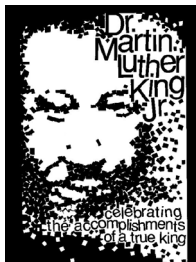


Respect Columbia **Kindness**
COMPASSION **Community**
Acceptance **UNITY** **Tolerance**
Understanding **DIVERSITY**
Love **HARMONY** **CHOICES**

The Power of Diversity

writings from Columbia students



Columbia Values Diversity Celebration
January 17, 2019

A Simple Breath

Sara Butricks

Unfortunately, we do not live in an Utopia,
Dystopian societies are not a pretty place.
Switch on the news, people die everyday.
Hate is killed and reborn with a simple breath.

We wish for a perfect world,
One we will get.
One we do not deserve.
Because hate is killed and reborn with a simple breath.

Maybe someday we can all be one.
We can be a place people want to go to.
We can be a haven, an asylum.
Hate can be killed and reborn with a simple breath.

Maybe it's something we can achieve,
Or maybe it is an impossible dream.
Either way, we still have to believe,
Hate can be killed and reborn with a simple breath.

In the meantime, we must learn to love
People who are not the same as you and me.
We must not think we are below or above.
We are all different and unique, you must see.
Although this place is nowhere near pearled,
In one, simple breath, we can change the world.

Lange Middle School, Mr. Sesmas, 7th Grade

The People

Henley Strohl

Some are small or big and tall and some are long or thin.
But everyone can love each other not from the outside but from within
Some are Christian or Jewish and some are Turkish or French.
Their culture ties to their religion that everyone can share.
So if you meet somebody, give them a friend wave,
Because everyone is different in every single way.

Columbia Independent School, Ms. Pursifull, 4th Grade

Differences

Cameron Lee

Diversity is what makes us different and different is good.
It doesn't matter if you grew up rich or if you grew up in the hood.
People just need to show love and show a little heart.
It doesn't matter if I shop at Goodwill or If I shop at Walmart.
We just need to love and care for each other
It doesn't matter if you live with a single dad or single mother.
You need to understand for those people it is tough
We all just need to stop and start spreading a little love
It doesn't matter your gender and it doesn't matter your height.
It doesn't matter if you're black and it doesn't matter if you're white.
It doesn't matter if you're yellow or if you are gray.
Everybody should be treated the very same way.
Just because somebody's different doesn't mean you can be teasing.
Because everybody was put on this Earth for a reason.

Lange Middle School, Mr. Sesmas, 7th Grade

Who Am I?

Maia Trotter

Who am I? No one of importance. What do I do? Become invisible in the eyes of many. So why am I writing about myself? I'm not; I'm writing about specialty, and my views on it. I believe "special" is a lie we tell ourselves. It is something we strive towards for eternity. I believe specialty is non-existent. Commonly, people are told that they're special and were born with something in their blood. There may have been strong influence in their lives, making them a certain way, but that doesn't make them naturally gifted in one particular subject. I doubt there will be many writings similar to mine, but that doesn't make mine special. My writing is different, but not quite special. Whether you think you're special or not, whether you believe in specialty or not, I hope you take time to consider my words and maybe delve deeper into the phrase "special."

Gentry Middle School, Ms. Willingham, 7th Grade

Snowflakes

Lyric McGruder

People are like snowflakes, no snowflake is the same. And people are different too, so why do we feel ashamed.

You say we are welcome, but is it really true my snowflake heart has been beaten and bruised.

No person is too small, no person is too young, we come together and be as one.

No person is ordinary, look inside you're extraordinary, there is no reason to change.

No matter what they tell you. You are beautiful inside and I hope you think the same.

I want you to shine bright like the star in your heart. Shine little snowflake, change is not far.

So remember what I told you, the light will be there to hold you. And cradle you in her arms.

Goodbye my little snowflake, goodbye.

Locust St. Expressive Arts Elementary, Ms. Toalson, 4th Grade

The Power of Diversity

Jonathan

We the Americans,
Are called “the melting pot.”
Our Americans,
Are as strong as a diamond.
Anything put in our path,
Even a juggernaut.
We can break through as a nation.
The American perspective,
Is predictable without diversification.
Different cultures,
Impact America as a nation.
Variation of freedom of expression,
Impact us as a nation.
Some people can’t handle diversification.
Making our future,
Unpredictable by association,
Of a multitude of varied creation.
Diversified idea express,
Humanity or lack of humanity.
No diversity can have this world chaotic.
No One can ever stop the power of diversity,
Cause we are strong and United as one.

Diversity means OK to be different

Jayee Nistendirk

To me diversity is a type of strange coolness.
It can show you all the wonderful things in people.
Diversity helps us see how different is ok.
It shows you how you can become yourself around others.
Diversity isn’t just about being different, it’s about finding yourself.
Without this diversity, we would not be able to sit in a room together.
Diversity is all around us, teaching us who we are.
Sometimes I wonder if diversity is meant for us to come together.

Lange Middle School, Mr. Sesmas, 7th Grade

Diversity

Rosemary Anderson

Hi, my name is Rosemary Anderson and I think everybody should respect the differences of everybody. When I'm saying this, I mean whether your skin color is different or eye color or whether you may need help with something. I think no matter what your differences are, you should be able to participate in everything!

Rock Bridge Elementary, Ms. Sanders, 4th Grade

What it means to be a Latina

Alejandra G. Alderete-Raygoza

Diversity.

I am diversity.

When white men and women picture diversity, I am what comes to mind.

A First generation Mexican American and a young teen mom. What more can you ask for?

Unfortunately for some of you that's not enough.

You want my accent to be thicker, my hips to be bigger.

You expect me as a Latina to crumble in school and to give myself away to your cookie cutter ideals of who I should be.

You expect my vocabulary to be small and my voice to be loud because of the stereotypes that have been written for me before I was old enough to crawl.

Dr. King had a dream, that one day people would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

We are taught every year of the injustice in the way people were treated.

And although the hate and racism we see today doesn't compare to that of the early 1900s and before, those problems are still present, and that needs to change.

Columbia is known to celebrate "diversity" but forgets to celebrate diverse people.

You celebrate Cinco de Mayo and Dia de los Muertos, but then go to work and school and degrade Latinos for being "too" ethnic.

Change won't happen overnight.

However, Columbia needs to be the change we want to see in the world.

We as a community need to be more accepting to cause a chain reaction around the states.

Rock Bridge High School, Mr. McGinty, 12th Grade

Diversity Questions

Julius Galbreath

If I am an odd one,
Should I be cast out?
Or should I stay,
And roam about?

If I believed otherwise,
Should my attempts be shot dead?
Should you leave me crying,
And let me be filled with dread?

Would you let me cry,
My talents unknown?
Just because,
I wasn't like you.

If I were a different race,
Should I become wasted space?
Well I have the ace,
Cause that shouldn't be the case.

If you are different,
Should you kick the bucket?
Would you yearn,
Just to be the same.

That shouldn't be the case,
Because I have the ace.

So how did you answer?
Do you feel yet rude?
Or are your feelings forever more crude?
Let me ask one more.

If I were to be odd,
Should I be cast out?
What would you say,
Is that the best route?

Diversity

Hope-Divine Crawford Watson

I my name is Hope-Divine Crawford Watson. I am going to tell you about my experience. The first time I went to America was last year. I had a hard time when I came. I was scared and thought people would bully me. When I was scared at that time, I would not eat a lot and I would not talk that much because I didn't want to stay in America. So when I started at school, I was always scared until a few weeks later. I had a friend name Rynaz. She was my best fiend. I felt comfortable around her. Then I got more and more friends. I did forget about missing my home country, Jamaica, but what made me happy is we go and meet my family in the summer. I went to my home country and I had fun but I did miss America. So that's what happened: I miss my home country, then I miss America. I am very glad to share my story and this was all about diversity. I was scared because there were different people and that's what diversity means to me.

Locust St. Expressive Arts Elementary, Ms. Koonse, 4th Grade

Diverse

Sumanth Ganga

Not alike, different, varied, all kinds, being unlike others.
Being diverse is not bad in my eyes,
But for others it has a different meaning - Diverse, unwelcome, unsafe, weird.
But really who is the unsafe one?
Bullies, they're mean, make fun of you for your culture.
They say we don't have a brain, But I say we all do have a brain,
But that doesn't mean we see things the same ways.
When you look outside what do you see? A place full of difference not similarity.
Open your eyes and what would you normally see,
People, just people, nothing special.
But if you look closely you see...
People, all kinds of people, white people, Black people, Asian people, Australian
people, African people, and European people.
We're all different you see but no one things about it usually.
On the outside we all do the same things, eat, sleep, go to school, work, worry,
laugh, and joke. But we all do it differently,
What we do echoes one word and one word only,
Diverse

Columbia Independent School, Ms. Brown, 5th Grade

The Power of Diversity

Luke

Today's my one,
Month,
Anniversary.
Locked up in these
Bricks
I'm in on Halloween
Different cultures playin
Tricks
Dressing up in spooky stuff
But my perspective is feelin
Rough
Our power is all
Within us
More religions
Are here to bend
Trust
Our World is a little
Chaotic
People runnin
Gunnin
There's no logic
We need our
Life
Can't let a gun
Rob it
Homicides
Every day with
Red polish
Nowaday's
They runnin around
With no
Knowledge

The Power of Diversity

Taehee Oh

When my family moved into our new house in this old and quiet neighborhood, our neighbors were very warm and welcoming. They brought us flowers and welcome cards to us as we invited them to have tea at our new house. After that experience we continued to interact and help each other. This series of interactions became a starting point in building trust between our neighbors.

However, an outsider may look at our neighborhood and doubt the friendship between us. That is because in our neighborhood, everyone is very diverse from each other. We have different race and ethnicity. This is not just with our outward appearance. We have contrasting beliefs, religion, background, personalities, and political views. We are diverse in many ways. You might ask, how did we build trust when we are so different from each other? Is it even possible to build trust when we are this diverse?

Building trust in a diverse environment is not only possible, but when it is established, this friendship will be beneficial for the whole society. This is because we can learn how to appreciate different people. Eventually, people are all different. Society can be more harmonious if we build trust regardless of our differences.

I am part of the Missouri symphony Orchestra and find that our neighborhood is very much like my orchestra. There are great numbers of different instruments in our orchestra. These different orchestral instruments vary greatly from each other. For example, violins are played when you vibrate strings with a bow. You also have to find the pitch with your fingers. Clarinets are played by vibrating the reed and putting air into the instrument. You control the pitch with your embouchure and fingerings. As you can see, these two instruments are very different. Even though the instruments are very distinctive from each other, when they come together, the harmony and the music they create is beautiful. Besides, if all the instruments sounded the same, how would an orchestra play great musics by great composers?

Have you ever heard orchestra symphonies? You might notice that the different sounds of instruments blend in to play beautiful sounds. Diversity of instruments may be an important factor to play wonderful music, but this would not be possible without trust. If the violins don't trust the rest of the orchestra to play the right note or the rhythm and then take over the orchestra instead, we would only hear violins. Then the music is no longer special nor beautiful. All the instruments need to trust one another to build a harmonious sound. This is why orchestras like ours rehearse

to build trust between each other just as our neighbors were able to build trust by interacting with each other. So what does this example show? It shows when diverse people trust one another, we can build a harmonious society.

West Middle School, Ms. Inniss, 8th Grade

Power of Diversity

Claire Guo

Diversity is all around us. It exists in our family, in the school, in the neighborhood, and everywhere in the world. For example, in our daily life, we eat different kinds of food, such as Japanese food, Chinese food, Thai food, Mexican food, Italian food... Each food tastes so different, but they all taste yummy!

We can also choose different styles of clothing like dresses, t-shirts, skirts, sweaters, shoes and hats. Even though everybody looks different in their clothing, they all look great.

We can learn different languages, religions, cultures, and different ways of living, from other people. We can also learn others' perspective, by talking to them, as people could have different views even for the same thing. All those differences make us think more and act more. That will inspire us to be more creative and therefore invent new things. That is exactly the reason why humans can make progress along the history.

Now let's imagine what if the world didn't have diversity. We would all eat the same food every day. We would all look the same by wearing the same clothing. We would think the same and behave the same! Even worse, we would have the same faces as each other! Oh my God, everything, everywhere, everybody would all be the same! That sounds so terrible!

Luckily, we live in a world with diversity, which makes our life very wonderful and full of unpredictable surprises.

The Power of Diversity

Charlee Braik

You may have a friend you may have an enemy that may look different, they may act different, but you may have more in common than you think. Don't be jealous. Just be you. Because you are unique and don't let anyone tell you wrong. If we were the same then the world would not be awesome. So because you don't like yourself doesn't mean you should change yourself. You are awesome.

Shepard Boulevard Elementary, Ms. Kruse, 4th Grade

A Mixed World

Keriana Kyle

I am a mixed girl in a mixed world
A world where some girls like to twirl
And others like to wear their hair in curls
Where some boys are dreary
And others are weary
Where some people are crying
And others are dying
I live in a world where some kids like school
But others break the rules
And yet I am different
From those who like Charles Dickens
I would change being a mixed girl in a mixed world.

Lange Middle School, Keriana Kyle, 7th Grade

Diversity

Alivia Nowlin

Everyone is different and that's a good thing. If we were all the same, who would be to blame? No one would tell who is who, that's why it's good just being you.

There are lots of people in this world, but not a single one is the same. That's why it's good to be different. Yay!

Rock Bridge Elementary, Ms. Sanders, 4th Grade

Be Your Own Superhero

Seth Thompson

Diversity is what makes the world go round.

It's what makes us different from the next person in line.

Answer this, do you really want everyone to look like and think like everyone else?

We can't expand our knowledge if we can't think differently.

Let's embrace diversity, you can be your own real life superhero.

You being different from everyone else is like having your own superpower.

Back in the day you were punished for having something that you can't control.

This isn't then, you can be yourself without punishment.

What I'm trying to say is that no matter what anyone else says about you, you can be yourself, you can be your own superhero.

Lange Middle School, Mr. Sesmas, 7th Grade

One of a Kind

Samantha Salazar

Diversity makes our country one of a kind.

Every person is unique,

With different voices, shapes, and sizes.

Every personality is special.

With different preferences and favorites.

Every experience is different,

Each one shapes you into who you are.

Each one of us is valued

For all these special things.

Lange Middle School, Mr. Sesmas, 7th Grade

Shades

Agrim Sharma

America was supposed to be my heaven, It was a dream that scorched into reality,
In a trip where my soul was on the line, Here is my story,
For what America has done for me,

Maybe I found my love for coloring,
but I lost my love for being colored maybe it's not my fault,
then are you saying that it's my mother's? Who
else is gonna pay the price, my brother?
No, maybe you should treat me like a person instead of an other,
Then again, maybe it is my fault, I chose to come to America,
the land of opportunity,
All I wanted
to do was to be part of the community,
But all I get
is everyone acting like the judge and the jury,
Now I'm just waiting for the executioner to put me out of my misery

Sticks and stones may break my bones,
But your words will end up breaking my soul, With you telling me I ruined your life
because I was moved to this earth's globsity, For me it's not much better, you see, for
me Missouri was the cause of my misery,
With you antagonizing me day by day, I walked the halls dizzily,
I held the walls; you made the ground slippery,
Where under your feet
you've been grinding up pieces of my soul, Well, it's been 6 months, so CONGRATU-
LATIONS, You're on a roll The world of diversity yet I stick out like a sore thumb,
You might believe you've broken me but your job isn't done,
Don't make the mistake of thinking I can't fight back, that I'm weak, You know...
You're lucky,

That my angel can control the devil to the left of me, Sittin' on my shoulder advising
me to raise my fist and tell you to stop testing me,
But my angel is the reason I'm still trying to get through to you, It's the reason I've
taken all the hell that you've put me through, Even though there is no reason why I
needed to,

Cause the last time I checked I'm human too,
But you're mad cause of the body that god put me into? TELL ME!!!
is the outer shell the only thing that makes sense to you?

Tell me, is this all you see?
Just 'cause I'm a different shade of color you think less of me?
You don't see the fire raging inside of me? And you know the funny thing?
I still want to be friends with you,
But I don't think that my friends share my beliefs My angel, my devil, and me, the
victim in between,
The devil's talking about how you insulted my cuisine, The angel says he's playing in
the dirt,
but I should stay clean,
This might be a nice time for an adult to intervene Now my devil's screaming at the
top of his lungs,
But the shallow voice of my angle is the hero of this war, So stop resisting,
You say that we are opposites but then aren't we supposed to attract?
Just look at my soul, you'll see a mirror, but then again, There is a crack

So this is what America has done for me, And all I've got to say back is THANK YOU,
The fire you caused in my soul can burn villages to the ground,
But it can also forge the strongest of steel, So what you have done for me, America,
Is given me a soul that is the only shade to be considered to the eye,
That isn't overlooked, but appreciated from each side, I will not forget this 'till the day
I die,
But cherish that instead of color to color, We can see eye to eye

Jabberwocky Studios

Different Savanna

Diversity means everyone is different. We all have different skin color. We all like different foods. We all have different fashion tastes too! Diversity means no one is the same. Just imagine a world where we were all the same. People would know what you did because they just did it too. Just remember, diversity means everyone is different and so are me and you.

Rock Bridge Elementary, Ms. Sanders, 4th Grade

A Thing with Feathers

Alex Schust

My sister Hope is Africa
In her eyes exists the future she's forging
Her heart plays its rhythms with a djembe
And she smiles like she just bought a new cow
But she confuses me
With Masai roots and Missourian residence
She walks with chin high and temper low
As she is scorned by the world for it
She's a girl in men's clothes
A black sheep, if you will
And she acts like it doesn't get to her
But I can see what she thinks
She offers herself to society
But she's an extra piece in the puzzle
And she bleeds between the colors
Of white and black.
She wears her hair in tight dreads
But has white friends
She does hip hop
But took tap as a kid
And hides her tooth gap
Beautiful at home
Behind a set of blue green braces.
With a handful of black folk
sprinkled like pepper down our street
She looks for a island in the shifting seas
But finds herself as a bridge instead
Because her nurture and nature aren't homogeneous
My stomach curdles like milk
As I see the glances she pulls from others
As she tries to find someone she can connect to
But can't fit in
Because individuality is good, in moderation
I have always held the utmost respect for her
With her chin high and temper low
As she is judged for the way she was born
And where she grew up

They tell us “birds of a feather flock together”
Well, where are her birds?‘ Cuz all I see
Is someone who had to grow up too soon
Because she is too black to be white
And too white to be black
And though she is subject to constant judgement
And never truly home
Her skin is hardened like the hide waterskins
From which her people drank
A mix of cow’s blood and milk
She sings loud like a mother lion
And her heart beats like the Sun
Setting on the Serengeti
See, The Sidewalk Ends in Harlem for her
So she walks down Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Until she gets to its intersection with Malcolm X Dr.
But she stays on her road, undeterred
She sees the world in shades of gray
A mix of white and black
And I sometimes wonder
If maybe she likes to be a bridge
Maybe she likes being an extra piece
Because they don’t have to fit in
And I realize I’ll never understand
You won’t either
No one will ever truly understand her
And I think she likes it that way
There is one exception
No one will ever understand but Emily Dickinson
Who says
“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all
My Hope is that you’ll spread your wings
And perch in other souls
And sing your song to bring them hope
And never stop at all

Jabberwocky Studios

The Power of Diversity

Mina Chen

Diversity is not on the outside, it's inside too. Isn't our stories always leading us to different experiences like no other? Aren't the choices we make today and tomorrow for our lives all distinguished? In some form, aren't we all diverse?

We wear masquerade masks to compel ourselves to blend into that box. To be like them. Alas, they still considered us "lost" souls among a sea of Identicals and the renegades among perfect society. We misstep. One wisp of mistake, a slip of the tongue, one rogue thought escaping from our mind, too vast, brilliant, and painfully colorful.

So, they locked us up. Since we had the wrong skin color. Since we had danced to life in another way. Since we had our faith in different things. Caged in a color-deprived, empty void, taught how to become an Identical by our jailers. They tell us, the quicker we transform to an Identical, the sooner they will free us back into society. We hate this prison they trap us in, we will give in if it means getting out.

"Your thoughts shouldn't tip too precarious to the dissimilarity."

"Care more about how others see you. Dress to our trend!"

"You don't have to waste effort forging your own path, flow with the majorities."

Thus, it is a concept of enlightenment that tugs us in gradually, it is too seducing and too easy to not resist. A realization comes that our differences must be what has kept us from connecting with the rest... All our irregularities are the reason we couldn't fit in... Therefore, extinguishing the bright flames inside would reward us with fates of joyful unity...!

The chains which had bounded us breaks today. We're set loose from the tortuous place we promise ourselves to never to return to. When we walk down the streets, not a single person darts this way and that, enjoying the freedom found; not a single cheer heard.

Yes, we walk in a single file, at the same speed, and marching equal steps. A heavy mist drips in the atmosphere making us feel humid in our plain khakis and colorless shirt. We have purged ourselves of our sinful own opinions and voices. Our life currently till its end, like the Identicals swore, should become a trouble-free one! In our future never again would we have to suffer the mocking, shunning, the getting picked on, being spit upon, being an exile, a freak! Oh, the marvelous perks of being accepted!

As we welcome the embrace of uniformity and fade in with the crowds of Identicals, one very last rebellious idea sneaks into mind:

What if there was another world, a non-discrimination, and non-judging, community? Maybe humans no matter the background, are free to inspire each other, creating dreams never-dared imagined? Is it possible people ranging from all appearances can walk hand in hand, marching for a greater future? Perhaps they share contrasting cultures that morph into sharing universal happiness? Can their divergence make them fall in love? They weren't Identicals, but can a pulsing-diversity humanity raise up an even prouder flag? A flag woven together from all the colors, genders, beliefs, songs, legends, blissfulness, tears, and tolerances of everyone. A Banner that waves high in the sky!

What a wonderful, wonderful, world it would be...

But right then, we remind ourselves the stone rigid rule that drills permanently into our mind:

“Your thoughts shouldn't tip too precarious to the dissimilarity.”

And so you thought, along with our inkling of individuality, to, disperses to nothing...

Oakland Middle School, Ms. Ross, 8th Grade

Kindness

Chen R.

This story begins in kindness.

Treat people by kindness, respectfully.

Treat people the way they want to be treated.

Don't treat them different.

Treat them like you're treated nicely.

Treat them RESPECTFULLY!!! Not Different.

Cedar Ridge Elementary, Ms. Kunkel, 4th Grade

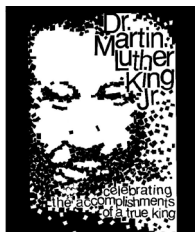
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