

Chloe Clayborne, McLean, St. James Catholic School, grade 7

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Children's Connection 2015

DECEMBER 30, 2015 - JANUARY 5, 2016

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Nathan Pearce, 6, McLean, Kent Gardens Elementary, grade 1, Mrs. Viernes, "The Town"



Maya Mansour, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Bike"

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.

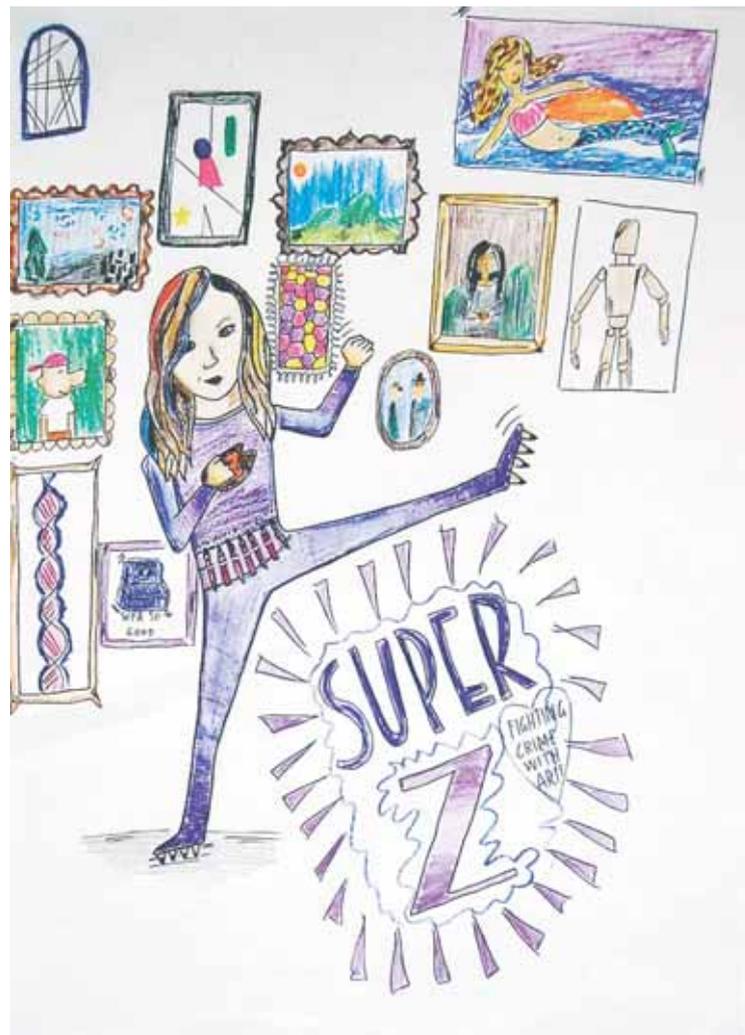
We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2016 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection.

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



Zara Adams, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 6, Mrs. Ashe



Michaela Pearce, 9, McLean, Churchill Road Elementary, Mrs. Brownley, "Oceana"



Aurora Hanein-Chagoury, Cooper Middle School, grade 7

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Horse Show

I took a deep breath and stood on my toes, looking over my horse's thick, coal black mane. Hundreds of eyes were watching the group of riders that were already inside.

"Okay, you can go in and start fixing your girth," one of the instructors breezed past me, flashing me a smile and added, "Good luck."

"I'm going to need the whole state of Virginia's luck on my side if I don't want to go in there and make a fool of myself," I muttered under my breathe, lightly tugging my horse forward. "Come on Nacho, now's not the time for napping."

As I lead him through the arena gate, I stroked his soft, brown neck so I didn't have to look at the audience.

When I had led him to the arena and halted him, I finally dared to look up.

The bleachers were packed with parents, friends, and siblings coming to watch us ride.

"Good luck." Siri smiles at me as she leads Twinkie, the palomino gelding she often rode, past me.

I smile briefly at her, feeling the butterflies in my stomach erupt into giant moths.

Swinging the beat-up leather reins over my shoulder, I start to tighten Nacho's girth.

"Too loose," I murmur, my slick hands slipping on the smooth leather as I tighten the girth a couple more holes.

When I finish, I lead Nacho over to the dusty wooden mounting block. Climbing on, I had to steady

myself so I didn't fall off as it rocked back and forth.

Holding onto the saddle to steady myself, I stick my left foot in the stirrup and swing over and onto his back, gently lowering myself into the saddle.

Clicking to him, I directed Nacho over to where the two girls that I was riding with sat as their mounts stood quietly under them.

"We have to say our names?!" Rachel squeaked as I got closer. "That's it, I'm outta here!"

Our instructor, Meredith, rolled her eyes, "Come on guys, you can do this, and you can't back out now, it's show time!"

Much to my dislike, I ended up being first.

Facing the crowd, I announced, "Hi, my name is Michaela, and this is Nacho," I say, surprised at how clear my voice sounded.

While I wait for the other girls to finish saying their names and that of their mounts, I fiddle with my brand new, purple and red riding crop.

"Okay girls, let's get started," our other instructor, Christopher, called out as she marched through the dusty ring to the center of the arena. "Tighten your reins and when I say 'three,' pick up your posting trot."

When she reached three, I give Nacho a slight nudge and tap with my crop.

Ignoring the sea of faces, I focus on rising up and down in time with his outside leg.

"Up, down, up, down," I mutter to myself, "Come on Nacho, you can do it!"



Aubrey Augustine, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Horse"

Gradually, I feel the myself relax and the tension leave my shoulders. *This is fun!* I thought.

As suddenly as it had started, the show ended and I was leading Nacho out of the riding ring and to his stall.

Wiping my brow, I circle him and began to take off his saddle and bridle. When I finish, I slipped on his faded orange halter and clipped on the lead rope.

Tugging on the rope, I led him out of his stall and to the area where you bathe your horse. "Come on boy, let's go take a bath." Nacho seemed to blink in agreement.

Leading him over to where a few spare hoses were laying around, I tied him to a steal circle in the wall, making sure to use a safety knot so that he could pull away, without getting hurt, if he got scared or spooked.

Grabbing an already soaked sponge, I started to rub it over his back where his saddle had been.

His back glistened from the wa-

ter, and I licked my dry lips. I was parched. Spraying myself with the hose was definitely a possibility.

Forcing myself to stay focused, I soon finished and led Nacho back to his stall.

I pull off his halter and I hug him. "Thanks boy, you were awesome."

Digging through my jacket pocket, I find a horse treat and hold it under his muzzle. He immediately stops trying to chew on my jacket and snatches the treat from the palm of my hand.

Crumbs fly everywhere as he chews on the treat.. "Piggy." I laugh and scratch his nose lightly with my finger tips.

As I watched him munch noisily on some hay that he found on the floor of his stall, I thought back to earlier today, *It was amazing*, I thought, *I hope I get the chance to be in another horse show sometime.*

—MICHAELA SVENSSON,
CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY, GRADE 5, MR. DEPA'S

A Good Person

The majority of people strive to be a good person, but not everyone knows what it means to be a good person. Yes, it is important to be kind to others and respect others rights, but there is more to being considered "good." The motive to your kindness is also a key component. A good person will be kind only for the sake of being helpful. A good person will feel it is necessary to be pleasant even when it seems impossible, and strives to make someone's day just because they feel like it. People who have a good attitude towards other people, and a sense of selflessness, are what I believe are good people.

—TATUM LOHMAR,
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

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What They Are Thankful For at Churchill Road

Kate Walsh,
Churchill Road
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kindergarten,
"I am thankful
for the earth
and my family"



Alvaro
Escoberos-
Marcos,
Churchill Road
Elementary,
kindergarten,
"I am thankful
for my friends"



Julia Jackson,
Churchill Road
Elementary,
grade 2, Ms.
Cindy Zemke



Kirin Sandu, 5,
Churchill Road
Elementary,
kindergarten,
"I am thankful
for my family"



Alex McNeill,
Churchill Road
Elementary,
grade 2, Ms.
Cindy Zemke



Evan Herlands,
6, Churchill
Road Element-
ary, kinder-
garten, "I am
thankful for
my family"



Zara Lang, 5,
Churchill Road
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kindergarten,
"I am thankful
for my family"

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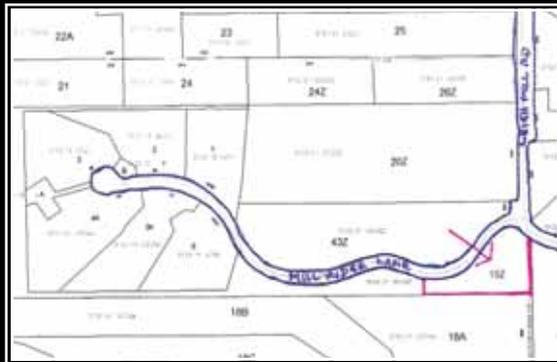
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



KENT GARDENS' ARTWORK

Grace McCracken, Kent Gardens Elementary, grade 3



Kaylee Marinus, Kent Gardens Elementary, grade 5



Alexandra Wood, Kent Gardens Elementary, grade 5



Kyle Li, Kent Gardens Elementary, grade 2



Siena Creevy, Kent Gardens Elementary, kindergarten

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Sophie Stute, Churchill Road Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Cindy Zemke

When I Grow Up...

I want to own my own dental office and be a dentist in that office. Why I want to do this is because I love keeping my teeth clean and why not others. I also I think it is very interesting to know about this subject. The reason I want to own my own office is because that means I

am my own boss and I don't like others telling me what to do. It also allows me to be flexible with my work hours so I can spend time with my family. That's what I want to do when I grow up.

—SHAYAN ABBARIN, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

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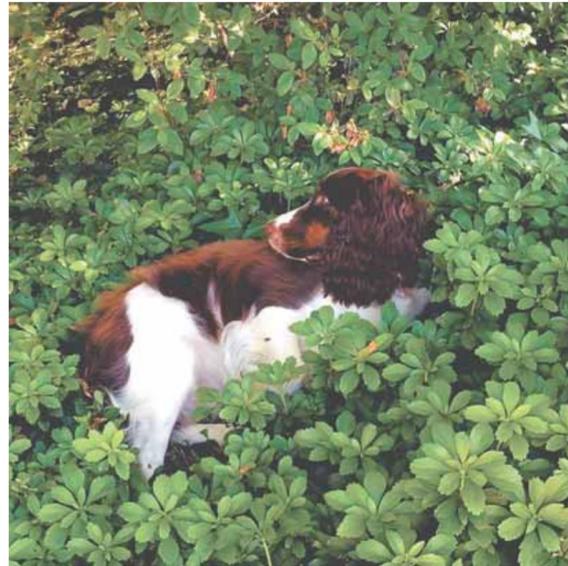
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LIFE IN PICTURES

Alexandra Gagnon, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Dog in Leaves"



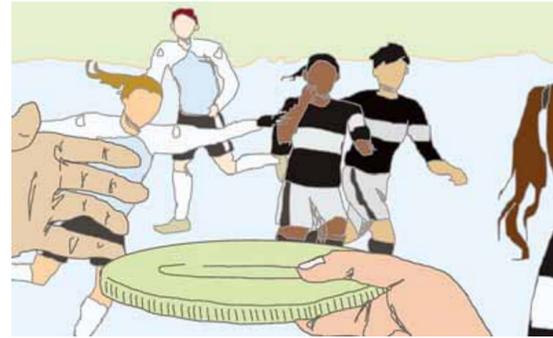
Aubrey Augustine, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Horse"



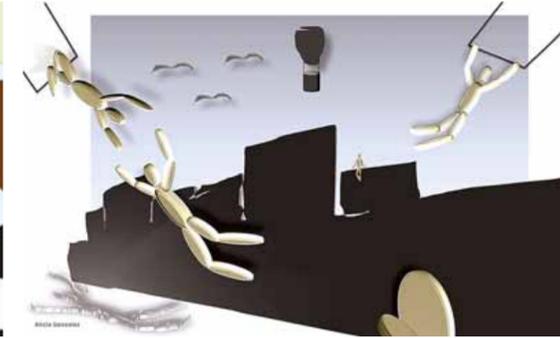
Mary Scalia, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Dog"

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

COOPER MIDDLE ART GALLERY



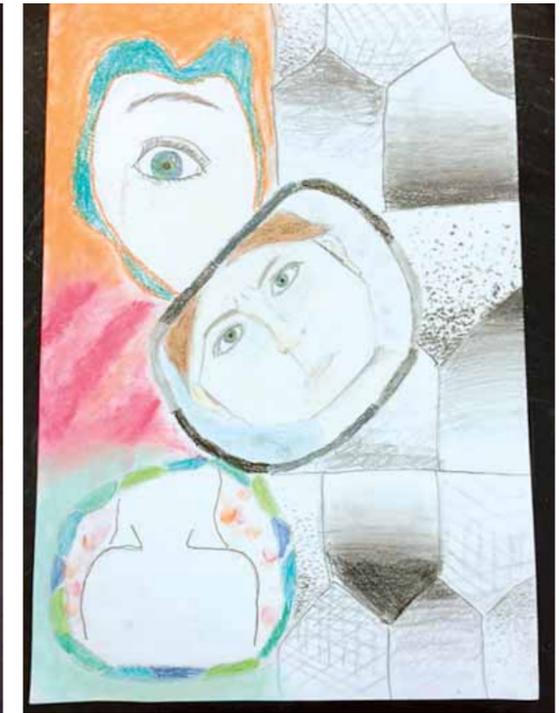
Ann Zhao, Cooper Middle School, grade 8



Alicia Gonzalez, Cooper, grade 8



Joshua Guinn, Cooper Middle School, grade 8



Campbell Duncan, Cooper Middle School, grade 7

Same Sky

During my first 13 years of my life, I moved many times between Japan and the United States. I love my life and I don't take it back. I realize that I have made treasured friends from many countries. However, I always hesitate to move to unknown places. I would hate to move again, especially right now. My friends in Virginia are very supportive and caring. I feel very grateful to have these people as my close friends.

Just about 3 years ago, I was in the car that night in Tokyo

when my friends and I waved at each other, saying goodbye possibly for the last time. I had cried all the way to the airport even though my tears were already gone and dried. So I cried without tears and I felt like my heart was sinking deeper as the time passed away. I did not want to go to a new place where I don't know anybody and I have little knowledge of English. I did not care that I was losing my voice or that I was really loud in the airport.

After arriving in Virginia, I sobbed each night for a month

alone in my room. I dreamed about all the possibilities of going back to Tokyo but I knew this imagination was all fairytale and wouldn't happen in my life. After a month of weeping, I was strongly determined to not look back at the past and instead, move forward, because I knew nothing could change. The past cannot be changed but I can change the future.

For a while, I felt like I didn't want to do anything. At the time, it was very hard catching up to all the classes on top of my conflict in speaking English.

Whenever I struggled, I always looked up the sky and imagined what I should do, and then I felt like my friends and I were gazing upon the same clouds in the sky each time. Fluffy clouds meant facing new challenges, gray clouds meant stay tough, and fleecy clouds on sunny days meant to smile. Just thinking or assuming that they are here with me and we are looking the same sky today makes me jubilant.

—MOTOMI SAEKI, COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL WRITINGS

Christmas Eve Dinner

It is Christmas Eve, and I am eating a traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve dinner consisting of twelve different dishes. First thing we eat is the sweet smelling honey bread. After, I see the yummy varenyky made of mashed potatoes, onion, and sour cream. I feel the borscht in my mouth hot and tasty. I hear my grandmother saying how good the food is. Then I taste the fish salty and flavorful. I love this dinner!

—ANDRIKO BILANIUK, ST. MARK SCHOOL, GRADE 6

Christmas

On Christmas Eve night I hear the steaming fire crackling. I hear the sounds of Christmas music. I go to sleep wondering what will happen the next day. Then I wake up and run to the family room to see all of the presents. I go to wake up my brother and parents. I smell pancakes cooking and see the Christmas tree sparkling...I look to see what's inside my stocking...I taste hot chocolate as I open each package. After we open all of our presents we eat breakfast. For the rest of the day we play with our new presents. Christmas is my favorite holiday.

—SAMANTHA BROHOSKI, ST. MARK SCHOOL, GRADE 6

Christmas Break

Every year during Christmas break, I go to my grandparent's house. My uncle and aunt are always there, and we make Christmas cookies. My grandma always makes the dough ahead of time so that it is ready when we get there. I see all of the decorations on the table. I feel the cold dough. I hear everyone laughing and having fun. I smell the cookies baking in the oven. After they're done, I taste the freshly baked sugar cookies. They're so good!! We take some home when we leave, and those are the cookies we give to Santa.

—ERIN GARVERT, ST. MARK SCHOOL, GRADE 6

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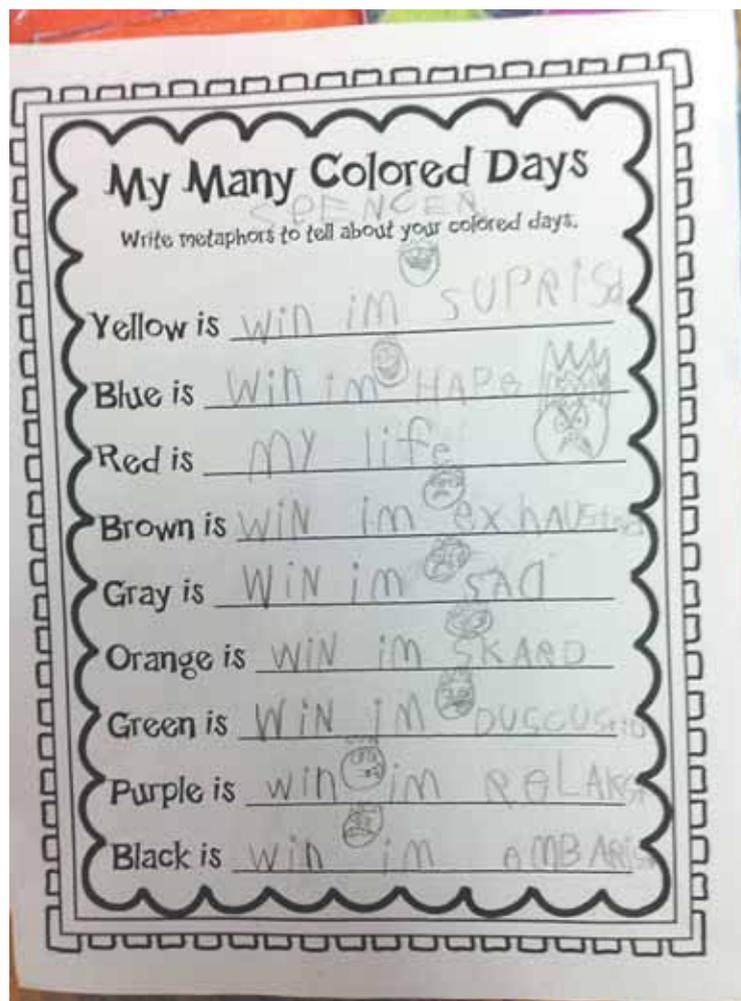
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

My Many Colored Days

Yellow is when I'm surprised.
 Blue is when I'm happy.
 Red is my life.
 Brown is when I'm exhausted.
 Gray is when I'm sad.
 Orange is when I'm scared.
 Green is when I'm disgusted.
 Purple is when I'm relaxed.
 Black is when I'm embarrassed.

—SPENCER BUDDIE, McLEAN, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY, GRADE 2, MS. CINDY ZEMKE



Spencer Buddie, McLean, Churchill Road Elementary, grade 2, learns how to express feelings using color.

What Makes a Good Friend?

What makes a good friend? Many people don't know what makes a good friend. I'm here to help you. This is my list of what makes a good friend.

A good friend doesn't humiliate you in front of everyone, doesn't bully you, and insult you. A good friend doesn't cheat off you during a test. A good friend doesn't make you in uncomfortable position. A good friend does not spread rumors about you or make you cry. A good friend helps you when you're down. A good friend doesn't lie to you or care about your appearance. Most importantly a good friend accepts you for who you are!

—CAVAN VARGAS, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

What makes a good friend? For a while I have thought about this question and finally came up with an answer. A friend is someone who is always there and has your back. Friends are trustworthy and optimistic. Along with all these positive attributes there is also negative attributes. Just like everyone else in the world, friends can make mistakes, but in the end they always want what's best of you.

—JOHN KING, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

What Are You Thankful For?



Tabitha Maples, Churchill Road Elementary, kindergarten, Ms. Laura Zielinski, "I am thankful for my family and friends"

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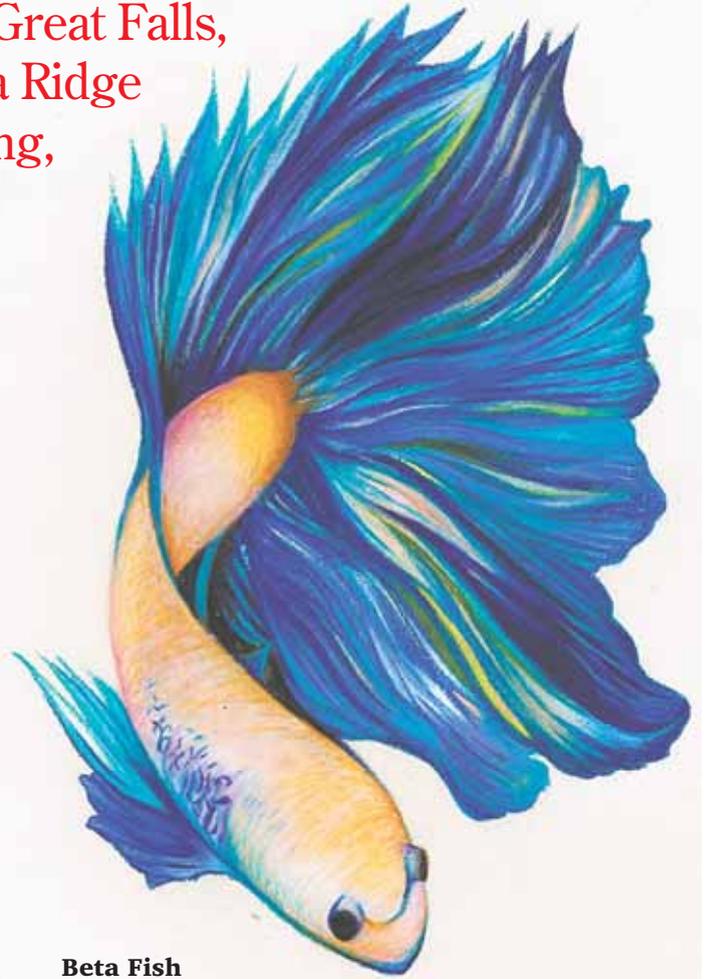
Cannonball Spin

Meet Young Artist of Great Falls

Abigail Paredes, 13, of Great Falls, eighth grader at Seneca Ridge Middle School in Sterling, has sent a selection of her artwork.



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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



SPRING HILL GALLERY

Eloise Lorenze, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Dorothy Moon



Liann Moreschi, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 3, Ms. Dorothy Moon



This right here is my boot boots,
He likes to wear a pair of blue boots.
Sometimes he wears a bow
Sometimes he puts on a chow
Sometimes he eats fish,
(fish is his favorite dish)
That is all about my owl who's shy.
Now its time to say good bye!

Hayley Varacalli, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 3



Avery Lewis, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Dorothy Moon

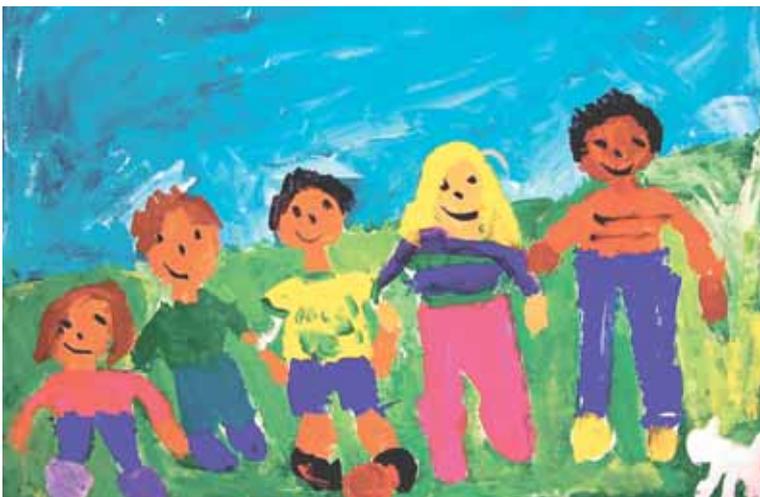


This is my big fish
People say he is spiky.
Once he blew a big bubble,
He always gets in trouble.
His friends name is Buggle,
And they always like to snuggle.
That is all about my fish who's shy.
Now its time to say good bye.

Aria Patnaik, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 3



Max Moser, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Dorothy Moon



Liliana Seng, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 1, Mrs. Ashe



Milan Le, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Dorothy Moon



Margot West, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 1, Mrs. Ashe



Cameron Demma, Spring Hill Elementary, grade 3, Mrs. Ashe

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

"My Key"

Everyone
Has life
With keys
And locks
Our keys to life
Are all different
But for me
To unlock the gate
Of success
To break the chain
Of freedom
To ignore the forces
Of my obstacles
To release the doors
Of effort
To discharge the locks
Of interest
All are the same-
A utensil just for me
To write my way out
To spread my life and world
To give me joy and strength
My key to the world
Just a pencil

—NICOLE SIM, 13, FALLS CHURCH, GRADE 8,
LONGFELLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL, Ms. JENNI-
FER BERGSTROM

When

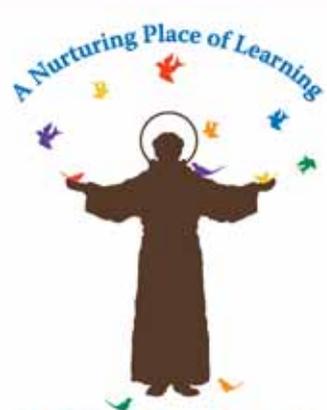
When will I stop
Seeing the clouds
Crackle with anger
And cry with tears
When will I finally see
A glimpse of the bright blue sky
And the sparkling sun

When will I be able to hear
The birds chirping
Instead of hearing
The helpless cries and wails
Of the weak
Desperate
And lone

When will I finally touch
The warm fuzzy sound
Of laughter and smiles
Instead of showering
In cold wet tears

When will I taste
The tears of joy
Golden warmth
Melting in my mouth
And not
The scars of sadness
Tasting bitter and salty?

—NICOLE SIM, 13, FALLS CHURCH, GRADE 8,
LONGFELLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL, Ms. JENNI-
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What Are You Thankful For?

Lucas Muangman,
Churchill Road Elementary, kindergarten, Ms.
Laura Zielinski, "I am thankful for my family"



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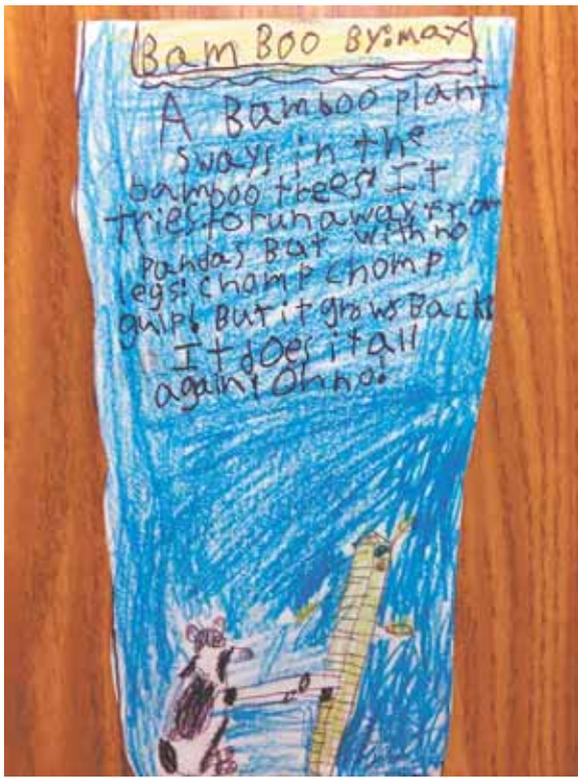
CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Best Friends For Life



Danni Marino, Churchill Road Elementary, kindergarten, "I am thankful for my friend"

Max Brooke, Churchill Road Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Cindy Zemke.



"Bamboo"

A bamboo plant sways in the bamboo trees.
It tries to run away from Pandas But with no legs!
Chomp Chomp gulp!
But it grows back!
It does it all again!
Oh no!

—MAX BROOKE, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY, GRADE 2

I was four when I met my best friend; a stuffed horse. My older sister Becca bought him for me, and I've loved him ever since. He is brown and fuzzy, with a yellow bow tied around his neck. He has beans in one leg, but nowhere else. His neck now flops over from all the times he's been suffocated while I'm sleeping, and he doesn't sit up straight anymore. I remember once, I was around six, and I couldn't find Horsey. I looked everywhere; the living room, dining room, my room, my sisters' and brothers' rooms, the kitchen and even the basement. He was nowhere to be found. That night, I sat in the kitchen, refusing to go to bed without Horsey. My mom tried to remind me that I had other stuffed animals. I still didn't want to go to bed without him. Just Horsey. I sat next to the window in the kitchen as rain poured down around us. Then something caught my eye. A small brown, fuzzy yet damp, ear. I jumped to my feet. I ran out the door and into the backyard. I grabbed my cold, soaked, best friend from a rotting, rusting table on the back deck. I held him close to me and told him I loved him. I ran inside and put him in the dryer so he could be clean.

Once done, we go upstairs together and cuddle in my bed. He is my best friend. He'll always be there for me. When I got stitches, when my mom died, when my sisters are mad at me, when I just can't take it. I know he's always there.

Friend:

1. A person attracted to another by personal regard
2. A person who gives assistance; supporter; faithful companion; keeper of secrets
3. Someone with whom you can laugh or cry; share your hopes and dreams
4. Someone who knows all about you and still loves you

—KIMBERLY TALLANT,
COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL,
GRADE 7

The McLean Children's Connection

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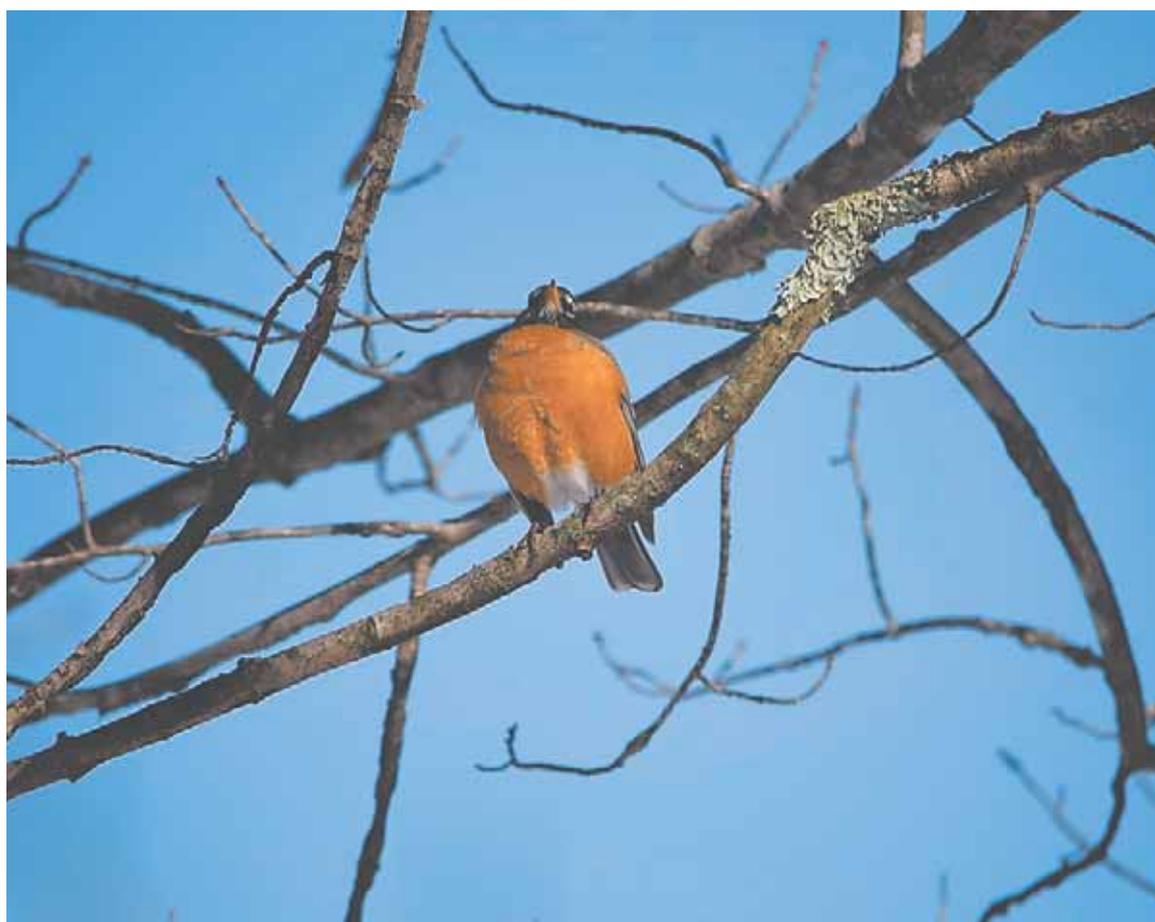
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Josephine Mou, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Bird in Tree"

"Jealousy"

You live so far away
but I can feel your warmth

I need your love
that's why I always walk around you

Don't look at my seven friends
I am the real one
I am the only one with green and blue colors

I love you, Sun
but why are you always angry
and melting my ice cream?

—JU HEE BAE, 17, McLEAN, McLEAN HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12, MS. NAIMA CHAMBLISS

"Fly"

Don't move!
or I will slap you
with this huge newspaper

Don't sit here!
I know you are not going to eat it
then why can't you let others eat?

Don't rub your hands!
I know you are not apologizing
So stop messing with me, you little fly!

—JU HEE BAE, 17, McLEAN, McLEAN HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12, MS. NAIMA CHAMBLISS

"Grades, ABC"

I hold my pencil and notes tight
I dream about it all night
Only one of them should be mine, A
and I don't have much time

If I choose to work

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Michaela Pearce, 9, McLean, Churchill Road Elementary, Mrs. Brownley, "Flowers"

Angels come to cheer me
If I choose to sleep
Bees try to sting me
If I choose to give up
Chains lock me in my room

I build my own alphabet
It shows my knowledge
It guides me to college
It holds a ticket to my career

Stress becomes my friend
but progress is my goal

—JU HEE BAE, 17, McLEAN, McLEAN HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12, MS. NAIMA CHAMBLISS



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Friday, Jan. 15, 7-9 p.m.
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\$10/\$5 MCC district residents;
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Saturday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m.
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**Peggy Wallace Kennedy:
"A Walk to Redemption"**
Sunday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m.
\$25/\$10 MCC district residents

The McLean Community Center
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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

Notice of Trustee's Sale

2050 S. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22204
Arlington County

In execution of a Deed of Trust dated October 11, 2013, in the original principal amount of \$555,000.00, recorded as Deed Book 4732 at Page 1740 of the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Arlington County, Virginia, the undersigned Trustee will on **Wednesday, January 6, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.**, by the front main entrance to the Arlington County Courthouse, 1425 N. Courthouse Road, Arlington, VA 22201, offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder, the following property, with improvements thereon commonly known as **2050 S. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22204** and more particularly described as follows:

Parcels 2,3, and Part of Lot 2, Estate of Benjamin Perry Improved by premises known as 2050 S. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA and as more particularly shown on plat attached hereto and made a part hereof entitled "Lot 2 of the Partition of the Estate of BENJAMIN PERRY and a Vacated 16.5' Outlet Road" by Alexandria Surveys International, LLC, dated Mark 5, 2002, as the same is duly platted and attached to the corrected Deed recorded in Deed Book 4196 at page 1179 among the Land Records of Arlington County, Virginia.

RPC: 31024007

This sale is subject to any reservations, restrictions on use, covenants, obligations, rights of way, conditions, easements, leases and mechanic's liens, if any, whether of record or not of record, to the extent any of the foregoing apply and take priority over the lien of the Deed of Trust.

Deposit of \$20,000.00, or 10% of the sales price, whichever is lower, by cashier's or certified check, shall be required to qualify as a bidder prior to the sale, except for the Noteholder.

The deposit, without interest, is applied to the purchase price at settlement. Settlement will be held on or before fifteen (15) days after the sale. Upon purchaser's default, the deposit shall be forfeited and the property shall be resold at the risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser.

The balance of the purchase price shall be paid by certified or cashier's check, or wire transfer. Settlement shall be at the offices of the undersigned Trustee, or other mutually agreed upon location. The property and any improvements thereon shall be sold in "as is" condition without any warranties. The successful bidder shall assume all loss or damage to the property from and after the time of the sale. Purchaser shall be responsible for all costs of the conveyance, which shall be by special warranty including, but not limited to, the preparations of the deed, Regional Congestion Relief fee, and the grantor's tax. Real estate taxes shall be adjusted as of the sale date. The sale is subject to such additional terms as the Trustee may announce at the time of sale. The purchaser will be required to sign a Memorandum of Sale incorporating all the terms of the sale.

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Winter Wonderland

The Time Is Now, And Then Some



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I sit and write, I am 25 days out from my next CT Scan. Which ordinarily, wouldn't cause a blip in my thinking: having been scanned and "resulted" over 25 times in the last seven years (usually, once every three months). However, this time the scan will occur after a quarter in which I've changed my infusion schedule from every three weeks to every four, as written about in a recent column entitled "All Four It." In doing the math: 13 weeks divided by three; 13 weeks divided by four; as a result of this modification, I am now receiving one fewer dose of chemotherapy. And this change was made not because I was in remission or my tumors had shrunk. No, this change was made because of a less-than-desirable quality of life. Also, as written about in a previous column, one entitled "Slippery Hope," feeling miserable one out of every three weeks was not contributing much to the quality of that life so in sharing these feelings with my oncologist, the change in frequency was agreed to. But my CT Scan schedule remains quarterly. Ergo this column's angst.

Given this rather significant change – and the correlating reduction in medicine administered, this next scan is hardly just another few slides in and out of the computerized tomography. No. This may very well be a crossroads in my treatment. If the scan shows no growth, then off I can continue infusing into the wild blue yonder (at least for the next three months until my next scan). If, on the other hand, the scan shows growth and/or movement, then perhaps I have crossed over onto a path going who knows where. And since my frequency change was made without discussing the what-if scenarios (which my oncologist prefers not to do), I am free to speculate without the benefit of any professional insight. Presumably, we'll either go back to infusing every three weeks (continuing with Alimta) and see what appears – or not – on the CT Scan (three months hence) or we'll change medications/protocols entirely and then, as we say in Boston: "It'll be Katie 'bahr' the door;" meaning, watch out/hang on for dear life (no pun intended) because new and different drugs don't necessarily equate to an improved/ "normal" quality of life. In short, my situation/health could get worse. And my request/desire to alter my previously effective infusion schedule – so far as keeping my tumors stable is concerned – from three weeks to four, may be the direct cause. Wanting to improve the quality of my life may now have led to a reduction in the quality of that life. And though I certainly understand how unreasonable it is for a patient/survivor to expect to have his cake (sugar-free preferably) and eat it too; still, I was hoping I had a few more bites at the apple.

I'll know soon enough – not, and that's the point of this column. Unfortunately, I'm already worrying about the results and the consequences of my actions. Usually, the associated anxiety starts about two weeks before the scan. Now, considering the stakes, I am worrying about it nearly four weeks before. Double the trouble and none of the fun. And believe me, it's not as if worrying this far ahead of the next scan serves any purpose whatsoever. Nor will it speed up the process or affect the scan results. All that happens is that I will be nervous and anxious about something I can't control, and make worse a situation (the waiting) that I've previously been able to manage.

Well, at least I'm not blaming myself – totally, anyway. This is all premature and nothing is pre-ordained. And considering that I've been on chemotherapy for almost seven years, and survived way beyond my oncologist's original "13 months to two-year" prognosis, perhaps my tumors won't be effected and life will go on as-per-usual. Who knows? Maybe infusing less will actually help me more?

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

By OLIVIA ZHANG
CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY,
GRADE 5, MS. GABRIELE

I trotted out the warm, cozy house and cautiously stepped onto the porch in my backyard. In an instance, cold air hit me in the face like somebody giving me a cold, hard slap. I took a deep breath watching it in the air as it turned into a puffy white cloud then disappeared like magic. I stepped forward again feeling the water in the snow seep into my boots. Today was a sunny but cold day. Perfect for playing in the snow that would soon melt. It was the beginning of spring. The leaves on once bare trees now began to grow and would soon bloom flowers. I looked ahead at Ava, my younger sister. She was prancing in circles while laughing like snow was the best thing in the world.

"Come on! Come on!" she said giggling and waving me over.

I stepped forward again and again until I was at the last step of the stairs. I hesitated a moment before finally stepping down into the fresh, sparkling snow. The perfectness of the snow disappeared under my boots with each step I took. Where the sunlight hit at the right spots, the snow sparkled like jewels. I quickly ran to Ava not wanting to ruin the perfectness. Of course, that didn't work. It just made more footprints.

I felt it before I saw it. "WHAM!" The snowball hit me straight in the arm. I looked in the direction of the thrown snowball and saw my sister pointing at me, then laughing, then bending down to make another snowball.

I shook my head and yelled, "You're on!"

I grabbed a handful of snow, not caring if I ruined the perfectness, compacted the snow into a circular ball, then aimed and threw. "Wham!" I shut my eyes for a second waiting for the pain to hit. Two heartbeats later, I peeked and saw *my* snowball, not Ava's, hitting *her* straight in the back. *Bullseye!* I thought.

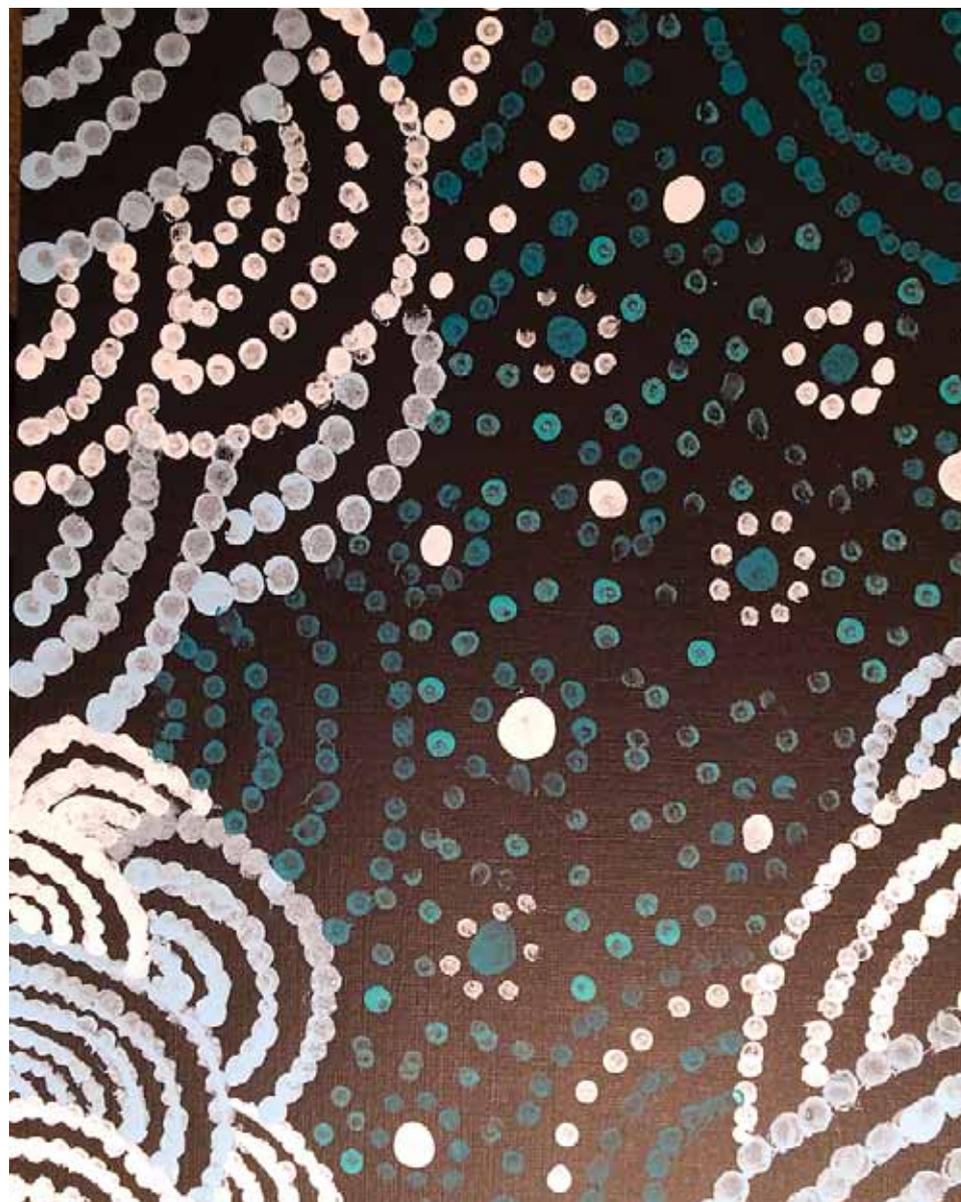
Ten minutes later, I looked down at my clothes. Ava and I were covered in snow almost head to toe! I couldn't tell who was covered the most.

We laid down next to each other just gazing up at the brilliant blue sky and white clouds that looked like cotton candy. I couldn't hear anything but the sound of the wind in my ears. My heartbeat that was once beating furiously now slowed down as I relaxed. The back of my head began to feel numb, spreading throughout my whole head as I lay there for a long time. Soon enough, I lifted my head up and just sat there, arms around my legs.

"Let's go sliding!" Ava suddenly said.

She bounced up, then trotted to the playhouse, climbing up the rope that led to the slide. I stood up, brushed off some of the snow, then tromped through the snow to the bottom of the slide. There, I pushed snow from different directions to the foot of the green colored slide, making a mound that my sister would slide into.

Right when I stepped away from the slide,



Eleni Katsapis, St. James Catholic School, grade 6

I felt a fast breeze whip across my face, then a joyful "Whee!", and finally, the sound of snow going everywhere.

"My turn!" I said laughing as my sister pushed all the snow back into a big pile.

I climbed up the multi-colored steps and then crawled on my knees to the starting point of the slide. As soon as I saw Ava step away from the bottom, I pushed my glove covered hands hard against the slide shouting with joy as I flew down the slide, the wind whipping my hair. "Splat!" I landed in the big snow pile laughing as I did.

"Whoo hoo!" I said high-fiving Ava, "Let's do it again!"

We began the tiring but fun process all over again taking turns to build the big snow pile.

After a few more rounds, Ava plopped onto the snow on her back and moved her arms and legs like a car windshield. I laid down next to her and began moving my arms and legs just the way she did. Ava jumped up from her snow angel a few minutes later then sat cross-legged on the ground studying what she made. Once I thought I had finished, I got up slowly hoping not to ruin the snow angel I had made. I sat down cross legged next to Ava and studied mine. Silence passed over our neighborhood like no one was there except

for the cheerful, chattering birds. My snow angel looked pretty good except for the fact that a couple footprints were near it. Ava's snow angel looked shorter and cuter than mine as if it was a replica of her.

"Do you want to go back inside?" I asked.

I was hoping she would say no but instead, she nodded her head like a bobble head, got up, and then skipped up the steps to the porch. She stomped her feet near the screen door while shaking off the snow. I didn't want to leave the breathtaking site but I got up, sprinted up the steps, and stomped the snow off my boots.

Inside the warm cozy house a few moments later, my sister and I took off our layers and layers of clothes, scarves, gloves, hats, and shoes.

We now sat in front of the warm, crackling, orange fire. A warm, fizzy apple cider bubbled in my cup. I brought the cup to my lips and tipped the cup slightly letting the cider fall into my mouth, the bubbles popping on my tongue.

The yummy flavor danced in my mouth. This apple cider was my all-time favorite. It tasted like regular apple cider but was fizzy like soda.

As I took more and more gulps of the delicious apple cider, I realized how glad I was to have a great family and friends.

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