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Love

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*One Community, Many Stories*  
*writings from Columbia students*

*Columbia Values Diversity Celebration*  
*January 12, 2012*



# BLENDED AS ONE

*Alexa Ninichuck*

Imagine a rock band with no drummer, a jazz band with no saxophone, or a country band with no guitarist. Something would obviously be missing. It's not the individual drummer, sax, or guitarist that makes up the band, but rather the combination of each unique instrument blended together. Each note is matched perfectly to the others played. Often in music, when one instrument is lost, the others struggle to keep on. In a way, the community of Columbia operates kind of like music. Each race, religion, culture and opinion is like an individual instrument. When played solo, it's beautiful, but when intertwined with others, the outcome is much more harmonious and enjoyable.

Each culture has its own unique story. Caucasians immigrated from England and developed their own country, the United States. African American's ancestors struggled through the oppression of the white slave owners, eventually to become free. Jews faced the holocaust and the unjust rath of Adolph Hitler. These are just a few examples of the diverse stories that could be told from Columbia's community members. Each story brings a hint of genuine history to our city.

Too often we see discouraging acts of hate brought upon other people. Even in small city Columbia we find acts of violence, rage, harassment, bullying, and so much more that could be avoided if we all knew the truth. One contributing factor of these "hate acts" is the constitutional right that people have to freely speak, protest, and print. Columbia, Mo witnessed the protesting of the Westboro Baptist Church in 2009. They protested against the production being made at Stephens College. You may be asking, "Why would they want to protest a simple production?" Because it focused on a true account of a man being murdered on account of his homosexual lifestyle choice.

In my opinion, everyone has a right to their own opinions. When people commit these hate crimes they are doing nothing for themselves and slowly but ultimately diminishing the idea of diversity. How can we expect individual cultures to flourish without the support of our community? This is why Columbia as a city needs to stand firmer to our foundation. This is why every instrument must be played in tune and on time.

In such a diverse community, our growth rate is enormous. New cultures, races, religions, etc. are residing here every year. With each fresh perspective, our community is enriched and enhanced in some way. Most times we greatly benefit from the varying aspects. Without our cultural diversity our idea of "One community, many stories" would cease to exist because there would be no stories to be told. We should all value and celebrate the diverse area that we are so fortunate to live in. Let's get out there and harmoniously blend and enhance to the best of our abilities.

*Mrs. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# DIVERSITY

*Bennett Lawson*

Picture this, everyone is exactly the same. We all have brown hair and blue eyes. It wouldn't be any fun! We wouldn't be able to tell who was who and no one would be special. Having diversity...now that's fun! Diversity means that there are differences in a group. One person can be a comedian, another could be a singer. Some people are smart and some people are not. Who knows what I'm going to be? It doesn't matter. If I am in a diverse group, it will be okay.

Diversity is good. The reason it is good is because it allows us to appreciate other people and what makes them special and unique. It's like we're all different kinds of candy in a bowl. Someone eats a piece. Now there's no more of that candy, but there's still a lot more great kinds and tastes left to try.

Another example of diversity in our lives is with the clothes we wear to school. Kids wear sweats, jeans, shorts with shirts of every different color to school. What if we had to wear uniforms? It may take less time to pick out our clothes in the morning, but it wouldn't tell us anything about each other. Wyatt likes Nike. Carson plays soccer. Mariah likes purple. These are things we know because we get to show diversity in our clothes. This tells us important stuff about our friends. Diversity is good.

We should all see diversity as a normal thing, not a bad thing. We shouldn't judge people by their differences, but we can look and see the person for how they are special.

*Ms. Germeroth, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge Elementary*

# MY DREAM

*Sydney Jones*

I have a dream one day enemies will be friends.

I have a dream on day clothes and voice won't matter.

I have a dream one day the words of hate and ugly and many more words will disappear into the dark and never return.

I have a dream happy will spread across the faces and into the people's souls.

I have a dream new improved things will be built and others only stay in memory.

I have a dream one day war and fighting won't exist and only the battle of hope will roam the world.

I have a dream and you do too, don't be afraid to let is soar.

*Ms. Smith, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Shepard Elementary*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Quinncee Carbone*

People should all be treated the same, even if they are handicapped, African American, white or just different. Everyone is different no matter what. It's like the golden rule if you don't want to be treated poorly then don't treat others poorly. If you are someone who laughs at people with disabilities look at yourself and think should I sit here and laugh or get up, help, and make someone's day? If you just see how easy it is to make someone's day you could do it every day. It will change so many people's attitude.

If you're always mean, people will have a perception that you are not nice. If it weren't for Martin Luther King Jr. Whites and African Americans wouldn't be able to walk on the same side of the street!

Poor Martin Luther King Jr. was shot on the balcony of the hotel he stayed at in Memphis, Tennessee for fighting for equal rights. His house also bombed, people had hated him for fighting for equal rights. But we still carry on his memory and African Americans can walk on the same side of the street and can do whatever they please together.

If one person tries to be nice then everyone will want to be nice and that's very good! Even little kids can help a lot, believe it or not but I wouldn't lie. ANYONE can help so try it, it's easy, really easy! Nothing on this planet is more important than to help a friend, an old folk or just someone that needs help.

Just try it and if you don't like it ok but you could make someone's day, week, or even a whole year! It could really happen you have to see that it's a great thing! One person could really make a difference. So take one day just one little day and help someone that needs you!

*Ms. Germeroth, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge Elementary*

# MY CLASSROOM DIFFERENCES

*Bhargav Addagarla*

In my classroom we have people from different places with different cultures. Like one person is from India and one person is from Korea. It doesn't matter if we are black or white and brown but we still need to be treated the same way. We can stop judging people by the way they look. If we stop, it will spread peace to the community. And that is what we need to do!!!

*Ms. Dent, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Paxton Keeley Elementary*

# ON THE OPPOSITE END OF THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

*Timothy Virgil*

He does not belong to any flawed cliques whatsoever. He does not belong to any community, religion, or group who share some form of geography. He is different. He will surprise you. He can manipulate you. He knows of human nature and virtue.

*Ideas are everywhere and belong to no one.*

There are ideas all around me. Bumping, pushing, and persuading me. Begging for attention and acceptance, but never forcing anything on me. Ever. I call the shots now. African American is an idea rather than a race. I do not need to take that idea and some of its contents in. I am only born African American. The rest is up to me for customizing purposes. Whatever ideas that many African Americans follow I will most likely not embrace.

*Move. Step aside. I am not going to restrict myself to only what my skin tone has to offer. . .*

I control what ideas get extracted to become a part of my system. Spanish? Yes. . . It is part of my system now. That Mexican culture? It can be part of me as well. My 9th grade Spanish teacher told me that Mexicans are looked down upon, and this surrounds me every day. I am grateful to be around such massive and cultural beauty. In my mind, ideas are neutral; everywhere. You know you are good at another person's culture (idea) when a Mexican wants to talk mess about you as you walk down the hallway—"¡Mira ese mayate allí! (Look at that fag there!)" I personally thought it was interesting to insult someone who takes into consideration such an amazing culture.

The African Americans which I coexist with in today's world are too far behind for me to waste a breath on them; such as this requirement that we have to support some "hood." A hood is what's slowing folks down. This obsession about city of origin is ridiculous. I could care less about Atlanta, Georgia, or East St. Louis. I have goals in mind that require me to go outside the African American realm. Sagging? No. Basketball? No. Rapping? No. Getting with a white woman? No.

*Conformity is not a must for me. . .*

I chose not to fit in. The best option is not socially belonging to anyone. Social neutrality is beautiful. Instead of supporting two opposing groups, oppose none. Get lost in the ideas of both parties. Become a mixture. I am not going to satisfy any of these people. If you don't like it, move. Step aside. You are not a worthy piece.

Billions of people exist out there. I am to select a good one or two and surprise them. My intelligence is going to take me somewhere. I have no clue where, but somewhere. Maybe just maybe, I will explode. Then soon, others can probably extract ideas from me. Because I believe that African Americans are heading in a very wrong direction; in the direction of mental restriction, this nasty, downward social spiral, this destruction of the fragile African American reputation. They just do not understand, and yet it is up to them to get themselves to understand.

*For there is no disliking you, but only the disliking of your doings.*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Ben Humphreys*

Columbia, Missouri is the home of many parks and recreation facilities. These facilities are open to everyone in the city and are used by people of all ethnic backgrounds. The abundance of recreation facilities in Columbia is what makes our sense of community strong. From the ARC, parks, golf courses, lakes and more, these places are open for the use of anyone in the City. Most park facilities offer free recreation to families and residents of the City of Columbia. For example, Stephens Lake Park offers playground facilities, swimming, fishing and fitness trails all for no cost. Some places such as the ARC and the golf courses offer nice public facilities open to anyone at a reasonable cost. The availability of great parks and recreation facilities really adds to the diversity of the City of Columbia.

When someone walks to a park to either fish in the lake or play on the jungle gym there is nothing stopping any ethnic group from doing it. When you go to the Twin Lakes Park to let your dog run off leash at the dog section you will see a huge cross section of people from all over the world. The wide diversity in Columbia does not just show at the parks, but is also seen at the ARC and the golf courses. When you walk into the clubhouse at either L.A. Nickell or Lake of the Woods Golf Courses in Columbia you see all ethnic groups being served equally. When you are out on the course you see the restrooms or the water fountain being used by anyone who wants to, it makes you reflect back to a time when not everyone could use the water fountain at a public place. Then you realize how far we have come in our country and our community. The ARC is an indoor fitness facility and is a great example of a place where people from all origins get together for fun and exercise. When you head out to the basketball courts you will see tons of people and none look the same. There are all kinds of games going on in there, and many different people play the games. The pool is also home to much diversity, as the slide has a line of all ethnic groups wanting to take the ride to the bottom. The track and other fitness activities are also open to everyone as long as they are old enough.

The parks and recreation facilities in Columbia, Missouri are a key reason why the citizens in the community function as a diverse but equal population. A strong bond is formed when people of all ethnic origins are free to spend time exercising and relaxing in a safe and friendly environment. The more time people spend in recreational settings with those from other cultures or backgrounds, the less likely there is to have conflict. The investment the City of Columbia has made in all of the parks facilities will pay great dividends in the future, because the community will be safer, stronger and healthier.

*Ms. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# a RAINBOW OF PEOPLE

*Eilish Matthews*

Columbia is a rainbow of different religions, cultures, races, ethnic groups, and opinions. This is important because it teaches the people living in Columbia that there are many choices and life styles. Diversity lets Columbia grow as a community and as a family. Religion, culture, and opinion are all things that effect the growth of Columbia.

Different religions teach different morals. One religion may say that we need to preserve the traditions while others say we need to breakout of the old habits. This is helpful in the long run because the people can use those two outlooks to make Columbia a more modern place while still preserving the older traditions. This makes Columbia an easier place to live for everyone.

Culture has an obvious effect on Columbia. Every household in Columbia has a slightly different culture than all the others. Different languages, foods, and clothing are on display almost anywhere a person goes. This creates a community that allows anyone to fit in and feel welcomed. The more people and ideas there are in Columbia the better it is.

Everyone has different opinions. Every thought and idea varies in some way. This mixture of opinions is what lets Columbia be the best that it can be. Different opinions give different viewpoints on each problem.

Columbia's rainbow displays many more colors than just seven. Every person adds to the community. Every person is their own color. Diversity is what makes Columbia a great place to live.

*Mrs. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Danica Barnes*

A long time ago, black and white people were separated. To this day children bully others for their hair being different, or their eyes looking "weird" or their clothes look old and cheap. But it is wrong.

It is important for everyone to be treated equally. We are all humans, we're God's creation. We all have hearts, and feelings. So why attack one person's feelings, why be the cause of shed tears? Does anyone really deserve that? No! NOBODY is better, or worse than anyone else.

People are people, and justice is the American Pledge! "Justice for all" it says! So show justice, and kindness, and welcoming to all! Let children and adults alike have peace, and show that every human beings life is worth living? Be kind, be fair, and treat others as you want to be treated.

*Ms. Germeroth, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge Elementary*

# DIVERSITY

*Clara Yu*

What is Diversity? Doesn't it mean to be different? Yes, it does. Diversity does mean different. However, even in the 9 letter-word of 'different', there are several meanings hidden in it. You could be different in a good and a bad way. Different can be similar to unsame, unusual, or unique. Different can be different from the meanings: same, similar, familiar, old. So there is a lot of meanings in diversity as well as different.

The diversity we're talking about is between races, gender, or maybe even age. Since the diversity is important in life, let us talk about it.

Is it fair? Does it matter? The color of your skin, your gender, or how old you are. Is it fair to exclude others for it? No. This may be my personal opinion but I think it's wrong and unfair to act uncourtously to people who are just. . . .different from you. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sojourner Truth are two people who fought diversity gone bad.

I don't mean being different is bad. In fact, it's good. Your artwork or competition might be different or unique. That's super! Also, if every single thing in the world was exactly the same, the world would be a boring place without sparks. So yeah, being different is good, but making fun of different people isn't good at all. So, let's all fight diversity in the bad way by changing first with you. So let's all chill out and be treated equal and treat others equal and the world will become a better place for you and for me.

*Ms. Germeroth , 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge Elementary*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Megan Pullen*

Do you know diversity? Diversity is something that separates us all. Ranging from race to disability.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made sure that all people should be treated the same even if they have a different color of skin than you do. He made sure that all people should be able to go to the school of their choice or drink from any water fountain. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a hero. Years ago girls were not allowed to work either. They had to stay home and work on cooking and cleaning.

Diversity is also if you have disabilities. You didn't have to have a way for the handicapped to come in. Now we have to have bigger doors so everyone can come in. A little while back people with disabilities could not go to the schools of their choice or even get a job.

Diversity separates all of us. Like I have blue eyes but my friends might have green or brown eyes or I have white skin but some of my friends have brown skin. Even though we are different we are great friends.

Yes, diversity separates us all. We should go celebrate our differences and treat others the same.

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Jane Lee*

I'm from Korea. My name is Jane. My real name is Younghyun, and some people think I'm weird. I didn't do anything bad or weird. It's because I'm from a different country. People are all the same, they just look different. I speak a different language. Maybe that's the reason people roll their eyes at me and my friends. I just don't understand. I didn't do anything.

I felt so different when I first came to this country. I only knew one person besides my family. Clara. Clara was desperate about how we should be treated equally. We didn't like being called Chinese or Japanese. We thought we were treated differently. Some people stared at us. We are all the same.

A living life is important. No one talked to me the first day of school except for Clara. I'm trying to act like American, maybe it's a pressure, but I'm still Korean.

My friend Megan is one of the people who thinks all the people have to be treated equally. I hope all the people will think all the people should be treated equally like Megan.

It's really hard to make friends in a whole new country. I didn't understand what people were saying. I'm getting shyer and shyer. I don't know why it's so hard. People think I am weird. They don't want to talk to me. I thought I was wrong. Not all people thought I was weird. 1/3 of the people in the world think we are all the same. Those people they're all my friends. Even though they don't even know me, they can be my friend.

There is a man who can't walk in our neighborhood. He's always on his wheelchair. I see him riding down my neighborhood. He can do anything he wants to do even though he has no legs. He's always smiling and when I first saw him I was a little scared. My mom didn't care how he looks like. Now, when he passes us, we say hi.

Just think like this. It's like, if you're an American and if you go to my country, Korea, they'll think you are different. When you see someone different, think about it. How would you feel if you're them?

*Ms. Germeroth, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge Elementary*

# TREATING PEOPLE EQUALLY

*Madison Rice*

Have you ever seen a white kid bullying a black kid? Some people have. Did you want to do something but you were afraid he or she would turn on you. I would be scared.

People know it's not nice to hurt others feelings but they do it anyway. Martin knew and he though we were stronger than violence. He had a dream, that one day his girls and boys would live in a world where they were not judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character. His dream came true after he died.

When Martin was a kid he could only go to certain places and sit on certain seats on the bus. Sometimes if the bus was full the driver could make a black person give ups their seat and give it to a white person. Rosa Parks one day refused to give up her seat and got arrested. Then Martin said that no one could ride the bus until the law changed.

Martin changed the world without violence. Don't judge people by their skin judge them by their hearts. Martin changed the old ways so black and whites could be friends at last.

*Ms. Germeroth , 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge Elementary*

# RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE

*Madison White*

"Pop, Pop,Pop" that's the sound of ideas popping into everyone's brain. Everybody is different but treated the same at Paxton Keeley Elementary School. If you are black or white or maybe brown, everybody treats you the same.

At our school we have all different cultures like Indian, Chinese, and Korean. That is why I love this school. I can learn from diverse people. We all have the right to do fun things together.

You should treat others the way you want to be treated, and everyone should be treated equally because it makes the community peaceful and happy. Don't judge someone from the outside. Everybody has different talents that give back to the community. People all can feel happy and a part of the community if you treat them the right way.

That's why I love my school because Paxton Keeley Elementary School accepts everyone for who they are.

*Ms. Dent, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Paxton Keeley Elementary School*

# DIVERSITY AND CULTURE IN SOCIETY

*Josh Villarreal*

Imagine a village with only blacksmiths. Without the other necessary members of the village; it does not prosper and crumbles as a society. Diversity is important because it provides our society and culture with unique and inspirational perspectives. It can create new ideas and changes that are beneficial to their society and at times the rest of the world. If we all looked the same, felt the same, believed the same, life would be boring. We need diversity like we need different channels on TV to watch and want to eat different foods at time to time. This is why Columbia needs to celebrate diversity since its essential to all societies to have some diversity. With the different views that come with diversity, societies are able to grow and prosper as a whole.

Now imagine life without soap, roads, religion, stores, your favorite foods, and anything that's ever been printed. Without the multiple races and cultures in today's society; some of these inventions would not exist today in our everyday lives. Since diversity comes from mostly the difference of people's culture and race. Thanks to the different cultures and races of the world; we now have some of the luxuries of our everyday lives. Not only are the items we use come from different cultures, but also diverse ideas and beliefs. Our societies now have the theories and philosophies of Confucius, Plato, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and plenty of others. With the thoughts of these philosophers, we can think about what they believed and come up with our new ideas and theories. This why multiculturalism is so important and should be celebrated by Columbia and other societies elsewhere.

*Mrs. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Cassidee Tuttle*

Even though everybody looks different on the outside we all have feelings on the inside. At my school (Columbia Independent) there are a lot of different cultures, and people that look different from each other. In fact, two of my best friends are African-American and Korean. They both have the same feelings as I do.

In the past one of my friends and I got into a fight and realized we had the same feelings. We were both sorry and sad. It was then and there that I realized we got into fights over silly little things. Other people in my class are Chinese, Greek, Brazilian, and Indian. They all have the same feelings as me. People's beliefs may be different, but we're all the same on the inside, no matter how different we look.

*Mrs. Schust, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Columbia Independent School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Jonathan Jalali*

Everyday we experience diversity. We often forget how fortunate we are; so diverse, so harmonious. Everyday, I shake the hands of my African-American Brothers and Sisters, I shake the hands of my Asian Brothers and Sisters, I shake the hands of my White Brothers and Sisters. And at the end of the day, we all walk amongst the halls as one. One people. One student body. One family.

I myself, am Persian-American. My Father was born in Iran. My Mother is from California. I have two best friends; one of which is white, the other Jamaican-American. Without Dr. King's movement, our friendship would never be possible. It's wonderful how we're able to be as close as we are. I value diversity due to the fact that without it, half of my friendships wouldn't exist today.

But in all honesty, diversity is something often taken for granted. But, one man who will never take it for granted, is my father. He grew up in Shiraz, Iran. Iran has always been predominantly Muslim. But, in the 70's, when the revolution came about, and power shifted to the Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, Iran's government became a corrupt theocratic tyranny. The Ayatollah was a Muslim dictator, nearly a purist. He was bent on achieving shiite/shi'ah Muslim dominance; persecuting any religious or political groups not "pro shiite-Muslim". Long story short, my Father's family fell into that category. They are members of a religion called the Baha'i Faith, a world religion emphasizing the spiritual unity of all mankind. Ayatollah Khamenei persecuted Baha'is all throughout Iran. When the revolution came to Shiraz, my Father and his family had to leave with the clothes on their backs. He was forced to leave everything due to lack of diversity.

Due to his sacrifices, I've learned truly how important diversity is. It is what our great nation was built upon. The land of opportunity. For all races.

Like I said; Most take it for granted. They don't realize all of the persecution that goes on in the world, due to fear and denial of diversity. This is why we're truly grateful. Without Dr. King's Civil Rights Movement, there would be no diversity for my Father's Family to immigrate to. Diversity is extremely important to us. This is why we are not prejudice, or judgmental. We value diversity.

I pride myself in being a role-model and friend to people of all races and religions. I have neighbors of all backgrounds. I have classmates of all backgrounds. I have teammates of all backgrounds. And I love the diversity. All of them are equal in my book. And they should be in everyone's book. Diversity is imperative in any society. I hope one day, the whole world will put aside all petty prejudices, and unite as one people. But we must start small. But we can pride ourselves in the fact that we have diversity here in Columbia. We can pride ourselves in the fact that Columbia Values Diversity.

*Mrs. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# UNITY IS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

*Rachel Cullen*

Columbia Missouri is a very fine place to be. We have all different kinds of people. Our neighbors and our friends show the diversity of our area. No matter how different we are, we come together as one community. Our unity is a cause for celebration. Each member of our community has their own language, culture and background.

My street, for example has loads of diversity. My neighbors speak various languages but we still do activities together. I believe Columbia has a familiar sense of community that some parts of America lack. Instead of strictly speaking one native language in a closed community, Columbians are open to meeting and talking to each other freely. Languages don't put up a barrier here but instead they put up an opportunity to learn for one another.

Our city has many different cultural aspects. I see living, breathing proof just walking the halls of my school everyday. Most of the students in our school are taking a second language course in which we also study foreign culture. Personally, I am taking French and learning about French cooking, travel, religion, cities and overall daily life. Many of my friends study Spanish language and culture. We also have extracurricular clubs in our school for each language that we take. Sometimes our clubs will all meet together for activities. That is a prime example of a community coming together as one but still keeping their own, individual culture unique.

A person's background can make them who they are. Just as each of us have an interesting background and different history so does Columbia. Columbia's population is 100,000. Each one of those citizens has a special story. Whether the story is about a little girl who is an only child and lives in the middle of pure suburbia, or a thirty year old workaholic who struggles to get by, we all have a story. Each story is unique and combined with the stories of everyone it makes our community even more unique.

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

# DIVERSITY

*Jaymyn Bell*

Variety, Difference is a reason for celebration

To praise and observe beautiful minds and colors balance, value and worth of human kind

Balance, value and worth of human kind

Thoughts passing through my mind of freedom for all

Rights for beliefs , ethnic, age, education-power

Pictures of swirled colors, genes, ages, backgrounds united in one

One race the human race

My brown hand in my mother's white hand together walking around my city

Accepted, blended, in place, balanced, Free!

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Derek Strawn*

In Columbia there are so many different religions that anybody can fit in and not feel like an alien. You could probably find somebody that is from where you are and meet new types of people and become friends even if they are not from the same culture.

Columbia is lucky to have so many different cultures and religions from people because we may all look different on the outside on the inside we are all alike and can work together in peace and harmony to make Columbia and the whole world a better place for people and animals of the future.

Multiculturalism is important so kids can meet and be around kids from around the world and could become fascinated about cultures and someday help find out more about past and present cultures. People from around the world may have different ways of doing things or making things and can make the product or deed better and faster. Then when you mix the old way and the new you could get an easier and quicker more modern way to do things or make things. That's why Columbia is lucky to be a very, very diverse city and why we are a very successful city.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Josie Ball*

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle." This quote refers to the great amount of effort that would be required in order for everyone to be treated equally. He knew that one day the idea of equality would be accepted. Finally, after decades of hard work, multiculturalism is celebrated. The phrase in our Declaration of Independence, "All men are created equal" is actually true. People are aware that equality is important, but the purpose of our celebration is often forgotten. Celebrating diversity is essential in our community because it reminds everyone of the days when equality didn't exist and recognizes the struggles that they went through. It also shows the importance of a person's uniqueness and how it is a factor in our society.

Everyday from the time our country was founded to the 1960s was a struggle for African Americans. When one celebrates diversity, they're honoring all of the perseverance that an individual had that helped to create equality. Celebrating diversity is a way of thanking these courageous human beings for everything they contributed towards making everyone in our society possess equal opportunities. Without people like Martin Luther King Jr., discrimination might still occur. We are reminded not to take this for granted.

Diversity is a major part in our community for several reasons. This uniqueness allows people to experience different cultures and ways of life that would not be possible otherwise. When people are exposed to different cultures, their minds become more open. Their opinions begin to change from the stereotypes that once made up their incipient beliefs. These people will then pass this experience on to their peers and the next generation. Eventually, all of these combined cultures will be tolerated and accepted. But a person that has never been exposed to different cultures has not been given the opportunity to a more free mentality. This is yet another explanation on why celebrating diversity is crucial in a society.

To sum it up, the celebration of diversity amongst a community is critical for several reasons. It reminds people of all the suffering that was endured during the days when people were not equal. It honors the brave individuals that were able to persevere and continue to fight for equality while under this great amount of distress. Celebrating diversity shows everyone how much this uniqueness within people contributes to our society. Lastly, this celebration provides Martin Luther King Jr. with the attitude of equality that he always dreamt of.

*Ms. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# COLUMBIA

*Allison Farris*

To shrink from color, cower, whites, I'm not diseased, just black as night.  
Down in the South, there was a veil, we see in books, still written now.

The men were cruel, they cut and burned, the women worse, or so I've learned. They fire and gossip and spread like fire, all you problems, forcing you to retire.

Like alcohol, different bottles same result, the blood is red, despite the outside coat.

After the fact, one hundred years, still black man had reason to fear.  
Down in the deep, Southern pride flying high, white man sure, the coloreds should die.

The KKK marched down the street, hooded figures, long and bleached.  
The dreadful taunting, nasty deaths, they made it seem what's not, was less.

But one good man, I know there was, a Mister King, from Atlanta, Georgia.  
He had a dream, up in D.C., of justice, peace, and equality.

That someday black kids would learn with white, that lynching men wouldn't hide in the night.  
That blacks could speak their mind, straight up, and not be scared of what was to come.

Now fifty years later, in Columbia, Missouri, for whites and blacks, equal is misery.  
Equal is happiness and equal is pain, equal is their chance to gain.

I go to school with all different kinds of skin, white, black, Asian, Mexican.  
I take my class with each of them, and each his say, is worth the win.

So Dr. King, up there above, sits there smiling, looking down on us.  
In a community rich as any other, diversity unites us brothers.

At school, the store, and the workplace, here in Columbia, we're the same.

The reasons here to love it, are boundless, so it seems,  
But most of all the fulfillment, of Mister Martin's dream.

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

# COLUMBIA DIVERSITY

*Riannon Zellmer*

When you think of Columbia  
What comes to mind?  
I think of many different people  
Many different kinds  
All different outsides  
None quite the same  
But familiar insides  
No shame in their game.

Columbia is full of diversity  
Different cultures all around  
Each person in our community  
Helps create our sound.  
A sound of loving caring hearts  
Each beating one by one.  
Each of us singing to our part  
Under a shining and diverse sun.

When you think of Columbia  
What comes to mind?  
Do you think of Dr. Martin Luther King  
Back in his time?  
All he wanted was peace and equality  
Diversity through us all.  
So you could be you  
And I could be me.  
So that one wouldn't feel bigger  
Nor that one would feel small.

If only he could see us now  
How his dream has come true  
How we stand hand in hand  
And how diversity has changed everything we do.

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

# DIVERSITY

*Patrick Jordan*

Multiculturalism is important in a growing community like Columbia. The world is changing and using the Internet which connects different cultures. Because we are connected, we can learn and know more about what is happening in other parts of the world. It's easier to learn about different cultures when people from those cultures live in our community. If we could have a different variety of cultures in our community, there could be more understanding and less fighting. This will lead to more peace and harmony.

Without internet, we would have to use books. Books may have good information on history but the internet is like live television. It is updated all the time. When something happens in Egypt, the rest of the world knows about it immediately. We can read on the internet about Greece being low on money. When my mom tells me that I have family in Holland, it doesn't seem real to me until I see their profiles on Facebook. My mom shows me their pictures and their posts about what they are doing. The internet makes the world connected.

Because we have to learn about other cultures, we can learn from books or we can learn from people that come from other cultures, Learning from a person can be more accurate. Just like the telephone game, when stories get retold, they get exaggerated and not very accurate. Also, learning about another culture from a live person can give you a better idea of how we are alike. Sometimes we only see the differences like religion, language, and clothing. If you actually get to know someone from that culture they can be pretty similar. We all love our families, we all live in a house, and we all worry about some of the same things like schoolwork, friends, and stress.

When cultures begin to understand that they have a lot of things in common than they are less likely to fight with each other. It is not easy to start a war with someone that you are friends with. Learning about different cultures is the best way to understand each other and get along. There are too many wars going on in the world today. If you go to war with someone then you are not understanding them the way you should. This is why Columbia should celebrate diversity.

*Ms. Smith, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Krystle Wilson*

We must let freedom ring  
So we can all sing  
Together as one  
Instead of separated  
Black and White  
No longer matter,  
We can now see through  
Into one another's hearts  
There is no need to be scared  
To walk down the streets  
For we all walk on our own two feet

*Ms. Bivens, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Hickman High School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Lateeka Winn*

One community,  
Stories within,  
One community,  
Different friends,  
One community,  
Many cultures,  
One community,  
Many voices,  
One community for all to see,  
What diversity means to me,  
Many shades from a single tree,  
Diversity in my community,  
Where people live harmoniously,  
Where learning is free,  
When food comes in variety,  
Cause service has personality,  
Cause taste here is worldly from pizza to curry,  
Where language can vary yet,  
One voice can carry the tune of unity in diversity

*Ms. Bivens, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Rock Bridge High School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*LaQuanda McGee*

We are one,  
But multiple colors,  
We are two,  
As sisters and brothers,  
Black, White, all races do matter,  
We bleed the same color,  
This world can be better if we help each other,  
So lend a hand and make a step in the positive direction,  
Respect is for all,  
We have the same challenges,  
For we are all one,  
In Diversity

*Ms. Bivens, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Rockbridge High School*

## DIVERSITY

*Nora Hargett*

Diversity, a strong word that holds so much power, a word that holds the whole world together as one. It can keep a community together but it can also pull it apart. We need to cherish our own history but also welcome others stories and ethnicities. Each one of us is special and each one of us can make a difference. Diversity is something we need to celebrate and embrace.

There are many stories that are still yet to be shared. Look around and you'll see people from about any place you can imagine, we have these opportunities to learn about so many ethnic groups and yet we don't take advantage of it. My uncle works at the refugee center and he has so many stories that many people will never get to know if they don't reach out to each other. We need to make a world where people don't judge others before they get to know them. Diversity is an amazing concept and we need to get a hold of it before it's too late.

"America is not like a blanket—one piece of unbroken cloth. America is more like a quilt— many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, all woven together by a common thread." Rev. Jesse Jackson. We need to make sure that we leave this world knowing that we have done what's right and that we have loved each other not because of our origins but because we are all human beings living on the same earth. We need to shape a world that accepts others for who they are not by what they look like. Jesse Jackson is right, we are all woven together by a common thread but if we forget where we are from and if we don't except each other's differences then that thread might break in two.

# STORYTELLING FOR EQUALITY

*Sherry Xie*

Almost two centuries ago, when Columbia was founded, any person who did not have light skin lived in a world of prejudice and discrimination. No one bothered to listen to these people. No one bothered to even think about these people's thoughts and feelings. But if someone had, they would have discovered cultures so unlike their own, with different religions, traditions, and fascinating histories. Luckily, people started caring, and today, every person, man or woman, adult or child, has a voice. Columbia may be only one community, but there are hundreds of stories to be shared.

In Columbia, I see people who come from countries all over the world, with their own stories of their home country, their journey to America, and how their life is now. I am one of those people I moved to Columbia when I was five years old, only knowing a few words in English and most of my family and friends still in China. Starting school, I was surprised how my teachers and classmates were so interested in my culture. They asked about my hometown, about my family, and about anything else they could think of. Friends commented on how I was so lucky to be different, and I realize that I am lucky — I can share my story without having someone look down upon me.

Laurens van der Post once said, "... without a story you have not got a nation, or culture, or civilization. Without a story of your own, you haven't got a life of your own." To build the world of equality Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed of, we must listen to and accept other cultures' stories, and share our own stories in return. I believe humans were given the ability to speak for a reason, and if every culture in the world — or just our city of Columbia — came together to tell stories, it would pave the way to a better world.

*Mrs. Michelle Jones, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# THE HIJAB

*Fatimah Krgo*

The sounds of laughter and talking, and the smell of a clean bleach smell greets you as you walk through the door. It was the first day of the 6th grade. It was an ordinary morning. I woke up at 6:30, and was out the door at 7:25. When we reached the school, I was already starting to get butterflies in my stomach. I was going to a new school, new people and it was my first day wearing the hijab (headscarf).

This one piece of cloth had separated me from the other kids. I had changed the way I dressed, and was starting to realize how much of an impact wearing a hijab would be. But, I was still the same fun, and shy girl from elementary school!

As I walked into the gym, I could see people intensely watching me. I quickly sat down on the bleachers and waited for the teachers to tell us to start going to our first class. At around 8:30, we were sent to our team's hallway.

When we came to the hallway, we were asked to pick our locker partners, and to put our things into our lockers. The rest of the day was like any first day of school. At 3:00, we were on the buses on our way home. That year was one that I will never forget.

I realize now that some people will judge me by my religion, or what I wear, without even getting to know me. I too, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would like to change that. I think that I contribute to that by being a Muslim girl living in Columbia, Missouri and helping people get to know me, for who I am.

*Mrs. Inniss, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# DIVERSITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

*Isabel Dyke*

One community, many stories. That is what we aim for. Diversity and supporting it in our own community. Diversity is what we strive for when we set aside the natural barriers that come between people. It is the star that we reach towards when we are open to all people, regardless of dress, skin color, or heritage. Yet, despite the efforts, people are mistreated and misjudged every day in our world. Now is the time to unite to celebrate the differences that lie within the layers of our city. It is never too late.

Diversity is like an ice cream sundae. With only vanilla, it is plain and nearly flavorless. If you add hot fudge sauce or caramel, it gets more interesting and more fun to eat. If you add peanuts, sprinkles, and a cherry, it is even more desirable. If we have a city with toppings of all shapes and sizes, than we will have true diversity.

There is always more to a person than meets the eye. There is always more diversity. There is diversity in skin color, religion, and just the way of life. Our goal is to embrace, and not demolish, this aspect of life that should be desirable in all communities. That is our goal, and that is what we shall accomplish.

*Mrs. Wahid, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# DIVERSITY AND CHANGE IN COLUMBIA

*Kay Frymire*

“You don’t know what’s going on behind those front doors until you go inside,” Almeta Crayton once said. According to The Columbia Daily Tribune, she was describing the annual Everyone Eats food drive that she has been organizing for the past 4 years in Columbia. Crayton is a former first ward councilwoman. Most of her life in Columbia has been spent helping others.

Everyone Eats is a program which includes two things. The first is a Thanksgiving meal which serves more than 500 people. Many volunteers donate food and help Almeta with preparing, counting, and then serving the meal to poor Columbia residents. The second part of the program involves volunteers making food baskets for local families. These families have a place to eat, but not enough money to purchase ingredients. A volunteer for the Thanksgiving dinner, Curtis Soul, told why Christmas music was played at last year’s dinner. “People gathering together reminds me of the holidays, so we’re playing Christmas music. This is Almeta Crayton’s way of giving, and Christmas is about giving. So the two can go together.” Residents in Columbia admire and appreciate the things Crayton has done and is still doing for the community. Dianne Lynch, the president of Stephen’s College, described Almeta as the patron saint of Columbia.

Almeta Crayton follows in the footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. every day. She has definitely shaped Columbia’s commitment to Dr. King. Even this year, after being diagnosed with kidney disease, she is still trying to help others. Everyone Eats has grown tremendously and helped thousands of people thanks to Almeta Crayton. After last year’s dinner she said, “Sometimes I have to keep myself from crying because I look at what I see as the real Columbia and the goodness of this town.”

*Ms. Inniss, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# WHAT IF

*Kelley Tackett*

What if my skin were orange  
Or perhaps a neon blue.  
Would you treat me like an alien  
Instead of embracing something new?

What if I had polka-dots,  
Or stripes across my skin,  
A third eye on my forehead,  
Would you accept me then?

Or must I be like you  
Must I disregard what is unique  
Change myself so I am average  
Then what would you think?

In order for you to accept me,  
I need a mouth, forehead and nose,  
Two eyes centered, plus  
All ten fingers and ten toes.

It matters not what I think,  
You are blinded by prejudice,  
Just because I am different,  
Don't you realize this?

Would you really like it  
If I were just like you?  
Mimicking every movement,  
Everything you do?

Does my being different  
Affect your way of life?  
Do I cause you problems,  
Cause you trouble, pain or strife?

But the world is full of mystery  
And you may surprise me yet.  
My company awaits you,  
Our differences to vet.

# DIVERSE COMMUNITY

*Rebekah Busick*

"Racism is man's gravest threat to man - the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason." These were the words of Abraham Heschel. Everyone is different no matter how similar people may seem. Bringing everyone together who has differences is what makes a community. Even though we are very diverse we can all come together and be friends. Although people may have different customs, religions, skin color, or opinions, that is what makes a community.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said. "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." This is saying people should be accepted for who they are, not judged by what they look like, how they act, or what diseases they have. Rosa Parks wouldn't give up her seat just because she was black, from this she was arrested in 1955. Part of this was finally fixed when in 1964 segregation was ended and blacks could mix with whites. "We are all alike, on the inside." Mark Twain said this and is saying that we take one glance and only see what's on the outside. We don't take time to realize what's on the inside. "America's strength is not our diversity; our strength is our ability to unite people of different backgrounds around common principles." These words were said by Ernest Inoué. He's saying that our strength isn't diversity, but that our strength is to unite people together.

No matter what race, religion or person we are we all deserve respect. Instead of fighting against each other we need to unite and create a diverse community. Everyone is different no matter how similar people may seem. Although people may have different customs, religions, skin color, or opinions, that is what makes a community.

*Ms. Inniss, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# ALL AROUND US

*Sarah Bai*

What is diversity? In the dictionary, it is defined as multi-formity and variety, a point of difference. I think there is more to it than just the blend of different human races. It is the benevolent people that greet us at the supermarket, the friendly neighbors saying hello as they pass your block, the classmates you see every day in school, even the hardworking mailman that smiles at you chugging door to door to deliver letters.

Every one of us cares about each other, no matter what color, race, or ethnic group. America is called the “melting pot” because we all contribute and add variety to the nation. Being distinctive from the “crowd” is what everyone should be proud of. I am happy to be different, like everyone else, in my city. Our diversity is what brings unity in our community.

To the people who brought us together in our world: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Gandhi, Fredrick Douglas, they all had thoughts about balancing our culture and living together in peace. I hope that one day we will succeed and bring joy and happiness to all on Earth. I am glad for these people that changed us and the way we live. Our ancestors created backgrounds and traditions, not meant to be hidden. Our culture is constantly evolving but I hope our roots never stray away from us.

Though the world is never rid of evil, we can do so much starting from our communities and act towards others. We are supposed to act as one, uniquely. Wisely said by Malcom Forbes, “Diversity: the art of thinking independently together. We can be stronger united than battling for power or arguing about government rights, but it will take a long time for most people to figure out that satisfaction is right in front of us.

We should be glad to be in the same society yet come from different backgrounds and traditions. I like meeting new people and learning about their fascinating culture. I love to see our differences in art, music, literature, history, food, language, and so much more. It’s amazing to look back and see how far we’ve come as a whole. I concur.

*Mrs. Wahid, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Miguel Aviles*

Racist jokes, are they actually funny? If you think about it they really aren't. It's just someone making fun of your skin color, culture, religion... So how do you find this funny? Some can make you laugh, but you know it is wrong on the inside. Others are just plain cruel. I am flabbergasted by how someone of one race could make fun of another race. That isn't right! Is it okay for someone of the same race to make fun of their own race...? No! I know what you're thinking right now: "yeah it is okay for someone of the same race to make fun of their own." It isn't, because it can be just as cruel.

You can hear or see racist jokes everywhere: YouTube, talk show hosts, Facebook, friends and even family. No matter where you go they follow you because sometimes they are so cruel they imprint on you. But you have to keep going through ignoring them or blocking them out because hopefully one day there will be no more.

We should value diversity not make fun of it! We shouldn't have to hide from it, make fun of it, or even joke about it. Everyone is different so why should we make fun of them for that difference. If everybody was the same the world would be boring we would meet the same people over and over again it would be like having a billion copies of you.

So remember Racist jokes aren't funny they are cruel. Value diversity and do not take shame in it or make fun of it. Everyone is different and you can't change that so just accept. I value diversity... Columbia values diversity!

*Ms. Wahid, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Sarah Elizabeth Rieman Johns*

Dreams of Peace Fulfilled

Dr. Martin Luther King was a wonderful man,  
He tried to celebrate diversity with those who were fans.  
But unfortunately, he passed away,  
Before his dream could come true.

And to this day.

People still care.

About Martin Luther King,  
And his words; they still hang in the air.  
We have fulfilled his dream of peace,

At last,

I am not sorry to say it is true.

We have diversity standing on the grass so green,  
And underneath the sky of blue.

The black and the white,

The blue and the yellow,

It matters not what color you are:

You will find all the people of the world

Holding hands under the stars.

Columbia has changed,

Since they heard his name.

And the schools united cultures,

Grant was one of the first,

The students said that they would disperse.

They would not judge others because of their skin.

And they welcomed those people,

From all over the world,

And those children said,

You belong here.

Boys and girls

Many schools followed the steps,

Of Martin Luther King,

They would walk in his footsteps,

And yes, they would sing,

Sing for the freedom of all.

Do not judge others because of their skin,

And do not commit,

A large number of sins.

Love one another,

As equals.

And care for one,

Care for all.

# DIFFERENT

*Fonda Pham*

I was only 4 when I came to America. And only eight; came to Columbia. It was like a hard roller coaster ride and I tried to stay on. At times, I succeeded. Other times, I fell off, because I felt like I was different. Because the truth is, I was different.

The Story of Martin Luther King shows how everyone is different, and how they're still the same at the same time. Martin Luther King didn't give up, and tried to change the world, not for him, but for all of us. He said that everyone should be treated equally and everyone is unique, special, loved and irreplaceable. I didn't know that. But I learned that, eventually — the hard way.

I came to America in 2004. I was only four then, and was already trying to fit in. It was hard because everyone felt like I didn't belong; I talked with a thick accent, my hair was the filthy color of coal, unlike the other kids. It was hard, but with the help of my very kind preschool teacher, I succeeded in learning English, after many times when I failed.

I went to kindergarten, first grade, mastered second grade and leaped happily into third grade. I became loved and felt unique and special all over again. But then, when I felt that life couldn't be better, my mom had gotten a new job; I had to move all over again.

Life was difficult for me. I cried, and laughed at the same time, knowing I would never forget my friends. And the good thing is I still remember them now.

I came to Columbia. I went to third grade, and met a bunch of supportive people. I had a tough time with bullies, but still had loving friends that are still my friends today.

And now as I'm thinking back, I am as lucky as any other person.

*Mr. Trotter, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Helen Korcak*

Diversity is important not only to the people of Columbia, but also to the world. A world without difference isn't a world at all. A community is a place that is created for people to celebrate differences that make everybody unique. Everybody has something super special about them, sometimes their gifts are hidden. Sometimes very obvious, and in fact some people don't consider their gift a blessing. I have a special gift, I was born different.

On May 7th, 2000, I was born, just another child now being introduced to a world of diversity. My mom knew something was different, she just wasn't sure what. Afterward I got checked up and the doctor told my mother "We've checked over Helen and we've realized that she has a cleft palate." My mom didn't mind at all, nobody did, except for my older brother who was only being curious.

By the time I was 14 months old, I had my first revision surgery, and started getting used to my new mouth. I grew up a normal child, although I wouldn't say that anybody can really ever be normal. I didn't notice that I was different than any of the other kids. I started speech therapy at age four during preschool. Before I knew it, preschool was over, and I had graduated. At that point my mom had really started to explain to me about my special difference, and why I was the only child at school to have my special teacher. I didn't realize that I was that different until I started Elementary school.

When I started Elementary school, nearly every new kid I met always asked me. "Why do you sound that way?" or "Why does your voice sound so weird?" I then repeated my constant explanation. Some kids understood just fine, few other children made fun of me. "How you doing flat-face?" one kid would say. I cried a couple of times, but I would always gather my pride, and tried to remember that I was just another individual with an obvious, special, gift.

Nobody should ever be ashamed of why they're special. If one person teases someone else about why they sound different or look and think different, just remember that they have their own difference that they should think about before they speak out. I like to celebrate the difference of everybody. I know that some people are rather unusual, but that's because we live in a world of diversity.

*Mrs. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Zayd Airawi*

It doesn't matter what others think about you what matters is what you think. People come from around the world with different names, cultures, languages, and accents. Diversity is what makes us all different, if there wasn't diversity, nobody would be different and they wouldn't really have anything special about them. If I am from Iraq, and my friend is from Libya, we still are humans but we have different stories about ourselves. Also, if I had a vanilla ice cream it would be better if I had sprinkles and other toppings so the ice cream can be different in a unique kind of way.

What makes us have friends is also because of diversity. It wouldn't be fun if we were all the same because then we would all have the same things in common and not have anything that's cool about us. Some people around the world may say you're weird but all you should think is you always will have something special about yourself that makes you different than others. You are who you are and you will never change. If you are skinny, fat, or your skin is white, tan, or black all that matters is who you really are in the real world and what you really think deep, deep down in the center of your heart.

*Mrs. Long, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Lydia Broadus*

Martin Luther King is a name that means something, a name we should all be proud of. He changed the future and made it a place we want to live in. He was a hero, and still is, he is one of the many people that changed the world, others changed the world too but not like Mr. King did. He changed the world so the unheard could be heard; he changed the world for us, not himself.

Mr. King was not ignored; he had a dream, a dream that is famous up to this day. He is remembered for his bravery and his fight for fairness. He might have thought back then that he could never change the future or even his present, if only he could see today...

Our community is always saying, telling and teaching that it's not what's on the outside that matters, but on the inside. I think that's just what Mr. King wanted us to see, he wanted us to see each other from the inside, not the outside. He wanted us to be friends, live in peace and love each other.

If it wasn't for Mr. King, we would still be unheard, waiting for someone to come along and change the world. But luckily Mr. King already changed the world, he gave up his life to change the world, and it would be rare for someone to come along as dedicated and loving as Martin Luther King.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# COLUMBIA RELATIONS

*Hayley Leal*

On a cheerful spring day, I marched into the classroom with a grin on my face and a jar of Nutela in my right hand. I breathed in the smell of breads and meats and sugary things all mashed together, it was like a food heaven to me. In our third grade classroom it was “Heritage Day” where we all got to bring in a food from our own nationality, and of course I chose Nutela because I’m half British.

I looked around the room examining all the food. There was everything from rice, to meats, to pasta! I honestly at the moment felt like Garfield in heaven.

When it was finally time to eat I was ecstatic. It was like the whole world had morphed itself into food and was sitting right in front of me. I suddenly understood what all this food was telling me: there’s so many different people in this classroom, so many different cultures and journeys that people have been on.

As I made my plate I thought to myself that each piece of food was showing me who really lived in this tiny little town. There were so many foods, and so many people.

From there I went around the classroom asking people where they were from. People said things like: Czechoslovakia, Germany, France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, India, Africa, and so many other places. At that age it seemed impossible to express how much I had taken in. I was astonished at how many different cultures were in that room!

In conclusion, I learned that Columbia may be a small town, but it’s still part of this big world and has my different people in it. Columbia is rich like chocolate sauce in diversity.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# WHY IS MULTICULTURALISM IMPORTANT IN A COMMUNITY?

*Brandon Young*

Do you know that there are all different types of cultures? There are people all around the universe and we're just used to the people we see day to day. That is one reason why I think that multiculturalism is important in a growing community. Multiculturalism allows community's to be open and creative. And, it also allows you to meet people with amazing ideas and stories to share.

Religion is one aspect of why multiculturalism is important in a community and is a group of people's shared beliefs. Religion can also keep everyone in balance because of emotion. Also, religion is important in multiculturalism because people can share the values of religions other than your own.

Language is another important aspect of community multiculturalism. Language is an important tool not only in communicating thoughts and ideas, but it creates friendships and culture relationships. Also, if you know someone from another country you could benefit and learn some of their language.

Traditions are also a part of multiculturalism. The culture in which we grow up develops our future of ourselves and the world around us and has a connection of our ancestors and traditions. In our American culture it's important for others that come from other countries feel connected in the community.

Culture, race, and religion all play a part in the way people eat. Ethnic foods can teach us about different cultures and different types of people that live in our community. For example, Chinese restaurants in town will a lot of times have workers that are usually from the country in which they come from. Therefore, they know how to prepare the meals.

The City of Columbia can hold on to the diversity of multiculturalism. Therefore, as a community by helping each other to talk about and understand the way other people in different countries live which have come to our community. Diversity in our community will be the most effective way of teaching ourselves about other cultures.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# CHOPSTICKS AND KIM-BAP

*Ester Park*

I have met a lot of Americans while I living in Columbia. I have seen many people who wanted to recognize and accept my traditions but other people think I am strange and don't want to recognize my traditions.

One time when I felt accepted was, when we invited an American family to have dinner with us. We always give guests fork for their convenience. However, when our friend's dad saw our family use chopsticks, he said he wanted to try to use chopsticks, too. We thought it was great, so we gave him a pair of chopsticks. He tried so hard to use his chopsticks. Also, he ate traditional Korean food, Kimchi, and he liked it very much. I liked his attitude, because he wants to try other country's traditional things, and thinks other country's traditions are also cool. I want to learn from him.

There have been other times when I have not felt accepted. One day, I brought traditional Korean food called Kim-Bap for my lunch, I was really happy and thanked my mom because she made my favorite food for me Then, one boy in my classroom said, "What's that smell? Ew, That food looks really bad." After I heard what he said, I felt really upset, because he just ignored my country's traditions. This taught me there are people who understand other people's traditions, but others just like their own traditions.

When my dad decided to come to America, he had lots of choices where to go. But he chose Missouri and Columbia. There are three middle schools in Columbia, but I came to Smithton. There are four teams in Smithton but I came to team 61. It was a coincidence for me to meet my friends and teachers. Columbia has a population of 100,000 people, but, only 1% are Korean. I have taught my friends the Korean language and have invited them to my house and my mom prepared Korean foods. I want my friends to know where I come from, and introduce them to my country's culture. I think when our cultures mix together, and we can feel other country's cultures as precious and accepted, our Columbia will be more enriched than before.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Ashley McGinley*

He Had A Dream

He was a great man with a heart of gold,  
knowing what to say and when to say it,  
Most famous words were "I have a dream,"  
And those dreams have been fulfilled!  
Now almost everywhere you look,  
You see people of different race having fun together,  
The Africans, Caucasians, Mexicans and the Asians  
We're all treated the same and all love to hang out and have fun with one another!  
Columbia is a diverse city and has diverse cultures,  
We are all different and think in different ways,  
Different languages, religions, skin colors, and ideas!  
I think it's exciting to be different and diverse!  
Some people have a difference of opinion,  
How about you?  
What do you see when you look around?  
Do you see people different than you?  
Do you see people and think they're weird because they're different?  
Or do you see people that act like you,  
Do you see the people around you that accept you because you are you?!  
This is all because he had a dream.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# DIVERSITY

*Tejaz Ajit*

Imagine a world where people thought and acted alike, would we still have the things that we have today? Different creative minds are what help our community flourish; with different ideas and views, diversity can help build a stronger and more connected network. Awareness and acceptance of differences in communication, and views of life, are crucial elements of a well-functioning system.

Schools with diversity enrich the lives of all students and promote an understanding and awareness of multiculturalism; most educators view a diverse student body as an important educational resource that enhances the environment for learning. A system is strengthened when it recognizes and appreciates the varied backgrounds of those it serves, as well as those working in the field. Diversity can impact the future lives of many people with different perspectives and different ways of thinking; this is what strengthens our community, environment, and changes our ways of living.

In a growing community that's rich with diversity, minds are improved, and a better society has been created, where the person can experience a taste of new cultures and ways of living. This society can open up the mind; ideas can be exchanged and you could experience how it is to live the life of this person. In growing communities, differences are needed to make a change. Interacting with people who come from all over the world helps you understand the world better. Columbia should celebrate and recognize diversity not only because of the different people who live in this city, also because this can cultivate minds and provide an enhanced learning environment and different opportunities to understand the world as you've never experienced it before.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# DR. MURIEL BATTLE

*Olivia Kreisman*

I have chosen to write about Dr. Muriel Battle and what she did for Columbia Missouri. I chose Dr. Battle because I could potentially go to a public high school named after her. Last year I got the chance to meet her husband, Eliot Battle, when he came to my elementary school and had a long conversation with all of the fifth graders. Her children were the first African American students to attend my elementary school "Grant Elementary School".

Dr. Muriel Battle was born in 1930 and passed away in 2003. She was an educator and a school administrator. She gave her time and energy and dedicated her knowledge to improve the public schools of Columbia, Missouri. She also did her best to improve housing and job opportunities for all races in Columbia.

She was similar to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the way that they both wanted to help the communities in which they live and they both accomplished their goals. Like Dr. King she was interested in helping people of minority races become more accepted in this country or in Dr. Battle's case, her community Columbia, Missouri. I think that Dr. King and Dr. Battle thought that every person should be able to do anything they want to do and their skin color, race, or religion shouldn't matter. I also believe that she thought the way to impact the community was best started in the schools where she taught and later acted as the principal. She tried to be instrumental in Dr. King's movement by showing children that they are all equal in her work in the classroom, an administrator, and on the school board.

As I look around my classroom and see my classmates of all colors, races and religions I think it is an honor to Dr. King and Dr. Battle that they were able to achieve such a diverse and special place for children such as me to learn. Dr. King once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". I believe that Dr. Battle took this to heart and decided that one community at a time, those injustices would be overcome.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# THE LAST LYNCHING

*Kieran W. Malloy*

The mobsters trekked across the ground  
to find James Scott and have him bound

Their tempers high with rage and hate  
the fury and anger was oh so great

They marched right in and ripped him from his cell  
the fate of Scott was not looking too well.

They bound his legs and shackled his hands  
they lynched him up and sat in stands

They laughed and cheered  
until the light of dawn

Then the people had gone and all the remained  
was Scott, the wind, the sorrow, and pain.

The years passed on and the world made change  
the story forgotten and the thought of diversity became not so strange

The people came together and all was at peace  
except for James Scott for his pain never ceased

It only went on until one day his pain was just gone  
I'm glad to say. The story revealed for all to see

They were going to right the wrong they had made  
and try to bring justice to that horrible raid

They brought on their wealth, their good hearts, and minds  
they gave him recognition and love and kind.

\*\* \* \* \* \* \*

*James Scott was the last person to be publicly lynched in Columbia.*

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*

# THE STORY OF AGRICULTURE

*Andy Mott*

When we think of diversity, we tend to think of things like ethnicity, religion, or culture. But I am part of a different minority in Columbia: I am a farmer.

Growing up on an 80 acre farm in southwest Missouri was my life until four years ago. I remember wanting to help Mom on the farm as much as I could in my young years. By nature, I wanted to be in the center of everything, and always wanted to know what we were going to do next. And there was always something to do next on the farm; feeding the cattle or the chickens, watering the dogs, brushing the horse, or looking for a new baby calf. Every Saturday morning was spent at the livestock sale barn with Dad and Grandpa. When I think about it, I realize how lucky I am to have spent my childhood on a farm.

Moving to Columbia from the farm in southwest Missouri was a culture shock. Having only five acres where I could run and play was something new to me. Where I came from, 80 acres was very small; everyone was a farmer. It's been a life changing experience for me, moving from a rural area to the city.

It didn't take me too long to figure out that most other kids didn't live the same way I did. While my friends went home and played inside after school, I was outside cleaning out my steers' stalls with my brother. During the winter when my classmates slept in on snow days, I was up early scooping the snow out of the feed troughs. In summer, other families took long, relaxing vacations. My family was home getting ready for the fairs and finishing 4-H projects.

Now you may ask yourself the question, "Why in the world would anyone want to live this kind of lifestyle?" For as far back as we can trace, my family has been farmers. So I guess part of my passion for agriculture is about tradition. Though there are many challenges on the farm, it's a very satisfactory lifestyle, knowing that you're taking care of yourself and supplying other people with food as well. Because of farmers, America has the safest food supply in the world. The average American farmer feeds over 150 people. I am very proud to be a part of this statistic.

Knowing that I can help educate the people in my community about the value of American agriculture just by doing what I love pleases me. I can share this story through my writing. I can carefully care for my livestock and represent the cattle industry well at exhibitions. Through 4-H and FFA, I have many opportunities to talk to others in our community, state, and nation about agriculture. I am finding my voice and sharing my message; I am proud to contribute to my community by being an American farmer.

*Ms. Barnhouse, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, West Junior High School*

# PABLO

*Travis Bassford*

Since I was born I had never met anyone from Mexico until Pablo walked into my 3rd grade class. He knew no English and was very poor. Gregorio, his neighbor, who was also in my class, was the only one who could talk to him because he knew English and Spanish.

We began the first day of school with the teacher reading a book aloud to us. Pablo looked around and paid no attention to the book. He was so bored. After reading aloud, we started reading independently. He had his head down the whole time and probably fell asleep. I felt really sorry for him. Then it was time for writing, he basically stared at his pencil the whole time. Math was the worst. He tried hard and the teacher tried to help him but it was no use. Pablo just could not understand.

The next day I asked Gregorio some Spanish words. I learned a lot. I approached Pablo and said hello in Spanish. He was shocked. During reading Pablo and I read a book together. He struggled but I helped him. By the end of the day he could read the book correctly. Even though it was only a twelve page book, it was a huge accomplishment. After Pablo learned a few words in English, I could explain writing to him. He wrote a three page story in Spanish. I was impressed. Then Gregorio interpreted the story and it was terrific. It was all about his family and where he had come from. Math was hard because numbers were a lot different than words. It kind of threw him for a loop but he caught on quickly. I kept working with him until he finally got it. He felt good and I knew it because I saw it in his eyes.

After four weeks had passed, Pablo was very close to learning Basic English. I was excited for him and he was really excited. One more week had passed and he got it. He could read, write, spell, and do math, not in Spanish but in English. In class for the first time he raised his hand. He got the question correct. I was happy for him and he was especially proud. Pablo, Gregorio, and I are all best friends. Pablo has lots of good friends because he learned how to be more social.

Our community depends on diversity because people can do great things beyond their language, culture, and their skin color. By working together we can learn new things.

*Mr. Drennan, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Derby Ridge Elementary*

# ONE COMMUNITY, MANY STORIES

*Raya Aberbach*

“One fine summer day, a Rabbi came into a town in Europe. He was poor, and not well known. A teacher from the synagogue spotted him, and invited him into his own home to sleep. He fed him, and provided for him. Ten years later the same Rabbi came into the same town in Europe. This time, he was very famous. He paraded into the town in a carriage drawn by two horses. He was welcomed in with a crowd of people crooning over his horses. The richest man in town invited him to stay in his home. The Rabbi replied, “I will be staying with the teacher, for the time I will be staying here. He provided for me when I came into this same town ten years ago. The only difference was I didn’t have these two horses and the carriage. You may take care of my horses because if I didn’t have these you wouldn’t have invited me to your home.” The Rabbi slipped out of his carriage, walked over to the teacher, and together they strode off to the teacher’s home.” —Rabbi Yossi Feintuch

This is a story that my Rabbi told to my Sunday school class a few weeks ago. This applies to me because I am a Jewish girl living in a town where most people are Christian. I think it’s important for people to be diverse because the world would be really boring without it. It is also important to pass down stories and legends from your heritage to your children and them to their children, and so on.

There are many religions in Columbia. We have a Mosque downtown, a Synagogue on Green Meadows, and a ton of Churches all around town. We have the First Baptist Church downtown, Woodcrest Church, First Christian Church, and so many more. With all the races, religions, and ethnic groups, I would say that Dr. King’s dream is truly being fulfilled.

If you don’t think it’s important to be diverse, think of how boring the world would be if we all looked the same, acted the same, and did everything at the same time. Picture a town of dark red brick houses. Picture a girl, dressed in a pink sweat suit, coming out of every house on the block. It is 2:38 pm on a Saturday. Picture them all picking up a pink jump rope from the pavement in front of them. They all jump forty three times, and then they get tired, and go inside. See how boring it would be if we were all the same?

Our religions, customs, cultures, and languages are what make us unique. They make us different. Those things will be passed down generation to generation, father to son, and mother to daughter. And those stories, the ones that describe our heritage, those are what keep this diversity alive.

*Ms. McCarty, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Smithton Middle School*



This collection of student writings is sponsored by  
McDonald's Restaurants of Columbia



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Original paper collage by

Brooke Vangel

Columbia, MO • 1995

Printing provided by  
Missouri Employers Mutual

