Kaila Hogan, fifth grade, teacher Anne Nagy.



Caitlin Smith, second grade, teacher Anne Nagy.



Haneen Abdelhaq, fourth grade, teacher Anne Nagy.



Swarna Pasupuleti, Grade 4, Armstrong Elementary School



Nick Weiland, 7th grade, Langston Hughes Middle School

The Black Moon

The black moon sits in the sky
 And laughs at the world
 Crying a sound that goes on forever
 And yet never will be heard

—JESSICA WHARTON
 GRADE 8, LANGSTON HUGHES MS

Flower

Each petal flows,
 like streams as bright as the sun.
 The morning dew,
 sparkles like the stars.

But who will ever notice
 the beauty of a single flower,
 in this early morning?

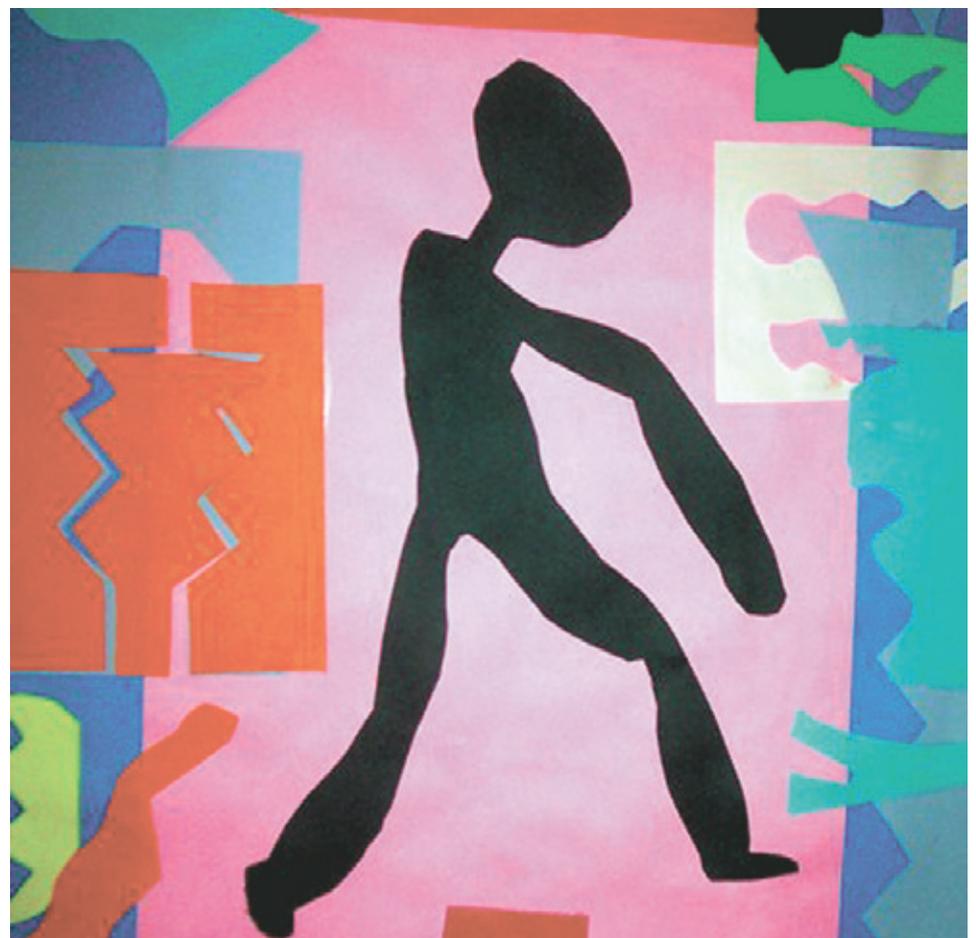
—CLARISSA SCOGGINS
 5TH GRADE, HUNTERS WOOD ELEMENTARY

Nightmare

You glance around the room, you're
 awake
 Hearing only yourself breathing
 heavily
 And the dull roar of an alarm echoes
 repetitively
 The images that were pieced together
 in your subconscious
 The glimpses of creatures, situations
 and tragedies
 Leave you sitting upright, translating
 and identifying why

The purpose of the images that left you
 silently screaming and on edge in your
 dream country
 After only a few seconds, the images
 dull and fade
 Losing their vibrant terrifying colors
 and shapes
 As you simultaneously lose the fear
 And slip back into safe reality

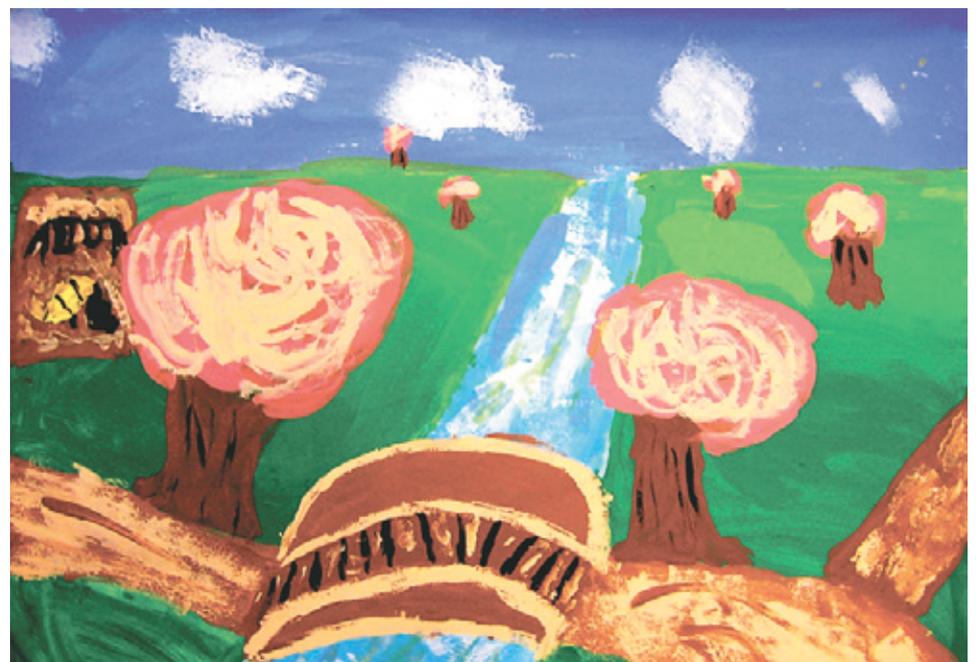
— PAIGE POWERS, 12TH GRADE
 SOUTH LAKES HIGH SCHOOL



Taylor Newman-Farr, Grade 4



Avery Robinson, Grade 6, Terraset Elementary School



Nature Park by Polly Lynch, 6th grade, Hunters Woods Elementary



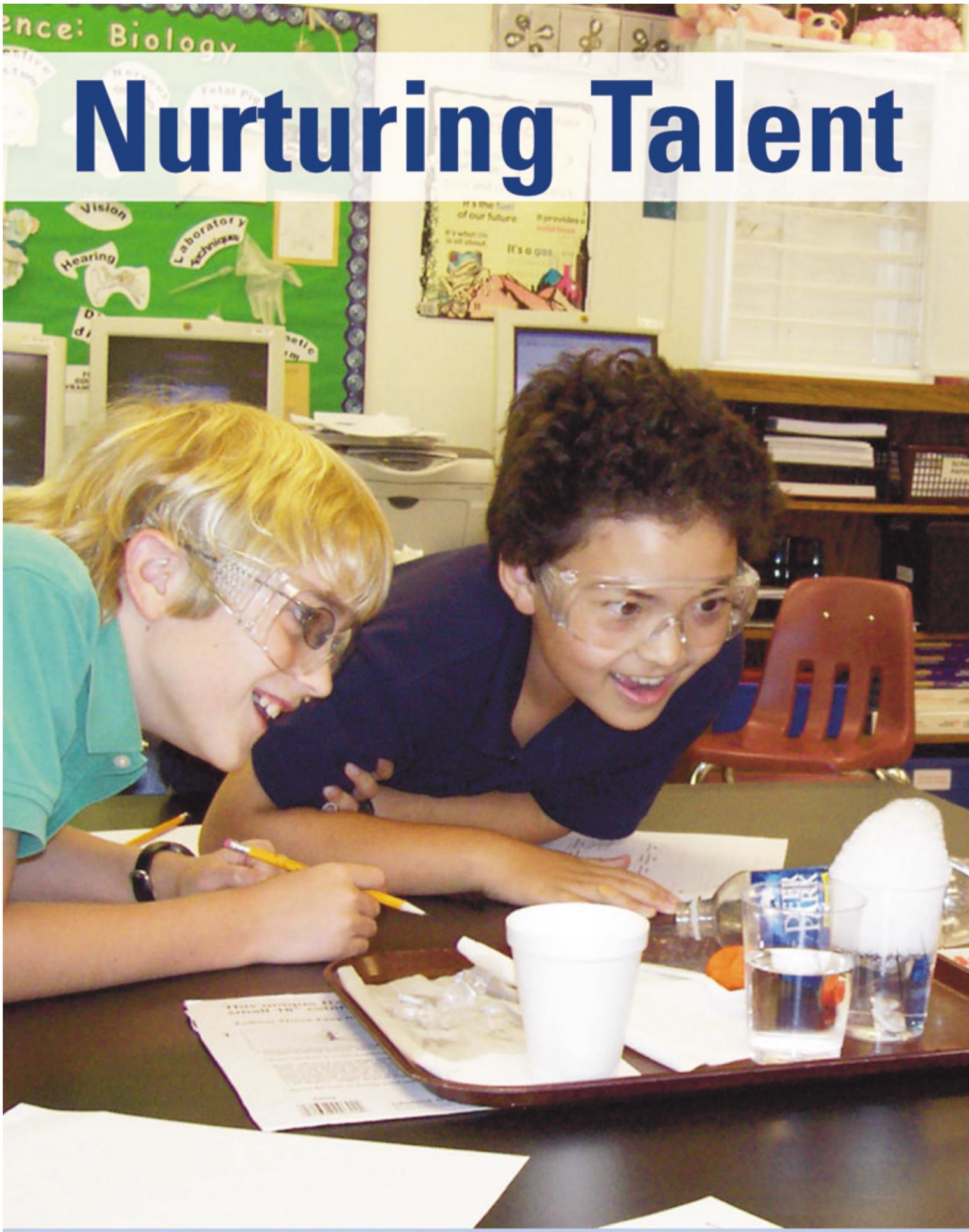
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