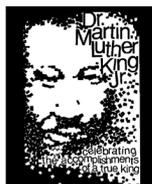


Choices
Diversity
Community
Love
Acceptance
Tolerance
Unity
Columbia
Compassion
Understanding
Kindness
Respect
Harmony

The Dream Revisited

writings from Columbia students

*Columbia Values Diversity Celebration
January 17, 2013*



FEMALE GENDER EQUALITY

Maddie Renner

Imagine just because you have different length in hair, or a different pitch of voice, and maybe even different interests you don't get a job. Men think we're afraid of getting dirty or sweaty, but we're humans just the same. Boys even in elementary school say they're better. "I'm way faster than you." or "I'm so much stronger than you." And things like sarcasm, "Oh no! Be careful that bench is dusty!" Women may not get a job because men say "You're a woman, you're too weak."

Things need to change. The way the male gender treats women needs to change. Boys should stop saying they're better. Men should hire women for their ability, not their looks. Women want to be treated like normal people but no! We're treated like a fragile diamond flower. That needs to change.

This would make life a lot better. More women will get jobs. It will be a lot more peaceful for girls in school. The female gender will be treated normally. Humans will be humans all the same.

Ms. James, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

THE DREAM REVISITED

Tacrian Cain

"You're black. You can't play with us." How would you feel if somebody said that to you? MLK Jr.'s dream was that blacks and whites get together and hold hands. My dream is like MLK Jr.'s dream. My dream is that people won't judge other people by their skin color. We are not there yet but it will happen.

I saw somebody get judged by their skin color. It was my brother. First, my brother wanted to play football. He saw some familiar kids across the street playing football. He thought he went to school with them. Next, he asked them if he can play with them. Then he waited until they gave him an answer. Last, they thought about it and said no. After that my brother was confused that they said no and then he asked why he couldn't play. They said because you are black. He was sad. Finally, he saw his other friends and asked if he can play they said yes. When his other friends said no because he was black, they were judging him by his skin color.

Sometimes in the USA white people won't let black people play with each other. I learned a lesson that I will not mistreat others so they could stop talking about each other is what I can do to help my dream. My dream is that blacks and whites will still be together in the future. Everybody should be nice and respectful no matter their skin color.

Mrs. Buckley, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

THE WOMEN RIGHTS

Sydney Livingston

To all the women

Aren't you glad you live today instead of back when you could only do some things?

I hope that you are glad that you have every right now that all men have, and you should be proud of that.

If you were to sink back into centuries ago, and at one point you would not be able to vote, you would not have a say as to who was in your government, and who was making all the decisions.

Back then all you could do was sit inside and wait for your husband to get home from work, just so that he could sit and watch you care for your children and make supper.

But no, not now! Now you can be the ones coming home late from work. Now you can vote for who you believe is right to rule. Just like Susan B. Anthony gave us the right to do that.

You should be thankful for all the rights you have today.

I know that we are all proud of our nation's women and all of the things that they have stood up for.

Starting way back in the 1800's our nation's women have lead us to freedom and the right to say the things we want to say, sure the men had a role in it too.

But mostly the people who lead us through everything we have been through are the women.

That's what you should be thankful for.

We all just need to say thanks to the ones dead or alive and tell them that they are everything that we have lived up to be today.

Be a teacher or a lawyer or anyone who has made an impact in your life.

Someone has to stand up, and now it's our turn to fight for what we believe in.

Be big or small, but if you have a problem with it, you have to fight.

Not with violence but with words.

Do it for all of us, do it for yourself.

Because we have things on our minds and just like women before our rights we will not stop fighting.

Mrs. Aguilar, 5th grade, Shepard Elementary

RELIGION DIVERSITY

Ivy Asplund

There was a cool spring breeze outside. The building was beautiful with its bright white walls with its beautiful trees and flowers of every color, but it was unusually loud. . . there were hundreds of protesters at the door of the church building. They were saying we either weren't strict enough or too strict. My father walked right past them, but they stayed put. They were still there when the meeting began, but they left by the end.

I have another story about one of my dad's employees. He's a Muslim so people say he's a terrorist behind his back because of what happened on 9/11. My dad tells them not to make assumptions about someone because of their religion. No matter how many times he says it they still do it.

I think people should let people believe what they want to. They should also treat everyone the same no matter what they believe in. They should also try to be kind to people no matter what others say about their religion. They should also accept that people will believe what they want no matter what.

I believe that people shouldn't care about what other people believe in. They also shouldn't make assumptions about people because of their religion. I believe, it would make the world much better for the people they're doing it to. They would have more peaceful church meetings. They also would have more friends if people stopped saying bad things about them. It would be wonderful.

Ms. James, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

DIVERSITY

Ke'ani Salas

When we are little we are told it is not ok to judge others but as we get older we see more and more people getting judged. So, why do people think it is ok to judge others for their differences? It's not. None of us are the exact same so why do we feel the need to judge others for their differences?

My father is in a wheelchair and whenever we go somewhere it seems someone is always staring or whispering. Once when he picked me up from a student council meeting, he said a couple of first graders were whispering about how he looked weird because he's in a wheelchair.

I used to look at other people in wheelchairs weird. Probably because I didn't know their story. Now I say "hi" or "hello" because I know how they feel sometimes they get tired of the stares and whispers. People in wheelchairs aren't as different as some people think. Yes, their abilities are limited. They can't do all the things we can like walking or running some can't even write. But they can still do most of the things we can.

Put yourself in their shoes. Imagine you are taking a stroll down the street and everyone that walks past you stares at you. How do you like it? Do you feel like you are being treated unfairly for something you can't control? That is exactly how they feel. Think about that next time you see someone in a wheelchair. Diversity is a wonderful thing we should celebrate it and embrace it.

Dedicated to my father who is the inspiration of my story.

Mrs. Croom, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

THE WORLD OF DIVERSITY

Meriam Schieber

Have you ever seen a crowd of people just staring at one person because the way she or he looked, spoke, or maybe because she or he was different? Well, maybe you have or haven't but it is never ever okay to stare at one person because she or he is different.

At our school we have a little girl that has mental disabilities. People stare at her because the way she walks and the noises she makes. I don't stare. I also don't see what the matter is. I see people that are different all the time. For example all the people in my class are different. I think we're all different, good or bad ways, and no one is 100% the same or 100% different.

There is a difference I rather call it diversity. There is diversity in everyone and that's what makes our world colorful. You're different from me and I'm different from you. People with mental disabilities are all around us. Like attitude and more. It's no big deal we are all different in a unique way.

Now imagine a world where no one judged you about your problems. Well, I think that if you and me can change one mind then we can change everyone's mind. I hope people know that this is something we can fix if we truly try. We can make everyone feel good about themselves, because a world of difference is a colorful world.

Ms. Rice, 5th grade, Rock Bride Elementary

DIFFERENCES IN OUR WORLD

Raven DeBates

"Look at her" kids whisper. "She talks weird." This is just one thing kids face when they have physical features. I along with many others face this problem.

I have a cleft pallet. It is a birth defect that I will have to deal with my whole life. It affects your speech. If you have this condition you will probably have to take speech therapy. It changes the way you look. Many are bullied because they look different.

When you have a cleft pallet you have to have surgeries. I have recently had a bone graft. A bone graft is when they take bone from your hip, knee, or anything else and put it where you need the bone.

I was bullied because I looked different than others. I once sat in the corner crying. Kids looked at me and said "she's weird." I had to take speech therapy. I hated it and thought it was boring. But it helps me, now I talk better than I did three years ago.

Tell your kids about cleft pallets. Make sure they understand. If they don't they could be bullying someone with a disability. Never bully others because they are different. They might be in a wheel chair but it doesn't make a difference.

It is excellent to be different. Diversity may be a problem but don't let it be. Let's celebrate our differences!

Ms. Rice, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

ONE THING THAT HURTS MIGHT BE...

Ava Gorham

What can you do to make the world a better place? Why don't we start with acceptance in how we learn? People all around the world learn differently. So don't bully someone just because they learn differently than you.

A lot of people around the world are bullied or bully themselves for learning differently, or more slowly. Most people in this case probably feel miserable or useless in school. These people may also miss or try to miss a lot of school pretending to be sick and don't get a good learning chance. Some kids probably stay inside a lot. Some people (if they stay inside) are even bullied by their own parents.

Some parents bully their own children just for learning differently or more slowly. My cousin's friend (who is on his baseball team) is bullied by his own parents because he learned differently! My guess to kids disappearing suddenly is they are being bullied by their parents. This probably scares them so they run away. So please don't bully your child for learning differently! Don't feel bad about yourself either!

When I was in second grade, I learned differently too. I was always very slow with reading so I didn't get to read to myself. I was always reading to my mom, dad, or teacher Mrs. Randel. I was consistently being timed whenever I read and I got tired of it a lot! I was really trying hard to read faster. I did! Now I read at a nice speed. If you know someone like that you may want to help them.

These differences are wonderful and the world would be bland without them. But some people need help with their differences and here are a few ways you can: You could encourage them before a test. Maybe you could help this person practice. You may also review these difficulties after they learn about them in school. This is one way we can make the world a better place, but there are many more. We can make the world a better place!

Ms. Rice, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

Peace

Sidney F.

Treating people respectfully

Peace

No wars

Peace

Being kind and helpful to your neighbors

Peace

Follow God's path

Peace

Treat all people the way you want to be treated

Peace

Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for it

Peace

Loving those who are different

Peace

Would make the world paradise

Mrs. Lawler, 4th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

THE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT PEACE

Grace Schieber

The important thing about peace is that it is very nice. It looks like a nice shower of rain and feels like a pillow. If you had to taste it, it would taste like sweet warm pie. When I think of peace I think of colorful flowers. When you think of peace what do you think of? When everyone thinks of peace then the world will be amazing!!!

Mrs. Lawler, 4th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Matthew Linhares

"Peace is not something you do once a day, and it is not something you throw away. It is equal, it is fair, don't stop until everyone has had their share. Integration is the peaceful way, segregation has passed away. Let's all do our part to keep it this way!"

Mrs. Lawler, 4th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

I Have a Dream

Adrianna Preyer

I have a dream
That people would stop shooting
Children and adults

I have a dream
That people would stop
Kidnapping children and
Taking them away

I have a dream
That people would
Stop killing people
In their family and
Just love them

I have a dream
That all of these
Things will stop
Happening to children,
Teenagers, even adults
And our community
Will be ok

I have a dream . . .
What is your dream?

Mrs. Aguilar, 5th grade, Shepard Elementary

Peace IS...

Braden Ambra

Peace is one helping another. Peace is the soothing sound of music in ones ear. Peace is relaxing after a hard day. Peace is great battles ending. Peace is the joy of freedom. Peace is us, without us peace would be just another word. So for a million years to last:

PEACE!

Miss Hassemer, 4th grade, Shepard Elementary

LEUKEMIA

Claire Forshee

One thing about the world that is unfair is diversity. Diversity can be good and bad. It can make you feel left out or help you to stand out. You choose.

I am a Leukemia patient at the Women's and Children's Hospital. I was diagnosed in 2010 and will finish my treatment in 2012. A major way I have felt diverse was in second grade. I lost my hair. I wore hats every day.

My diversity made me feel annoyed, angry, and sad. Lots of people stared and asked questions as if I were an alien. Some people said rude things and called me names.

Every day I think about my diversity and how it affected my life. Lots of people have helped us fight for our rights so we could celebrate diversity. Be grateful for difference and be glad we don't have complete sameness.

Miss Germeroth, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

THE DREAM REVISITED

Jude Schwedtmann

Have you ever felt different? Or have you ever tried to speak to your mom and she didn't know what you're saying? I couldn't speak any English to my mom. I have just come to America from China.

At the age of five in America a woman adopted me. I was happy to have a new mom. The only problem was that we couldn't understand each other.

Have you ever spoken to your mom and she didn't know what you're saying? I was hard to communicate with the most important person in my life. It made me feel frustrated to talk to my mom.

Now that I have lived in America for five years, I now know English. My mom and I can talk together all the time. It feels great to talk together.

My mom and I are from two different parts of the world and know two different languages. Even though we were born in two different countries we're still a part of the same family.

Miss Germeroth, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

THE DREAM REVISITED

Kylee Parker

Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Ruby Bridges, we all should be thinking about these people. They all risked their lives for us to celebrate diversity. We all feel diverse sometimes. This is how my story goes.

My name is Kylee. I'm a fourth grader. When I was in kindergarten something happened. It made me feel diverse. Though I learned something, to read lips.

My grandma helped me read lips because she had her voice box taken out. Now she can't talk. Or breathe out of her mouth. She has to breathe out of her throat.

Since she is different people ask questions about her. When she comes to my school people sometimes make fun of her. It sometimes gets annoying. Everybody asking, "What's that?" I wish it could go away.

On friends and family day, my grandma came. As you would guess everybody asked questions. There were so many questions that at the end of the day my teacher had me tell my class why she can't talk. I was so embarrassed because not a lot of people had a grandma like mine.

Through all this time I've learned a lot. How to read lips, and how to answer lots of hard questions about my grandma. Though the most important thing I have learned was that it is not a bad thing to be diverse. Martin, Rosa and Ruby helped me know that; if we were all the same it would be boring. Trust me.

Miss Germeroth, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

DIFFERENT MEANS SPECIAL

Rachel Yoon

Have you ever had a person in your class speak all different languages? Well I have, and I have a dream for America that no matter what language you speak, where you're from, and how you look like, you all be treated equally. Like Martin Luther King, Jr. said I have a dream that one day. . . . On a Georgia hill a black boy and a white boy become a brotherhood.

When I was first came to American school. I was walking to find my new classroom, and everybody looked at me. I was scared as a ghost hunting me! And also I felt different from others. Because everybody had blonde or brown hair color, with black or white skin color. Then I looked at me. . . My hair color was black, and my skin color was orange. Then I found my new classroom. My new teacher gave me a sheet of paper, but I couldn't read the words. A girl came to me and asked "Do you want some help?" I couldn't understand what she meant. I was going to cry. Then everybody looked at me again.

One year later. . . It was my first fourth grade class. So I was walking to find the new classroom. Then I thought . . . In this world, there are many types of people. It doesn't mean some are good or some are bad. What I learned from this experience is, it's okay if you're different. Different just means special. Different is not a bad thing. And now I understand how Martin Luther King, Jr. felt.

Ms. Blackburn, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary

THE DREAM REVISITED

Kamille Dy

Decades ago a middle-aged man, by the name of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., started a well written thought out speech with the four words, "I have a dream. . . ." In his speech many important points were brought up but the two most crucial were the ideas of all races and ethnicities being equal to one another and peace between every individual. Dr. King's speech not only opened the eyes of many individuals, his speech opened their hearts and gave them the hopeful idea that the world could be at peace and finally everybody would be treated with equal respect despite their ethnicity. Because of the violence that still takes place in our community day to day, Dr. King's dream of everlasting equality throughout all races and peace between all individuals has unfortunately not become a reality. This idea is exemplified through the many shootings we have witnessed in Columbia, Missouri and several hate crimes that have taken place in our community over the last two and an half years.

Dr. King's speech stressed the simple idea of ending violence. This idea was a main component of his dream and the world that he had envisioned for future individuals of America. Unfortunately this dream of his has not become a reality and it can very well be expressed through the shootings we have seen in Columbia, Missouri over the past year. In early April of 2011 a young man at the age of seventeen was shot and killed by another teenager. News reports had stated that it was clearly not an accidental murder and the shooter intended on shooting the victim. It was also said that there was a fair chance that this murder had been gang related, but nobody know for certain. At the time it had been the second fatal shooting in Columbia in less than a month.

"They will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Such a power statement expressed by Martin Luther King, Jr. in his "I have a dream" speech. This statement of his was full of hope and the idea that one day America would be equal and individuals of any race would be accepted by everyone and treated equal to one another. But just like his idea of violence disappearing, it wouldn't happen. Over the past few years there have been copious amounts of racist hate crimes in our community. Two more recent hate crimes were committed by college students in Columbia. In March, 2011 two Mizzou college boys were arrested for a very rude and hurtful racist prank they pulled. The boys were suspected of spreading cotton balls in front of Mizzou's Black Culture Center-they claimed it was only a joke. Whether it was a joke or not it clearly offended many people and was taken very seriously. In February of 2011 another racist hate crime was committed by yet another college student. Racist terms were spray painted on the surface of a building in Columbia by this student but later washed off. Through these racist hate crimes, I think it is safe to say it is obvious that racism is still present around our city.

Although Dr. King's speech did open the eyes, minds, and hearts of many individuals, it is sad but safe to say that violence and racism still exists in Columbia, Missouri. It has been proved through the many shootings we have witnessed and several hate crimes committed in our small town. Unfortunately we will probably not see a change in our life time, but we can hope that one day the dream of Dr. King will become a happy reality.

Mrs. Cone, 12th grade, Rock Bridge High School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Ashley Rippeto

Our society, as confusing as it is,
Is filled with differences that make us one
It takes talent to make a society so diverse
But still be able to remain this flexible and this fun.
We have different cultures, races and religions
And somehow we find ways to look past the unfamiliarity
We don't always have to understand why people are the way they are
Sometimes not understanding why sparks the deepest clarity.
Peace lies somewhere in the veins of our world today
Peace is something that we have struggled so hard to reach
But with every smile to every person who is not like us
That peace remains alive, for that peace we keep.
Finding truth in the largest sins
Make up who we really are to be
Our society's mirror is the acceptance of other people
And how we influence loving the things that we can't always see.
Martin Luther King told us that we could be cohesive
With a varied races and varied people side by side
Let's always remember that peace reins true when we learn to love
Let's let love be our compass, let's let love be our guide.

Mrs. Cone, 11th grade, Rock Bridge High School

COLUMBIA VALUES DIVERSITY

Julia Schaller

Born and raised in Saudi Arabia, I've always loved trying new things and learning about new cultures. Being raised in such a diverse place has really opened my eyes to understanding other people similar to me, as well as those that aren't so similar to me. Being taught French at a young age, I've also taken a calling to the French language. And when I think of my life now, the friends I have, the paths my life has veered down, I can't help but thank God for the diversity in my life and all around the world.

Today, as I read Martin Luther King Junior's famous speech that we all know too well, I read it afresh. I've read the speech, heard it even, but has it ever truly sunk in to me? Well, this time it's resonating. As I think back on my own life, I'm so proud to be as diverse as I am. I'm proud

to call my best friends who are from different countries my best friends. I'm proud of diversity that I've strived to live for my life. Thinking back, throughout history, although there have been wars, many conflicts, and disagreements, our nation is what it is today because of the diversity of people.

When I think of true cultural diversity, I am reminded of a trip to China I took last year. After flying for an eternity, I landed in Beijing, China, where, for the next week, the Chinese way of life was going to be my own. So much of the Chinese lifestyles are so different from what I live my normal life like here, but that was what was so beautiful about the whole trip. Everywhere I looked, I saw beauty. A beauty I had never seen before: the beauty of a true foreign culture. Being in a city so gigantic, I was exposed to so much new culture and interesting lifestyles. And, I really believe that being able to travel to those places, live in those places, walk a week in a different culture's shoes for a week, is one of the most rewarding things a person can do. Not only will you learn perspective, but you'll fall in love with humanity, as I did.

After that trip, my life will never be the same. I feel as though my mind is constantly blown away by the reassurance of cultural diversity, just as my heart bursts at its seams of appreciation for all that life is. Thank God we live in a world where we, as diverse cultures, can walk together, love together, and be together. I am blessed to live in a world, a country, a state, a community in which being different is encouraged and shown in such a bright light.

Mrs. Cone, 12th grade, Rock Bridge High School

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

Simon Midkiff

Dr. Martin Luther King envisioned a world in which no one goes to bed hungry. As we all know, Dr. King was a dreamer. His dream of a free nation, where all men and women are created equal, gave rise to the civil rights movement. Because of Dr. King, I share my classroom with amazing friends that I would not have met if not for the civil rights movement. Dr. King also shared his thoughts on poverty and hunger, "I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for the minds and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits." I too believe that everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, should have the right to healthy meals, every single day. By simply donating your time or a few dollars each month, we can end hunger in the world.

Every year, my mom and I volunteer to ring the bell for the Salvation Army. Last year, it was the coldest day EVER, but there we were, ringing the bell for hours. We always sign up for a three hour shift, and last year, those three hours seemed like a lifetime. Outside of the warm and toasty store, our hands were numb and our toes were frozen solid. Every 20 minutes, my mom would go inside and refill our hot chocolates. This was the only way we could stay warm. Trust me, it wasn't fun, but afterwards I felt like I had done something that actually helped people. This feeling is why I will volunteer next year, and the year after that.

Collecting can goods with my Boy Scout Troop is always rewarding. My Troop always collects food for families during the Holidays and during the colder months. It's our way of making sure families have enough when they need it most. Each year we collect at least 50 cans of food. This food helps families who may not have the resources to help themselves. We see this as a way to encourage our families to keep trying.

By giving just a few dollars to the homeless men and women who live in our city, I know I have made a difference. My family and I often see homeless people on the streets of downtown Columbia. When we have a few spare dollars, we always give. We give because it's the right thing to do. If one day, the tables are turned, I would like to think that my fellow man would help me find a meal.

By helping, I feel like I can change the lives of people who may be down on their luck or need just a little bit of help. Sometimes, we all need help, which is why it's important to consider others and how we can help. Just think, if a 12 year old boy can do all of this, what can we ALL do to end world hunger? I think we can do a lot. Don't you?

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

REALIZING THE TRUTH: THE JOURNEY BEHIND DISCRIMINATION

Kajole Patel

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Martin Luther King, Junior stated in his "I Have a Dream Speech" in 1963. This is an exemplary statement numerous people refer to. I, too, think like Dr. King, but unfortunately, there are some people in the United States who continue to stereotype and bully individuals. I understand that this is a growing problem that goes on daily, and I feel that every citizen in America should cooperate and allow others to be themselves.

Imagine if people looked at you in a rude view, as if you are their next victim. These people draw tension into your soul, ready to shatter your emotions in an instant. I have seen this happen numerous times through my twelve years of life. This is the reality of what many people have encountered. But why do such harsh people do this to others? We may never find out an exact answer to this problem. We need to help stop these predators invading innocent people's feelings.

Idiot, jerk, slut, bitch, freak, turd, whore, the list never stops. I have heard so many people name-calling others all of the time. When I hear those words, I always refer to a particular girl I have met in kindergarten. Back in elementary school, she was laughed at behind her back because of her weight, as well as having almost all of the grade level making fun of her, just because of the way she thinks and what she does. I still do not understand what is wrong with someone thinking differently. Once you get to know someone who is being bullied, in my case verbally abused, you will realize that that person is not as bad as you think. She was the first real friend I made, and that will never change.

Peer pressure creates difficult times for some individuals, as well. When I hear about cliques and "popular" people, all they do is impress others by grabbing attention in some way. When these kinds of people are seeing classmates who are unusual to them, they start to pick on them for some kind of reason. These kinds of people do this starting in sixth grade, and they continue doing this for the rest of their lives. This worsens the situation for others because they try to fit in the popular "standard," but end up being used. They create others to dress differently, hang out with people they dislike, you get the point. We need to stop becoming someone we are not so we, too, can make a difference.

This is a very serious matter and there needs to be some kind of solution for this issue. Perhaps, if one person refuses judging and mistreating others, person by person may notice and realize how cruel and shameful this practice can be. We need to somehow overcome this issue. If we live in a world where no one was left out or made fun of, then everyone would be able to have the chance to be themselves. So, we should help fight for a world of calmness and fairness.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Lydia Broadus

When I first heard about a shooting it was the Colorado movie theater one. Of course it was sad, but it didn't really make me feel in danger. It seems weird to not be scared when you hear about a shooting, but it was so far away that it didn't really pose as a threat to me. But then I started hearing about Columbia shootings. More and more shootings seemed to pop up on the news every week. Columbia always seemed like such a safe small town to me, a border to all the big cities where that kind of stuff happens. But then I realized that Columbia is growing and experiencing new things that happen to be a threat to anyone living in Columbia. But when you think about it, what problems can a gun solve that a mouth can't?

Many households in Columbia have been lately hearing gunshots. Hearing that noise for some families is normal, but it shouldn't be. Some people have certain neighborhoods they avoid at night. Columbia is supposed to be a safe town, but what has become of it now? Fear of being shot at in neighborhoods? If you are afraid to drive through a neighborhood at night then think about the people that have to sleep there. Shootings are a threat to everybody and they need to stop.

There are so many problems already in every city that are being decided how to be dealt with, without adding shooting to that already long list. Columbia is getting densely populated. The more people, the more children, and children and their parents should not have to worry about shootings. People should not feel frightened in their own city about something that really has no need to happen.

Shootings need to stop because they are dangerous and pointless. My dream for Columbia is for people to not have to worry about shootings and feel unsafe because of them. There is no need for shootings. We have mouths for a reason, and that reason is to communicate and work things out. Columbia used to be perfectly safe. But as it grows rapidly so many new problems have occurred. It's not impossible to fix these problems, new laws passed and awareness that shootings are closer than you think would definitely help. Columbia just needs a little help, and it starts with the people.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

VISION FOR THE WORLD

Evan Drane

One of my favorite past times is drawing or creating imaginary worlds. If I could create one in real life it would include peace, justice and equality. A world filled with these things might be possible if we all followed the teachings of Martin Luther King, Junior.

The definition of peace means without violence. When I hear someone say peace it makes me think of no war. Peace does not just have to be between nations. It could be between states, cities, schools, friends or just between you and your brother or sister. Here in Columbia, I believe we need peace among those that are frightening, hurting, or killing others in our community with guns. This is important to me because I do not want a family member, friend or myself to be injured or killed by this violence.

The definition of justice is being fair. Justice and peace are closely bound together. King said that "true peace is the presence of justice." To me, justice is needed for the victims of bullying. Most bullies chose their victims because they are different in some way and that they should suffer because of that difference. King would tell those being bullied to take a stand, but not in a violent way. I hope that I would have the courage to help a victim of bullying to get justice in a peaceful way.

The definition of equality is the state of being equal. The constitution says that all men are created equal. During Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life this was not true. Today there are times when I feel that I am not being treated equally. For example, I feel that students shouldn't be excluded from activities that only Triple E students can be a part of, like the Yearbook Club. I believe that King would say that anyone that has an interest in a club or activity should be able to join and not excluded. This is what equality means to me.

The start of creating a world of peace, justice and equality begins with me. By following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s example we can create a better world for all. Even though the man is gone, his teachings are still with us and the dream is still alive.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

MY TWO HOPES AND MY TWO DREAMS FOR AMERICA

Jordan Hollandsworth

I have many dreams for the future of America. But I have two certain dreams that I hope come to America in the near future. I hope the wars all over the world can end. I hope that one day all people will accept and be accepted by others.

My dream for wars to end goes a lot deeper than having fighting disappear. My dream is that soldiers can come home to their families. That no more lives will be taken or become missing. My dream is that our world could be safe enough to live in and the streets safe enough to walk. I also have another dream that is different from ending wars, this dream is about everyone being equal; this also goes a lot deeper than seeing so-called happy faces. I hope not only will bullying stop but everyone will be accepted. I dream that others will accept the rest of the people that make up our community and the golden rule will play a big role throughout humankind. Some people would say I am a dreamer, and that these things I hope for can't and will not come true. Maybe I am a dreamer but even if some would say we are human and can't stop wars or make everyone feel accepted. . . I still believe that because we are human we can work together to bring our soldiers home and accept all others as equals. I have many hopes and dreams for the future of America, and even perhaps the world, but I believe together as people we can accomplish this goal and make my dreams and hopes reality.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

I HAVE A DREAM

Leila Gassman

"I have a dream." Everybody knows these words. They are spoken over and over again, year after year. Books quote it, teachers lecture it, parents discuss it.

Most kids sigh, tap their pencils and wiggle their feet, waiting for the long, boring talk to be over.

But some kids still know what Martin Luther King's wise words mean. They know his dream – it is their dream too. Because they know the suffering, they understand what it means to be laughed at, to be left out.

And why? Why do they have to feel this pain?

"She's Asian. He's poor. She's black."

That's why.

You might not be a part of it. You might not even know that it is happening. But in whispers, in notes, in dirty glances – all that hatred leaks out. Those kids may be smiling, but don't be fooled! That smile is plastic, and inside they are hurting. There is a hole in their heart and dullness in their eyes.

We have gone a long way since Martin Luther King. But have we gone far enough?

Ms. Wahid, 6th grade, Smithton Middle School

BULLYING

Hayley Leal

She's wailing. She's beyond wailing. She's sobbing so hard her whole body lurches forward with every cry she lets out. There's a reason my best friend is lying on the ground crying so hard and pounding her fists on the floor. Bullies. My dream for the world is for everyone to treat each other equally, that people wouldn't get bullied to the point that they can hardly breathe, or even stop breathing. We are all equal, just different than each other, but no one should have power over someone else just because they have a bigger ego.

My dream is to not have anyone in the world have to want to die, or cry on a daily basis because of someone else's words or actions. I've watched my best friend want to die because she was being bullied so much. I never ever want to see that again. I never want to hear on the news that someone has committed suicide because of people bullying him or her. About 4,400 teens die annually from committing suicide, 44% of them do it because of bullying. The fact that anyone could be the cause of someone else's death is far more than not okay, it's terrible.

One out of seven kids at school has been a victim of bullying. My dream is for no one to have to go to school and plan how they walk through the halls, just to avoid bullies. My dream is to not hear people say cruel things to each other and have my friends tell stories of bullying at school. One out of seven kids being bullied is too many.

Fifteen percent of student's absences at school are because they are too scared of being bullied when they get there. My dream is for no one's education to be affected because of someone else's behavior. That is never ever okay. No one should have to skip school because of fear. My dreams are very strong, they may never come true, but they might. Together we can have bullying come to a stop right now before we lose another person, before another person has to skip school, and most importantly before the bully finds a new victim. My dream is that everyone can have peace in their heart, through all their life.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

MY THREE DREAMS

Elizabeth Curtright

Every student deserves three traits; equality, peace and justice. If we apply these concepts to our lives daily, then maybe every student will have a chance to have them too. I have had many experiences in middle school where the situation was lacking these traits. I wish that everyone could experience peace, justice and equality. If I can use these concepts in all circumstances, anybody can. Everybody should.

As I walked down the pavement sidewalk to the bus stop, my friend approached me. She began telling me a story that happened to her from the previous night. Another friend had been mistreating her. Gossip. Instead of jumping into the conversation about the other girl, I told her I was sorry that it happened to her. I gave her a few suggestions as to how she could solve her problem. In middle school there is endless gossip. To solve that problem I can do a few things, for example, choosing not to gossip. My dream is for there to be more peace in middle school.

Walking to my normal lunch table I saw a friend standing isolated at her own lunch table. I grabbed her so that she could join mine. She left her lunchbox in her place at our lunch table while she went to go do something. Secretly, one of my other friends took her lunch box and moved it to another table in order to make room for others. When my table got full, I moved to my other friend's table after the girls moved her lunch box. My friends had been mean to my other friend. Mean girls are thriving in middle school. It is a problem that is out of my hands, but I try my best to do what I can. I stand up to mean girls and I tell my friends and I tell my friends if they're acting like a mean girl. It is challenging when a friend is acting like a mean girl, but standing up to them will show them what they're doing is unacceptable. My dream is for there to be more equality in middle school.

As my tired hands continued typing, I yawned. I was up till eleven o'clock writing and typing. My partner, who was also my best friend, had dance, so I was stuck doing all the work. I did all the work, but we got the same score because I didn't want my teacher to know. I didn't tell her because my partner was my best friend. She let me down. There was no justice in my situation. My friend and I got the same grade. I could've solved the problem by telling my teacher, but I didn't. To solve the problem of injustice in middle school I can do something. For example, I can tell my teacher when there are people not doing what they are supposed to do. Honesty will help bring justice into all schools. My dream is for there to be more justice in middle school.

Although I only have a few dreams they are very significant. I want them to be applied in students' lives every day because justice, equality and peace are all important things. They are important to me because I want everyone to feel secure in middle school. These concepts will help kids make friends, keep friends, be honest, be responsible and many more things that will help them later on in life. I learned that applying peace, justice and equality to my life will make

middle school experiences better. Everyone deserves to have peace, justice and equality in their life. I wish that everyone had these traits in their lives.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

racism – WHY?

Nancy Diallo

“I have a dream.” The inspirational words of Martin Luther King, Jr. His dream was that all people would recognize that all men are equal, no matter what they look like. That was almost 50 years ago. Still now, racial discrimination is abundant and different races dislike one another strongly. I have a dream myself. I dream to live in a world deprived of racial tension and for everyone to really and truly believe that all of men are equal.

Racism is a difficult problem to deal with. I guess that is why it is still just a dream and not a reality. To make my dream a reality, it means altering someone’s viewpoint and shallowness. And changing the thoughts of others is difficult, to say the least. I believe, though, that it is not a hopeless cause. I am even more driven by the thought of living in a world where everyone got along, making everything more productive and finally allowing some peace, at least in that area. To make this wondrous possibility happen, however, is to change a person’s view and to do this to cure their figurative blindness. Many people, sadly, are trained from infancy to hate those of a different race. While a lot of racism points to White vs. African Americans, it can also be reversed and include Asian, Hispanic, and Native American people. If, though, people began to look, not on the outside, but on the inside, they would find out just who that person truly is. Thus they would cure their blindness and contribute to making the world happier.

Racism also roots in something that I find ignorant. I myself have experienced racism, and was moved to research other racist events in history. Through all my reading, I concluded that others ostracized those of different races because they were different from them. And because they didn’t understand the differences, they chose to go against them. If we could find a way to tweak someone’s shallow assessment of others, then maybe, just maybe, my dream will become a bright shining reality.

I am really into my cause and aspire that one day my dream will be real. If that does happen then, for once, everyone would actually be equal and judged fairly. Doing so would make this world so much better. Throughout my life, I have learned that if you push hard to achieve your goal, good things will happen. And, I feel passionate about my dream, and have high hopes that it will come true. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “I have a dream,” and he fought hard to make it come true. I have my own dream now. A dream to live in a world free of racism, and I hope that some way that very dream will come true.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Stephanie Kang

I could feel my heart pounding in my chest as I walked into the silent room. I looked around and saw classmates chattering, studying, or even sleeping. DING! The bell echoed through the empty hallways as my classmates found their assigned seats. When I sat down my hand shook and I started studying as quickly as I could. Suddenly, a hand shut my binder; it was my American friend. She said, "Stephanie, please . . . you're Asian. You're probably going to get an A again." As I looked at her blankly, unanswered questions quickly filled my head. Am I really ready? Will I get an A on this test? Did I study enough? I quickly mumbled, "Sure" and took my binder out from under her hand. Ten minutes passed and the teacher started giving out the test. I had to get a 100% on this test. Everyone including my family, my friends, my teachers, my community, always expected me to do well on everything.

This incident has reminded me that even though our society has greatly improved in terms of equality for all, we still have work to do. Dr. King's dream of equality has been the goal our society has wanted to achieve since his death in 1968. Since then, our society has grown from a deprived nation that looks only at one's skin color to a nation where everyone has an equal chance at everything. Although we have improved greatly, there is still one thing that blocks our path to fully reaching Dr. King's dream: stereotypes. Stereotypes are false generalizations about different groups of people. Over generations, an Asian stereotype has been that we, as Asians, never get less than an A+ or an A on our report cards, excel in math and science, study a lot, and are usually anti-social. Although some things could be true for some people, not all of these things are true about every Asian in Columbia. Once we can fix these stereotypes and our view of others at first sight, Dr. King's dream can be achieved. Not only will everyone have equal rights and chances, but everyone will have freedom to live without being judged by appearance or stereotypes.

Although I was under a lot of pressure, I did eventually get an A on my test. As I worked through my test, I could hear my pencil scratch the paper. I scribbled my answers to the questions. DING! The bell finally rang and I rushed to finish my last answer. When I turned my test in I looked around for my American friend and found her standing behind me. She walked toward me and said, "How'd you do?" As I thought of a good reply, I remembered questions I had asked before my test. I enthusiastically replied, "Great!" I waited for her stereotypical reply, but instead she answered, "Great, I thought I did well too!" Her response makes me realize that maybe Dr. King's dreams are already starting to become a reality.

Ms. Barnhouse, 9th grade, West Junior High School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Luke Troyer

I awoke in a cold sweat. I looked around at my small slim apartment and remembered what lay ahead of me. Today was the day. I remembered the past month. The cotton balls lay scattered around the building. I whipped out my cell phone and dialed 911 immediately. The police arrived five minutes later. News cameras whirred. A reporter asked what my opinion was. I looked the camera straight in the eye. "I don't want any retaliation attack. Peace is what we need. I may want peace but I will make sure this person who did this gets justice for what he did."

The phone rang. I picked it up and the police officer gruffly told me that I was to come down to court that day. Soon, I was dressed and the hazelnut smell of coffee filled the air. A police car drove up to the apartment complex. I got up and trotted my way down the stairs and over to the police car.

I entered the car to hear a squabbling coming from the radio. The police officer apologized for the loudness. I asked "Is there any way that we can just have peace?" The police officer sighed and looked at me, "I'm sorry. Even though I am also Africa-American, I have been around long enough that hopefully the judge will throw the book at the racist. I seriously doubt it though."

The ride was quiet the rest of the way. When I arrived I was ushered into the courtroom where the defendant, a white male, stood waiting. He had had a flashy suit, and a big attorney. I looked down at my clothes to see that they were a simple suit that had a little stain.

At that time the judge, a white male, arrived and the courtroom became in session. They recounted the events of the night. I testified to what had happened. The judge looked at me with latent eyes. The defendant's lawyer asked me only one question. "Why should we believe you because there is no security tape, just this boy's story?"

I looked the attorney straight in the eye and said "All I wanted was peace. I speak for all the minorities in Columbia, Missouri but if you don't believe me you are showing that Columbia doesn't value diversity and we bow to the majority." The courtroom went dead silent after I answered.

The jury took one hour to decide. "We find the defendant guilty. We recommend 1 year in jail and 400 hours of community service." The judge banged his gavel and the shouting began. I looked around and there was not one person who wasn't on their feet clapping.

Later that day I received a letter with no return address just some simple words. "Mr. Scott, thank you for showing us the way. Now that this case is over, we can finally say there is equality in Columbia, MO." I broke down into tears. I finally had justice.

Ms. Barnhouse, 9th grade, West Junior High School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Adam Moesel

This summer I got to view a piece of the dream that Martin Luther King Jr. had almost fifty years ago. My family took a trip to Washington D.C. to see some of the monuments there and learn more of their history. While there, I was privileged to see the new Martin Luther King Jr. monument, standing in the bright glory in tribute to one of the greatest civil right leaders the world has ever seen. He saw a problem in the world and he had the courage and tenacity to get up and do something about it. It's not only that he did a great thing for the civil rights, but he inspired many people to go out and make a difference too. With this butterfly effect it is impossible to truly quantify the astounding difference this one man made in the world.

But how did Dr. King accomplish such a large feat? The very inspiration of King's famous non-violent protests originated from the earlier civil rights activist, Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. King saw how successful Gandhi was in his non-violent practices, so he tried his first one out in 1955. After a year of boycotting bus depots, the law in Montgomery and throughout Alabama was reviewed and found unconstitutional. With this first victory, work of the civil rights movement and mission spread across the United States. At the center of the news was the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Over the next ten years many successful peaceful protests followed. The legacy of this great man was built during this period into what is today. Dr. King was a peaceful, good-natured man, who sought for the equal rights of all no matter their race, gender, or age.

How would King feel if he was still alive to see this day? Did his dream really ever come to pass? In one of his most famous speeches "I have a dream. . . .where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers." But have we reached that stage yet? We live in a world full of ever increasing judgment with different problems than segregation but with related problems such as bullying and various forms of discrimination. It is still a time where each of us is often stereotyped by the color of our skin. Perhaps we may never reach the day when we destroy the racial barrier altogether but my hope is that we can come ever close to such a goal.

I believe Dr. King set in place wonderful stepping stones toward such a dream. He made it so the millions had more equal rights than they had every previously enjoyed. But we still need to focus on destroying residual racial prejudice that continues to plague our generation by better appreciating the benefits of life in a diverse society. This diversity makes America the beautiful country it is!

To eradicate residual prejudice people have to learn to have trust in those from differing backgrounds, grow to feel safe in contexts that are more familiar to others than themselves, and seek to actively learn and appreciate variety of cultures and heritages. If we can commit to becoming

close friends, then little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and many other ethnicities and it will feel as natural as the sun rising in the morning.

I am thankful for our diversity. I can't imagine a world with little difference between people. I am proud that this country has reserved the third Monday of each January, to observe and embrace the sacrifice of such a great man who embodied such a monumental cause. I hope we all can reflect on Martin Luther King, Jr. day, even though we are out of school and enjoying a holiday, on how we personally might go out and make a difference through service, and lead the way for generations to come.

Ms. Barnhouse, 9th grade, West Junior High School

a WORLD OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

Jerica Mahaney

Peace is a world of non-violence.
Peace is a world where people of all races
Can come together in harmony,
Where mothers and children
Can walk the streets without fear,

“Where people are not judged by the color of their skin
But the content of their character,”
Where people of all races can stand together
Knowing that one day they will be free

Justice in a world,
Is the right of fairness among people,
People are made to do right and wrong
And when you do wrong
You are penalized and justice is served

Dr. King wanted justice in the world
When there were white signs all around the City of Columbia
Robbing little black children of dignity
He wanted peace;
He wanted the nation to rise up
And live up to the meaning of its name
He wanted a world of peace and justice

Ms. McCune, 9th grade, West Junior High School

a SINGLE SOUL WALKING

Kelly Tackett

A single soul walking
Footprints in the grass
Is he built of memory
A ghost of the past

What thoughts cross his fleeting mind
His footsteps made a light
Willed to bear the weight of the worlds
Walking in the night

The air hangs in grey-mist curtains
The cloak of dark enveloping
His solemn figure against the sky
His shadow still developing

His path unfolds forgotten ways
Revisiting the dream
The time it takes to save them
Not as far as it may seem

But truth sometimes forgotten
Night's silence is its own
The balance imperfect
He always walks alone

Mr. Clowe, 9th grade, Jefferson Junior High School

THE DREAM

Katherine Neff

Stumbling through the harsh words of my peers I walked quickly, but not too quickly, down the street to school. It was 1960, I could go at an All-White School, but that certainly does not mean that they accepted me. My backpack felt heavy. And when someone inevitably pushed me I fell hard onto the concrete. By the time they finally went on their way all I could see was red. On my face. My hands. My knees. I wanted more than the world to run back to them, yell in their pale faces. Yet I knew I could not, for I would be expelled. But that's not the real reason. The real reason is that no matter what I would say they could never feel the pain I had. My tongue could have been as harsh as theirs, but they still wouldn't care. Because they have thousands on their side, and even with a new, good school they would still rule over me.

So it came as no surprise to me when I showed up late to class, and the teacher gave me thirty lashes with her ruler. Another boy turns up ten minutes later. John, a white boy. He only gets twenty. That does not surprise me. But it does when later that day we were called to assemble in the gymnasium. I undyingly fixed my gaze on the soul man who people like me truly believed in. In the flesh, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stands usually where our principle was found, on the school podium. Eyes flashed towards me as the people around me started to think. I, being one of the only colored kids in the school, was frankly used to it. But I felt a difference, a change in the atmosphere, and especially felt it after his earth moving diction. Perspective. That is what had changed. Respect. That is what I had gained. Those kids who used to laugh at me now talked peacefully, including me in the conversation. And as the years went by my rights have grown humongously. It is a big world, too big to criticize others based on something as irrelevant as skin color.

By all means I cried that late April night eight years later, because Dr. King was my hero. The only reason I succeed today. So, if there is some astounding way that he can hear me now, right in this moment, I want to thank you Dr. King. Thank you so much, for your dream.

Ms. Wahid, 6th grade, Smithton Middle School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Gabrielle Jones

I see the smiles on a child's face.

I hear the laughter of people, it echoes through my mind.

Not the color no, I don't look at color,

Because I am black you are white, I am white you are black.

None is the same we are all separate but equal.

I don't see color I see personality,

I am happy because you are sad,

I am angry you are joyful,

I am one you are two,

I see, you are blind,

I am tall, you are short,

But we,

We are perfect,

Perfectly in balance.

I will not put you down, but simply help you up, and then we are equal.

I become confused and my feelings so I ask what you see.

Your respond,

"I see you my friend, it doesn't matter to me that you are a color,

What gender you are,

Or even from where you come,

You are mine and I am yours,

Respect, equal, peace and tranquil.

You make me happy therefore I am happy,

Does it matter who or what you look like?

No,

Therefore I am blind, blind from color,

But what I see is personality,

Your wrongs will be made right through time and peace.

You smile you laugh, we smile and we laugh

You make me feel, no different but the same,

I realize your words are true, no longer confused, I accept,

We are all,

We are one,

We are different,

None like another,
Segregated no more, we share joyfully, peacefully, and we laugh and smile.
We will not judge, for we are,
Respect, equal, peace and tranquil.
Join us,
For fulfillment and happiness,
No,
Not for the title,
But for the reasons,
The personality,
Join for me,
Join for you, join for all of us, for we are one, we are respect, equal, peace and tranquil

Ms. Barnhouse, 9th grade, West Junior High School

THE DREAM REVISITED

Abby Wade

With sticky little glue-coated hands,
She grabbed the box of crayons,
and sprinkled them on the table like confetti
next to her big piece of burnt-orange construction paper

She adjusted the ribbon on the back of her head,
Tweaking it just right, the way Mama had done this morning.

She looked at her array of crayons,
Debating on which one she was going to use first.

They were all so different,
the names, the colors.
There were even shades of the same color,
And they came in a wide variety.

Which blue was she going to use for the pond?
Which yellow was she going to use to draw the sun?
Should the swirls that shaped the wind be white or baby blue?
What shade of green was she going to color the grass,
Was she going to use pink or purple for the flowers?

After a long and well thought out deliberation,
She decided she was going to use ALL the colors.

She didn't have a favorite.
They were all crayons,
Regardless of color,
And they all looked pretty on paper.

The little girl set hard at work,
Rubbing the wax crayons
All over the chalky paper,
Clutching them tightly in her chubby hands,
Brow creased in concentration.

There was nothing interesting or significant
About her drawing when it was finished.

It was no different from any of her other drawings
Even though she took extra care to include all the colors,

She did, however, learn a very important concept that day.
No matter the color of a crayon,
It was still a crayon,
And there was no point discriminating against
A single one,
Because they all were,
Essentially,
Different in their own right,
But inevitably the same.

Ms. Barnhouse, 9th grade, West Junior High School

THE DREAM OF LIFE

Inga Van Dyke

Riiiiip! That's the sound of someone finding out a loved one has died, the letter opened, the words read, the tears spilled. I dream that someday war will be eradicated and will be thought of as a foreign concept everywhere, the sort of place described in "America the Beautiful". The world needs peace for the land, the economy and most of all the people and their emotions. Every individual person is more important than the titles and lands of a country.

"He's gone, he's gone, he's gone." Kimberly babbles into her phone. She had just lost her older brother and I could hear the terror in her voice, I could hear the thoughts echoing in her head "How can the world go on without Eli?" A rock seemed to be growing in my chest, layer after layer for Eli, for Isabel, for everyone who'd died in war or lost someone to war. Heavier and heavier the rock seemed to grow in size and weight as I thought of everyone who died in any war. This was the day I had a dream, a dream for peace in a world where no one lost their loved ones to war. This is how my dream goes, because this dream is the kind that someone never forgets.

Singing, that's how I imagine the day leaders finally got together to save hundreds of thousands of soldiers lives and the emotions of their loved ones. People would go on picnics with pies and apples and smile as the horrifying memories faded because they knew their leaders would bring them peace. Leaders from everywhere in the world would gather and talk, just talk until nothing was strained and they could agree not to fight wars.

In this dream people don't start wars. They know that if they do, nobody will help them. Except this dream doesn't have to only exist in my head; it could happen. After all they would know that they can't win if no one sides with them and only help the defense, which would be setting them up to fail. I have a dream that I don't expect to forget any time soon.

I have a dream and it's a good one that I know many people share. In this dream the world doesn't hear the terrifying stories from people in different countries. This is the world where no one gets a call or letter explaining how their loved one died in war heroically, bravely. It doesn't matter how it happened because it did happen, but people don't have to get the stories, people don't have to die. I have a dream, I hope you do too.

Ms. McCarty, 7th grade, Smithton Middle School

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