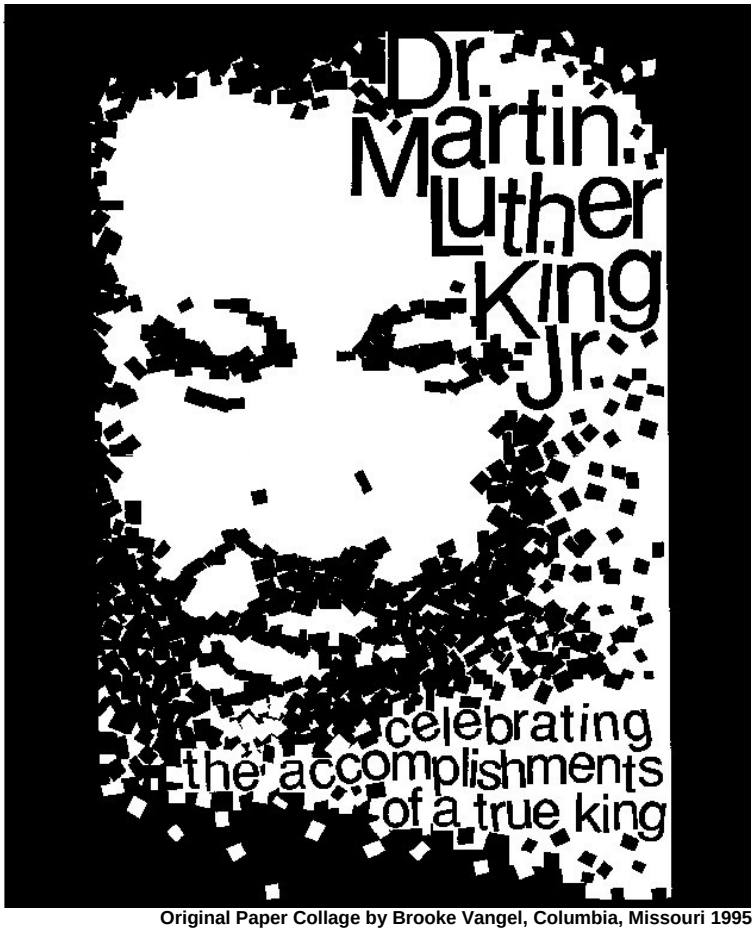
Columbia Values Diversity: Everyone Counts



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Writings by Columbia Students

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COLUMBIA VALUES DIVERSITY CELEBRATION

Thursday, January 14, 2010

Everyone Counts!
By Paige Kiehl

Everyone counts,
Don't you see?
We all contribute to this community,
No matter your skin color
Or the type of background you have,
We are all important, we all count
Young and old
Glad or sad
We all give a piece
A piece of ourselves
And that is why, my friend
We have such an enriched community
No matter your skin color
Or the type of background you have,
We are all important
We all count
So whenever you look around
You can see
And beautiful rainbow
Of nations
And tongues
Joined as one

Jefferson Junior High, 9th Grade
Mrs. Spate-Smith

Chance
By Keeley Houghton

Why do some live
In a one race space?
To look at a face,
And determine their place.
To never spare
a second glance.
How, may I ask,
will they get a chance?
A chance to fulfill a new
place in this cruel dance.
They have been made prey,
to the hunter of hate.
But is it really too late?

Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade
Mrs. Donoho

By Amelia Heaston

Imagine a world where you're friend, not foe.
There is a field out there, where flowers grow.
The wind light and warm.
The high sun aglow.
The field is big, but no flower's alone.

Imagine that field has a river that flows
With stones in the bottom, each stone is a whole.
I acknowledge each stone, each pebble alike
Even if they are different,
That's what I like.

Imagine a field that has a tree that sways.
The leaves the same size, each leaf with a name.
An equivalent tree, to others around.
That is a place where everything counts.

Everyone counts has a meaning to me.
It's stones in a river, leaves on a tree.
Each flower is special, one of a kind.
When you say that saying, that's what I find.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. Vandeloecht

Everybody Counts

By Zayd Alrawi

I think everybody should count
It doesn't matter if your skin color is black, brown, or tan
It doesn't' matter if you have a broken arm or a missing limb
It doesn't matter if you're short, tall, fat, or skinny
All that matters is that everybody is treated equally
If you have a good heart
This means you share and care about others
Have kind feelings towards others
That's what matters
To live peacefully
We have to accept everybody's difference and forgive each other
That's what matters

Russell Boulevard Elementary, 4th Grade
Ms. Johanning

In My Eyes
By Allie Lopez

As I walk into Spanish class, I know what's coming….
You may talk in Spanish, but no English!
So as we're talking about verbs and vocabulary, my mind starts to wander
What if I went to a Spanish speaking county and I couldn't speak their language?
But I can, and I have my family and my teacher to thank for that because….
In my eyes everybody matters!
When I walk into the familiar small white house,
I see my friends grinning and many pictures on the painted wall.
A family with parents from England does things differently than my own, and that's the cool thing.
Eating new delicious foods and playing funny games.
Exchanging different cultures is a special thing because….
In my eyes everybody matters!
On those few Sunday mornings that I've stepped into the cold church, I've been surprised.
Laughter fills the air and movies fill the television screen.
I've stepped into a totally different world with new cultures and religions.
I've always thought of a church as being boring with organ music,
But I was wrong.
Friends having a good time and talking about something they believe in, without being judged is what it's all about because…
In my eyes everybody matters!

West Junior High School, 8th Grade
Mr.Straatman

What if you didn't have Rights?
By Yousuf Jayyousi

Imagine if you were outside, thirsty with no money and you can't drink from a water fountain. This is what was happening over forty years ago to African Americans, just because they had different skin color. They were not counted as a whole person and there were many other rights they didn't have.

I think everyone should count because there is no difference between people based on religion, color or race. It's not fair that some people get better jobs and schools, when the parents also need money to survive, and the children need the same education. A long time ago if you looked around, you would see black people and different nationalities that were suffering because they didn't have their own rights. Just think if you didn't have rights, you should be sad and angry.

We have to work hard to not let this happen again.

Islamic School of Columbia, Missouri, 4th Grade
Mirsada Ivankovic

We are Different and Yet the Same

By Mary Clare Agnew

If you were blind, what then would you think of me?
Would you admire my potential and the things I could achieve?
Or would you still fear me, guided by society?
Would you scorn me? Shun me? Turn me away out of hate?
Will ignorance be your light on this winding road of life?
Will you heed its call and turn your eyes from the truth?
Some say we are no different and in some ways that is true
But in some ways I will always be far different from you
I have scars on my heart which you will never have
I have felt things and seen things I'm sure you never will
But if you did would you still feel this way?
Would you still shake your head and mutter slanderous names?
Are we different because society has decided we are that way?
Would you learn to smile at me if I acted a certain way?
If you get down to the basics, we're really quite the same
But we will always be different, it seems that fact remains
But because we are different does not mean that we must hate
It should not result in violence and hearts crippled with pain
So learn to hold my hand my friend; and you'll find it isn't so hard
Learn to walk beside me and the path won't seem so long
Learn to smile and mean it and see I too can love
And treat me as an equal, not a raven amongst doves

Jefferson Junior High, 9th Grade
Mrs. Spate-Smith

Why We Matter
By Shahd Jaouni

Let me tell you why everyone matters.

If someone doesn't count they would feel bad. If you were left out what would you do? I think we are all equal no matter who we are. I think we all should have the same rights and freedom. We are all human beings. We all should be able to speak up and express ourselves.

It really doesn't matter how we look, act and what language we speak. It also doesn't matter what religion we practice. A long time ago, our forefathers were not fair. Blacks and whites weren't equal. If we aren't equal to each other now, we would go back to their time. That can lead to a civil war.

People from all over the world should be equal. In my class, we are from different countries but we get along well. Sometimes we argue but we make up quickly. Sometimes we express ourselves by voting. We vote about where to go and what to do. Voting is a good way to express yourself.

Every four years, we think about who we want to rule our nation, so we vote. That way we can tell everyone who we think is the best one for the job.

Some people in the world are either greedy or they don't respect other opinions. If we stop that, we can live in peace and harmony. This would lead to a better planet.

Islamic School of Columbia, Missouri, 4th Grade
Mirsada Ivankovic

Everyone Counts
By Gabriel Paddock

Everyone Counts because everyone makes a difference. Anyone can change the world! It does not matter what color you are. It does not matter if you have special needs or if you are in a wheelchair or if you are small or tall. It does not matter if you are really weird, we need to make sure that everyone in our community counts. If you don't let people come and make a difference then I don't' think you can make a difference.

Russell Boulevard Elementary, 4th Grade
Ms. Sprigg

Brothers and Sisters
By Hannah Cajandig

Everyone's affected
By each little word we say
Treating everyone differently
Is definitely not okay

We are all the same
Skin is just a color
It doesn't classify or identify
Whether we're brilliant or duller

Don't sit back and watch
People mistreat each other
We are supposed to be a community
Of loving sisters and brothers

Maybe someday
Fairness will be spread
Everyone will feel serenity
Because of equality said

Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade
Mrs. Donoho

Everyone Counts
By Christina Coe-Kalogeris

Martin Luther King, Jr. said he had a dream. A dream for all races to live in peace. For if everyone is divided, few ideas can be made and no one can move forward.

Everyone counts isn't just a phrase but has a meaning to it. It means everyone is equal. Everyone's ideas are equal. It means no one is judged by the color of their skin, their race or anything else for that matter.

Together we stand, divided we fall. These words are so true and yet so many ignore them. No one person can change the world, but with the help of others you can accomplish anything.

Every person should open, not just their eyes, but their hearts to others. Every person has a dream. Everyone is whole, everyone is one person with a dream and with help from their friends, can accomplish their dream. Even a smile can give someone strength, have them have gratitude toward you.

Everyone counts is more than just a phrase, but it has meaning to it

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Mrs. Vandeloecht

From the Poor to the Rich

By Jessica Kanne

From the poor to the
Rich, every-
One counts.
Me and you should be

Treated the same. Hairy
Head or bald. You're just as important because
Every one counts. Every

Person is different, each
One
Of us are unique, even mentally
Retarded people. And

The reasons why are: 1. Everyone's
Outstanding in

Their own way. 2. We are all
Humans. 3.
Everyone has a

Reason to live.
If we were all alike, life would be boring. Everyone
Counts and we should all live Dr. King's dream because
He had hope to make something happen and he wanted peace, justice, freedom and equality. And now we pretty much have it because everyone counts and we are all talented in different ways. Just like Dr. King, if you believe in something and work hard for it, it can happen. If you're black or white, rich or poor, you still count. What you say is still important.

Russell Boulevard Elementary, 4th Grade
Mrs. Sprigg

By Eric Becker

If not for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., think about where we as a country would be. I know, I can't really picture it clearly either because I have the pleasure of growing up in a time and country of equality. In the 1800s, it wouldn't have been possible to have an African-American president, but now thanks to the civil rights movement, I can be proud to live in an equal and diverse nation, full of different races and religions.

At one point in time, African-Americans were considered 3/5 of a Caucasian, and as I think about that now, I'm sure you agree that this was a pretty terrible thing. But thanks to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other citizens such as Rosa Parks, all of this was changed. Now, the U.S. Government considers everyone equal, no matter race, religion or age.

Yet around me I also see racism and hate, which I believe, is one of the stupidest things to feel towards another human being. Just because someone is different than yourself isn't reason to hate them. You should accept people for who they are and not their intelligence, skin color, gender or race.

Think about if African-Americans were never brought to America. We wouldn't have Rap, R&B, Hip-Hop, Jazz or Soul music, no Gospel choirs in Sunday churches, no "soul" food, no Fubu shoes, no Fresh Prince of Nickelodeon. Do you like peanut butter? Well, even that was invented by an African-American named George Washington Carver, along with over 400 other peanut products.

I believe everyone counts in our community because we need variety. Variety breaks us free from the norm, and it allows us to explore different beliefs and ideas. Just walking around downtown, I can easily find Chinese restaurants, pizza places, and Thai restaurants, and houses of worship that are all packed in one small area.

If you ever get tired of one thing, just exploring our immensely diverse community can allow you to easily find something new and exciting to get you out of the rut of being stuck in your regular lifestyle.

At my previous small school, most likely 97% of the students were white. Only three or four students were African-American and I don't remember one that was Asian, aside from a couple of exchange students. Now, in Columbia, there are a number of Asian and African-American students and friends I've made, and I couldn't imagine not seeing the variety and culture around me all the time.

Jefferson Junior High, 9th Grade
Ms. Spate-Smith

Everyone Counts
By Clara Brand

Everyone is different but should be treated all the same

No one has the right to bully or cause others pain

When Martin Luther King was young he tried and tried to teach

"We should not fight back with words or hate, we should fight back with love," he preached

No matter what your skin color: if you're black, or tan, or white
try to do what Martin says and do the thing that's right

You should include everyone with every single ounce
Just make sure you do remember everybody counts

Never leave out anybody from a conversation,
'Cause after all we are just part of one big human nation

Gentry Middle School, 6th Grade
Miss Brown

Everyone Counts
By Benjamin Anderson

In Columbia there are many cultures, races and religions. We should not take our diversity for granted because without it, we would not be the community we are today. Diversity is like a symphony. Each instrument contributes its different sound to make beautiful music. Without any one instrument, the symphony would not be complete. In this same way, for the same reasons, everyone counts; everyone is important. Every person adds their own flavor to the stew. Albert Einstein, born in Germany, brought with him to the U.S. theories that revolutionized science. The blues came from the laments and work songs of the slaves in the south.

All of these flavors together form our delicious stew, our society, but not only must we remember that everyone counts but we must help others know that too. Some lack the confidence to share their ideas, worried that they will be ridiculed or criticized. Those who don't lack confidence should do their best to help others discover it within themselves, for without their flavors, the stew will be bland.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. Vandeloecht

By Rachel Brenner

United we stand
Divided we fall
With nothing to break us
Nothing at all.
This is the dream
Together as one
To help undo
What our ancestors have done.
Light skinned or dark
What difference is there?
Everyone counts
So why should we care?
Dark or light
But everyone counts
For that, we must fight.
So live the dream
Distribute equality to all
Because united we stand,
Divided we fall

West Junior High, 8th Grade
Ms. Michelle Jones

Columbia Values Diversity: Everyone Counts

By Ella Taylor

"Everyone Counts" means a lot to me. Everybody should count. Basically everybody matters. People all over the world should matter. It doesn't matter if you have different colored skin or different colored hair, or if you come from a different culture. Everybody counts. Everybody matters.

Nobody should be left out or feel left out because basically everybody's the same. It doesn't matter if you want to become a teacher, an artist, a bus driver, or maybe even a singer. Just because somebody speaks a different language doesn't mean they are not a part of you or shouldn't be included. Nobody should be left out or be treated mean. As the old saying goes "treat people they way you would want to be treated."

Everybody on this planet should count in everything! I think people should love who they are and who other people are, too. Don't just give up on someone. Show them they will always, always count.

If our community wants people to feel they matter then we need places like a school, a public place where people all different shapes, sizes, and colors can go. A public place is for everybody like we have right here in Columbia, Missouri. Like the ARC. That's something that counts everybody in.

Everybody counts just like you and me!

Blue Ridge Elementary, 5th Grade
Mrs. Coonrod

No One Should Be Left Behind

By Briana Hardin

No one should be left behind
All the things we **dream** for,
Strive for in our **life**:
Peace, Justice, and Equality.
But how can we get these things?
And **who** are they **available** to?

No one should be left behind
Aren't we all living **breathing** beings?
Doesn't everyone **deserve** the same things in life?
We should all have an opportunity,
To get the things we **struggle** for;
Peace, **Justice** and Equality.

No one should be left behind
Everyone matters.
In the end, we all venture towards the same thing:
Peace, Justice and **Equality**.
Everyone **should** have the chance,
To **experience** these things in their life.

No one should be left behind
No one **would** be left behind.
If the world could **rid** itself
Of its **prejudice** and **narrow-minded** ways.
If we all had the chance,
Of **Peace, Justice and Equality**
To the degree it **should** be.
The world will have reached a **level**
Everyone thought it **incapable** of…

Hickman High School, 10th Grade
Mrs. Varns

We Value Everyone
By Brandi Dye

Who is perfect?
No one
Who contributes to society?
Everyone
No matter your race
Religion
Or culture
We are all human
We are all talented
Every single person
Brings something to the table
Be it brains, humor, logic or style
We are drastically different
And completely equal
No human
Has any right to decrease a person's worth
Until there is a flawless human
Everyone has a talent
Skill or
Idea
That gives them the worth of any
Writer,
Scientist,
Philosopher or
World leader
And the possibility to be an do anything

West Junior High, 8th Grade
Ms. Barnes

My View of Diversity
By Laura Richards

Over one million snowflakes fall a year and no two are the same. No matter how many fall a year, they will NEVER be the same.

The same goes for people. No matter how many babies are born, everyone is different. Even identical twins are different on the inside. Everyone has different religions, cultures, and skin color.

Even with all this talk of difference doesn't mean you have to treat people differently. If you look past skin color, religion and culture, you'll find that everyone is the same. I may be white and you may be black, he may be from England, she may be from Japan, you might be Jewish and I might be Christian, but if you look past all that you'll see that we're all the same and Everyone Counts!

Russell Boulevard Elementary, 5th Grade
Mrs. Smith

Our Columbia
By Jacque Arnold

"I have a dream," he said.
So does Columbia,
"Dreams can come true," she said.
Even in Columbia.
"We are many parts," they sang.
Hispanics, African-Americans, Caucasians
We are Columbia.
Hindu, Muslim, Catholic, Jewish, Christian
We call Columbia HOME.
3/5 of a person no longer
We are whole people of a whole community
"Not an end, but a beginning," he said.
That is Columbia.
Gather your family
Gather your friends
Gather your students
Gather together Life
Here in Columbia.
"Together we are Strong, apart we are Weak," he said.
Love, Respect, Safety
Somewhere in Columbia.
Everyone is in need
Everyone is whole
Everyone counts
Everyone in Columbia.
Join hands and walk together
With people of Columbia.
"My country," we sing.
My community.
Your community.
Here we are in OUR Columbia.

Jefferson Junior High, 9th Grade
Mrs. Spate-Smith

Everyone Counts
By Jzhia Allwood

Every person should count no matter how they look, or how their voice sounds or their skin color. So look past the skin.

Just because of slavery, you still shouldn't treat races different. If your friend is a racist, you shouldn't be. You should teach the right thing to do. All cultures, all races, and all religions should be important to our history. Our goal should be to come together as one and treat everyone equal.

Enjoy your race, be proud of your race, and represent your race. Then our community would be a better place. I know that if we all work together and the world was not segregated then more people would be happy. I know everyone counts!

Russell Boulevard Elementary, 5th Grade
Mrs. Smith

Columbia Values Diversity: Everyone Counts!

By Humera Lodhi

I looked around my local grocery store, as I tried to find a bouquet of flowers as a gift for my mother. I passed roses, marigolds, lilies, and tulips. All of these flowers look beautiful, but there was just something that stopped me from picking them. Suddenly, I saw the perfect vase. It was absolutely enchanting, like a collage, only one or two of each type of flower. I grinned and I quickly purchased my selection.

My mom gave me a tight hug as I handed her the gift. I was sure I had picked the right bouquet. All the other ones which contained only one type of flower looked pretty but also boring. All the flowers were the same; none had a different color or design. The vase I had picked out what unique and "alive". It had a splash of color that the other pots didn't and it was truly mystical. And as I greedily picked out the tulip from the bouquet I had bought my mom I looked down and was shocked. The flowers looked different, they no longer had that special touch so I quickly returned the tulip back to its original location. Each flower had something special to give the bouquet. If I took even one out, the whole effect was ruined and the vase was no longer the prettiest. Every single flower counted.

Columbia, Missouri is like this bouquet. Each person is a different type of flower. Every person is unique and that is what shapes our city and makes it magical. If we were al the same we would be like a bouquet of one type of flower, gorgeous but endlessly tiring. If one person was ignored or taken away from Columbia, we would not be the city we are today. So, no matter how old or you, tall or short, color or ethnicity, never think you don't count because everyone counts!

Gentry Middle School, 7th Grade
Ms. Bergman

Black and White

By Russell Nichols

The white people are like kings.

The black people are like peasants.

But a man named Martin Luther King, Jr. was like the black knight fighting for justice not with his fists but with his words.

And won.

Lange Middle School, 6th Grade
Mr. Moore

3/5ths to a Whole

By Mahogany Thomas

Investigate the rudiments of the whole world,
Beyond layers or rocks you'd find diverse people.
A union of assorted individuals,
Joining together and counting in the creation.

While we're all spread out gasping diverse cultures,
We've allowed the world to become more dimensional.
Putting all people together
Allows sight that was yet to be seen.

Everyone counts into the making,
No one person is less that any other creature.
Each human being creates a special part,
The world becomes a special tree made of unique leaves.

Glancing back into the past,
Some Americans were considered 3/5 of one another.
A fraction of was all a person could say,
While their true significance was neglected to be displayed.

Currently in our communities everyone counts,
Demonstrating how far we have come since fraction days.
While all our differences have come together to great use,
We have to continue to remain this way.

For each person is now valued treasure,
Everyone now counts as their voices make a difference.
Everyone counts now in 2009,
And with everyone's help we will count all the way until the end.

Certainly as long as we remember simple analogies
Such as every speck is important in the assembly of dirt
And every branch's significance in the beauty of a tree
Also that every wall is a gift to the structure of a house
We can remember the importance of every person
How everyone counts in the creation of the world!

West Junior High, 9th Grade
Mr. Fagan

The Simplest Reasons

By Ouma Amadou

Once called a melting pot, American is now known as a salad bowl.
Bother are analogies of Diversity in America,
yet the question still remains,
"Why does everyone have importance?"
Everybody has significance for the simplest reasons.
Without people from other countries in America,
We would never be able to experience each other's distinctions in food or customs.
If immigrants from different ethnicities had not
populated the New World, none of us would be here.
Everyone matters because anyone could possibly help you,
when you need it the most. If you look past
race, gender, and nationality; but look at one
important aspect: We are all HUMANS.
We, as humans, are important to each other,
because we have the same needs and desires.
Without each other, there would be no compassion,
controversy, civility, culture, or commonality.
This is why everyone matters.

West Junior High, 9th Grade
Mr. Fagan

By Olivia Huggans

Destroy the barrier between races.
Inspire all others to do the same.
Value the voice of all others.
Equalize all people.
Realize everyone counts.
Speak out.
Ignore the colors of peoples skin
Treasure your friends no matter what
You can make a difference!

Paxton Keeley Elementary, 5th Grade
Mrs. Aguilar

Everyone Counts
By Krista Ward

On the surface people might think everyone is being treated equally but in reality it's not like that at all. People who were told they were less of a person probably felt like they *were* less of a person on the inside. They were probably upset and felt like they weren't worth anything. We don't want people thinking the whole community is against them, let alone the whole world. We want everyone in the community to feel like they count!

The phrase everyone counts means that we treat everyone with the same amount of love, respect, and hope. If someone is in trouble we should all try our best to help. We all come from the same place so looking down on one another shouldn't be an issue; but we all know it is. Clothes are just clothes; shoes are just shoes and some of us are less fortunate than others. If people see appearance as a problem, then maybe they should fix it. Help instead of hurt!

I personally think it's important to make sure everyone counts in your community because then your community will run well. By working together and involving everyone it would decrease crime, graffiti and just overall conflict. I think that by involving everyone in the community they will feel important and live happier lives!

In order for me to involve everyone in the community, I would come up with fun, safe and understandable activities that everyone could relate to. We could clean up areas that need help; we could plant trees to help the environment, we could come up with a group that brings awareness about community crime! We could do a lot of things and if we work together there are endless possibilities.

Douglas High School, 10th Grade
Dr. Bagby

A Time for Change
By Olivia Johnson

It kills me how one black person can turn their nose up at another black person while a white man is looking down on both of them saying black people can't act right nowhere. When will we learn? That you're going to need one another at the end to rise above the hate and racism in the world which we call home today. How are you going to look down or talk about somebody else when at the end of the day we all are human no race better than another, no person better than another cause everyone counts in the world population in the state, city. Just try to remember how many people died to let us to even say that we were equal and that everyone counts. Remember and keep Dr. King's speech alive. "I have a dream."

Jefferson Junior High, 8th Grade
Mrs. Donoho

Everyone Counts

By Kayla Hauck

It's a lovely thing when your hand's in mine

When we work together to shatter this line

We're gonna do this together, me and you

We're gonna help every color blend, like people should do

The outside is a door to your heart of gold

But if nobody knocks, then no one will know

It's a tragedy to see how our judging eyes follow

Making assumptions based on nothing; our chests are so hollow

We are gonna change direction, we are gonna spark the flame

We are gonna show the world all the beauty they have shamed

The little girl around the corner, shivering in the cold

The little boy just following orders, doing what he is told

Race, age, gender, and town, disguise us from first glance

Oh, how lovely would this world be, if we gave each other a chance!

Rock Bridge High School, 12th Grade
Ms. Black-Cone

Everyone Counts
By Innova Garver

I think everyone counts because even though they are a different color than you doesn't mean you should judge them. Even if they have a different religion than you doesn't change who they are. Just because someone is from somewhere else doesn't mean anything.

When they are from Mexico, Asia, and England you shouldn't judge where they are from. When they are different than you doesn't mean you can't count them. So you should count everyone in.

Count everybody even if they don't know you. Everybody is as special as you are. You should not make fun of anyone just because they are different. If they speak a different language that doesn't mean you have to be mean.

So you should count everyone so they won't feel left out. When they are left out, they think you don't like them. So remember, everyone counts.

Blue Ridge Elementary, 5th Grade
Mrs. Coonrod

Oxymoron
By Kellie Pitt

Two people of opposite qualities
Can complement each other perfectly.

It's the exception of this fact
That keeps us from thinking practically.

We see someone of a different race and
Assume we're not alike automatically.

But the fact, there, makes us more alike
And each one of us, very selfishly

Feel that we count as a person
So why doesn't that solely

Make everyone count?
Because we can't accept the fact
That we are all actually

Diversely Similar

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

Everyone Counts
By Maria Doerr

When I look around at all the faces,
Do I see race, wealth or superiority?
No.
I see a seeking people
I see in each face a purpose and a dream;
Not one worth less than another;
I see in each face
A common dream becoming a reality,
A dream conveyed to me by Dr. Martin Luther King
To break those chains of discrimination;
Each mind has something to share,
Each person a song to be sung;
Should one be told not to sing,
As others sing loud?
A few select voices,
Of those which fit a special class,
Cannot sing democratically, peacefully;
A united hymn must be sung,
Each person unique with vitality;
Contributing in different ways,
Each necessary in our enlightened verse,
With king-like purpose
To peacefully state
Our belief of equality,
And to rise up as one
To the sunlit path of justice with all people,
Each an individual, vital mind,
A purpose and dream that counts

Columbia Independent School, 9th Grade
Mr. Stuhlman

Everyone Counts
By De'Nayah Hyler

I think everyone counts because we are all human and should all be treated with respect. Some people use to be treated like animals because of the color of their skin. I don't think that's fair since we are human. Some people couldn't go in to a place because there was a law that had signs everywhere for a certain color.

I want to make sure everyone counts because I don't want to grow up letting people get my self-esteem down easy. Everyone's ideas should be heard. God made us the way we are for a reason and because of this we shouldn't be made fun of. This is why everyone counts.

Martin Luther King, Jr. got killed trying to undo the law of people not getting to go to the same places. That is why to this day we have a special day for Martin Luther King, Jr.

Remember everyone counts!!!

Blue Ridge Elementary, 5th Grade
Ms. Coonrod

Everyone Counts
By Alison Thompson

Everyone is the same if you look past their race, skin color, religion, heritage, abilities, age, family, and personality. Just because someone is different, doesn't mean you should treat them differently, especially meanly. I mean, why would you treat them differently than your friends? What makes you and your friends so special? Now when I say "everyone counts", I don't mean everyone counts like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc, I mean everyone is together. Like a family, a team, a group. Everyone participates.

Now, a long time ago, blacks weren't treated fairly. Whites made the blacks their slaves. Sometimes a slave's owner would make them work and then the owner would take the money and keep it. Finally, slavery ended. But there was segregation after that. Blacks lived on a whole other street. But thanks to Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and other blacks, segregation ended.

After reading the second paragraph, don't you think you should start treating people differently? Not only blacks, but everyone around you, well you should. Not matter if they are Asian, Scottish, Irish, American, English, French, or Jamaican, they count, and so do you. So if you're left out, tell them this story. Stand up for yourself, because you deserve better than that.

Russell Boulevard Elementary, 5th Grade
Mrs. Smith

It Doesn't Matter
By Alycia Soloman

Your Race –
It doesn't matter what color you are.
That's diversity.

Your Background –
It doesn't matter if you had slave for you ancestors or not.
That's diversity.

Your Disability –
It doesn't matter if your disability is shown or not.
That's diversity.

Your Life –
It doesn't matter if your mom and dad live with you.
That's diversity.

Your Community –
It doesn't' matter if you disagree with someone or not.
That's diversity.

Diversity –
That's Columbia, Missouri

Lange Middle School, 6th Grade
Mr. Moore

Diversity in Columbia

By Abby Theroff

Your culture, your town, your school
Nobody can
Ever
Take these things away from you.
It makes no sense when people
Make fun,
Gossip,
Whisper.
We are all different
It's nothing we can change
It's one thing God reinforced when he made man.
Adam and Eve weren't the same
So
You expect us to be?
They are your ancestors,
Your roots.

We are the same.
Same mind, same heart, same soul
Everyone is equal. Or at least should be.
Same chance at an education, love, freedom,
If we don't take a stand then who will?
Skin color is northing bur your outside
It is part of who you are
And
Who you will become.

Who cares whether you are black or white, Hispanic or Cuban?
I know I don't
So neither should you!
Diversity in Columbia is a symbol of fairness
We should all be treated fairly and that's the truth!

Lange Middle School, 6th Grade
Mr. Moore

Celebrating Diversity

By DeAuna Wolf

Canadians
Egyptians
Luxembourgian
Ecuadorians
Brits
Romanians
African Americans
Tunisians
Italians
Native Americans
Germans

Dominican Republicans
Irish
Vietnamese
Europeans
Russians
Syrians
Iraqis
Turkish
You

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Mrs. Wahid

Diversity

By Cameron S. Ivey

So what is Diversity? To some diversity is just Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, but to me it's much more. To me, diversity is a way of life; something that makes everyone equal no matter what their background may be. It's a political tolerance for people of different backgrounds. Whether black or white, Asian or Hispanic, everyone has the same equal rights.

As a woman of many different backgrounds, I can say for myself that diversity is very important. To gain acceptance and respect from people who are different than me feels wonderful. Although I am different than others, we all have at least one thing in common… We're all human beings, and with that being said, I don't understand how you could ever hate or shun one of your own just because they may have a different religion, race, ethnicity or even sexual orientation. They are still people and they all deserve respect, regardless to how many differences there are between you and them.

As MLKJ one said "*Discrimination is a hellhound that gnaws at Negros in every waking moment of their lives to remind them that the lie of their inferiority is accepted as truth in the society dominating them"* except I guess it's not only the Negros that have concerns about racism anymore. Every race and religion has thoughts of discrimination, whether it's "why" or "how". Some people can't even take a trip to the park without getting disfavored by someone. I think it's just as hard to deal with discrimination now as it was back with MLK was alive

I know my country has no perfected itself. At times, we've struggled to keep the promise of liberty and equality for all of our people. We've made our share of mistakes, and there are times when our actions around the world have not lived up to our best intentions. – Barack Obama

I have tattoo artists for parents and everywhere I go they get dirty looks from people. People look at me like "how could you live with that", and I just ignore it because life is too short to be mad all the time. I know there are ignorant people in this world and that's something I will probably have to deal with for the rest of my life but hopefully with time, things will get better. People will accept each other for who they are and we could all live in peace but for now we'll just have to fight the racism and discrimination until justice comes of this world. Every day I'll face a new challenge but I'm ready for whatever obstacle may come

Smithton Middle School, 6th Grade
Mr. Wahid

Everyone Counts

By Cullen Dutton

Jane Adams once said, “The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.” When my mom first told me this quote, I did not understand it, but as I have gotten older I not only understand it better I appreciate it more.

I understand Adams quote as meaning everyone counts or everyone should count in our community, our country, our world. Everyone should be treated equally no matter what race he or she is or what religion they practice. People should be treated equally no matter how much money they have or how many possessions they own. I try hard everyday to remember how lucky I am to have good parents, family, a good home, and a good school. I understand this is not the case for everyone though.

The first time I really understood this is when I was six years old. I was shopping at Wal-Mart with my mom when I noticed a boy in the store who was about the same age as me. The first thing I noticed when I saw him was that he didn’t have shoes on. He was also alone for the moment and looked very hungry because he was trying to open a bag of cookies. When I walked up to him I said “hi” and “are you alone?” He replied, “no” and then ran to another isle. After that I went back to my mom and said I wish that other people could have the same stuff as me if they already do not have it. I felt a little guilty for having so much when others had so little.

Now that I am 12 years old, I notice other things that we all need but may not all have. We need equal opportunities for education. We all need access to healthcare. We all need food, clothing, and shelter. We all need a community to support us and people to love us. I have learned that everyone counts. Anne Frank once said, “We all live with the objective of being happy, our lives are all different and yet the same.” I think everyone would be happier if we took the time to help each other. After all, everyone counts.

Smithton Middle School, 6th Grade
Mrs. Burns

Celebrating Diversity

By: Marquis Ledoux

There was a time in America when people from a different race other than white were beaten and treated like dirt rather than human beings. They weren't even considered a whole human. They were considered three-fifths of a human. Meaning that they weren't given any rights, they couldn't vote and they couldn't have any say in what happened to them and their families.

I think that everyone should be treated equally. No one man is better than another. No one should be judged by the color of their skin. Black, white, red, brown. They all come together in harmony just like an artist's painting using all different colors to create something beautiful.

I have many friends from different cultures and backgrounds. I treat them all with respect and dignity. I don't put them down because of a stereotype and what happened in the past. I see them for who they are, and we all value each others opinion. I don't judge people for what their skin color is, I judge them on their character.

My teacher is from a different country and her religion is a lot different from mine. I still don't criticize her or make rude comments about her people. If I have a problem with her, I approach it with the same respect as I give my other teachers. If I don't, I try to apologize because I must have been in a bad mood or something.

Diversity is important, and I'm glad that I'm celebrating it. Without it, I probably wouldn't have most of my friends. And I would probably not be in America because my family is from South America in Guiana.

Smithton Middle School, 7th Grade
Mrs. Wahid

By Mary Elizabeth Snethen

Egalitarianism will be the day when equality lives. This will be when money no longer defines our abilities. This will be when nothing but one's attitude can set them apart from the crowd. This will be when race, gender and lifestyle do not decide our paths. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dreamed of justice. America can and will have justice, and when it does it will be on our shoulders. When the amount of responsibility one has for this cause, the weight will be lighter. Justice can only come if one is willing to sacrifice their rights to gain that of others, include love in their heart, and remove violence from their actions.

The people that take their rights for granted are the ones who could never sacrifice them for another person. This ultimately results in stepping backwards in the opposite direction of justice. In Dr. King's speech he said, "If a man won't die for something, he is not fit to live." His statement shows that he believed that anyone who does not know the importance of equality should not have it. People can say forever they believe in equality and overall fairness, but until their actions show it, they have no purpose.

Therefore, the best way to show one believes in equality is love. Including love in one's heart will overall make them a better person. Love has a power greater than anything on earth, and when it is accepted by someone it speaks louder than everything else. Dr. King once declared, "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." This shows he understood the power of love. Hate would never transform an enemy into a friend. Fear could not, nor jealousy. While this may seem corny and cliché, the fact of the matter is: Nothing can replace it. Love is indispensable because anytime anyone attempts to live without love, their true unhappiness comes forth.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love." After one includes love in their hearts, violence should wane. Peace will never exist if violence is among us because it will bring hatred into the thoughts of many people. The familiar saying, Violence is not the answer, is quite true. Arguments should always end with forgiveness. If it would end with violence the argument will become a fight. Though violence is the path our country has chosen, it leads our citizens into a choice. One may decide to resolve every conflict with rage, while the other may choose to discuss the situation. If more people would attempt in decipher disagreements in communication, our world would see much less violence. Dr. King's speech included a message about violence. He said, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals." This means that nonviolence is not the lack of violence, but the choice against acting violently.

For example, Edgar falls into an argument with his wife. He could choose to act violently, in an attempt to get his way. Edgar could also act nonviolently if he were to choose to discuss the problem and work it out through conversation. His two choices are separate in the way they stand, both opposite in resolving one situation. If Edgar wants peace in his relationship he should choose the discussion.

Overall, justice will only come if one is willing to sacrifice their rights to allow that of their neighbor, include love in their heart, and remove violence from their actions. Martin Luther King Jr. believed this to be the only way to solve tension. Columbia, Missouri is home to many opinions, some more rational than others, but we are all equal. Justice has come, and will improve forever as long as people can follow Dr. King's guidelines. Everyone deserves an equal chance to speak, and this will happen. Egalitarianism will be the day when equality lives.

West Junior High, 9th Grade
Ms. Barnhouse

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