

JCCS



THE STORYTELLERS

"Storytelling unites us. It can take the personal and make it universal. It can teach and penetrate the hearts of people and bring us together. It's a way to see."

Chicago storyteller Lynne Jordan



San Diego County Board of Education

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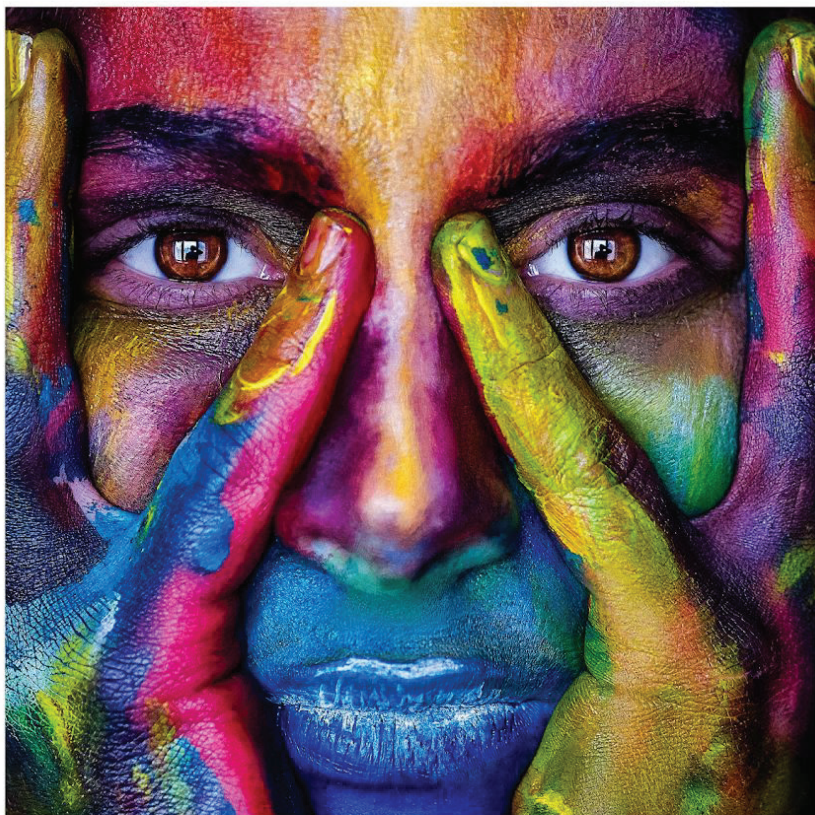
San Diego County Superintendent of Schools

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Please note that there may be grammatical errors, etc., but since this is narrative writing, we chose not to edit them in order to retain an authentic student voice.



As we navigate the challenges of distance learning, especially with social justice at the forefront of our work, we know that it is critical to hear our students' voices loud and clear and to let them know that their stories matter. With that in mind, we decided that our first quarter focus of the 2020-21 school year would be around narrative writing across contents. We honed in on flash narratives, which maintained the integrity of the standards that we are aiming to meet, but also gave access to all students to participate.

Flash narrative is a form of short story writing that includes a beginning, a middle, and an end as well as other narrative elements; however, those elements occur in as few words as possible. Typically, flash narrative falls anywhere between 100 to 2,000 words, depending on what you are referencing. Our students were asked to write flash narratives in the range between 100-300 words and then condense them to six-word narratives with an emphasis on precise language.

Everyone has a story...here are ours.

What

What a strong, independent, resilient women
Victoria J. (Urban Camp GRF)

Momma Bear

Momma bear protects baby from lion
Victoria J. (Urban Camp GRF)

Gymnastics is Life

Sam loved and lived for gymnastics
Victoria J. (Urban Camp GRF)

Care

Mama bear will protect her cub
Ruby B. (Urban Camp GRF)

Be

Be fair, be strong, be independent
Ruby B. (Urban Camp GRF)

Bored

Emily is jumping because she's bored
Nicole C. (Urban Camp GRF)

Grizzly Bears

Big and brown, splinters, and hospitalized
La'Ney M. (Urban Camp GRF)

Excitement

It's the weekend, sunny day, excitement
La'Ney M. (Urban Camp GRF)

The Notorious RBG

Notorious RBG was an incredible judge
Dianna J. (Urban Camp GRF)

Big Bears

Baby bear and mama bear are relaxing
Dianna J. (Urban Camp GRF)

Almost Flying

Joselin, jumping of joy almost flying
Cassandra O. (Urban Camp GRF)

Jump

Jasmine jumped up to the sky!
Alissa C. (Urban Camp GRF)

Single Mother

Dad left mom stayed later died
Aaliyah P. (Urban Camp GRF)

Rest Easy

Strong-willed determined fighter rest easy
Aaliyah P. (Urban Camp GRF)

Achievable

She dreamed she would she did
Aaliyah P. (Urban Camp GRF)

Hope

Only chance, don't give up
Shugga Free (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Always Running

I ran fast and passed out
-Felix A.M. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

15 Months

I did 15 months with obstacles
Davey L. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

My Life

Trivial situations, good and bad. Bad influences!
Riley R. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

The Process

Boys to men; humbles the process
Adrian S. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

The Struggle

Struggling, hungry, feening; gotta get it.
Adrian S. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Locked Up

Cop car, police station, Juvenile Hall
Mariano S.R. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Crashed

Drinking, driving, swerving, blackout, ambulance, hospital
Mariano S.R. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Soul Ties

Even damaged souls need love too
Ty'jaih W. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Problem Child

Streets, drugs, crime; I'm all in
Ty'jaih W. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Free Me

Hours, days, months; time blending together
Ty'jaih W. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

True

Innocent, guilty, honest; own your mistakes
Ty'jaih W. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Finding Me

Strong, weak, confused; I'm feeling lost
Ty'jaih W. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

True

This is all a true story
Pedro C.Y. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Way Home

It died on my way home
Pedro C.Y. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

No school YAY, more family DANG!
Angel U. (South County Community School)

Making my money and doing myself.
Cesar C. (South County Community School)

So close to getting off probation!
Smile A.R. (South County Community School)

Being locked up is like quarantine.
Eric V. (South County Community School)

Making money and making more money.
Natalia R. (South County Community School)

Wake up, Zoom, Practice, Sleep, Repeat
Brandon V. (South County Community School)

Vulnerable and bullied. Sad, but hopeful.
Tara W. (La Mesa Community School)

Wrongly Accused, Police Brutality, No Justice.
Latrell S. (La Mesa Community School)

Witnessed a murder, did the time.
Leslie S. (La Mesa Community School)

Nice morning. Family misunderstanding. Big fallout!!
Nehemiah R. (La Mesa Community School)

Collision, Charged with DUI...but sober?
Lamarionna M. (La Mesa Community School)

Intoxication, had altercation, caught a felony.
Ocean F. (La Mesa Community School)

Playing, enjoying summer, blamed, felt untrustworthy.
Amarii C. (La Mesa Community School)

Treated differently by police, but innocent.

Jose B.G. (La Mesa Community School)

Judgemental people, carelessly assume, peoples struggles.

Adrian E. (La Mesa Community School)

Racially Profiled, Very Irritated, Always Happens.

Paris F. (La Mesa Community School)



Jaqueline I. (Bayside Community School)

BONES

By Jacqueline I. (Bayside Community School)

I was 12 years old, in 7th grade. I was bones, I was dying, slowly. I was careless and uneducated about my situation.

You're too skinny they said, but who were they to tell me? Hearing that sentence felt good, I felt I had accomplished my goal, but hearing it wasn't enough, I still wanted more. I wouldn't eat all day, I wanted to be fit, I was fit.

In my eyes, I was doing the right thing. I tried working out, and then dieting, and eventually I stopped eating all together. When I looked in the mirror I saw fat, when you looked in my eyes you would see nothing, I was lifeless, walking dead.

My addiction to not eating became strong. All my favorite foods were strange to me. I didn't want to eat all the things I used to love. Spaghetti was my favorite and I couldn't even look at it, I couldn't stand the smell. I convinced my mind that I didn't like food. For months, I was training my mind to feel a certain way about food so I wouldn't fall into the temptation of eating it.

My dangerous mindset finally got me taken to the hospital. That is where I stayed, in the Medical Behavioral Unit for a month, trying to escape from the mentality that convinced me eating was bad. After the hospital, I found myself in an Eating Disorder Program, which helped me regain my strength and taught me coping skills to use for whenever food became too overwhelming.

After months at UCSD, it was time to move up a level and I began individual therapy. Finally, my team decided it was time for me to move on and try to face the disorder and end it by myself.

It's been a long journey to recovery...hospitals, medication, meditation, and therapy sessions. Four years later I am here and doing much better. I still have some struggles here and there, but I push through them and realize and remember what I have overcome.

Why You Lying?

By Nikko E. (La Mesa Community School)

School was slow sitting in class like any other day. Stunned by the sound of the principal calling my name , "Nikko Elliott come with

me.” He sat down in the office. As I looked around this seemed all too typical to me, the posters about caring for students, but the staff didn’t care, no one ever did.

He began asking me all these questions about other kids on campus then he asked if I was selling drugs on campus. I nervously mumbled “No, but how did I get brought into this?” He replied, “we had some suspicions about you and a few students selling on campus.”

I was then suspended for a week. While thinking of what could happen in my room dwelling on how I need to choose who I associate with more wisely, my family gets a call from the school that they are choosing to expel me and I was bewildered by this. After all, I might have had some mistakes, but this time I was truly innocent. Throughout this experience, I learned to just focus on myself and better myself and not try to worry about others.

Sparring My Inner Demon

By Abraham C. (Second Chance Community School)

As I sat outside contemplating my life I could hear my heartbeat as if it was the base of a drum beating and sweat trickling down my face. I begin to squeeze my fist tight as if I’m holding onto my dear life. I could feel my blood boiling inside as if my skin was on fire, my mind clouded with impulsive thoughts debating on which decision I should make. Deep down I know the consequences for the risk I’m about to take. I let my emotions get the best of me, as I see my enemy I couldn’t picture his shadowy face. But the vicious tone in his voice caught me off guard as he said “Why do you pretend to walk through life unscathed?” I had no reply. I sat there in rage. He laughs out loud with a sinister look on his face and he starts reaching for me. I let all of my aggression out, not holding a single punch back because one slip-up could cost me my life. As I pound my enemy down I begin to recognize his face, his wicked laughter growing louder and louder, his face covered in blood. As I began to recognize myself he had a sinister grin on his face as he began to fade away. My body started to feel numb and cold as I realized I was all alone, staring at my fist bloody and bruised. I saw blood on the ground too. Ever since that day I could vividly picture fighting my inner demon and the look on his face.

Flying High Like a Bird

By Josselin S. (La Mesa Community School)

One day when I was younger, I was at home with my mom and siblings and I am not really feeling comfortable because my stepdad is there. Also, I just hate seeing him even my mom because she



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believes him more than me like in my head I am like why is my mom doing this to me? But I also have watched her do more things for him and my siblings. She would always make them happy and I would always feel left out. That's the reason why I left home so young.

I felt that way because I was always left out also because

every time I tried to explain or tell my mom something she would give me her back or try to say that she had things to do when it wasn't really like that. She would always use that excuse. Also, she loved my brothers more and cared for them more than me because for her I was always the bad one but I would always be strong and find a way out to not feel sad. That's why one day when I was 14 I told her just do you and I'll leave you alone with your man that's when I left the house. I would always ask myself, "is love really NOT FOR ME?"

Injustice in my life is my parents should not just leave their kids out of their lives cause that's what makes it worse for us. Not feeling the love from my mom was not easy and made it difficult for me to keep going on with my life. That's when I said, damn why did I come here to the world if bad things were always happening to me. That's when I realized that love wasn't for me. However, I never gave up on myself no matter what I was going through. I was going through rough times but I would always find a way out to make myself happy.

...And here I am again telling half of my story.

Car Dealership Tragedy

By Marcus W. (La Mesa Community School)

One day my mom's boyfriend, Stedman, picked me up from school. He told me, "You know, it's your Mom and my first year anniversary." I said, "Really, that's cool, what are you going to get her?" Stedman said, "I'm going to get her a new car right now!"

When we got to the dealership, he saw a car that he liked, then started laughing and said, "we're here for your mom." We were walking. He saw a Porsche and wanted to test drive it. Stedman asked the salesman if he could test drive the Porsche. Out of



Alexandra B. (Bayside Community School)

nowhere the guy laughed sarcastically, and said "No." Stedman asked him why not, the salesman just kept laughing like a comedian was in the room. I was weirded out. I thought something was wrong with him but he kept saying no. Stedman was fed up. He didn't want to, but he said, "You do know my truck cost more than this Porsche?" The salesman didn't believe him, so Stedman decided not to buy a car just to prove a point or prove the salesman wrong.

So what we decided to do was to go to a new dealership to buy my mom a Chevrolet Traverse for their year anniversary. As long as she was happy at the end of the day. Also to this day Stedman still wants to prove the Salesman wrong.

Picnic Day

By: Esmeralda C. (Victoria Community School)

I still remember the time when I moved to Jalisco (southwest Mexico) when I was 5 years old. I will never forget when my dad bought us a horse. My dad has known a lot about animals since he was a kid, because my grandparents had a farm. I still remember that day when my family decided to have a picnic on the hills. It was the

most beautiful day I've ever seen. The day was shiny, the air felt so clean, it wasn't as hot as I expected. The day felt so perfect that we went for a walk riding the horse. It was my first time riding a horse. It felt unbelievable. My mom made us some sandwiches and tacos for us. In a big backpack, we put the food, water, some sodas and blankets so we could sit on them. On our way up to the hill my mom didn't want to walk, she said, "I'm so tired girls, get off of the horse. It's my turn." So my sister and I had to go walking all the way up with my dad. When we got there, we made a bonfire and sat on the floor. My dad started to tell us stories about his childhood and made us laugh so hard. On our way down we saw a lot of animal bones and my dad used to say, "The dinosaurs used to live here and eat humans." My sister and I used to get scared. My dad saw Chamomile flowers, so he cut some flowers for my grandma, because she drinks tea every morning. Thinking about this experience now makes me feel nostalgic. It brings me memories about my childhood and how happy I was living in that little town.

6 Word Narrative - Nostalgic sunset horse ride and picnic

My brother Richard and His Friend Mike

By Shelby E. (La Mesa Community School)

Richard has always been a very admiring kid although Mike wasn't such a good kid. Mike has gone to Juvenile hall countless times and had also been on probation and house arrest several times. Mike was always looking for a way to cause trouble, unlike Richard.

Richard and Mike decided to sneak out and take a walk around Lakeside in the middle of the night. Mike decided to set a car on fire without Richard noticing. Once Richard noticed the car on fire he tried to stop the fire but wasn't able to. Mike and Richard started to run and while they were running an officer in his police car saw them and stopped them. The officer then saw the car on fire right after he stopped them both.

Richard and Mike were both put on probation for a year and they also both had to do community service. Richard was a good kid but he did not get justice at all. Their faces were both caught on camera and it showed the whole scene and proved that Richard had nothing to do with it. They both had the same consequences even though Richard didn't really take place in the scene. Richard should have gotten justice because he didn't have a criminal record and also did

not take part in the event, unlike Mike.

I believe that this is a problem with the justice system because they had footage from when the event took place and proof on a criminal record and still did not care to separate the consequences between Richard and Mike. They put Richard through something he shouldn't have had to go through and made him feel like no one would ever look at him the same as they did before.

Kickboxing day

By Abigail C. (Victoria Community School)

Starting the day with some breakfast, the breakfast smelled awesome pancakes. At 8:30 I went to run with my sister and my dad. Running is another of my favorite sports, and then I took a 20 minutes break. I Showed up to my math class. The day is going very great.

Most of my day is practice kickboxing, boxing and muay thai. I still remember the time when I started to do kickboxing, I was so happy.

September 20th one day left for my fight competition, the day is getting close. One day before the competition I took a shower, ate my dinner and then I went to sleep.

Finally, September 21st, the day of the fight competition. Everything was going very well until I had to fight because I was so nervous. Thinking that if I lost what would I do? Honestly, not everything turned out as I thought. I won the fight but the judges cheated and gave the trophy to my opponent. At that moment I felt like a loser in front of the public and very sad. But my coaches were so happy of what I did and they still keep encouraging me to get stronger and get ready for the next one.

6 Word Narrative - Training kickboxing is hard but interesting

Movie Night

By Mary G. (Victoria Community School)

I still remember when we were in line, and excited to go to the movie theater because we were waiting for the movie to come out. I will never forget when my friends and I were hiding 3 big bags of cheetos and candies in a bag back. And no one decided who was going to go in with it, so I decided to take it. I wasn't really convinced but since



Alize A. (Bayside Community School)

no one wanted to go in with the backpack, because literally the backpack looked really big, so I had to say that I would do it. When I was giving my ticket to be able to get in the movie theater I was feeling all kinds of emotions but the most I was feeling was nervous by getting caught. I remember that we had to go to the bathroom to wait for the movie to start, while we were waiting we were taking some pictures. 10 min before the movie started Jessica and Yolanda said “you and Evelin are going to stay here while we go for the popcorn and something to drink.” And I told them why don’t we just go all together and they said “no because if you get caught with the backpack we’re not going to be able to watch the movie, and it will be embarrassing if they caught us all.” So I said it was fine, Evelin stayed with me and Yolanda and Jessica left for the popcorn. Me and Evelin decided to go out the bathroom and pretend we didn’t know Jessica or Yolanda. When Yolanda and Jessica finished buying the popcorn, me and Evelin left the room, and we saw that we had the entire room for us, there were just like 3 other people in the room but practically it was just us. The movie was cool and we loved being together. I say this was one of the best memories with them, I miss them all and I wish to see them soon.

Road Trip to Guadalajara

By Coby M. (Victoria Community School)

It was a Hard day for everyone packing their clothes and getting ready to go on a road trip to Guadalajara. The idea was to start leaving in the night so we did.

Later on my brother kept driving the whole night. We got to this little town and stopped to take a look around the town and at the same



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time look for a store but everything was close since it was already late.

It took us about 26 hours to get to Guadalajara but at night nothing much happened. My brother and dad would take turns to drive if one was tired the other one had to drive. Me and my two sisters were in the back of the truck just looking out the window. It was hot. My mom was not having the greatest time of her life with the heat and we had no A.C in the car.

Later that day we all wanted to arrive already. It was dark and both

my dad and brother were tired so they parked in front of a park to get some rest.

The next morning we stopped at a gas station to get drinks and use the restroom. That was just in the morning. So on the day nothing much to see besides Lands and horses in the road, we were almost there.

We got hungry and my dad noticed we were by Mazatlan so we drove until we got there which was a nice experience to look around and have breakfast there. My dad kept driving until we got there as we were getting closer to my Grandpa's house. A lot came to my mind, memories, good memories but also not the greatest ones. The city was part of my childhood which made me didn't want to remember the bad times, only the good memories . When we finally arrived at my Grandpa's house it was nice seeing him again after a long time not just him but my entire family.

The day she was born...

By Belen R. (Victoria Community School)

It was the first of August when the girl of my eyes came into the world. I still remember how she was born that night in the hospital.

At first I was scared because it looked pink and was very small. but when she cried I cried too, I was very happy, my niece looked beautiful.

I never imagined that it was like that to be in labor. Two days I did not sleep at all to be close to my sister. I saw how my sister suffered from contractions.

It was 2 in the morning when we were on the way to the hospital. I was afraid that the baby would be born in the car, since the hospital was an hour away but there was too much traffic and it took 1 hour more. So my brother-in-law told a policeman and the policeman opened the way for our rapid arrival.

As soon as we entered the hospital, they took my sister to the room to check on her, but they told her to go home. We stayed in the car ...

Suddenly, the stronger contractions began again and they increased because it was time. I didn't hear from her until 8 at night. But when they put me in with her shortly after, Lia began to be born and they asked me to help them hold my sister's legs. But since she was born and cried I was very very happy and I'm still happy with her.

6 Word Narrative - Her birth is now my happiness

Don't Fall Asleep

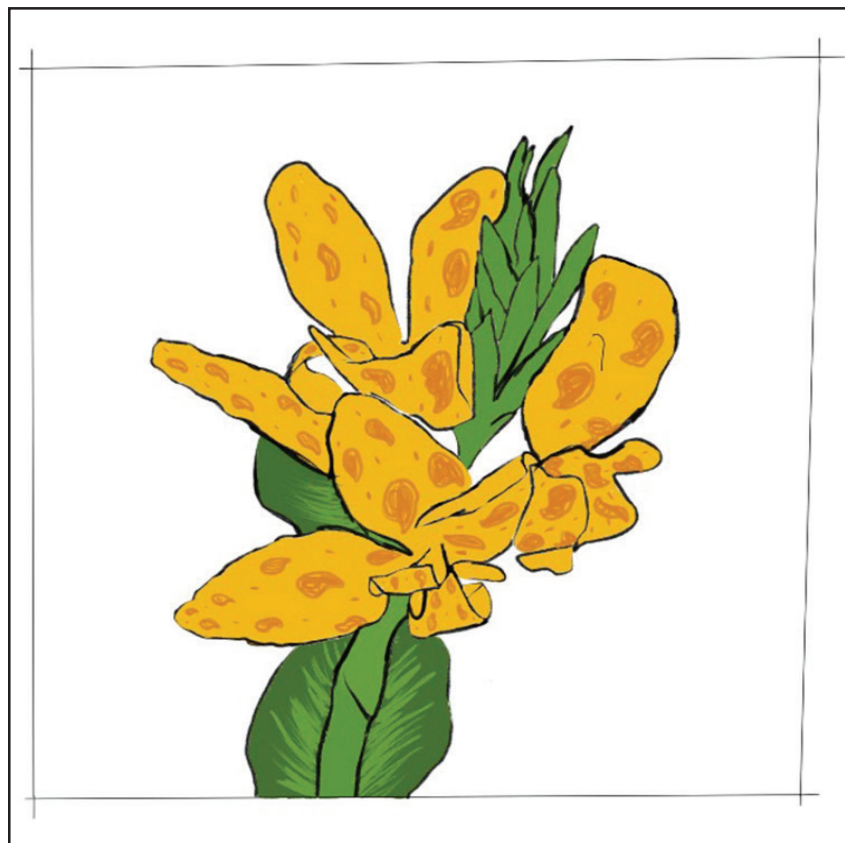
By Ruben M. (Victoria Community School)

I was going to sleep in the middle of class. I was laying down in bed and listening to Mr. Patrick speak.

As I was drifting off into my dream, I saw my favorite video game character and he pointed a water gun at me but I thought it was a real one. As I saw him pulling the trigger there was nothing I could do.

I was looking around for something to grab on but I couldn't see anything. Everything was pitch black and I can't see anything my favorite video game character disappeared and it was almost like he wasn't there and the pitch black was a trip for me it was almost like an optical illusion so I tried to do something and I dream up a floor right

under me and started to walk towards the darkness. When I finally saw something, it was a different shade of black and it was so clear. I was in a big room all of a sudden and then I saw it. It was a skate park with video games near it too! It was like a dream come true and I saw all my favorite food like pizza and sushi and takis. I saw my best friends and all my favorite family and even that girl I have a crush on but that doesn't matter. So I said to everyone let's go skate and they all yelled back loud and said YEAH! So we all were skating and out of nowhere a big monster was attacking us and then a giant robot came out of nowhere and the monster and the robot where in a 1 vs. 1 and they started fighting while they were doing that everyone was trying to escape but they couldn't because we where in another room this whole time The robot lost and we were all going to die that's what one of my friends said and then next thing you know the monster stared killing everyone and it was me and no one else I was hiding



Yasmine A. (Bayside Community School)

and it was carnage just every where it was so scary I just wanted to know when it was going to be over. By the time I found a exit it had felt like 6-7 years already.

And when I saw the exit I did not know if I shouldn't go through it or not because if I went through it I would forget all that has happen and if I dont I will never get to go do my homework again so as I was trying to go through door something was holding me back I felt like I should have gone and avenge my fellow comrades. But then i felt something on my shoulder and my back and up and down my spine. It felt like hands and I knew who it was it was my best friends and my family they told me to forget about them and move on. Then they said we all love you and they push me thru the door and as I woke up, I thought to myself, don't take love for granted appreciate it while you still have it . Then I got yelled at by Mr.patrick for not Listening

6 Word Narrative - Don't take things for granted everybody.

“Yes, I Do”

by Reyna A.T. (Victoria Community School)

“Oh boy, am I really ready for this?” (Nervously giggles.) I bet you all are wondering how I got here well here's my story. It all started January 2019. I was sitting on the couch when my cousin Crystal came in excited telling me to get ready because we were going to a party. Later that night we got to the party and everything was going great, everyone was having fun, dancing, conversing. It started to get really hot at our table so much dancing was going on so I walked over to grab some punch.

Then to my surprise the two boys that were staring at us early walked over to me. They were just trying to introduce themselves and were trying to start a conversation. I didn't really pay much attention. I just laughed and walked back to the table. The night continued and the fun and good vibes lasted all night.

The next morning I saw someone added me on snapchat and it was the guy from last night. We started conversing and became friends but once he found out I had a boyfriend he became distant. A few months went by and I ended up breaking up with my boyfriend. Things just didn't work out. Then I got a message and it was my best friend.

I was surprised I haven't talked to him since I got a boyfriend. We just started talking and getting close again. Now I understood why he became so distant with me when I got a boyfriend because he liked me and didn't see me as a best friend he saw me as his girlfriend. We started seeing each other every day. We became so close.

We met each other's families and one thing led to another. He asked me to be his girlfriend and I said yes. So we started dating and life was just going great. I feel like I really did find my one true love. Of course we went through our ups and downs in the relationship but we got through it together and that's what matters. Yes, my answer was yes I do. And there's my story of how I met my one and only true love.

6 Word Narrative - My story features Love, passion, time.

My Favorite Christmas

By Kimberly R.B. (Victoria Community School)

I was on the phone calling my family asking them what day they arrived at the airport? After talking for 30 minutes on the phone I was worried about the gifts so I went to the mall. I was getting ready for Christmas and organizing all the presents. I went home and wrapped gifts after putting the gifts under the tree 5 days passed. My sister and I went to the airport for my family. I was so happy for my mom because she has not seen her for 12 years. My sister came from Kentucky and her name is Martha.

Going home with my 2 sisters in the car my mom was crying and happy. Christmas day was very fun and happy .

6 Word Narrative - A happy family time sister Christmas

"My Boring Time"

By Alma N. (Victoria Community School)

When I was in my room so bored, I was on my phone looking at Facebook. I was watching videos. It was a very boring day, I had absolutely nothing to do. As I was very bored, my cousins came to my room. Ariana and Vanessa were talking about what we could do if we were bored. And then we were bored, I thought putting on music to sing was fun. And then we had music and there we were talking about "Corridos". For example the best Corridos are old ones

because they sing about important people. And we were no longer bored because we were listening to music. Music for me is relaxing and that always takes away the boredom because I start to sing my favorite songs. My cousins were together for days and we went to a family reunion and well, they had music and that took away the boredom.

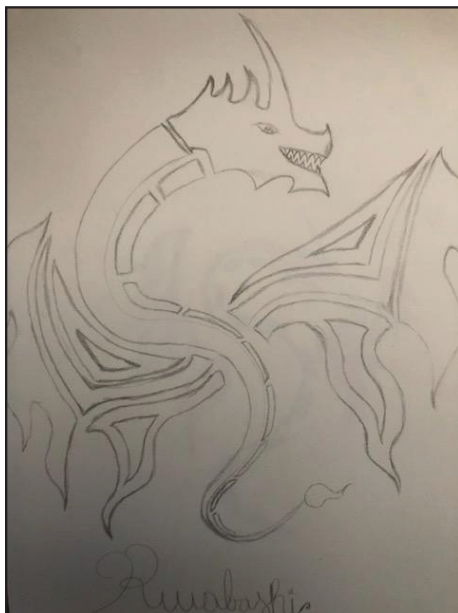
6 Word Narrative - Boring day listening to Corridos exciting

The Day We Killed the Bombers

By Santiago C. (37ECB Community School)

Eruptions going off around me, our home is under attack! Survival is my main priority. I'm making my way across the street. Kids are raising hell and arming themselves. Wealth and power are what drives our attackers. I must protect my village. I catch the gaze of a rebel nearby, I unload on him. He exchanges fire and I fearlessly advance on him. Suddenly, SMACK he is knocked out dead and the man standing there drops his pickaxe. He's in shock. I approached him.

He immediately says, "I've been attacked." So, I lowered my weapon. I said urgently, "JOIN ME." He agreed and we raced back to the village. When we got there we saw a group of people.



When we got there we yelled, "FRIEND OR FOE? Identify yourselves!"

They said, "We are villagers." We lowered our weapons. They began to trust us. "We need to stick together and fight back!" I said.

The attackers started closing in on us! However, we retaliated giving them all we had. Finally, we took back OUR village and Victory was ours again!

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“What You Can’t See”

By Nicholas S (37ECB Community School)

“What you can’t see is what you should fear the most.”

I wake up and find myself in a dark void, confused and alone.

As I start to think about the things only I know about, my worst fear starts to happen. My thoughts start to fill the void appearing like ghosts but looking like ghouls. Some fly by but some stick and tend to intensify. Almost like a dream, I take a deep breath and open my eyes but think, “is it really what it seems?” only to realize I woke up to another dream.

As I experience these thoughts, they come to life and my worst fear grabs me by the arm. I turn around only to see it was the person I once was. As we stare at each other, I can feel happiness but then anger and rage filled the room. I realize how much happier I used to be.

My former self says, “don’t forget who you used to be. Yes, you had to grow up quick but that’s a good thing just open your eyes and see.” I wake up only to see I made it out of a deep sleep but I’m not alone. Even though I’m not in that void I can’t help but sense that something has gone or is going to go wrong.

A Perfect World

By Aries P. (37ECB Community School)

12:00 a.m. Oct. 30th, 2020: A blinding light illuminated Logan’s room. Is it morning? Off to the coast, a brilliant light flickered as it diminished into the horizon. After that night, the vivid sight of a



gleaming horizon had never been forgotten. Before society fell into anarchy, a wealthy man by the name of Sylvester Pride had built walls to segregate the social classes.

July 23, 2041: Fists raised High as people chanted in unison, “enough is enough!”

SOAR Academy

The walls had only oppressed the people and so Logan had dedicated the years trying to find a way to unify what was left of the people. In the midst of the crowd came a faceless man. A loud bang breaks the chants, then Logan's vision goes blank.

Dec. 3rd of 2041: When the sun rose, thousands of people (led by Logan), had stormed the vast walls. The city's capital was a glorious white chapel, led by Sylvester pride. He was pale and frail with a nappy white beard. He

snickered at the sight of dirty people in ragged clothes on his floor. Logan demanded the walls be brought down. Sylvester was forced to comply. Over time, the people had assimilated into a new society. It was equal, fair, and honest. The people were united and anyone could follow their passion so long as they contributed to something that involved humanities development. Logan made sure of this, to have a world productive towards the growth of humanity that remained self aware.

Feb. 13th, 2061: Logan had reached the final days of his life. Society remained at peace with no murder or crime. As Logan lied on his deathbed he questioned if this change would last forever? Will people be happy with a perfect world? I will never know.

Perseverance: A Matthew M. Story

By Matthew M. (Second Chance Community School)

was struck with sudden fear, filled with disappointment, my heart rate dropped and I started sweating profusely, "you aren't going to pass and I'm waiting for you to fail!" I'm going to prove her wrong, for years I have been hearing this from her. Why can't my mom give me some sort of support or at least not put me down? However, in this case she might be right because I'm failing all my classes except for PE. I can't allow her to be right...she can't win.

English and History classes started at 7:30 on alternating days but I was there at 6:30, 35 minutes for Math during lunch and 50 minutes



SOAR Academy

after school for Science all in the name of catching up. I no longer had time for my own entertainment; hanging out with friends and joking around was out of the picture. I wanted to win, and that's the sacrifice.

Naturally, through my perseverance I passed all my classes. I earned three B's and a C in Science. Now it was time to deliver this news to my mom. "I always knew you could do it, I believed in your ability," my mom said.

The Wisdom Within

By Pablo R. (Second Chance Community School)

I was confused, staring at the mirror in my room, lost in reality not knowing how to fit in a world full of scars made by those who fell for the system's violence during a time of pandemic. I envy those who had it perfect, those with money, the fame, looking down on me thinking they were better. I always thought that maybe taking from them would make me feel more satisfied. But, it just made me worse, taking me away from my gifts, blinding me from seeing that perfect picture.

So I decided to just drown myself in a pool full of liquor and hid myself in that dark room full of pills numbing the pain. I used to think Robin Hood was a good guy giving what he had to the poor. So I took on that role but it just made me greedy. I wanted more, I wanted to be the top dog with the whole world behind my back. Instead, I got caught up in the system with chains all around me holding me back from reaching my goal. Maybe it was just bad luck, or maybe it was God reaching out to me giving me a second chance, teaching me that with patience comes wisdom, and with wisdom comes greatness. If I could go back in time, I would open my eyes and show people that there's hope.

John Doe

By Donald R. (Bayside Community School)

It was a dark and spooky night. There were kids crowding the neighborhood trick or treating. Me and my friend John were out trick or treating too. I dressed up as a vampire and John dressed up as a ghost. As we walked down the street, we noticed a mansion full of spiderwebs and creepy darkness. I gulped as we walked up to the



Isaac F. (Bayside Community School)

house, there were no kids trick or treating there so I was confused.

“What, are you scared to knock on the door?” John said to me.

“Of course not, I’m never scared. I just don’t feel so good about this,” I said to John.

As we approached the door, I noticed it slightly screeched and then opened. A tall thin, pale man with a black hat was standing there.

“What do we have here?” the man said.

“Trick Or Treat,” John and I replied.

The man stood there and looked at us with a smirk on his face but said nothing. John and I waited there nervously. Then the man walked away through his hallway.

“Hey, where’s our treat, loser?” John yelled at the man.

“John, something doesn’t feel right, we should go,” I told my friend.

John then barricaded through the man’s door and followed him.

“I want my treat, loser.” John yelled at him again.

“What are you doing, c’mon.” I yelled at him.

The man continued to walk through his long hallway as John followed him angrily. Suddenly, the door slammed shut and I heard John scream.

I ran back home and told my parents what had happened. They called the police. I gave them all the information I knew about John. As the police talked to my parents, they stared at me with confused looks on their faces.

Then the policeman approached me and said, “Sorry kid, but John died 4 years ago.”

I did not know how to respond. I just sat there in shock and confused.

It’s been 20 years since I last saw John. No one has seen or heard from him. As I reflect on this event, I feel that night will forever be a mystery.

Birthday Surprise

By Ashley Q. (Bayside Community School)

Earlier in the day, Natalie had gone to her friend’s house thinking she would celebrate her birthday with her. She was excited.

As she left her house, she yelled to her mom, “Bye, love you. I’m going to my friend’s house.”

An hour later, Natalie stormed back into the house and ran to her room. She felt sorry for herself and was pouring her eyes out, thinking everyone had forgotten about her birthday.

“Natalie! Are you okay,” her mom asked worried, knocking on her bedroom door. Natalie ignored her mom.

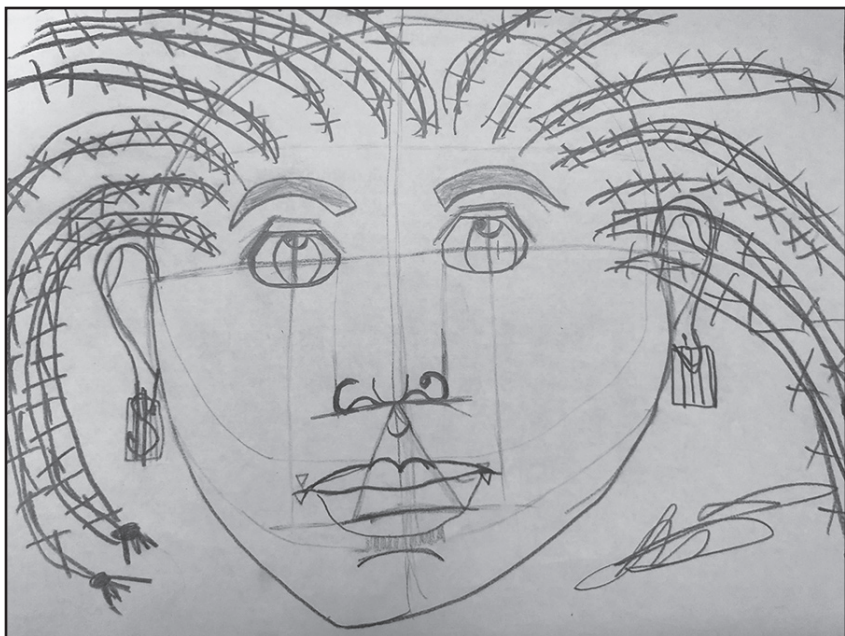
“Natalie, honey are you okay?” her mom asked through the door. “Can you please say something?”

“Yes mom, I’m fine. Can you just leave me alone, please?” she whimpered back.

“I’ll be downstairs if you need anything, okay?” her mom said back to her. Natalie stayed in her room.

The doorbell rang downstairs and her mom answered it.

“Hey Ms. Jones, did she come back home? Did our plan work?” Natalie’s friend said when the door opened.



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“Yes, but Natalie has locked herself inside her room and she is bawling her eyes out. I feel so bad.” Natalie’s mom told her friend.

“It’s okay, soon she will know that it was all fake and part of our plan,” Natalie’s friend said happily.

In her room, Natalie still believed her own friends and family forgot about her birthday. She did not know they had planned this and were preparing everything right now for her surprise party.

Thirty minutes later, Natalie’s mom turned off all the lights and yelled for Natalie to come downstairs.

“Hey Natalie, honey, can you come downstairs? I need help,” her mom shouted.

“What is it?” Natalie yelled as she opened her door and walked out.

“Why is it so dark? MOM!?” Natalie turned on the light.

“SURPRISE!” everyone screamed. Natalie was surprised and happy.

“Happy birthday, Natalie,” her mom said. “I thought you guys forgot,” Natalie whispered to her mom. “I would never,” her mom replied.

She hugged her mom. Natalie spent the rest of the night with her friends and thanked everyone for coming.

Billy's First Day of School

By Jesse O. (Bayside Community School)

When Billy woke up that morning he realized today was his first day of middle school. He was now a 6th grader and if he had known how the day was going to turn out, he would have chosen to stay in bed.

It was 7:00AM and Billy had to be at school by 8:30. He got up and hopped in the shower. Once he was out, he glanced over at the clock and noticed it was already 7:40AM.

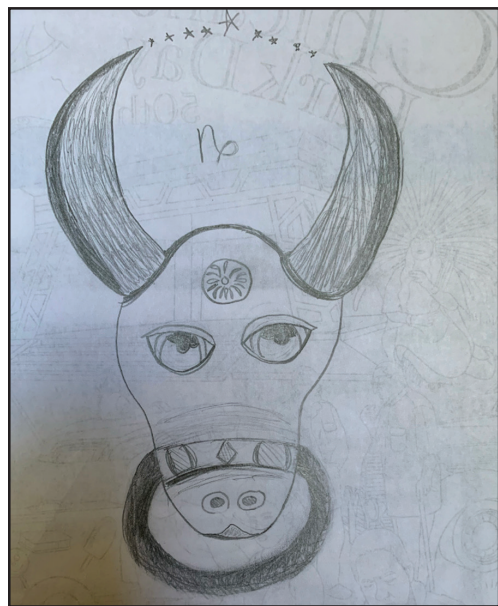
After finishing breakfast, he called his brother for a ride to school, but his brother told him he couldn't take him.

Billy's heart dropped and he started to panic because he didn't know how he was going to get to school. He thought about how far his

school was, 6 blocks. He knew his mom would never approve of him walking to school alone.

Billy realized the only way he could make it on time was if he walked and left right then. He looked at the clock and it said 8:15.

Billy hurried out of his house and when he got 2 blocks down the street, he noticed that the gate was open to a house he knew had vicious dogs. He tried his best to avoid the house when he passed



Regina H. (Bayside Community School)

it, but when he looked over the gate, he saw two dogs lunging towards him.

Billy started to run because the dogs were chasing him. He ran towards his new school. When he was almost there, one of the dogs jumped on him and ripped the bottom of his pants. A teacher saw this happen and helped Billy.

Billy stood up, looked at the teacher and said, "Hi, I'm Billy. I'm sorry.

I tried to get here on time.”

The teacher laughed and responded, “ Well Billy, it’s only 8:27, you are on time!”

True Colors

By Jacqueline I. (Bayside Community School)

It was a regular Monday, nothing new, nothing unusual. Me and my brother were fighting as we always did. He never leaves me alone, that is something I dislike very much. Just because I am the younger sibling he feels the need to pick on me even more. Of course mom and dad never tell him anything about it though. They say, we’re siblings and it’s “normal”, it’s just annoying to me. I can’t wait until I am as tall as him so I can fight back. I know I shouldn’t take it that far though because he is my brother and he does still love me at the end of the day.

Anyways this Monday was different. It started off fine, it felt normal. Then at school, I felt a weird vibe, I had a strange feeling that something was going to happen. I spent my day talking to friends and learning in class.

Lunch time came and I decided to sit alone. I needed some quiet. I was enjoying my lunch in peace when suddenly this group of boys came up to me and started picking on me. I’m used to this with my older brother, but I didn’t know these boys. What did I do to them? They took my phone, one I had paid for with my own money. I wasn’t going to fight back. There were three of them against me, and I’m just one.



I was giving up hope and I was going to let them take off with my phone, but that’s when my older brother jumped in. He scared them off! He got me my phone back. I never thought he would stand up for me like this. I’m so proud to have an older brother. Even

though he is mean to me, he wouldn't let anybody else disrespect me.

2020 Craziiness

By Luis G. (North County Technical Academy)

I will never forget the year 2020. This year everyone was forced to wear a face cover to stop the virus from spreading from one person to another, not being able to go into many places without getting your temperature checked. Everything changed once the covid 19 took over most the whole wide world. Death rates went up, people losing jobs, losing contact with family, and I think people are going crazy too. Like today, I went to the 99 cent store to buy some milk and Cinnamon Toast Crunch. I see a "Karen" walking in without a mask. A store employee, this young teenage kid, you can tell it's his first job ever, respectfully offers her a mask. Karen says "I don't need that, I feel safe" The employee says "I'm sorry, I'm going to have to ask you to leave the store then." Karen refuses to leave, continues shopping, and puts her groceries on the conveyor belt at the checkout counter. The employee looks mad and calls over a middle aged female manager. The manager refuses the sale and again asks Karen to leave. Karen starts knocking over the racks of chips and gum at the checkout counter while shouting "Shopping is my RIGHT!" People really are going crazy.

My First Day of School

By Sahera I. (Bayside Community School)

It was a day like any other. Delia felt very happy and a little nervous because it was her first day at school. She ate breakfast and started getting ready. Finally, it was time to leave and Delia went to school.

When Delia arrived at school she was very nervous yet happy for another school year to begin. The principal welcomed her politely and even walked her to her first classroom. The teacher asked her to say her full name and age outloud to the other students.

"Mi nombre es Delia Torres y tengo 17 años," she said to the class nervously.

Deila sat behind a small group of girls. They began to whisper among themselves which made Delia feel a bit uncomfortable, but she didn't care.



Bayside Community School

After a few hours all the kids went to recess and Delia sat on a bench to eat. She sat by herself but after a minute, the same group of girls from class approached her. She kept eating and didn't pay attention to them until they started to bother her. All of a sudden, they threw their food at her. Then they laughed and walked away, smiling. Delia did not know what happened and was in shock because she had not done anything to them. The days passed and every day during lunch, the same girls bothered her.

One day when the same group of girls started bothering her again, a girl and a boy came to defend her.

"Muchas gracias chicos," Delia told them.

"No hay problema, nosotros sabemos como son ellas. Mi nombre es Alan y ella es mi hermana, Britzy," the boy replied.

"Mucho gusto, yo soy Delia," she said to him. The mean girls were still standing there.

"¡No sabes cuanto te odio!" one of the girls yelled at Delia. Then she walked away with her friends.

Delia stood there confused because she didn't know why the girl said that. Delia, Alan, and Britzy kept talking and immediately became



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good friends. After that the group of girls did not bother Delia anymore.

Family Beach Day

By Vanessa C. (Bayside Community School)

Today is Christmas and my family and I are taking a trip to the beach. I am very excited. I do not remember the last time I went to the beach. At 5AM in the morning, I'm already packed.

I hear my mother yell, "Get up, you have 5 minutes to get ready."

I run to the bathroom and brush my teeth, comb my hair, and get in the car. My mom, sister, and brother get in the car too and then they all exhale deeply and say, "Finally a break from the city."

Then we go to the store to buy some food for the road. A few hours pass and we finally get to the beach and start to unpack everything. My mom says how beautiful it is at the ocean. I agree and tell her that I love the clear water. Then I arrange things and my sister changes into her bathing suit and goes in the water. My mother makes lunch and my brother tells us he is going to the store. When my sister gets out of the water, she tells us how hungry she is. My brother comes back from the store with sodas and potato chips. We eat together and then it is nighttime and it's time to go home. My sister doesn't want to go and she starts crying. My mom tells her to be calm. My brother and I tell her we are ready to go. We get in the car and drive to our house. It is a Christmas I will never forget.

On My Way Home

By Victor V. (Bayside Community School)

I was in the third grade. I was an only child being raised by a single mom. It was 7:30AM and my mom was getting me dressed. I brushed my teeth and she did my hair. We forgot to keep track of time so the school bus passed. My mom didn't have a car so she made me walk.

I was walking to school and all of a sudden, I noticed a black van. I didn't think anything of it until I saw it five more times cross the same street. Usually when I walk to school I take a shortcut through an ally. While I was still in the alley, the black van pulled up in front of me and stopped. Four men got out of the car and grabbed me.

I screamed at them, "LET GO OF ME! STOP, DON'T TOUCH ME!"

They covered my mouth and put me in the van. I was terrified. I thought I would never see my mother again. I begged them to let me go, but they just ignored me. Thirty minutes went by until the van stopped. I peeked outside the window and saw that we had pulled up to a store. The men got out of the van and went inside. Then I realized the men had left the van door unlocked. My heart was pumping. I opened the door and ran for my life! I was lost. I had no idea where I was. I knew my mother would be worried about me not coming home and call the police.

I began to walk. I was dehydrated. Then I saw the black van again. I was tense and ran. I was scared so I hid behind a tree. This was the most exciting moment in my life.

All of sudden, I heard lots of people yell my name. I ran from behind the tree and saw my mom. I jumped into her arms in excitement. She cried tears of joy. And I never walked to school again.

Getting Ghosted

By Yasmine A. (Bayside Community School)

The blazing sun blinded me through the curtains as I opened my eyes. I stretched my arms wide on the living room couch and put my flip flops on. A message brightened my phone screen. It was a message from China, my cousin.

"I'll be there tomorrow," China wrote in the text.

Excitement filled my heart. I felt like a child getting candy. The house was a mess and I had to have everything ready for her to feel

comfortable when she arrived. Cleaning the house took me about 2 hours. I was sweating intensely the whole time. I hurried and took a shower before my mom got home from work.

My mom got home late and told me to get ready for bed. I texted China again that night to see where she was.

The next day I woke up eager for my cousin's arrival.

"Hey, are you almost here? I cleaned the house. When you get here we can go buy fruits and vegetables?" I told China in a text.

Throughout the day, I checked my social media to see what China was up to. I couldn't wait for her to come.

My heart dropped as I stared at the screen. She was here. But she was with her friends. I felt annoyed because she had told me she wasn't here yet. She had said she would let me know when she was by my house and then I would go get her at the train station. I felt nosy having to ask her why she was with them rather than coming to my house.

A few days past and her mom came to San Diego as well. I never heard from China. She had ghosted me.

Misha Cat

By Isabelle C. (Bayside Community School)

I'm scrolling through my phone, looking at all the cute cats in the world. I think to myself, "When will my mom ever let me have a cat?" She always finds a way to tell me no for everything. She's always giving me excuses, either I'm not responsible enough or how the cat might run away. It's always something.



SOAR Academy

I remember my older brother wanted a car for his 16th birthday and got one.

I run to his room, slam open his door and ask him frantically, "Hey, how did you convince mom to give you a car for your 16th birthday?"

Scared, but laughing, my brother replies "Give? I convinced her to allow me to buy myself a car for my 16th birthday."

I rush to my room and call my friend. We talk on the phone for about 30 minutes and she offers me a part time job on the weekends. After I hang up the phone, I have everything planned out and I'm finally ready to talk to my mom.

As my mom walks in the door, I walk over to her hiding my excitement, and calmly say "I hope you had a good day at work. I have something to propose to you." My mom looks worried and confused as she says, "What do you want to talk about?"

"I was talking to a friend who has a babysitting job and she offered me a job, working with her on the weekends. I thought that would be a perfect way to prove I'm responsible enough to make money so I can buy myself a cat," I say to her pleadingly.

My mom, with a shocked look on her face, replies "I'm impressed you figured this out for yourself, Ok, just remember it's going to be a big responsibility that you're going to need to take care of."

The Most Enjoyable Thanksgiving

By Jorge Z. (Bayside Community School)

My girlfriend Olivia and I leave to go to San Francisco from San Diego at 5:00 P.M. All I see ahead of me is a wide open road with 8 hours to go, with a whole lot of nothing for miles and miles. All I see is dirt and mountains until the sun goes down and then it's pitch black outside. I can feel the nerves running all throughout my body and butterflies fill my stomach as we head to my girlfriend Olivia's parents' house. We get there at 11 o'clock at night and go to sleep because we are exhausted from the long drive.

We wake up the next morning and it is Thanksgiving day. I forget all about being nervous until we get out of bed. Today is the day I meet Olivia's family for the first time. We get dressed up nicely for dinner. I wear my favorite black dickies and long sleeve shirt. Olivia's parents pop some champagne before we all get in the car and drive to her



Alexandra B. (Bayside Community School)

aunt's house for dinner.

We pull into her aunt's driveway and instead of being nervous, I am filled with excitement to see how the night will go. Olivia's family and I walk into her aunt's house and Olivia introduces me to everyone. As the night goes on, I get more comfortable talking to her family. The night goes as smoothly as I had hoped. I spend a lot of time explaining myself, like where I'm from, where I work, how long we've been together, and how we met. We all eat dinner together. The food is really good and tasty. I fill my plate with turkey, mashed potatoes, egg salad, and macaroni.

I have never been to a Thanksgiving dinner because my family does not celebrate it so it is very interesting to see how others celebrate. The little kids get to fill their plates first, then the teenagers, then the elderly. After dinner, dessert is served. We have pumpkin, chocolate, and apple pie. The night comes to an end. My belly is full and I am happy and content with how the night went.

A Good Memory

By Angelina O. (Bayside Community School)

My mom and I decided to go to Indiana when a close relative died. We ordered plane tickets for the next day. The next morning, we got up late so we had to rush to the airport. We were so late, we didn't even have time to shower. Because we were rushed, we forgot some things at home and in the Uber we took to the airport. But that didn't matter to us, we were excited to go see our family. When we arrived at the airport, it was too late, the plane had already left.

We paid for new tickets and waited 7 hours for the next flight. It had a stop in Utah. When we arrived at the airport in Utah, we almost missed that flight too, but thankfully, we made it. Finally, we got to Indiana. We were happy to be with our family there. We felt love. We felt at home. But we were also sad because we had to go to a funeral.

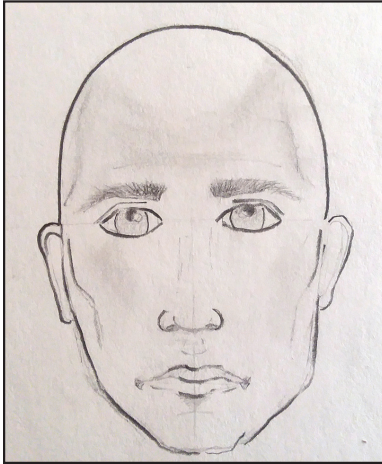
When we went to where we were staying, I was so happy, I finally got to see my baby nieces. They had gotten so big. The entire family went out to eat that night. We all ate at a Puerto Rican restaurant called Boriquen. I had a blast with my brother and three sisters. We were all together again. I wish it could be like that always. I also got to meet family members who I didn't know, or had not seen in many

years. That is love, seeing people you love and spending time with them.

Love is also saying your last goodbye to the person you loved who passed away. Finally, the two weeks were over and it was sad leaving my family, but I was glad to go see my dad at home back in Tijuana.

Hard Times

by Isaiah N. (Kearny Mesa SOAR Academy)



SOAR Academy

and wash my sins away.

Have you ever been in a cold cell?
Have you ever made that promise
to never tell? Got the feeling your
time going slower than a snail?
All facts no metaphors. I have
been on the right path when I was
released. Until my P.O. text me to
come outside. When I came outside
everything went downhill or south
however you wanna call it. Next
thing I noticed, I was back in them
juvi blues in IBR. I thought I was
getting out but I took my freedom
for granted. Now I'm gonna be
doing hard times. Lord forgive me

Extravagant Trip

By Danna R. (Bayside Community School)

It was a cloudy day, the kind of day the girls both enjoyed very much. Emma and Stacy laid in the living room finishing up their studies, when they got the idea to go on a trip. It was last minute and lacked planning, but to them that made it more fun.

They enjoyed going on extravagant trips. This time they decided to go to Spooky Woods, which was over half an hour from Stacy's home. They packed some food, sandwiches, Cokes and their favorite snack, chocolate covered pretzels.

As they started heading towards the woods, they noticed a creepy man standing by the side of the road. He stared deeply at Emma, who was driving her new SUV. But they were too excited to care and

shrugged it off as him taking a liking to the vehicle.

Once the girls arrived at the woods, they carried their bag of munchies to a huge log they could see from the car. They chatted and ate their delicious food until they realized it was getting dark.

As they walked to the car, they heard a man yelling behind them. When they turned to see who it was, they saw the creepy old man from the road. He started to run towards them when he saw the surprised look on their faces. The girls raced towards the car.

The girls were sweating and afraid what the man would do to them if he caught up. But thankfully they made it to the car before he got there and they quickly drove away in the SUV until he was nowhere in sight.

They rushed into Stacy's place. As they closed the door behind them, they both collapsed in exhaustion and laughed as they looked at each other. It was a crazy day, but at least they enjoyed another extravagant trip.

On the Other Side of Town

By Alondra A. (North County Technical Academy)

I swear it started peacefully, walking down the city with our signs for equality. Then, with a blink of an eye, there were cops in riot gear. I could hear the yells of protesters mixing with the yells of the cops. It was night time, the wind blowing gently.

In another part of the city, the night might have seemed peaceful, but those who were in the middle of the protest knew it was anything but that. I stood in the middle of the street confused. I wasn't even supposed to be here, yet I was. I turned to the sound of protesters running from



Bayside Community School

tear gas being thrown at them. I ran with them in panic. Why didn't I listen? My family told me I wasn't allowed to come and that I had no business being here, yet here I was unsure of why anymore. We continued to run when suddenly a protester on top of a car yelled, "No, no more running. We're here to fight for equality. It is time we take a stand and fight for what we want. They say we have equality but they need to understand that equality means at all times, not just when it's beneficial to them". That's when it clicked. He was right. That's why I'm here, to stand for equality. It's why I threw my family's resistance out the window, I know what's right and wrong. The yells of the protesters agreeing broke me from my thoughts. They turned and walked towards the cops. Looking at them as they kneeled. I followed along. It's time they listen. Because equality is what we are fighting for, and it is time, they understand that equality isn't only sometimes and we're not going away anytime soon. This is only the beginning.

Daily Routine

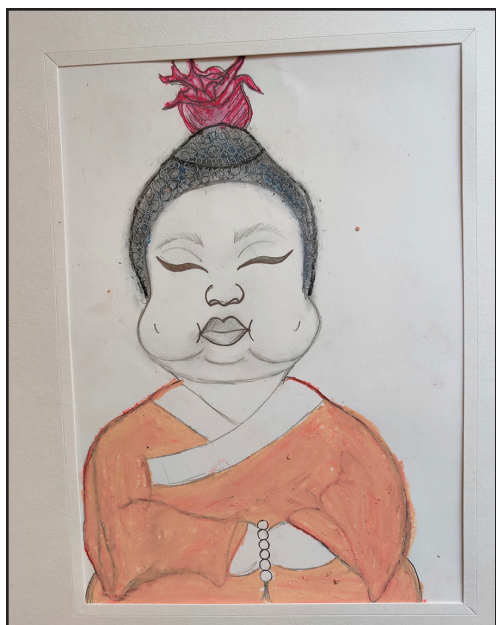
By Regina H. (Bayside Community School)

Sofia had always been a very lonely, hard working, but odd person. She would be lost without her life's rituals.

Everyday she had to wake up, shower, drink a cup of coffee, drive to the office, do 8 hours of paperwork, drive home, eat a practical meal, and clean her house, including all door knobs and then shower, before she felt like herself.

One unusual morning Sofia was riding on the subway. She sat staring out of the window, wondering what her life's purpose was. As she sat there, unconsciously rubbing her nose back and forth, making a cracking noise, she quickly realized she was touching her face. Immediately, she reached into her back pocket to get hand sanitizer. As her nose began to run down her lip, she sat there flabbergasted that she had just touched her face.

Suddenly, she felt a connection in her body telling her that she was getting sick. Sofia began to shiver and noticed that she was next to an air vent. Her worry for her health increased and she decided to get off the subway, cancel her day at work, and just walk home. As she walked, deep in her ear, she felt the remains of an itch in her throat. Sofia disliked getting sick, but she cherished the extreme awareness of connection in her body.



Jacqueline I. (Bayside Community)

Once she arrived at her apartment, she began to feel pressure in her chest, but no one was there to help her. Sofia had always felt alone but the feeling was so intense now, it was as if she were stuck in her lifeless apartment. Her clean, pearly walls that can blind an eye and her squeaky clean door knobs had become pointless.

On this day, Sofia did not follow her daily rituals, instead she curled up in her bed and realized she

could not control every aspect of her life. Her rigid schedule was just too much to handle because she was so sick. She spent her days mentally and physically drained and didn't notice it until she became very ill physically.

Losing Can Be a Gift

By Ruben A. (Bayside Community School)

It was the third day of school and Nelson was still picking on Bart. Bart was tired of it and was done trying to be the bigger person. He called out Nelson and challenged him to a boxing match after school. All day Bart thought about the fight because everyone at school was talking about it. Every time he looked at the clock, he was more and more nervous because time was going so fast. Finally, it was 2:30 PM and school was over. Bart was nervous, but he was also brave.

Bart walked into the gym and saw a crowd of kids waiting for him. He climbed into the ring. Nelson was there waiting for him. They were both freshmen, but Nelson was bigger than him. Now it was time to fight. Bart said a prayer in his head before it started.

They started fighting and Bart was losing, only because Nelson was

bigger and Bart was skinny. Bart tried his hardest to win, but he couldn't and he got knocked out.

Bart was so angry he signed up for boxing classes and got in shape. For months, he trained hard lifting weights and boxing. He thought to himself, "I am ready". He was better than ever mentally and physically. He used to be quiet, but now that he was more fit, he talked to people. Without that loss to Nelson, Bart would have never trained so hard and been in the shape he was in now. He had the mindset that losing the fight was a gift.

It was now Spring. One day, Bart saw Nelson and challenged him to a boxing rematch. He could see the fear in Nelson's eyes because Bart was stronger than when they first fought, but Nelson accepted his challenge. Bart was not scared this time, but Nelson was.

During the rematch, Nelson was not connecting any punches and Bart was connecting all of his. Bart knocked him out, but Nelson got up and Bart told him he didn't want to fight anymore because he was done being angry. Nelson put his hand out and they shook hands.

The next day Nelson was not picking on anyone anymore and from then on he greeted Bart and they were friends.

Happy Ending at the Siege of Yorktown

By Princess W. (37ECB Community School)

I wake up to a knock at my door. My wife answered the door. It was my Sergeant, "We're going into battle in Yorktown two hours away." I went inside, told my family the news, gathered my uniform and said my goodbyes.

Once I got to base camp I saw John, My friend I've fought with in previous battles. I've known John since the 1st year of high school. We attended military training together. For the future of my family in this new land, I knew we had to win. I knew we needed a revolution. John and I fought for our families.

The battle began. Shots were fired in all directions. I'm scared I will get hit. All I can think about is John and our families. Cannon fire annihilates the squadron on our left. We continue to push forward to claim our victory. Our troop began to receive fire, and struck many of us. John has been hit. I crawled to where he was to help him. I pull him to cover and try to care for his wound. I hear the sergeant call for us to retreat. I tried to carry John but I just could not do it so

I left him behind. I told him he was a good friend then left him there lifeless. We won. But we lost many.

I got home, grateful to see my family again. I told my Wife the news about John and I had to let his family know. I walked to John's house and knocked on the door. His wife opened the door, expecting John, however she only saw me. We exchanged looks, and she knew. She began to cry. I gave her a hug to console her. I told her she won't get through this alone.

The Delinquent

by Mark F. (Kearny Mesa SOAR Academy)

It started when I was 16 years old and I got locked up for the first time and I came to Kearny Mesa Juvenile Hall Detention Facility on November 15, 2019. I did 4 months for an armed robbery and I was released March 26, 2020. When I got out I was doing good for the first couple months, but then I started messing up and fell back into my old ways. I went on the run and I left to Arizona for about two months until one day I got pulled over and the cops seen that I had a warrant for my arrest. I was taken to Durango Juvenile Hall and that is when they sent me back to Kearny Mesa Juvenile Hall.

Racism Was the Cause

By Yasmin A. (Bayside Community School)

In 1942, the US government was in short supply of workers due to World War II. They made a deal with Mexico called the Bracero Program to let Mexican citizens work here temporarily. The conservative population didn't like that they were blaming us Mexican-American teenagers and young adults for many issues in the city such as crime. Even the way we dressed irritated the city's conservative population.

On August 1, 1942, me and my friends were involved in a brawl in a home near Los Angeles' Sleepy Lagoon. The next morning, the body of Jose Diaz was found nearby. The media and police quickly blamed the 38th street gang which I was a part of. A bunch of us were arrested even though we didn't participate in that fight. Twenty two of us were found guilty for the Sleepy Lagoon murder, which was later considered a great miscarriage of justice.



Regina H. (Bayside Community School)

After a few months, a group of 16 American soldiers stationed in Los Angeles claimed they were verbally taunted by us pachucos. Seeking revenge, the servicemen took cabs over to our neighborhoods in East LA, and started attacking anyone dressed as a zoot suit. We pachucos were thrown into the street. Much of our clothing was torn off and burned on the spot.

This rioting continued for days and instead of arresting the American soldiers they arrested us victims who were being attacked for wearing these suits. The rioting then became much more severe and all military personnel were banned from Los Angeles. This rioting happened because of the racism these Americans had towards us pachucos or Mexican-Americans.

Good Morning Sleep Tight

By Adrian H. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

The light of early morning crept slowly across the sky. As the nocturnal animals of the town we're getting ready to fall into slumber, others were ready to start their day. As workers who work the graveyard shift were getting into their cars to come home. Others were starting up their engines and turning their radios to their regular 91.5. Birds sang as owls slept. Foxes scavenged for food as raccoons cuddled and caught z's.

As one day ends for some, it's barely starting for others. But that just wasn't the fact for Jeremy during finals. Jeremy stayed up for

three days straight studying and reviewing materials for his finals. His friends noticed how restless their friend was and told him that he needed to relax.

“Dude, you need to get some sleep. You like a real life zombie bro,” one friend said over the phone.

“If I fail, my dad will kill me and there goes my summer vacation,” Jeremy explained. “Bro, how about you do me this one solid?” “Fine. What is it?” “Go on to your roof and look at the world wake up and go to sleep at the same time.”

Jeremy did as his friend told him but still didn’t understand what his friend meant until he saw it. The pinkish and purple sky that looked as if it was made out of pure cotton candy. Jeremy felt his body begin to relax and his eyelids grew heavy.

“Wow, man, this is amazing. It’s so peaceful,” Jeremy said as a yawn escaped him. On his roof of his house, Jeremy fell asleep.

“Hello, are you still there? Jeremy? Are you snoring? Hello? Did you fall asleep on me? Oh well, good morning and sleep tight my friend,” Jeremy’s friend said as he hung up the phone and smiled to himself.

Back to School

By Jesus D. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

John just moved to California with his grandparents. His grandparents told him they were going to take him to school the next day.



Alexandra B. (Bayside Community School)

He is scared to go to school. His grandparents took him to back to school shopping. They don't have much money for clothes so they bought what they could. John went to sleep feeling anxious but managed to fall asleep. He wakes up, gets ready and begins his walk to school. As he arrived there were hardly any students around. He rushed into the school and found his class barely making it on time.

As he sat down, his teacher immediately made him introduce himself. John could see kids laughing at him. Lunch and recess comes around and he goes to the bathroom. They start teasing him about his clothes and begin beating him up. A girl walks by the bathroom and hears the ruckus and goes in to stop the fight. After she stopped the bullies, she demanded an answer why they were beating me up.

"We are just breaking him into the school," one of the bullies said.

"Well, you better be nice or I will call my older brother," she said to them.

The girl brings the bullies and John together to kick it and they discuss their similarities and differences and end up being friends.

Wanting Freedom

By Salma J. G. (North County Technical Academy)

It's so hard to believe, I saw it being aired all over the news. Some people thought it wasn't real, I also doubted it. Me and my family thought it was all conspiracies, created by the government. But then people started dying. Even then it seemed unreal, But a lot of us have had our loved ones pass away. Even myself. At this point there is no denying it's real.

Last Wednesday I went to the Vons and saw everyone taking safety precautions and standing six feet apart, waiting in a long line just to get to a register. A mother and her daughter, about six years old, stood away from everyone else in masks and gloves, the expressions on their faces showed their fear. I thought to myself that this new way of us living is crazy and I hope that sooner or later we can go back to the old normal. I miss the freedom we had before the virus, freedom to go and do fun things, freedom from facemasks, freedom from fear, not even knowing or appreciating what we had.

Tank Tops

By Detavius J. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

There is a young man named Billy Bad and he loves tank tops. One day, he was going to the store to buy a new pack of tank tops. When he arrives at the store, he goes straight to the tank top section to locate his tank tops. He couldn't find them anywhere so he goes to find a person working there.

"Where are your tank tops," Billy Bad asks. "We don't carry those anymore," the clerk said.

Billy Bad leaves the store angry because he couldn't get his favorite shirts, so he finds another store to find his tank tops. He goes in and it's the same thing. There are no tank tops so he asks the clerk at that store and it's the same thing. All the tank tops are gone.

So, Billy goes on his phone and finds an article that said the tank tops company went bankrupt. So, all the factories are getting shut down and there would be no more tank tops in the world.

Given a Chance

By Jesus M. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Axel travels to Los Angeles from China. He knew a little bit of English but mostly just Mandarin, the language Chinese speak. He came to LA and started looking for a job. Most of the jobs didn't accept him because of his race, so he thought, so he started hating Americans. He was about to find a way back to China because he didn't like how he was treated. Then one manager looked how he was treated and gave him a chance. He was impressed how Axel worked so hard and Axel was happy he was given a chance.

Fight or Die Trying

By Danna R. (Bayside Community School)

The night is gloomy and the stars are nowhere in sight. As I sit and brush the clothing's wool, my mind flies to new possibilities of living. Days pass, the same thoughts run through my mind. It's all I can do to pass time, other than work in the fields, but I'd rather stay inside.

My life as a slave becomes more confusing every day. Men and women getting whipped and beat, children taken from their families, constant working, nonstop. Is this what life's about? Will I have to see

another dark day, go through the same thoughts and leave it all in my mind?

The window is open and everyone is asleep. I look down at the wooden floors, then up at the emptiness around me. The clock is ticking. It's all a matter of acting or the choice to continue with this tiring life.

No one has tried to run away, maybe because they believe it's useless, to risk your life for your freedom, something that's been long gone. But, I can set the way. I just have to make a run for it. I get up, take a deep breath, and jump.

As I run for the exit, my feet feel heavy from yesterday's labor and I don't know how much longer I can push through. After 10 years of being raised in this hell pit, I might just get out. I can see a light from afar. But then, I hear a loud pop. I look down, and all I can see is my blood stained shirt. At least I tried.

Detention Won't Destroy My Family

By Leslie G. (North County Technical Academy)

It was a steamy summer day when we made it across the border. I was a shy eight-year-old child from Mexico. My family made a life decision to make a better future for my brother and I. Today, we were going to risk it all. Crossing the border was not easy. Along the way, we saw a group of people who also saw us. We introduced ourselves with caution just in case they were undercover border patrol. Once they introduced themselves, we knew they were not border patrol but just a family also crossing the border for a new future just like us. They invited us along. There was a group of family, three parents, and three kids with two male leaders who were helping all of us cross the border. The two males that lead us were familiar with the roads that were a mystery to us because this is what they did for a living.



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My feet were so tired, I couldn't walk any more. Then one family's baby started crying. We realized the border patrol heard us. They told us to get into their truck. I had no idea what was going on. I was scared and holding on to my parents. We arrived at what seemed like a facility . When I went inside, I heard yelling coming from my parents. I felt a man grabbing my hand and brother's hands. I realized they were separating us from our parents and was terrified. After hours from not hearing from my parents I asked the lady that was guarding the door, "Where are we?" She said, "You are in a detention center." I told her. "I didn't do anything wrong," and asked, "Why am I in detention?" She was silent , so I went back to my spot to wait for news about my parents. A man approached us and led us to a cold section of where kids were being held. As a male guard walked me and my brother towards the kids, I saw in front of me in what looked like cages, and I knew, with dread, I was going there. Our first night was scary, and we were up all night crying. Then I remembered what my mom told me before our journey, she said, "Always remember if this journey does not go well, you have an inner strength that will get you through."

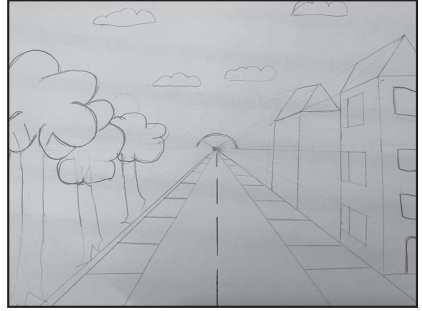


Ashley Q. (Bayside Community School)

Blind

By Hakeem A. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

Once upon a time there was a monkey named Simon. This monkey loves bananas. This monkey would have done anything for bananas. The monkey was very smart but the bananas made him 'blind.' He would do things you weren't supposed to do that normal monkeys wouldn't do for those bananas.



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Last Day

By Saul E-B. (East Mesa SOAR Academy)

I was having trouble breathing last night so I made a trip to the hospital. The doctors took my blood so they could see what's wrong with me. A few hours later the nurse came back with a doctor. I could read their expressions and it looked like they're hiding something and already my heart started racing.

"Hello Mr. Smith, we ran your blood samples four times and were still confused," the doctor said. "I'm sorry to say you have 24 hours to live."

After 30 minutes of arguing and saying that it must be a mistake and try testing my blood again, I made up my mind.

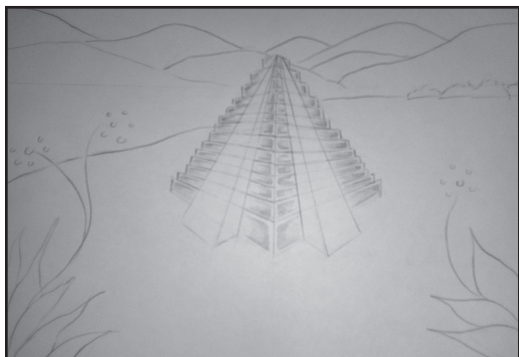
I got up from the bed and went to take a drive. All that was going through my mind was what can I do and who should I tell?

The Meteor Power Revolution

By Ezekiel H. (37ECB Community School)

The enormous purple red meteor crashes into Earth with a loud explosion. As soon as the meteor hit the earth, King was nearly killed. Then he got struck from the meteors power. He absorbed the meteors power, but he didn't know that he had super strength, super speed, super healing powers. He discovered it when he was attacked. Suddenly, soldiers started attacking him and innocent bystanders.

One of the bystanders was injured which King attempted to help by applying pressure to the wound. Miraculously, King healed all the injured. King was in awe of his newly discovered power of healing. He realized something must have happened by absorbing radiation from the meteorite.



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He immediately began defending himself against Renegade soldiers. King was outnumbered by the Renegade soldiers and began to fight. It was through the confrontation that he realized his newly found strength. This enabled him to suppress the

Renegade soldiers with such great ease. This unnatural strength allowed King to be more confident in those who would come against him. King realizes the scope of his newly found powers. Now with unheard of speed or unmatched power, he journeys back home. Navigating through the jungle, the hills and terrains he makes it home. He wakes up and he realizes it was all a dream.

King begins to recount the events of his dream. He understood the importance of power. If he had the power, he would use them to help the less fortunate, helpless and those without advocacy. Though King's dream was marred with unparalleled events, King with an unnatural power and responsibility was able to help the innocent.

The Long Trail of Tears

By Jesse O. (Bayside Community School)

The date today is October 1838 and I've been walking with my family towards our new land for a long time. U.S. soldiers forced us off our Cherokee land four months ago, the land that's been in our tribe for hundreds of years. I am a 16 year old Cherokee boy. Me and my brothers are on this trail to Oklahoma. We were hunting when the U.S. government forced us off our land and tried to take our stuff but I kept my hunting bow. It is the beginning of winter so it is very cold and we have seen a lot of stuff going on. The days are cold and sad

but during the night it is worse, it is freezing and we have no shelter, just a fire we start to try and keep warm.

Everyday before the night sky falls we have to bury our fallen natives. Every night my brother and I have to dig holes and place the fallen people of our tribe into them and we all sit around and pray for greatness. Our people have died because of the cold, sickness, and even people who couldn't take it anymore and decided to stay behind died. These long days and nights have us all beyond tired. It isn't fair that we had to be kicked off of our land but the chief said, "it will lead us to greatness".

This long walk has taught us a lot and how to stay strong. I've become a way better hunter, although there weren't too many animals to hunt because of the cold winter. We have all stuck together. Me and my brothers have ups and downs and fight everyday but the chief always tells us, "don't fight each other save your energy for when you guys most need it."

On Time

by Darnell J. (Kearny Mesa SOAR Academy)

"Beep beep beep" the loud, red circular alarm went off as soon as eight o'clock struck the clock. Nelly knew it was time for school. He woke up and got out of bed just to close the blinds. "Five more minutes," he said. "Oh my God," Nelly said as he woke up an hour and a half later. He scrambled through his drawers looking for anything to wear. He rushed out the house, forgetting that he had a math test to take first period. He rushed and ran as fast as he could. His backpack slowed him down even though he tightened his straps. He made it to school just in time for him to present. From this day on, he knew it was better to be on time than to be late.

¡Grito de Dolores!

By Sahera I. (Bayside Community School)

Acabo de llegar a la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. Se me hace raro que es Domingo y no haya más gente lista para ir a la iglesia. Ojalá ya llegó Ignacio Allende y Juan Aldama creo que ambos van a ser importantes para convencer a Hidalgo. Al desmontar mi caballo oigo unos caballos acercarse, es Ignacio y Juan, pero dónde está Hidalgo me pregunto. Juan y Ignacio se bajan del caballo

con una emoción que nunca les e visto en su rostro. Juan me grita:
¿Hasta que llegaste! cansado le preguntó “¿Dónde está Hidalgo, no estaba con ustedes anoche?” el ha estado aquí en la iglesia desde el amanecer -me responde Ignacio.

Entramos a la iglesia y estaba Hidalgo trabajando con algo, así que decidí hablar con él a lo que le dije.

Hidalgo, tienes que unirte con Juan, me voltio a ver con un rostro determinado y me dice.

¿No, para que?, no lo haré, “para salvar a Mexico, tienen que unirse los dos”, Hidalgo Se enfoca en su trabajo y me ignora.

Me retiro de la iglesia solo para descansar un poco y me pongo a pensar en voz alta.

No lo puede ser necesitamos a Hidalgo sin el no vamos a ganar.

Esa noche muy preocupada cuando de repente escuche la campana de la torre oriente estaba cerca así que decidí ir, cuando llegue mire a mucha gente ahí mismo se me olvidaba que era una fiesta de la virgen de dolores, después mire a Hidalgo arriba dirigiendo a todos a que pusieran atención a lo que diría, me sentí un poco relajada porque sabía estaba bien pero no sabía que era lo que diría si era bueno o malo, lo único que hice fue poner atención y escuchar lo que diría.

Después Hidalgo dijo “ganamos” y gritó. ¡Viva Mexico!”

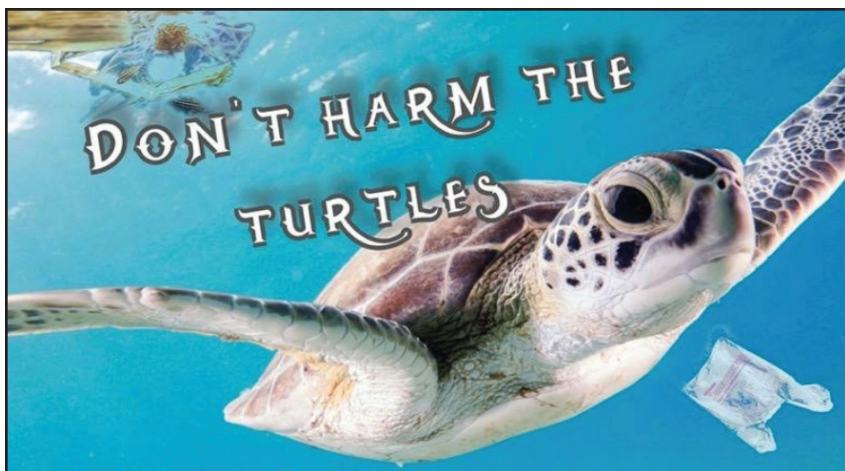
¡Viva nuestra madre santísima de Guadalupe!, ¡viva Fernando VII y muera el mal gobierno!”

¡Viva la América!, ¡viva Fernando VII!, ¡viva la religión y mueran los gachupines!”

Battle of Normandy

By Victor V. (Bayside Community School)

It is the summer of 1944 and I've been drafted to our second world war. I'm barely 18 and I'm experiencing war and couldn't even enjoy my new adult life. We have been training for a year to learn combat. One year later and we were heading into battle I was shaking in my boots. We headed to Normandy France where the Nazis took over. Me and my buddies were on the same boat approaching the beach. We got to the beach and when the doors opened everybody in the



Ashlie Q. (Bayside Community)

front of the boat dropped dead. The people that were still alive had to jump off from the sides of the boat. Some people drowned because the water was deep and our equipment was heavy. My buddies and I survived. It was crazy my ears would ring each time a grenade was thrown, I thought I was going deaf. Left and right my allies were getting shot. I even saw one get their face blown off.

We managed to get to the barbed wire, that's when we had to use the bangalore torpedo to blow up the barbed wire. The Nazis saw this and shot right into our direction. We had to take cover behind a building and I killed the guy that was shooting at us. Then we infiltrated the base killing every last one of the Nazis. My adult life had officially began.

Changes

By Paul R. (North County Technical Academy)

On a sunny afternoon John got home and was watching tv. Then on the news he saw that stores were closing and you have to use a mask now but he didn't care that much and changed the channel. Then a little after he remembered that he had to go grocery shopping. He started going to the store and saw everyone wearing masks but he didn't have one. When he got to the store there were people everywhere. They had their carts full with food and toilet paper and everything they needed. When John got in front of the Walmart store there was a worker standing there watching everyone, he went up



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to John and told him that he needed a mask or he can't come in. John thought it was a joke and tried to keep going but they didn't let him in. He decided to leave and tried to go to the haircut place nearby for a cut. He walked over there and saw that it was closed. But there was a sign on the door saying that it was closed

because of the virus. Then next to it was another one saying to wear a mask and stay inside to be safe. He started walking back to his car and sat on it. Then he searched up where to get a mask or how to make one and he saw that he could use a bandana. He put it on so he wouldn't be at risk and then went into the walmart to shop for his groceries and everything he would need to stay inside. He realized that this is the new normal now and he can only do one thing which was go along with the changes to keep himself and others safe.

The Strike of the Pandemic

By Marbella E. (North County Technical Academy)

As I lay in bed going through the news to see what's new I came across a bolded letter titled "CoronaVirus." As I start to read, "In China thousands of people have already died from this disease." I tell myself it's nothing big. It's in China. I don't think it will travel anywhere else in the world, but I was very wrong. It slowly started traveling across the country. Some people didn't even know they had Covid-19 until they got tested. This virus started becoming even more deadly to humans. People began losing friends, family members, daughters, and sons. They felt hopeless losing them so unexpectedly because of this virus. Schools, businesses, stores, and restaurants started to shut down. I tell myself, "What has this world come to?" I hope one day this world goes back to walking around without being asked to put your mask on, all stores being open, and being able to eat wherever.



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