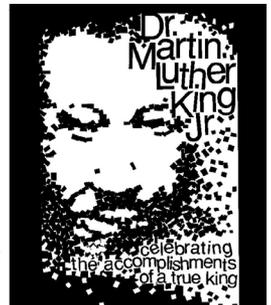


Choices
Diversity
Community
Love
Tolerance
Acceptance
Compassion
Understanding
Kindness
Respect
Harmony
Unity
Columbia

Unity in Our Community

writings from Columbia students

Columbia Values Diversity Celebration
January 14, 2016



Hungry for Diversity

Xavier Pinhero

Hunger does not discriminate.

Thanks to the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri,

Hunger can be managed.

Managed by diverse groups,

Students

Non-Students

Young

Old

Black

Asian

White

Hispanic

Native American

Church groups and

Non-church groups.

All these groups work together to stop hunger.

And it works too.

Happily strangers bag hotdogs,

Smelly fish and

Potatoes.

They scoop cereal

And assemble buddy packs.

All this to stop hunger in CoMo

Diversity works!

Mrs. Schauwecker, 6th grade , Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Be Nice to One Another

Xavier Hoos

Be nice to one another play a game of ball
play a board game
play a game of tag
play a game of hide and seek.

Be nice to one another
don't be mad at each other
be happy and don't fight
don't hurt each other
make friends with each other
be nice and don't be mean
be nice to one another.

Be nice to one another be nice not mean
making other people happy and you will be happy
and if there mean to you be nice to them
be nice to one another

Mrs. Archer, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Diversity Acrostic Poem

Evan Mess

Under the same sky.
No weapon is stronger than unity.
In the same community.
Together we are stronger.
You can make a difference.

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

I'm from a Catholic School

Katie Williams

I'm from a Catholic School, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School,
Where faith is increased, and fun friendships are made.

I'm from a place of faith,
from Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit.

I'm from a school with imperfections,
from a place with doubt and mischief.

I'm from a place of laughter and jokes,
from a place of comfort and hope.

I'm from a place of rallying,
from a place where people help people.

I'm from ice cream socials and field trips,
from kind friends who care about me.

I'm from a confusing place,
from acceptance and helpfulness.

I'm from rumors and lies,
from crying and dishonoring.

I'm from rebuilding hearts,
from being put down, but getting back up.

I'm from worrying about my future,
from looking for the right place.

I'm from emotion and positivity,
from people not accepting me for how I act.

I'm from service hours,
from helping my community, even though I may not want to.

I'm from Spanish, Religion, Social Studies, Math, Science, and Language Arts,
from amazing and inspiring teachers.

I'm from my OLLIS Family.

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Is Columbia United?

Kayliana Harris

Is our community united? I believe our community is not very united, or connected, for several reasons. There are some ways our community is united. I will write about ways I am united with others and ways I would like to become united with others that I think would help our community.

I believe our community is not united because kids don't have enough good experiences with kids who are different than they are. Schools pick kids by where they live and many students of the same income, race and religion often live near the same places. For example, I used to go to Benton Elementary School and it was totally different then the school I go to now. My mom is white and my dad is black. At Benton, I was one of the few students who was not 100% African American. I now go to Rock Bridge Elementary and it is completely different then Benton. Now, I am the only person in my class who is not 100% white. At Benton, many kids and their families struggled with having enough money to pay for a place to live in a safe neighborhood, for food, and clothing. They didn't get to participate in the activities that the kids at Rock Bridge Elementary do, such as sports, dance, music lessons, and after school activities. I feel like my friends from Rock Bridge have never known people like my friends from Benton, or any other kids of different incomes, races or religions. This is not unity, especially because we all live in the same town and could learn a lot from each other.

My older sister, moved from Lange to Gentry. She says now she is usually one of only a few black students in her classes. She said she was the only African American student in a class learning about slavery, and that was REALLY uncomfortable. I have had some of these same experiences being the only biracial student in my class. Since I am biracial I get a lot of questions about my race. I think other kids ask uncomfortable questions because they are never around people different than they are. Do you think our community is united?

How am I united with our community? I am united with our community. My family, my church, and my main way is an after school club that helps our school and community. This is K-Kids. We do different service projects for our community. We have done hat and glove drives where we bring in hats and gloves and donate

them to any kids who need them. We also mentor younger students to help them feel connected to our school, to help them learn, and so they will know we care about them. I love doing this because while having fun we are enjoying our time together and helping someone. Everyone in the group is unique and diverse. That is my favorite thing about it, we all get together for one cause...to help.

One idea I have to have more unity in Columbia is to connect schools through clubs like K-Kids, field trips, or projects we can work on together. We could even use our iPads! I think if kids from schools like Benton worked with kids from schools like Rock Bridge, they would have more experiences with diversity. The kids would get to know each other and share learning experiences. They could connect with each other based on personality and friendship, not just where they live or what they look like. This way, when kids get to middle school, they will already have experiences with diversity and friends from other schools. I think they would also work better together. This would be unity.

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Diversity

Isaac Becker

No one is perfect in every way, but everyone is perfect in their own way, whether it's math or science or running, etc. Everyone has talent in their own way. It doesn't matter what color skin you have, not at all. It only matters if you know what you are going to be like. Don't copy other people. But you have to embrace who you are in the world. Whether you are nice or mean or scared of the world you have to stand out as your own person.

Mrs. Blackburn, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Unity Among Us

Augusta Nickolaus

We join together just as a family would
Through the big scary storms that roll
over our town
Through the seasons that seem to be
constantly changing
We stand together
As a community we move on past our losses
but not forgetting them because
we know they'll make us stronger
We know that if we leave this town we are
and always will be
a Tiger
To some our town might just be a rest
stop off a highway
or a dot on a map
but to us its home

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Everyday Lives

JT Odom

The crowd is buzzing. The tailgates are booming with people, music, and food. There is a rush into Faurot field. People are finding their tickets and are ready for the game. They're bringing in their tiger tails and pom poms. Everyone is hoping this team wins. The crowd is filling the stands and popcorn is filling buckets. Kids are running around and throwing their new Mizzou football from the tiger team store. The TV stations arise on air and the reporters are ready. Thousands of people come to watch the game.

Coaches and players are going through the steam and loud fireworks to get on the field. The soldiers in the corner of the field are doing push ups and blasting the canon. Then there is the coin toss. The referees flip a coin. The opposing team yells, "Heads!" The Tigers lose the toss. The other team elects to receive the ball. The

crowd yells continually. The kicker kicks the ball. It lands out of the end zone. It is a touchback. The defense comes out and they are ready to play. "Down, Set, Hut!" the opposing quarterback yells. The play has started. The team works like a puzzle. The opposing quarterback throws the ball, it's tipped, and the ball falls into linebacker Michael Scherer's arms. He runs from the twenty to the 15, 10, 5 touchdown Tigers! The team goes wild and the fans go wild too! The fans start a chant together. One half of the ZOU yells, "MIZ-" and the other half yells "ZOU!"

They do this over and over together and the Band is Playing in perfect harmony. Notice the mentality? The mentality is that everyone is working together to get a win for the football team. Everyone is working together to accomplish one big goal. "Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."- Mattie Stepanek "Where there is unity there is always victory."- Publilius Syrus It's harder to do things by ourselves. This way there is a bigger chance at success. That is the mentality we need on campus. That mindset is great and we need to put it in our everyday lives.

Ms. Archer, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Culture that creates

Erin Theede

Culture that creates our community
Our diversity is like no other
Loan help to other people who need it
Uniting bond with each other
My happiness enlightens everyone around me
Binding culture
Individuality and uniqueness
A loving relationship within all of us

Dr. Willingham, 7th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Six thousand languages

Lisa Zhuang

There are over six thousand different languages in this world. That means there are over six thousand different ways to say *hello*, over six thousand different ways to say *nice to meet you*, and over six thousand different ways to say *goodbye*. Yet, there are places in this world where there is only one acceptable way to say hello, nice to meet you, and goodbye.

When I first started school, I was moving from a home where Chinese was spoken freely around the house to a place where English was the norm. Having been taught English, I felt little trouble slipping in with everyone else. However, one word that I couldn't get past was *Mom*. At school, all the kids called their moms *Mom*, *Mommy*, or *Mother*. I could pronounce those words with ease, but yet they sounded bland and meaningless on my tongue compared to the word *Mama*. To me, my mom had always been *Mama*. When I heard the kids calling their moms *Mommy*, I went home and called my mom *Mommy* as well because that was what everyone else did, and I wanted nothing more than to be like everyone else.

But the word *Mommy* had no meaning to me. When I said *Mommy*, my mind simply pictured my friends' moms, smiling brightly. But, when I said *Mama*, my mind conjured memories of sleepless nights soothed with warm hugs, laughter as I helped wash the dishes, and reassuring pats on the back as I cried. The words *Mommy* and *Mama* had the same definition, but yet their meanings were worlds apart.

As I continued school and was able to meet more and more people, I met more and more people who felt the same as I did. I met people who said *Mum*, and *Ma*, and *Nana*. To them, *Mama* felt empty on their tongues. It was then that I realized, in my not-too-small and not-too-large community of Columbia, that the people weren't united by their similarities, but rather by their *differences*.

There is no other feeling in this world quite like knowing that you are accepted for doing what you believe and being who you are. I call the streets and the people of my community home not because a certain group of people deemed that I "belong," but because that we are all equals despite our differences.

In this world of over six thousand different languages, there are over six thousand different cultures, over six thousand different beliefs, and way more than over six thousand different people. This simple fact is a power that one can fight with or one can celebrate with.

I am proud to live in a community that is celebrating with it.

Ms. Black Cone, 11th grade, Rock Bridge High School

Different People Same Unity

Isabella Ngo

Different colors
Different eyes
We are people of all kinds

Different voices
Different faces
We are people of different places

Different clothes
Different religions
We are people with different traditions

But...

We have the same feelings
And we have the same kindness

We have the same charity
And we have the same unity

We will be united whether we are near or far
One big community is what we are

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Where you are from

Emily Bacon

It doesn't matter where you are from,
but where your heart comes from.

It doesn't matter how you look,
but how you look at everything.

It doesn't matter who you are,
but who you want to be.

It doesn't matter how you talk,
but what you talk about.

Community isn't about looking the same,
it's about coming together and living the same.

It's about bringing our world together to find peace,
and make it into a better place.

It's about working as one,
and compromising with one another.

It's about family, friends, and cultures coming together,
to make life fun, simple, and even better.

Unity makes community,
just like we make up each other's lives.

The world is full of millions of people,
but it only takes two for a unity form.

Step by step our community will grow,
and then we'll be the most united people we know!

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Columbia Defines Diversity

Matthew Vincent

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines a community as “a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc.,” however; under this definition Columbia is not a community. This town is much more than a group of people who have the same interests, it is a group of people who have different interests, different religions, different backgrounds, and are just overall different. Everyone in Columbia is not the same, for Columbia values diversity. I guess then, if you wanted to define Columbia as a community using Merriam Webster’s definition, the best way to define it is that Columbia does have a common interest, and that is to stay diverse.

Diversity tends to be defined as something less than what it is. When we hear the word we think instantly that diversity is synonymous with having different races. Although this is true, that having people with different skin colors is a measurement of diversity, it by far is not the best way to measure diversity and neglects the important aspects that make diversity great. To really understand what the true meaning of diversity is, we need no further then look at Columbia.

Diversity is defined the mosque downtown. With this building standing just a few blocks from churches of many different denominations, it illustrates the acceptance of other religions and creeds in Columbia. Throughout the history of the world, there has been a conflict between Islam and Christianity, and still today in other parts of the world mosques and churches are subject to the acts of extremists. Yet, while other areas have conflict, Columbia has a mosque walking distant from a church.

Diversity is the University of Missouri. As the center of the town, the University of Missouri is a hotspot of diversity in Columbia. With thousands of clubs and thousands of students and faculty from around the globe, the University of Missouri ushers in a great deal of diversity. International students bring to Columbia new ideas and a desire to learn. The University of Missouri hosts many events such as India Night, where the whole community of Columbia is invited to enjoy singing and dancing and learning about a different culture. This event tends to be filled with individuals from many different backgrounds sitting side by side

learning and enjoying a different culture.

Diversity is more than just these things and Columbia resembles more than just these examples. It is impossible to write down and put into words the diversity representative of this community. Diversity is more than just having different religions and races in a region, or differing opinions and beliefs. True diversity comes from unity and acceptance. Columbians don't always agree on everything, and that is ok. As long as we all get along and respect each other we will keep our strong diversity and be a united community.

Ms. Black Cone, 12th grade, Rock Bridge High School

Diversity

Gabriel Watkins-Mocumbi

Diversity has been a large topic of debate for many years. Is such in such diverse enough? Is such and such too diverse? On a national scale, I may not know. However, I can easily say that here at Our Lady Of Lourdes Interparish School in Columbia we have attempted to achieve that perfect balance of diversity.

When I first came to OLLIS (Columbia Catholic School at the time) I was one of four African-American children. Now that I am in my 8th grade year I have noticed the number of ethnicities represented in my class has grown by quite a few. The African-American population has grown by 1 and we now have multiple Hispanic students and a Filipino student. Though the Caucasians may still be the majority, integration of other races is on the rise.

Now, when I mentioned that Caucasian is the majority, it's not just the same person copy pasted all over the place. We're not all the standard stereotype of a "model private school child". Many of our "cheer girls" play basketball and some of our "jocks" play in the band. We don't just fit into one group.

As I previously mentioned, Caucasians are still the majority, it's not just one type of family. Personally, I live in a single parent home. The 8th grade class alone has families from all walks of life. Some of my closest friends have a "standard" nuclear family, others have mixed race families, and even parents who are divorced.

Though, one may think that all private school kids are the same and that all private school parents are the same, but that's just not the case. Every different parent has their own identity and personality. No two parents or kids can be pinned in one category.

In terms of race, Our Lady of Lourdes is more diverse than one would think. Our school has children who have parents from Africa, South America, Asia and Belgium to name a few. Students, are black, Caucasian, Asian and interracial. We even have students from other religions.

With all the things I've mentioned above we're not perfect. We have work to do. We're still not as diverse as we could be at Our lady of Lourdes Interparish School. But to the lady of Lourdes Interparish School teachers it doesn't matter. Every single teacher here teaches to us all the same, no one is treated differently because of race or anything else. True diversity is actually recognized because no one is treated differently. We are expected to achieve the same academic standards. We all eat lunch together, we all go on field trips together, we all celebrate Mass together. The only division among us might be who's playing basketball tonight or who has practice. It is never and never will be about race, religion, or lifestyle.

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Columbia is where we live

Anna Wells

Columbia is where we live
Our world today is better than yesterday
Many people want the world to be a better place
Many people do something about the environment we live in today
Unity is in the word Community
New things, new people, the population is growing
I can help change the world too.
There are babies, kids, teenagers, adults all are adapting to the world.
You may think the world is coming to an end but it is only the beginning

Dr. Willingham, 7th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Creating a Community

Madison Wright

one
me, just me, full of ideas and thoughts and feelings
one, two
parents, with rules and regulations, teaching right and wrong,
helping me embrace a world I don't always understand
one, two, and three
friends, growing up, with different perspectives than me,
challenging my assumptions,
changing the way I perceive the world
one, two, three, four
years of high school, surrounded by people I have never met,
every day, new information,
classes and peers feeding me new information,
providing dimension to my world views,
helping me create a broader opinion
--diversity shapes us into people reaching their full potential,
morphing our one-sided perspectives,
shaping us into three-dimensional people,
creating a community large enough for everyone to fit.

Ms. Black Cone, 11th grade, Rock Bridge High School

Communities

Na'Shawn Jones

If you're small or tall, old or young, you can make a difference. Find friends and family and unite, and your community can start small then grow the more you try. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., he was a little kid once, but he and his community made a change. Rosa Parks, she and her community made a change. You can do it too, you can make a change, if you never give up.

Mrs. McGinty, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Differences

Dashia Stone

A small suburban city in Missouri consists of people of many different races, ages, and religion. People think are drawn to think of this as a problem. People think that because we like different things that we are more or less intelligent than one another.

In the real world, we need each other's differences in order to keep balance.

For example, if other areas grew the same crops as we did, we would not need them.

We would also be dull on knowledge. How would we learn to speak different languages if we all spoke the same language? If we all praised the same god, ate the same food, sang the same songs, how would we develop our own little culture?

In this suburban town of Missouri, there is a melting pot of people of different ethnicities, religions, ages, and different levels of education.

We live lives of diversity and obtaining new knowledge. Walking downtown, you find many different types of people. People with connections and a passion for music, new graduates, older musicians, people with stories (everyone has one), people with education and people without one. Whether you are living it large in a mansion, or dirty and homeless on the streets, everyone can learn from everyone. Every single person you meet has a story to tell.

This ties into a truthful quote, "be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle."

Ms. Black Cone, 10th grade, Rock Bridge High School

My Mom's Business

Noel Wheeler

My mom has a cleaning and donation business called Safi Sana. She gives anyone who needs a job a cleaning job to clean people's houses. So, how it starts is some people from, let's say Kenya have to run away from their homes because their country is at war. If you were them where would you run? Well, some run to the United States. You can't "run" to the United States so I'm pretty sure someone would fly you to the United States. But once you get here what will you do? You have no money and no shelter. Well, in Columbia you should find my mom! She will find you an apartment and a job. You earn money from your job so you can care for your family. You don't just clean for white people, or just clean for black people. We clean for everyone! And get this, my mom doesn't even get money for this wonderful deed. None of my family members are black but the friends that are just like family members to me. And look at your classmates or workmates. They aren't just your skin color are they? No. You can help them because everyone is family here in Columbia. And families are UNITED! So, next time you see someone lonely or just not on the bright side of the day, think about it. Say something to them because we are family and families are UNITED FRIENDS!

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Columbia

James Hebert

Coming together as a community
Obligated to do whatever they can to help
Loving everyone no matter who they are
United and prospering together
Mixed culture blended into one
Building relationships in everything we do
Inside is an awesome college town
Always there for you

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

A Masterpiece

Julia Keller

You wake up to see people singing Christmas carols. That reminds you that today you get to go see the winter parade! You've been waiting for this for the whole year. You go down stairs eat breakfast and think about your friend that you made last year at the parade. Her name was Sonya. She was African-American. You wonder if you'll see her again next year.

On the way there you look out the window and see all different people. Some are Indian, some are Asian, Chinese, African-American, American and even Hawaiian. Wow, you think these are all different people with different religions and beliefs. We really have something in common though, we all have gathered here to come and see the parade. You get out of the car just in time to see the beginning of the parade.

Just then you see an amazing float! Its has a big robot that looks like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He's saying the I Have A Dream speech. Then candy comes flying at your face. You look up and see Sonya waving trying to get your attention. As the float seems to drift away, you notice a little girl sitting all alone. You go and sit by her and give her an extra piece of candy. Her name is Yoyo. You talk and become friends.

After the parade ends, you tell your mom all about your new friend that you made this year. You can't wait to see them both next year. You go to your room and look to see if there are any emails on your computer. You see a picture that Sonya sent to you in a helicopter above the whole parade when you and Yoyo were playing. You see that when all different people get together it creates a wonderful masterpiece.

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Different colors

Justin Slade

Different.

Important.

Valuable.

Everyone is interesting.

Respectful.

Special.

Incredible.

Treated fairly.

You can make a difference.

All around the world there are all types of people and races, but we are all the same, we are one big family. That can never be broken we are the same but we are different. Diversity is around us we may not notice it but it is, diversity is a very good thing. We should celebrate our differences.

Ms. Germeroth, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

A United Community Makes Us Stronger

Ava Beary

It's like this: a snowflake hits the ground. That snowflake started a community. More snowflakes joined the community, landed on top of the first snowflake. The first snowflake that started the pile, the community, the happy, the fair, the united community, but the snowflake who also had to learn that all kinds of nature was going to be in his community. The grass, the leaves, the dirt, and mud. All different parts of nature, on the outside, different colors and abilities. But like the snowflake did, we too have to learn that if you want a happy community, you have to have happy people in it. Not people that are called names and treated differently because of skin or gender. People that work together to be one whole happy community. So no matter what color, gender or abilities, we are all people. We should all be treated the same.

Mrs. McGinty, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Community is Our Unity

Ruby Hord

Care about each other
Our unity could change everything
Make a difference in the world
Martin Luther King, Jr. made a difference.
Unite with each other
New thought could change anything
I could make a difference, and so can you
Together, we can make a difference
You could change anything if you believe you can.

Mrs. McGinty, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Diversity is a good thing

Hailey Newton

Diversity is a good thing, it's why
we are all here together. You and
me can always play, even though
we are different. Don't let religion,
color, gender or anything else
separate us. We are all equal and
we need to stay that way.
Diversity is why our schools
are mixed with all different
kinds of people. Don't feel
bad that you are different.
Being different means
you stand out. So just
remember, everyone stands out
in one way or another. Be
yourself and nobody else.

Mrs. Nichols, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Come Together

Tatianna Todd

Some people believe a small town is better, yet some people beg to differ. Columbia can often meet in the middle of the disagreement between the two. Although Columbia is small, the diverse properties are amazing. Even though these properties reign unique, with a diverse community comes diverse conflicts. Columbia has recently learned that, and every day we are better understanding than the situation before.

There are sometimes problems in communities. When people are attempting to live together, they really start to see the difference in the surrounding people. When you live in Columbia, that difference is in everything you see. We have many ethnic groups to spread ourselves amongst which opens us up to more culture, but that's not always a pro when living in a diverse area. The cons can come fast and out of control. For example, Jonathan Butler recently went on a hunger strike that started November 2nd at the University of Missouri. He demanded a hunger strike when students shouted racial labels at him and the President did not take any action when confronted with the harassment. The hunger strike was followed by the boycott of the Mizzou football team. Although this was a racial event, there was support about taking action to the racial comments by multiple ethnic groups. They didn't join in because they had to, but because they knew it was something to fight for. Even through all the races, Columbia knows how to still fight together. Races of Columbia learn to help when they see that racism can happen a time and to anyone. This becomes a major plus in the community. When living in a diverse place, coming together can change a lot.

But there's always room for improvement. One thing Columbia lacks when coming together is understanding. Many races come together to fight because every race has had its issues so we can relate even in the littlest way. When coming to fight for all and yourself. Diverse or not, we are all people. People who bleed, cry, and need the same things. Columbia should take a moment to realize that we all need to come together during a time when human rights are tested. This is our only setback, but with every racial issue springs an even tighter community. One day Columbia will be exquisite at dealing with racial issues or diverse issues and that day is soon.

Ms. Black Cone, 12th grade, Rock Bridge High School

We are all one

Lars Perkins

We are all different but we are one when we put all our hearts together... Don't get me wrong I know that we are all different some are black some are white and some are from different countries but we are all the same and when we put our hearts together we are one it doesn't matter if you're from China or Sweden or Ireland we are all one.

Mrs. Nichols, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Differences

Karlie Kahl

Dream on and be someone that helps the community

Important. You are an important part of the community.

Fight for what's right. If someone is getting bullied because they are different you can help them.

Faithful. Be faithful in others and encourage others to do their best.

Equal Rights is very important to our community.

Respectful towards the different. Don't say anything mean behind someone's back if they are deaf especially.

Everyone is different on the outside and how they look but that doesn't matter it's the inside that makes us the same.

Never change your unique personality.

Character. Everyone has a unique personality. NO ONE can change it.

Exceptional means to be unique, not perfect, unusual, rare personality or different.

Special. You are who you are and NO ONE can change that.

Mrs. McGinty, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Future Values Diversity

Allison Foster

"Help us build Mrs. Maddie! Help us build!" I look down at the children who are so persistently trying to grab my attention. I see that they are building a castle-like structure out of the large number of blocks that can be found at the day care where I work.

"Sure, guys. What are you building?" The youngest, and smallest, of all the children at the day care, DeShawn responds.

"We are building a house. For our dragon." With that, he holds up a toy dinosaur. Instead of turning the game into a lesson, I decide to just play along.

"Is that so? Well, in that case, I would definitely like to help! What can I do?" I sit cross-legged on the floor as the young boy hands me blocks to hold and gives me instructions to go with them. Soon, the other preschoolers realize that they are missing out on our game. They wander over, one by one. Finally, all of the children are helping DeShawn build a house for his dinosaur/dragon. All except one young girl in the corner.

It doesn't surprise me that it is this girl who is afraid to play with the others. She only joined the preschool a week ago. I don't know much about her, only what her social worker has told me, but what I do know isn't pretty. She was abandoned shortly after birth at a fire station, complete with one measly blanket and a coke addiction. From there she was given to one family, and then passed to another, and eventually another.

She is different from the others. She is quiet, and she doesn't smile a lot. From what I can tell, she is part Asian, and maybe part Hispanic. That is another difference. Most of the kids here are either White or African American. Most of the kids don't even seem to notice the different races present in the schoolroom, but she does. And she seems to think that, because of her race, she won't be accepted.

I contemplate going over to talk to her. I want her to know that she is welcome to play with the other children, but I don't want to scare her. Suddenly, I feel a little hand poking me in the side. It is DeShawn, trying to get my attention.

"Mrs.? Why is she sitting all alone?" He points with a chubby finger over to the girl in the corner.

"Well, I'm not sure, DeShawn." I watch as DeShawn picks up a few of his blocks, and walks over to the girl. Without saying a word, he sits down next to the girl, and hands her a block. Soon, the other children notice that their ring leader has left, and one by one, they follow suite. Before long, all of the children have moved to where DeShawn and the girl sit. Then, I watch as the most amazing thing happens.

The girl, who had never spoken a word to me, started talking to DeShawn. She and the other children started laughing and playing.

I feel my jeans start to get wet, and I realize I am crying. For so long I have told these children to accept everyone, but to see them actually doing it brings joy to my heart.

It is then that I realize that these children are our future. These are the people who will run our society, who will have the power to change the status quo. These are the people whose beliefs will change the way our government works. And looking around at these children, at our future, I see that we are in good hands.

Whether our present values diversity or not, our future certainly does.

Ms. Black Cone, 11th grade, Rock Bridge High School

Colors

Woodes Braswell

Civils rights is good for the world
Options are a good thing
Luther – Martin Luther King Jr.
Our colors may be different but we are the same on the inside
Respect everybody the same
Stay different.

Mrs. Blackburn, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Different!

Kalia Bush

Don't say anything you are going to regret.
If everyone is unique then the world is right.
Forgive the people that were wrong.
Faithful for differences.
Everyone is unique.
Respect other differences and ideas.
Everyone is best at something in a way.
Never judge because you are unique and so are they.
The world has different people but that's OK.

Mrs. Blackburn, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

The Columbia Tree

Zohra Runyan

Trees have leaves or fruits maybe nuts. But all of it in one big tree. We will make a beautiful home for many animals. In this case, the tree is Columbia. We are leaves, fruits, and nuts in all our disabilities and differences. We make a home for OUR city and will always respect others. We will believe, trust, listen, and help people succeed in making a better community called the Columbia Tree.

Ms. Hassemer, 4th grade, Shepard Boulevard Elementary School

Unity

Lucy Elfrink

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Wanted it to stop sooner.
It was hard to be slaved.
At least they should be paid.
We are all one community,
So we have to show unity.

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

Unity

Sarai Jones

If you look deep, deep inside the heart of our school you will see that our class is all about unity. We all work together and think really hard to brainstorm ideas for math then science and then more. When working together we all finish faster and can all understand the project we work at, but when we work all along... we try and try but we can't get it right it takes time and sometimes we work till the night. So may I ask why be alone when you get a whole class to help you get through the test so know that I've come to the end of this poem I'm going to ask - are you alone? Do you not have a buddy to help get through math or maybe a group to read a good story well then look around there are 21 people in your class room or maybe 22... so look and pick and come up with a group talk about where you can and then they will help you.

Ms. Kunkel, 4th grade, Shepard Boulevard Elementary School

Diversity

Ahmed Sudi

haiku

I might be different
I might do stuff differently
But I am a person.

narrative

People might have different cultures, religion, skin or bodies but it doesn't mean you can make fun of them for that. My parents are immigrants and they do not get treated differently from others. If there was a large group of people and one had a learning disability people would give weird looks to him and that's bad so our society needs to change. Whether the person is gay, straight, mental, autistic, black, white or anything that makes our external traits different - if you are good on the inside you are good on the outside.

Mr. Imler, 5th grade, Paxton Keeley Elementary School

Diversity

DeShaun Robinson

Some people think diversity is about black and white people. That's actually just a little bit of it. Diversity is your race, gender, culture, and religion. That's not even half of it though. Some people think if you're not a white male you're a bad person. People say you should make a social media profile for Facebook or Snapchat. I won't because I have seen people get called the N word on stuff like that. At school I hear people say Asians are smarter than everyone. Others think we should all be the same. But would you rather have everyone be different and learn new things about them. Or would you want everyone be the same and learn that everybody like all the presidents were exactly like you. I would like people to be different. Many people think all Muslims are bad because of 9/11. But one of my best friends is a Muslim. So I think people like that don't use common sense. I think they are dumb. My little brother's friend's dad thinks that his son should not be friends with me or my brother because we are not his skin color. I think that's dumb. People who don't like blacks, Asians, Muslims, and women, don't understand what being different is or how that's good that they're not you. Diversity is about how people are different and not exactly like you. Diversity is good. Being different is the greatest thing the world has to offer.

Mr. Imler, 5th grade, Paxton Keeley Elementary School

Our Shared Community

Kelley Tackett

they teach us to see the world in percentages
to understand foreign cultures in summary
but ignoring the individual

they teach us color-coded maps
in terms of 'us' and 'them'
forgetting, in it all, the potential for 'we'

they teach us respect in the abstract
as if, every day, we fail to encounter diversity
and when we do, one face can speak for it all

this ignorance is taught but cannot be believed
if one would dare to step outside
because diversity is necessary to reality

our community is not made of percentages
and color-coded summaries that will never
be detailed enough to capture the nuances of the truth

our community is a collection of shared stories
which influence the town for the better
lending new ideas and criticisms and perspectives

our unity is earned through our diversity
the friendships here formed across cultures
blossom and flourish and grow

this unity is more than hope
it's a promise of a better future
held tightly in multifarious hands

this is what defines our complex humanity
the recognition and validation of those who
aren't like us, creating a worthy, resilient, comm-unity.

Ms. Black Cone, 12th grade, Rock Bridge High School

Where I'm From

Grace Farnan

I am from Columbia Mo,
From sports, academics, and friends.
I am from a loving family,
Kind, funny, and really loud.
I am from campfires and cookouts, the whole 9 yards,
Long lasting memories forever will I know.

I'm from Family Dinner Fridays,
From Farnan's and Vogt's.
I'm from blue eyes, red hair.
I'm from Mizzou alumni, the honors graduates, the football fanatics.
I'm from the snow falling, to the spring breeze.
I am from John 3:16, where without it, we wouldn't be.

I am from all of my teachers, my coaches, my fans.
I'm from long evening walks, and quick morning jogs.
I'm from beautiful scenery, and family road trips.
I'm from all the people that inspire me every day.
From soccer cleats, basketball shoes, and everything in between.

There are many different people, with many different plans,
But I'm proud to be from Columbia.
Our diversity unites us.
And that's who I am.

Dr. Willingham, 7th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Columbia

Chandler Gibbens

Columbia, Missouri is a diverse place. The University of Missouri attracts many scholars from across the globe. Despite their different backgrounds, they must come together to learn and create the best possible Missouri University that there can be. Despite the initial division on the campus of the University of Missouri, the student community has showed much unity in its protesting. The protesters have been fighting together, even though they are different, to achieve a common goal of making the university the best place it can be.

The protesters who were fighting the university are not all of one race or ethnicity, there are many different people protesting all with different backgrounds. During the protest, the protesters were all different races. It didn't matter what skin color the person next to you was, and if a white person asked for help, then the closest person would come to their aid. The diversity of the group helped protesters see that there may have been a different approach to trying to achieve their goal. There were white people linking arms with African-Americans, linking arms with people who are Asian. This situation has really given many opportunities to join and create a very diverse group working together to achieve a goal of making the University of Missouri a better place for people of all races.

The football team for the University of Missouri also showed that unity is needed to win a battle. They joined with their fellow students to fight for their common goal of making a better university for the future. After hearing that a student was going through a hunger strike for what he believed, the football team saw that this protest needed all the people that they could get. They joined and refused to take part in football practices and games until the demands of Jonathan Butler and Concerned Student 1950 were met. They united as a team and united as a university to bring about change for the good of everybody. Without this unity, the protest might have failed.

Their unified protest resulted in the resignation of President Timothy Wolfe and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. The community and protesters have been given an opportunity to learn from these protesters that one cannot win a war with one group of people, you need to come together to fight in order to win. In videos of the celebrations following the resignations, people were singing and it showed

that people were not there as a group of whites and blacks, but a unified group as one.

The protesters had to learn that the enemy is not a person who looks different from you, it is somebody who is not trying to treat you equal. At the beginning of their protest, during the parade, several white people tried to fight the protest by letting President Wolfe's car drive by, and at the end of their protest, hundreds of white people were celebrating. The unity of all races was what really brought success, because without the unity of many people, the success of this protest would not have been possible.

Mr. McFarland, 9th grade, Hickman High School

Unity

Mackenzie Haupt

Unity. What a great word. It could mean a lot of things, like respecting a religion, creating a organization to help someone in need, or just simply what someone has done in the past to strengthen this nation. George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. Do you know his speech? It's one of my favorites. He's the one who stopped black people from being ignored and mistreated. He was the youngest man ever to be presented with the Nobel Prize. But it didn't start there. Let's go back to when Abraham Lincoln was president. He was born in Illinois in a poor family that lived in a log cabin. He wanted to abolish slavery, and he did, but what he didn't know was that later on in life, some people would bend the rules, and that's where Martin Luther King Jr. stepped in. George Washington is the reason we have American soil we can freely step on with justice. He was our country's first president, centuries and centuries ago. In our community, every voice matters, everyone can become a great person, remembered by the world years and years later. Be the world's next Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln, George Washington. Every voice matters.

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Diversity in our community

Ella Byergo

What is diversity? Is it being a boy or a girl, being different? Yes it's both! Being different is what makes you, you! We're all different we all make mistakes. If we didn't have diversity we would be the same. It not about being a boy, a girl, black, or white! It's about who you are and who you want to be, you can be nice or mean. A black man and a white man they are diverse but they should be equally treated! Same with a black and white woman! We're all different colors no one is the same!

There are two types of diversity, one being visible diversity. Visible diversity is a difference that you can see. Visible diversity is what we just listed, some examples are being a boy/girl, or being black/white, or having different color of hair!

The other being invisible diversity, meaning it is a difference you can't see. I haven't listed any invisible diversities because they are what you know on the inside. Like if you flunk a test or your job because you can't see those things, so they are invisible. Being diverse doesn't matter it's who you are, who makes you, you!

Diversity is all around, it's everywhere.

Mr. Imler, 5th grade, Paxton Keeley Elementary School

Diversity

Kamysia Shaw

Don't be a follower be a leader. Be your self, be a leader. You're unique even if you're a different color or have different color of hair. You are the light that shines in your heart. You can be your own you. Follow the light that shines even if you black or white you can still be a leader. Don't make fun of people because no body is perfect and together we can make people better. Like Sacajawea she made a difference in Missouri by helping explorers communicate with Native Americans. That's why you can make a difference in this world.

Mrs. McGinty, 4th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

My Community

Natalie Gorham

My community is united
Who cares if we are all different
That is the beauty of being diverse
We can look past our differences
And come together looking toward the same goal to improve our community
And having fun while doing it
Making memories
Learning life lessons
This is my community
This is Columbia

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

Where I'm From

Jackson Freelin

I am from the sweet smell of homemade syrup on waffles every Sunday morning
From staying up late with my family to watch movies
From the hum of the lawn mower followed by the scent of freshly-cut grass

I am from saying goodbye to saying hello
From the large hill that I live atop
I'm from acres of field waiting to be explored

I am from playing catch in the backyard
From the abundance of stories my grandparents told me

I am from Columbia Missouri, where I was born and still live in to this day
From the rusty metal chest in the basement and the cedar chest in the bedroom,
both holding memories from years past

Dr. Willingham, 8th grade, Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School

Together

Brooke Bess

Together we are a community
Together we stand strong
Together we fall
Together we fight
Together we win
Together we lose
Together we are one
Together we can do this
Together we sacrifice
Together we are brave
Together we are scared
Together we stand hand in hand
Together we have confidence
Together we smile
Together we frown
Together we are happy
Together we are sad
Together we are friends
Together anything is possible
Together we are Columbia

Mrs. Tutt, 5th grade, Rock Bridge Elementary School

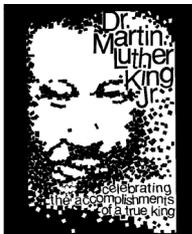
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