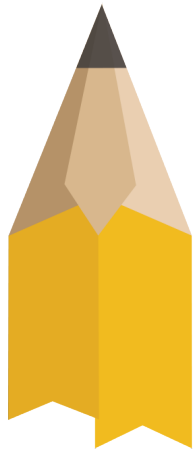


HOPE AND COURAGE

Denton ISD's Adopt-A-School Program presents the 2025-2026 Art & Essay Contest, featuring a collection of essays and artwork from 4th and 5th grade students across the district.



Special Thanks To



Denton
Public School
Foundation

**for partnering with the Denton ISD
Adopt-A-School Program's Art & Essay Contest
to host the District Award Winner's Night.**

Every year, the Adopt-A-School Program, a Partner in Education with Denton Independent School District and the Denton Public School Foundation, collaborates with elementary schools across the district to participate in the annual Art & Essay Contest. All fourth and fifth grade students submit an original piece of art or an essay (written in English or a language of origin) based on a yearly prompt or topic. Offered by long-time Adopt-A-School partner, Denton Black Film Festival, the theme for this year is Hope and Courage.

This book is dedicated to the students, teachers, and community partners of Denton Independent School District. Through the resolute and inspired work of our elementary educators, students in Denton ISD continue to shine in areas such as language and visual arts, highlighted on the pages within.

Thanks to the support of loving community partners and sponsors, like Denton Black Film Festival, recognition such as this is possible. Please let this publication, and its congruent award celebration, serve as a reminder that the Denton Independent School District is committed to reciprocal family and community partnerships.

Art Winners

4th Grade Art

1st Place District Winner

Charlee Lebending - McNair Elementary

2nd Place District Winner

Makayla Schmeiser - Hill Elementary

3rd Place District Winner

Mohammad Islam - Newton Rayzor Elementary

5th Grade Art

1st Place District Winner

Lilah Stephenson - Adkins Elementary

2nd Place District Winner

Kate Crocco - E.P. Rayzor Elementary

3rd Place District Winner

Sutton Hicks - Providence Elementary

Essay Winners

4th Grade Essay

1st Place District Winner

Violet Fraga - Nelson Elementary

1st Place District Bilingual Winners

Mia Mercado Alvarez - Hodge Elementary

2nd Place District Winner

Elena Song - W.S. Ryan Elementary

2nd Place District Bilingual Winner

Myah Martinez Riojas - Hodge Elementary

3rd Place District Winner

Sutton Guernica - Houston Elementary

3rd Place District Bilingual Winner

Ximena Avalos-Ramirez - Newton Rayzor Elementary

5th Grade Essay

1st Place District Winner

Christopher Ragsdale - Bell Elementary

1st Place District Bilingual Winner

Daniel Melendez - Shultz Elementary

2nd Place District Winner

Madi Reyna - Pecan Creek Elementary

2nd Place District Bilingual Winner

Marley Hernandez - Evers Park Elementary

3rd Place District Winner

Aashritha Davala - Martinez Elementary

3rd Place District Bilingual Winner

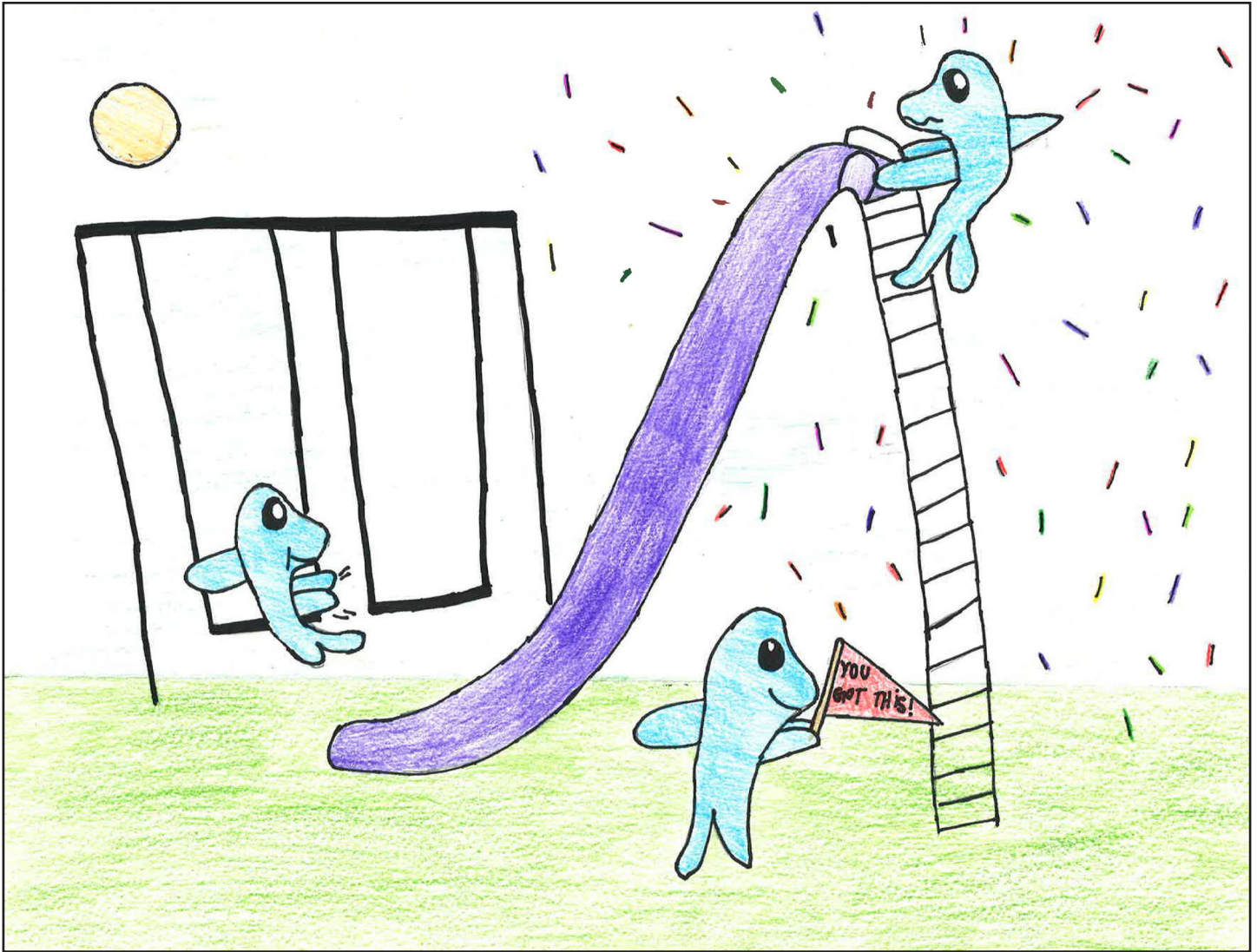
Aranza Mujica - Hodge Elementary



**Charlee Lebending, 4th Grade
McNair Elementary**



Lilah Stephenson, 5th Grade
Adkins Elementary



Makayla Schmeiser, 4th Grade
Hill Elementary



Kate Crocco, 5th Grade
E.P. Rayzor Elementary



**Mohammad Islam, 4th Grade
Newton Rayzor Elementary**



**Sutton Hicks, 5th Grade
Providence Elementary**

Joining Choir

**Violet Fraga, 4th Grade
Nelson Elementary**

Hi, my name is Violet and I'm in 4th grade at LA Nelson. This was a time I felt courage and hope. Let's read! One sunny day in August I was on my gray couch holding up a white paper up to my face. It read "Join Roaring Nelson Choir!" and there was a picture of a maroon lion. In bold letters I didn't know if I wanted to join at first but I had to. I love to sing, (at home) that is. I had never really sung in front of anyone though, but this was important and I had to join. The next day at school I turned in my bold white paper signature and all. After that I studied the other half of the paper with all the dates. The first rehearsal was pretty far away but I had time to practice right? I arrived at home and my mom asked if I had turned in my paper. I confidently said yes and headed to my room to practice. I had all my courage gathered up and I let it out when I sang. It was a great warm feeling like lyrics wrapped around you as a blanket. But suddenly my voice cracked! What if this happened at choir? I lay in bed awake thinking about what things could happen in choir good and bad, scary and fun. Who knows what awaits in choir, definitely something! The next two weeks flew by and before I knew it I was at the door of the music room. I closed my eyes, gathered up all my courage and hope and memories of the joy of singing and walked in, Phew, got that over with! I spotted some of my friends and sat with them. They greeted me and we took roll calls. I boldly said my name but suddenly, and I spotted some 5th graders even looking a bit nervous! I guess everybody was nervous at some point. Probably because this year was the first choir year with a music teacher. The old one had been here for 3 years. Finally we reached the cafeteria and formed a circle and sang. I sang with all my courage and all my hope from the past few days. Everybody's voices spiralled in a circle like a real choir of beautiful voices at LA Nelson, because it was! We played games, sang, and did rounds. There was a whole new world of singing I had never even heard! When choir was over I told my mom all the wonderful things we did. That day I learned all you need is courage and hope to achieve your goals and turn your dreams into reality, I know where I belong. I belong in choir.

Adopt a School Essay

**Christopher Ragsdale, 5th Grade
Bell Elementary**

One time that I had hope and courage was when I was trying to read, but it was confusing. All the letters didn't make sense when I put them together. I was in first grade. I tried again and again to read but it wouldn't work. So I had to ask for help. Even with help it still wouldn't make sense. It wasn't until I learned that I had Dyslexia that I got why I was struggling and why I needed help in reading. When I started doing Dyslexia class with Mrs. Green it started helping me understand how to put all the letters together. Mrs. Green also taught me how two, three, or even four letters can make one sound or multiple sounds. Later on in the year I understood it and I started to be able to read sentences. It was a lot of sentences. After that, I started to be able to understand what my teachers were teaching me. Later on, I switched teachers to Mrs. Bailey. Mrs. Bailey taught me even more. She helped me learn to read longer paragraphs and sentences. After all of that, I became a better reader. When I was learning to read I had to show hope. If I didn't show hope, I wouldn't believe in myself to read. Also showing hope helps the teachers know that you are always ready to learn, try new stuff, and never give up. When something difficult happens you can't give up on everything. You have to keep trying and build yourself up to your goal and have courage.

Courage

**Elena Song, 4th Grade
W.S. Ryan Elementary**

Have you ever got scared because English is not your first language? My name is Elena and my parents are from South Korea. Even though I was born in America, my parents are from Korea, so Korean became my first language. On the first day of school, I was nervous if I will make a mistake. Thankfully, my sister is great at English so I learned basic words I needed to know, like teacher, thank you, and hi. I didn't know much of school except it's a learning place for kids, so I didn't know we would stay really long. So I became more nervous and didn't talk much as the other kids. I kept wearing masks to cover my mouth because I felt safe with it. My kindergarten teacher helped me be brave, so I didn't wear masks. In first grade, I felt much more comfortable. In second grade, I was almost great at everything except speaking louder. My second grade teacher made me brave that I used my voice. (before this happened I was so quiet that it was a whisper) Now, I feel thankful to the teachers who helped me speak up and I'm still trying to speak up every day!

The Concert

**Madi Reyna, 5th Grade
Pecan Creek Elementary**

The car rode fast, yet just the good amount of speed. As I was looking out the window, I saw a sign saying “Billy Ryan High School”. As my mom parked, I felt a growing nervousness in my stomach. I grabbed my slightly heavy violin case, getting out of the car.

“Are you ready, sweetie?” said my mom.

“Yeah... I guess.” I said, my voice was casual, yet kind of nervous.

“But this outfit is just so... Weird! I look like someone going to a funeral wearing all black!” I pointed at my black skirt, shoes, and shirt.

“I bet everyone else performing here doesn’t want to wear all these formal outfits.”

She was right I guess... But I couldn’t say that!

As we walked in, there were tons of people. Kid, Adults, teens, you name it. There was a big sign saying : 5th grade orchestra this way →. As I walked that way, I sat my case down and unbuckled it. I put my shoulder rest on my violin, and grabbed my bow. I said bye to my mom and walked to the stage. Butterflies filled my stomach with each step I took. Luckily enough, I sat near the back. but still kind of close. I sat next to a kid from a different school– someone I didn’t know. I put my bow on the stand, as Mr. Adkins walked on stage.

“Alright everyone, pluck me four open D’s.”

I pluck them, doing pretty well. But the butterflies still lingered in my stomach.

“four open A’s!”

At this point– I didn’t care. I just need to try. I got this... Then we started practicing Chicken on a Fence Post. It was the only song we were performing with our bows, so it wouldn’t be too hard, I hope! I was doing good... For now.

As I played, I slowly got more confident. By the last song, I was confident!

After watching all the high schoolers and middle schoolers play... We played chicken on a fence post! With high schoolers! After all the performances...I felt good about myself. After the performance, I put my violin back in my case, and start packing up. Then, after all that.. I felt better! In fact, way better. I walked out, and saw my parents. Not to mention, also my friend’s parents. “You did so good, sweetie!”

I did it. After all that work... I did it.

What Hope and Courage Really Means

**Sutton Guernica, 4th Grade
Sam Houston Elementary**

Have you done something new or done something you didn't want to do? That's called courage. Courage means being brave and doing the right thing even when it's hard. You show courage everyday but you might not even know it!

Things like taking a test and trying your best, even trying new foods is showing courage. An example of when I showed courage is when we had a performance and I was speaking. I showed courage by trying my best to not mess up. I was brave enough to do it.

I was proud of myself for being brave and courageous. I learned that having courage is an important part of life. Another important trait is hope. Hope means believing good things are possible even if it's difficult. Having hope is also an important part of life just like courage.

If you had no hope you wouldn't believe in yourself to do anything. You use hope everyday throughout your life, you probably tell yourself you can do it, and I believe in you. In conclusion Hope and Courage are a trait that everybody should have and use.

Third Grade STAAR Test

**Aashritha Davala, 5th Grade
Martinez Elementary**

When I was in 3rd grade, I had to take the STAAR test. I had so much hope that I would master it, but first I had to do practice tests. I practiced at home and whenever my teacher gave me one in class. At home, my dad printed the practice test and the answer sheet. After I finished, I'd call my mom to come into the room. She would take the answer sheet and grade my work. One time, I got all the answers correct! That gave me even more hope.

I started practicing in the morning and at night. My parents were proud of me because I worked so hard. I was the smartest in my class and my teacher's favorite student. I kept practicing because I really wanted to do well. Every time I got better, I felt more confident. I believed in myself and knew I could master the test.

When it was finally time for the real STAAR test, I had so much courage and hope. My parents told me I could do great, and that gave me strength. I was nervous, but I tried my best and didn't give up.

Then the scores came in... and guess what? I mastered it! I was so happy! Having courage in myself was worth it.

Mi Primer Día

**Mia Mercado Alvarez, 4th Grade Bilingual
Hodge Elementary**

Todo empezó con mi primer día de coro . El coro es un club que hacen en todas las escuelas o en casi entodas las escuelas pero en mi escuela si. Mi nombre es Mia mercado yo siempre me encanta cantar aunque nopuro cantar mucho. Mi canción favorita de cantar sería snowman me la enseñó mi maestro Bueno mi primer diaen cora !!!! Yo estaba muy nerviosa porque pensé que el maestro iba a ser malo y yo estaba muy nerviosaaunque mis amigos estuvieran conmigo. Eran Addy Adriana Ramone y Melani y Mayra.Pero aunque mis amigos estén conmigo todavía estaba nerviosa pero también tenía miedo que mi amame iba a olvidar y que no me iba a recoger y el maestro me dio miedo porque siempre que íbamos a especialese íbamos con el .El siempre era muy muy muuuuuuy !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!estricto pero no era solo eso que me daba miedo eraque me dio miedo que lo hacía mal como si no cantaba bien o cosas asi. Pero mis amigos me empezaron ahacerl que me haga sentir bien por decirme cosas buenas cosas como que lo voy a hacer bien y que no meestrese y que el maestro no iba a ser enojado o estricto aunque sí es no me impide que balla.Al Final me empezó a gustar porque el maestro si es estricto pero no tanto pero despues de como el 4Día me empezó a gustar muchoMis razones son mi hermanito no me molesta cuando llegó a la casa porque llego más tarde que cuando no mequedo en coro y otra razón es que al final del biade coro los carros se tienen que parquear afuera bueno todoslos padres vienen un poco tarde solo la mamá de adriana es como la única que si bien en tiempoPero Abby y Alex el es el primo de Abby y yo jugamos tag a mi si me gusta esa es mi parte favorita de coroporque pueden marcar toda la energía y cuando llego a la casa no molesto .Si antes se sentían nerviosa de entrar a un club como yo primero solo. Recuerden que tal vez es tuprimera vez en el club o en un lugar so siempre. ¡¡Recuerden esta historia!!

Coraje o esperanza

La vez que lo logré

**Daniel Melendez, 5th Grade Bilingual
Shultz Elementary**

¿Alguna vez has tenido un momento en el que no creías en ti mismo pero encontraste esperanza? Esta historia comienza en los últimos meses de 4to grado. La Sra. Najera nos estaba preparando para el examen STAAR.

Mrs. Najera enseñó cómo hacer un buen ensayo, por alguna razón yo simplemente no podía entenderlo, me equivocaba y incluso usaba mala gramática y no era organizado. Fue entonces cuando la Sra. Najera vio que necesitaba ayuda me vio porque estaba preocupado que nunca iba a entender. Así que me ayudó y poco a poco comencé a entenderlo. Podía escribir buenas oraciones, pero todavía necesitaba ayuda para repasar debido a mi gramática, así que comencé a practicar cuando llegué a casa mi hermano Nathaniel se me acerca y me ve luchando. Le dije que no sabía cómo hacer una buena oración porque no use buena gramática, entonces se convirtió en mi maestro y dijo que me ayudaría. Me puse tan feliz porque finalmente iba a aprender a hacer un ensayo, así que nos pusimos a trabajar. Él me enseñó a repasar y todo. De hecho, lo estaba entendiendo justo cuando en mi mente hizo clic. Finalmente aprendí a hacer un buen Ensayo gracias a mi hermano Nathaniel. Estaba muy feliz. Al día siguiente volví a la escuela, le conté a la Sra. Najera lo que pasó y ella se puso muy orgullosa de mí, luego me dijo que volviera a mi asiento que hiciera un ensayo argumentativo y se lo mostrará, así que lo hice y ella dijo que había mejorado mucho y que me estaba yendo muy bien en mi trabajo estaba muy feliz por dentro. Estaba tan feliz porque recibí la ayuda que necesitaba de mi hermano Nathaniel y mi maestra, la Sra. Najera. Simplemente no podía creer que finalmente hice un buen Ensayo y agradecí a la Sra. Najera y a mi hermano por enseñarme cómo hacer un Ensayo.

Aprendí que incluso cuando hay tiempos difíciles, todavía encuentras esperanza. Hay una cita que aprendí que es “lo que crees lo puedes lograr”. Esta cita me dio esperanza y fuerza para completar mi ensayo. El fin.

La Entrada al Coro

**Myah G. Martinez Riojas, 4th Grade Bilingual
Borman Elementary**

Un día estaba apunto de empezar la clase de matemáticas y de repente tocaron la puerta. ‘TOC TOC’ se escuchó el sonido y luego entró el maestro de música.

–Alguien se quiere meter a coro antes que se acaben las oportunidades –dijo el Sr. Cardona

–Yo –dije nerviosamente levantando la mano.

Ese mismo día había ido a música y se me había olvidado preguntar si podía entrar a coro. Pero ahora tenía una última oportunidad, pensé a mi misma.

– Ok ven –dijo el Sr. Cardona haciéndome la seña de que vaya

Cuando caminábamos a la clase mis manos temblaban porque los niños me iban a escuchar junto con el Sr. Cardona. Cuando era mi turno de cantar para la demostración de coro mis manos me sudaban mi frente también parecía que estaba bañada de sudor deseaba que nomas no se burlaran de mi cuando cantara y que me aceptaran en coro.

–¡Siguiente! –grito el Sr. Cardona

Me llené de valentía me clarante la garganta y empecé a cantar al final no sabía si lo había hecho bien masomenos una semana después llegó el día que me iban a decir si iba a ir a coro Me dieron el papel en la mano no lo vi hasta que llegue a mi casa

–!Siiiiiii! –me emocione porque si iba a ir a coro. hasta salte de arriba abajo al lado al otro. Y sentía que tenía mariposas en la panza me frote la panza como si me doliera.

–¿Mija estás bien? –me pregunta mi mama

–Si es que logré meterme a coro –le dije a mi mama aun saltando

–¿Ok? –dice mi mamá volteandose a la cocina.

The Announcements

Marley Catherine Hernandez, 5th Grade Bilingual Evers Park Elementary

“Good morning!” my mom told me. “Groooan,” I thought. “I don’t want to do this, but I guess I have to because I thought it would be ‘AMAZING’.” We get up and head to the living room. “It’s gonna be a good day you’re gonna do great,” She chants. “I don’t know mom, I’m a bit scared. But I think I can do it,” I told her. We head to the bathroom so she can brush my hair. She brushes my hair in a half ponytail- “BEEP BEEP” “Oh no Marley, that’s the bus, you better get going!!” I rush out of the door and head my way to the bus. She waves goodbye to me. I wave back but with a concerned look. “You’re gonna do great!” Her words echoed in my mind. When I get inside the bus, it is quieter than usual.

“PSHHH!” The bus doors opened. When I get to school, I quickly get to the EXPO room. There are some unfamiliar faces I didn’t know. I know them now: Molly, Magnolia, Jose. C, and Rennlee. Mr. Cristales waved at me and said hi. I waved back, he pointed at a chair and told me I could sit on it. I sat down and waited for the bell to ring. “BRNNNNG!” I quickly stood up and stood next to Rennlee.

“Good morning Eagles, today is gonna be a fan-tastic Tuesday because you have a confident smile on your face! I’m your English announcer, Rennlee Cowan,” she says. “OH NO! It’s MY turn now! Don’t panic Marley, you can do this. You just have to speak in front of hundreds of kids.. Ok here goes, something,” I thought. I look at the screen to read my script. GULP, “¡Buenos días, águilas! Hoy será un martes fantástico porque tienen una sonrisa de confianza. Soy su locutora en español, Marley Hernandez” I say. “Wow, I actually did it. I think I could get the hang of this.” I thought.

Anuncios

**Ximena Avalos Ramirez, 4th Grade Bilingual
Newton Rayzor Elementary**

Este año, me ofrecieron ayudar a traducir en los anuncios. Todo empezó hace un año, en un proyecto del programa GOAL. Teníamos que anunciar algunas cosas en los anuncios de la escuela la siguiente semana.

Yo tenía que traducir algunas cosas para los alumnos que no entienden inglés. El sábado y el domingo, no podía dejar de pensar en lo que diría en los anuncios. Cuando llegué a la escuela el lunes, me fui a la biblioteca. Ya había unas maestras en la biblioteca. ¡Eran las directoras!

De repente llegó mi compañera, Zoey. Ella iba a anunciar algunas cosas en inglés y yo traduciría. Cuando terminamos, me sentí mejor que cuando había empezado.

Durante esa semana entera traduje casi lo mismo. Después de eso, se terminó el año escolar. Cuando empecé este año escolar, la maestra Born me ofreció traducir en los anuncios. Tenía que preguntarle a mi mamá, y cuando le pregunté, ella aceptó igual que yo.

La siguiente semana después de avisarle a la maestra Born, empecé a traducir. ¡Me encantó! Empecé a ir todos los días. Todo gracias a ser valiente.

Fui valiente y eso sí me ayudó mucho. Hoy en día, ya lo hago sin temor, y hasta más personas ayudan con los anuncios!

¡Me cambié de escuela!

**Aranza Mujica, 5th Grade Bilingual
Hodge Elementary**

La última vez que yo mostré valentía fue cuando me vine de Venezuela a Estados Unidos. Yo vine desde Madrelaura esa fue la escuela donde yo estuve para kinder y primer grado. Cuando llegué a Estados Unidos me inscribí en Hodge Elementary la escuela en la que estoy ahorita, yo me cambié a hodge en segundo grado, me tocó la clase de Mr.rosado. En esa clase estaban Audrey y Miranda. Se miraban muy amables y divertidas, y eran muy bonitas, hermosas.

Cuando llegué a Hodge tenía mucho miedo, cuando mi Mamá me dejó en la escuela estaba llorando. Me sentía como si mi cabeza estuviera a punto de explotar por el miedo que tenía. Cuando llegué a hodge yo no sabía nada de Inglés, tampoco tenía amigos, prácticamente no conocía a nadie. Pero cuando entré a mi clase, ví a la persona más amable del mundo. Cuando la vi ella me dijo “hola”, ella me mostró la escuela y como era todo, se llamaba Audrey ella es muy buena.

Cuando la conocí deje de llorar y me puse feliz, lo que aprendí fue que siempre tienes que ser valiente y enfrentarte a todo sin miedo, sin llorar, tienes que sonreír a pesar de que te duela siempre tienes que estar feliz, como yo cuando vi por primera vez a Audrey.

Skating 101

**Sienna Hirst, 5th Grade
Adkins Elementary**

Have you skated before? I have, and I had to show courage at Adkins Elementary when I went skating in third grade. Twice a year, every year in P.E, we have Skating 101. Third through fifth grade does it, and I had never done it before. I had to show courage and be brave. Why? It hurts to fall, and I was bad at it.

Well, I didn't want to at first. I was scared. I had to be brave, put on the skates, and try. I put my gear on, got a safety check, stood up... WHAMMM! I fell. I stood back up, and tried again. Guess what happened? I fell. "Ugghhh," I muttered. "You got this. Just keep trying," one of my friends told me. Those were the words that gave me courage. 'Keep trying,' I thought to myself. 'You got this.' That got me through it. By the end of skating, I had gotten, not good, but okay at it.

In conclusion, my friend gave me courage. I might have quit. Thanks to her, I kept skating. She gave me courage throughout skating. This proves how I got courage, and how I showed it.



**Natalia Ruano-Mata, 4th Grade
Adkins Elementary**

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Hope and Courage

Logan Alford, 4th Grade
Alexander Elementary

My name is Logan Alford, I am in fourth grade, and my teacher is Ms. Fahlmann, I go to Alexander Elementary, and this is my Adopt-a-School essay. My Adopt-a-School essay is about me in the talent show, and how I showed hope and courage in it. Before the talent show I practiced my piano routine over and over again because I was playing a complicated song called Fur Elise by Beethoven, and I was trying to make it perfect. I was very scared whether I was good enough or not. I was good enough to make it through the auditions and the small group of everyone else in the talent show, but I still had to build up enough courage to play in front of 600 kids and teachers plus all of the PTA. When the day finally came I was very scared constantly hoping I wouldn't mess up in front of the whole school. When it was my turn to perform my courage had grown, and I sounded great doing it though I had missed a few notes. My hope and courage helped me break through my fear and play piano in front of the whole school and PTA

Juvenile Brother

Mia Hernandez, 4th Grade Bilingual
Alexander Elementary

One day I had courage was on a Monday in the 3rd grade in 2024. It was the morning and my stomach had hurt and I had to get ready to go to school. While in the car I could feel my eyes dropping and my eyes getting watery. And when we were at school my brother Ikeer was walking faster. I hoped not to cry but as soon as I entered my class room I started crying, I continued but I didn't have courage to talk to my teacher or the counselor. When I got to my other class I went to the feeling corner and cried I was in the blue zone. I got courage to talk about my big brother problem and then I hoped to not get overwhelmed by questions from my friends, But I didn't and I had courage to talk to them about it.



**Danyelle Watson, 4th Grade
Alexander Elementary**

Lock Down

**Leiana Maestas, 5th Grade
Alexander Elementary**

A time when I showed courage was in the 1st grade. I had a lock down and I didn't know if it was real or not because they never told us it was random, we all ducked down and did what we had practice. My friends were talking a lot, I didn't talk because I didn't know if it was real or not, so I stayed quiet. The teacher was looking at the kids who were talking they got in trouble. Meanwhile the other kids that weren't talking got a prize.

After the lock down was over the principal spoke on the intercoms and said that something went on in the neighborhoods and that it was covered by the police, she said that nobody got hurt and everybody was safe. The principal thanked everybody for following their teachers and doing the right thing. Our teacher was happy and thankful that we were all safe and we did the right thing and we were very brave and had courage.

I learned to have courage and be brave because if you do the right thing everything will go as it's supposed to. That's how I learned to have courage, now I feel more confident and take drills seriously so everything will go as planned and nobody will get hurt.

Cuando decidí no quedarme callada

**Gloria Gaytan Hernandez, 5th Grade Bilingual
Alexander Elementary**

Alguna vez has tenido que lidiar con muchos problemas o estrés y sientes que no se lo puedes contar a alguien por miedo a que te juzguen?

Cuando yo estaba en primer grado era usualmente molestanda por un niño, y los demás niños al ver que yo no hacía nada también empezaron a molestarte usualmente.

En ese momento yo no tenía amigos y a la misma vez me daba miedo contarle a mis padres o a mi maestra por miedo a que no me creyeran o me regañan mis papas por no haberles dicho antes, tampoco quería angustiar a mis papas.

Llegó un momento en el que yo decidí que no podía con nadie, y que también nadie me ayudara ya que un simple castigo para aquellos niños no haría que ellos pararan de hacerlo.

Por un tiempo siguieron molestando y yo quería que pararan de hacerlo entonces decidí que eran mis problemas siempre había estado sola y lo resolvería sola. Desde ese momento fui enfrentando a mis bullies y ya no dejando que me molestaran aunque en un momento necesite ayuda pero después de aquel momento dejaron de hacerlo.

Aunque también me di cuenta que todos en algún momento necesitamos ayuda y no siempre hay que retener lo que llevamos dentro y en algún momento tenemos que sacarlo para aliviar el peso que llevas cargando adentro.



**Ezekiel Huffman, 5th Grade
Alexander Elementary**



**Amiyah Johnson, 4th Grade
Bell Elementary**



**Naomi Standford, 5th Grade
Bell Elementary**

Hope and Courage Essay

**Emma Gibson, 5th Grade
Blanton Elementary**

One time I showed hope and courage was when I had to go and do the live announcements in front of the WHOLE school. I was nervous at first, but ended up really enjoying what I was doing. Here is how it began:

I took a small step into the library with shivers going up my spine. I looked around myself and found my news media partner Lily. I slowly walked up to Lily with a small smile, "Hi." I said, "Hello." she said back. I sat down in the big fluffy chair next to her and it felt like I was sinking in a big pile of feathers. "Are you ready for this?" I asked her, "Kinda." she replied, "And a little nervous too." I smiled and nodded. I had been feeling the same way ever since I had stepped into the large rectangular room. My eyes wandered all around the room scanning all the books. Then my eyes wandered to the big glass door and I saw kids my age and under rushing through the hall hoping that they would not be late. Suddenly I realized that later these children will be watching and depending on me while I deliver the news.

"Don't worry girls!" said our librarian Ms. Patrick walking through the door, "I haven't forgotten about you!" Ms. Patrick walked by a large wooden door near her office. Her hand signaled that we should follow her. When we got to the door I suddenly felt that I could not move. For a second I thought somebody had glued my shoes to the ground, but I realized it was just because I was overly nervous and kept on walking.

Finally, we reached a medium sized room and saw a table with a microphone and two chairs. In front of that was a large camera. Me and Lily sat down in our chairs and watched the words in front of the camera that we were supposed to say. After we got a good look at things we were told that she was about to turn everything on. Once she turned on the camera and the microphone we began. "Hi, Welcome to the knightly news broadcast!" I said with a cheerful smile then I said the rest of my lines. I walked out and I noticed it was not too bad after all!

This has taught me that you can do anything and everything. I hope you take this message to heart.



**Niko Freeman, 4th Grade
Blanton Elementary**



**Lincoln Bundy, 5th Grade
Blanton Elementary**

My hope in school

**Selah Mendez, 4th Grade
Borman Elementary**

My hope is to become a singer because choir has brought me to believe that I actually had a chance for a career in singing. Sometimes people just break you down but you need to believe that a lot of people are bringing you up. Only true friends will support you. And all my friends support me and my dream. My favorite singer is Taylor Swift and her amazing performances. And I can't wait to see if I get my dream career.

So then I'll try my hardest to get good grades and be great in things I'm not so strong on.

And I would love to have a solo in choir. And that is my hope. It is to become a singer.

Every year I sing my heart out at the winter choir concert. The choir teacher has helped me so much. Because my voice was so tense and he gave me hope because my voice was good but not the greatest it could be so in choir. We did voice exercises and that helped. The choir has literally helped me so much. My hope is to become a singer.



**Keegan Rodriguez, 4th Grade
Borman Elementary**



**Anika Mast, 5th Grade
Borman Elementary**



**Allison Ochoa, 4th Grade
Cross Oaks Elementary**



Charlotte Bogel, 5th Grade
Cross Oaks Elementary

Hope and Courage

Asher Schoppa, 4th Grade
E.P. Rayzor Elementary

One time in school when I used hope and courage in school was when I tested for Expo/ talented and gifted program. I used hope and courage by how I focused and worked hard and hoped I would make it into Expo. To get in Expo, you have to be chosen to go and if you are, you have to do a test with questions from the grade above you. You have to score >90 percent to get in. The questions were hard and confusing. But I stayed focused and chose the answers that made the most sense and I actually got in. I was tested once a week and each week's questions were all very different but very alike at the same time. The questions weren't like any normal question. You had to think outside of the box and more than one answer always made sense and it was very difficult. But I took my time and worked hard and was able to get in and get > 90 percent. Now days, there are many of my other friends that also worked hard and make Expo so much more fun.

Hope and Courage

Carter O'Brien, 5th Grade
E.P. Rayzor Elementary

Hello! My name is Carter O'Brien. And coming to this school was scary, I knew no one and no one knew me. But instead of being shy, I talked to other people and tried to make friends. No luck. But instead of giving up, I had hope that I could make a friend. I kept on learning new people's personalities until I found someone who was just right. And we had a lot in common, we played the same game at recess, and liked to talk and joke around with me.

I felt like I achieved my only goal coming here, making a friend. And now, I feel like I'm understood and fit in. Sure, I'm not the most popular kid, but I feel happy anyway because I feel noticed and liked. All of my teachers have been nice to me and gave me some pretty hard challenges. But I try to show courage and push through the challenges then next thing I know, I'm finished! And school is beginning to feel... fun?

Even though school being fun is an unpopular opinion, all of the teachers, staff, and students are very supportive and spread hope and courage to me and people who struggle. I've learned that having courage and hope in yourself always leads to success and happiness. So the next time you see someone struggling, spread positivity and courage. It will really help when they have a hard time.



Judy Igara, 4th Grade
E.P. Rayzor Elementary

Hope and Courage

**Francis Heetderks, 4th Grade
Evers Park Elementary**

Some things might seem scary, but have courage. With courage you can do scary things.

The third grade is the first year you must take the STAAR test. It might seem stressful that you have to take a really long test. Some things can seem scary and hard to do at first, but you will find out that these things are actually not very scary or hard. In the third grade, I was nervous about the STAAR test. But I quickly found out that the STAAR test is actually decently easy. From this and a lot of other events, I quickly found out that things seem scary at first, but if you have hope and courage, you will find that it was not as scary as you thought it was. You might seem nervous about something that is coming up. But have courage, because a lot of things that seem scary are actually pretty easy.

Another example is roller coasters. Roller coasters might seem scary. But after you got off the roller coaster you probably wanted to go on more roller coasters. You can learn from this that a lot of things seem scary at first, but you can find out that it was not actually scary. After I went on my first roller coaster I wanted to go on it again. You can learn from this that some things might seem scary, but courage and hope can help you to do these scary things.

So if something seems scary, have courage and hope to do this thing. You might even find that it was actually fun.



**Alexander Hernandez, 4th Grade
Evers Park Elementary**

Sorting Out Kismet

**M. Cramer, 5th Grade
Evers Park Elementary**

There are lots of times in life when we think we need to take fate and shape it into something that compliments our needs, but we just need to have the courage not to counteract kismet. I experienced this firsthand during house sorting in fifth grade. The house system divides students and staff into groups called houses. I was really anxious about house sorting day. I didn't want to be in a different house than my friends, since houses would sit together at lunch and I didn't want to waste one of the few times of the day when students can socialize freely.

Throughout the week before house sorting day, my anxiety slowly rose. On the day of the sorting, I woke up with butterflies in my stomach. As the day continued, the butterflies became wasps. At lunch I sat at my class table and thought. I was okay with sitting alone at lunch, but I much preferred eating with friends, so I devised a plan to increase the chance that I would get into the same house as them. Earlier in the week, we had watched a video on how we would get sorted; the fifth graders would go out to the playground in three lines. Each line would go to the top of one of the slides, where a teacher would be waiting with a huge sock-like bag. The kid at the front of the line would reach in and pull out a rubber-band like bracelet. The color of the bracelet determined the house you would be in. Next, that kid would go down the slide and walk to their house area on the playground. My plan was to hide my bracelet in my fist so none of it was visible, and then say I had gotten whichever house my friends had.

After lunch, we walked out to the playground, where the sorting was going to take place. A common passerby would have thought nothing special was happening that day, was it not for the sense of anticipation hanging in the air. Everyone was fidgeting as if they couldn't bear to keep still. I for one was dancing feverishly in place, and humming "Roar" by Katie Perry under my breath for a reason I was oblivious to. At long last, we reached the playground, and I tried to calm myself by taking a moment to observe my surroundings. Overhead, the sky was an overcast quilt of silver swirls. On the wall of the school, there were six posters, each sporting the name and color of one of the houses, which I assumed was where the kids went after they'd been sorted. On the playground long lines stretched from the tops of the three slides to varying points nearby. At the front of one of the lines, I saw two of my closest friends, Fatima, and my twin sister, Magnolia. Even from here I could see anticipation glittering in their eyes. In front of them, their teacher, who was holding the bracelet-filled bag, said something inaudible to Fatima. Then, Fatima reached into the bag, and drew out a purple bracelet. She was in the house of Nukumori. On Magnolia's turn, she got two purple bracelets! Please Nukumori, please Nukumori I silently pleaded.

I didn't really pay attention to the rest of the sorting, I just repeated my plan over and over again in my head, trying to draw strength from it. But it was hard. Maybe because I knew it wasn't right to cheat on something like this. I don't know if it was just that I knew it wouldn't work, or that I had the integrity and courage not to go through with it, but in those last moments before I pulled my bracelet out of the bag I was filled with resolve. I drew the bracelet out of the bag then held it for all to see! It was purple!

With a jovial smile on my face I leaped down the slide. I could hear Magnolia shouting, "She looks Happy! She must have gotten Nukumori!" I ran over to them, smiling so hard my face hurt. My arrival was followed by joyous celebration, and we all agreed that this day couldn't have turned out better.

In my opinion, courage is the ability to have hope in matters that don't necessarily entail the desired outcome. That is one of the best qualities a being can possess. Looking back on it now I am glad that I used these qualities during the house sorting because though I probably would have gotten the same bracelet, I wouldn't be looking back on this memory with the happiness I feel now.



**Kian Bogue, 5th Grade
Evers Park Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Adalynn J Reed, 4th Grade
Hawk Elementary**

One day I showed courage at school. I will now tell you the story.

One day in second grade me and my best friend Ivy Rose were playing together on the playground. We had been best friends since kindergarten and bonded around this time in art class. This moment we were walking to that bridge that separates the two rock wall balconies. I was heavily breathing because Ivy was fast but I'm slow like a bear trying to catch a fish. (In this case Ivy is the fish just if you're wondering.) We then saw a boy named Noah who always wore the same hoodie every day. He meanly said to Ivy "Are you in kindergarten? Cause if so what are you doing here?" So yes, Ivy was pretty short but he could not talk to her like that! Ivy started crying and I said "You can not talk to my friend like that! Just because she's small doesn't mean she's younger than you! Second graders can be small! How'd you feel if someone said to you what you just said to her!" I felt good. Normally I didn't stand up for people who were being bullied because I was afraid I'd get bullied back but that time I did stand up for someone and it felt good. Now Ivy doesn't go to Hawk but I will not stand up for someone when they're being bullied. Standing up for someone makes you feel good and have pride. That is what I learned when I showed courage.



**Emily Ford, 4th Grade
Hawk Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Kelly Sze, 5th Grade
Hawk Elementary**

I was nervous and scared. It would be my first time being in a real school. I've only been in an online school, and I knew nothing about my new school. I didn't know where to go. Would they like me? Would my teacher be nice? Soon I'd find out. When I first got there, my stomach twisted like knots as I went to my classroom. Even though I felt scared I took a deep breath and walked through the classroom door. It all felt so different. "Hi, I'm going to be your teacher. Please take a seat". It was my new teacher. She had a bright smile that made me feel warm inside. I quickly took my seat, and immediately, my tablemates greeted me so kindly that it felt like a warm hug. Then the girl next to me smiled and said, "Hi, I'm Aubrey! Want to play with me during recess?" At that moment, all my fear started to ease away.



**Chloe Dykes, 5th Grade
Hawk Elementary**



Jasmine Javier, 5th Grade
Fred Hill Elementary

The Work Sheet

Grey Neal, 4th Grade
Hodge Elementary

One day my teacher gave out a work sheet because we were too loud during a game and we had to be at a level 0 but she still allowed us to work as partners but we have to be at a level 1 or a level 0. When my table heard that we can work with partners they all asked me to be their partner because they wanted help with the work and I was like their mini teacher. When I helped one person another person asked for help and if I told them to wait they wouldn't listen and kept on asking me to help them and when I would help them the last person I helped would tell me that they don't get what I just help them with and I would also tell them wait but they still didn't listen and they also kept on asking me. They stopped listening to me and started to talk. They just wanted the answer so I stopped helping them and did it by myself so that they can learn and not just me learning. When the teacher said "there are five more minutes left they stop talking and ask for the answers to the questions and I said "yes but I won't tell you the answers but I can help you with your work" they said "Grey just tell us the answer" I said "no but I can help you". Right then the timer ran out and they got mad at me because they didn't get to finish the work sheet so I said "oh well I tried to help but y'all didn't listen" after I said that the teacher said "time to leave"



**Itzel Torres, 4th Grade
Hodge Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Hannah Hutchens, 5th Grade
Hodge Elementary**

Do you want an exciting story about courage? Well if you do, you're in the right place! In this story you will learn about being brave, being an upstander and having courage!

When I woke up I immediately felt crummy and tired, but then I remembered I get to see my best friend, Bailey. And that made me feel a little better. I effortlessly got ready and was on my way to school. When I arrived, we had to immediately get into math problems, like this day could get any worse, I said with a sigh. When math period was finally over it was time for lunch and recess.

In the lunch line I realized Bailey sounded a little off, like she had a rough morning too. At lunch I noticed when someone would try to talk to her, she would push them away or say "leave me alone" with a rusty voice. After lunch was over it was finally time for recess. I was last out because I had to use the bathroom, so when I went to go look for Bailey I saw her talking to Sofia in the distance, but I realized all the expressions she was giving off didn't feel right.

I carefully crept in closer to hear some of the conversation. I hid behind a green electrical box trying not to get seen but when I took a peek we locked eyes. I thought I was caught but to my surprise they continued their conversation. I realized Bailey was saying bad things to Sofia, but I couldn't take in that my best friend was bullying someone. I kept making excuses in my head on why she was doing this, I was in complete disbelief. But I finally took into the concept that she's bullying someone and not doing the right thing, but I didn't want to tell because then I wouldn't be a "real" friend.

I finally built up some courage and confronted her. I was really nervous but looked fine on the outside. When I confronted her she gasped in shock. I thought she didn't want to be my friend or I was in the wrong. But no, she said "Sofia started it" with anger and frustration. I was so nervous I thought this just made my day worse, but then I realized Bailey looked down, like she was reflecting on something, or she knew she was in the wrong. It was silent for a minute, and I started to calm down. Then she finally came out that she had a rough morning and she didn't know what she was thinking. I smiled with relief and felt better. I felt fresh and like I just did something amazing. And I'm glad I did that, even though she was my best friend, I still built up courage to fix it! The rest of the day was good and now anytime I feel like a broken pencil I sharpen it up with a courageous act.



**Elena Byington, 5th Grade
Hodge Elementary**

When I Had Courage

**Brielle Haynie, 4th Grade
Martinez Elementary**

A time I had the courage to do something I was scared of is when I was in 3rd grade. I was so close to getting in trouble but I stopped 2 people from getting into a fight and almost went to the office. It made me nervous but I knew doing the right thing would take courage.

How I learned the lesson of courage was by someone telling me that "hurting somebody can also hurt you." I started to pass that same speech around to other people, especially the ones who seemed to like to be mean to others. I figured if they kept what I told them in their head, maybe they would stop being mean to other people.

A time I used hope was when I was also in 3rd grade and had a STAAR test to take. I thought it was really hard to do but, as it turns out, I passed the test and got a A+ on my test. I didn't believe in myself until I passed the test. Another thing that I had hoped for was when I was 7 years old and I was trying out for my dance team for the very first time. I thought I wasn't good enough to be on the team but I was wrong. I made it on the team and realized I needed to keep hope in my heart to do so.

Sometimes, believe in yourself!



**Carmen Sandoval-Hernandez, 4th Grade
Martinez Elementary**



**Mariah Shaw, 5th Grade
Martinez Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Emerald Skeldon, 4th Grade
McNair Elementary**

In fourth grade, there was something called ‘assessment week’. No one told me, I had gone to school on those sunny days to find out there was a test each day of that week. I don’t know why we did them, because we did our diagnostics, and I had good enough grades. On the first day, my teacher announces, “Class, we have an assessment today.” I grip my chair. What does she mean? Did she warn us on Friday that we had one? I grabbed my pencil as she handed out the story and notebook paper. The question was on the smartboard, and she told everyone to write it down on our papers. “This is gonna be hard .. “ I mumble to myself. During the test, I stress out about giving my paper to the teacher. I give it to her and she tells me to read the entire story all over again. “I have to work harder than I did- GIRL!” I wanted to say. I read it again and hoped I got the correct answer. It was really hard to finish, and I got all sweaty and I looked like I just went dumpster diving. But anyways, I gave my papers to her and she took it. I took a deep breath. I had been very stressed, so I got up for some water. When I drank it, it felt like a wave of cold washed over me. I felt pretty relieved that I had some water, because I was pretty much tearing up. I got scared she would give it back to me again, and I would have to work hard AGAIN! Luckily, I didn’t get it back. The next morning, we had another test, surprise surprise. I wanted to yell out, “I AM DONE WITH THESE DARN TESTS!” but I just sighed and I started to write the question down on my paper. I tried to get it done fast, so it could be over with, but when I turned it in, she handed it back to me. “I shouldn’t have rushed .. “ I thought. I bit my nails super low, it’s a habit whenever I’m nervous or stressed. I took deep breaths, and worked slowly. I built up courage to ask a question about the test, and she told me, “You have to figure out the main idea if you want to find the problem,” but that still helped. When I felt as if it was good enough, I turned it in, scared. She graded it and left me. Phew! I was hoping she would take it. I was getting more hope and courage by the day. On Thursday, I had missed it. So on Friday, I had to take my final assessment. She was going to give us two days to work on it, but I missed the first day, so I had only one day. During the test, I hadn’t really felt prepared. I had missed a day and now only had one day to work on the biggest assessment in the week. “Okay,guys. This is your final assesment.” She said. While the test was happening, I had worked really hard, erasing my words I thought weren’t good. I was super scared. Like biting-my-nails-until they-bleed level (not really) scared. I thought if it weren’t good enough ... then would I have to do it on monday? Would it be sent home for homework? But instead of thinking, I looked around. I saw my other classmates- stressing. The same as me! Some were putting their hands thru their hair, and some others were making faces that looked like distress in school. I wondered .. “Does everyone else also stress ... ?” I now know that I’m not the only one stressing here. This test was grueling for everyone. So I gathered more courage to start writing. When I thought it was good, I turned it in. She took it, and didn’t come back. I knew she had liked it. On Monday, she called on me to correct my assessments. My stomach churned. “Wait.. what? ... “ Everyone stared at me in a weird way. I felt super embarrassed. “No, wait, you’re good.” She called to me. I felt better, way better than when she called ON me.

Over that week and the last one, I used at least a whole container of hope and courage. During that test, I was really scared and stressed about my teacher not liking my work, so I used hope and courage by telling myself I will do good, and I’ll succeed. Basically words of affirmation! I learned that even if you’re stressing, and the problem is all around you, there is still something hiding within you- the solution.

El Examen

**Abdiel Sanchez, 4th Grade Bilingual
McNair Elementary**

Una vez que tuve esperanza en la escuela.

Un dia estaba tranquilo en mi escuela cuando mi maestra dijo”chicos es tiempo de que empecemos el examen”,yo estaba confundido porque nunca me dijeron nada entonces le dije a un amigo” bro que examen esta hablando la maestra” dije, mi amigo me dijo”bro la maestra nos dijo el lunes sobre el examen” yo estaba mas confundido cuando recorde que el lunes falte.

Cuando empez6 el examen me di cuenta de algo, ESTA EN INGLES,yo en ese tiempo yo no sabia ingles.

Mi maestra estaba caminando cerca de mi miro mi pantalla y me dijo” Abdiel veo que no pasas de la pregunta nueve”dijo y yo le dije”maestra puedes cambiar el examen a espafiol”por mala suerte mia mi maestra dijo un no moviendo su cabeza y se fue yo estaba devastado entonces me acorde de algo una estrategia para el ingles que me ayud6 para todo el examen, al final cuando el examen termino y nos dieron la calificaciones yo me SAQUE UNA A mis padres estaban orgullosos de mi nota.

En conclusion esto es una vez que tuve esperanza en la escuela.

.....

Hope and Courage

**Avery Marshall, 5th Grade
McNair Elementary**

If you were asked to use two words to describe me then the first two words that came to mind would probably not be courageous or hopeful, but sometimes when you try something new, it's scarier than anything you've ever done before. And this is one of the times I was both courageous, and hopeful.

Last year in fourth grade there were a lot of people in choir, I was one of them. If you were in choir last year then you'd know that the main goal was to make it to performance time sounding good. Like most choirs we needed people to try out for solos, when me and my friends heard this we were excited and signed up right away. But as soon as I wrote down my name I was overwhelmed with anxiety, meanwhile my friends were raving about the possible solos.

Soon enough it was time to try out. I had practiced and perfected although I was still overcome by anxiety, yet in the back of my mind I still wondered if I was good enough to get the solo. If I didn't then was all of this for nothing? Then he called my name. I walked up to the microphone and started to sing but then after just a few words the music stopped "next" the choir teacher called as I sat down next to my friends. They praised me but it didn't help that sometimes with friends they are able to lie about the truth to spare your feelings.

Two weeks later on a half day I was walking down the hallway to the water fountains when I saw the choir teacher standing there smirking. When I look on the wall I notice a paper. The paper was titled "Choir Soloists." I look closely at the list when suddenly I see my name, and practically run back to class and say very loudly "The choir soloists list is out!" people flood out of the classroom and crowd the sign. My friends and I look at each other. We all got solos, we were in this together.

Now we are in choir again this year and it's almost time to try out for solos, but this time I'll be ready. This time I won't get scared, because of my experiences. My friends and I took a risk but in the end it paid off, and we won against the odds.

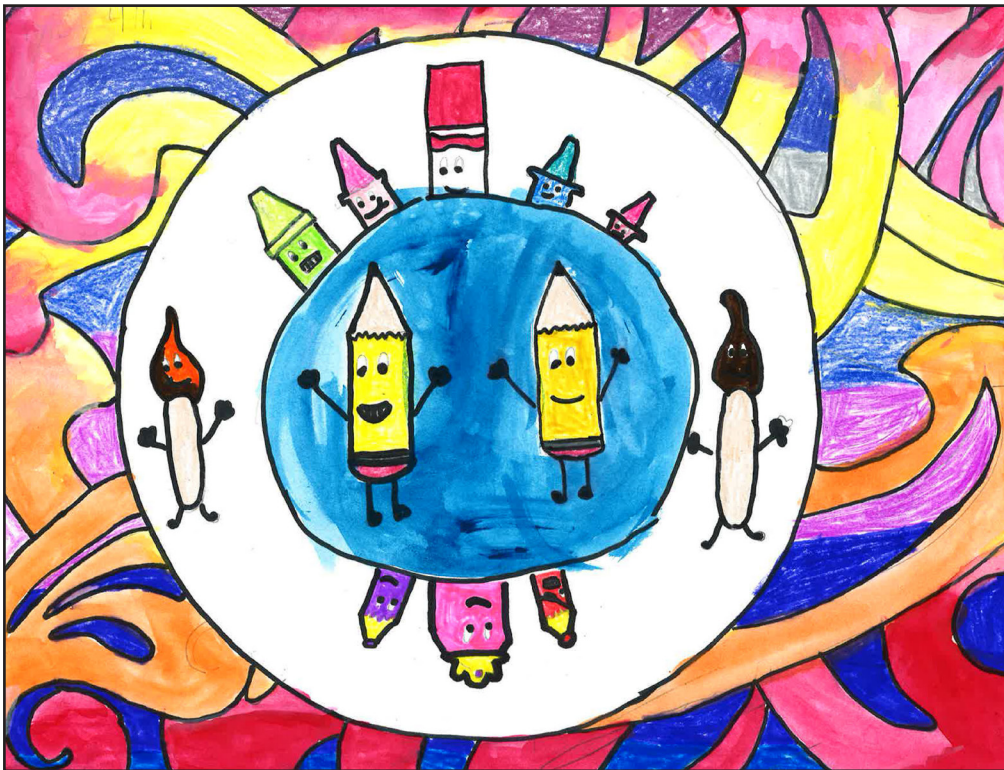
Hope and Courage

**Elias Martinez Hernandez, 5th Grade Bilingual
McNair Elementary**

Una vez tuve esperanzas de aprender inglés cuando llegué a Estados Unidos en segundo grado. Cuando llegué, sabía que era un idioma importante el inglés. Estaba por todas partes de la escuela claro no entendía nada de lo que decían. Entonces decidí algo, era tiempo de aprender inglés. Decidí meterme en clases de inglés poco a poco pude aprender pero no era suficiente así que tuve que meterme en clases todos los días todas las semanas todos los meses hasta años. Hasta decidí hablar con personas que solo sabían inglés eso era bueno para mí. Además lo necesitaba para cuando ande en secundaria eso sería difícil para mí. Pero no imposible para mí y ahora me sentía bien de lo que sabía y lo que aprendí a lo largo ahora se hablar un poco de inglés. Entiendo mucho más a las personas que conozco o que veo. Claro no es fácil aprender inglés pero se que si sigo así aprendere mas hasta podría hablar pero solo pasa si sigo así ser bilingüe para mí y las personas. Con quien estoy en la escuela o en la calle incluso en los que no conozco en la escuela espero que algún día hablar inglés porque lo necesita mucho para otros grados y espero poder cumplir eso como otras personas de otros países como yo. Bueno espero cumplir lo que quiero para mí y seguir con las clases de inglés y el aprendizaje que mada la escuela e incluso afuera de la escuela.



**Ellie Kyrias, 5th Grade
McNair Elementary**



**Ryley Miller, 4th Grade
Nelson Elementary**

The time I did my first STAAR Test.

**Aiden Au, 5th Grade
Nelson Elementary**

Have you ever taken the STAAR Test? Because I certainly have and it was one of the most stressful times for me. But I didn't give up, I showed hope and courage, and actually did amazing! I showed that by taking my time throughout the test, going back to double check my work, and taking breaks between questions.

For my first reason, I showed hope and courage by taking my time throughout the test. During the STAAR, I was very stressed because I had never done a STAAR before. But the day before, I remember my mom saying "Make sure to take your time!" So I did, I took my time and got less stressed throughout the test!

Second, I showed hope and courage by going back to double check my work. After every question, I felt like it was wrong. So I figured that if I were to double check afterwards, then I would feel better. So after I answered my question, I would check it again and make sure it was right. So to conclude, when I got my scores for the test, most of my answers were right!

Lastly, I showed hope and courage by taking breaks between questions. When I would feel unsure about something during the test, I calmed down by taking a break, I would take slow, deep breaths. Then when I'm ready, I would focus back on my screen, and my mind would be refreshed and ready for the next question!

To sum all of this up, I showed hope and courage by taking my time throughout the test, going back to double check my work, and taking breaks between questions. This could be inspiring to young children and just to know, there is no need to be scared when it comes. Just take your time and you'll do great!



**Zayden Seshie, 5th Grade
Nelson Elementary**

Hope and Courage

Boden Passons, 4th Grade

Newton Rayzor Elementary

Have you ever run a whole mile? Well if you have, you know what it feels like and you know it takes courage. This is my experience with the mile in Rayzor Runners, a running club at my school.

We were getting ready to go out in front of all the parents. They were there to time us for the mile. We were super nervous to go, but we had time because there was a whole group going before us. There were two groups. The first group was to see how fast they can go and there were about five people in the first group. People counted down “five, four, three, two, one” and they set off. Titus and Keith were in the lead but Emery slowly and steadily caught up to them. When they were on their second lap, Emery was right next to Titus and Keith and they stayed like that for the whole lap. On their third lap, Emery started to get in front of them and they weren’t catching up to her! Emery was on her final lap but Titus and Keith got a kick and they were on her heels. But she didn’t give up and she was still barely in front of them. It was the last lap and it looked like they were sprinting. Titus and Keith were gaining on Emery and it was the last stretch. Everyone was either yelling “no way, she’s going to win” like they couldn’t believe it or “Go Emery”. Titus and Keith were right behind her, but she still won!

Now it was time for the second group to go, which was the one I was in. About twenty kids were in that group and it was crowded. This group was for the prediction run where before you pick a time and then whoever gets the closest to the time they predicted wins. so they counted down and we were off, I was in the front group and it was going pretty good in the first lap I was keeping up with everyone else in the section, but when I started the second lap I was still in the first group but I got a super bad cramp or as some people call it a side stitch so I slowed down a little bit. But it wasn’t about speed it was about timing so I was okay, by now I was about to finish my second lap but the cramp just kept hurting more and more,

It was extremely hard but I pushed through and somehow it started hurting less. So I was ready to keep on going and finally I was at the final lap, I was super tired but I knew that it was only one more lap so I started to slow down to match the time I predicted I could see the finish line and before I knew it I finished!

I had to wait for the others to finish before we did awards. I was so excited because I thought I did really well on predicting the time. Before I knew it everyone was finished so it was time to celebrate with the awards. The first medals went to the group that tried to run their fastest and the fastest girl award went to Emery, the fastest overall award also went to Emery, the second fastest overall went to Keith, the fastest third overall went to Titus. At least that’s what it was until they found out that Titus actually got second and Keith got third. He wasn’t upset and he showed good sportsmanship about it though. Now it was time for the prediction group. Third place was me! I was so excited that I got third and then they said second and it was my best friends Brooks and Finn.

I had so much fun with my friends we ate our popsicles and played tag. I was so glad that I did that mile even though it was hard, because I got to have fun after!

Hope and Courage

Lily Puyear, 5th Grade

Newton Rayzor Elementary

I have felt nervous and like I should give up if things get hard. It happens all the time but there are two things that help get me over the hard feelings. Hope and courage they’re like little voices in the back of your mind saying “you can do it don’t give up”. An actor named John Wayne once said “ Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway” that is one of my favorite quotes. I am going to tell you about a time where I had to use hope and courage to get over my fears.

I help Mrs.Born (Newton Rayzor’s librarian) with the school announcements. I did all the behind the scenes stuff for a month or two because I really liked it and it meant that I didn’t have to go on camera. Then I started holding the Texas and American flag when we did the pledge of allegiance. But Mrs.Born wanted me to go on camera to do the announcements. I couldn’t go in front of the whole school. What if I messed up and said the wrong thing? It would be embarrassing. At least that’s what I thought.

I finally decided to go on camera and announce. I was nervous of course but I used hope and courage to get through it. And I didn’t mess up at all! That doesn’t mean that I never mess up though. I mess up all the time but I just keep going. Reminding myself to keep on saddling up even though I might be scared to death.

So overall hope and courage help you get over the hard feelings like nervousness and embarrassment and if you just keep on trying you can achieve anything even if its just doing school announcements.

Hope and Courage

**Ricardo Soberanes Montano, 5th Grade Bilingual
Newton Rayzor Elementary**

Durante el tiempo que yo he estado en la escuela un momento donde demuestre fortaleza o esperanza fue en este año escolar, este año cambié de escuela y crearme ese fue un gran cambio para mi. Yo llevaba mucho tiempo en esa escuela y mis recuerdos también estaban allí pero ya nada de eso importa porque ya no estoy allí.

Nueva escuela es unos de los cambios que obviamente tuve que enfrentar, no conocía bien la escuela y el medio ambiente era extraño. No estaba acostumbrado para nada, sentía que era cuando se descubrió América era inexplorado desconocido y no quería estar allí para todo, algo que si me gustaba era que la escuela era nueva pero no era el asunto.

Nuevos compañeros es probablemente el mayor problema que me enfrente y para que sepan les voy a decir que no es nada fácil! No conocía a nadie, parecía que ni notaban mi existencia parecía que era un simple grano de arena en un enorme desierto, me sentía muy incómodo si alguien me veía me veían de una forma extraña y no me gustaba eso para nada. Mi primera interpretación fue con un niño con el que ya soy amigo pero esa simple palabra con la que me dijo me hizo sentir mejor.

Sobresalgo, en cada asunto lo supere y lo puedo decir con orgullo me hice amigo de muchos niños, me acostumbre a la nueva escuela, y aunque todavía extraño muchísimo mi escuela anterior representó con orgullo a estas increíbles escuelas, a cuales quiero mucho.



**Ian Ariza, 5th Grade
Newton Rayzor Elementary**



**Sayesha Nair, 4th Grade
Paloma Creek Elementary**



Harper Avila, 5th Grade
Paloma Creek Elementary

STARR Test Stress Out

Kenneth Wilson Younger, 4th Grade
Pecan Creek Elementary

One time in school when I showed resilience was when I was in 3rd grade. The summer before I was in 3rd grade I was so nervous about the STARR tests. We did practice tests about 1-2 months before the real thing, but the day that we took the STARR test I was stressed out of my mind! I wished I was prepared for what was going to happen, but I wasn't confident so I had to improvise.

The night before the STARR test I got a good rest, but I still felt tired. When I woke up the first thing I did was splash cold water on my face so I could wake up. It didn't work, so I had to go half asleep. When I got to school I went to the cafeteria, ate breakfast with my friends, and we walked to class to get ready for the test. It was just a class of 3rd graders with their anxiety level off of the chart. Minutes felt like hours, we had to start as soon as we unpacked our stuff. Once we started I was incredibly nervous to work, but as soon as I tried I did incredible. I was one of the last people to finish because I like to take my time on school work instead of trying to answer as fast as possible.

I was so happy when my parents told me I got an "M" on the math STARR test which stands for, "Masters". Instead of celebrating normally, like having a party or getting presents because of how hard I worked, I celebrated by playing soccer. I was so happy when I got the math test that when I was playing soccer I hit a really good goal against my 6'2 dad! My dad said he was really proud of me and that made me even more happy than I was before!

The STARR test was so stressful when I thought I wouldn't do well but since I tried my best I did good! Now I think I can do even better because I'm prepared and I am excited because I know I can do it. Even if I don't do well on the STARR this year I will try to do better next year, but if I do well again I will celebrate by playing soccer with my friends and family.

I am glad I did good because I can show an example of what listening in school can get you to. Even if you sometimes get distracted, just ask the teacher for help and they will help you understand the lesson. Don't forget, always try your best even if you don't believe in yourself. If you need to you can just take a quick break and that will help. That's how I did really well on the STARR test when I thought I would fail! So always remember to believe in yourself no matter how hard something is.



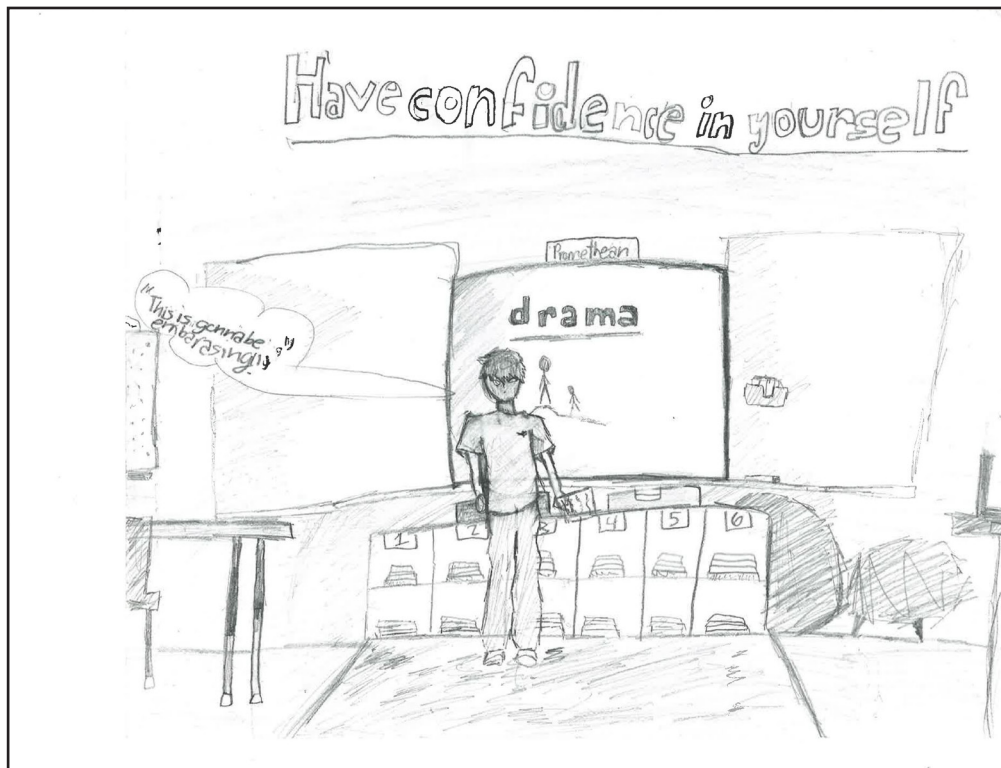
**Julian Lara-Cervantes, 4th Grade
Pecan Creek Elementary.jpg**

Hope and Courage in Soccer

**Jonathan Roark, 5th Grade Bilingual
Pecan Creek Elementary**

In second grade, soccer was the only thing that kids played, so I decided to join in and found that I really liked it. Two years ago there was a time that I showed hope and courage in soccer, when I tried out for G.O.A.L. I tried my hardest but didn't make the cut the first year.

One way I showed hope was when I practiced every day. When I played during recesses sometimes I couldn't play so I just watched. A way I showed courage was playing on a team outside of school to get better. Another way I showed hope was when I tried out the next year in fourth grade. But I also found out that all but one of the coaches had quit, moved, or had too much on their schedule. But even still the one coach left persevered through. I tried my hardest at tryouts, and five to nine days later my teacher told me to go to his room with four other kids that I later found also made the team. Robert Frost once said "dawn goes down to day." This means that the hard moments come and go like dawn is a hard moment but the sun rises and it's all good. We did pretty good that season, we won our first, second, third, fourth, and fifth game by at least three points. We thought we would win the final for the first time in our school's history. But during the semi-final it all fell apart. One of our players was sick, another two couldn't make it, one got stung on the neck by a wasp, and we lost in a penalty shoot out. I'm still on the team, and I didn't have to go to tryouts this year either. I hope we win this year, and I'll try my best to play my role, because I learned that there is always hope for better, just like the sun rising.



**Paolo Soriano, 5th Grade
Pecan Creek Elementary.jpg**

The Hope Equation

**Kaden Stiff, 5th Grade
Providence Elementary**

That day, with our regular teacher absent, felt different. A substitute, an older woman with a gentle face, took her place and, instead of a one-size-fits-all lesson, handed out different assignments tailored to each student's perceived skill level.

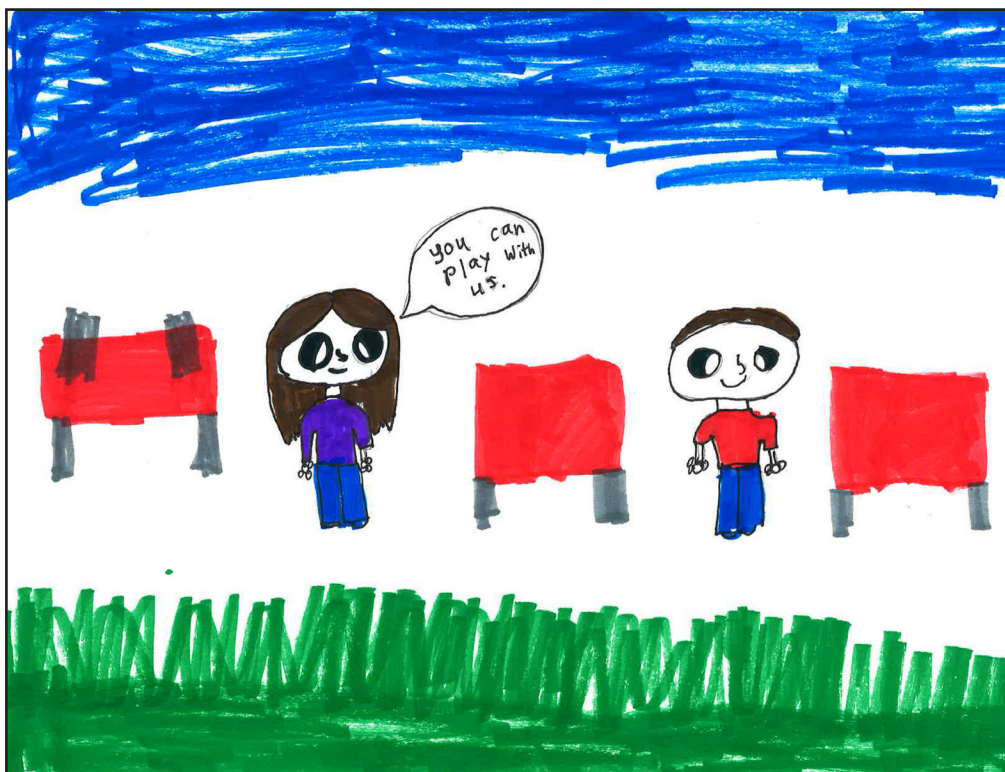
When I looked at my paper, my stomach dropped. Equations and symbols I had never encountered stared back at me, a language I didn't speak. It was an instant jolt of panic, a fear of inadequacy that I hadn't felt in a while. But in that moment, faced with the unknown, I decided to try. I refused to let the initial confusion defeat me. I tackled the first problem, and the second, and the third, even though I was mostly guessing, trying to apply any logic I could recall. My effort, no matter how clumsy, was my declaration that I wouldn't be beaten by a sheet of paper.

The substitute, seeing my struggle, approached my desk. She didn't scold me for not knowing:

She saw my effort. She sat down and, with a patient and thoughtful explanation, began to unravel the complex concepts. She didn't just give me the answer, she gave me the tools to find it myself. She taught me a new way of thinking, of approaching a problem. And in that moment, the symbols transformed from menacing hieroglyphics into logical steps. The puzzle pieces clicked into place, and I felt a sense of clarity and accomplishment that was deeply satisfying.

The next day, back with our regular teacher, I felt a nervous excitement. I had retained the knowledge the substitute had shared. When I received a similar problem, I didn't panic. I remembered the steps, the process, the new way of thinking. And I got it right. This wasn't just a lesson in math; it was a lesson in life. It taught me that fear of the unknown is natural, but it doesn't have to define your actions. It taught me that sometimes, the best learning happens when you're pushed outside your comfort zone. It taught me that the right kind of support can turn a moment of fear into a moment of triumph.

That day, that substitute, and that sheet of paper didn't just teach me a new equation—they taught me the value of hope, the power of a good teacher, and the quiet satisfaction of overcoming a challenge.



**Lily Bradley, 4th Grade
Providence Elementary**

Hope and Courage Essay

**Vivian Liikala, 4th Grade
Reeves Elementary**

On a fine day at Reeves I got here early, you know why? Because I had safety patrol! I was nervous because I didn't know what to do. I was with my sister. Then a little while later my sister's friend Rose walked up to us, and we walked up to the doors together.

Rose pushed a button to speak to the front office, then Rose said, "Hi, we're here for safety patrol." I was glad we had a friend that knew how to do safety patrol. We walked in and I knocked on the door to the office. I heard a beep then pushed the door open. There were other 4th graders, because the safety patrol was only for 4th graders. Unless there weren't enough 4th graders, then 5th grade would be here. I dropped my bag off with the other bags in the office. Then Rose grabbed a vest, me and my sister did too. A teacher called us out, and I was ready.

All of the safety patrol grabbed a large cone the size of us but a little bit smaller I felt my heart pounding in my chest as I walked out of the doors. The teacher told me where to put it, the cars were already here, I opened the car door that was near me and when a kid stepped out I closed the car door. I had done it! my first car opened, closed, and left. Up next I was ready, proudly ready. I had been courageous, I thought in my head!



**Rebecca Goodman, 4th Grade
Reeves Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Sebastian Layton, 5th Grade
Reeves Elementary**

I show courage every day on the rocket news team, whether it is typing the script and boldly sharing my ideas with my fellow newspeople. So let's start from the beginning, I was applying for the news team and I had a mini 1 page mini script written and a picture of the clouded tiger cat (which I was doing a segment on for my application not about the picture, but the cat.) and was performing the segment. I made two videos and showed hope that I would be in the news team, then the next week, to my joy, I got myself on the news team! The next day me, my best friend and another person were heading to the recording studio to record the news for the next day. This was my first time doing news! I was excited and kind of nervous that I would do something wrong.

The next day I went to record the news then I went to the classroom to watch myself on the announcements (It's not as vain as it sounds) to see how I did. Everybody was surprised to see me on the announcements and I was not used to seeing me in front of that board doing news, the teachers were congratulating me and saying I did good which was very nice of them. I was very happy that I could perform in front of everybody! Every day I was hoping the news could be our best story yet. At lunch we wrote the script (and sometimes I had to hustle to finish my food.) Soon, we all became good friends and were very agreeable with each other. Soon it was time to swap out with the other people and we went up on the stage to show them the ropes.

We soon had our second turn and I got a new job to do, the animator. I know this is NOT a movie, and we do not animate our videos. To simply explain my job I got to make silly "board glitches" and we had a silly thing where one of the people did not see the glitch. Like that person in those horror movies who thinks everybody else is going insane and having hallucinations. It might be a bit cheesy, but cheesy is my middle name! (my middle name is actually not cheesy, but it's my choice to tell my real middle or not too though.) We all got really confident in the news team, that's how we keep ourselves from wanting to quit from shyness. Soon it was time to hand over our turn but soon we will go again. This is why confidence and having hope and courage really pays off in my case, and you will always remember it pays off to have courage too!



**Anna Hunter, 5th Grade
Reeves Elementary**



**Irene Avevalo, 4th Grade
Rivera Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Emily Matute, 5th Grade Bilingual
Rivera Elementary**

Alguna vez has tenido que proteger a tu hermano chiquito cuando tenías 7 años? Cuando estábamos esperando el bus una niña se estaba acercando a mi hermano chiquito y le estaba diciendo cosas malas cuando yo vi eso fui donde ellas y le dije a la niña “puedes dejar a mi hermano porfavor” ella no me respondió solo le susurro algo en el oído a mi hermano.Después el bus llegó y todos nos subimos yo y mi hermano nos sentamos juntos y le pregunte “que te dijo la niña” el me respondió “nada” me quede callada callada todo el camino.Cuando llegamos a la escuela nos estábamos bajando del bus la niña vino donde nosotros y me empujo a mi y a mi hermano yo ayudé a mi hermano a levantarse del suelo y le dije a la niña “ya para de molestarnos si sigues le voy a decir a ms.melendres”ella no me hizo caso solo me dio la espalda.Entramos a la escuela y fui a dejar a mi hermano a su clase y vi a la niña y le dije “que haces en el pasillo de los kindergartens y ella dijo “nada” cuando me fui a mi clase no estaba preocupada porque la niña no estaba en la misma clase que mi hermano entonces me olvide de todo hasta que...BOOM me toca subirme al bus y veo a mi hermano llorando junto a la niña que lo molestaba fui donde ellos estaban me arrodille enfrente de mi hermano y le dije “estas bien que te hizo”me levante y mire a la niña y le dije “ya te dije que pares por favor” ella se hizo la inocente y dijo “ yo le pegue a tu hermano porque me estaba pegando y diciendo cosas malas y ademas me quito mi asiento” yo ya me había cansado de que así que fui donde donde el busero y le pregunté “puedo hablar con mi maestra”el busero lo pensó un rato y dijo “si claro no hay problema”fui donde mi maestra y le conté todo lo que sucedió. Al día siguiente hablaron con la niña y la suspendieron por 4 días y le hablaron a sus papás por darle un puñetazo a mi hermano y a partir de ese día nos dejó de molestar.

La lección es: nunca te dejes hacer cosas malas y se valiente.

Hope and Courage

Mia Williams, 5th Grade
Rivera Elementary

Have you had to show courage? I have. The star test was hard at first but then it was exciting. This is my story....

I had to do the star test, it was the hardest thing we had to do in the fourth grade and I didn't believe in myself and I was going to get a bad grade. But then I got a great teacher that used to push us to reach success and he explained it so good but tomorrow was the star test day. I didn't believe I was going to pass my star test But I got into small groups, tutoring, and did my homework and also practiced at home. During my star test the star questions were hard and easy. The last couple of questions were really hard and I was stressing and worrying and comparing myself to other people and I started tearing up, I took a break and took a deep breath. After I finished the star test, I didn't feel good, luckily the teacher let us draw so that took my mind off of things. A few months later school was over it was summer I went on my ipad and searched my computer number to find out my results and I clicked on star test results and I got Masters and Meets masters on my reading and meets on math I was so happy and excited I told my mom she was happy and my dad. I learned to always believe in yourself and never ever doubt.



Elizabeth Vu, 5th Grade
Rivera Elementary



**Vivian Richards, 4th Grade
Sam Houston Elementary**

The Interview

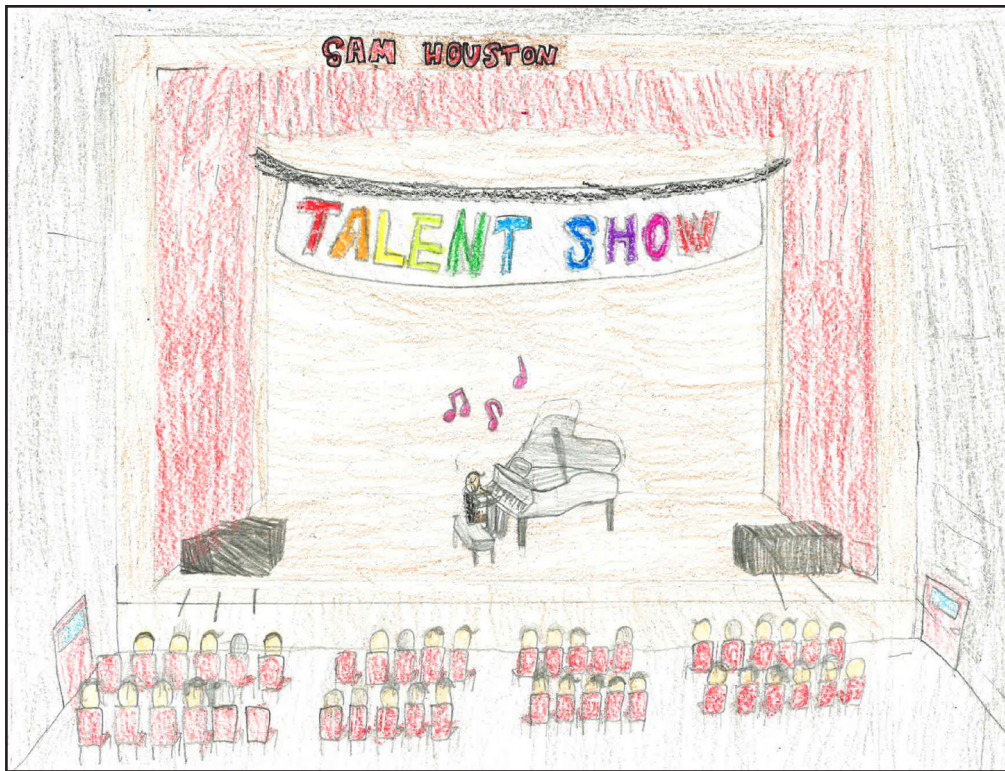
**Andi Cabrera, 5th Grade
Sam Houston Elementary**

One time I showed courage in school was when I was interviewed for the student leadership team program (SLT).

When I was in fourth grade, I wanted to be in SLT, and people that wanted to get in had to be interviewed. I was very nervous the night before. I picked out the best outfit I had, and went to school the next morning. During my science class, the SLT assistant leader would call people one by one to be interviewed. When they called my name, as I got up from my seat, I noticed my legs were a tiny bit shaky. However, I took two deep breaths and told myself "I can do this".

The interview went pretty well. They asked me simple questions, like, "If there is a problem at school, what do you do?", and, "Why do you want to be in SLT?" I answered all questions calmly, and it paid off! A month later, I got a note saying I was accepted into SLT.

This shows that even if you are nervous, as long as you have a good mindset and are as calm as possible, you can get through anything!



Jayden Kim, 5th Grade
Sam Houston Elementary



Makenna Smith, 4th Grade
Sandbrock Ranch Elementary



**Ashuthosh Maradihalli, 5th Grade
Sandbrock Ranch Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Zayahna Joan Katende, 4th Grade
Savannah Elementary**

First, I got up, and did my mourning routine. Today is a big day. I was ready but nervous for what was about to happen today. My mom drove me to school and wished me good luck because I'd need it. I got to school and went to my classroom. I sat at my turned upside down desk. I waited and waited to take a bathroom break until everyone was here. Then it was time to start.

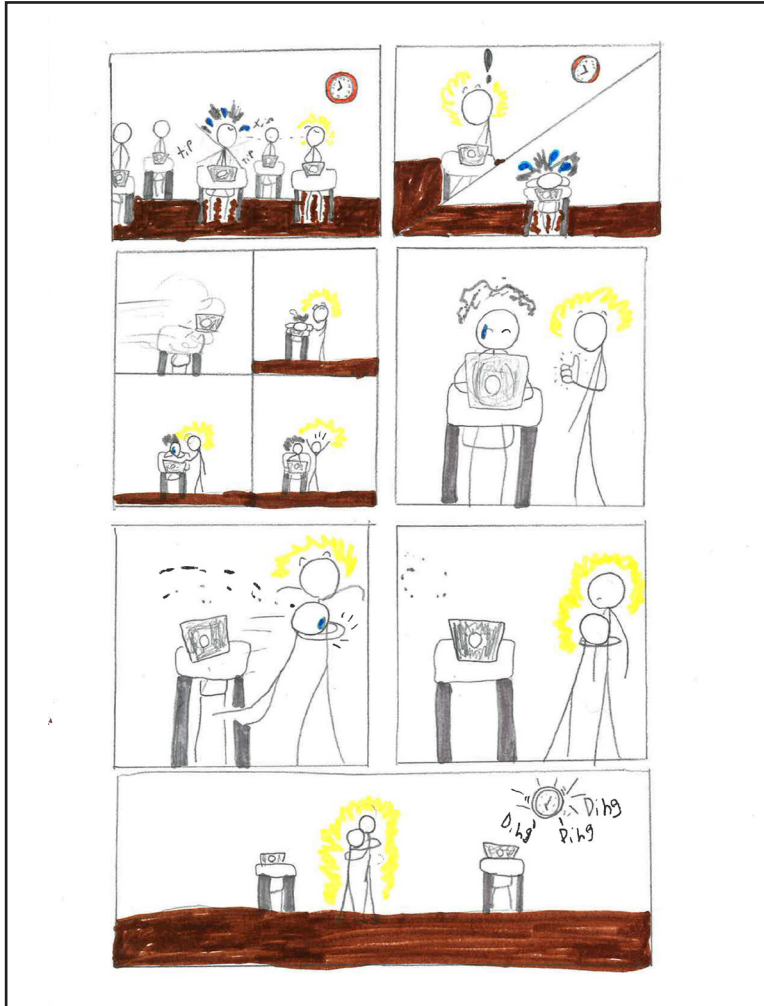
Next, I opened my Chromebook with hope to do well on the reading Staar test. I followed the instructions, took a big deep breath, said all my prayers and said to myself, "I can do this" I started, question after question essay after essay. The questions felt like they'd never stop!!! I thought it would take a year but it didn't. It took 3 to 4 hours to finish for me.

Then, I was so very tired but I had to keep pushing and working. I was almost there. I could really feel it and hear it calling my name like this, "Zayahna you're almost to your freedom!" said an encouraging voice.

Finally, I was on my last question, then I was at my freedom like the encouraging voice said. Then everyone else was done then it was time for lunch and recess. After that we had a snack and partied until it was time to go home. That's my story when I showed hope and courage. Also I got a great grade and my parents were so proud of me and still are. The moral of the story is that believing yourself is important especially when doing something scary and something you don't want to do.



**Jenesis Johnson, 4th Grade
Savannah Elementary**



**Lincoln Brooks, 5th Grade
Savannah Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Kelly Bossenbroek, 4th Grade
Shultz Elementary**

Hope and courage are actually pretty similar. When you are being hopeful, you are thinking about the positive outcome. Even when doing this for someone else you are having hope for them. On the other hand, courage is when you overcome a challenge, push through, or go through the learning pit. You could even say courage is alike to determination. I showed hope and a bit of courage helping someone understand a concept on their worksheet.

“Oh yes,” I whisper to myself. I’m on the fifth question of my math worksheet about fractions. (There are only five questions.) Though the person next to me is on question one. I can’t help but hear her mouthing, “This is so hard to understand, help!” I then finish my answer and quickly check it, next I set the paper into the turn-in bin. I am now ready to help as much as I can! Slowly turning to my right, I whisper in a low voice, “Hi, did you need any help with your worksheet?” “Um, yeah. Could you help me a bit now?” she answers in a polite voice. “Of course I can,” I respond. “I’ll be right back.” I go and grab my math journal, then begin flipping through it, till I find the page about fractions and the steps to draw or solve them. Out of a plastic drawer, I grab a piece of notebook paper.

Next I point to the first step about splitting fractions. “Is this part troubling you?” I ask. “Yeah,” she answers politely. Then I grabbed my blank piece of notebook paper and began drawing a circle with a line in the middle. “This,” I say “Is a fraction, right, do you recognize it?” “Yeah that’s a half,” she responds. Lastly I draw the steps on how to draw the half. I do this for all of them. When I’m finished, I have a smile as big as an elephant’s ear on my face. Though before I grab my computer, I don’t forget to say, “You got this!” “Yeah right”, she responds, and I walk away.

This firstly shows hope because I am helping someone with their work and hoping that this is enough to help her figure out this minor misunderstanding. Also before I leave I don’t forget to tell her, “You got this!” This is a word of encouragement that helps push the hope that she had. This piece could also show courage because I had to have courage to go up and ask her if she needed any help. She said yes and I was brave enough to move on. All in all this shows courage meaning being able to move on, and hope being able to think of the positive things on a challenging problem.

Hope and Courage

**Mia Sequera, 4th Grade Bilingual
Shultz Elementary**

¿Alguna vez has intentado algo nuevo que se te hizo difícil pero fuiste valiente y no te rendiste. Un día estábamos en la escuela, y todos estábamos muy emocionados porque ese día empezaban los clubs. Había muchas opciones pero yo escogí tejer. me pareció interesante y aunque estaba nerviosa de no hacerlo bien tuve la valentía de intentarlo pensé “siempre es bueno intentar cosas nuevas y nunca rendirse”.

El día se me hizo muy largo. Pero después del recreo llegó el momento. Primero entramos al salón y buena suerte para mi porque mi maestra era la que organizaba el club de tejer. Así que me alivié un poco porque iba a tener más confianza porque iba a tener más confianza con ella que con otra maestra.

Cuando el club empezó yo estaba feliz la maestra nos dio hooks, son los palitos que se usan para agarrar y trenzar el estambre. La maestra nos enseñó a hacer la bolsita. Es muy fácil primero haces tu nudo, después haces dos trenzas y vas a meter tu hook por la tira de arriba después le pones más estambre, lo pasas y así sucesivamente.

Al final del día yo estaba muy feliz porque aprendí algo nuevo y aunque me costó un poco aprenderlo no me rendí, fui valiente, e hice todo mi esfuerzo.



Wyatt Callahan, 4th Grade
Shultz Elementary

Hope and Courage

Lucas Tutt-Barrio, 5th Grade
Shultz Elementary

Have you ever wanted to give up on something because it was too hard? Once at a baseball game, the score was tied and I was on third base. There were only four minutes left. I needed to score to win the game. My heart was beating hard like it was trying to come out of my body. I was nervous. I had to have hope even though it would be hard.

It was a hot fall Thursday. The day of my playoff baseball game. The score was 4 to 4. I was on third base. My heart was pumping hard. I just needed one run to win the game. This was going to be hard. My opposing team was using their most accurate pitcher. I was more nervous than I ever was. My team's chance to go to the championship was on my shoulders. Just like I knew, the ball wouldn't go past the catcher. Time was running out, I felt like giving up, but then a miracle happened. The ball went about 6 or 7 feet behind the catcher. I knew this was my time to shine. I sprinted as fast as my legs could go to home plate. Right when the catcher was about to tag me out, I made a bold choice and slid. "SAFE," yelled the umpire. When he said that, I felt like a superhero saving a city from aliens. Everyone started cheering. When I got back to the dugout, all of my teammates were screaming and giving me high fives. My team eventually won the game and moved on to the championship game.

That day, I learned to never lose hope, even when things seem tough. Because of my "heroic" slide home, my team won the game. I am very proud that I didn't lose hope and tried my luck at going for the winning run.



**Jerusha Jacobson, 5th Grade
Shultz Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Hensley Smith, 4th Grade
Stephens Elementary**

One time I showed hope and courage was when it was the first day of school in 3rd grade. I walked into the classroom and then I was really nervous. I did not want to go in. My thoughts said do not go in! But I said no and I went into the classroom. I had enough courage to go into that classroom. I was scared but I did it anyway. I had enough hope to go into that classroom. Even though I did not want to, I still did with the courage of my parents and me! Another time when I had hope and courage was when I moved from an apartment to a real house. I was so excited but scared for a change. I really been waiting for this moment. I would still get my own bedroom and my own bathroom but I was sad too. My baby brother had taken his first steps in that apartment. I did not know that I would lose so many memories and good times. It's hard to move houses even when you had so many memories and that's the time I had hope and courage.



**Ezra Owens, 4th Grade
Stephens Elementary**

Courage

**Violet Aguirre, 5th Grade
Stephens Elementary**

A time in school where I used courage was during the STAAR test because taking a test is generally a bit scary, but the STAAR test is intimidating. Why you may ask is it sounds like your whole life depends on it's like "Why be preparing from the beginning of the school year just to fail at the end?"

An example of how I showed courage during the STAAR test is when there was a hard question, instead of staying stuck on that question I tried my best. If I still didn't understand it, I would flag it and move onto the next question and try harder if a difficult question comes back.

Another example of how the STAAR test made me show courage was that we could not raise her hands to ask the teacher a question we had to solve it out on our own and we only had six or seven hours to complete it and some of the words, I didn't really know what they were, but I kept trying to understand some words I understood some words after trying, but some words I kind of understood them.

My last example of how I showed courage doing the STAAR test is that I had a lot of pressure to succeed and do really well. During the STAAR test that pressure made me feel a bit nervous, but even with that I worked hard on every question. I tried my best and made sure not to finish too quickly but not too slowly, so I wouldn't get a bad outcome on the STAAR test.

In conclusion, I hope that this essay helps you have courage on the next challenging thing you do and yes, the STAAR test might be a little bit intimidating but if you have the courage to face it, you can do amazing on STAAR.



**Atlas Rios, 5th Grade
Stephens Elementary**

Hope and Courage

**Anaya John, 4th Grade
Union Park Elementary**

One time when I showed hope or courage at school was when I had to take the STAAR test but I didn't have hope in me to take the test so I started to overthink that I would fail the test and I got so stressed that I was gonna fail that I didn't want to go to school for a whole week ! But when the tests came around I got a little more courage to take the test and it turns out when I got the results back I mastered the test and I got a really good score and from now on I have more hope to do hard tasks.

This moment of hope or courage taught me to not think " oh I can't do this " or " oh I suck at this" because you have to try things instead of assuming that you're stupid or you can't do this", that will get you nowhere .

It is important for everyone to have hope or courage in school, or in life, because if you say your whole life oh I can't do this, that will get you nowhere.



**Savannah Siccama, 4th Grade
Union Park Elementary**

The Courageous 4th Grader

**Angelina Tineo, 5th Grade
Union Park Elementary**

Have you ever been bullied or seen bullying? Here's a story of how I stood up for myself and a friend. I showed courage once by standing up for myself and another in the situation of being bullied. When I was bullied, I was being bullied alongside a friend of mine in our art class.

Me and my friend, who we will call Jake. Now, Jake and I were good friends and were both in choir. Since we had a choir performance coming up, Jake and I started practicing together. Yes, it was the wrong place and wrong time to do it, but we had to be ready. As we were practicing our singing and fixing our vocal mistakes, a girl who we will call Madiese came up to us and started saying rude comments. "You guys should stop singing here, it isn't choir class, your voices suck anyway." My friend Jake, had quickly responded with "We know, but we still need to practice for choir to be perfect." Madiese probably was not expecting us to snap back, but we did. "Your voices still suck. How did you get into choir either way?" She taunted.

The thing is, me and Madiese had some history. We used to be good friends, yet after fourth grade, the string between us kept pulling and pulling further apart. Until it snapped. Then she became my biggest hater of them all. She had been constantly bullying me, over and over, taunting me for no apparent reason. Yet that day was when I snapped. "How did you get into choir either way?" She said, rolling her eyes. "Oh, I don't know, maybe because we can actually sing?" I responded. "It isn't choir class, so maybe stop that singing." Me and Jake did not want to deal with this further, so we just walked away and told a teacher. After the teacher gave Madiese a warning, Madiese looked flabbergasted. Her jaw hung low, looking like it would have fallen off by the way it was hanging.

Her eyes widened as she looked at me and Jake. "I didn't even do anything though! I was telling them nicely to stop singing but they didn't listen to me!" She was whining and arguing so loud she sounded like she was in court fighting against her case. Things later got heated as she started telling the whole class of what we had done, trying to get everyone on her side. Her lips tightened as she started spouting out nonsense about me and Jake. But there was one thing that made it all go down in flames. "Your family doesn't even-" She stopped as she noticed the teacher was right behind her. "My family doesn't even what?" I said, my eyes glaring so hard at her I could've burnt a hole through her skull. "Let me guess. You were gonna say my family doesn't even love me, right?" I said. "N-No... I wasn't" Madiese said. "No, no, tell me. Were

you going to say that my family doesn't love me?" I cocked my head slightly at her amusing words. "Well, I wasn't-" "No, no!" I interrupted. "You know what you meant. But jokes on you, because my dad would fight for his life to save me, my sister would sacrifice herself for me, and the only reason why my mom always works here is because SHE JUST WANTS TO BE WITH ME!!" I yelled, the sound of my voice being nearly deafening. The entire class almost went quiet, with Madiese staring deep into my eyes, as if she wanted to see what my brain was thinking. Tears slowly started bubbling at the rim of my eyes, but I held back, standing my ground. Jake stared at me, shocked as if I just committed a crime, but that shocked expression slowly turned into a cheeky grin, as he started patting my back and congratulating me for my act. The tears slowly fell down my face, but I did not make a sound as Madiese walked away scoffing.

After that she had left me alone and hadn't laid an eye on me after that. I don't know about Madiese now, but she left me and my friend alone for good! So, it turns out if you stand up for yourself and have courage, you too can do anything. Although, I do hope that they have changed for the better. And although I did have a bad history with that person, I do hope the best for them, and I hope that no other people will have to go through what I did.



**McKenna Hicks, 5th Grade
Union Park Elementary**

Valentía

**Ashly Fuenmayor, 4th Grade Bilingual
W.S. Ryan Elementary**

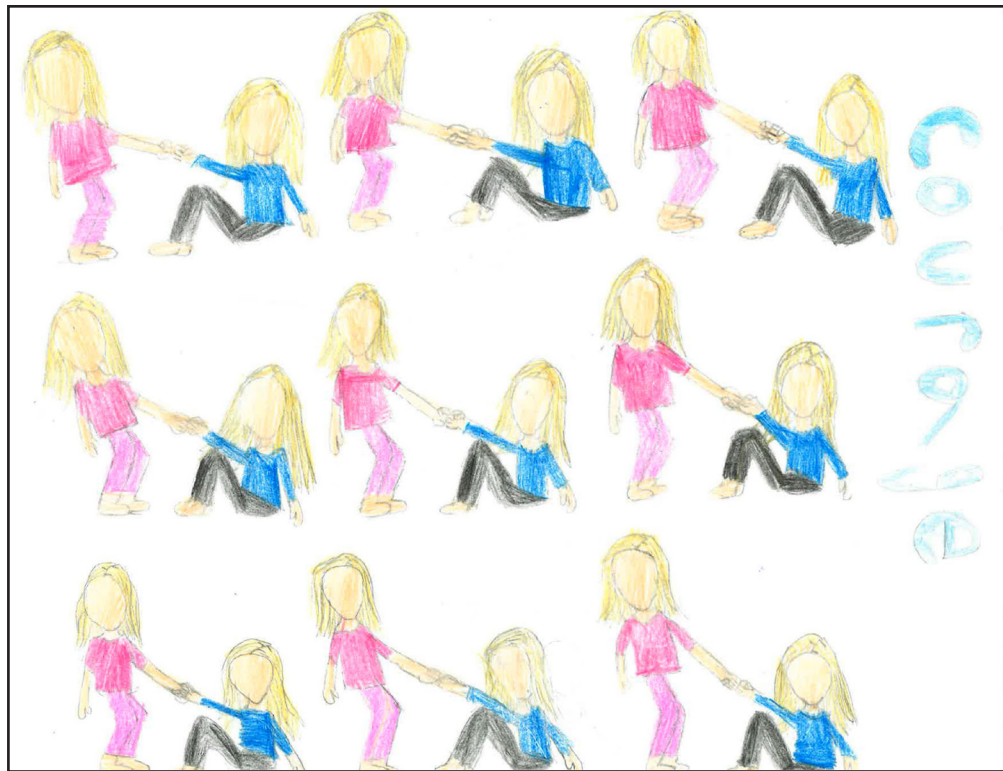
Yo fui valiente cuando pase por 2 países para venir acá a w.s ryan y me sentí muy feliz e hice muchos amigos pero unos se tuvieron que ir.

Otra vez cuando tuve que ser valiente fue cuando pase por la selva para llegar a Denton, Texas. Tuve que dejar a mi familia para estar aquí. con tiempo hice una familia muy muy grande con mis nuevos amigos y maestras.

Para hacer muchos amigos tienes que ser muy valiente. Pasó una vez cuando yo le dije a la maestra que unos de mis amigos.

Le estaba pegando a un niño y fui valiente porque si tuve miedo pero quería proteger al niño.

Ser valiente a veces puede ser difícil. Pero tuve valentía cruzando países, haciendo nuevos amigos y ayudando a mis compañeros en la escuela.



Adeline Quirk, 4th Grade
W.S. Ryan Elementary

Coming To W.S. Ryan

Pushkal Viswanatha, 5th Grade
W.S. Ryan Elementary

Have you ever moved to a new school and have shown courage? Well this is the story of me moving to a new school called W.S. Ryan. At 7:25 AM, I started putting on my backpack, finished my breakfast, and said, "I'm ready dad!" to my dad. My dad replied, "Okay Pushkal, I am coming," Then, in a nervous mood, I hopped in my car and slammed the door shut. Right before starting the car, my dad asked, "Are you ready for your first day of school, Pushkal?" I replied "Yes," and my dad started the car and we soon got on Ryan Rd.

Then, I started worrying how my teachers would treat me and how I would make new friends. My stomach was literally bubbling out of worry! I was thinking about how I would get through this day—"Pushkal, bye! Enjoy your first day of school!" My dad said. I replied with "Bye dad!". I examined the exterior and saw the chocolate brown bricks with the arched roof outside. It was actually pretty nice! I began to walk into the building as a teacher greeted me, "Good morning!" I thought that the teachers were pretty nice and said, "Good Morning!"

Then I entered the building and saw the beautiful banner and decorations lined up across the walls. I read the signs and started walking through the hallway and searched for my classroom. Then immediately, I saw a sign that said 2nd-3rd hallway, and started walking through it since I was in 2nd grade. I walked and walked, and saw Mrs. Forsyth's classroom with some vibrant decorations on the door. I was feeling very jittery, so I took a deep breath and walked into the classroom.

As soon as I walked in, I saw all the great decorations, and Mrs. Forsyth greeted me with "Hello Pushkal!", So I said "Hello Mrs. Forsyth, good morning!" Next, she showed me my cubby and desk, so I gently put my backpack in my cubby and took a seat on my chair. There were 3 other students seated at the same desk as me. As I was thinking that my teacher was really nice, but how my peers would treat me, they said "Hi!, what's your name?" I replied "Hi! My name is Pushkal, how about yours?" They all told me their names. I soon became friends with everyone and the school year went really well. This was also a time I also realized moving to a new school might be scary at first, but things will get sorted out as you move through the school year and showing courage is important.



Penelope Schnurr, 5th Grade
W.S. Ryan Elementary

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It's okay to try new things

Camila Dominguez Palacios, 5th Grade
W.S. Ryan Elementary

“Ayy noo Jennifer im so nervous..!”

Do you wanna know what happened next at that time...?

One of the times that I showed hope and courage was when I was in fourth grade. When I was at Expo class, I had to participate in presenting a project in front of all my classmates. By the way there were a lot of fourth graders in my class, like more than 20 students. The project was about how big my intelligence was.

First, when I was at my regular class I was just working on a math problem before my teacher needed to come get me, my teacher told me and my friend Jennifer this, “Nicole and Jennifer please get ready for Expo!”. Then I said “Okay”. After all, me and Jennifer went to the expo class with all our classmates from other classes. When we were walking to the Expo class I almost tripped because of how nervous I was. By the way, two days ago before we needed to present the project, I edited a lot of my project because I wanted to leave a good impression on all my Expo class.

Then, when we got to the Expo class I was literally so nervous... That my hands and my feet were shaking like a lot...! Also, because of how nervous I was I felt like the class was so hot. Then, before we needed to present the project, the teacher told us to make the final details so It could be ready to present it. However, when the teacher was talking I was thinking that I didn't need to edit it more because I knew that I did it perfectly. Then, after the teacher told us that we needed to do that, I was just practicing how to present it so I wouldn't be nervous anymore. But I don't even know why I thought that it's okay to be nervous when you're gonna try something new. After that I did the presentation to all my classmates and teacher, but now that I have to show a project to my classes I'm not scared anymore.

In conclusion, now you know what happened next when I told my friend Jennifer that I was nervous to present my Expo project, but she was also nervous about it. So one of the times that I showed hope and courage was when I had to present a project to my Expo Class even though I was super super nervous. I learned that it's okay to learn new things even though you're scared, nervous, sad or even mad because you need to present a project. However, it's okay to try to participate in learning new languages by presenting your intelligence. Finally, now that I present a project in front of my classes, I'm not scared anymore.

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