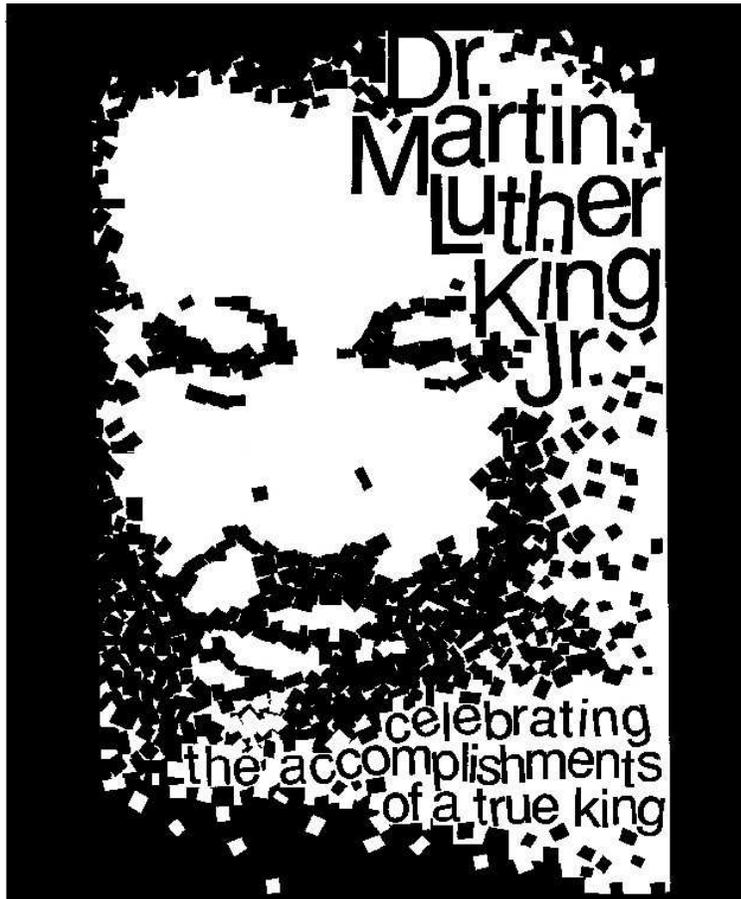


Columbia Values Diversity: This We Believe



Original Paper Collage by Brooke Vangel, Columbia, Missouri 1995

Essays by Columbia Students



COLUMBIA VALUES DIVERSITY CELEBRATION

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Diversity

By Michael Godas

Diversity can be seen everywhere.
Integrating everyone's specialness.
Valuing each other's uniqueness.
Everyone is different.
Respecting everyone's heritage.
Standing up for yourself.
Independently seeking diverse relationships with others.
Taking everyone's feelings into consideration.
Yearning for people to grow and learn about each other.

Interpreting different holidays and religions.
Never judging people because of their beliefs.

Culture is everywhere.
Observing each other.
Languages are different.
Understanding that we all are different.
Making friends without judging people.
Be yourself.
Incorporating each other's ideas together.
Accepting all people.
Taking steps to understand diversity.
Happiness is all we need.
In it together as one community.
Supporting each other

Working towards respecting each other
Every difference counts

Believe in everyone's differences.
Everybody accepting each other for who they are.
Loving one another
Including each and every one
Exercise your brain to learn about different cultures.
Very sensitive to everybody's feelings
Expecting likeness for all humanity

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

Diversity
By Asmo Mohamed

Many friends
Black, brown, yellow, and white
Working and learning together in school
Different skin, different languages
Same heart.

Blue Ridge Elementary, 5th Grade
Ms. Truesdell/Mr. Hurtado

Thinking About You
By Neil Cathro

All the people
Made me laugh, made me cry
Went on a journey
Heard you coming
Standing in the rain
Thinking about you, Made me think
Everyone must be different
Black, white — gay, straight — rich, poor —
Good or bad
Once I loved you more than ever
Beyond measure.
But we lost it
Maybe if we could
Start over
If you could make me love you
Then we could go on a journey
Stand in the rain
Thinking about each other
Just two friends
Sharing a wonderful day
In the rain.

Paxton Keely Elementary, 5th Grade
Ms. Powell

Diversity in Columbia
By Per Andre Stromhaug

In Columbia we value Diversity
It makes us a more wholesome society
Understanding each other helps us
Live more peacefully
And that's how we do it
In this here community!!!

In Columbia we are not involved in racism
We are more involved in what we call respectism
Understanding each other helps us
Live more peacefully
And that's how we do it
In this here community!!!

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Michelle Jones

When we all come together
By Savannah Norton

When we all come together
Everyone seems equal

It doesn't matter if we are
Black or white, that's how I feel

Diversity creates peace
Something everyone needs

Our differences are what make us so special
I hope everyone sees

I live in a town
Where I have a lot

The people I see
The things I've been taught

From the Africans and Hispanics
Even the Greeks

Diversity is how
We are all unique

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

“This We Believe”
By Elizabeth Legarsky

This we believe- every person has an impact on your life.
This we believe- dreams let us free and open doors of opportunity.
This we believe- the different smiles, skin colors, religions and cultures bring strength,
knowledge and talents.
This we believe- freedom is valued and encouraged.
This we believe- we all have the right to opinions, dreams and education.
This we believe- peace and no violence create better places to live.
This we believe- diversity holds us together.
This we believe- diversity holds the key to peaceful, pleasant, human beings.
This we believe- our differences make us stronger.
This we believe- we can go to school together, be friends, and go places together no
matter our skin color.
This we believe- Columbia values diversity.

Jefferson Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Donoho

Diversity in America
By Katie Patterson

Everyone knows America is diverse right? Have you ever wondered why?

Well let me tell you why. We are diverse because we are free. That's a good thing. If we weren't free and diverse, everyone would have to do the same things as everyone else in this country, how utterly boring. I mean, think about it, everyone came here to be free and diverse. If we weren't, I think I'd be bored stiff but since we are, we can have the liberty to choose for ourselves, what our religion is and what we do. If we weren't diverse, someone (most likely a king) would tell use everything to do, now that would be absolutely, outrageously boring. I'm so glad we have diversity here.

Now that I told you about it, how do you feel about diversity?

Midway Heights Elementary School, 5th Grade
G. Spellman

Columbia Values Diversity

By Humera Lodhi

I watched colorful leaves fall in my backyard one autumn morning as I ate my breakfast. They all looked so different. Each separate leaf was not noticeable, but together they made a beautiful and noticeable picture. Down they all went; each in their own separate ways. Some went quickly like a bullet, or kids in a race, while others went slowly, enjoying the journey. The speed of the leaves was not their only difference; there were many other differences as well.

Later that day, I walked down the halls of my school, chattering with my friends I noticed that the leaves were not the only things that were diverse in Columbia, Missouri my hometown. The people at my school were as well. Kids and teachers of all races were mixing, like the leaves of all colors lying next to each other on the ground. People who were brown, black, and white were all chatting together, like a scarlet red leaf maybe lying next to a chocolate brown one.

While learning about atoms and molecules in my science class, I took a quick glance around the room and was surprised at what I saw. People of all cultures were working side by side with out any trouble. I, an Indian was working with my partner a Caucasian. A girl who had Japanese blood in her was working with a boy who had grandparents from Africa and parents who were born in France. Wow, I thought, how cool! I also realized that that was sort of like the leaves. Each leaf had a different texture; some were rough and broke easily, and others were smooth and soft. And though all the leaves were different, they didn't have any trouble lying on the ground next to each other.

At lunch while sitting with my friends and eating the granola bar my mom packed I saw kids eating all different types of lunch. Some kids ate pizza from school, others mozzarella cheese sticks, some bought taco salad and a few people were eating wraps. I realized we all had our own likes, dislikes, thoughts, strengths and weaknesses. Here at lunch there was the perfect example of kids with their different likes and dislikes my friend was looking at my raisins with disdain when I despised the cheese Ritz Bits she was eating. The leaves too were like that; they too had their own similarities and differences. One way they were different was when they came down. Some came down zigzagging, others drifted down peacefully and calmly, a couple of leaves went straight down, some went down curling as if descending a staircase.

As looking out of my car window at the end of the day, I thought about the leaves I had seen in my backyard that morning. They were all so...so, diverse, yet so united. As I thought about the leaves I couldn't figure out why I kept thinking back to the people at my school. I thought so hard and long about this and suddenly like a light bulb the answer came to my head. The people at my school were diverse yet united; in fact Columbia was diverse yet united. I hadn't thought of the answer because I had been so used to seeing people of all races, cultures, background, different ideas and more live peacefully together. It was at that moment that I realized Columbia's diversity was a thing we should all cherish in our hearts.

Gentry Middle School, 6th Grade
Bergman

“Somewhere Down the Road” (Free Verse)
By Chauncey Goins

This we believe...

Somewhere down the road...
It separated.

It separated into a path,
That led to a world unknown.
A world full of regulations,
Discrimination,
And segregation,
That destroyed one whole nation.

As I lay here
On the side of the road
I can see a small clearing,
That leads to a view of the clear blue sky.
Could it be a hallucination?
Is it my imagination?

Hope,
Faith.
This we believe; there is change.
Thought & consideration,
Put into the creation of a whole new nation.
And somewhere down the road...
It intertwined.

Columbia Values Diversity: This We Believe

Jefferson Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Donoho

The Word: Diversity
By Mariah Brady

Doing what is right and respectful to one’s culture.
Individuality is ok. All of us are different, that’s what makes us unique.
Valuing how we benefit. We are lucky to have different ethnicity.
Every little thing we can do to help them understand.
Respectfully responding when someone needs assistance.
Seeing all the different colors. They shine through the beautiful people.
Immediately I see the different backgrounds, and where people come from.
Teaching everyone new things about you.
You are what sets us apart from everyone. From all other people.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

The Song
A difference in you and me
By Samanthah Fernandez

There's a difference in every body,
no matter what color you are. We share
the same world, but we have different lives.

There' s a difference in every body, whether
we like it or not, we share the same world,
but we aren't the same.

There's a difference in every body, like our
religions are different.

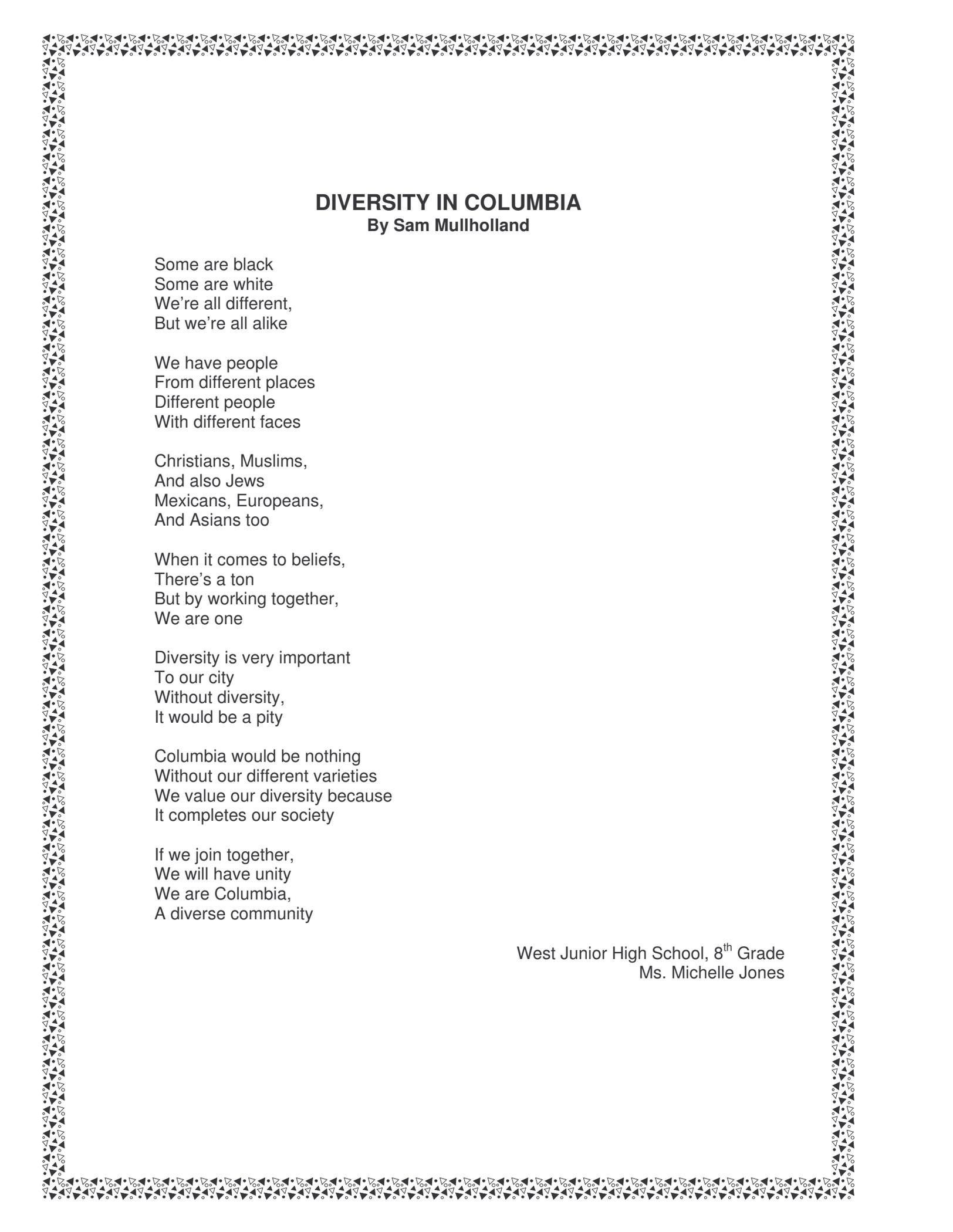
We aren't the same in side!
Weather you'd like it or not!

Blue Ridge Elementary, 5th Grade
Ms. Truesdell

Columbia's Diversity
By Vlad Florea

Columbia values diversity,
It doesn't matter where you're from,
Or what you believe in,
You are treated just like everyone else,
After all that's common sense,
We're all humans in the same city,
You have no restrictions or limits,
And everything public is open to you,
Chinese, Mexicans, Indians,
They are all welcome to Columbia,
Imagine how boring our city would be,
Without the colorful elements of diversity,
Differences add strength and unify the city,
Everyone and everything should be valued,
Because of their ethnicity and culture,
And that's the important part in the issue,
Because it makes Columbia more interesting

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Michelle Jones



DIVERSITY IN COLUMBIA

By Sam Mullholland

Some are black
Some are white
We're all different,
But we're all alike

We have people
From different places
Different people
With different faces

Christians, Muslims,
And also Jews
Mexicans, Europeans,
And Asians too

When it comes to beliefs,
There's a ton
But by working together,
We are one

Diversity is very important
To our city
Without diversity,
It would be a pity

Columbia would be nothing
Without our different varieties
We value our diversity because
It completes our society

If we join together,
We will have unity
We are Columbia,
A diverse community

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Michelle Jones

By Anne Carter

The flowers in a field
Hold a knowledge we have ignored.
A knowledge history couldn't comprehend.
Yet is of the utmost importance
Differences make us beautiful
Diversity is essential

Now is our time
To shine as the brightest stars
and share the power of diversity
This we believe

We are different
We don't look or sound the same
We worship in churches and mosques
And all different places.
We speak in languages others can't understand.
The University brings us near
But our differences bring us together.

Now it's our time
To shine brighter than the sun
And embrace the power of diversity
This we believe.

We share some things too,
We are humans to be valued
We celebrate many similar holidays
We value our community
What is the beauty in all being the same?

Now it's our turn
To brighten dark places
And teach the power of diversity
This we believe

Columbia values diversity
Without it we are boring and bland
Diversity makes us a rainbow to value so highly
Columbia is not Columbia without diversity
This we believe

Today is our day
To light up the world
And embrace what makes us different
And celebrate our diversity
This we believe

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

Columbia Values Diversity Celebration

By David Ayrton Lopez

These days, cities struggle to plan the best roads, amass the largest libraries, and provide the best parks and scenery for their citizens. But too often they forget that a truly overwhelming amount of the learning that goes on comes from the people you meet and the experiences that you share. Most of the beauty in Columbia does not come from things that we pay taxes for. What really makes our city such a remarkable, unique community is the plentitude of the different cultures and ideas. Not visually aesthetic reasons, but rather, the beauty of the individual, and how personal values are able to merge into the perfect collective.

During my stay in Columbia, I have attended India Night, China Night, and International Night, all in the same year. I have been to three different houses of worship for three different religions, which all happen to be within a three mile radius. I have met with international students, conversed in numerous languages, and swapped stories about my culture and heritage with others.

And when I consider these myriad life experiences, I am astounded to realize that I live in such a massively diverse world. But when I realize that all of these events have taken place in my *hometown*, I truly feel blessed to call Columbia home.

Although it is almost taken for granted that Columbia is such a unique, exciting place, we must stop to consider what changes and struggles had to occur for this to happen. Missouri was not always so quick to embrace peace, justice, and equality. Missouri was one of the most violent slave states during the American Civil War, and was one of the hardest to rid entirely of the cruel injustices of slavery. But it is remarkable how Missouri has risen out and reformed its past and turned into a new, prosperous land where citizens are judged based on their person, and not their race. The old ways of the past are long gone, and they have been replaced with new ideas of justice which value diversity and differences. I feel that our city of Columbia is perfectly representative of this new ideal.

In Columbia, Missouri, inhabitants do not merely “tolerate” different cultures. Rather, they go out of their way to promote and celebrate differences in a way that everyone can learn from them. To me, our city represents the pinnacle of cultural diversity and is the perfect community in which to celebrate the differences which make us so uniquely human. This, I believe.

Rock Bridge High School, 12th Grade
Ms. Cone

By Gina Hwang

There is one thing that has bothered me from the moment I first set my foot in the school building. It is the fact that I look different from most of the other children. I just moved here from South Korea this August, so it was the first time for me seeing diversity itself. It was not the first time I was facing foreigners but it still made butterflies flutter around my stomach for I knew that the etiquettes and customs here were different from those of my origins. I was hopeful still that I would learn the normal way of acting here and making many foreign friends.

I didn't expect myself to become popular at an instant and that didn't happen either. I found kids that are in the same classes as me and speak my mother tongue and hung out with them. Through them and the classes, I began to make foreign friends. Now I have white and black friends, a Japanese friend and a Mongolian friend. I have male friends and female friends, which would be awkward in my home country, for boys and girls do not go along well there. I think it is the advantage of this country and city, that there are so many types of people that gender and color does not matter any more and people are only judged by their characteristics and abilities.

I reflect my first few weeks of school, and how I have come to the present date. I am glad that my parents chose to come to Columbia, such a diverse city, and I also think now that finally I fully understand diversity, not in the dictionary way but through experience. I make diversity along with others.

Smithton Middle School
Pride Team
Ms. Vandeloecht

Columbia Values Diversity: This We Believe

By Samantha Eiffert

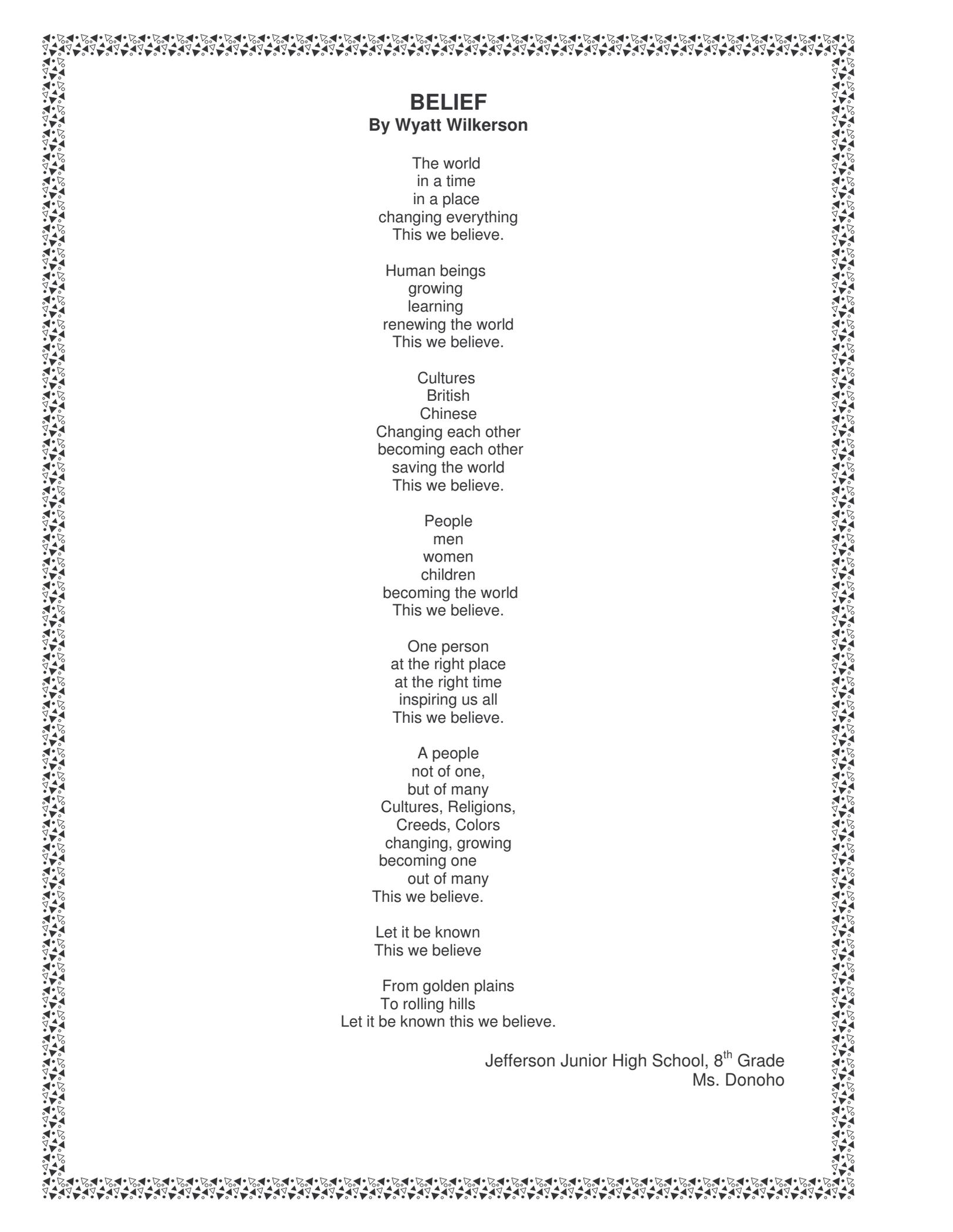
I went for a run on a summer's eve
Through trees, over hills, on grass, on concrete
Past the Mosque and past the church,
Past the Republican office, past the Peace Nook.

And every person that I met
Smiled and waved though I was soaked with sweat.
Who did I see? Who *didn't* I see?
Strangers and friends, bourgeoisie with goatees.

Fellow runners out on the trail,
Orange-vested volunteers on litter detail.
The laughers, the lunchers, the ludicrous drivers
Pastors and artists and leather-clad bikers.

Diversity makes for an interesting run -
The end of the poem and I've barely begun
To tell you how 'Columbians' are slightly bizarre.
But diversity makes us who we are.

Rock Bridge High School, 12th Grade
Ms. Cone



BELIEF

By Wyatt Wilkerson

The world
in a time
in a place
changing everything
This we believe.

Human beings
growing
learning
renewing the world
This we believe.

Cultures
British
Chinese
Changing each other
becoming each other
saving the world
This we believe.

People
men
women
children
becoming the world
This we believe.

One person
at the right place
at the right time
inspiring us all
This we believe.

A people
not of one,
but of many
Cultures, Religions,
Creeds, Colors
changing, growing
becoming one
out of many
This we believe.

Let it be known
This we believe

From golden plains
To rolling hills
Let it be known this we believe.

Jefferson Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Donoho

I Am, You Are, We Are The Same

By Alyssa Hawkins

I am black. You are white.
I am tall. You are short.

We are the same.

I am human. You are human.
I am not property. You don't own me.

We are the same.

I am black. You are white.
We are equal. We share power.

We are diversity.

We can live in peace and harmony.
We can keep Dr. King's dream alive.

We are diversity.

I am black. You are white.
I am human. You are human.

We are the same.

Blue Ridge Elementary, 5th Grade
Ms. Truesdell

By Ariel Merriman

cross, kippah, sari; black, white, latino; Bible, Torah, Hadith;

yes, Si, ja;

conservative, liberal, independent;

all together, all the same;

he had a dream, and here it is,

in this one place

I am proud to call home.

Rock Bridge High School, 12th Grade
Ms. Cone

In Columbia
By Corinne Piotter

In Columbia

A rainbow of culture is born

From the storm of racism

Suppressed by one of the prosecuted, Martin Luther King Jr.

The Rainbow that is urged on by man's hand

And each piece brought from it corner of the world by plane, train, and boat

Is by far the most beautiful on this planet

In Columbia

Each child's life is cared for and nurtured by multicolored hands from so many places

Black Charcoal hands from Africa

White Snow hands from Europe

Yellow Sun hands from Asia

Tan Leather hands from South America

Red Clay hands from North America

Even though the Rainbow is filled with plentiful colors, more are always being added to

This Rainbow that is urged on by man's hand

And brought from its corner of the world by plane, train, and boat

To Columbia

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Barnes

By Myah McCrary

I Believe, that the place I live,
Is a land for all people.
Giving and Sharing,
It all takes place here.
Prejudice, it's a thing of the past.
I Believe, We Believe.

I Believe that the place I live,
Is where we can overcome it all.
Working together,
To help the poor and assist those of older years.
Hand in hand, we can accomplish anything.
I Believe, We Believe.

I Believe that the place I live,
Is a home where judging is no more.
A town of worshipping as you like and please. The place of "I Have A Dream" come true,
Where people of different ages, race, religious and gender,
Play together, work together, and live together.
I Believe, We Believe. . . .this is a home we all dream of.

West Junior High School, 9th Grade
Mr. Fagan

Columbia Values Diversity

By Anka Siraji

Look around you, see diversity
Look around you, see the different skin colors
Look around you; see that we are all different
But we all come together to form a complete city

Learn the different cultures
Learn the different religions
Learn the different beliefs
Learn about the differences; strengthen the city

Look at my skin color
Look at my religion
Look at my culture
Look at my beliefs

We've learned to set aside my differences and
We've learned to value diversity in our city

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Michelle Jones

Diversity

By Reagan DeClerk

Diversity is all over the city of Columbia. Everyday when we look around we see so many people who are from other countries or who have a different religion. They could be Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Lutheran, Mormon, Baptist, or Amish. There are so many people around who have different cultures. It is important to be in a diverse city; everyone is different and unique in their own way. We all have different pasts, languages, lifestyles, ethnic groups, and foods!

Although it is good to have differences, we also need to have some similarities that can bring us together and unite us. We all have feelings, education, and even celebrations. I think that it is so good that we can have a city full of so many different unique people and we can still get along and be united. That is why Columbia is such a great diverse city!

Without diversity in our community, we would have a place where everyone would be doing the same thing, and look the same. We wouldn't be able to meet new people and do new things, and that is what life is all about, doing something new and having fun with it! Because of the diversity in our community, we are stronger. We can all work together as a team; we can understand others' thoughts and feelings.

I really appreciate diversity because all of us can live in harmony even if we don't have the same skin color or same beliefs. Diversity helps me learn more about my world and other cultures. Because of diversity, I can also learn new languages, and that is a great thing to be able to do. I love diversity and I think without it, I wouldn't have all of the great friends that I have today!

As Dr. Martin Luther King said, *"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"* Because of Dr. King's speech, we now have a more diverse community; we are stronger, and more united. As you can see, diversity has helped us in so many ways, which is why Columbia values diversity!

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

By Rafael Leija-Elias

I turn to see a crying face, a face filled with hope that our country will finally turn another cheek and drown our hate. Martin Luther King's dream has at least been achieved, that all the people will come together to solve the problems of the world together, not as individuals but as a whole. We, the people of this country have finished the puzzle. We have broken the barrier of racism. The only way for work peace to come is by spreading equality, but before this all we've been spreading is animosity. The hatred has died and will not rise as long as we are alive. The time was no to take a stand and we have done that very thing, we have changed history, while it was in the palm of our hand. Diversity is spreading throughout the world and we have contributed by electing a president of color. This is what diversity is. Diversity is allowing people of every race, background and culture to flourish together and that is exactly what we are doing and we're doing it, together.

Smithton Middle School
Pride Team
Ms. Vandeloecht

Diversity

By Riannon Zellmer

Not everyone has the same color skin.
Not everyone thinks the same.
Not everyone will win or lose
But there's absolutely no one to blame.

It doesn't matter the way you think
Different from someone else.
'Cause no one is just like you or does
the things you do.
So just be yourself.

Don't you know what diversity is?
Well then I'll tell you so.
Diversity is different people from different
Places you know.

You shouldn't pick your friends by the color
Of their skin or what they like to play.
You should pick your friends by diversity
From the inside in.

So when someone asks "can I come too?"
Think of diversity, not if they're just like you

Smithton Middle School
Pride Team
Ms. Vandeloecht

Columbia Values Diversity

This We Believe

By Ella Taylor

This is what we should believe. We need to believe that different people from different countries can make Columbia a different place, a unique place to be. Places like Asia, Cambodia, Mexico, US!!!

We can communicate. We can learn different things about other and different people. All of us can sit in Missouri in peace.

Learning different languages, different clothing, different hair styles, is good. You can be unique. You can make a difference. You will be yourself but in a very, very special way.

It doesn't matter if you're white, or black, or even Cambodian. Try, try to communicate and make our community better.

I believe that Columbia values diversity is as strong as it can be. You should believe that too.

We should believe that.

So, can you believe in you? Can you believe in others? Like others?

Do you believe that Columbia values diversity is as strong as it can be? Can you do one simple thing? Just believe!!! In us and our community!!!

Blue Ridge Elementary, 4th Grade
Ms. Monroe

Diversity

By Amelia Heaston

Many people are different
There's no way you can see
The even slightest resemblance
Between you or he or she
We all have different faces
And different feelings, too
We all have different thoughts and minds
And ways we do things, too
But even though we're different,
As many might just find
Who CARES if we are different!!!
No one *really* minds!!!

Smithton Middle School
Pride Team
Ms. Vandeloecht

DIVERSITY

By Natasha Koch

Columbia, Missouri can be seen as a patchwork of its unique city culture and diversity. Our schools are like a collage of so many different cultures, ethnicities, and traditions merged together, living side-by-side, distinct in their individuality but joined in their unity. We as a nation and as a city are throwing away any lingering prejudices and preconceived notions of our fellow man. Each one of us is living the dream, whether we know it or not. Now is the time that we open the door to an age where everyone can achieve without the shackles of oppression or the fear of persecution. We are many steps into the process, on a personal, local, and national level. From our schools, collages of intertwined unity and crossed boundaries, to the new president of our country, Barack Obama, who has broken down one of the last racial barriers facing this nation. Our goal in this country, even down to this junior high school, is to rise above the wounds of the past and transcend the binds between races, cultures, and ways of life. To live in diversity, to be truly strong, united.

West Junior High School
Ms. Cone

By Laura E. Matera

Hollowed bells spill their music across an empty sky,
A tribute to someone's God, people, humanity, and life.
Other heads are bowed due East from West
Church steeples rise and for a moment, we see the moon's silver crest.
Music and dance—the foundation of art,
Where culture, philosophy, and hope leave an enduring mark.
Because anger, violence, and above all hate,
Do more to destroy hope and alienate a faith.
Organic foods, new found convictions,
Dreadlocks, piercing, tattoos, and easy ambitions.
This myriad of color— a painter's pallet,
Crushing stereotypes, conformity, and standards with a mallet.
Shakespeare's pizza— food of wondrous quality,
To bring our community together with peace, love, and harmony.
Because we may not understand the way a people think,
Their duties, their principles, or relate to their beliefs.
We may not like what people wear or like what they might eat,
But the beauty in diversity is questioning how or what you think.
Perhaps on Wednesday afternoons the steady beat of time,
Will indeed be interrupted by a honk for protest from behind.
There will still be baggy pants or skinny jeans
At home, at school, or on the streets.
But to each his own, and to all be kind,
The value in our community is the value we give to our own lives.

Rock Bridge High School, 12th Grade
Ms. Cone

Diversity

By Duha Shebib

It is a bird that spreads its wings to
Shelter everyone
It is a shade of black and white mixed together to create
Peace in many different colors
It is a whiff of fragrances that joins together to create
The scent of peace
It is the park that joins everyone together in every occasion
It is a song that many genres of music
Sing together
It is the coexistence of
All races and religions
It is the diversity of Columbia where you can
Find anyone and justice, and peace,
Come together
To become
Unity

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Barnes

Values of Diversity

By: Eun-Soo Jang

Perfect. The same. Nothing different. Some people in the world believe that if everything were the same, there would be less violence and fighting. That's completely the wrong answer. If everybody was the same and liked the same things, nobody would get married, nobody would get a job, except two people. There would be no beautiful, unique, and different colored skins. There would be no black hair, blondes, or brunettes. All the fashionable clothes we have now would be gone!

Another main part of this world is nature. If everything was the same, I would never see blue flowers, white flowers, and purple flowers. The sky would be no joy to look at. I would have no excitement to guess the weather and I would never have to take time for what I wear.

But, we don't have to live in that world, the world of mono. We should give thanks to this gift called diversity. We should thank this world for unpredictable skies and weathers and the beautiful different types of people. But, the only way to thank this diversity is to respect it. Why respect it? To live in peace and harmony.

Smithton Middle School
Pride Team
Ms. Vandeloecht

By Eunice Wang

I was heading to the pool,
After a very long day at school,
I noticed many college kids,
As diverse as salsa lids.

I contemplated these different things,
'Cause some got tattoos, some got wings.
I realized diversity's great,
And, we've got lots!-but you just wait.

Religion is part of diversity,
I think more is better, but that's just me.
Muslims, Jews, Christians, the whole shebang,
Give Columbia a nice sweet tang.

You may think your boss is from Mars,
And doesn't understand your love of cars,
But we are all alike, for we have thoughts,
Opinions, dislikes, oh yes, there's lots.

But, not every Asian is smart,
As not every grandpa is an old fart,
People have differences, like their race,
Religion, their nationality, and worship ways.

What do I think of diversity?
You may expect me to have no glee,
But I think it's very important,
Just as the opinion "you can't say can't"

Life's boring without variety,
From the president to you and me.
You may learn new cultures with different people,
So you may know not all worship areas have a steeple.

As I come to a close,
I hope you don't judge people by their toes.
Now to finish this up I'll say
Diversity is the ideal way.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

Columbia Values Diversity Celebration: Poem

Meredith Westfall

Colors of the earth and skies,
Black and white, all in our eyes.
Cross or crescent, both are praised,
We each see the same sun rays.

It's bland at best, the world in white,
In black too dark, cannot see the light.
In red, too serious; in green, too wild;
In yellow, naivety outshines the mellow.
In purple too proud, in blue too calm;
In orange too humorous to get anything done.

The changes in culture, in tone and in rhyme,
Remind us to accept others, whether forest or lime.
Some of us are red, and others maroon,
It brings color to the world,
Which can never happen too soon.

Rock Bridge High School
Ms. Cone

This We Believe

By Rayven Stokes

This we believe because we are all the same in many different ways. Black, white, mixed and tan, we come from North America, South America, Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia. My name is Rayven and I am a full African-American and the 2 boys in my class are Palestinian -American their names are Ferris and Ahmad we both have the same religion but are from different places. We all may not live in the same place nor have the same brothers or sisters but we still love each other in many ways.

My next-door neighbor is half black and half white which makes her mixed. She is a girl and so am I, but we're not the same colors. But that doesn't mean we can't be friends. There are many things we have in common. However the things we don't have in are that she likes soccer and I like gymnastics. But we don't let that get in-between us. I am 10 she's 9 but were still friends and love each other in many ways.

Whether we're Muslim, Jewish, or Christian we are all equal in every way.
Indian, European, or African we are all different but we have the same value

Islamic School Columbia Missouri, 5th Grade
Ms. Key

Columbia Values Diversity

By Bradley Elliott

Columbia is a city that's full of diversity. With Columbia being such a diverse city, I believe that all of our diversity is making our city better. I believe that since we have all of this diversity in Columbia, I think that Columbia does value diversity.

With there being so much diversity in Columbia, it means that lots of us are different. In Columbia there are so many different religions that our citizens believe in. Some of us are Muslims, Jewish, Christians and of course there are lots of others who believe in lots of other religions. Also, there are lots of languages spoken in our city like Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and so many more languages. There are also lots of different celebrations in Columbia that people celebrate from their own countries. Some celebrate Kwanza, Hanukah, and lots of other different celebrations. So basically we all have different lifestyles.

Even though a lot of us are from different countries and have different beliefs we still realize that we have lots of similarities also. Like one big reason that lots of people from other countries have come to Columbia is because Columbia provides lots of good education that lots of foreigners didn't get to receive in their own countries. We also have realized that even though we're from different countries, we still feel. Since we all know that we have feelings we think about others' feelings before we say something that could hurt their feelings. The cool thing about Columbia is that a lot of us are from different countries and believe different things, but we are still able to work together easily with each other to make Columbia a great place.

Diversity, I believe, is important to the city of Columbia for many different reasons. One reason diversity is important to Columbia is because with diversity it helps all of us realize that it is definitely good to be different. Also, diversity is important to Columbia because with all the diversity, we get to learn about other countries more from people who live here. Finally, I think diversity is important to Columbia because we get to come together on some days and celebrate the different cultures in Columbia like The Roots and Blues Festival that we have sometimes. That's why diversity is important to Columbia.

Diversity is important to me because with diversity, I get to learn how to speak in new languages from some of my foreign friends at school. I have also been able to learn about a lot of other countries and what they are like from my friends at school. Learning about other countries is important to me because I learn what other countries are like and I learn how everybody has very different lifestyles and I have learned how that is a good thing. I have also learned to accept people's differences since so many people are different in Columbia. These are some reasons why I think diversity is important to me.

Diversity is something that is very good for Columbia, and I think that Columbia does value diversity. I think that diversity has made me a better person and I think that it has made Columbia a better city.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

By John Alden

Humans were made to love
Made to rule this world of ours
To keep it peaceful, full of justice
To avoid horrors of wars
But our human hearts filled with hate
And in discrimination

We killed and raped, scorned and slaughtered
In awful evisceration
So we cursed other races
And we isolated
Ourselves from the rest
Our views clouded and shaded
Why can't we just love again?
Not be Lings, McCredies, or Teeples Forget about being elite
And just be people?

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Barnes

How Diversity is Like Food and Crayons

By Rayna Sims

Columbia, Missouri is a diverse town,
People come here from all around.
Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Jews,
Those are some religions to name a few.
Take a walk around and I bet you will hear,
Languages spoken from far and from near.

Our town is so different, the inside and out,
With all the exotic restaurants, there isn't a doubt!
Mexican, Italian, Thai, Japanese,
American, Indian, Mongolian, Chinese.

Even though some people have foreign names,
On the inside we are all quite the same.
We all have to follow the same set of rules,
And we all think it's important to go to school.

All of us are part of the same human race,
Do not discriminate against the color of one's face.
White, brown, red or black,
It's like a box of crayons, there's more than one in the pack.
All the crayons work together to get the picture done,
Lots of different colors make it more fun.

Diversity is something that should be well cherished,
Because Columbia would not be the same if it perished.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

What is Diversity **By Sarah Levin**

Diversity is variety.
Diversity is differing from each other.
Diversity is living together as one.
Diversity is people of different races being best friends.
Diversity is a school of many cultures learning together.
Diversity is using our differences to make us stronger.
Diversity is each individual being different but living in unity.
Diversity is what makes Columbia strong.

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Michelle Jones

The Value of Diversity **By Orreshia Chatman**

Diversity
What does this mean?
To be black or white
or even be green.
What's the point in diversity?
Why do we even care?
Is it because you're Asian,
or Indian with long dark hair?

We believe in diversity here in Columbia, Missouri.
Everyone also has their own opinion
and their own story.
It's important to accept all
and have equality. Here in Columbia Public Schools
we live with that mentality.

No one is selfish,
No one is greedy,
We help out all
Colors, religions, cultures, and ethnic groups,
especially the needy.
We help everyone,
so that everyone is free
What's diversity mean to you?
Because this is what it means to me.

Rock Bridge High School, 11th Grade
Ms. Smith and Mr. Egan

We Are All The Same

By Megan Sweeney

We are all different
We're big we're small
We're old we're young
But if you look close enough
Aren't we really all the same?

We could be
Catholic
Baptist
Christian
Muslim
But if you look close enough
Don't we really all believe the same?

We may all look different
We could be African or Indian
Korean or Chinese
American or Spanish
But if you look close enough
Don't we really all look the same?

We may celebrate
Kwanza
Hanukkah
Christmas
Or Ramadan
But if you look close enough
Don't we really all celebrate the same?

Still, we breathe
We eat
We dance
We feel
Don't we really all do it the same?

Every person makes our community a little bit stronger
Columbia values diversity, this we believe
Because when you look close enough
We really ARE all the same

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

In Columbia We Are Equal

By Saja Mecibi

In Columbia we are equal
No matter your color, religion, or race
There are many different people
Columbia is an equal place

You might be black or white
Or any color in between
Columbia is like a rainbow
It's the most amazing thing I've seen

In Columbia there are different religions
Like Muslim or Christian or Jew
But there are many, many more
More than you ever knew

As different as we are
We are still a family
And we must treat each other
With respect and serenity

We are all united
And we always stick together
So soon we will realize
That this kindness will last forever

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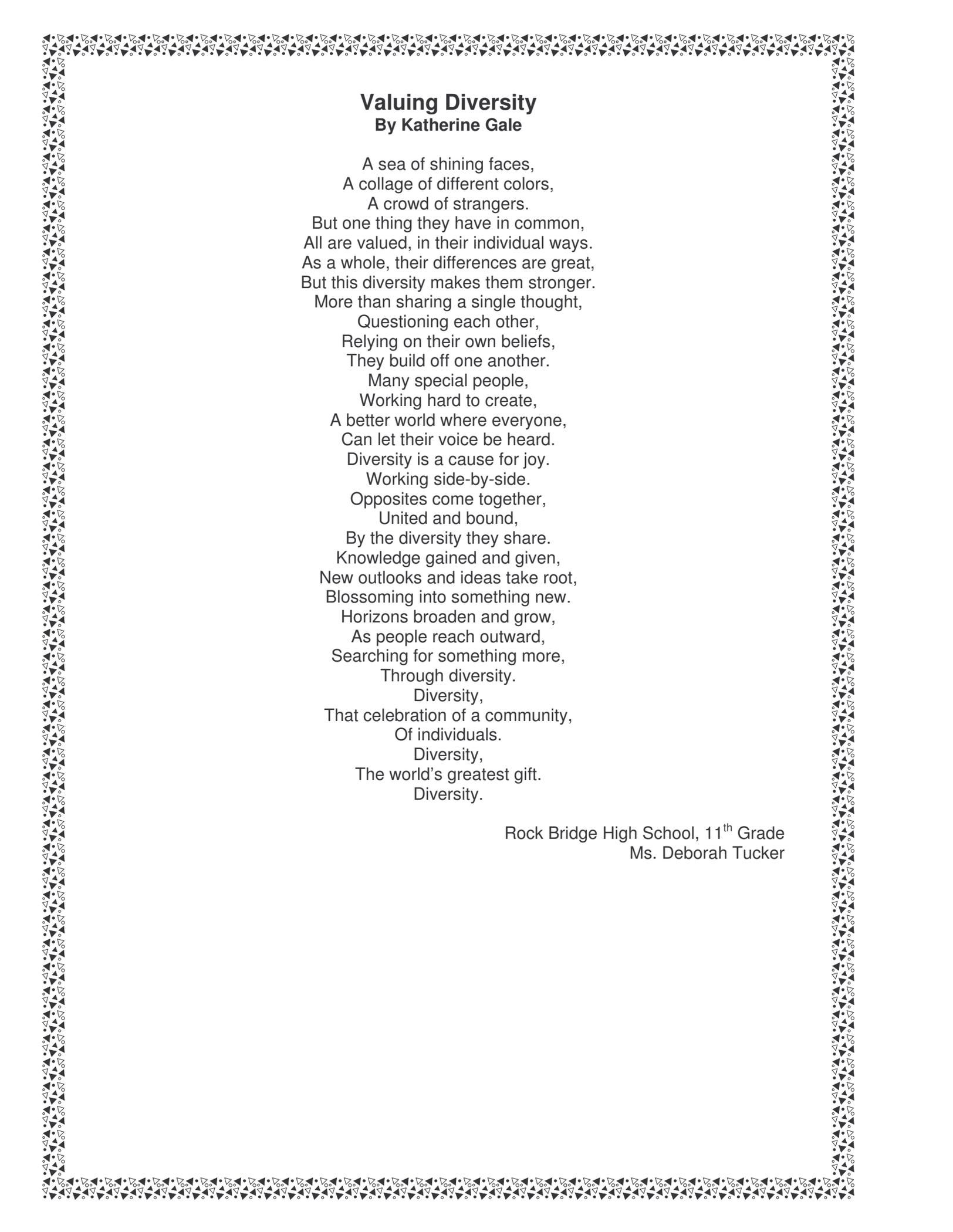
Gentry Middle School, 6th Grade
Ms. Wilson

By Denayah Hyler

We have many different cultures and because of that, we celebrate different cultures, like Christmas, Hispanic Heritage month, Thanksgiving, and Black History Month. Our celebrations bring people that don't celebrate these holidays together. They can try can try new holidays.

We have different ways to say things, like "mealy calikemoca" means Merry Christmas in Hawaiian people's way. "Hula" means "Hi" in Spanish. There are many different laughs for different cultures and that is what makes people special because we like different stuff. That is what makes us unique in our own way.

Blue Ridge Elementary, 4th Grade
Ms. Monroe



Valuing Diversity

By Katherine Gale

A sea of shining faces,
A collage of different colors,
A crowd of strangers.
But one thing they have in common,
All are valued, in their individual ways.
As a whole, their differences are great,
But this diversity makes them stronger.
More than sharing a single thought,
Questioning each other,
Relying on their own beliefs,
They build off one another.
Many special people,
Working hard to create,
A better world where everyone,
Can let their voice be heard.
Diversity is a cause for joy.
Working side-by-side.
Opposites come together,
United and bound,
By the diversity they share.
Knowledge gained and given,
New outlooks and ideas take root,
Blossoming into something new.
Horizons broaden and grow,
As people reach outward,
Searching for something more,
Through diversity.
Diversity,
That celebration of a community,
Of individuals.
Diversity,
The world's greatest gift.
Diversity.

Rock Bridge High School, 11th Grade
Ms. Deborah Tucker

What is Diversity

By Sarah Levin

Diversity is variety.
Diversity is differing from each other.
Diversity is living together as one.
Diversity is people of different races being best friends.
Diversity is a school of many cultures learning together.
Diversity is using our differences to make us stronger.
Diversity is each individual being different but living in unity.
Diversity is what makes Columbia strong.

West Junior High School, 8th Grade

Ms. Michelle Jones

The Value of Diversity

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We help everyone,
so that everyone is free
What's diversity mean to you?
Because this is what it means to me.

Rock Bridge High School, 11th Grade

Ms. Smith and Mr. Egan

Columbia Values Diversity

By Diana Harmata

Should the color of your skin ever define what is within? Is it even part-way fair to fight each other over prayer? Must we really all agree to live in friendly harmony?!! Those three questions have been debated for a long, LONG time. But there is a single word that answers all three. NO! One thing is obvious when discussing these issues- NO person is the same. We look different, we think differently, and we have different dreams. And that is not a bad thing! We are all special and we can learn from each other. YES, Columbia Values Diversity: This I believe!

Columbia isn't solely a certain religion, a certain political party or a certain ethnicity. I know Christians, Muslims, Jews, Catholics, and Mormons. I know Indians, Chinese people, Africans, and even more, of all different colors. Republicans, Democrats, Independents- Columbia has them all. Even on my team at school, it's like a mini-melting pot. Three universities make our town full of so many wonderful people with new, different ideas- but no matter our differences, all of us share similarities that keep us together.

All cultures and religions are *very* different. Christians celebrate Easter and Christmas, while Jews celebrate Passover and Hanukah. Muslims celebrate Ramadan, and they even have to fast! But *all cultures* have celebrations, in some way. All cultures have their stories to tell, too. Everyone has a folktale or saying they know that teaches life lessons, whether it is an old Chinese proverb or The Tortoise and the Hare. We all have histories, and we all have big dreams ahead of us. But most importantly, we all love. No matter our color of skin, our religion, our party, or our beliefs, we all have the ability to love.

Diversity makes Columbia very strong. It balances our community. People have different ideas and opinions which may be very good, and we can learn from what everyone has to say, and maybe make better judgment in the future. A little taste of the whole world is in Columbia, and if we maybe can't GO to places outside of the U.S., we can experience them a little here. Originality is something that this diversity inspires too. If everyone was the same with the same set of opinions and values, we would lack independence, and would set our future down in stone. Columbia doesn't LET you do that. Here, you have choices. Here, diversity is plenty, and the blend makes us strong.

I value this diversity in Columbia. I have many friends of different colors, religions, and beliefs-and I've learned a lot from them. Seeing both sides of an issue broadens my knowledge of the world, and keeps my mind active and curious. But it's not just the differences I appreciate-it's the similarities. We all have stories. We all have dreams. We all have a language. Those things may be different, but we all have some. But we all have the same love.

Should the color of your skin ever define what is within? Is it even part-way fair to fight each other over prayer? No. Columbia respects these differences, and we've grown strong because of them. Columbia values diversity - this, I hope, we ALL believe.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. McCarty

This We Believe

By Caitlyn Morris

This I believe....

People tangle themselves in a web of lies.

Ashamed,

Afraid to face their feelings,

Unprepared to face the truth.

Hiding behind lies is all they can do, all they can think.

This I believe....

Our community is afraid,

Scared of what might happen next.

Hiding behind fighting, behind violence.

Hurting innocents.

Killing loved ones.

This I believe....

Words have suffered defeat.

Their time of rule has come to downfall.

Expressing feelings with actions overpowers words.

Coming up with the right words is too hard anymore.

People think thinking is out,

Fighting is in.

This I believe....

People shouldn't be afraid of what is to come.

Face it, deal with it, live it, and move on with life.

Don't hold grudges; don't hold onto things that happened years ago.

Digging up the past holds you back.

Keeps you from achieving your goals,

From moving forward into the future.

This I believe....

Follow your own paths,

Don't let others control your life.

Be one with yourself, not one with the crowd.

This I believe....

Own up to your differences.

Don't try to hide them.

They are who you are.

Pushing them out of your life,

Impossible.

They are there, inside of you,

Just waiting,

Waiting, to come out.

This I believe....

Jefferson Junior High School, 8th Grade
Ms. Donoho

Diversity

By Briana Grant

To me diversity is a really good thing. I see diversity everywhere. In my school, at the mall, and various places but one of the main places I see it is especially in politics. Me being an African American, I am very proud of America and the world and how far we have come. As you can see, we have an African American presidential candidate. It inspires not only African Americans but people of other ethnicities to reach for the stars and go beyond expectations. When I walk into school everyday, I don't just see one ethnicity, I see at least five.

I think diversity is very cool because you can learn about different heritages and cultures other than our own. You can go different places and spot a different person with a different ethnicity. When I think of people it is not what is on the outside that counts but is what is on the inside. I alone have a lot of friends that have a different religion or culture than me. The members of our community are different because we have different religions but we can all come together when we need to. We are the same by the way we care for one another. I think that we all need different kinds of diversity because it does add strength to our community. we are all different people but we can all come together and be a community if we try and we do that really well. I value diversity because if we didn't have it our world would be very boring and unexciting. I value diversity because each person in our community has something to do and they bring strength to our community. That is why I value diversity and that is why Columbia values it too.

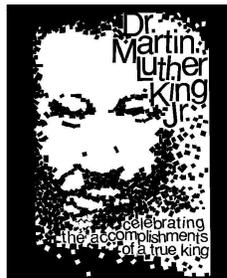
Smithton Middle School, 6th Grade
Ms. Wahid

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