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MLK Day Contest Essay

Bullying is a prevalent issue in our community, especially in schools. To many, our school is not particularly affected by this problem, but bullying is more than just the textbook guideline found in our student code of conduct. In my eyes, bullying is a flexible word that takes on many different meanings and causes many different actions, but it always boils down to one thing—*judgement*. As students, we are constantly being judged. Whether it is teachers judging our work, parents judging our report cards, colleges judging our applications, or the judgement we begin to harshly pass on ourselves as a result of this incessant scrutiny. The fact is, Students are a community unlike any other. As young people who are all approaching the pressure of adulthood and working towards the same overarching goals, if we all worked and depended on each other, we could grow and achieve further ambitions. However, we fail to realize the importance of community and continue the cycle of judgement as we pass it onto each other. Rather than students worrying about how they can flourish in their classes, questions invade our brains: “Does my hair look weird?” “Would it be embarrassing if I ask this question in front of the class?” “Does it seem like I’m trying too hard?” All these superfluous worries plague our classrooms and affect our learning. As the future of the world, we shouldn’t be taught at such vulnerable ages to change ourselves to appeal to others. No one can thrive in an environment where the pressure of needing to succeed is followed by the weight of our fellow peers’ judgment.

Although it seems like an unfeasible task to get an entire student body to halt our judgment for each other, the smallest action can have exponential effects on our community. Instead of just calculating equations, we are forced to also calculate our every move and action, just so we can be perceived better by others. How are we supposed to achieve anything as a community if we act like this? I urge my generation to take the initiative to do what is right. If you see someone struggling with the homework, *reach out*. If you see someone trying out a new style, *compliment them*. If you see someone put in 100% effort, *recognize it* and show how *remarkable* that is. All these actions are seemingly small and could be washed away in the clamor of everyday life, but the Athens student community totals at nearly 2,000 students. If each person were to do one nice thing as little as once a day, that’s 2,000 more acts of kindness, and 2,000 more examples of how to treat your community. If there’s one thing I have learned in my math classes, it is that numbers add up, and these numbers can change lives, and will transform our community.