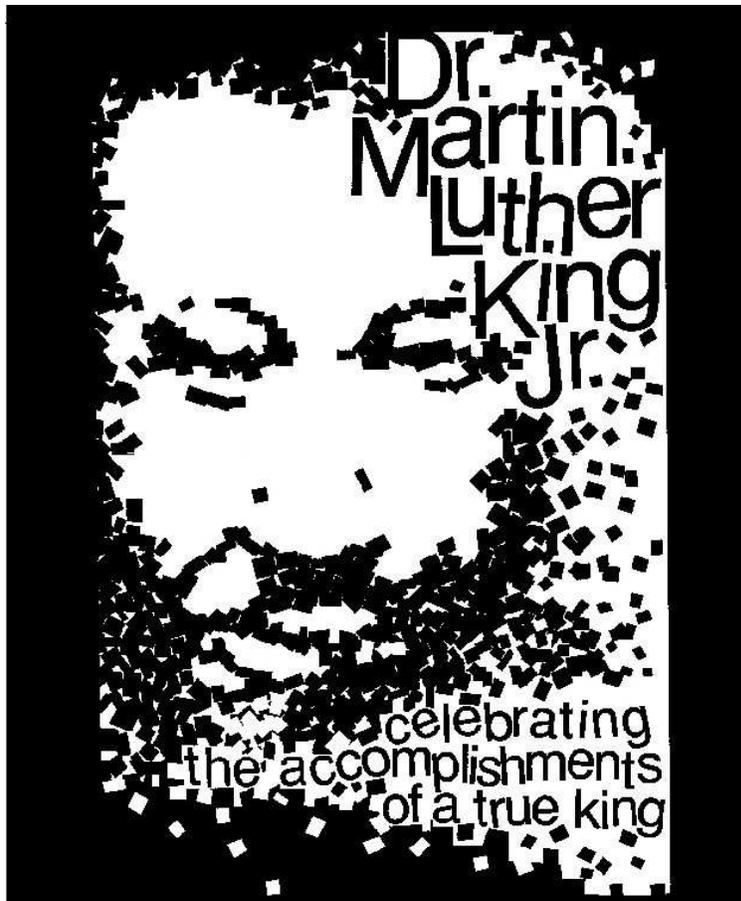


# *The Garden of Humanity: Cultivating a Community of Diversity*



Original Paper Collage by Brooke Vangel, Columbia, Missouri 1995

*Essays by Columbia Students*



**COLUMBIA VALUES DIVERSITY CELEBRATION**

*Thursday, January 17, 2008*



## **Apples and Us**

**By Daphne Yu**

If I had three different colored apples in front of you, one green, one red and one yellow, you could tell me which apple what which color. But, what if I peeled all of the? Could you then tell me which apple was which color? I couldn't. Why? Because apples are apples, just like humans are humans.

Dr. King died, not seeing his dream of human beings being treated fairly, and being judged by their insides, not outside. We are still alive, and have the chance of make Dr. King's dream come true.

When you look at a person, don't just look at the skin color. Take time to see the inside, same in everyone, but yet different. We all have different sweets and sour, softness and hardness.

In Columbia, our community is well-developed. But, just to add a glaze of caramel, we need to think before we act and judge. Get to know the person before you make your decision on who they are. Make new friends and be nice to everyone, despite their skin color.

Today, you're an apple growing on a tree. Tomorrow, you're still an apple growing on a tree. Do you want to be sweet, or sour? Soft or hard? Who you are will reflect your decision.

Smithton Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Pride Team

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## **Columbia**

**By Brandon Lowe**

Like a seed just planted,  
Nothing to see,  
Time passes by,  
Then there's a tree,  
At first there was no one,  
Not even me,

This town started growing,  
Just like the tree,  
So many people,  
Something to see,  
A still- growing city,  
Full of diversity.

Rock Bridge High School, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Smith

# Extraordinary

By Shana McClain

One day as was walking,  
I stopped for something that startled me  
I sat and looked at the flowers  
They all looked so beautiful  
There were  
Yellow daisies,  
Purple lilacs,  
Orange carnations,  
Red roses.

Not one flower was the same  
For that's where the beauty came in.  
Some were big,  
Some were small,  
Some had 4 petals,  
While others had 3,  
Some had thorns,  
Some were smooth.

One day as I was walking,  
I stopped for something that startled me  
I sat and looked at the flowers  
They all looked so beautiful  
There were people of different colors,  
Red,  
Yellow,  
Black,  
White,

Not one person was the same  
For that's where the beauty came in,  
Some were tall,  
Some were short,  
Some had long hair,  
While others had none,  
Some had light skin.  
Some had dark skin,  
For as we all are Diversified  
No one is the same  
We are all unique And Special in our own way  
For every Person and every Flower  
That's different  
It's what makes this world  
Extraordinary!

Jefferson Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Paula Donoho

## **After the Rain**

**By Salsabeel Alshaar**

After the rain I look up at the sky

People of all colors backgrounds and race had had stopped what

They're doing and I ask why?

That day in Columbia everything stopped for a while.

That moment I looked up and on my face formed a smile.

A beautiful rainbow formed over the city! When I looked around me

I saw something as pretty.

All colors of people standing beside me All sharing the same view

that would soon fade away.

As one rainbow faded the other one stayed to grow in Columbia, our garden, our city.

Something so beautiful, something so pretty.

Islamic School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Lina Wahid

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## **Garden of Humanity**

**By Nomin-Erdene Jagdagdorj**

Dr. King's dream of peace, justice, and equality is an ambitious one. It's a goal that everyone should try for. There are many different people in Columbia. Luckily, most of these people can get along with each other well.

As members of this diverse community, we should all work to keep Columbia growing. A city of many races, religions, cultures, and opinions. We should respect others and their opinions. We should also honor their beliefs and accept everyone for who they are, even if we don't quite believe the same things.

Our community is a lot like a garden. Each individual is a special part of the garden. Each person makes the garden better. Just as a garden needs soil, sun, rain, and hard work to grow, our community needs acceptance, respect and cooperation. All of these components put together result in this wonderfully diverse place to live.

Columbia is full of many different groups of people. We may come from different places and believe in different things, but we can still get along and live together in this extraordinary we call home.

Smithton Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Pride Team

# Learning New Ways

By Mariah Miranda

We should learn to face the fact  
Our differences are not what we lack  
But our compassion and respect for one another  
May we learn to find friendship with each other

Chorus:

Let live, and let go  
Leave space for peace to grow  
For life out greatest deed  
And out love is all we need

Verse:

Maybe you should realize  
That this is the only way to go  
That this is the moment we've been waiting for

Let live, and let go  
Leave space for peace to grow  
For life out greatest deed  
And out love is all we need

Verse:

Push away the hatred  
So we can finish what we started  
Not worrying about all that is unguarded  
For we need to figure out all that needs to be wielded

Ooo,

Let live, and let go  
Leave space for peace to grow  
For life out greatest deed  
And out love is all we need

Love is all we need....  
All we need...

West Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Fullerton

## **Diversity**

**By Jensen Roberts**

Diversity is something we all need to know about. It's when people of all races, culture and religion are brought together by fun things like festivals, and parks. We have a problem and I think I have the idea to bring people together.

When I go to the park, I see people of all races, cultures, and religions. I always try to make new friends. When I do try to learn their cultures, languages and religion. And be nice to them. It's being a good friend. Socializing to different races, cultures, and religions is good because we can talk about their favorite things and people. (ask) if they have pets brothers or sisters.

When I go to the Twilight Festival, I see people everywhere at booths, lunch, walking around everywhere. And guess what? None of them are the same. And there are like a billion people. I try to find people who dress different and talk different. Bringing people together, and talking to others is good to talk about anything or everything.

If everyone respected others, there would be less judgment of color, language, culture, and religion. It will decrease violence and racism. Dr. King would be so happy if he knew that we fulfill his dream. It would be good to keep people out of jail because of violence. Who wouldn't be happy about that?

Well, it's time for me to end now but I you to know I hope Dr. King's Dream will be fulfilled and we, the world, will have peace.

Rock Bridge Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

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## **Together**

**By Jamie Hinners**

Together, Indifferent  
Something we all know  
Together we stand  
And together we grow.

A garden of people  
From our hands to our toes  
We stay a community  
Through heat and snow.

In this garden  
Everyone is right  
And to see out community  
Will be such a sight.

So we will stand  
In the morning light  
And sit together  
In the evening night.

Jefferson Jr. High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Donoho

## **A Blue Flower among a Patch of Red Roses**

**By Abdul Rahman**

Imagine yourself among a patch of flowers growing in a large garden. You are the only flower that is blue. All the other flowers are red and pink. The red and pink flowers need soil, water, sunlight, and someone who cares for them. You, the blue flower, need the same ingredients to live a decent life. Even if there was a cactus in the middle of the garden, it will need the same elements to become a successful plant. After looking around, you realize that all the flowers in the garden have the same length and beauty.

Being different does not mean that we cannot get along well. Being different means that we are able to learn from each other and gain ideas about life through peaceful cooperation. Learning from each other helps us have a better idea about how to deal with different things that may go on in our life. If we are different from the people around us, we can always acknowledge and recognize those differences to celebrate one another. By celebrating our differences, we can live peacefully wherever life may take us.

This is exactly why God created us all different; to love one another, respect other differences, and to recognize positive deeds of different people.

Islamic School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Lina Wahid

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## **A Dream**

**By Tessa Vellek**

I woke up this morning and remembered my dream  
The people of the world were working together as a team.

The world is like a garden, filled with flowers of all kinds;  
We are all unique people with varying feelings and diverse minds.

We each have different skin and a different face;  
But what is important is in the heart not our culture, creed or race.

On the Massai Mara the men have competitions to jump high;  
While down the street my neighbor plays basket ball 'til evening is nigh.

I met a young girl who answered questions in a one-room school;  
She's a lot like my friends who use learning as a tool.

Even though we are all different we are even more alike;  
It's simple – Some children play marbles while others ride a bike.

The world should be governed by all people, a form of democracy;  
Where all persons are treated justly – without prejudice or hypocrisy.

It's amazing how a dream in the middle of the night;  
Can make the world beautiful and everything all right.

West Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Botkin

# Garden of Harmony

By Therese Spollen

Stretch out your hands,  
Take up the call.  
Extend a welcome  
To one and all.

This is the place  
Where everyone can be.  
This is the place,  
The garden of Harmony.

Orchids from the East,  
And lilies from the West.  
All are welcome here  
The place they grow best.

Daisies from the North,  
and violets from the South.  
All have heard of this place  
by word of mouth.

Scents mingle in the air  
Some familiar, some strange  
But it doesn't matter to anyone  
Just how they are arranged.

Sweet is next to sour  
And tart is twined with honey.  
No one is excluded here,  
Where the days are sunny.

The scents grow rich  
As they mix together,  
Forming a bouquet  
Oblivious of harsh weather.

This is the place  
Where everyone can be.  
This is the place,  
The Garden of Harmony.

Welcome home.

Rock Bridge High School, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Cone

## **Columbia Values Diversity**

**By Cynthia Martinez**

People should treat everybody the same because we look different but are the same in the inside. People have many religions, culture, and opinions. Some people are Mexicans and some people are Japanese. Some people are different then Mexicans, Japanese, and some are different than other people that live in different state, but all of us are still the same no matter what we look like.

People need water, food, and other things, too, just like plants need all those things. Plants look different and smell different. Same with people. There shouldn't be any wars or fights because that just makes things worse than it already is. I think that all of us need to live together peacefully to make Columbia a better place to live in.

If kids are different they should be friends because they are the same in different ways. It makes them special when they are different. People should live together.

Blue Ridge Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Truesdell

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## **The Importance of Diversity**

**By Marco DeLaRosa Downing**

Diversity in a community is a phenomenal thing. It helps everyone learn to be accepting of all people. To maintain a diverse community we must be accepting of others and instead of saying what is different say what we share in common. We all share common traits and an inner connection. In addition we are really just the sam; are all people who work and have a family and initially strive to survive. There are many reasons why diversity enriches the community.

Another thing a community needs to support a diverse community is a feeling of fitting in because people won't want to come to live if the community itself is mean and dangerous. The community in itself needs to help support everyone no matter what race, color, or religion. To maintain a good diverse community you have to work at it, it may be hard to understand others but you must. A good community takes work and if you want it full of rich cultures then you have to make it what you want.

A diverse community helps to fulfill Dr. Martin Luther King's dream. It does because a diverse community is an accepting community. It is filled with people trying to help others and thinking about the overall picture not about just what they want. A community that is diverse is a community where everyone can learn and further themselves in the knowledge of peace and cultures. Dr. King's dream was of everyone being equal and that is what a diverse community is.

West Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Darter

# The World is Like A Garden

By Molly Krueger

The world is like a garden  
Wonderful and free  
Each of us are different  
As unique as we can be

We each are different flowers  
Beautiful and bright  
But even though we're different  
The difference is all right

All our different colors  
Make us who we are  
We share the same soil  
And the sunlight near and far

The golden sun shines on us  
The rain falls on us too  
And even though we're different  
We all share the sky blue

Together we can make  
A beautiful garden  
And when the cold air comes  
Our ground will never harden

If we all stay together  
And treat each other right  
Our differences will help us  
And shed a brand new light

Without our separate colors  
Our garden is boring  
But each of us are different  
And our colors are soaring

The difference keeps us going  
It's the beauty of our life  
Diversity helps us all out  
Inequality causes strife

West Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Darter

# The Garden of Humanity: Cultivating a Community of Diversity

## Britany Montgomery

Everyone can agree that autumn is a beautiful season, full of color and glamour. The season is one of a peculiar uniqueness, being that it is the only season that allows those of us that don't already know, to see the actual difference in all the trees.

In the spring all the trees look alike. Maybe one is darker than the other or maybe one is thicker but they all look the same. They all have some type of green leaf and they all have a trunk of some shade of brown, but for the uneducated, they all look nearly the same.

It is only in the fall season when we can see the beautiful reds, gold's, and yellows of every diverse tree.

What I'm trying to get at is , all people , like trees are unique. We all are from different places and are come in different shades. It is only until we allow others to see our inner selves that we begin to show our true colors and our real differences.

We are all people and we are all different. The only thing that separates us are the things we allow to get in the way. There is no reason for the trees to not get along with their millions of miles of roots intertwining together to create the beautiful relationship that are our forest and parks and backyards. Where would we be without the trees to give us oxygen, keep us warm in the winter, and cool in the summer?

Same goes for where we would be without the beautiful diverse cultures of the many races that make up the glorious place we call our home, Earth. Where would the world be without the rich cultures of Mexico or China? With out the amazing influences of Africa and India?

The world would not be the place it is today if everything was the same , if our seasons never changed and we were stuck in spring forever, what kind of world would that be? Well the answer is simple, a boring one. So embrace our diversity and live in the spirit of Autumn.

Rockbridge High School, Grade 11  
Ms. Black-Cone

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## Best Friends

By Saja Necibi

You are black  
and I am white  
You like day  
and I like night  
You like dogs  
and I like cats  
You're scared of bugs  
and I'm scared of rats  
We're very different  
as you can see  
But we're best friends  
The best that friends can be

Mill Creek Elementary, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Crews

## **A Beautiful Garden**

**By Jude El-Buri**

Why do we have different skin color? Why do we have different hair and eye color? Why do we have different ethnicities, religions, cultures, and beliefs? Why? Does it matter?

No. Aren't we all human beings? Don't we all need the same things: food, water, and shelter? Don't we all strive to do good, to be successful, to achieve? So why? Why can't we have tolerance for each other?

If we would all just think about those questions for a little bit, we would realize how silly it is that we have problems with those things. Have we does what Dr. Martin Luther King would have wanted us to do? We have improved, but I still think we can do better. I believe that when we harvest from our garden, we will get a garden full of beautiful flowers.

Well, let me explain. Maybe that can shine a light on our garden of cultures. Every color, every flower is different. Although they are different, they all need sun, rain, and soil just as humans need food, water, and shelter.

Having so many different cultures, beliefs, and ethnicities is the nutrition our garden needs. With that, our flowers bloom and glitter in the sunshine. To us the world – your life is all based on our differences. Without difference, we would have a garden of black and white flowers. But with all of our differences, we have beautiful colors – red, orange, yellow – all kinds of shapes and sizes so, which garden is better? The one with the same type of flower in black and white? Or is it the garden with different types of flowers in all colors and sizes? The colorful garden holds all of our difference in one place. The garden of Columbia. And we flowers are different shapes and colors. So, it's up to you to decide which garden you want to have and be part of it as a whole.

Now we can fulfill our dreams, achieve, be successful. Now we can strive to do good, learn and play. Now we can live in a place of justice, peace and fairness. Now our garden can have hope and love, peace and kindness. Now our garden can flourish into the best garden it can be. The Columbia garden of difference. We can make this world better together.

Smithton Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Pipes

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## **Garden of Humanity**

**By Fatimah Krgo**

Just like roses need sunlight to grow and be beautiful, people too need joy and laughter. If people did not have laughter, the world would be so dark. It does not matter if you are black, white, Christian or Muslim we still can be one community. If people were all the same, with the same skin color and the same clothes, life would be boring. Because we are different we can bring new things to the world, and we can learn new things from each other. We can all keep our garden clean and beautiful by making everybody welcome and treating everybody with respect. We need to start looking at people like beautiful flowers in a garden.

Mary Paxton Keeley Elementary, 4th Grade  
Mrs. Janet Kieffer

## Garden of Humanity

By Zaynab Hussam

Columbia is a garden of humanity. We need care, love, awareness, and understanding. There are African-Americans, Caucasians, Arabs, Indians, Asians, and many more. Just as there are petunias, roses, pansies, daises, many more as well. The flowers share the soil. We share the same Earth. No one is the same. We should respect peoples differences and encourage them. We shouldn't judge people by their skin color but by their character. We need to work together and help each other no matter how they look. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once quoted, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comforts and convenience, but where he stands at time of challenge and controversy." It basically means that when things are easy, you should have enough character and when things get tough, you should still have enough character. We need to help fulfill Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of having his four children live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I think diversity is great. Do you?

Smithton Middle School  
Pride Team

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## Our Garden

By Penny Komes

Gardens are  
A system of things depending on others  
One plant needs the rain, sun, soil, and love  
It cannot grow alone  
Because the truth is that it needs so much just to get by  
Know all of this we can say that our world is a garden  
We are all dependent upon one another  
In the most humane way we need each other  
Not just for necessities  
But for the touch of human life  
To know that even through everything  
We are all on common ground  
That we don't stand alone  
Yes we are all different  
But have you seen a garden that isn't?  
Not one flower is the same as the next  
No person is either  
The beauty is gone when it is all commonplace  
We need it all  
The rain of religion  
The diverse soil  
Everything we are  
Is in each other

Jefferson Junior High School, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Spate-Smith

## **Diversity**

**By Jiwon Kwon**

Columbia has different races, religions, cultures, and opinions. Sometimes, people fight because they do not understand and respect others' differences. But we cannot exist even one minute without help from other people. So, I think we should accept the harmony people bring instead of the differences. In this meaning, Columbia can continue to grow as a diverse community through tolerance and the opportunity to recognize others' differences and understand them.

In order to grow as a community and continue to flourish as a diverse population, the community needs to treat everyone equal. Equality can be reached through understanding, love and respect. I think even though people appear different to each other they can still be friends and live together. I am from Korea, so I look different from others and speak different from others. But my classmates and friends treat me the same because we are all alike. A beautiful garden has lots of different plants, but they share common ground. They all need soil, sun, rain, and a little hard work to grow. Just like a garden, Columbia has lots of different people to make it beautiful. We can each offer something unique, but our common ground is the city of Columbia. So, I think people can live in Columbia in harmony, even though we have differences from each other.

A diverse community can allow everyone to understand differences and to actually practice them. Diversity and differences are what make Columbia special. Of course, it is usually easier to be peaceful when people have the same opinions, religions, and cultures. Where there are differences, I think people should try even harder to get along. If people respect, understand each other's differences, people will make a very beautiful, peaceful, and colorful Columbia.

Blue Ridge Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Truesdell

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## **The Meaning of Life**

**By Jessica Ginter**

A garden with flowers,  
A community with people.  
Flowers start from seed,  
People start from birth.  
Flowers grow with water,  
People grow with love.

Both need someone to care for them,  
Help them grow,  
And nurture them.  
Both start from common ground,  
And grow with time,  
Some live longer than others.

Although they look nothing alike,  
People are very similar to flowers.  
They are both unique  
And beautiful in their own way.

West Junior High School, 8th grade  
Mrs. Michelle Jones

# Diversity

By Molly Reed

It stares you in the face everyday,  
Piercing through your veins, burning like a fire  
That has the ability  
To crumble an entire city.  
Once it looks in ones eyes,  
They become transparent.  
It sees through everybody.  
Reaching out go grab anyone if it can.  
We plead for  
As we pull from inside ourselves to find it, but  
Racism is as strong as the  
Iceberg that sank the Titanic.  
It's hatred drowns everybody, it's in each soul  
And it laughs at us and at  
It's refusal to leave us alone.  
But what  
Happen if those eyes opened to  
A new world?

diversity

would

One where people could  
Stand together.  
The soil could be planted into the  
Garden of Humanity.  
Forever growing  
Taller, stronger.  
No longer would we see blacks,  
Whites,  
Living so pessimistically.  
We'd all  
And the streets would be cleaned,  
Altered to the point where all could return,  
Joyfully and gracefully.  
We could forget the words that killed  
Heart and answer those rhetorical questions.  
One would stare differently at the new groomed  
No longer would we hate,  
We'd love.  
Being forgotten,  
Would disappear.

mend

the

Universe,

“alone”

Everything would be much more glorious  
If those flowers planted  
Grew all to be different colors,  
All standing  
But for us to pull through,  
To grow and change,  
It only takes time.

together.

West Junior High School, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mr. Fagan

## **Columbia Values Diversity**

**By Angela Zhang**

Although a garden has many different types of flora and fauna, all the plants within a single garden share the same common ground. They share the same soil, sun, and water-the same resources. They live on the same ground, in harmony. Together, all the different flowers flourish together and create a masterpiece of nature.

This garden is like our society today. Here in Columbia, we have a diverse community full of people of different races, ethnicities, religions, and beliefs. We live together, sharing this city, but we do so in harmony. At school, looking around a cafeteria, you'll see children of many different countries eating together. At my own lunch table, for example, you'll see people from nations across the world. We have a girl from Sri Lanka, I'm from China, a friend of ours is from Sudan, and of course we have classic "Americans". We're from nations scattered across the globe, yet we come together to dine, talk, and just generally hang out as friends.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that one day his children would be judged for who they were, not what they were. He had a dream that all children would live together in peace; that children of different races would merge collectively as friends. The diverse community we have today in Columbia helps fulfill Dr. King's dream of peace because, as he once hoped, the children of today generally are judged by their actions and words; not their apparent race. Dr. King's dream, that he died fighting for, has finally come true for us today.

A garden with but a single type of flower is boring and not aesthetically pleasing to the eye; a garden with a large variety of different flowers of all different colors, height, and form is much more beautiful. Such as it is with Columbia today-we have people of many different backgrounds, who all live together and make this lovely city.

West Junior High School, 8th Grade  
Mrs. Darter

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## **Growing Garden**

**By Julie Runyan**

If Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was growing a garden of diversity and peace in Columbia, would his crops grow? In order for the garden to grow everyone in Columbia needs to be open-minded; we need acceptance and much dedication.

To be open-minded we need to always be ready to think and learn. Columbia has to be ready to help each other; we have to think out-of-the-box. We can't just be the same as everyone else; we have to be our self.

It is very hard to have acceptance; it takes a lot of patience. It should not matter if who you work with, sit next to, or even walk past has brown, black, white, yellow, red or orange skin. We all have to accept people for who they truly are.

Columbia needs dedication; dedication means hard work. One has to give it everything he/she has- his/her very best work. Even if one should fall he/she has to get up and walk again. Try after try, NEVER GIVE UP.

Dr. Martin said these words long ago, but we should still be living them every day. It should not matter what color of skin people have, we can all be friends. I hope Columbia will always be a growing garden with many different things to grow in.

Smithton Middle School, 6th grade  
Ms. McCarty

## **Different Beliefs**

**By Ahmad Diab**

There are different people from different countries and states but we all are still the same. I think that no one should make fun of other people's religion. We have different beliefs and different languages but we are still the same in many different ways.

Some people are from Palestine and some people are from Korea but we all may learn and speak English. Columbia has many rules and laws that make us feel safe. People in Columbia are nice to each other, like back then there was slavery and discrimination against people of color but now there isn't. Besides, people respect each other so if they see poor people they won't make fun of them instead they will help them. Furthermore, if someone did a mistake people will teach him and be tolerant and patient.

We should not call people names just because they are bad at something. We have to work together, for instance people in the food bank work together to give food to poor people. Also people are responsible of protecting their environment like they will not litter or throw nails in the street that might endanger others safety. Flowers can't bloom without water. If all people work hand by hand and helped each other, Columbia will continue to bloom just like the flowers.

Islamic School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Lina Wahid

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## **A Man Named Martin Luther King**

**By Lena Piazza-Leman**

A man named Martin Luther King,  
Did so much of genius things.

When African Americans saw no light,  
He stepped up to stop the fight.

And as the people stuck to their ways,  
He worked even harder to give us better days.

Dr. King was shown brutal hate,  
But those evil souls were just too late.

He gave so many a great and clever speech,  
He showed us all that a fair society, wasn't all out of reach.

But before his dream was fulfilled,  
During his speech, he was brutally killed.

An enemy used a heavily loaded gun,  
But the evolution had only just begun.

Today we remember his wisely words,  
And spread our wings as newly-born peace-birds.

We should all be grateful to Martin Luther King,  
Because harmony he dreamed of, and harmony he did bring.

Smithton Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Smith

## **The Garden**

**By Kristen Wright**

Robust oaks spring from the center of the garden;  
Fall cast ifs spectrum over every leaf and twig.  
The hand of creation painted all foliage in a magnificent pallet;  
Green. red, gold,  
Every color a particular hue, a unique shade  
Canvassing the ground of our city.

Ivy hails the sun's rays with every green leaf  
Supported by its companion,  
The silent yew whose limbs lift the vine beyond to a new potential.  
The rose bushes, blushing in the crimson glow of noontide,  
Their soft petals entwined among a blackberry bush.  
The rose's thorns hidden masterfully by its ally's thick leaves.  
Both ebony and scarlet act as gems to be stolen by the retreating sunlight.

Various plants of various heritage adorn this garden.  
Each plant is a rare specimen of life;  
A gift grown to grace the soil of our town.  
Each plant is drawn with a raw dye,  
but each is painted with the same brush to create the masterpiece,  
the Da Vinci, that is Columbia.  
A segregation of these colors would destroy the picture of life they have together  
created,  
And destroy the rainbow on earth we have come together to erect...

As all light fades from the overlooking sky,  
The colors soon fade into darkness,  
All golds, reds, and blues,  
Yellows and Safire hues fold into the color of night.  
Now all the shapes that were once so defined, mold together to make  
One vast movement  
One form,  
One community.

Rock Bridge High School, 11th grade  
Ms. Smith & Mr. Egan

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## **Garden of Humanity**

**By Hannah Chen**

Columbia is like a garden. We are like butterflies fluttering among the flowers. We are wearing costumes from different cultures. We believe in different things. Dr. King's dreams have come true but will it stay that way? That depends on what you do!

Paxton Keeley Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Kieffer

## **What I think a Garden of Humanity Is**

**By Tenea Henderson**

Columbia is like a garden. There are different kinds of people just like there are different kinds of plants. People are from different places, they have different skin color, and they are completely different on the inside and out. There are different kinds of plants like trees, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. They are still plants, but they all look different.

People are different from others because not everyone can be the same. If everyone looked the same, talked the same, and acted the same then that is a big problem. If that all happened, then no one could tell who is who. Also nobody likes to be the same because they like to have their own personality. Sometimes people think they can be whoever they want, but they can't because everybody has a specialty and a personality.

Columbia needs new people so we can learn more, but what we don't need is someone hurting or criticizing someone about how they look. We need new people so we can learn more things at school that we don't know. And we don't need people hurting or criticizing someone about how they look because that is racism. So if we can put an end to racism then our Garden of Humanity would be the most beautiful garden anyone has ever seen!

Blue Ridge Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Truesdell

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## **How to Fulfill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream of Peace**

**By Lisa Lantz**

Have you ever thought you can fulfill someone's dream? I have when I read about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his dream of peace and harmony. I learned that if we try, we can all work together to fulfill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream. One way is to not make fun of people's culture. Another way is to make friends with people who look different from you to see what they are like. Finally, we can try not to judge people by their skin color.

One way to not make fun of people's culture is to read about it to see what it's like. Another way is to ask someone about their culture to see what it's like. You can hang out with someone who has the same culture as you. You can also think of what you'll feel like if someone made fun of your culture. Finally, you can get to know a person with a different culture than you.

One way to make friends with people who look different than you is to introduce yourself. Another way is to greet people. You can help people if they are confused. You can also hang out with people to make friends. Finally, you can try to talk to people to make friends.

One way to not judge people by their skin color is to get to know that person before you judge them. Another way is to hang out with someone who looks different from you. You can include someone to play with you who has different skin color. You can also think of what you'll feel like if someone made fun of your skin color. Finally, you can play with someone who has the same skin color as you.

In conclusion, I learned that if we work together with different looking people we can fulfill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream.

West Blvd. Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Dr. Brian Herndon

# The Gardener and the Garden

By Daniel Dissmore

There once was a garden of vegetables and fruits  
It was owned by a gardener and his recruits  
There were all kinds of vegetables  
Like cucumbers and celeries  
And there were lots of fruits  
Like apples and cranberries

One day the apples and pears got into a fight  
Over who should get the most sunlight  
Soon the bananas were drawn in  
Then the plums and the cherries  
A war in the garden was about to begin  
Next thing you know, in came the berries

But the fruits weren't the only ones having a battle  
The vegetables fight over dirt was making the ground rattle  
The carrots and potatoes engaged in underground warfare  
While the tomatoes and cucumbers fought on the ground  
When the gardener saw this he came to declare  
"A solution to this war must quickly be found"

The gardener called together all of his recruits  
He said, "What should we do about these vegetables and fruits"  
All day long they thought and talked about a plan  
A plan that would end the war and bring peace to the garden  
Finally at that evening when the sunset began  
The men finished the plan and got ready to put it into action

The men had decided that equality was the solution  
And so they put their design into execution  
All the fruits and vegetables would get equal shares  
Of water, dirt, and sunlight to keep everyone pleased  
Success was quickly gained and now the gardener declares  
That equality will make things right and everyone appeased

West Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Botkin

# How to bring people together?

By Mohana Ratnaparkhe

How to complete Martin Luther King's dream? Cooperating, working together, collaborating are some helpful ways to bring cultures together, and fulfilling Martin Luther King's dream.

But the question to everyone is "how?" Well there are many ways to do it. Have a open mind to make friends, to be willing to have a chance to get to know others. You do not want to say or hear the words "I can't do it", because you can, and you know it, you just need to show it. You want to be open to meeting new people. You should make friend with people from other cultures by understanding their feelings. Try sitting with them at lunch try to figure out what are the similarity between you and the person who is sitting right next to you.

Go to their homes. Try to learn their lifestyles. Learn what they eat. Try to learn about them, their family's lifestyles, and everything else about them. Then tell them how you feel. Invite them to your home. Those are great ways to make friends with other cultures.

You should learn their languages, how they sing, don't make fun. Look at them as a person that is not just a member of a group. Look for people who need more friends, and just like I said try to know them

How do you know them at school if you can't go to their homes? Well ask them questions. The main questions are: What is your name? Where were you born? And where are you from? And you can just add some more things to make the topic interesting.

Don't judge them by how they look, where they are from, and what they like or dislike. Judge them by thinking if you are comfortable with them and if they have an attitude

There are lots of differences and you have to deal with them, but first deal with the similarities.

Smithton Middle School, 6th grade  
Mrs. McCarty

**In the Garden of Diversity**  
**By Meganne Eaton**

In the garden of diversity  
We try to live together  
We all live on the soil  
Of the great and diverse land

We all are different colors  
We all have different names  
We all are very different  
But one thing stays the same

Our love for each other  
Unites us, every one  
So together we can share  
The knowledge of our worth

The soil that we're planted in  
I know that's made of love  
The sun that we need to shine  
Is the influence that we need to follow

We all are different colors  
We all have different names  
We all are very different  
But one thing stays the same

No matter what our race  
No matter if we're poor  
We all live here together  
So we can love even more

The rain that makes us want to love  
Is the instinct that was born  
All it takes to grow this garden  
Is a little hard work as well

We need to pay attention  
And be careful with our words  
All it takes is one bent plant  
To make our garden mused

So when a good deed comes your way  
Don't hesitate to give one back  
For each good deed we give today  
Ten-fold will be reaped  
Just wait for tomorrow  
When you will see  
Just how much your little piece  
Helped our garden of diversity

West Junior High School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Mrs. Darter

# Beautiful Diversity Circle

By Mahogany Thomas

Cultivating diversity is a magnificent thing,  
After all, it was a dream of Dr. King.  
To cultivate more diversity we can all help out,  
By simply changing our daily routes.

We can celebrate others,  
By recognizing their day.

Not ruining their self-esteem  
because of their language, religion, or race.  
Although we may look different and have different beliefs,  
One thing that's for sure is that we all have needs.

In order to survive we must have each other,  
Which will let us build up the power and joy to continue on living.

In order to start we need to all join hands,  
And put aside our differences so we can all move up another level.

Our community is constantly growing,  
But we need to take that as a time for more togetherness.

And be excited, because as we grow,

Realize we are not only growing in size but in a spiritual bond within each other.

This bond can not be broken, however instead it can always be expanded,  
Because with every loving hand it touches another bad soul turned for the better.

Just remember a circle filled with differences has inner beauty as well as out,

But a circle filled with similarities only on has beauty on the out.

Dr. King's dream is important  
and is something we should all be apart of.

So don't sit around and hate others,  
Instead become a part of the beautiful diversity circle.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade  
Mrs. Smith

## The Garden Of Humanity

By Humera Sultana Lodhi

When I see the U.S. today, I see it as a blossoming and beautiful garden. In it, there are many different flowers blending together. Everyday a new flower blooms and it is soon mixed into the crowd. Also everyday a flower passes away. The flowers care for one another and love each other. There are three very special things about this garden. The first is that each of these flowers is unique in their own way. The second is that the garden is made up of very different types of flowers. And the last is that each flower is a person.

The U.S.A was not always like it is today. There was a time not so long ago when people of the U.S. would look down upon people who were different than them. At that time, many white people did not want African Americans to live with them. Of course none of the African Americans wanted to be treated badly. However, there were only a few who voiced, and showed with actions, how they wanted to be treated. One man had a dream, a big dream that would change people's lives. That man was Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. King's dream was that he wanted everybody to love one another and treat one another equally regarding everything. Eventually his dream did become a reality. I think if Martin Luther King Jr. were to see the U.S. from a bird's eye view, what he would see would make him cry to seven heavens out of happiness!. I think he would see people of different cultures, religions, and races getting along. He would see people helping one another through hard times. He would not see people being segregated or treated differently because of their race. He would not see people being laughed at because of their color.

As my teacher once said, "The sun offers warmth and light to a garden. Without it plants, animals, even humans can't survive. And without it, there would be total darkness." I thought very deeply about what she had said. I have come to the conclusion that the sun of our garden is love. Without love there would be no warmth or light. Without love we would be in total darkness and misery. If Dr. King were to look at us today, he would see that we do have love. I think he could easily say we have a sun in our garden. But it is easy to lose our sun. If we do not continue to care for one another and help each other through hard times, we will lose our love; and therefore lose our sun. And without the sun our garden will perish.

In our garden there is also soil. In other gardens the soil is where the plant finds shelter. In our garden it is not quite like that. The soil in our garden is respect. Soil is one of the most important aspects of a garden. Without soil the flowers would not be able to live. In our garden it is the same. Without respect, we would not be able to live. In the time of Martin L. King, many white people did not have any respect for the African Americans. Many white people taunted the African Americans and treated them with rudeness. Now it is not like that. Everybody treats each other with respect. If Dr. King were still alive he would see that we have made a great improvement in being respectful to one another. The soil again like the sun is easy to lose. If you dislike somebody and feel like saying something mean to them, just stop and bite your tongue. I'm not only saying this to other kids but to adults and myself as well.

Besides the sun and the soil there are worms in every garden including ours. In most gardens worms are decomposers. The worms to me seem as if they care that the flowers had good soil so they can live. So when I put this all together I think that the worm in our garden is care. Now, we care for one another and make sure not to upset someone's feelings. We take care of the poor, the needy and the sick. In Martin Luther

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King's time the rich did not often care for the poor, the healthy did not often care for the sick, and white people hurt African American people's feelings. If Dr. King was to look at us now he would be proud to see the changes we have made in our society and how much we care now. If we do not care for one another we will easily demolish because like the soil without the worms we, the flowers will not get the nutrients from the soil since the worms aren't decomposing.

There is one more very important aspect in any garden. Of course, the water! Without water the flowers from any garden would surely die. The water in the gardens keeps the flowers alive. It keeps living organisms from dying so it keeps peace. And that is exactly what the water is in our garden, peace. Without peace there is violence, war, and worst of all death. Right now we are not killing each other because of race, ethnicity, or culture. We are striving to keep each other alive. That is the job of many people such firemen and policemen. Back in the time of Dr. King that was not what was happening. African American's were being killed or being put to jail for something as small as whistling or sitting at the front of bus. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated for nothing. If Martin Luther King Jr. was here today he would be so happy that we are at peace with ourselves in the U.S.

Of course, there were many white people also, who supported Martin Luther King Jr. Without the support of other people Martin Luther King Jr. would not have been able to convince the U.S. about what he said. This does not make him any less brilliant or more brilliant. Nobody can accomplish anything without a little bit of help. That help might be a kind word but it could turn out to be as big a help as managing a rally.

In conclusion any nation will suffer greatly without love, respect, care and peace. Martin Luther King Jr. helped teach us that. He also helped teach us that we are all equal in every single way. We are a diverse country. That is what makes us a unique country. Without diversity we can not survive. It is the key to a fantastic country or garden. In the time of Martin Luther King Jr. the U.S. was not as good as a country as it is now. There was not much love, respect, care, peace or diversity as there is today. It was not as beautiful a garden as it is today. I hope it will remain like this forever. I think Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud of our country today and like me would hope for it to stay the same.

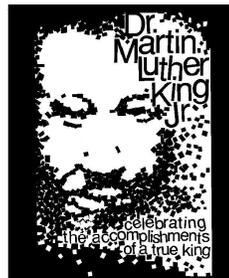
Mill Creek Elementary, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Pam Brown

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