Reading Takes You Everywhere!
By Ainsley Lee, 9, Grade 3,
Fairhill Elementary School,
Fairfax Teacher: Mrs. Hartman
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Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students. We asked children from area schools to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children’s & Teens’ 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 2020 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year’s Children’s & Teens’ 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 news pages.

Our preferred method for material is email, which should be sent to kemal@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 Kurspahic

By Juliana Esen, 11, Vienna, Grade 6, Fairhill Elementary

Welcome

By Juliana Esen, 11, Vienna, Grade 6, Fairhill Elementary

My Dream of Space, by Eva Huang, 8, of Vienna, Grade 3, Mosby Woods Elementary, Fairfax, Teacher: Yanshun Sui

Catch, by Nora Li, 8, of Fairfax, Grade 3, Greenbriar West Elementary School

Anne Basilio, Grade 3, Mantua Elementary

My castle, by Emma Yuan, 6, Grade 1, Daniel’s Run Elementary School
Children’s & Teens’ Connection

Mantua Elementary Art Gallery
Artwork submitted by Nathalie Shirley, Mantua ES Art Specialist

Joeun Park, Grade 5

Talia Gomelsky, Kindergarten

Alannah Murphy, Grade 4

Knox Lake, Grade 1

Owen Breitbeil, Grade 1

Autumn Silverman, Grade 8

Victoria Pham, Grade 6

Genesee Chinn, Grade 5
Pitter pat, pitter pat, down comes the rain.
Pitter pat, pitter pat, against the windowpane.
Pitter pat, pitter pat, we’re warm by the fire.
Pitter pat, pitter pat, I sit there as I tire.

—Serena Anmuth, 9

School Stress
If I had the power to change one thing about school, I would change the back-breaking, bone-crunching stress. Both my sisters are at Robinson Secondary School. In sixth grade, both my sisters were on top of it! Now it’s like my sisters don’t exist, buried in homework. But it’s not their fault, it’s the teachers. The teachers spring assignments and test reviews unreasonably, and they pretend to care about “time with your family.” This is a problem not just for my sisters, but it happens to everyone. I love learning but I don’t like how they force it into your brain and I don’t like how they pretend to care. This needs to stop.

—Harlan Taylor, 10

“Evil Homework”
Slamming doors
Stomping feet
getting more and more
grinding teeth
Homework’s due
nothing to give
Nervous as can be
Teacher announces, “It’s 50% of your grade”
a nervous gasp
We say, “Oh no!”

—Ivy DiPietro, 10

I run around kicking the big ball
see the defense, I dodge them all.
It is me against the last player,
I hope and give a prayer
kick the ball with all my might
See the goalie full of fright
The goalie dives
but the ball thrives
and I score a goal!

—Bryce Schaffling, 9

Soccer is awesome
soccer is fun
I play soccer all day long
I play soccer through the day
that is my average way
I play soccer through the night
It will be full of delight
On my team I score a goal
That is my soccer roll.
It is awesome
It is fun
It is spectacular all day long.

—Caleb Burley, 10
Children’s & Teens’ Connection

Nate D’Mello, 11, Grade 6

Hazel, by Eleanor Kim, 11, Grade 6

By Natalie Mejia-Ramos, 11, Grade 6

By Norah Easter, 8, Grade 3,
Fairhill Elementary, Teacher: Ms. Hartman

By Karuna Dongol,
12, Grade 6

By Juliana Esen, 11,
Vienna, Grade 6

By Vincent Deo, 12, Grade 6

Fairhill Elementary
Art Gallery
Artwork submitted by Fairhill Elementary
Advanced Academics Teacher Joan Swanson.
The Best Gift
The best gift is not an object or a place yet a feeling. The feeling of warmth of family and friends. The feeling of paying it forward or buying something to help someone. That little drop of kindness that makes yours and others day so much better. The exquisite delight of making someone smile is the best gift of all.

—Meissa Islam, 11, Grade 6

The Best Gift I Have Ever Been Given
The best gift I have ever been given wasn’t something big, like a play set or a bike. It wasn’t expensive either, like an iPad or a phone. It was something more meaningful than any of those gifts combined. It was a door to imagination, a window to creativity. It was a very highly recommended cure for boredom: A Book. This magical gift led me on so many adventures and to so many memories, even though it was just a combination of writing and pages, brought together by a hard cover. I am extremely grateful that I was able to receive the pages, writing, and cover. I wish that everyone will be able to receive such a gift, and be able to treasure it forever.

—Maxine Leonard, 11, Grade 6

What Makes A Good Parent
Being a good parent is a difficult task but very beneficial to your child or children. Ways to be a good parent are loving your child, making sure your child is making good choices, being protective of your child, and talking to your child when they need you. Parents are a role model to their child or children. That’s why parents also need to make good choices, kids should be able to look up to their parents. A good parent should know how to deal with their child or children in almost any situation. The most important thing a good parent should do is love their child or children.

—Amanda Li, 11, Grade 6

What Makes A Good Friend
There are many ways to be a good friend. A good friend should be kind and aware of how the other person is feeling. Friends shouldn’t make one another feel bad, but they should always tell the truth. They find you fun and interesting. They laugh with you, not at you. They comfort each other and keep them company. Even if they can’t figure something out they try to help the other person. They cheer and applaud for you. They encourage you when you need it. They never forget about you. Most of all they always care about you.

—Elise Yang Ravenhill, 9, Grade 4, Fairhill Elementary School
**Children’s & Teens’ Connection**

**Why Mistakes Are Important?**

In life you will make mistakes, but don’t worry, everybody does. Those mistakes are much more important than you think they are because those mistakes help you learn. If you never make mistakes, like my friend once told me a secret and I told someone and now we aren’t as good friends as we used to be, and from that day on I have never done that again. That was important because it helped me learn, you don’t learn as well as if you make mistakes. Mistakes help you succeed in life, in school, work, university, and even when you’re working at home.

You should learn from your mistakes, because if you learn from them you don’t repeat your mistakes, and you know what’s right and what’s wrong. If you see someone that does something better than you, don’t worry about it. Everybody has their skills. For example, maybe you’re better at math, reading, or drawing, anything you’re good at. All that matters are you know everybody has something that they are good at - whatever it is. When you make a mistake don’t take that as a bad thing. Take that as a normal part of life and a part of learning.

**Snow Day**

I watch beautiful snow fall from the sky
I watch each snowflake fly high, high, high
I watch a snowflake fall onto my nose
I look down at my body, snow covering my clothes
I hear my Mother call me in for supper, I guess my time is up
I bury myself under a pile of snow I just can’t get enough

**Humility**

What the word humility means is that you don’t think of yourself only but also think of others. Another explanation for the word humility is you put others’ needs before yours. Another way to show humility is not to brag. Another word for humility is humble. People often use humility at Christmas time because you give kindness. Here is one way to show humility: if you see someone that is homeless person give them something that they need like water and food. Think of your own way to be humble and do it. It will help the earth. HOORAY!

**I made it myself!**

The sheer craftsmanship
Attention to detail
A complex blend
Parsely, thyme, oregano
A time consuming endeavor
My first plate of spaghetti

—Jimin Yeo, Fairfax High Freshman, Teacher: Felicia Hamilton
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CHILDREN’S & TEENS’ CONNECTION
FAIRHILL ELEMENTARY

By Vaishnavi S Sariputi, 10, Fairhill Elementary, Grade 4

Save the Planet, by Reyhan Akea, 9, Grade 4, Fairhill Elementary, Teacher: Mr. Jones.

I like my Doctor

Meet Emma

Artwork by Emma Yuan, 6, Grade 1, Daniel’s Run Elementary School, Teacher: Ms. Forstall

Neighborhood watch

Ready for Christmas, by Eva Huang, 8, of Vienna, Grade: 3, Mosby Woods Elementary, Fairfax, Teacher: Yanshun Sui
Bolivia
I on the basketball court.

It's a hot summer morning.
Kids and adults are playing sports and having fun all around me.

Sweat and food fill the air.
The touch of the basketball makes me want to play.

Happy, excited, everyone is having so much fun.

—Alejandro Sanchez, 10, Grade 5

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico
It's the middle of the day when the sun is up.

Colorful rainbow-colored buildings everywhere.
Popsicles on the side of the street.
The popsicle stick was hard, and the popsicle drips down on my hand.

It makes me get a brain freeze.

It felt like I was at the beach sitting in the sand and relaxing.

—Bo Nong, 10

A Mountain Sunset

I'm at the top of a tree covered mountain.

It's sunset.

Brightly colored flowers.

I spot a wandering moose.

Soft floral scent of bluebells and oak trees.

I hear chirping birds as the leaves rustle beneath my feet.

I feel calm, serene, and peaceful.

—Avery Chang, 10

Black Friday

At one or two a.m.

People everywhere tackling each other.

Shopping carts rolling in different directions racing to the front of the line.

—Benjamin Hiu, 10

King of the World

My house.

With no lights on.

It's very late.

Though I'm still up.

Watching TV.

Sneaking food in.

I smell the beans.

That I'm eating.

I feel nice.

Like I'm the king.

Of the world.

—Bryan Montano, 10

Home is Nice

Under my covers with my cat at my feet.

In the middle of the day.

My cat is turning, trying to find a comfortable position.

The panda scenery painted on the walls and a pillow make me feel happy.

The heater is on.

Mom's cooking lunch.

My sister's baking.

Hummmmm…my fluffy blanket and my warm cat.

The alarm goes off for my sister's baking.

My mom is calling my sister.

I feel comfortable and happy and calm.

—Caroline Ehlers, 10

San Francisco

San Francisco is the best place by far.

the honks of many cars.

Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge.

the gas and smoke.

the delicious seafood.

San Francisco put me in a good mood!

—Amelia Frias

My Barn

I am in my barn.

The barn is warm and quiet.

I can see my animals.

The horses are sleeping in the stables.

The lambs are lying in the hay bales.

I can smell the hay.

it is stacked neatly on the wall.

I can feel the soft, wonderful wool on my hands from the dozing sheep.

And it makes me smile.

—Alley MacDonald, 10, Grade 5

A Mountain Sunset

I'm at the top of a tree covered mountain.

It's sunset.

Brightly colored flowers.

I spot a wandering moose.

Soft floral scent of bluebells and oak trees.

The taste of lavender in the air.

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By KENNETH R. LOURIE

The doctor told me that I’ll probably receive results from today’s biopsy in five to seven days. The pathologist will send the results to my oncologist who presumably will email them to me. Now whether that new information will cause a change in my treatment, I certainly don’t know. However, I would imagine that the genetic mutation/biomarker would cause an immediate change. We’re not exactly waiting for Godot here. And neither is the progress in lung cancer research, after years of comparative stagnation during the last three years than in the previous three decades, according to LUNGevity. Lung cancer is by far the leading cause of cancer deaths annually with up to 200,000 new cases diagnosed every year. “Targeted Therapy” is what I’m talking about. And it’s a simple, as sounds, medical principle. A specific medicine is more effective when given to a patient with a specific biomarker (type of tumor; they’re not all the same). Eleven years ago when I was first diagnosed, mutations were not yet a part of the oncologist’s playbook. Now, they’re on page one. After years of advanced treatment based on old-ish/conventional methods, I am about to move to the head of the class. Maybe even become the teacher’s pet (I’m already my oncologist’s prize cow). This is not experimental stuff, this is state of the art, so to speak. And soon, if I’m lucky, I will join the ranks.

At this juncture, I know very little specifically about what might happen next. I have learned during my years of treatment and meetings with my oncologist that future scenarios are rarely discussed. Sure, we’ve occasionally mapped out, generally speaking, a course of action/reaction, but my oncologist prefers not to get too far ahead of what we are at present. One new symptom and/or unexpected result from a CT scan or a brain MRI and once again, it will be “Katie, bar the door.” Accordingly, I have become a patient to know. That’s not double talk, that’s years of experience. I’d like to think it’s part of the reason I’m still alive.

Another reason I’m still alive is the Team Lourie philosophy: hoping Kenny can stay alive until research catches up, or even passes you by which then enables you to take advantage of the next big thing/new drug. Over the last 11 years, I’ve been the beneficiary of two drugs that has provided drugs which allowed me to live years beyond my original “13 months to two year” prognosis (in quotes because that’s what my oncologist said). Now I hope to be the beneficia ry once again of the latest and greatest treatment: “Targeted Therapy.” If so, another 11 years would suit me just fine.

To say I’m excited would not exactly describe my state of mind. Hopeful, of course. Anxious, for sure, because I think my oncologist, per our last meeting, was anticipating my future a bit and switching from my present opdivo immunotherapy to something brand new (or a new combination of medicines) seemed timely to him. Ergo, my needle biopsy today. A specific targeting intervention, I guess you could say: “I’m pleased as punch,” though, to quote Hubert Horatio Hum phrey Jr., the 38th Vice President of the United States, that I had this procedure. It opens up/creates new treatment possibilities which for a nearly 11-year cancer survivor is likely way more important than I realize. After all, my oncologist did characterize my non small cell lung cancer, stage IV diagnosis as “terminal.” A disease for which my oncologist also said that he “could treat, but that he couldn’t cure.” “Well, I don’t suppose he can cure me now with whatever targeted therapy matches my tumor’s biomarker.” So I’m counting on these new drugs being able to treat me some more. I could live with that.

By KENNETH R. LOURIE

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