

By Leona Ng,
5th grade,
Churchill Road
Elementary School

Children's Connection 2010

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Best Wishes For The Holidays



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2010

MCLEAN CONNECTION EDITOR
KEMAL KURSPAHC
703-778-9414 OR
GREATFALLS@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Merry Christmas, by Valentina Deshler, 5th grade, Churchill Road Elementary



By Hamza Sohail, 4th Grade, Churchill Road Elementary

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the McLean Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students.

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

The response as always 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 2011 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 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

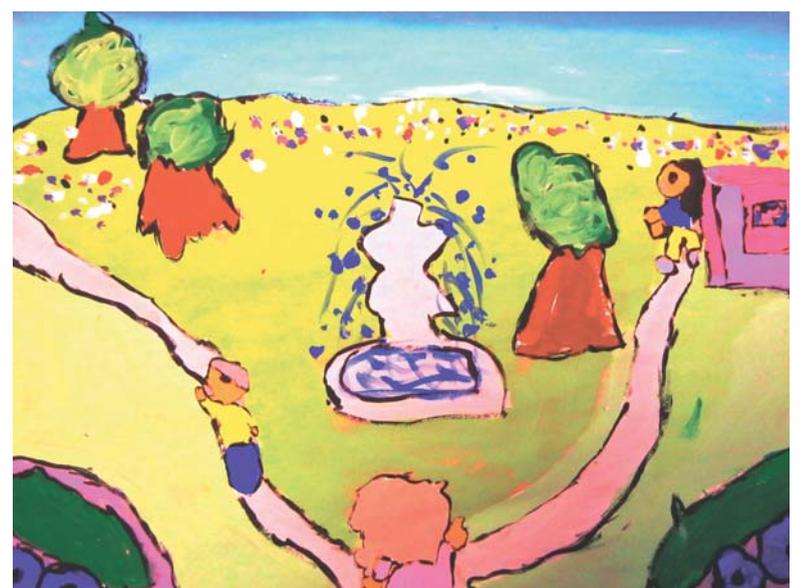
EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC



By Alice (Hay Won) Choi, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade



Thankful, by Amy Yang, Kindergarten, Churchill Road Elementary



By Angela Feng, 3rd Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Writing to Writers

Letters from Spring Hill Elementary.

Dear Joan Hiatt Harlow,

Your book, *Blown Away*, really surprised me. I never thought it was pages.

Reading *Blown Away* made me realize how fortunate I am to have a house rooted to the ground, as well as electricity, air conditioning, and food at my disposal. I never knew what it was like to live in 1935 but your vivid details made me feel like I was there.

Blown Away really touched me. I have never experienced a tragedy in my life but while reading your book, I felt a real connection to the characters. I felt like I had known them my whole life and was living through the hurricane with them, but just out of reach so I couldn't help. It was like a bad dream when your voice doesn't work.

When Star became ill, I found myself wishing for her to survive. After the part when Ruby died, I was distraught as tears filled my eyes, I couldn't believe my favorite character had just passed away. I was amazed at Jake's strength during and after the hurricane. I hope that I could be as brave as he was during a similar predicament.

I thank you, Joan Hiatt Harlow, for writing *Blown Away*.

Your fan,

—CHASE BRADSHAW

Dear D.J. Machale,

I used to think life had too many decisions to make. What sports to do, when to do homework, and they happen over and over. Then my friend, Chase, showed me *Pendragon: The Merchant of Death*.

Your book made me think. When Bobby went on his first adventure to Denduron, he had many decisions to make. Some of them were extremely difficult, like if he would help the Miligo miners or run away. When evil Saint Dane comes in Bobby must decide if he will battle him or not. During these times he had to face emotions of anger, melancholy, and confusion.

Now, whatever territory he flumes to next he'll be faced with tough choices. I can relate to him, since I've made decisions under influence of pressure and emotion. But his choices are more extreme than mine.

Looking at the big picture, my choices are pretty measly. They aren't that hard, and don't affect a lot. I guess I'll just look at the bright side of life now. Thanks.

Sincerely,

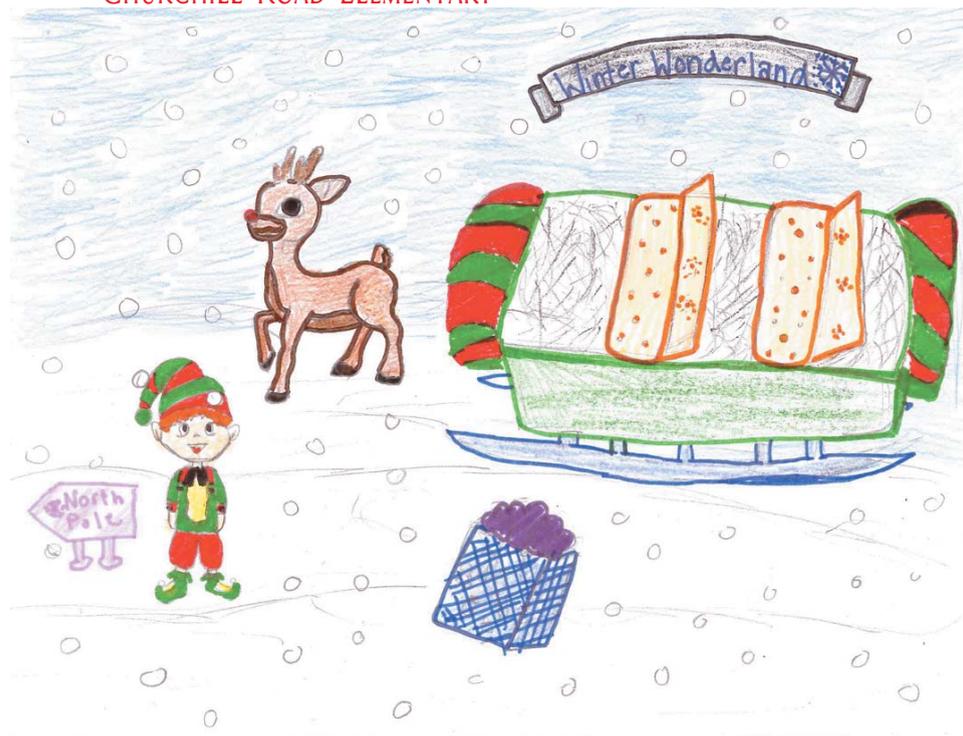
—TERRY KEFFER
GRADE 5

Dear Katherine Paterson,

I am Isabel Romov and I'm in 5th grade. Your book *Bridge to Terebithia* was so intriguing and made my heart pass over beats. Your book showed me that life can have melancholy yet contentment if you convey it right. When Leslie died I put the book down because it reminded me of the time my cousin died at age 12. Awhile after I had started to read the book, I was hoping what I read was just my imagination, but I was erroneous. Even though I was crying my eyes out while reading the book I couldn't put it down because I thought something better would happen. I was right: Jesse built the suspension bridge for his sister and that made my tears dry up in a flash. I was grinning like I never grinned before because I know life will get well again sooner or later but forgot in the shield of my wretchedness. *Bridge to Terebithia* is a book I will never forget it has many themes which make the book come alive. It has exploration, a little bit of anonymity, a little bit of romance, and a bit of violent behavior. This book could

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 5

CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY



Winter Wonderland, by Sneha Kripanandan, 5th grade, Churchill Road Elementary



By Anya McKee, 5th grade, Churchill Road Elementary



By Emily Kruse, 5th grade, Churchill Road Elementary

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Snow Days Are Good Days!

BY SHREYA J. RAMESH/5TH GRADE
CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

Snow is falling on the ground
Making things very bright!
Kids are waking up all around
Surrounded in a world of white!
Snowmen are being built over there
We're all engaged in play!
Snowball fights are everywhere
Thanks to this winter day!
Sledding down our driveway
Skiing down the grass that's hilly
Making snow angels today
We'll do this until it's too chilly!
Icicles are above the front door
Outside there's a cool winter breeze
The snowplow is making a roar
Sparkling snow is on the trees!
Together as a family we do every thing
Sipping hot chocolate and eating today
After that, many games we will bring
Until we get too tired to play!
Slowly the snow is melting away
The storm is beginning to end
All this snow will be gone in a day
Then there will be school to attend!

Letters from Spring Hill Elementary

FROM PAGE 4

teach anybody a lesson that your life is never always happy. In the finale of the book it showed me you can do anything if you keep your mind wide open. You can imagine fairies and mythical creatures and they will appear right in front of your eyes. Even though your life may seem faultless it will always until the end of time have something to make you gloomy or inquisitive. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Keep writing!
Sincerely,

— ISABEL

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SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY GALLERY



By Hana Kontrec, 6th Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School



By Chloe Reed, 2nd Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School



By Ada Chen, 6th Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School

By Alicia Gonzales, 3rd Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School



By Tammy Ding, 2nd Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School

By Anna Nguyen, 4th Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School

CHURCHILL ROAD POETRY CORNER

Snowball Fight

BY ARMAN PARASTARAN
CHURCHILL ROAD ES/5TH GRADE

Tim was in a snowball fight
He had it in the very dark night
He threw a snowball left
His aim was very deft
And he hit someone in the broad light

Snowmen

BY BORIS TOPALOV
CHURCHILL ROAD/5TH GRADE

One day, Frosty the snowman awakened again
He went and awakened another snowman called Jen
Jen was stylish, she loved shopping
Frosty was old, he wasn't even hopping
In return, Jen made him a den

A Winter day

BY ENDER JASKA
CHURCHILL ROAD ES

Under the winter sky,
The snowballs fly very high
The snowflakes fall so gracefully,
The adults watch their children faithfully
The cars and trucks may slip so they slow
Being cautious wherever they go
The cocoa is out for the children to drink,
When they finish they will skate at the rink
When the day is done they sleep in their beds,
And they dream about that snow day in their heads

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

The Greatest Gift Ever

BY CLARE DABALDO
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

I love giving! I think the greatest gift is the gift of giving. It hadn't always been that way, but as I got older I became more aware of the world outside of me. Shoes and clothes are nice and all, but the satisfaction of helping someone out is as good as it gets.

For my 12th birthday party, my friend Ashleigh and I had a big birthday bash. Her birthday was in April and mine was in June, so we split the difference and had it in May. Our parents rented out the McLean teen center, aka the Old Firehouse, hired a DJ, and bought a huge cake. We bought lots of pink and orange colored paper (Ashleigh's and my favorite colors) made invitations, and then handed them out to the whole sixth grade, so no one would be excluded. But, instead of gifts and presents, we changed things up a little.

Ashleigh asked for money to support a mission in Guatemala. I asked for canned food and money do-

nations for SHARE, a local charity helping people in need in the D.C. area. So, you had a choice and you could give to a local charity, a foreign country, or both.

The party was a hit, and about 85 people came. Even my friends from Pennsylvania came down to help me out. We kept the food pretty simple; candy, cake and a big punch bowl of water instead of bottled water so we didn't waste plastic. There was a ping-pong table, pool table and air hockey table. If you were tired from dancing, you could chill out.

I had so much fun and I think all of our guests did too. By the end of the night, my charity earned more than \$500 in cash, food and clothing donations!

When I thought about it, I realized that I could have gotten a boat load of presents. But, I think the fact that I know that I helped people out, and had fun doing it, made me feel better than any present I could ever get.

It just goes to show, the gift of giving is the best gift you ever could receive.

My Family's Holidays

BY DELANEY BURKART
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells! Jingle all the way..." Singing and laughing as we all crunch through the old snow on the way to the next house. Each sister is lined up one by one decked in red and green from head to toe, and all bundled up with cheeks stained red. Waiting nervously, we all think: are they awake? Will they get mad? And do they have food?

A special family tradition of my family and friends is to go caroling every Christmas Eve. After having a feast of ham and mashed potatoes, and our food has finally settled in our stomachs, we get ready to go. Even though all of us know that practically no one will answer the door, it is still fun to parade around acting like fools.

Each year when we go caroling we bring a different "spirit supply." For instance when I was younger we all went out with big bags of glitter. My mother told me that it would help Santa spot our neighbor-

hood from up high, with all of the sparkle. When I went to look back at the street it was glistening and sparkling like a diamond.

However, our most common "spirit supply" item that we use is tinsel. As all of our families wander around the neighborhood singing, we also decorate the neighborhood with tinsel. All of us wrap mail boxes, fake reindeer, and practically anything we can find. It's our families' special way of spreading joy and spirit.

One of my best memories of when I went caroling is when I was around the age of 10. We went to this one house and they gave us cookie dough! And in addition after that house, we got fresh hot chocolate from another neighbor! That definitely sparked my night.

When my neighbors shared with my friends and I, it lit up our evening. Just knowing that they cared, and that they appreciated our spirit was awesome. So remember over the holidays to share and spread spirit to everyone. You never know whose day you might brighten.

The Gift I'll Never Forget

BY ELLIE CROSS

I was nine years old when I got a letter in the mail that I will never forget. My brother and sister also got the letter, and when we opened it, we cried—my grandfather had been diabetic, and had cancer, so we could assume that something wasn't right. In-

side the letter were many, many two-dollar bills. That may not mean much to you but to my family; it meant more than a small, green, little piece of paper.

My grandfather always knew that one day two dollar bills would go scarce because the usage of

SEE GIFT, PAGE 8



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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Where the Truth Lies

BY JESSICA BULFORD
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Some days it seems as if it is only you and that you are carrying the whole world on your shoulders. It is days like those when you feel weak, vulnerable, and need someone or something to lean on. Growing up, I realized that moments like these aren't there to make your life harder. They are there to make you stronger. At a young age, I realized that it was important to be able to depend on myself when no one else was there to follow through for me.

As I got older, my life started to change. I was no longer that little baby with the bright blue eyes wrapped in my father's arms. Slowly I was entering the real world, where things like school, friends, and sports seemed like the most important thing. Soon I was practicing for soccer games or staying up all night doing homework. As I took bigger steps into my future, I realized it was my future, and I couldn't depend on others to make it a success.

Depending on me became more important as I started middle school. Sometimes I wasn't sure

who I could go to or who I could trust. I couldn't have other people making decisions for me or telling me who I was. They weren't me and wouldn't have to live with the choices that they wanted to make for me.

I never easily let my guard down and wouldn't become best friends with someone I had just met. But I had to be careful not to shut myself out or push away people who cared, and I learned it isn't bad to ask for help. I learned that if I met the right people, they could help me become a better person and teach me new things. They could make me laugh when I wanted to cry or smile when I wanted to frown.

It is difficult to get through life without depending on or trusting yourself. I know I will get knocked down, lose friends, and have my heart broken. But, more importantly, I will meet new people and do things I never knew I could. I will conquer what I viewed as impossible because of the choices I have made and the people I keep around me. I will only be able to get there if I trust myself and work hard to make the best choices.

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The Gift I'll Never Forget

FROM PAGE 7

other more valuable dollar bills were more common. He decided to collect them, and that was one of his most prized possessions—his collection of two-dollar bills.

At first we didn't know why he had sent us the money, but we could tell that our parents knew—they just didn't want to tell us yet. I was a little nervous at first because normally my grandfather had only sent two-dollar bills along with our birthday gifts, never any money that was so un-called for like this.

After school one day, I went over to my friend's house right up the street. After being there for about 10-15 minutes, my mom

called. She wanted me to come home, because she had something to tell me. I was really confused, but I didn't question it. Little did I know that I would come home to a family with red faces from crying.

Later that week, we had driven up to Salem where my grandfather was born for his funeral. The weather was just like it should be for a such occasion. It was pouring rain, just like the tears were pouring down my face during the six-seven hour trip to Salem. After the news had been given to me, I had known what the money meant. He wanted all of his grandchildren to share the joy he had found in those little pieces of paper, and so I will, always.

Fire

BY SAM SILVERMAN, 6TH GRADE
CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

People think of fire As a raging, untamed beast. But I see it's true meaning. Fire is a privilege. It is the essence of beauty. Its flickering form transfixes its observers. The orange, yellow, and red hues warm the mind, Its dancing flames taunt the imagination. Fire is not destruction, but rejuvenation.

What Do the Holidays Really Mean?

By MORGAN KULIGOWSKI
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

When it snows outside your window and all the trees lose their leaves, the holidays are here! Holidays can be time for fun and games, receiving gifts, and having parties. We see stores with lights and lavish decorations and mall parking lots overflowing with harried shoppers. Through all the chaos, we should take a step back and ask, what does all this really mean and why do we do it?

I celebrate Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Christ. Is this really what comes to mind when you hear the word Christ-

mas though? The first thoughts that are conjured by many are that of Santa, toys, decorations and shopping for that hard to please relative. To me, Christmas should be the time to come together and celebrate the most wonderful gift that we have ever received.

On Christmas day all of my family and many others rush to the tree to see what is under it. After opening these wonderful gifts we all take a moment to think about what the holidays are really about. My family believes that Jesus was born on this day and was the son of God. His mother and father were so happy and filled with joy because their son was finally born. They were now a family.

I believe we should all be happy and filled with joy, too, not only for the gifts but also for the reason that you are also a family. They understand the problems you face, support you in whatever you do, but most of all they love you. Other holidays also celebrate this wonderful thing like Hanukah or Kwanza which bring the whole family together to enjoy the holidays together.

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, or even another holiday they all have the same meaning, bringing the family together. So this holiday season think about how thankful you are for being part of a family, the greatest gift of all.



By Violet Shin, 6th Grade, Spring Hill Elementary School

Christmas

By GRACE GENT/5TH GRADE
CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

There is Thanksgiving, Halloween, Valentine's Day and others,
But Christmas with your father, mother, sisters and brothers,
Is the best holiday of them all.
For sharing, giving, and caring makes this holiday a ball,
But the best gift of all is spreading a smile to a face of another.

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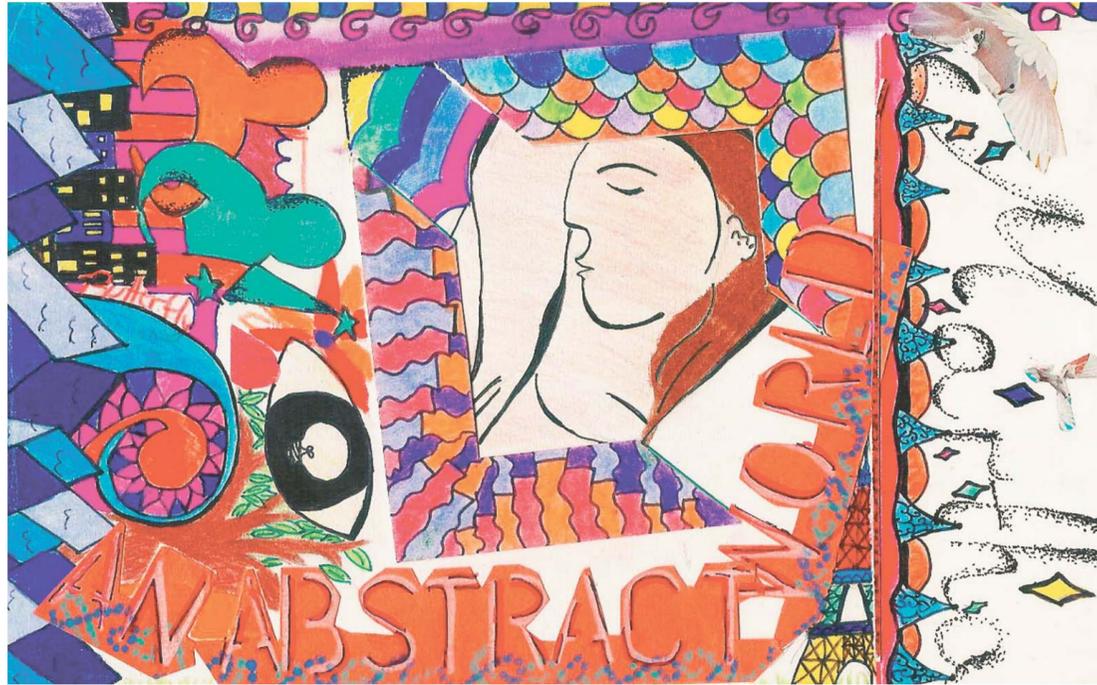
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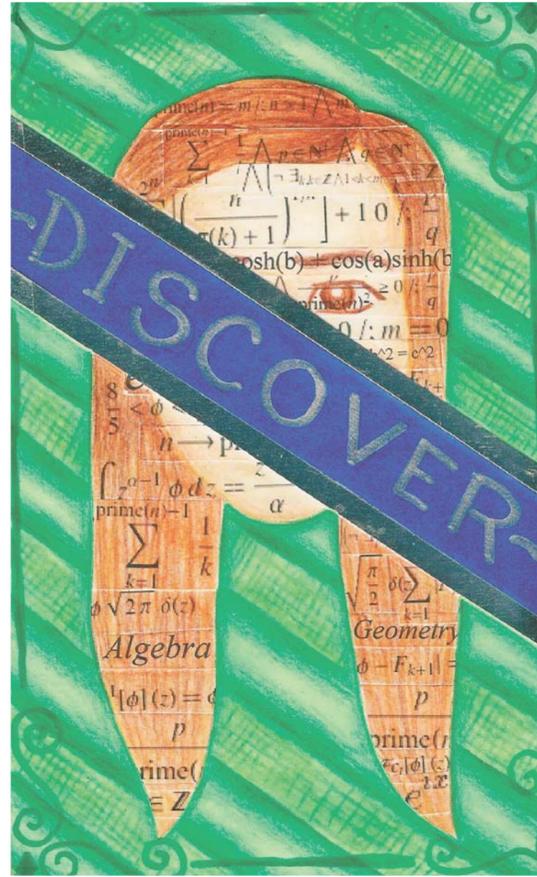
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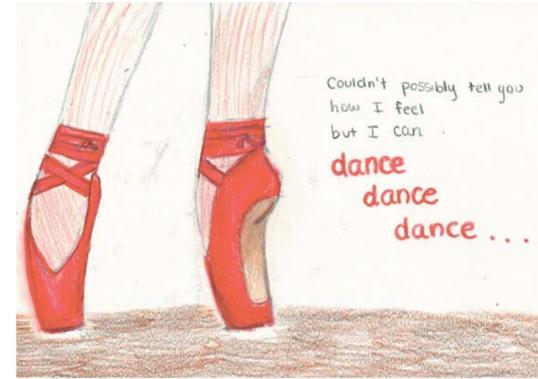
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My Abstraction, By Martha Carro, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade



By Maya Chung, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade

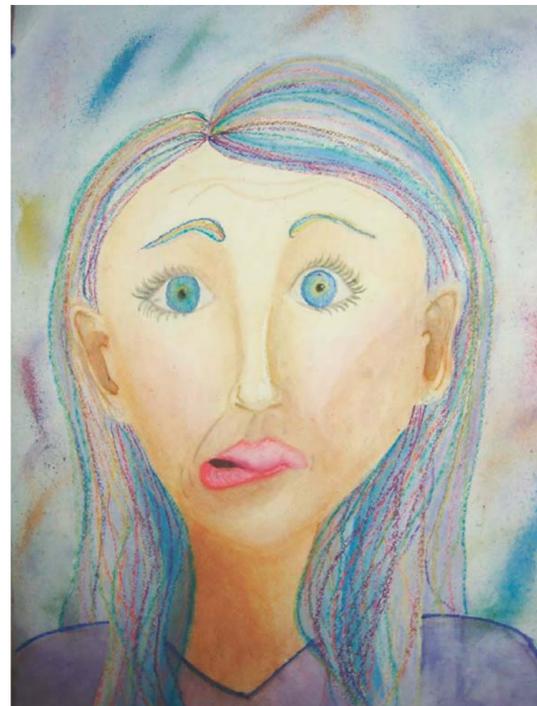


Dance, Dance, Dance, By Sarah Falls, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade

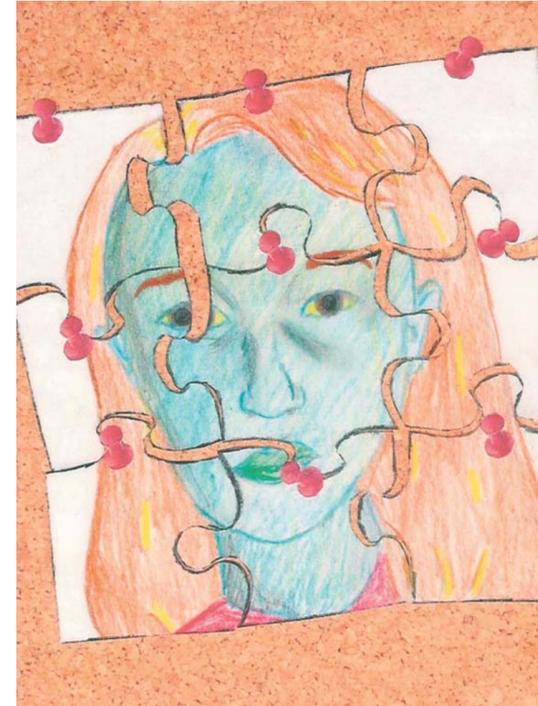
LONGFELLOW MIDDLE ART GALLERY
Dolores J. Wimberly, Art Teacher at the Longfellow Middle School, has submitted a selection of her students' artwork.



By Antonio Chan, Longfellow Middle School, 7th Grade



By Jaqueline Green, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade



By Emily Williams, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade

Feeding 1000 Homeless In One Day

BY BEN SO
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

It started out just helping my brother and our church feed 75-100 homeless people. Every other week our church youth group prepares hot chicken dinners at Mclean Baptist Church and delivers them to downtown D.C. This activity has been going for about 3-4 years. It's led by Mark Short, my brother Andrew So, and Bob Lictra.

One day my brother and Mark said "Hey why don't we feed 1000 homeless people in one day!" Then all of us decided, yea, let's do it. This was a big process for Mark and Andrew. Their idea was thought

out constantly to prepare.

When this was a set idea they brought it to the church to announce. They had a meeting with the church leaders. Some of the people said, "Andrew, Mark this couldn't possibly happen, it's unrealistic." After the meeting Andrew and Mark decided to turn what they think is a fantasy and make it into reality.

It's been several months preparing and preparing. They tried to get a lot of schools to help donate and provide donations. Then this fantasy was becoming more into a reality.

We got so many donations and a lot of volunteers. Then since Cooper Middle School 8th graders

need community service hours we ask Cooper to help us.

Then as time went by we picked a date for the feeding 1000: It would be November 13, 2010. Time went by so fast it was only a week away and we have \$980 for donations and we took that money to order the food. The plan was for 300 hot breakfasts, 400 bag lunches, and 300 hot chicken dinners.

It was the day before the big day and we planned to start 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The people in charge came to help set up tables and the music we will play during the Feeding 1000. It was finally the day we had so many people in the morning. We

had kids from Churchill Elementary, Cooper Kids, Langley Kids, and Mclean Kids. Also we had a news reporter from the Mclean Connection.

We had clubs from Langley keep an update on Facebook and Twitter to let everyone know how much we did. So far at 12:30 p.m. we have delivered 700 meals. So we're ahead of schedule. By 3:30 we have about 50 meals left to deliver.

Then at 4:30 we were done. We finished ahead of schedule. So what some people called a fantasy turned into a reality. By the end of day we fed not just 1000 people but 1103 homeless people. So that's my most significant time in 2010.

how I could help.

My birthday is three days before Christmas, and so every year I have a birthday/Christmas party. Christmas has a lot of meanings, and one of them is giving back. So every party I have, I don't ask for presents. I ask for money or toys that fit the category of a 2-9 year old. The toys end up going to an organization and the toys are given there, and the money is given to a charity.

So Christmas to me is about giving back. Thinking that I can change a child's Christmas, being able to put a smile on their face, to make them happy. If everyone this Christmas season went out and bought a toy for a child, imagine what'd they do.

Seeing the smile on their face glowing as they see a gift wrapped, the eagerness as they open their gift, and their Christmas is changed into something worthwhile. So this Christmas, give back to the ones in need, and if we all do our part, we could transform this Christmas into something better.

Time to Give Back

BY CATHERINE WHITE
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

When I look at my Christmas tree I see twinkling lights and cookies in the shapes of reindeer and Santa. Presents wrapped in bright green and red paper, waiting to be opened. A Christmas dinner that's made just right, with a feast laid out in front of me, eating it in my best dress. I think about Christmas, how I have the same one every year.

One day I was in Washington D.C. two days before Christmas, passing children in rags, mothers holding their children trying to get warm, had possession of nothing, frowns that looked like it was permanent. It was heartbreaking to think that people were having an extravagant Christmas while children, grownups even babies couldn't have a Christmas like ours, or give presents to their children. I decided it wasn't fair, because it wasn't. So I started thinking about

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Memorable Things in 2010

BY FRANK DING
 CHURCHILL ROAD ES/5TH GRADE

This was a very exciting and interesting year. I did so many new and cool things that I really liked. Let's take a look at what I did.

The first memorable thing is reading the two greatest books I've ever read in my whole life. They are *The Lost Hero* and *Where the Red Fern Grows*. I really liked them because of all the adventure, action, and excitement. *The Lost Hero* is also the longest book I've ever read. It is 553 pages! I can't wait for the next book in the series of *The Lost Hero* to come out! I liked *Where the Red Fern Grows* because of how sad and happy it was at the same time. It really stirred my emotions. I want to read *Summer of the Monkeys*, which is by the same author as *Where the Red Fern Grows*.

Another thing is going to Hawaii for the first time. I went to two islands and snorkeled for the first time, climbed a giant tree, saw a lava formed cave/tunnel, played at a beach, and much, much more. My favorite thing was snorkeling. It was really fun because of the view of the tens and hundreds of fish, but it also felt really weird wearing a mask and breathing through my mouth underwater. My brain was saying, "No! No! You'll get water in your lungs and you'll drown!" but my lungs were saying, "It's fine! The air is perfect! Well, maybe except for the fact that it is a bit salty." There were such a large variety of fish. There were flat fish, thin fish, long fish, and fat fish. There were also spike balls on top of the corals. I will never forget that

Those were my top memorable things in 2010. I wonder what interesting things will happen in



By Elizabeth Hoeymans, 5th grade, Churchill Road Elementary

2011! Perhaps I'll learn something cool at summer camp. I might read another amazing book. Or, my family might go on another cool trip. I can't wait until next year to find out.

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Power of Speech

BY REAGAN HILL
CHURCHILL ROAD ES/6TH GRADE

Every person beginning with day one of their lives, the first thing they are taught is how to speak. Speech is the very basis of human existence. It is our ability to speak and communicate that has made humans the superior species on the planet. Everything that we are is because we can speak.

Freedom of speech fosters creativity, organization, religion, learning, culture, and so much more. "We have enjoyed so much freedom for so long, that we are perhaps in danger of forgetting how much blood it cost to establish the Bill of Rights" (Felix Frankfurter). Ever since the world started we have been fighting for our freedom. We didn't just get freedom; we had to fight for it. We went through wars and arguments just to get to where we are today. When someone says, "What does freedom mean to you?" what do you say? To me it means you can believe in anything, speak freely, and can choose what you want to do. Of all our freedoms the freedom of speech is the most critical.

The world is constantly changing. People state their opinions, say what they mean, and speak out about what they think is right. In the Bill of Rights it says that the people of the United States are allowed to speak their minds. One famous person that challenged people to change was Martin Luther King Jr. He spoke his mind. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke how he felt, and what he wanted to change. Despite people shouting out at him, he still spoke what he believed in. He spoke about what he wanted, so that the people would really pay attention and listen. Freedom of speech means, "[g]ive me liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

Sometimes people forget the importance of freedom of speech. Even people that can't actually speak words, find ways to express themselves and communicate. People speak in so many ways. Instead of people speaking words, you can use sign language, you can show what you want to say, you can write it down, and you can speak through touch. Everything that we've become and everything that we can do is because we can speak. Freedom of speech was the first amendment. It gave us Freedom of Assembly, to believe in any religion, and freedom to write whatever we want. Speaking is so important in everyone's lives, they shouldn't forget the importance of it.

The main reason we have freedom of speech is because everyone has an opinion and everyone wants their opinion to be heard. Americans' voices are not going to shut down and stop. They all want to speak and be listened to. If no one's voice and mind is heard than we wouldn't be able to write books, have newspapers, have presidents, and we wouldn't be able to be ourselves. Freedom of speech is speaking your mind and what's in your heart. It's telling what you think is right for yourself and the world. No one should ever forget or take advantage of having the right to speak because one day that right might disappear and go away. In the future, remember that we have our freedom to speak only because we fight for it everyday.

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My Answer to Cancer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Oddly enough — or not, since receiving my original stage IV lung cancer terminal-type diagnosis/prognosis on Feb. 27, 2009, I have not felt compelled or motivated in the least, beyond my immediate circle of family and friends, to seek out other lung cancer patients/survivors for support, for reassurance, for advice or for any kind of group and/or individual therapy. Perhaps I will live to regret it (wouldn't that be the ultimate irony), but I haven't really felt the urge to purge myself of whatever mental toxins I was/am internalizing. I was — and am, still managing. In addition, I've not been interested in joining or attending any kind of lung cancer awareness group or participating in any type of lung cancer out-reach activity.

My thinking has been — and still is, that I don't want to immerse myself in the cancer culture. Maybe I'm pretending that I'm not a member of this group (whose membership is not the least bit desirable)? Maybe I'm afraid of what relationships I may start or what relationships I may see end badly? Perhaps I'm worried that a connection and commitment to similarly diagnosed people will somehow weigh on me and adversely affect my own relative/comparative good health? Seeing sicker, weaker people might make me feel sicker, weaker; that scares me. I want (need, probably) to be surrounded by positivity. I don't want (need presumably) to expend any energy overcoming negative people, places and things that might challenge the positive mental attitude that is key to fighting this insidious disease. Nor do I think that my presence will energize anybody to do anything. I'm not so self-absorbed or educated to believe that something I say or do — with respect to this whole lung cancer trip, is going to help another individual rise to some previously unattainable height. I have to help myself, first and foremost, don't I? I'm having enough trouble fighting my own battles.

The longer I'm a cancer survivor — outliving my original prognosis (13 months to two years), the more difficult it becomes to care about others as much as I care about myself; every day could be my last. As such, I need to protect myself from the slings and arrows of the outrageous misfortune that has befallen so many others. It's difficult enough to mentally maintain my own disposition that when I have considered joining/participating in some cancer-type activity (5K walk, parade, seminar, support-type group, etc.), I've balked at doing so, fearful of the risk to my own psyche — meaning the weakening of the mental resolve which has enabled me to live the life I have over the past 22 months. I don't trust myself to hold up under the collective catharsis of so much pain and suffering.

At the end of the day (heck, at the beginning of the day, too; and every minute in between), this whole cancer battle is about self-preservation — or perceived self-preservation. I'm not embarrassed to admit that I'm afraid of being around other cancer patients who are terminal. I'm extremely sensitive and aware of my surroundings; I can't presume there won't be an emotional toll on me. Moreover, all I have going for me is my sense of good humor, positive attitude and belief in what I'm doing: diet changes, vitamins, alkaline water, apple cider vinegar, baking soda, pureed asparagus, probiotics, exercise, etc. I can't risk immersion, or even exposure to a cancer culture that might threaten — or question my pursuits and the reasons for them. I have to consider the consequences of my actions, especially now, and mind my own business — in my opinion.

I'm probably wrong living in this sort of semi isolation, but it's my life and I'm trying to live it the best way I can — most things considered.

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

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21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

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AT&T Mobility is proposing to install new wireless telecommunications antennas on an existing building located at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington, VA. The new facility will consist of adding three panel antennas (one per sector) to existing rooftop mounts at 62 feet above ground level. Support equipment will be placed on an existing rooftop equipment pad. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61107459-SF c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail South, York, PA 17403, or via telephone at 781-273-2500.

21 Announcements

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AT&T intends to file an application for the collocation of new antennas on the building located at 1900 Columbia Pike, Arlington, Virginia. AT&T is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal regulation 37CFR1.1301 et seq, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 36 CFR 800. The project referenced as "Court House" will consist of the collocation of antennas on the roof of the building. In addition, conduit will be run from the equipment shelter to the antennas. Parties interested in submitting comments or questions regarding any potential effects of the proposed facility on Historic Properties may do so in writing by contacting Carol Blitz, AT&T, at 7150 Standard Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076 or c/o theresa.scarlato@atcassociates.com

21 Announcements

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AT&T Mobility, LLC is proposing to modify a wireless telecommunications facility on a building located at 1415 N. Oak St., Arlington, VA. The proposed modification consists of adding three antennas (one per sector) at a height of 73.4 feet on the rooftop. Two antennas will be mounted behind an existing screen wall, and one will be on an existing chimney. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61108009-MAT c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail South, York, PA, 17403, or via telephone at (781) 273-2500.

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21 Announcements

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AT&T Mobility, LLC is proposing to modify a wireless telecommunications facility on a building located at 1415 N. Oak St., Arlington, VA. The proposed modification consists of adding three antennas (one per sector) at a height of 73.4 feet on the rooftop. Two antennas will be mounted behind an existing screen wall, and one will be on an existing chimney. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61108009-MAT c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail South, York, PA, 17403, or via telephone at (781) 273-2500.

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AT&T intends to file an application for the collocation of new antennas on the building located at 2001 North Adams Street, Arlington, Virginia. AT&T is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal regulation 37CFR1.1301 et seq, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 36 CFR 800. The project referenced as "Fort Strong" will consist of the collocation of new antennas onto existing antenna mounts. In addition, new conduit will be run from the antennas to the existing flex bay. Parties interested in submitting comments or questions regarding any potential effects of the proposed facility on Historic Properties may do so in writing by contacting Carol Blitz, AT&T, at 7150 Standard Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076 or c/o theresa.scarlato@atcassociates.com

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Rehan Javaid



By Cole Stitt

Inspired by Picasso

Students in Kate Vose's 4th grade class at Curchill Road Elementary submitted their designs created with cut paper and inspired by Picasso's artwork.



By Matthew Swiers

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

My Retreat

BY GWENDOLYN TORRENCE
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Every single summer of my life, we have packed the car to trek through hours of traffic jams, pouring rain, and blistering heat just to get to a place where there isn't any hustle and bustle, no TV or Wi-Fi. So where are we going? To the greatest place on Earth, (in my opinion) Lake Erie, Pennsylvania.

I cannot tell you how many times I have woken up thinking I was hearing the waves crashing up against the shore, just to realize my fan was set on full speed. The crushing disappointment was unbearable and I started to count down the days till I knew I could lie down in the sand with the waves lapping up against my feet, and not hear the cars rushing past or the dogs bark.

With my dad working full speed, and my family's crazy schedule, we're stressed all the time. So when we hit the curvy hill that leads down to our lakeside cottage, I can feel the tension and stress rolling off of our backs. When we have unpacked and re



By Arista Wilson, Grade 4, Churchill Road Elementary School

SEE RETREAT, PAGE 17

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



"Elf on the Shelf," Jacqueline McElroy, 8, 3rd Grade. Potomac School, McLean

Greatest Challenge

BY SYDNEY GOODSON
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

So many incredible inventions have been made in our generation. Everything from navigating cars to phones that can hold a thousand apps have been created. Don't get me wrong, the technology that has been developed is amazing and I use it every day, but the greatest challenge of our generation is a much bigger picture.

You may have heard of the movie 2012. It's a lot of mixed up action but the basic summary is that all of the damage created by humans will destroy the earth on January 1st 2012. It may seem dramatic but there is a meaning behind it. Did you know that the earth can only hold so much Carbon Dioxide? The millions of cars we have on the road each day give off so much carbon dioxide in the air pollution that it has caused major gaps in our ozone layer. These gaps

can repair but only if we stop putting so much pollution into the air. The major challenge of our generation is to protect the only Earth we have.

We can all help the environment in many ways. One very easy way is to donate a dollar to plant a tree in a forest, or you could turn the power off on electronics when you aren't using them. If you really want to make a difference you could always take the extra step and switch to a renewable energy source to conserve energy and volunteer in your local community to help rebuild wildlife.

I think that it is so important for us to take the extra step to focus on conserving the planet, because if something were to happen to earth then all of the groundbreaking technology and developments would no longer exist. It will be a challenge to make these changes, but it is important for everyone's wellbeing. It will take a lot of hard work but it is worth it to live in a healthier and beautiful place. We can all make a difference.

Retreat

FROM PAGE 16

axed, it's like the days have melted into each other.

My cottage is about 100 years old and has so much personality. My dad's side of the family is almost gone, so when we come here it has all the old memories and the rooms they've slept in. In all of our cottages, we can hear almost everything loud going on. Our neighbors joke that they know it's our dinner time because we have this huge bell, and we ring it every time it's dinner time.

Swimming is the best part. We don't have to pay to get in, or have to deal with the crowds or the life-guards. We can stay out there for as long as we want- as long as we have sun block. Our cousins always come down for a week or two



My Cats, by Molly Murray, Kindergarten, Churchill Road Elementary

and the house is usually trashed with sand everywhere and dirty clothes piling up, but it's worth it.

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Keaton Lee, Longfellow Middle School, 7th Grade

Inspired to Dream

BY NEEKA EGHBALI
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

What is the greatest gift you've ever received? When asked this question, the possible answers are endless. Most children desire a popular high-tech gizmo or gadget that after a while ends up under their bed, forgotten. Although, there is only one gift I've received that has changed my life forever. It was the greatest gift of all, and best of all it required no battery, charging, or mindless game play. It was nothing special in another's eyes, though it became my whole world almost instantly. It was a simple little journal that my parents gave me that opened my mind and heart to expressing myself.

Since that fateful day, I have had a lifelong love for writing; recording my personal thoughts and creating stories. I especially enjoy sharing my stories with others, and seeing how they react or are moved by my writings. I am passionate about being a writer, and my journalism teacher Ms. Farrell has given me

the opportunity to spread my wings and flourish. Each and every day, I look forward to attending my Journalism class, waiting breathlessly for the next assignment.

At the beginning of this school year, I was given the honor of receiving the position as Editor in Chief of the Hawkeye. Working on the Hawkeye has been a truly wonderful experience. I now appreciate all the hard work that it takes in creating a newspaper. Nevertheless, the hustle and bustle of the constant deadlines makes it fun and interesting each and every day. The dedication and hard work each journalist at Cooper Middle School contributes is the reason the Hawkeye is a stunning success.

There's a deep connection between my journal and I. It inspires me to go further than even I have ever dreamed of. If separated from my inspiring journal, it would be like an Orchestra without a song, an artist without a paintbrush, a writer without a pen. I hope that you too have a special gift that has inspired you to dream.

Our Generation

BY HARRIS LATEEF
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

From a bad economy to astronomical college tuition my generation has many challenges and limitations. Never before has a generation been so technologically intelligent and constantly connected. In many cases this is a good thing but in others it can be a major drawback to everyday life.

Our parents grew up with no Internet, no texting, and well under half the television stations we have now. Most people can argue that advances in technology, entertainment, and communications bring nothing but good. Others, like me, believe that with every leap forward in technology we take two steps back in the fight for education. Technology provides students distractions and habits that negatively affect their lives and education.

In December 1992, when Neil Papworth, a 22-year-old test engineer, sent the world's first text message while working for a technology firm, little did he

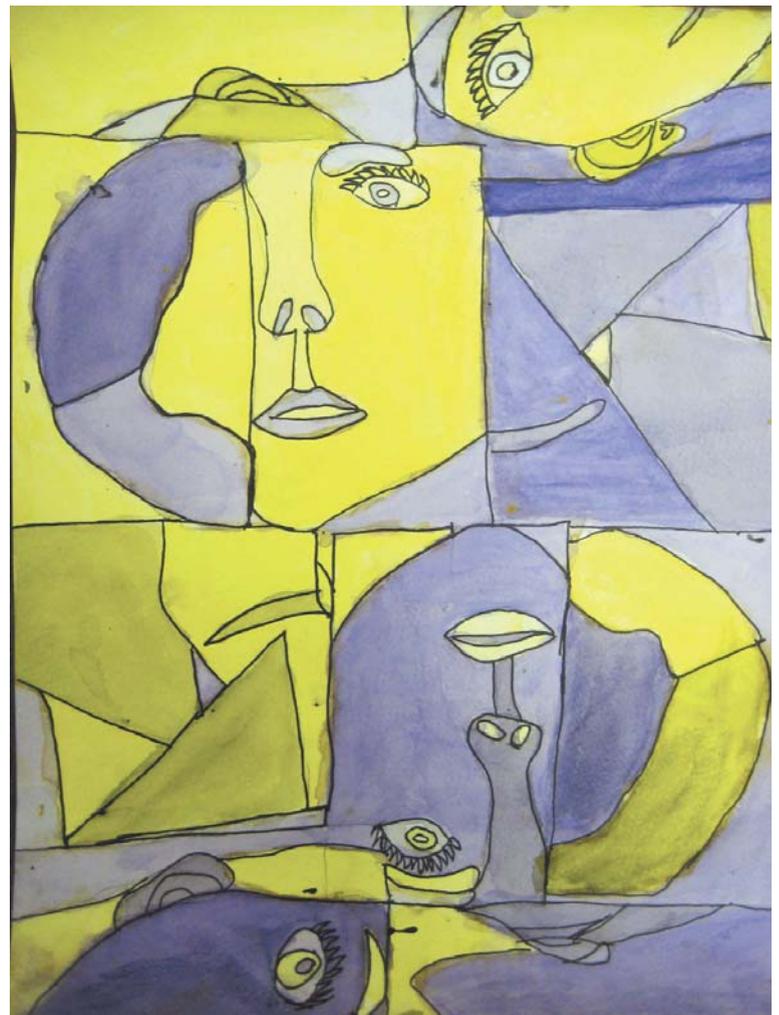
know that 18 years later text messaging would become the most widely used mobile data service in existence. In an average month, 152.7 billion text messages are sent and received in the United States alone and 534 text messages are sent monthly by each SMS messaging user.

A recent physiological study unveiled in August of 2010 found that students who send and receive more than 200 text messages daily are 150% more likely to fail a class and engage in harmful behavior. In recent years, many people have been concerned about the growing problem of texting while driving, which has led to countless accidents and even deaths. Last year I conducted a research study for my science class and found that cell phones emit the largest amount of potentially harmful radio frequency waves while using the telephone and texting features.

Overall, I believe that allowing students to possess cell phones at a young age is one of the greatest issues that negatively affect my generation and, if nothing is done, many generations to come.



By Meg Garland, Longfellow Middle School, 8th Grade

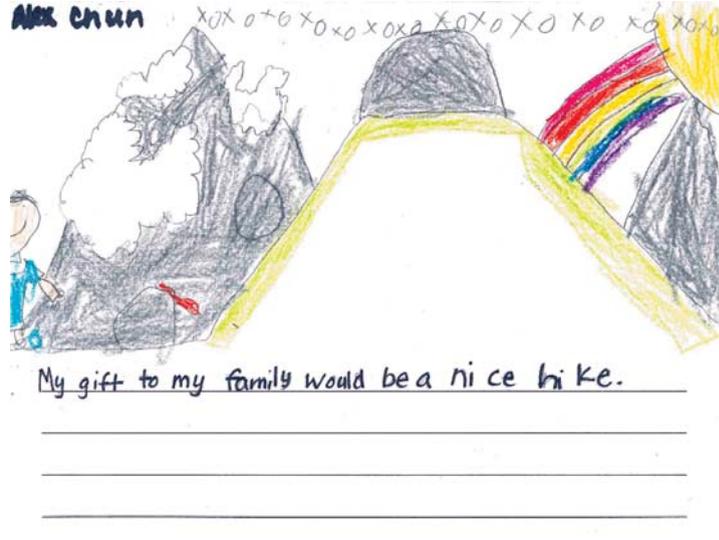
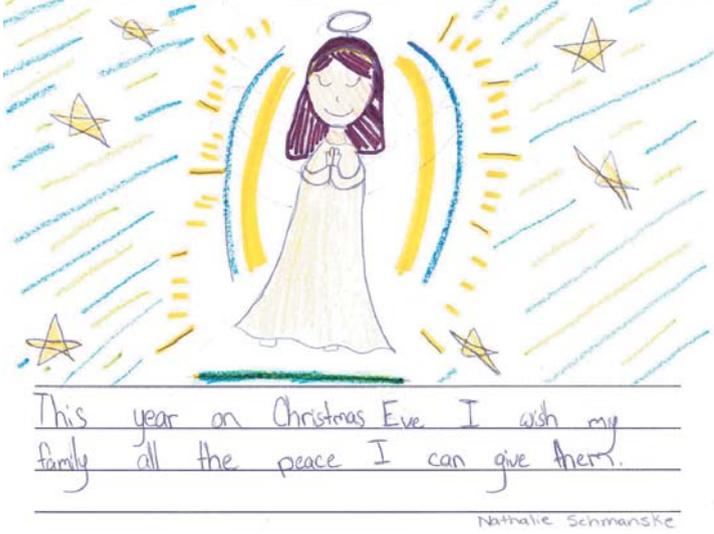


By Hailey Guinn, Longfellow Middle School, 7th Grade

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

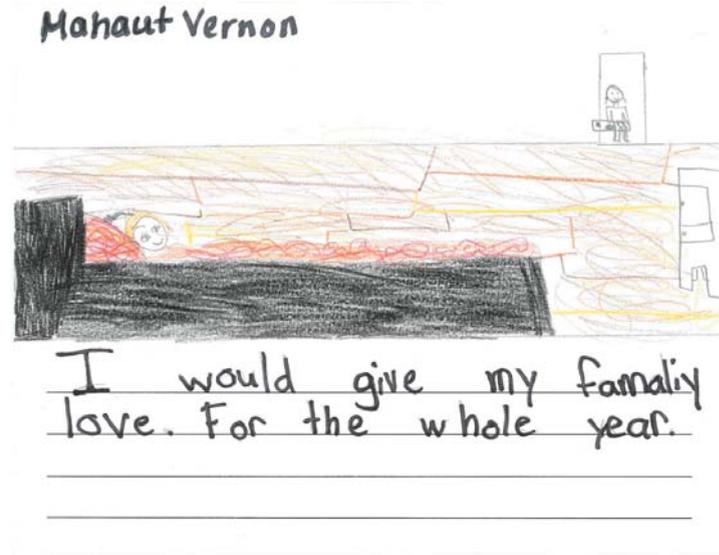
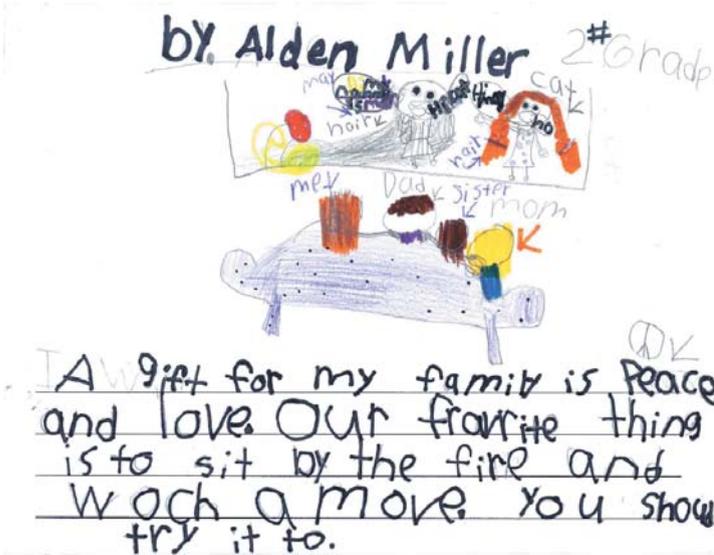
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