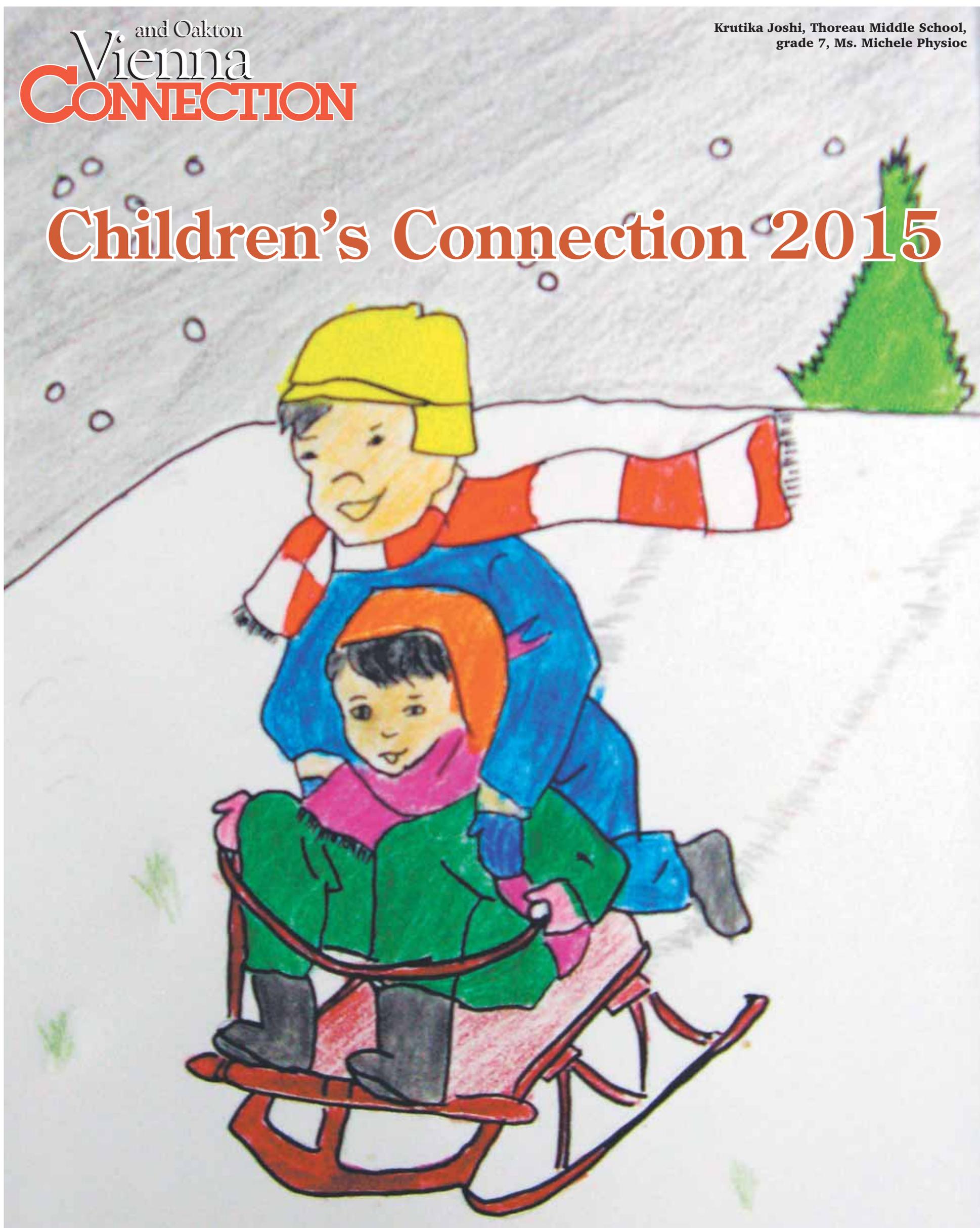


# Children's Connection 2015



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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Ray Wilson, James Madison High, grade 10



Kali Smolinski, Colvin Run Elementary, grade 2, "Self-Portrait with Friend," crayon and marker

## Welcome

**D**ear Readers:  
This week, the Vienna/Oakton 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.

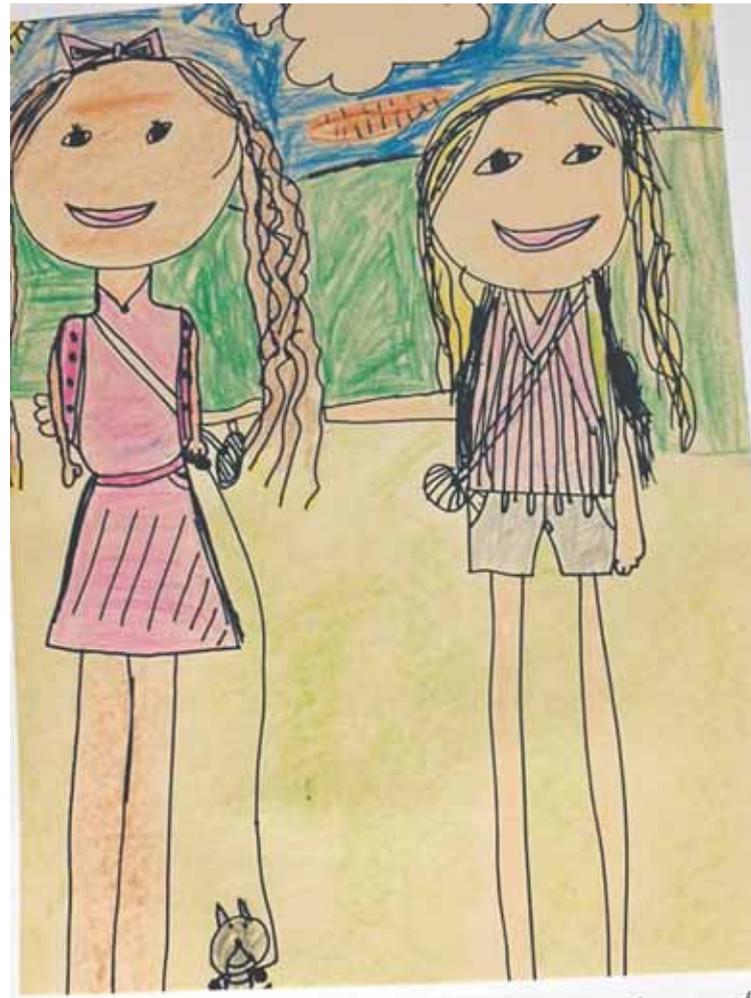
We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2016 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions

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 [vienna@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:vienna@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



Laicey Xayachak, Cunningham Park Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Alice Bredin-Karny, "Patrol and Friend"



Jack Gao, Vienna, Colvin Run Elementary, grade 1, "Meadowlark Garden"



Annabelle Li, 5, Waples Mill Elementary, kindergarten, Ms. Melissa Pisani

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

THOREAU MIDDLE ARTWORK



Allison Kirkman, Thoreau Middle School, grade 8, Ms. Michele Physioc



Abigail Gibson, Thoreau Middle School, grade 8, Ms. Michele Physioc



Allison Kirkman, Thoreau Middle School, grade 8, Ms. Michele Physioc



Willow Thompson, Thoreau Middle School, grade 7, Ms. Michele Physioc

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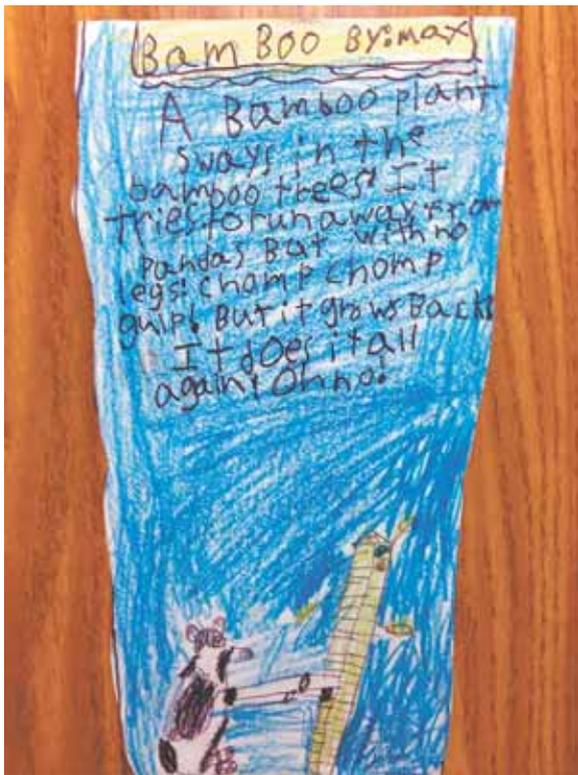
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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## 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

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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



**COLVIN RUN ELEMENTARY PHOTO GALLERY**  
Cameron McCusker, Colvin Run Elementary, grade 3,  
"Black Glue and Watercolor"



Elliot Dell'Atti, Colvin Run Elementary,  
grade 3. "Heritage Self-Portrait"



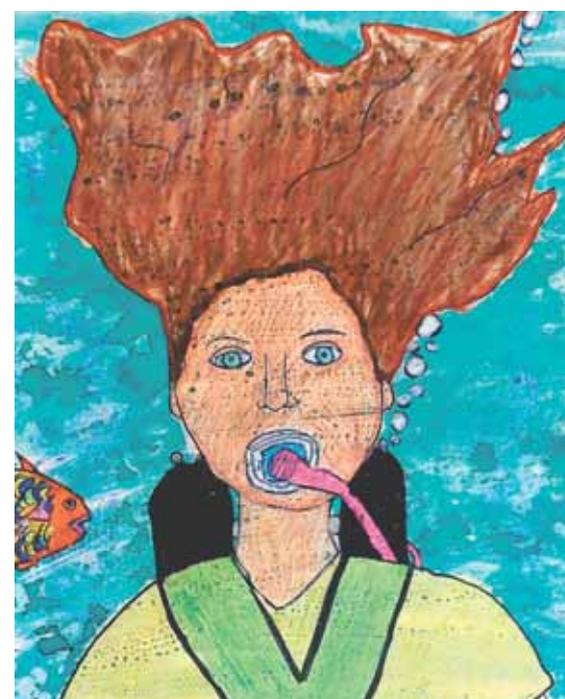
Ryan Moon, Colvin Run Elementary, kin-  
dergarten, "King of Kindergarten"



Kali Smolinski, Colvin Run Elementary, grade 2, "Self-  
Portrait with Friend," crayon and marker



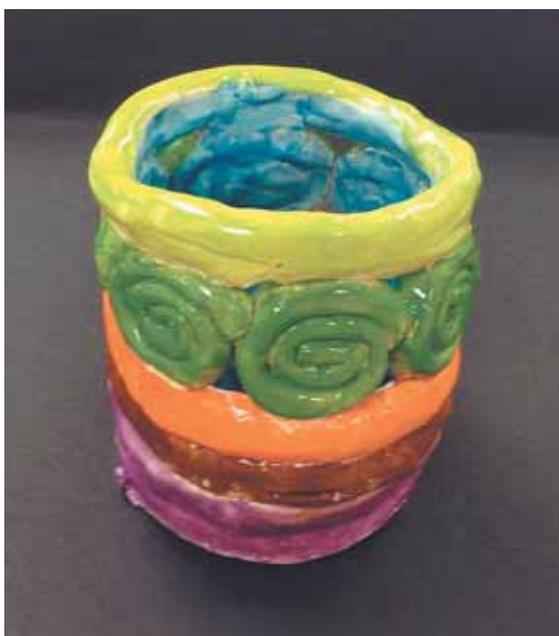
Federica Lewis, Colvin Run Elementary,  
grade 6, Ms. Lauren Grimm



Grayton Simanson, Colvin Run Element-  
ary, grade 5, Ms. Lauren Grimm



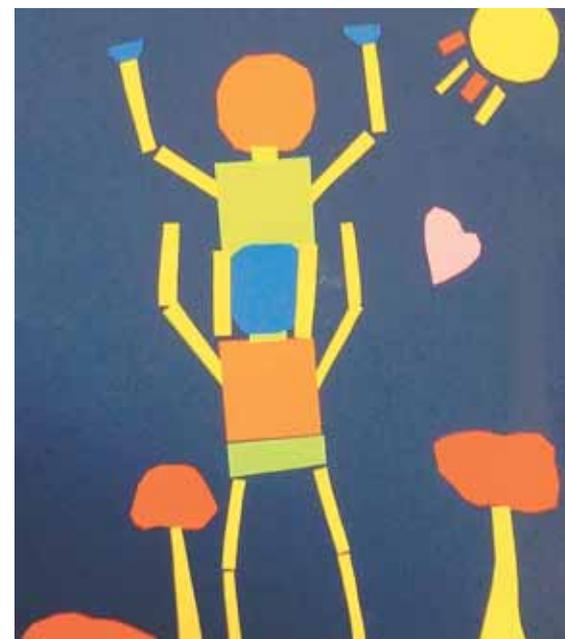
Evan Chen, Colvin Run Elementary, grade 2, stitchery on  
burlap



Blake Thompson, Colvin Run Elementary,  
grade 4, Ms. Lauren Grimm



Kyra Joostema, Colvin Run Elementary, grade 6, Ms.  
Lauren Grimm



Connor Lee, Colvin Run Elementary, grade  
1, Ms. Lauren Grimm

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## "The Town of Vienna"

The town of Vienna: what a place,  
 In Northern Virginia it's a very quaint space.  
 So many festivals get celebrated here,  
 The kids and adults, together they cheer.  
 From the historical library to the very old train,  
 To Viva Vienna where the rides are insane.  
 From the restaurants like the Vienna Inn and Foster's Grill,  
 There is also a Wendy's, whose shakes give me a chill.  
 The days go by and the town of Vienna keeps getting better,  
 I don't think it will ever get worse, never ever.

Follin Lane is a very busy street in the town,  
 But from now until January it will be shut down.  
 The thing I can't stand the most is the sound,  
 Of construction where they move the big dirt mounds.  
 Vienna has a good location as everyone can see,  
 It's a great tourist attraction because it is near D.C.  
 Tysons also is a few seconds away,  
 And other places are close by, Fairfax and the Chesapeake Bay.  
 So all in all, it is a tiny but extraordinary place,  
 And if you didn't know I wanted to inform you, just in case.

—JOE McCLOREY,  
 OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL, GRADE 6

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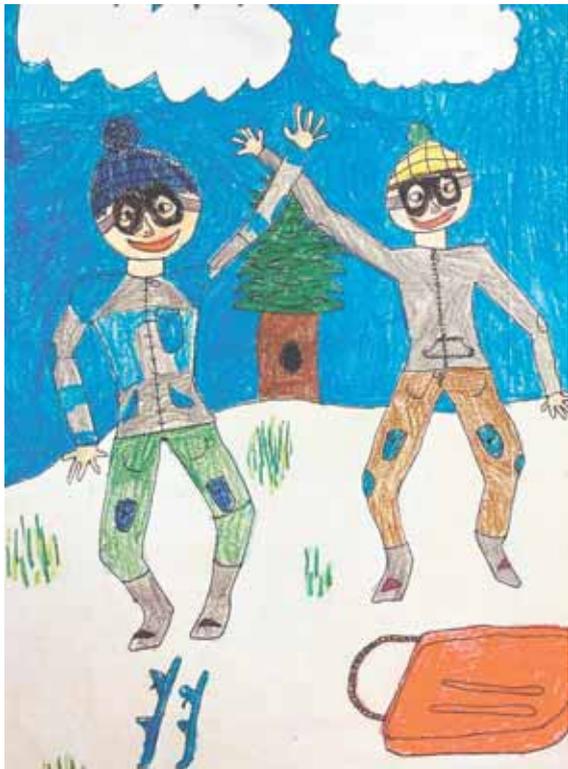
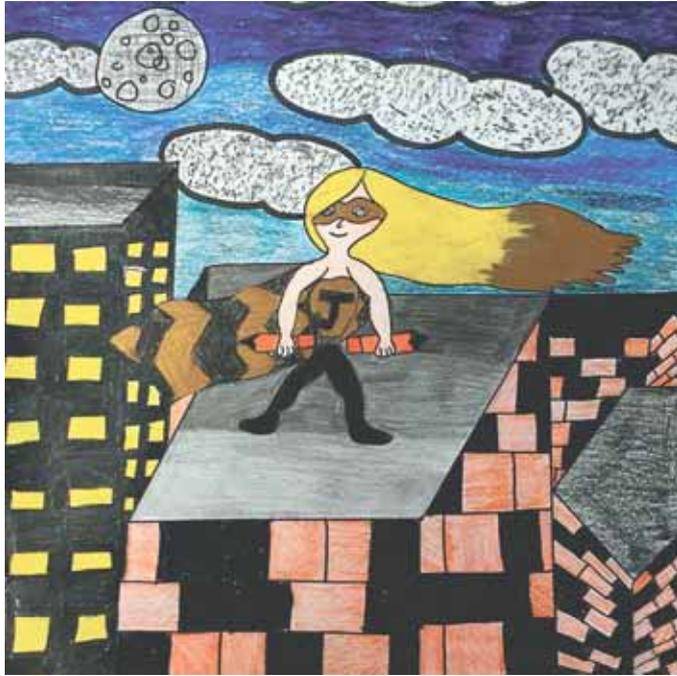
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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

VIENNA ELEMENTARY  
ARTWORK

**Jaclyn King, Vienna Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Marianna Condley**



**Daniel Choi, Vienna Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Marianna Condley**



**Theo Erickson, Vienna Elementary, grade 3 Ms. Marianna Condley**



**Matthew Pearson, Vienna Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Marianna Condley**



**Ariel Barker, Vienna Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Marianna Condley**

## A New Perspective

BY CHARLIE FREITAS  
ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL, GRADE 8

My stomach lurched as I look over my left shoulder. It must have been almost a hundred feet down off the side of that narrow path. "Oh yeah, that horse loves to look over the canyon. He's the daredevil of the group," our guide said. The horse I was riding was hugging the edge and I knew I would surely fall if my horse lost its footing.

About an hour before that my family passed a horse ranch, and my mother said, "Why don't we going horseback riding down the Grand Canyon." Of course she didn't mean the whole Grand Canyon, just a small divot with dry land off one of the sides of the Grand Canyon. What sounded like an innocent idea soon turned to joy then fear. "These horses are pretty tall, aren't they," I said to the man helping mount the horse. "These are actually some of our biggest horses," the man said. My stomach dropped. I felt like this was the last time I was going to step with my own legs. I got up on the horse and so did the rest of my family. We started riding down a narrow path barely the width of my horse. My nerves were definitely showing. I was scared but I couldn't turn back anymore, my parents already paid for the trip.

We passed huge rocks that looked like they were held up by invisible columns. All the fear that I experienced on the way down was gone now. The guide started to talk, "These rocks were created about 1.8..." I stopped listening because I was amazed by the undisturbed scene that was right in front of me. I looked up and saw trees and the clear sky. The sun was shining right into my eyes, but it wasn't annoying me like usual. The world seemed to stop even though my horse was still trotting forward as it was trained to do. The world was different from down there. The feeling I had was similar to being up high in the clouds even though I was on ground.

We started back up the familiar trail, but it was different now. I appreciated all the surroundings more. The fear and apprehensiveness were gone now and I was mostly just focusing on the mysterious enchantment of the ancient orange stones. Our guide asked us, "How'd you guys like it?" Our family all said, "We loved it," almost in unison. My horse still hugged the edge but I trusted it, I knew it wouldn't let me fall.

This experience was amazing and I had a once-in-a-lifetime view that I will never forget. I saw the world from a new perspective. I never knew that something could be so fear-inducing, but so awe-inspiring too.

## "Fall Rain"

Water drips off the leaves  
As the branches sway back and forth  
And the drenched leaves drift down

When the rain falls down  
it lands against the umbrellas below  
like a person collapsing after a hard day's work

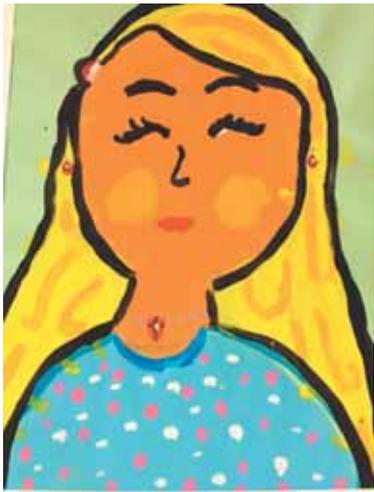
It slides down the slippery umbrella and falls to the sidewalk  
hitting the ground and slipping into the sidewalk's edges  
and then disappears in thin air like a ghost

—DREW GARNER, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## CUNNINGHAM PARK ELEMENTARY ARTWORK

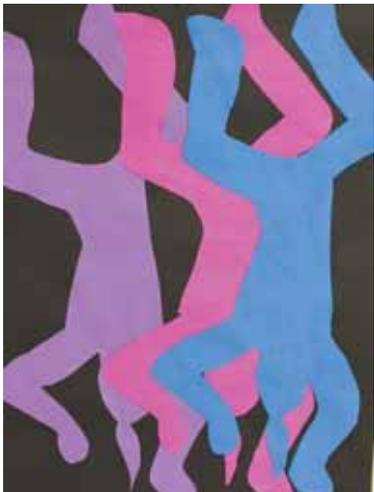
Chloe Dehn,  
Cunningham  
Park Element-  
ary, grade 3,  
Ms. Alice  
Bredin-Karny,  
"Shy Express-  
ion"



Ariana  
Bonilla,  
Cunningham  
Park Element-  
ary, grade 3,  
Ms. Alice  
Bredin-Karny,  
"Happy  
Expression"



Geneva Carr,  
Cunningham  
Park Element-  
ary, grade 4,  
Ms. Alice  
Bredin-Karny,  
"Handstand"



Leslie  
Alvarado-  
Andrade,  
Cunningham  
Park Element-  
ary, grade 4,  
Ms. Alice  
Bredin-Karny,  
"Tennis"



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That's how people feel  
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All for the money  
People end up killing one another  
All out of greed  
It's just not right

—SUNHYUP PARK,  
VIENNA MARSHALL HIGH, GRADE 9, MR. PIERCE

**“Change”**

Fall is near  
Leaves start to change  
Last year's self

—EMMA SMITH,  
VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

**“9/11”**

I look up  
I start to cry  
My heart falls like the tower.

—LEILANI URIBE,  
VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

**“Silence”**

Silence is a zipper  
shut tight like a locked box  
Silence lets you hear everything  
Silence sets your ears free  
Silence is a breeze  
Silence is an empty room

—BAYLY MOUNER, VIENNA  
ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

**“Basketball”**

Shoes skitter  
My opponent shoots  
Swish! It went in  
I dribble down the court  
I pass to my teammate  
In a flash he shoots  
Buzz! Time has expired  
All I do is watch

—ERIC DORMAN,  
VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

**“The Move”**

Thump,Thump,Thump  
Boxes being placed on the ground  
Vroom,Vroom,Vroom  
The sound of more moving trucks with our stuff  
Shh,Shh,Shh  
Rain hitting the ground hard  
Ugh,Ugh,Ugh  
My family and I wishing the move was easier

—DANIA ALBARGHOUTHI,  
VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

**“The Wizard”**

One day the great wizard came to town  
He hopped on stage with a frown  
His nose shone red  
His wand looked dead  
He must have been a clown.

—TYLER JOHNSON,  
VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

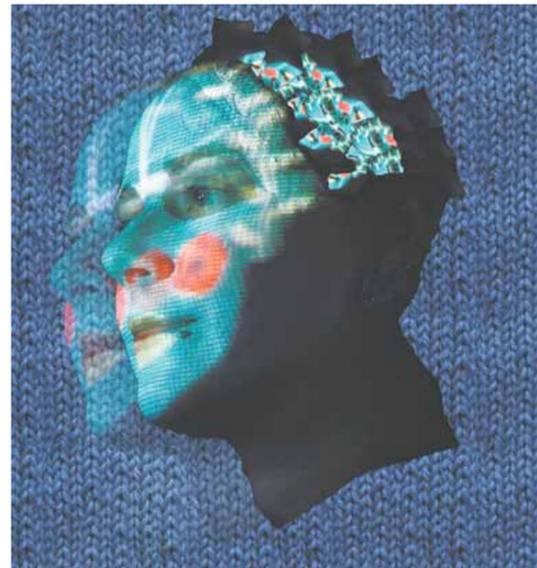
CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

MADISON HIGH GALLERY

Annika Burstein,  
James Madison  
High, grade 11



Phillip Sullivan, James Madison High, grade 12



Audrey Lynch, James Madison High, grade 11



Teodora Hryshchshyn, James Madison High, grade 10



Josh Nagy, James Madison High, grade 10

View from the Top

CAROLINE MUKERJEE,  
ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL,  
GRADE 8

I hear a soft purr, as the engine comes to life. All of a sudden I move faster and faster, my hands tightly grip the seat, as the plane lifts off the ground. My ears pop as we head toward the bright blue sky.

Earlier that day my family planned for my brother and I to go on a personal plane ride with my mom. We arrived at the local airport in Gulf shores, Alabama, where the pilot was waiting for us. "I call shotgun!" Cameron called. I got in with my mom in the back

and started slowly strapping myself in, still having second thoughts about what I was about to do. Then the pilot turned around in his seat. "You're going to need these," he said as he handed me a pair of headphones. "Thanks" I answered. I turned to the window and waved nervously to my dad, who was standing with my little sister, Claire, watching us go. "Let's do this!" Cameron said, pumped. The pilot got to work pushing buttons and flipping switches. The plane started gliding down the runway, picking up speed. The wheels lifted off the ground and rose swiftly into the sky. "Wow" I exclaimed. The world looked so different from up above. The ocean was a tie dye of greens and

blues, the gulf was shimmering in the sunlight. The sand looks soft and the water was calm. The trees, buildings, and people looked all so diminutive from up in the plane. All I could do was gaze at the magnificent world below me. Somewhere in the back of my mind I could hear Cameron asking the pilot about how the plane works and what that button did, but at that moment I didn't care. I was glad that I didn't back out at the last minute. "Look Caroline, we are flying by the peninsula," my mom said. "Yeah, we aren't that far from our house," I remarked. "Well we can't go that far folks, we have to turn around now." The pilot said through the headphones. The plane started to descend to the

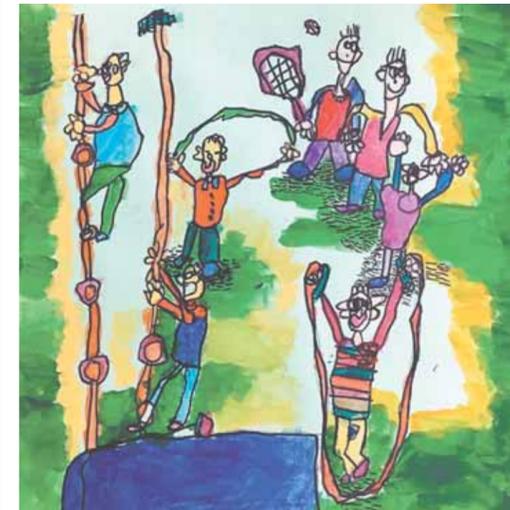
earth and knew it was over, but I wasn't discouraged because I had an incredible experience. The plane's wheels skidded to a halt on the runway. I clambered out of the plane and ran to my dad who was right where we had left him. "How was it?" he asked. "It was amazing" I replied. "Yeah, it was awesome!" Cameron put in. We started walking back to the car explaining our amazing adventure. When you are in the sky you see the world from a whole new and exciting perspective. You see things farther away and you capture our full potential. Now I know what it means to have your head in the clouds.



Ejun Kim, 13, Oakton, Westminster School, grade 8, Mr. Muntain



Annabelle Li, 5, Waples Mill Elementary, kindergarten, Ms. Melissa Pisani



Eythan Huang, 7, Flint Hill Elementary, grade 1

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## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Wesley Beeland, 8, a third grader at Colvin Run Elementary School, lives in Great Falls, is pictured with a statue of President Lincoln taken this summer at Gettysburg Park.**

### Thanksgiving and Football Rivalry Weekend

This Thanksgiving weekend, my father and I watched lots of college football during “Rivalry Week”. My dad asked me if I thought a rival is a friend or an enemy? I think a rival should be a friend. We shouldn’t have enemies. Some people get mad and yell at their rivals, but I think a rival can be someone who helps you. In sports, they can help you play better and make the game fun.

I read a story about the first Thanksgiving. At first, the Pilgrims were afraid of the Native Americans and did not like them. The Native Americans helped the Pilgrims survive in the New World by showing them how to grow corn and they became friends. President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a holiday in 1864 during the Civil War when the states were fighting against each other. My sister told me that brothers fought against each other during the Civil War and that it was a really sad time for our country.

Rivals can be from the same state and

even the same family. We watched an interview about a family rivalry. One brother was playing on the Georgia Tech team and the other was playing on the Georgia team. The mom was wearing a Georgia Tech jersey and the dad was wearing a Georgia jersey. Both players wanted their teams to win, but they were brothers, and even though they were rivals, I bet they also love each other.

When I play, I want my team to win. I also feel bad about the possibility of beating my friends but I still play my best and try as hard as I can to score points. I hope they understand that it is just a game, and that even though we are competing against each other, we are also friends. Competition and rivalry should be about having fun and helping each other become better players and people.

—WESLEY BEELAND, 8,  
GREAT FALLS, COLVIN RUN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 3

### “Falling into Fall”

I walk outside to feel the big breezy bite in the air  
I enjoy the sunny autumn day that shines brighter than a diamond  
I think to myself as the leaves dance around the sidewalk  
They fall as silent as the drop of a pin  
The smell of pine cones fill the air  
So many perfect pumpkins perched on porches  
Fall is a time filled with happiness  
Fall is orange, yellow and brown  
The days are shorts and the nights are long  
How great is this time where we fall into fall?

—AHAANA NAIMPALLY, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

### “Santa Claus”

Asleep in my room  
When I hear a small boom  
I jump out of bed  
I see someone red  
I wonder who it could be  
It’s Santa Claus I see  
He comes up to me  
“It’s Christmas,” says he  
He starts dancing around  
To a delightful sound  
I join the joyful dance  
Then we start to prance  
Out the door we go  
Into winter’s wonderful, white snow  
I hear a reindeer neigh  
We hop into the sleigh  
Up into the air  
And we see a glare  
It is Rudolph’s red light  
Shining during the night

Going down to the snowy North Pole  
ground  
We slam into it with a pound  
As we started to walk around  
A toy shop I found  
Elves everywhere making toys  
For all of the girls and boys  
Equipment for sports  
And toys of all sorts  
Time to go back home,  
Where no reindeer roam  
I get back in my bed  
To rest my head  
I remember the time  
Where I went to a place with no crime  
There was no time to pause  
When I met Santa Claus

—CHRISTOPHER WITH,  
OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL  
SCHOOL, GRADE 6

### “Dreams”

When nights get cold and the days get dark  
I go into a long journey  
Closing my eyes and drifting away.  
Starting to fly in a fantasy world  
I see a stunning new land from up above.  
Bright green grass spreading across the Valley like an endless river,  
Beautiful eyes of a fairy sparkling in the crisp air  
A glowing sun cascading down a waterfall,  
A flower as beautiful as a picture perfect day.  
My toes feel the tickle of the chilly river in the Valley below,  
My hands feel the softness of the butterflies fluttering past me,  
My heart feels it never wants to leave this magical, astonishing place!

—LEILANI URIBE, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

### “Monkey Feast”

Swinging on the vines  
Looking for bananas  
Gotta get home before dark  
Here comes a safari going down the road  
Pictures being flashed all around  
Spot a banana in one of their hands  
Hop down to go steal the fruit  
Then “ROAR” run at the sight of a lion  
Now I have to go home without a banana  
To make it even better I smooch a banana on the way home  
“I want to go to sleep,” I whine  
So sad when I get home with just a smushed banana to give  
I hand it over with a sad look on my face,  
My mother sighs and drops the banana outside our tree  
Nothing but sorrow and the **scnt** of a smushed banana fill the air  
Until... RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE  
A family of monkeys charge toward us  
We all wonder why  
Then they all stop, all 30 of them  
They stare at my smushed banana then at us  
And best of all they brought their own bananas  
After we invite them up  
MMMM, MMMM  
Monkey Feast

—COLIN SULLENDER, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

# The Blazing Fire of Kindness

BY VALERIE DIRKSE  
KILMER MIDDLE, GRADE 7

There are many trends in middle school including, fashion, sports, TV shows, and much, much more. Sometimes they can be good, but other times they can be just plain mean. I think the one that should be the most popular is kindness. By doing little acts of kindness for your friends, classmates, teachers, and school, you can make a big difference. Be the first one to light a spark, so eventually we can kindle a blazing fire of kindness.

The great thing about kindness is that you don't have to do something huge to make a difference. A little act of kindness can go a far way, like a smile or a wave. These are not hard to do and they can make people happier. They can create a domino effect. Because you smiled or waved at them, they might think to do that to another person. Then the person who was smiled at, is in a better mood and is reminded of kindness. They might help a classmate with their school work or do another kind act for a teacher. The chain effect keeps happening and eventually the kindness is spread all around to everyone and everything. All it took was one person being kind.

A smile or other simple act of kindness including giving someone your seat, saying please and thank you, or telling someone good morning can have a large effect. Along with creating a domino effect, it can do many things to the person individually. Sometimes people have bad days, weeks or even months, and are going through really rough patches in their life. They can range from getting a bad grade on a quiz to failing math, having a disagreement with your best friend, to your parents getting a divorce, or a classmate annoying you, to being bullied. Sometimes we know that the people who need comfort are going through the tough times and we can comfort them specifically, but other times we have no idea that they are feeling sad at all, so it is never a bad idea to be kind. Whether it is big or small, it always helps know that someone cares enough to be kind. It can brighten their day, wake them up if they were tired, and make them feel appreciated. Even if a person is completely fine, it never hurts to see a smiling face.

When my friend invited me over for dinner, I was really happy. It made me realize that she cared enough to plan it with her parents and make time on her calendar to spend it with me. Another time,

I was really tired in my second period class; a classmate said good morning to me and I woke up right away. I had a better day because it. Any act of kindness, no matter how small or big, has a positive influence.

Even though people know that being kind is the right thing to do, it is sometimes hard to be nice for many different reasons. Sometimes people can forget to be caring, underestimate the power of those small acts, or are too lazy to even do a simple thing. Another thing that sometimes keeps us from doing these simple acts is that we don't want to be kind to people we dislike. I don't want to make someone happy if they make me or others unhappy, or they always are misbehaving. I don't want to give them the kindness and happiness, because they wouldn't want to be kind either. One thing that I have to remember is to treat others the way I want to be treated. It is sometimes hard and unfair, but it is the kind thing to do.

In closing, even though kindness can sometimes be hard, it always the right thing to do. It can cheer people up on bad days and create a domino effect. Even small acts of kindness, have big impact. Light the first spark of kindness, even if it is just a smile or wave, and watch the fire begin to blaze.

### "Big Sister"

She drives down the street  
and then pulls out her phone  
to look at some new texts  
"Stop I'm scared" I say from  
the back of the car  
She doesn't care  
ignoring me  
There goes a car,  
then another  
She starts to gather  
herself to look up  
but a second later  
"CRASH"  
then I wake up  
but she's not there  
Never the same again

—JOSIE DUDEK,

VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS



## Here's What's Happening at MCC



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**"Sparrows" (1926)**  
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\$12/\$8 MCC district residents

**At the Old Firehouse Teen Center**  
**5th and 6th Grader Party**  
**Winter Wonderland**  
Friday, Jan. 15, 7-9 p.m.  
\$35/\$25 MCC district residents

**Family Fun Bingo**  
Friday, Jan. 15, 7-8:30 p.m.  
\$10/\$5 MCC district residents;  
Free for children up to 36 months old.

**Onstage @ The Alden**  
**Barter Theatre:**  
**"A Wrinkle in Time"**  
Saturday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m.  
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

**Martin Luther King Jr.**  
**Day Celebration**  
**Peggy Wallace Kennedy:**  
**"A Walk to Redemption"**  
Sunday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m.  
\$25/\$10 MCC district residents

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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Reindeer, by Abigail Paredes, 13, Great Falls, Seneca Ridge Middle School, grade 8



God's love

## 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.



Focus



Tess and Mia



Apple

Pear



Biellmann spin

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## “Christmas”

Sometimes I wonder what makes Christmas so great,  
Perhaps it's the presents or staying up late.  
Maybe it's the songs and decorations,  
Or the different gingerbread creations.  
I believe it is the feeling that makes Christmas so unique,  
It is the feeling that makes me such a Christmas geek.  
It's not the decorations, songs, or food,  
Christmas is all about everyone's mood.  
Santa is great along with music on 97.1,  
But your spirit is what really makes Christmas so fun.  
I will never dislike the movies and songs Christmas brings,  
Or the Christmas carols of joy that everybody sings.  
I love playing with my new toys on those distinct Christmas days,  
My parents sip coffee and tea and watch my little sister as she plays.  
I love the white snow that covers the ground,  
And the fire making a magnificent crackling sound.  
I'm not saying all these things aren't fun,  
But don't you just feel empty when Christmas is done.

—EDDIE PAQUETTE, OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, GRADE 6

## “Hunter and Me”

I opened the door and Hunter's outside  
I show him the ball  
**Off!** he knocks me down  
the ball hits the ground and Hunter's  
already dribbling around the yard  
the leaves **crunch** under us as we play  
the wind **howls** but we don't care  
but soon it is dark and time to go in  
we race inside and **slam** the door  
I take off my boots Hunter's laying down  
We relax by the **crackling** fire thinking about  
our next game together

—CAITLIN MCCALL, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

## “Frost”

I wake up, and all I see  
Is the Dark.  
I turn around, and then I see  
A crack of light  
Through the drapes.  
And then I remember  
It's Christmas Day!  
I hop out of bed, run down the stairs  
As the sweet aroma of Mom's French toast fills the house.  
I open my stocking above the warm fire.  
I taste the fresh peppermint staff, shaped like a shepherd's crook.  
After I walk to the tree,  
Dressed in silver and gold and red,  
Draped in colored lights,  
We open our presents, and I can hear the crackle of wrapping paper  
As it rips open,  
(We kids look forward to this all year)  
After we finish, “Snow!” I think, and rush to the window.  
But no snow.  
Just frost, cold to the touch.

—MELANIE GREIG, ST. MARK SCHOOL, GRADE 6

## “Crimson Pledge”

The Crimson blaze stays bright  
As the fire spreads throughout the night  
Through Earth's stone and Deaths might  
Crimson will survive the Fight  
They pledge to protect what's dear  
When humanity's enemies grow near  
For now their job is good as done  
As the enemy's reduced to none  
So when the fire burns away  
Crimson's legacy will be known to this day  
As our enemies know today  
That humanity's here to stay

—NICHOLAS MONTALTO, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MRS. LEWIS

## “Balloon”

The shining sun smiles upon a pale blue balloon  
ascending to the heavens above.  
It rises further and further  
inch by inch  
until it rides a gentle breeze.  
Suddenly the moody clouds pounce  
like a cat stalking its prey  
and unleash a bolt of rage.  
POP!  
The inflated balloon slowly sinks to the ground  
and all life leaves its deflated shape forever.

—EMMA SMITH, VIENNA ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MS. LEWIS

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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## What They Are Thankful For at Churchill Road

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



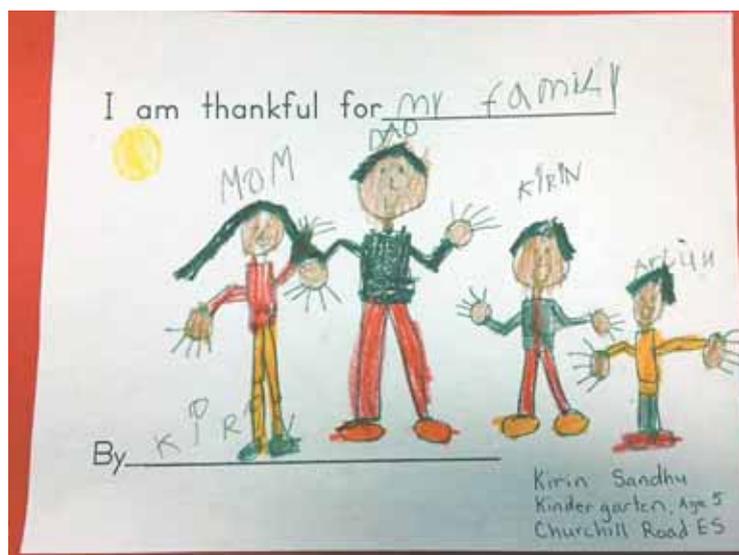
Alvaro  
Escoberos-  
Marcos,  
Churchill Road  
Elementary,  
kindergarten,  
"I am thankful  
for my friends"



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  
Elementary,  
kindergarten,  
"I am thankful  
for my family"

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

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.

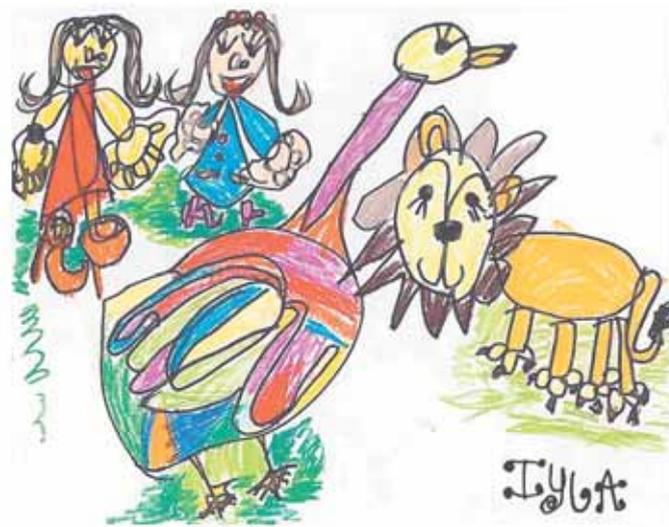
—ERIN GARVERT, ST. MARK SCHOOL, GRADE 6



NYSMITH SCHOOL ART GALLERY

Zani Xu, 9, Nysmith School, "Yardsale"

Iyla Sharifahmadian, 5, Nysmith School, Mrs. Hand, "Iyla and Minal Visiting the Zoo"



Kina Xu, 5, Nysmith School, kindergarten, "Winter Fun"

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## SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

### JANUARY

- 1/13/2016.....HomeLifeStyle
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18
- 1/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
- 1/27/2016.....Community Guide
- 1/27/2016..... Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment; Valentine's Preview

### FEBRUARY

- 2/3/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts I
- 2/3/2016.....Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month
- 2/10/2016.....HomeLifeStyle
- 2/10/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts II
- 2/17/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools
- 2/24/2016.....Pet Connection

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-Dagobert Runes

# CLASSIFIED

21 Announcements 21 Announcements

### NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

The Sycamore School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

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 of 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.

George J. Shapiro, Trustee

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
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-Dagobert Runes

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## 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.

## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

# Winter Wonderland

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.

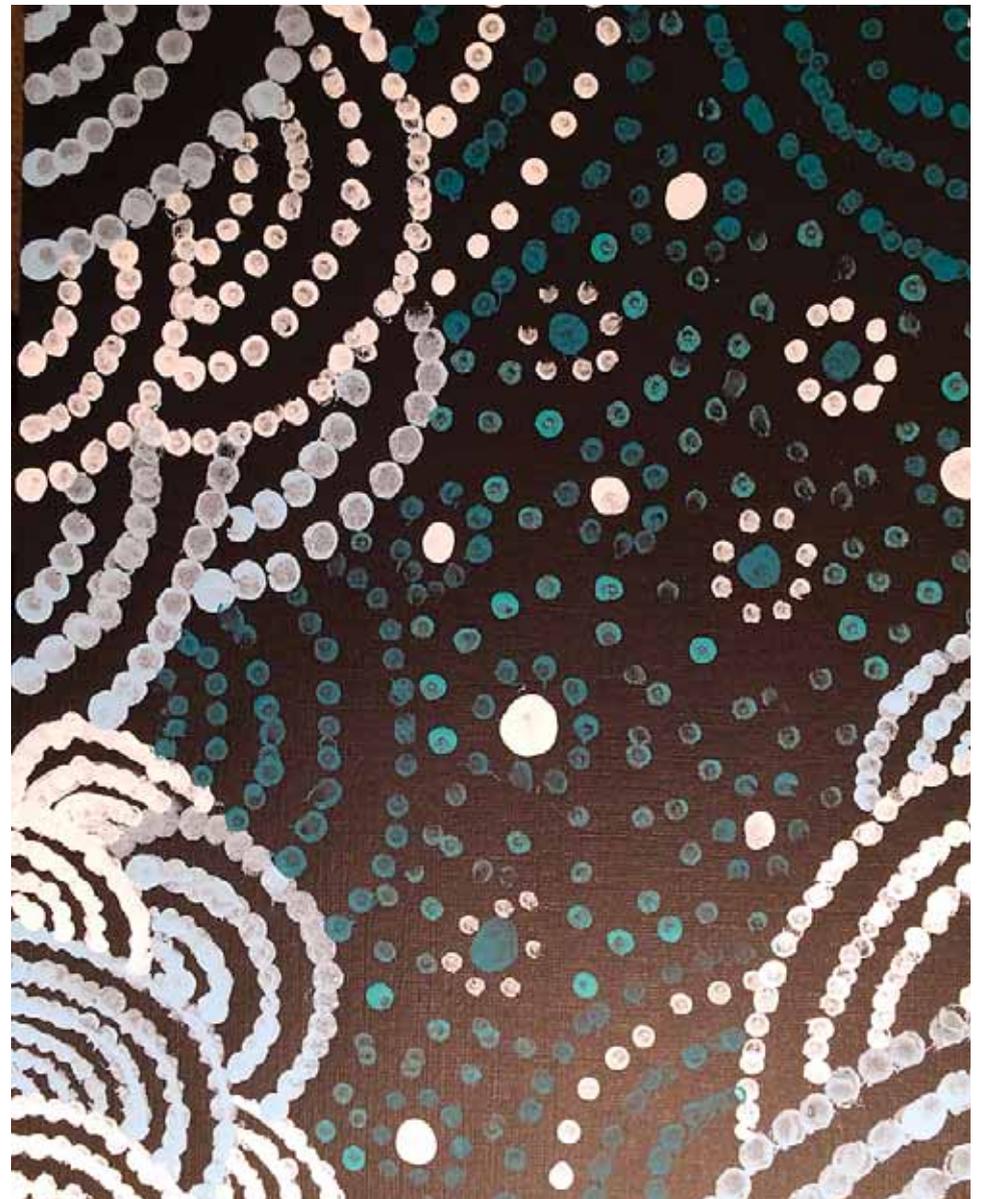
Ten minutes later, I looked down at my clothes. Ava and I were covered in snow almost head to toe! I couldn't tell who was covered the most.

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.

## 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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## "The City of Vienna"

The city of Vienna, it can't be denied  
All of us residents, we live here with pride  
We're lucky to live in this beautiful city  
When you look around, you must admit that it's pretty  
For others do not possess what we find abundant  
(If I were to describe it, it might sound redundant)  
But I think I will go ahead and specify  
What makes this town's beauty magnify  
First, the scenery, it is just so grand  
The endless, rolling nature all over the land  
We are so very fortunate to see things so pretty  
While some other towns stare at roads so gritty  
We have rolling hills and dipping valleys  
Not dangerous streets, nor dark alleys  
Now another thing, I would like to mention

Is something that will probably grab your attention  
You can visit all the different restaurants galore  
Or zip on over to your favorite store  
Without going on an hour long trip  
Just to get one paper clip  
For example, my favorite restaurant is Foster's Grille  
Whenever I go there, it's an absolute thrill  
Or another store that I really like  
Is Spokes Etc. where I bought my new bike  
For the people of Vienna, we are such nice folks  
We welcome people warmly, and tell kind jokes  
And we never ever are even close to mean  
We make you feel like you're on an island so serene  
Now I hoped this helped you to fully see  
That the people of Vienna are extremely lucky!

—TOLAN ROBERTSON, OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL SCHOOL, GRADE 6