

Together in Our Town
By Casey Chasteen

In my town we learn
Together
Accept every creed and color
Together
Reach out with helping hand
Together
Work to improve our community
Together
Support those we don't know
Together
We form our town
Together
Make Columbia unique
Together

Rock Bridge High School
Junior, Smith/Egan

As One
By Courtney B.

If you could look into the future what do you see
Is it possible what you want to be?
Why can't we be in harmony?
It's much easier to understand
Not only will it help
It heals your welt
If we have a mutual amount of harmony
We will be able to understand what's in store
It is possible to be together
Black, White, Caucasian, Mixed
We all are part of a community
Why not act as one
Just because we are different race
Does not mean we can't live in harmony
We are all equal
So be nice invite someone in your home
If we work together
We CAN make a difference.

Boys and Girls Town

Accept Diversity; Treasure what makes us wonderful!

By Austin Allen

The world is full of horrible things: poverty, homelessness, disease, crime, war, sadness, anger, and worst of all, hatred. Although we should not hate, there is but one thing that is fair to condemn someone for: their actions, which define their character. The sadness, the anger, the hatred – these wretched things that make our world less beautiful all come from people condemning others for things that no one can control, things that don't matter about a person: race, wealth, sex, orientation, intelligence, religion, or other attributes that make us all a rainbow of diversity. Humans fear what they don't understand, what they cannot control, so we are angry and damaging to those whom we don't identify with on the outside. But on the inside, we're all the same! The same heart and soul, the same desires to be accepted for who and what we are. If only everyone could look beyond the peel, beyond even the fleshy banana meat, and look at the seeds. The very core of each fruit is just the same, no matter how ripe the banana is, or how many bruises it has, or how it smells or tastes, or how hard it is to pull down the brown, crusty top. If only everyone could see that nothing about anyone is a matter of wrong vs. right, bad vs. good, or better vs. worse. We're all equal. If we could just see that, we'd all be one family, brothers and sisters, a steaming and delicious melting pot of spicy, hearty gumbo.

Harmony. Tolerance. Acceptance. Love for the fellow person. The fire that hatred burned can be withered by the flames of passion, kindled by the spark of love and explode with the energy of true happiness. No matter which god we worship, we can all preach the power of love, pray at the altar of harmony and sing in the choir of diversity, our song sounding loud in every cave, over every mountain, down every fissure and through every heart to the core of every soul. No matter what tint our skin has, there is a place for all of us in the grand rainbow of peace! No matter how we talk, we all have a voice in the council of the people, united as one! No matter how heavy we are or how wealthy we are, there is an equal slice of understanding pie for us, with a tolerance crust and a gooey acceptance filling! Whether you can see or hear perfectly or not, every human soul can feel the power of community! Diversity is what makes the Earth beautiful! You can see it in the plants, the animals, the land, the sea, the rocks, and the sky; why should our society be any different? Everyone must open their minds, open their hearts, open their soul to all the differences in everyone, but most importantly, to the things that are just the same.

I Dream a World **By Terryonna Samuels**

I dream a world
Where when a person comes for help
It is found
And not at the bottom of a list.
I dream a world
Without violence or silence.
I dream a world
Where nobody makes fun of you
Just because you don't look like them.
I dream a world
Of cleanliness and goodness.
There is no sadness.
I dream a world of that.

West Boulevard Elementary School
5th Grade, Jonette Ford

A Vision of Harmony **By Isabelle Mitchell**

There is diversity in my home, my school, my community. Without it, we would all look the same, speak the same, and do the same things.

There is diversity in my home. My mom is French and my dad is American. I speak French to my mom and English to my dad. I also eat a lot of French food.

There is diversity in my school. I have many good friends that are not my skin color. A lot of my other friends come from states other than Missouri, including me! I was born in Rockville, Maryland.

There is diversity in my community. For the first seven years of my life, I lived next door to a girl from Taiwan. Sean looked different, spoke differently from me. She and I played together every day.

As you see, there is an enormous amount of diversity in my home, my school, my community.

Here is something to remember: We all laugh and smile the same. Because of that, I was able to live in harmony among all this diversity all these years.

Rock Bridge Elementary
5th Grade, Mrs. Winchester

Some People Just Don't Understand

By Janey Trull

What has happened to this world?
We fight and make fun of each other,
I just wish we could just go above it all;

Some people have black skin,
Some people have white,
Some people try to make harmony between differences with all their might.

Some people believe in God,
Some don't,
And some refuse to understand others' beliefs, they just won't;

Some go to church,
Some practice religion at home,
And some live in Paris, others Rome;

Some believe they're equal,
Some believe they're better,
When this happens an argument is soon to occur;

Whatever the case, it's usually not good,
People need to promote peace and harmony,
We shouldn't need to tell them, they just should.

Smithton Community Programs
Columbia Public Schools

Diversity

By Briana Grant

The important thing about diversity is that it makes the world different. It makes the world different and exciting. It makes people feel unique inside. It makes them feel like they are not a part of a big blob. A lot of people think it is bad to have Diversity. But it is truly good to have diversity.

Diversity is something good for the world. If we were all the same, the world would be boring. Diversity to me means everyone is different in a good way. Different cultures, different skin colors, different clothes, different everything. That is great!

We should not hate each other because we are different, we should love each other. That is what I think diversity means.

Cedar Ridge Elementary
4th Grade

A Vision of Harmony

By Connie Cho

Each culture carries with it a distinct set of values, appearance, religion, language and more. When people start to believe they are the only ones with the right values or right methods, their minds close and so does their opportunity to appreciate other people. People close their minds only when they are ignorant. To create a society where diversity is appreciated and all people exist harmoniously, every person must be educated to open their minds and hearts. As Mark Twain said:

There is nothing education cannot do. Nothing is above it's reach.
It can turn bad morals to good; it can destroy bad principles and
recreate good ones; it can lift men to angelship.

Harmony between cultures is only possible if people actively seek to learn about the diverse world with an open mind.

Perhaps the best example of an appetite for knowledge can be found in children. They are unabashed to discover new cultures and see how people are not as different as they present themselves to be. Everyone should adapt their ability to see the unique aspects of each culture without casting them aside as unnatural or wrong from their religion to their food.

In Korean culture, the staple food is "kim chi", a spicy vegetable fermentation chock full of garlic and lots of red pepper that my parents like to eat three times a day. Growing up in America, I can remember not eating kim chi when my friends were going to come over, and opening the doors and windows to let out the smell of kim chi. In a normal Korean home, you would expect to smell some kim chi in the house, but the fear of being outcaste over a few whiffs was too great. Perhaps if we lived in a society where people's first thoughts were "I'd like to try some of that" or "I wonder how that's done because it is certainly different", I would've accepted my heritage a bit faster.

To become an accepting and harmonious society, the exposure to different cultures must be heightened and people should learn about these new cultures. Nowadays, my mom always puts out a small dish of kim chi when guests come over for dinner to share a little bit of our culture. When the issues are global, the small acts to bring our community together count.

Hickman High School
10th Grade, Mrs. Jill Varns

Ethnic Haiku **By Kavi Thakkar**

People are different
Yet they are all the same
They are all humans

Why degrade others
Why separate them
They all deserve same respect

People need respect
So you should give them respect
That gives confidence

Ethnicity is cool
Religion is good
It makes people different

Many stand up for rights
Religion is important
All people are good

Jefferson Junior High School
8th Grade, Mrs. Paula Donoho

My Dream **By Alexia Adeshakin**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. started creating harmony in this world. "I have a dream," he said in his speech. He was one of the leaders who made our world a great place. Now we can make it a better place by adding on to what he did. This is my dream that might be able to change Columbia.

People make the world a better place by working together as family and friends even if skin is a different color. Our hearts are still the same. Being kind, respectful, responsible, cooperative, safe and truthful are all virtues that we can follow to improve our community. Take time to listen to what people are saying and hear what they mean. Build friendships with your neighbors. Don't start fights; settle them. Peace and harmony are the two characteristics that help keep us together; create it and you will have a great community!

Two-Mile Prairie Elementary School
4th Grade, Mrs. Metz

Tolerate to Cooperate

By Saja Necibi

One day, I was in the summer school cafeteria looking for a seat; when I was about to sit a girl asked me what I was wearing on my head. I told her that it was a Muslim head scarf and that it was part of my religion. Then the girl told me that the seat was saved and gave me rude looks such as glares and stares. I was sad at the time, but now I got over it.

One important thing that girl did not have was tolerance. Tolerance is when you get along with everybody. She only got along with people like her, which seems racist. After what happened, I thought about doing something to help people who act like that girl. If I were older, like in high school, I would start a school club called the Multi-Culture Club of Columbia, Missouri. Any student from any race or religion can attend the club. The objective of the club is to teach people the importance of tolerance and how to live in harmony together.

In the beginning of the year, we would introduce ourselves and play fun games, such as soccer and volley-ball. Interacting together will help us get along and tolerate our differences. In the middle of the year, we would prepare posters that tell information about all the traditions, beliefs, customs and cultures of the people in the club. People who have the same cultures will make a mega poster to present. At the end of the year, we would have a big gathering and invite the whole community. We would also dress in traditional clothing. During the gathering we would present our posters and give out samples of food from all cultures.

After the students graduate from the club, they will talk with their schoolmates, friends and neighbors about the importance of tolerance and living in harmony with each other. It will be passed from person to person and from generation to generation, and Columbia will be a great place to live.

Islamic School of Columbia-Missouri
4th Grade, Mrs. Abdul-Wahid

Diversity

By Chris High

Black, White, Hispanic, Mixed, or an African.

We all have different colors our skin.

We will win to stop diversity in the future.

Everybody from different ethnicity groups and cultures were having separated lives.

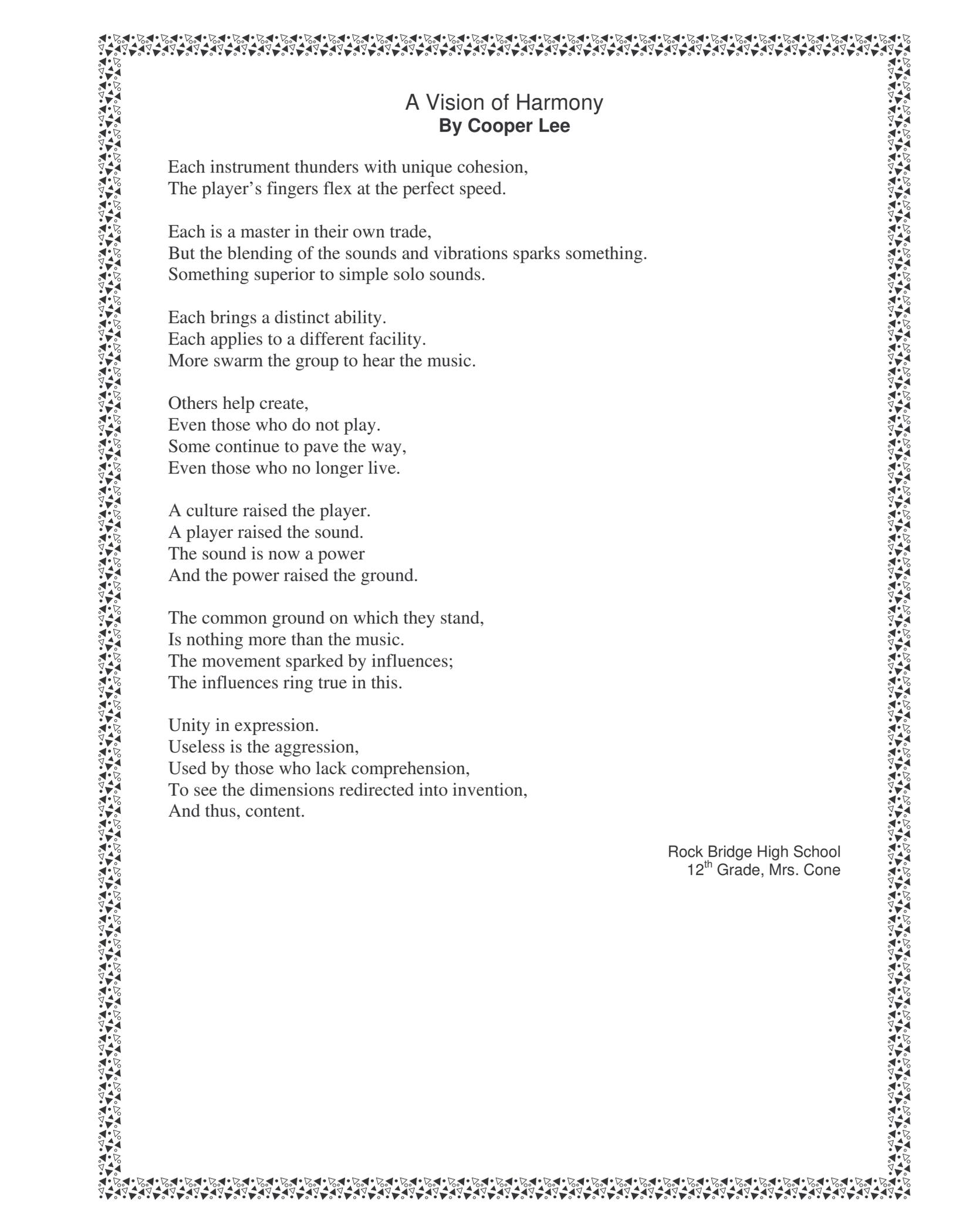
We have seen diversity in our bright and shining eyes.

When we living in different cultures, then why do we not been together as friends?

Diversity is affecting everybody's lives and careers in their lifetime.

We have to get along and be together to make a world a better place to live.

Jefferson Junior High School
8th Grade, Pat Cleeton



A Vision of Harmony By Cooper Lee

Each instrument thunders with unique cohesion,
The player's fingers flex at the perfect speed.

Each is a master in their own trade,
But the blending of the sounds and vibrations sparks something.
Something superior to simple solo sounds.

Each brings a distinct ability.
Each applies to a different facility.
More swarm the group to hear the music.

Others help create,
Even those who do not play.
Some continue to pave the way,
Even those who no longer live.

A culture raised the player.
A player raised the sound.
The sound is now a power
And the power raised the ground.

The common ground on which they stand,
Is nothing more than the music.
The movement sparked by influences;
The influences ring true in this.

Unity in expression.
Useless is the aggression,
Used by those who lack comprehension,
To see the dimensions redirected into invention,
And thus, content.

Rock Bridge High School
12th Grade, Mrs. Cone

Columbia: A Place Where Everyone Lives in Harmony

By Connor Lake

When I think of Columbia, I think of a community that is a blend of many cultures and each culture has many unique things about its heritage. Whether it is a religion or a special tradition, the cultures join together to form one big community that lives in harmony.

Over the years, I have had many friends from many different cultures. Setting our differences aside, we cared and watched over each other as good friends. I had a very close friend that would always try to make peace among everyone. I admired him because he would help everyone and when a problem occurred, he would try to work it out in a non-violent way.

In the future, if everyone in Columbia set aside their differences and worked together, I believe that we could make a better community for everybody.

Paxton Keeley Elementary
5th Grade, Ryan Link

Many Cultures, One Community...A Vision of Harmony

By Nicole Crespi

There is a lot of diversity in Columbia. No one can doubt that, but many people handle their differences very immorally. Many people make racist comments every day. Whether about the color of a person's skin or on the religion a person believes in, whether on their clothes or their language, many people are hurt every day. That is why Columbia needs to change.

In five years, I see Columbia changed into a great city with more proper thoughts and statements. People will not comment on others for any aspect of their lives. Racism probably won't stop altogether and there will still be lots of different people around, but they will not be treated wrongly because of their differences. Our city will be more harmonious and we will think more freely and righteously. But we can't get there without all working together.

All people are different and everyone should understand that. Think about how you would feel if somebody said something rude to you or one of your friends. You would feel angry or hurt, right? Then think that everyone else in the world probably feels the same way when you make a rude comment about them. If we all acted morally then the others around us would feel happier and freer to be different. No one is bad because they believe in a different religion or because they look, talk, or learn differently from yourself. Everyone deserves welcome and praise no matter how different they are. People need to give compassion to others and the vision of a brighter future for Columbia will come true.

Smithton Middle School
7th Grade, Alisha Long

King of Harmony By Brian Lopez

If I was King of Harmony, I will stop fighting in schools. I would stop people from saying bad, hurtful words in the community. So people have to treat the better community. The community has to stop doing this stuff. The community can be peaceful or hurtful.

People need to stop robbing each other, help the poor and the homeless, stop saying bad words. People should obey the law. People need to stop littering in people's yard. Those people don't care about the community. That how so people make it a better community to live in.

In school, people should stop saying bad words that don't belong in their mouths. Some people hate each other and they get in a fight. A person hating each other is not good because everyone should like each other. Never judge other people by how they look or their skin color. Everyone is the same on the inside. School is for learning and friends, not fighting, saying bad words or hating each other.

You can live a peaceful life or a hateful life. Peaceful is better. It's your choice. Make the earth a better place to live. Make life easier to live.

Blue Ridge Elementary
5th Grade, Ms. Truesdell

Don't Judge Me! By Tanail Coleman

Don't judge me
Hug me
Love me as if you were my brother
Show me
That you can better me
Teach me how I can
Listen to me
Don't hate me
Love me appreciate me
Don't hate me love me
We need one another.
Am not putting a gun to your head
Am not asking
Am telling you
To love me
And don't judge me
If you are going to judge me on how we need to stop this madness and how we need to put our hands together and make this world turn 'round
Love me
So don't
Judge me!

Jefferson Junior High School
8th Grade, Paula Donoho

The Fight for Freedom

By Osama Ehtesham

Have you ever thought about how life was from 1900 to 1980's? Let me tell you it was not nice for everyone. People were judged by their skin color and religion. White people had different schools, theaters and sometimes even a different entrance to some places. In a bus, the black people had to get into the back or sometimes they were forced to get off. Colored people had a different drinking fountain too and sometimes a different bus stop. Many black civil rights leaders were killed because they went in the public and spoke about freedom. Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and also John F. Kennedy were assassinated for speaking in public about freedom. Some were sent to jail for standing up for their rights.

However, not all white people were unfair to black people. John F. Kennedy was white, but he fought for equal rights. We should not judge others by their skin color, religion or race. The schools that black people went to were very poor. Sometimes the kids had to study with a candle because there was no electricity. Some schools didn't have enough money to have a book for every student so the students had to share a book by a candle fire. They didn't even have an air conditioner or heater in their school.

In my opinion, whether someone has a different skin color, race or religion, everyone is equal to each other. Everyone should be friends and have a good relationship with everyone. You need team work to build a good civilization. I hope that five years from now Columbia will live in harmony. Someone elected me as mayor of Columbia, but only for a day. I showed the young kids the movies about discrimination and how people were treated differently because of their religion, race, skin color, age, etc. When the children went home, they convinced their parents not to discriminate against others because of their beliefs and all the other things they learned about. Soon everyone became friends with each other and enemies became friends.

Islamic School of Columbia
5th Grade, Lina Wahid

King of Harmony

By Sam Cramer

If I was crowned King of Harmony, I would put more computers in schools and give everybody out in the streets a home. Every child will have toys. Every teenager will have games. Every house will have computers. Everybody will have clothes, food, water, heat and shoes.

I would do all these things to help make people happy. If people are happy, they get along.

That's what I would do if I was King of Harmony.

Blue Ridge Elementary School
5th Grade, Truesdell

Diversity

By Lauren Flaker

In the world today, it's inevitable that everyone will be different. We all come from different backgrounds and communities. I like this. It would just seem dumb if we were all the same. One of the hurdles Americans had to overcome during the 1960s was diversity, in particular, African Americans. It wasn't cool to be African American. Before the Civil Rights Movement they were treated differently from everyone else. Our society wasn't equal.

Equality is important in any society. For instance, as a student, I find it more effective when teachers treat us on the same level they would treat an adult. I don't mean that they have to spill their life story to me; I just think that they shouldn't treat students as if they didn't know anything at all. When someone acts like that, it just seems hypocritical of them. They teach us each day that in order to have a harmonious society we should treat others the way we want to be treated. By this, our educators have taught me to give everyone the same respect I would want.

In the early 1960s, Martin Luther King Jr. recognized the inequality in the United States, so he decided to make things right for all citizens. This man, with the help of others, made it possible for all of us to live in a better society. Whether he was giving his "I Have a Dream" speech or marching to Montgomery, he was fighting for what he thought to be right. Throughout the decade, African Americans moved closer to equality by one man's dream for a better community.

We, by all means, are not a perfect society today. There are still those people treated differently because of their race or ethnicity. To make our community better, I think that we need to live eye-to-eye with one another. No one group of people is better than another. If we all try to treat everyone the same then we, as a whole, can make the difference we need to have a peaceful society.

Jefferson Junior High School
9th Grade, Mr. Clowe

Denial

By Rae Faiman

Perhaps the main problem we face in our community isn't that of discrimination against other races, but simply that we're in denial of the discrimination that exists. As a high school student, I'm probably exposed to more racial slurs and injustices than any other social environment. However, if you ask a number of students, particularly those who commit these injustices, they will probably tell you that racism isn't a problem. These problems must be solved over the course of several generations. In one day, the most we can hope for is that people will realize how stupid, unnecessary and wrong these crimes against other human beings are. It's nearly impossible to fully place yourself in another's shoes, but if we could just think ahead to how our words and actions would affect other people, or even how we would feel if someone said that to us, it would decrease the frequency of racial intolerance. The only thing we can hope for is a higher level of respect for other cultures, skin colors and ways of life.

Rock Bridge High School
11th Grade, Smith/Egan

A Vision for Columbia's Growth

By Sydney Goggins

I envision a Columbia that grows not just in size, but in tolerance and appreciation for all the different races and cultures that make up this great city. Tolerance is essential in any society that is both functional and fair, and I believe that the roots of tolerance are in a strong sense of community. We learn tolerance or hate at a very young age. We need to teach the next generation to be kind and fair-minded toward all people, regardless of race, class or religion. But how do we do this?

In my own life, here are some things that I do to build peace and justice in my world. I try to make friends with new people, even when they have different ideas than I do. Whenever I go somewhere, I try to talk to people who are different from me or who I don't know very well. Many of my friends are my age, but I get along really well with people who are younger and older than me. I try to get to know people based on what I have in common with them, instead of focusing too much on the things we don't have in common. I read a lot about different cultures and ideas, and I try not to judge people by how they appear on the surface. I think all these things have helped me become more tolerant.

Some of my best friends I've had a lot in common with, but many of my friends have completely different interests than I do. I don't really care about fashion at all, but I'm friends with a girl who thinks her hair is perfect. I don't like video games, but I'm friends with boys who love to play them. I disagree with two college students I know politically, but I found out we had a lot of other things in common. Now we're really good friends. They've taught me tolerance.

I think that to build a harmonious community, people of all ages should do two things: 1) we should be generous and understanding of others and work to overcome our differences. 2) We should teach our friends, neighbors and children to do the same thing. Diversity is strength, not a weakness. I believe that Columbia can be a vibrant community where diversity is one of its major strengths. This takes will on the part of our leaders. Studs Terkel, the great oral historian, once said, "The only thing I like homogenized is my milk." I agree with him. Life is pretty boring when every person and idea looks the same. The best way that we can honor Dr. King is to celebrate the many different faiths, cultures and perspectives that make up our city not just once a year, but every day.

The Little Things

By Daniel Lindaman

The only way to make Columbia harmonious is through the little things. The small moments that get a person through the day. You see someone who forgot his or her textbook, you go out of your way to pick it up. You forgot an umbrella and it's raining at the bus stop, the other person there shares his or hers with you. Small things like these really brighten someone's day. Think if everybody did these for each other all the time. You'd have a city of cheerful people working together harmoniously. Then if everyone was busy doing this they'd never have time to be mean or hold a grudge. The only way to make Columbia harmonious is through the little things.

West Junior High School
8th Grade, Mrs. Botkin

A Vision of Harmony

By Methma Udawatta

Diversity.
A simple four-syllable word
That means so much.
Segregation, holocaust
All ideas against diversity.

What is diversity?
A town with equal amounts of different cultures,
Races and ethnicities;
A school where blacks and whites are friends;
A place where the blond-haired, blue-eyed
Aren't above the rest.
In Columbia's ideal future,
I see all of these.

In my vision, everyone is truly equal:
No rude comments are directed at people who look different.

Harmony will be created,
Like music,
When the rich altos of new cultures,
Will blend with the
Sweet soprano of the old.

If only we could be more accepting,
We would have more harmony
In our lives and the lives of others.

If we could work together,
And not judge the book by its cover,
There would be more harmony
In the whole world.

I hope, in the future,
These dreams will become reality,
And make our world truly a better place
For all of us:
A vision of harmony.

Smithton Middle School
7th Grade, Ms. Leslye McCarty

A Vision of Harmony!

By Dolphina Operle

If someone crowned me Queen of Harmony but only for a day, I would do what my mother would do. Now, my mother really cared about the environment. Here's what I would do in honor of my mother.

First, I would give all the children who are in the Columbia hospitals at least one hundred dollars for surgery or something else. The other people in the Columbia hospitals, I would have some kids write a letter to them so they don't feel afraid or alone. The kids and adults who are really important. You just can't forget about them. They are part of our community.

Then I would let some kids go to a retirement home and play with the people who live there. I would let them get to know them and visit them later. Retirement people jump out of their socks when someone visits them. It makes them think they are not forgotten in this world.

Then maybe I would throw a giant party for everyone in Columbia, but they have to get to know one another. After the party, my community will have more friends and have harmony with each other.

I want every culture, Alaskan, Asian, everyone to be together in a vision of harmony. We can't leave anyone behind. I hope I can achieve my goal.

Rock Bridge Elementary School
5th Grade, Mrs. Winchester

Caring in Columbia

By Yena Kim

I remember this one teacher who used to work with my ELL teacher a long time ago. She helped me almost every day. She also brought many books to read and lots of fun stuff to do. Such as sand painting, dyeing eggs for Easter, and teaching me an Irish Dance. I had lots of fun and was comfortable being with her.

I learned that it is really hard to give your time and provide your own money for those people who need help like I did. Even though some people may think that it is wasting time. For people who are learning appreciate it and enjoy it a lot.

Our community will have benefits if more people in Columbia act like my teacher. They would be more helpful and caring. If we start it with little things like gossip about others, and treating people equally, that would change many things about our world and our communities. It will bring peace and harmony slowly and together we could make a better city.

Smithton Middle School
7th Grade, Ms. Leslye McCarty

A Vision of Harmony **By Taylor Lightner**

The students of today hold the future in their hands and are believed to be the leaders of tomorrow. The communities they live in should consist of people who feel as if they are being treated with justice and equality, but also feel as if they are safe. Citizens might think that there is nothing they could do to help the part of the community that needs it most, so the treatment everyone deserves isn't being promoted to those in need of it. This isn't a good example for the students to follow. There is one Citizen of the Columbia community, though, who is trying her best to make her neighborhood as good as it can be. Almeta Crayton.

Almeta Crayton is a woman who spends her free time trying to clean up Columbia, but mainly her neighborhood. Where Mrs. Crayton lives, there are drug problems and violence that has no reason for occurring and that is just one thing she is trying to control. She is also a member of the City Council and there she proposes new ideas that can help her with the determination to make her neighborhood and Columbia safer for not only her, but the families living here as well. From being on the City Council, Almeta has come up with above and beyond ideas. She was a part of the group who proposed the idea of creating the Community Center that holds after-school programs where kids can receive help with school work if it is needed. Almeta Crayton also organized the "Food for Everyone" drive at Lou's Palace where families could come in to have a Thanksgiving dinner for no cost.

Every community needs a strong leader that is trying to promote the qualities of being equal throughout the citizens in the city. As shown, Almeta Crayton is that positive leader that is needed to help the leaders of tomorrow understand the reasoning behind it being so important to have everyone feel acceptance or equal. The vision of Harmony in Columbia isn't just in the hands of the students, but is also in the hands of the adults now. As the Columbia Community starts to expand, I hope to see the growth in the amount of leaders who are willing to take their free time just like Almeta Crayton to make sure that a peaceful community is created. Making Columbia a better place for all should not become too hard of a task if those citizens who don't help take a stand and make the Columbia community better one step at a time.

Jefferson Junior High School
9th Grade, Mr. Clowe

My World **By Aaron Morris**

My world lives in peace.
Here every man is kind.
Here people are generous.
Here people come
and lock their fear and hate
in a box with no key.
Here all of us run around
Because we are free.

West Boulevard Elementary School
5th Grade, Jonette Ford

Columbia: The Place to Be **By Jacob Mingus**

When you come into this town
Not one will be wearing a frown
In Columbia there are many ethnicities
This is one of many great communities
Different people working together for a goal
All are playing their own role
In Columbia acceptance is key
We need to act as one large family
Columbia will continue to grow
Harmony, culture and community it will show
The actions of people continue to lead
Columbia's future relies on today's youth indeed
Everyone needs to come and see
That Columbia is the place to be.

West Junior High School
8th Grade, Mrs. Botkin

A Vision of Harmony, Columbia **By Dongjin Yang**

Columbia is a small but elegant city. Columbia is known as the student city, which means the University City because there are many students who are from other countries in the world here. These students' main goal is to study about the advanced knowledge of America, which is really difficult. In my case, I had a hard time learning the English language when I first came to America. It was especially difficult to make American friends because I couldn't communicate with them. When I came here, I tried to talk to them, but I had to use my both hands so they could understand me. Now, I have no problem with communicating, and I have many American friends.

The strong problem for foreign students is learning English as a second language. It is hard for foreign students to explain everything in English to American students. Foreign students normally think what they are going to say in their language first. So to learn about America for foreign students and about other countries in the world for American students, I think there needs to be some events like Asia Day, Europe Day, Food-Sharing Day, etc. Then they could know each other's culture, food, etc. I know that in our school Smithton, there are days celebrating foreign countries, but in my opinion, I think they should also invite each other to their houses. I know that there are many different conflicts going on between American students and foreign students. To solve this problem and bring harmony, I think there needs to be more events for all students to understand each other.

In conclusion, I think Columbia will be one of the best attractions of U.S.A. Many people from countries all over the world will continue to come to Columbia. Columbia will be able to develop and address America as an international city.

Smithton Middle School
7th Grade, Ms. Leslye McCarty

United We Should Be By Parvaneh Dorestani

We are living in one small world,
Yet we stand divided,
We must stand united,
United we are stronger,
United we are much nicer,
We can only gain peace,
By releasing our differences,
Don't say "She's an African"
Think and say "She's a sister to me"
Don't say, "He's a terrorist"
Or "He is my enemy"
Say and believe that "He is an equal, a friend"
When we cast aside,
Differences of race and origin,
We transform into equals,
One unit,
Unified,
Powerful enough to accomplish anything,
If we respect,
Not scorn upon others,
They will return the treatment,
Be good and just to your fellow humans,
We all belong from one God,
The great Almighty creator,
And we all share the same ancestors Adam and Eve,
Do you believe that God the Great,
Would treat a race that he created better than another,
No, He the Almighty wouldn't,
He the most powerful would never abandon,
A race of his creations,
So we must follow His example,
And the teachings of equality from His messengers,
We must come together,
For that is what the almighty ordered,
We must respect differences,
We mustn't classify ourselves into groups,
And when we accomplish harmony
Only then can we truly be in peace,
For it is then when we will realize,
That we are one unit,
One world,
So we could act as one,
And stand united.

Smithton Middle School
8th Grade, Mrs. Jones

The Gift

By Jamela Kimbrough

The power of word was God's given gift.
The power of unity is a power within itself.
And the power of action and justice prevails in all.

The one that realizes this needs not the use of violence,
The one that sees the true power of these natural substances,
Can bring any enemy to his knees;
Not only that but they can control the outcome of any battle.

Dr. King was a prophet,
He was the pure essence of each of these powers.
With them he gave hope to the hopeless.
He gave dignity to his brethren treated like garbage.
He also gave freedom to the black race.

He had a dream,
A dream that all black little boys and girls
Could join hands with little white boys and girls
And sing the Negro anthem.

He dreamed that they could join hands in a black spiritual
And scream the words,
FREE AT LAST, FREE AT LAST, THANK GOD O'MIGHTY. I'M FREE AT LAST.

But this dream, this vision was not solely his; it was God's.
He had sent it down to Dr. King and told him, "Make it be so."
And that's what he made it be.

Dr. King was a messenger, a gift from God,
Because he made it his initiative to take God's will, for all man to be treated equally.
Even though he died young,
He had done his duty, and it was clear that because of this,
His vision, God's vision "It would be so."

Freedom, equality, justice, unity, and love "Would be so."
The cement walls of segregation,
Separating the innocent from the heavenly light.
Shall be shattered, opening the doors for everyone to the promise land.

My Friend **By Armin Mehmedovic**

Zermin, by friend, is a good student, excellent, as a matter of fact. He is also a good friend to have because he will help you with everything including homework. He will let you borrow his money trusting you will return it. His father has died in a war long ago, and he has only a mother and sister and brother. His brother goes to Smithton and is in the sixth grade. Zermin is smarter than me, so when I am stuck with something he can usually help me with whatever it is, to understand it better. Zermin would help anybody that asks him because he feels that if students ask him for something, they expect to get a little help from it.

If more people were like Zermin, then we would have a better community, because all kinds of people in our community would be getting along. He tries to do his best even if he is having an off day. He is nice and polite to his friends, enemies, and even people he does not know. I look up to him as an example of a great person and if everyone, even of different races, religions and colors were like that then there would be no wars, no arguments, and life would go on with leaving everybody's past behind. I wish that someday I can grow up to be like him. He is also a good friend because he goes along with what his friends want to do and leaves what he wants to do. These are all reasons why people need to be like Zermin to change our community.

Smithton Middle School

I Dream a World **By Xavier Braden-Key**

I dream a world
Where there is no homelessness
Or poverty,
Where if you have no home
Someone would offer you
A nice warm bed,
Where money grown on trees
And there is not mine
Just ours.

I dream a world
Where people have the right
To stand up for themselves,
Where no one can say or do a negative thing
And no matter how hard you tried
You could not harm a fly.

West Boulevard Elementary
5th Grade, Jonette Ford

Seeing By Maggie Lowenberg

I see people who walk by a person who is in need, just staring blankly, as if they don't see the problem. I see people who preach of a need of acceptance but only if you believe in their words. I see intelligent people being shut away from society because they are of "different skin color". This is what is wrong with society. Society lives narrow minded. People see differences among other people, cultures, and religions, and think that they are living wrongly. We don't embrace differences, we shun them. When we see these differences and treat these people different this is where the problem develops. We make stereotypes, we treat people as if they weren't equal to us, and we make an effort to socially separate ourselves. Society cannot do this. We cannot continue to be closed minded and ignorant about the variations among cultures, religions and races. We must open their eyes and see that each person is different from the next and be acceptable. If we could accept people for who they are, embrace the differences, society would be such a better place.

I also see people who have dreams yet never make goals to achieve them. I see people who speak of the injustice of society but never make actions to fix the problem. Actions speak louder than words. If we want changes then *we* must be the ones to take actions. We must establish goals and follow through with our goals. We cannot stray either, we must stick to our aspiration until we achieve it. We must think optimistically and convince the rest of society to think optimistically and open minded, then we will achieve.

Rock Bridge High School
11th Grade, Jodi Smith

Diversity in Our World By Amina Basalic

Have you ever seen people that are different than you? Well, I have and I know there are many different cultures, religions, and colors and it makes the world more interesting when we are all different in many ways.

In United State of America or anywhere in the world, if there was only one religion and only one color, then the world would be plain and boring. But when the world is filled with many different cultures, religions, colors and people, then the world is a much more interesting place to live in. Now that everybody is different, then the world is a pretty good place to live in. I know one person that made the difference in the world and peace; his name is Martin Luther King Jr. He made a difference in people; he made us realize it does not matter what color you are, it matters who you are inside.

So we need to treat all people equally and with respect. It doesn't matter who they are or what color they are, the only thing that matters is we all get the same respect from people. When you meet a new person, get to know them better before you say something bad about them, because they all have the same feelings as you do.

Smithton Middle School
7th Grade, Ms. Leslye McCarty

Being Brought to Life, Harmony By Abby Staysa

Found at the Thursday night twilight.
Wandering hippies;
Peace brought to the community
With heads high in the sky,
Flooding the town in tye dye.

Found at the Thursday night twilight.
Peace Nook
Support brought to the community
Differences in races, religion, sex accepted.

Found at the Thursday night twilight.
Street side music, live
In the sunset
Symbolizing our future harmony in the community.
With everybody doing a part,
Thursday night;
Where the vision of harmony is brought to life.

West Junior High School
8th Grade, Ms. Botkin

Blended Colors By Ashley Friel

There's red, orange, blue, green, and purple,
But the color of our skin is different, whether it be
White, pale white, black, brown, or even polka dotted,
But we are all one.
We blend together to make the colors of the rainbow.
As our colors blend I see that the sun is burning our skin
Changing its tone.
We want to see the beauty in our colors, not the sins in our blood.
So if we work together and communicate through our love
For each other, just like a rainbow, blend, but if we do not work together
And forget about how much we care for each other, soon our blended
Colors will no longer blend, but disintegrate
Then we will see the sins in everyone, and how rude and hateful
Everyone can be.
Yet if we become one and work together to become one,
And win this war through life and racism then we will become
Blended Colors!

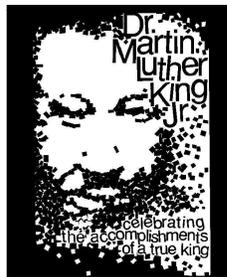
Smithton Middle School
7th Grade, Leslye McCarty

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