

# NIE Newspaper in Education Student Contests

Write a Column/Write a feature Contest

3rd Grade Writing Contest

Cover Design Contest

Design an Ad Contest

Classic Comic Contest

Photography Contest



Talents of the students within The Indiana Gazette readership area are featured in both written and artistic form within this special student supplement marking the celebration of Newspaper in Education Month 2022. It is a product made possible by The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch advertisers, hundreds of teachers and thousands of students. Like the newspaper, it brings a real world situation to the classroom.

The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch  
NIE Student Supplement,  
Thursday, March 31, 2022.

# The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch *congratulate* all the NIE contest winners



## *What's inside*

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As this year's Newspaper in Education contests come to a close,  
we would like to offer a sincere thank you to everyone who made this publication possible:

- **All of the participating schools:** Apollo-Ridge Elementary, Ben Franklin Elementary, Blairsville Elementary, Calvary Baptist Academy, East Pike Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Elderton Elementary, Homer-Center Elementary and Jr. Sr. High schools, Horace Mann Elementary, Indiana County Technology Center, Indiana Jr. and Sr. High schools, Learning Tree Homeschool Fellowship, Northern Cambria Elementary and High schools, Penns Manor Elementary and Jr. Sr. High schools, Purchase Line Elementary and Jr. Sr. High schools, Rayne Elementary, River Valley Cyber, Middle and High schools, Saltsburg Elementary, Seeds of Faith Christian Academy, St. Bernard school, United Elementary and Jr. Sr. High schools, WA McCreery Elementary and West Shamokin Jr. Sr. High school.

- All of the teachers and homeschool parents

- Each of the more than 3,000 students who participated

- **Special thanks to:** Katelyn Marsh from Penns Manor Elementary, Tracy Anderson from Eisenhower Elementary, Krista Templeton and Heather Hartman from Northern Cambria Elementary, Bethany Genchur from Homer-Center Elementary and Sara Grantz from the Learning Tree Homeschool Fellowship for their extra efforts with the Design-an-Ad program

- The many office support staff at each of the schools for helping through the process and communication between the teachers and Gazette staff

- Each of the participating businesses

A project of this magnitude is not possible without each of you and your time, dedication and cooperation. We hope to work with everyone again next year.

Thank you very much,

*The Indiana Gazette & Blairsville Dispatch staff*

## NIE program recognizes youths' skills

The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch are celebrating the 37th year of publication of this Newspaper in Education Student Supplement, which highlights the talents of local students from kindergarten through Grade 12 in a variety of contests.

All of the work included within has been created by students in our readership area. The kindergartners and first- and second-graders are asked to complete the last frame of a comic strip that has been developed by one of

our Gazette artists.

At the third-grade level, students are asked to write a short essay paragraph on a topic that changes yearly.

Fourth- through sixth-grade students design ads that are sponsored by local businesses, and at the high school level, students have the opportunity to showcase their writing abilities through an opinion-writing contest and a feature-writing contest.

High school students also compete in a

photography contest that includes the best feature, sports and news photographs, as well as a contest for cover design.

The goal of The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch's NIE program is to reinforce a positive lifetime reading habit in students by engaging them in a life skill that will be beneficial to them into adulthood.

It also provides them with an opportunity to have their work published, something few school-age students can pride themselves on.

## *On the cover*

Katlyn White, an 11th-grade student at Indiana County Technology Center, created the winning artwork featured on the cover of the 2022 Newspaper in Education Student Supplement.

# Design-an-ad winners

Area students in grades 4, 5 and 6 designed advertisements for 58 local businesses. The advertisements were then taken to the business owners, who chose the ones that appear in today's special section. Sales representatives from The Indiana Gazette's and The Blairsville Dispatch's advertising department then selected these winners from each grade.



**NEVAEH LACKEY**  
Blairsville Elementary  
Grade 4



**JACKSON SHARBAUGH**  
Horace Mann Elementary  
Grade 4



**EVELYN COLLIER-BUCK**  
Eisenhower Elementary  
Grade 4



**ADAM STEIN**  
Purchase Line Elementary  
Grade 5



**GAVIN HENIGIN**  
Homer-Center Elementary  
Grade 5



**CARTER SCHWEISSING**  
Eisenhower Elementary  
Grade 5



**NORA POLLOCK**  
W.A. McCreery Elementary  
Grade 6



**BLAKE GROOM**  
W.A. McCreery Elementary  
Grade 6



**LAINY CHVERCHKO**  
Northern Cambria  
Middle School  
Grade 6

# A list of this year's winners

The following is a list of winners in this year's Newspaper in Education contests featured in this supplement:

## COVER DESIGN

Katlyn White, Grade 11, Indiana County Technology Center

## COMICS

**KINDERGARTEN:** Josie Prushnok, St. Bernard Regional Catholic School, first; Abigail Edwards, Calvary Baptist Academy, second; Lilly Depner, United Elementary

**GRADE 1:** Madelyn Kosgei, St. Bernard Regional Catholic School, first; Addison Blough, Blairsville Elementary, second; Jaelyn Hickok, Northern Cambria Elementary, third

**GRADE 2:** Zoey Nicholson, Ben Franklin Elementary, first; Jude Rensko, United Elementary, second; Cameron Kline, Purchase Line Elementary, third

## THIRD-GRADE WRITING CONTEST

Allison Spencer, Purchase Line Elementary, first; Garrett Mortimer, Calvary Baptist Academy, second; Zarya Sandeen, Learning Tree Homeschool Fellowship, third

## DESIGN-AN-AD CONTEST

**GRADE 4:** Nevaeh Lackey, Blairsville Elementary, first; Jackson Sharbaugh, Horace Mann Elementary, second; Evelyn Collier-Buck, Eisenhower Elementary, third

**GRADE 5:** Adam Stein, Purchase Line Elementary, first; Gavin Henigin, Homer-Center Elementary, second; Carter Schweissing, Eisenhower Elementary, third

**GRADE 6:** Nora Pollock, W.A. McCreery Elementary, first; Blake Groom, W.A. McCreery Elementary, second; Lainey Chverchko, Northern Cambria Middle School, third

## FEATURE STORY

**GRADE 7:** Bella Prenni, River Valley Middle School, first; Addison VanHorn, Learning Tree Homeschool Fellowship, second; Regan Stone, River Valley Middle School, third

**GRADE 8:** Mikayla Mortimer, Calvary Baptist Academy, first; Alivia McKee, Homer-Center High School, second; Morgan Nagy, Homer-Center High School, third

**GRADE 9:** Lilly Ohler, West Shamokin High School, first; Lucy Dean, West Shamokin High School, second; Savanna Shaw, West Shamokin High School, third

**GRADE 10:** Maggie Coon, West Shamokin High School, first; Stella Rummel, Learning Tree

See **WINNERS: 4**

# This year's winners

**WINNERS:** From 3

Homeschool Fellowship, second

**GRADE 11:** Cherish Kauffman, Purchase Line High School, first; Kailey Tirpak, West Shamokin High School, second; Rachel Adamson, West Shamokin High School, third

**GRADE 12:** Emily Montanaro, Northern Cambria High School, first; Noah Peles, Purchase Line High School, second

**OPINION COLUMN**

**GRADE 7:** Haley Kovalcik, United High School, first; John St. Clair, United High School, second; Sullivan Waterhouse, St. Bernard Regional Catholic School, third

**GRADE 8:** Danica Marsh, River Valley Middle School, first; Drew Allen Kimmel, Seeds of Faith Christian Academy, second; Jada Walls, United High School, third

**GRADE 9:** John Michael Dunn, United High School, first; Marissa Bowers, United High School, second; Melina Fry, United High School third

**GRADE 10:** Bella Bartlebaugh, Purchase Line High School, first; Jalyn Buterbaugh, Purchase Line High School, second; Liam King, Calvary Baptist

Academy, third

**GRADE 11:** Ava Smathers, West Shamokin High School, first; Rylee Lee, Purchase Line High School, second; Noah Meckley, Calvary Baptist Academy, third

**GRADE 12:** Luke Rainey, Penns Manor Area Junior/Senior High School, first; Emily Jacobs, Northern Cambria High School, second; Miranda Pounds, Calvary Baptist Academy, third

**NEWS PHOTO**

Colin Knickle, Grade 10, Indiana County Technology Center, first; Caelie Jones, Grade 9, Learning Tree Homeschool Fellowship, second; Margaret Lowery, Grade 12, Indiana Senior High School, third

**FEATURE PHOTO**

Caroline Albert, Grade 11, Indiana Senior High School, first; Caelie Jones, Grade 9, Learning Tree Homeschool Fellowship, second; Sydney Duvall, Grade 12, Indiana County Technology Center, third

**SPORTS PHOTO**

Dakota Robinson, Grade 10, Indiana County Technology Center, first; Makenzie Wells, Grade 12, Indiana Senior High School, second; Angelo Lamantia, Grade 11, Indiana Senior High School, third

# Writing contest for the best feature story

Students in grades 7 through 12 were asked to write feature stories using the theme “With instances of mental illness among teens on the rise, what are ways you can lift up and encourage your peers?” The stories were judged by staff in The Indiana Gazette’s and The Blairsville Dispatch’s editorial department. Here are the winners.

**Untitled**

Teens have been in quarantine for over two years. Children that are developing have been staying home away from all of humanity. That has caused chemical imbalances in our brains. Both neurotypical and neurodivergent kids are being affected.

We all can relate to at least one mental illness, yet people are still unsupportive. How can we fix it? I have a few examples.

One thing that schools and individuals can do to help is get educated about real mental illness. I am not talking about being sad and having normal mood swings, I am talking about the real hard truth of mental illness. Things such as age regression, bad hygiene, and isolation are things that people get uncomfortable from but these are all just signs of mental illness. Approximately one in five



**BELLA PRENNI**

River Valley Middle School  
Grade 7

gest solutions is real education about mental illness.

Second, another solution is keeping an open mind. You never know what somebody is going through and being ignorant will not help. People everywhere are in different conditions and you never know what is a choice and what isn't. Whether you have a good or bad past with someone, this is the present and you need to be kind. Everything that happened is in the past. You could be the reason that someone hurts themselves. Even if you are uncomfortable or not good at advice, you need to be there to listen and support them. If you don't know what they are going through just listen to them and let them know that you are there for them. People don't always love themselves, but those who do need to help those who don't. People who don't like themselves are more likely to obtain mental ill-

ness. It doesn't matter how big or small the change is, everything counts. Keeping an open mind will help to come up with solutions and create a support system for those in need.

Lastly, try and create strong trusting relationships with adults that are able to help. Whether it's a counselor, principal, parent, or just a caring teacher, become close with them so if you or your friends need support you always have someone to talk to.

Humans are born to be around others and it is scientifically proven that people who are lonely have a shorter life span. Humans are destined to be with one another, and if you are in a dark place with depression without anyone it is more likely to last forever. "I am not sick enough" is often an excuse for people when they don't want to be

See **PRENNI: 5**

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Gavin Henigin, Grade 5, Homer-Center Elementary

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## Untitled

**PRENNI:** From 4

a burden and ask for help. But if you had stage one cancer and your friend had stage four cancer, you would ask for help because cancer is cancer. It's the same with mental illness. Mental illness is mental illness. That's

it. You should treat mental health the same as physical health. When you have a strong relationship with trusted adults you are more likely to open up, which can help with mental illness. That is why creating a trusting relationship is extremely important to kids with

mental illness.

These are just a few solutions to help with mental illness. There are so many more solutions but these are some of the most important.

I hope my writing sticks with you and many more. Thank you.

## Untitled

With instances of mental health in teens on the rise, people should take notice how important it is to lift up anyone who's dealing with mental health issues, and do whatever it takes to lift them up. Teens or anyone dealing with mental health struggles a lot or struggle with a lot of things, and there could have been a certain instance that created it.

I find it horrible that people get made fun of even for what mental health they have. I think that the most uplifting thing is to make those people feel appreciated. Some people feel like not even existing and are just so insecure and self conscious about them-

selves, so lifting them and making them understand that their friends love them for who they are. And who knows what anyone deals with, so instead of thinking negatively about anyone, we should be mindful and

respectful of everyone.

Out of teens currently in the U.S. about 50 percent have some sort of mental illness and most of it is because of instances. Most had felt sadness or hopelessness, and students have negative thoughts that prevent their learning, and people need to be shown how they are understood because it's difficult with these feelings to obtain certain relationships. Sometimes a mood isn't just loneliness or being angry or frustrated. Mental health challenges are more severe and longer lasting. We should encourage people to open up about their mental health issues and to be more confident and courageous in their own selves.



**REGAN STONE**

River Valley Middle School  
Grade 7

## Encourage with love

Some of the smallest things you do can make a big difference in someone's life. Having a pleasant attitude can encourage people in the easiest way possible. There are so many places for you to interact with other teenagers, such as at school, on the street, in a restaurant, or even at Walmart. And those are only a few examples.

Sometimes, it can be easier to encourage your friends and people that you know better, like inviting them to a youth picnic or anything that would let them know that you're thinking of them and care enough to spend time together.

Someone you don't know can be a little bit trickier. If you start with a smile or a wave, and then go sit on a bench, or at a table with them, you can start a friendship with someone who was once maybe all alone. Some fun ways to lift up your friends, and other teens your age, are secretly doing things they'll notice, like hiding a gift, or a note in their book bag, or doing your friends' chores for them.

Sometimes, mental ill-



**ADDISON VANHORN**

Learning Tree  
Homeschool Fellowship  
Grade 7

ness can be from stress. Does your friend have an important test coming up? Maybe an audition for a play? Or maybe it's a personal issue. One way you can encourage stressed teens is to offer to help them with their problem. Ask if they need help with their homework, or help practicing lines for a play, or anything that is on their mind. Sometimes, just talking about our problems can help us feel better.

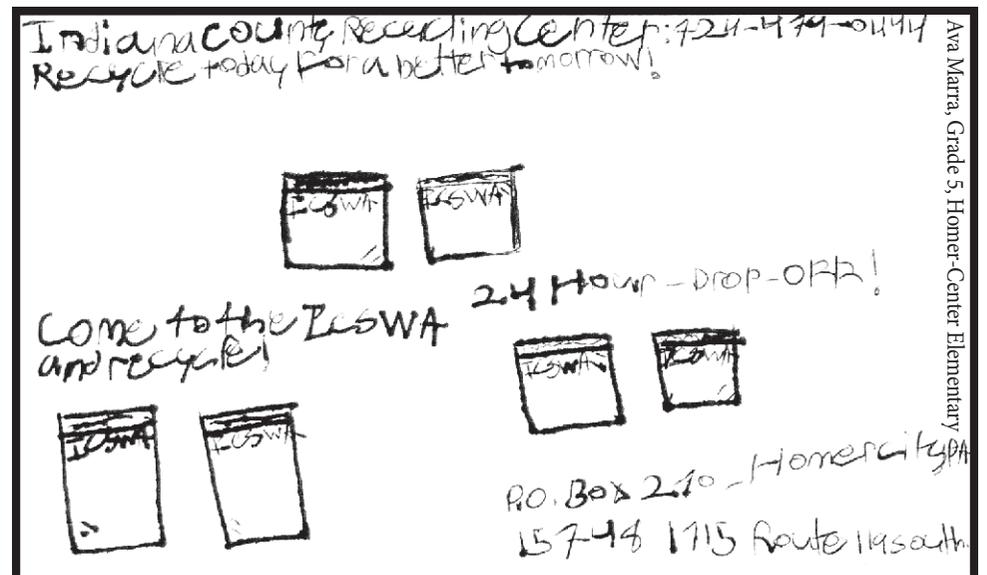
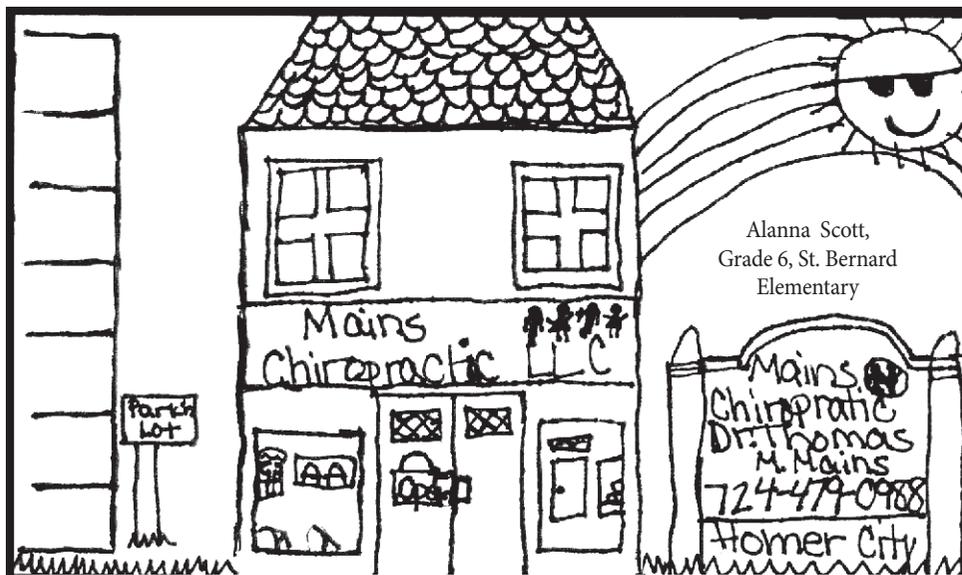
Last year, I had an unexpected emergency eye surgery. After being told it would be a minor procedure, I woke up with throbbing pain in my left eye. I couldn't see anything, because there was a huge patch on my eye. As

it turns out, my situation was more serious than the doctor originally thought. When I went home, I couldn't open my eye most of the time, and when I did, everything looked yellow. I was sad, upset and angry. A close family friend, Miss Christie, brought me a big fuzzy blanket. It made me feel happy to know she was thinking of me and cared enough to show it.

Another good friend of mine, Caelie, came and sat with me and talked to me. She brought games, but when my eye got too tired and hurt too much to keep it open, she was fine just talking, friend to friend. It meant a lot to me, seeing that she was willing to just be present with me, even though I couldn't participate in activities.

Having people there for you when you need them the most can mean the world. Sometimes, people need us to be there, and we don't know it. That is why we should show kindness and love all the time, because we never can be sure of what people are going through.

We all need to remember to love one another, because that will encourage us most of all.



# Writing contest for the best feature story

## Untitled

Even though I go to a Christian school, I still see teens with mental illnesses. In my generation, mental illnesses are on the rise as more and more teens experience paranoia, depression, thoughts of suicide, and many more, but no one seems to be there to help them. As friends or even a complete stranger, you should lift others up in any possible way.

Some ways to lift up and encourage your peers are talking to them. It is sometimes the best medicine



**MIKAYLA MORTIMER**  
Calvary Baptist Academy  
Grade 8

someone can get. A simple "hello" or "good morning" could put a smile on some-

one's face.

Just ask someone how their day is going or tell them a joke because laughter is also a good medicine. Try to be polite to others. Help them and lift their spirits up. If they do something wrong don't just yell at them, but use constructive criticism and motivate them to do it well the next time.

Other ways to lift up and encourage your peers are doing fun activities with them. For me personally, I love it when my friends invite me for a sleepover

or just to hang out. In my school, we have sports that everyone can participate in and have fun together! Also this year, we started choir for competition. It has made us want to sing together more.

There are even more possibilities as well, like when we all went to a retreat together and during our free time we went into a small room with an upright piano and started singing. We also have the opportunity this year to do the "Wizard of Oz" as a school musical, which everyone is super

engaged in and excited about.

Something I think we could do more of are clubs and small groups. In clubs, you have people with similar interests having fun together. Also in our youth groups, churches, schools, and homes, we could pray together and pray for others. We should get together youth rallies and do service activities to help teens meet new people and be a part in their community.

In the years to come, I hope people will be an encouragement to both older,

younger, and their own generation. It is needed in our world today more than it ever was. We need to help limit as much as we can the mental illnesses among all people, especially teens, in our world today. I am part of the generation going through this. I know people suffering from mental illnesses. Why can't we do everything possible to help? Do we want our world to continue like this?

Just think how many people are going through this. What can you do to help and are you willing to do it?

## How to help those around you struggling with mental illness

There are many ways to lift up those around you

that are suffering from mental illnesses.

Whether it's words of encouragement, giving them a hug, or just simply being present, you have the potential to be a big help.

Today, approximately one of five teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18 have at least one diagnosable mental disorder. This means at least someone you know, whether it's school or other

activities, is likely suffering from mental illness. Mental illness is a problem among many people, and it can be especially hard for teens. Whether it's depression, anxiety, ADHD, PTSD, BPD, etc., they are all a struggle, especially for kids. There are many things that we as people can do to help those that are struggling.

Complimenting someone is a small and beneficial way to boost someone's mood, confidence, and self image. Compliment someone's hair, clothes or appearance sometime. You'll likely notice a big smile on their face. When you smile, your brain releases tiny



**ALIVIA McKEE**  
Homer-Center High School  
Grade 8

molecules called neuropeptides to help fight off stress. A simple word of encouragement could really make someone feel better.

Letting someone talk to you about how they feel is another way to assist a peer who may be struggling with mental health. Just telling someone that you're there to listen can mean a lot, even if they don't open up much. A lot of those with mental illnesses may feel that they're struggling alone. Letting them know that they aren't is very important.

These are some very simple steps to help those around you that may be struggling with their mental health. Remember the importance of mental health in yourself and those around you.

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Amanda Stiffler, Grade 4, Purchase Line Elementary

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Victor Miller, Grade 5, Homer-Center Elementary

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## Mental illness in kids

Many teens and people nowadays are struggling from many different mental illnesses.

A lot of students are struggling from illnesses like anxiety, OCD, and stress. A lot of reasons why this is happening to kids is because of COVID, school and much more.

There are many ways we can help teens and people with these illnesses. One way is just offering support. If you put out a loving hand to a person struggling you can sometimes help. If a person is struggling any mental illness just let them know you are there for them.

Another way to help teens struggling with any mental illness is to offer your help. Sometimes if you just ask

them if they need help and help them out with something causing the illness it can help relieve some of it. Like if a person is under a lot of stress because they don't understand their homework then you could offer to tutor them.

You can also just motivate the person. You can push

them to keep going and not give up. Also just don't let them be hard on themselves and tell them to believe in themselves.

Encourage them to keep going and to work hard. Sometimes all a person needs is a push in the right direction. If you help him get on the right track towards getting better it might cause a chain reaction and end up helping more people.

Sometimes if one person gets better and spreads the act of helping other people More people will have better mental health.

The most important thing you can do to help someone is to be there and be present.

There are many other different ways to help, but in my opinion the best way is to be there to support them.

## A little more complicated

Mental illness is not an uncommon issue among people today, although it is not widely talked about or excused. With today's society and the current issues that are going on in the world today, it's not surprising that instances of mental illness are on the rise, especially in teens.

Since 2009, instances of mental health have increased more than 40 percent, and as of 2021 it was estimated that 1 in every 3 teens suffers from some form of mental illness. From being on lockdowns and not being able to go anywhere, to just everyday stress from school or work, there are many reasons why the everyday person could struggle with their



**LILLY OHLER**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 9

mental health.

Being a teenager in high school, it seems that whether you do well in life is determined by due dates and turning all of your assignments in on time, but high-schoolers have lives too. This can make us more stressed out, anxiety-ridden,

and maybe even depressed.

Some ways that we could uplift or encourage our peers are encouraging their interests, suggesting possible things that they could do to make themselves less stressed, and even just being there for them when they need somebody to talk to.

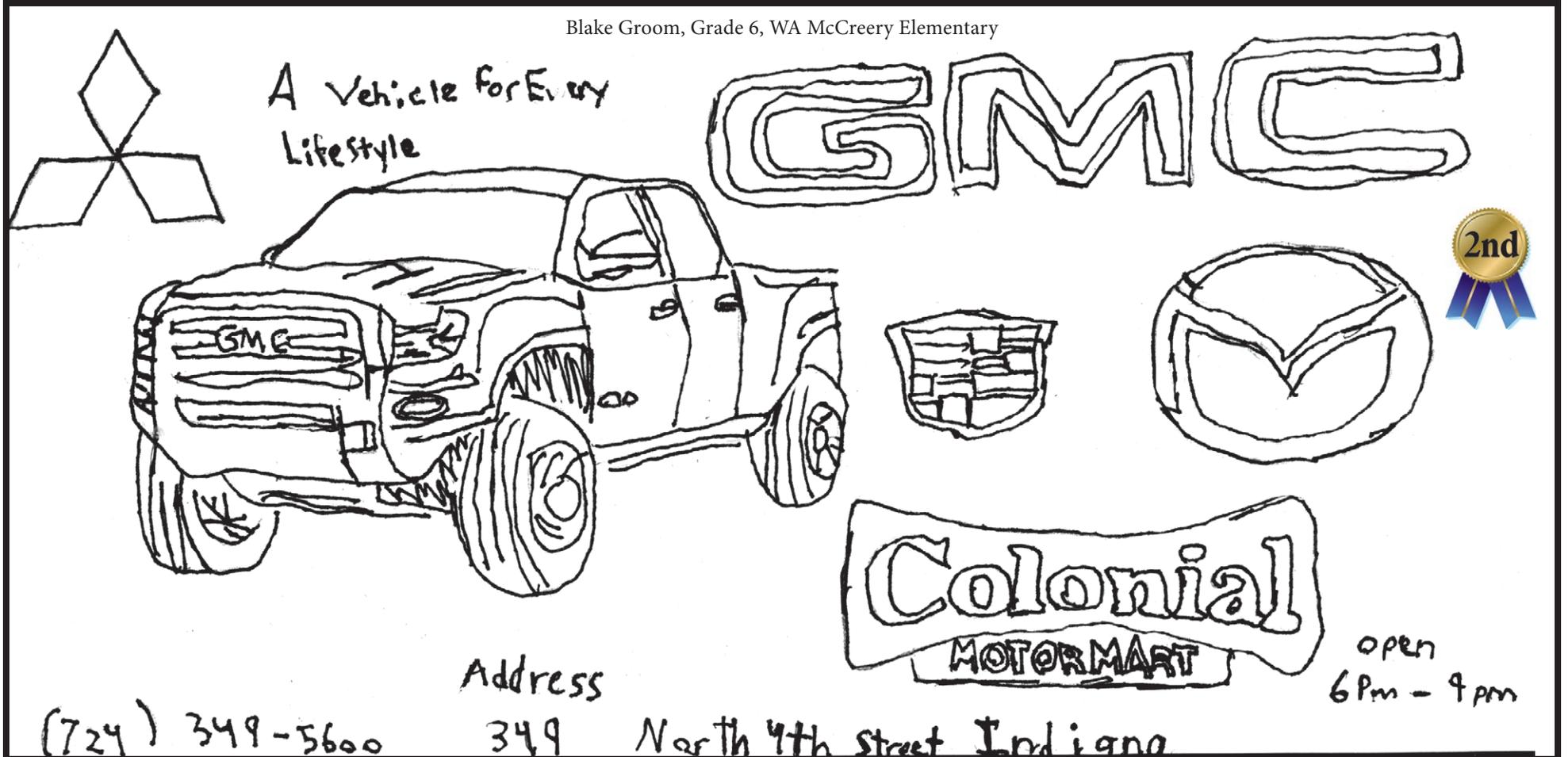
First, we can encourage or uplift our peers by encouraging their interests. We can do this by suggesting possible things that you think they may be good at based on their current interests.

For example, if a person in your class shows an interest in theater, or acting in the school musical, but they don't know if they should because they don't

See **OHLER: 8**



**MORGAN NAGY**  
Homer-Center High School  
Grade 8



# Writing contest for the best feature story

## A little more complicated

**OHLEH:** From 7

know if they would be good enough. You could encourage them to try it, and maybe even help them by practicing with them. This would uplift your peers, and help them realize that they are good enough, even if they happen to not get the part they were hoping for, at least they know they tried.

Sometimes people just need to go outside of their comfort zones to find something they really enjoy or love. It can be anything, big or small. If your peer wants to try something, anything really, it could be skiing, horseback riding, or even something small like trying a new food, encourage them. Encouraging people

to try new things gives them confidence and helps motivate them. This makes them feel better about themselves and uplifts their spirits. Encouraging your peers to try things they may enjoy is a great way of uplifting and encouraging them, when they may feel like they are not enough.

Second, we can uplift or encourage our peers by suggesting possible ways to make themselves less stressed. For instance, you could suggest to a stressed out peer that may be taking walks out in nature, working out, listening to music, or even drawing would help them and make them less stressed.

Doing things you enjoy can help with mental illness

or even everyday stress.

You could also suggest things to your peers that help with calming people down such as yoga or meditation. You could even suggest something like therapy to a peer with mental illness, so they have somebody they don't necessarily know to help them as well, which can make them more comfortable. Suggesting possible ways to make your peer less stressed helps them by knowing that there are people out there that feel the same way they do. Also, by suggesting things that may help them be less stressed, they are also trying new things, and learning how to work with the stress, and improve themselves at the same time. This improves

your peer's mental health, and their overall well-being.

Finally, to encourage or uplift our peers, one of the best things we can do is be there for them when they need somebody. We all struggle with things, whether it be our school work, issues at home, or even just life in general, but it helps if somebody is there for you. You can be there for your peers in a number of ways, whether it be by asking how they are every day, to even being their shoulder to cry on when they need it. If you show that you care, people will open up to you, and they won't be holding it all in. This helps them because then they know that somebody is there for them, and they know that somebody

is listening and cares. They can also let out anything that has been pent up inside of them for too long. This helps relieve stress and anxiety, and uplifts spirits. Being there for people also can uplift you because you have the satisfaction of helping somebody when they need it. Being there for people also helps you become a well-rounded person. By being there for a peer you become a better person, and the person you are helping learns that they are not alone and that they have somebody there for them.

To conclude, encouraging their interests, suggesting things they could do to be less stressed, and just being there for your peers, can help uplift and encourage

them. By encouraging your peers, you boost their confidence and help them try new things. When you suggest things they could do to lessen their stress, they realize that they are not alone, and when you are there for your peers when they need somebody, it helps relieve their stress and anxiety.

Being a teenager is hard enough as it is, but if we stick together, and help each other through the hard times we are all facing, our high school experience and lives will be made simpler and more joyful. Mental illness is not always as black and white as being encouraged or uplifted. It is more complicated than that, but it helps if we all stick together.



Kade Kunsleman, Grade 4,  
Homer-Center Elementary

### In hard times, do what makes you happy

Mental illness is usually solved by therapy and medicine, but what if the undertaking of relaxing and stress-free activities suggested by others could help even more. As the past two years have gone by, mental health problems in teens have been on the rise. While balancing school, lockdown, and even part-time jobs it can be easy to struggle mentally and emotionally through these tough times. Here are some activities I put forward and encourage my peers to carry out.

"I relished nature while on lockdown by doing schoolwork on my porch. This allows me to stay focused by staying calm and being enlightened by nature," says Gage, a freshman. I motivate my peers to spend more time outdoors. Being busy and always staying in the loop of working and social media can be very



**LUCY DEAN**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 9

stressful and you can easily forget to take time for yourself. To reduce stress take a 30-minute break and walk outside. Embrace what you see around you and make relaxing enjoyable. For example, picking beautiful flowers, watching the clouds, taking a hike, looking for animals, or even just planting some new greenery in your garden could uplift your day. It will be hard to find time every day to do this, but even just 10 minutes of being outside can help reduce stress, lower

blood pressure, boost your mood, and improve your well-being. This is one activity I encourage my peers to take action in to help uplift their mental health.

I also encourage my peers to enjoy the smaller things in life. A classmate, Alexa, states, "Hanging out and doing little activities with my mom has strengthened our relationship. Enjoying the little things like that has shown me that the smaller activities are just as good as the bigger things." Teens like to look at the big picture in life and they tend to miss out on the fun little activities and underestimate how contented these deeds can make you. Enjoying minor activities will increase teens' happiness and welfare because they have more to look forward to every day than just big activities. Simple pastimes such as watching the sunset, baking cookies, hanging out with a friend, sleeping an extra hour, listening to music, or even setting good

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## In hard times, do what makes you happy

**DEAN:** From 8

short-term goals can uplift teens' mental state and help them feel delighted.

Finally, Jesse, a fellow freshman, states, "Being nice to others helps my mental health because it makes me feel good about myself. It helps me understand how others can be helped with their problems. Being nice to others is good for your self-esteem and other peers will notice how nice you are."

So, I encourage my peers to try to do something nice for others. For example,

offering help to those in need, giving genuine compliments, talking to someone when they are upset, or making someone a small gift are all fantastic ways to perform a nice act to others.

Doing a good deed for others can uplift you because you are seeing how much you have brightened their day by taking advantage of the time you have with that person. Also, it can uplift if you do the different deeds consistently because you will be a kinder individual and you will feel like a better person after

seeing the smiles on their faces and the joy your presence brought to them.

In conclusion, taking time for yourself and getting out of the loop is just as important as working hard and staying focused through tough times. So the next time you are stressed out and in need of a break from your constant routine, try one of these many calming activities.

From spending time in nature to complimenting a friend, you never know how much these could uplift your happiness until you try one of these for yourself.

'It's not as hard as it seems'

The quarantine and just life in general has made many people's, especially teens', mental health plummet in the past few years. Luckily, the importance of good mental health and the well being of others is being noticed, understood, and helped. There can be many different ways you can help uplift your peers and make life a little more bearable for them. Being there to listen to them, sharing ways to relax, and suggesting healthy technology boundaries can make a big difference.

In an October 2019 article created by the American Psychological Association, they write, "Talking about stressful situations



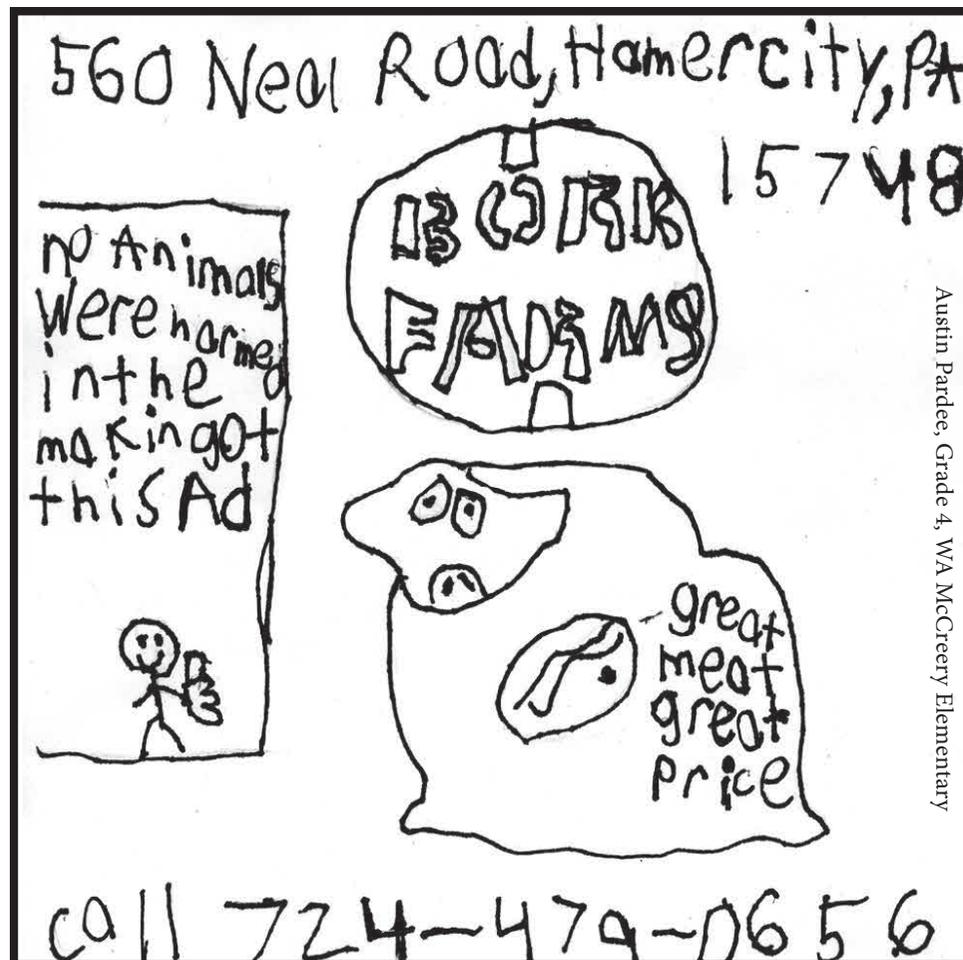
**SAVANNA SHAW**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 9

... can help kids and teens put things in perspective and find solutions." Talking about and expressing how you are feeling can not only lift a massive amount of stress and pressure off your shoulders but can also help you understand why you feel the

way you do. When a friend needs someone to talk to, the best thing to do is listen. If you feel you may not be the best at it, you could always give them an alternative, like a therapist or a parent. Having someone to talk to is one great way to help mental health and relieve stress.

"Just like adults, kids and teens need time to do what brings them joy ..." states the same article. There are many different activities people do to find joy and relaxation, whether it is reading, doing some form of art or exercise, or just having some down time. Though they all seem different, all these activities can help individuals relax and manage stress more effectively. Taking your mind

See **SHAW: 10**



# Writing contest for the best feature story

## ‘It’s not as hard as it seems’

**SHAW:** From 9

off of whatever it is that is bothering you by using one of these activities can affect your whole mood and can possibly even help you overcome that said problem.

Distracting someone and helping them find joy is another way to help with stress and mental health.

In today’s world, social media is a humongous part of everyday life. Even though there are positives

like better communication it can also be a contributor to stress in teens. Social media causes many people to be infatuated with their phones. It is extremely easy to get caught up in your phone, and before you

know it, you’re still up at 2 a.m. Sleep is also a crucial step in having better mental health, and you can’t get that if you’re up every night on TikTok. “Sleep needs to be a priority to keep stress in check. To protect shut-

eye, limit screen use at night and avoid keeping digital devices in the bedroom,” the article states. Taking breaks, even if they are short ones, from your phone can help increase better mental health and decrease stress.

It’s true that stress and mental illness for teens is a tough issue to tackle. However, it can be reassuring to know that by helping someone take these small steps, it can drastically change their life.

### The new normal

Approximately 16.9 million children, ages 3-17, have been diagnosed with some form of mental disorder. About 30 percent of teens worldwide have been diagnosed with depression and another 30 percent of them have been diagnosed with anxiety.

Do these numbers seem large to you? They sure do to me. So why are those who struggle with mental illness treated differently? They should be treated the same as everyone else.

Mental health has always been a sensitive and rarely talked about topic. Even though social media has spread the word about mental illnesses and how people struggling should ask for help, it still isn’t something that is considered “normal.”

Most teens who have been diagnosed with depression, anxiety, ADHD and other conditions, live completely average lives; however, when they talk about how their disorder affects them, or tell their friend that they will be missing school to go to the psychiatrist, they

begin to be viewed differently and are no longer considered “normal.”

What many people don’t consider is that you do not have to be free of mental disorders to be considered “normal,” especially when mental disorders affect such a large number of teens.

Society as a whole should stop addressing mental illness with a negative connotation and should not isolate those who are affected. Treating a person with a mental disorder as a pariah, causes that person to feel dehumanized or like they are crazy, even though their brain might just have a chemical imbalance.

Although you should never dehumanize a person with mental illness, you still have to be respectful of boundaries.

For example, if someone is having a panic attack due to their anxiety, they might want you to try to help them, or they might not want help, depending on the person.

You should treat them humanely and also understand that this person might be struggling with handling their mental illness.

Mental illness is something that is common. Being diagnosed with a mental disorder should become the new normal, and no one should have to live their life believing that they are different in a negative way, or “crazy.”

Those with mental illness are human too, and they deserve to live an amazing life, with supportive friends to help them face their challenges and not feel like an outcast.

### Dear Teenagers

Fact: Almost 14 percent of kids age 12-17 report experiencing at least one major depressive episode in the past year.

Fact: The University of Michigan conducted a study that reported 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys have experienced new or worsening anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

Fact: More teenagers are suffering from mental illnesses every year.

Dear teenagers, mental illness is a serious thing. Around 52.9 million people in the United States alone suffer from various illnesses, and 1 in 5 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18 have been diagnosed with at least one mental health disorder.



**MAGGIE COON**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 10

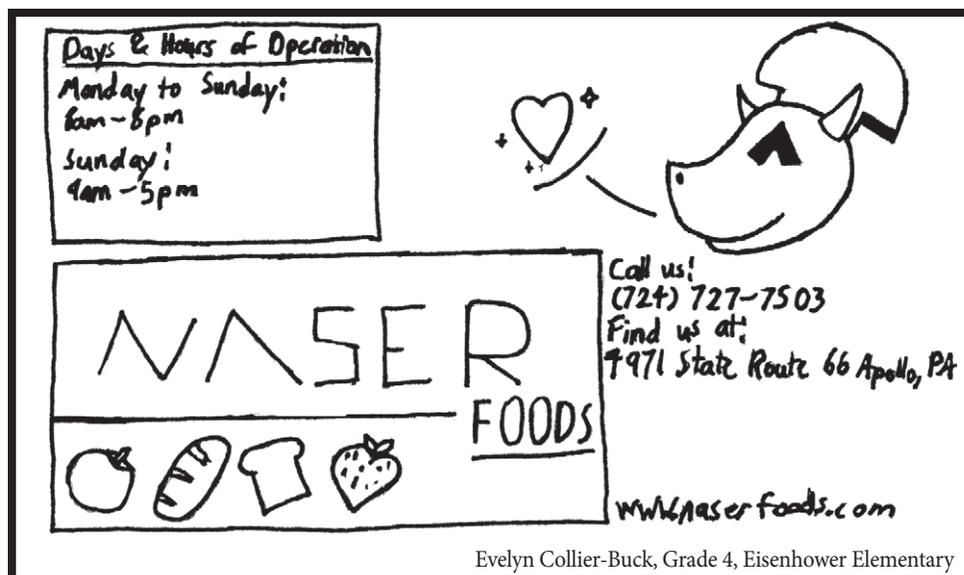


**STELLA RUMMEL**  
Learning Tree  
Homeschool Fellowship  
Grade 10

Dear teenagers, the world can be a scary place. Crime, pain and death are rampant, and with the effects of COVID-19 on top of that, it can feel like too much to handle.

Dear teenagers, you’ve

See **RUMMEL: 11**



Evelyn Collier-Buck, Grade 4, Eisenhower Elementary



Averie Robertson, Grade 4, Calvary Baptist Academy

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## Dear teenagers

**RUMMEL:** From 10

lost loved ones, you've had your world ripped out from under you, you've adjusted to isolation and then readjusted to socializing, and you are being expected to carry on with your head high. That can be hard. You're learning, growing, loving and hurting, and life can be overwhelming.

We've all heard the old axioms, "Think positive, be positive," or "Just smile." But the truth is, that's not going to cut it. I could tell you, dear teenagers, to smile more because smiling can reduce stress and lower your blood pressure. I could tell you to think about positive things — to focus on the joy in your life because that increases your lifespan and

lowers your risk of a heart attack. I'm not going to tell you any of that, though, because you've heard that before. Dear teenagers, I'm not discrediting any of that. Studies have shown that smiling *does* reduce stress, and stress is one of the factors involved in mental illnesses. But I won't tell you to brush it off and smile.

There's a difference, however, between positivity, happiness and joy.

Positivity is an outlook. It is making a conscious effort

to look on the bright side of a situation, instead of dwelling on the bad. The average human being makes 35,000 decisions every day. That's 35,000 times that you, dear teenagers, could be choosing to see the beauty instead of the pain. But I said before that I wasn't going to tell you to do that. Why not? It would seem that a bit of positivity could go a long way!

Dear teenagers, positivity can be dangerous. There's nothing wrong with it, in small doses, but the prob-

lem occurs when your positive thinking causes you to ignore the brokenness. Pushing away the problems won't solve them.

Happiness is a feeling. It fills you up to overflowing and pours out through a smile. Lots of people want to feel "happy" but one of the most common ways to achieve the desired happiness is through positivity. If you focus only on the good in life, dear teenagers, you probably will feel happy. The bad is still there, howev-

er, and ignoring it will only make it worse.

Joy is different. It is, like positivity, a choice, and like happiness, it is a feeling. But unlike those two, joy goes deeper. Joy is the act of recognizing the hurt in the world, fully understanding it, but knowing with full assurance that all shall be well.

True joy comes only from Jesus, who is sovereign over all. He is the only one who is eternal, and he loves you, dear teenagers, deeper than you can imagine.

### Lifting up your peers during rough times

Encouraging and lifting up your peers is very important due to the fact that mental illness among teens is on the rise. Many of the students or teens you walk by everyday are struggling with a mental illness. However, no one feels comfortable talking about their situation because they feel like no one will understand or encourage them. Instead, they feel like they are going to get reprimanded for their thoughts or how they feel. When you recognize that a peer is struggling, listen, remind them of their worth, but don't force a solution.

Listening to your peers is one of the most important factors of encouraging your peers.

Many times, teens bottle up their emotions until they just snap one day. The last few years have been rocky, and no one really knew how to handle it all, especially teens. They don't know how to express their feelings in a positive way, so they tend to use anger or not express their feelings at all. Listening to them would help them feel recognized and worthy of their feelings.

Most teens just want to be heard, and listening to them will help them think through what they are experiencing. Along with



**CHERISH KAUFFMAN**  
Purchase Line  
High School  
Grade 11

that, you should never try to force someone to talk about their feelings. If they don't feel comfortable, just sitting with them and allowing them to be in the moment could be what helps them. If someone trusts you enough to tell you what they are feeling, validate them. Remind them that this too will pass, and they are going to get through it.

Remind them of how many rough times they've gotten through before. Validate their feelings by saying, "What you are feeling is valid. You can get through this." Hearing this causes them to relax and feel as though someone notices how hard they have been working to get through their situation. Having their feelings validated causes so much less pain and misunderstanding, when it comes

to understanding the feeling, even though you might not know how they feel entirely.

That being said, you can also encourage and up your peers by not forcing them to their problems overnight. For some teens, the feeling of being forced to a their problems is triggering. Instead of telling someone that they "need to fix their problems," try encouraging them and reassuring them that they CAN get through it, and you'll be there for them the entire time. Not forcing them to do something hard is actually very encouraging to a teen struggling mentally. It shows them that you care and you don't want them to feel uncomfortable.

Personally, this topic means so much to me. While I decided on how to start the response to this question, I really thought about the importance of this answer. Over the last few months, I've gone through many trials. My mental health declined, and I found myself feeling more alone than I ever had. Anxiety took over my life, and I found every new day by waking up, already worried about the next day. Along with myself, I've seen many of my friends and peers struggle too.

Many times, everyone believes giving teens items, or

giving them materialistic things is the key. However, due to my personal experiences, I have found that most teens want their feelings to be heard and validated. We want someone to listen and remind us that

what we are feeling is normal, considering the world we are living in today.

Being a teenager is hard, but understanding how to help your friends or the special teen in your life can make it a lot easier on us all,

especially the teen struggling. We all just want to feel needed in this world. Listen, encourage, and never stop supporting.

With these three goals in mind, you just might save someone's life.



Leah Orsargos, Grade 4, Blairsville Elementary

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## Helping others helps yourself

The prevailing opinion on today's youth is that we sit around on our phones all day and only care about ourselves. In reality, if you look into what the new generation is out there doing for your community, this assumption will go out the window.

With mental illness among teens on the rise, it is important for teens to get involved with their peers and have face to face conversations.

The best decision I have made that has got me involved with my community and peers was joining Leo Club. Leo Club is a youth organization that was de-

rived from the Lions Clubs International. Some of the most rewarding activities that Leo Club does include volunteering at Special Olympic bowling, doing volunteer work at Beacon Lodge, and hosting holiday activities for the elementary school students.

One of my favorite things I have done for Leo Club so far was volunteering at Special Olympic bowling. Special Olympic bowling is a day where adults with intellectual disabilities get together to bowl and just have a fun time.

Teens from Leo Club volunteer at this event and help those who are in need. One of my fellow peers that have volunteered at this event described it as, "the



**KAILEY TIRPAK**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 11

most rewarding experience to have been a part of." Not only does this volunteer work help out those who need help with tasks such as bowling, it also helps out the teens who are volunteering

by lifting up their spirits and giving them something to feel good about.

Another amazing opportunity that teens in Leo Club got to experience was volunteering at Beacon Lodge. Beacon Lodge is a camp that welcomes all individuals with special needs to experience the joys of nature and many other interests. They operate completely on donations and the help of volunteers.

Each year, when possible, Leo Club sends a large group of students to Beacon Lodge to volunteer and do work at the camp that needs to be done. While volunteering, these students get to be with their peers, have fun, and help the community all at one time.

Studies show that people that describe themselves as "very happy" volunteer at least 5.8 hours per month ("7 Scientific Benefits of Helping Others").

Other beneficial events that Leo Club hosts are fun holiday activities for elementary students to attend. We put on Easter egg hunts and Halloween dances that all of the kids love.

These activities are a great way to get teens involved with the younger kids in the community and give them a role model position for the younger kids to look up to. We get to see how much joy the children get out of what we are doing for them. This lets us know that all of the work we put in is very rewarding.

If teens start learning about clubs such as Leo Club and give them a try, we will see that helping others and being around peers improves the quality of mental health.

Getting together with others and doing work that is very beneficial to all who are involved is a great way to lift up and encourage peers.

Teens can be very skeptical about trying new things out of their comfort zones, but once we go out and get involved, we tend to enjoy things we never would have thought we would have enjoyed.

If you are a teen reading this, try to get out there, get involved in your community, and try new things.

## Dancing through life

Over half of the population will be diagnosed with a mental health illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime. Mental health has always been an issue in the United States, but more so in recent times than ever, especially with current circumstances. The past two years have taken a toll on all of us, especially in the beginning where uncertainty ran rampant and anxiety increased. With times like

current ones, we need ways to lift people up, and dance is one way to reduce stress and renew spirits,

Martha Graham once said "Dance is a song of the body. Either of joy or pain." Dancing is a way to express and uplift oneself. No matter who you are or how old you are, you can always dance. I have been a dancer at Sharon's School of Dance for fifteen years now, and I have seen first hand the uplifting power of dance. Dancing has always been there for

me, whether it be a bad day at school or I feel stressed or frustrated. Dance serves as an outlet through hard and happy times. Dance is the perfect way to express yourself, from picking the perfect song to match your mood, to moving along to the music and just letting the music take you along on a wonderful journey. Although I am a studio dancer, a studio isn't required to dance. I find myself dancing on my way to class and down the aisles of

stores. I find myself dancing through life.

Some people may say or think dancing isn't for them, whether they are older or clumsy, but watching dance can be just as relaxing and beneficial as the activity itself. Going to watch a dance show is a fun activity that could be done with friends, family or alone. When the words "dance show" or "recital" are mentioned, most people automatically think of ballet and think it's boring. But watching others

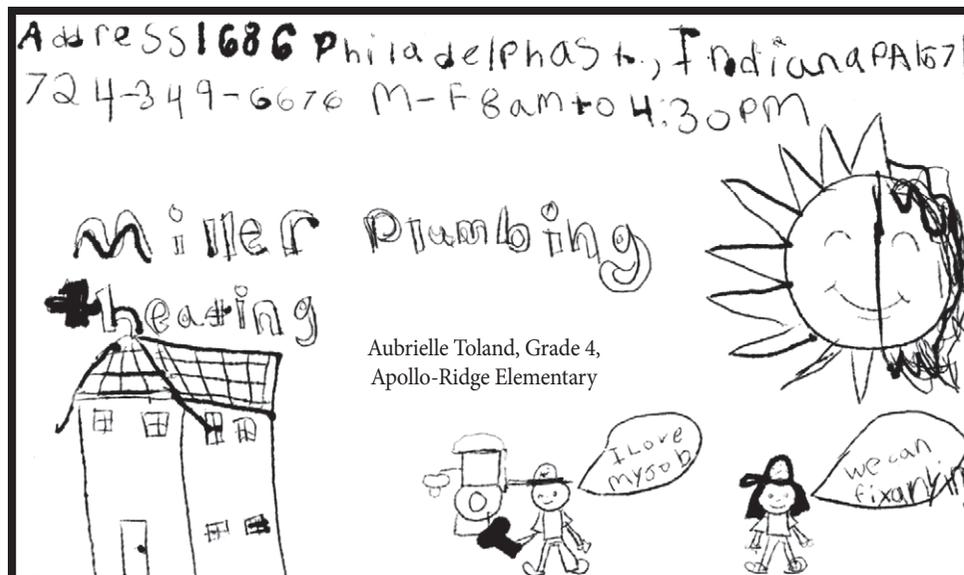
dance can actually be relaxing and very moving for spectators.

There are all kinds of other dance shows that many others find entertaining — The Rockettes, for example. The Rockettes, the stars of the Christmas Spectacular show, are seen and enjoyed by over one million people every year. This is a more upbeat show that can energize people, especially around the holiday season.

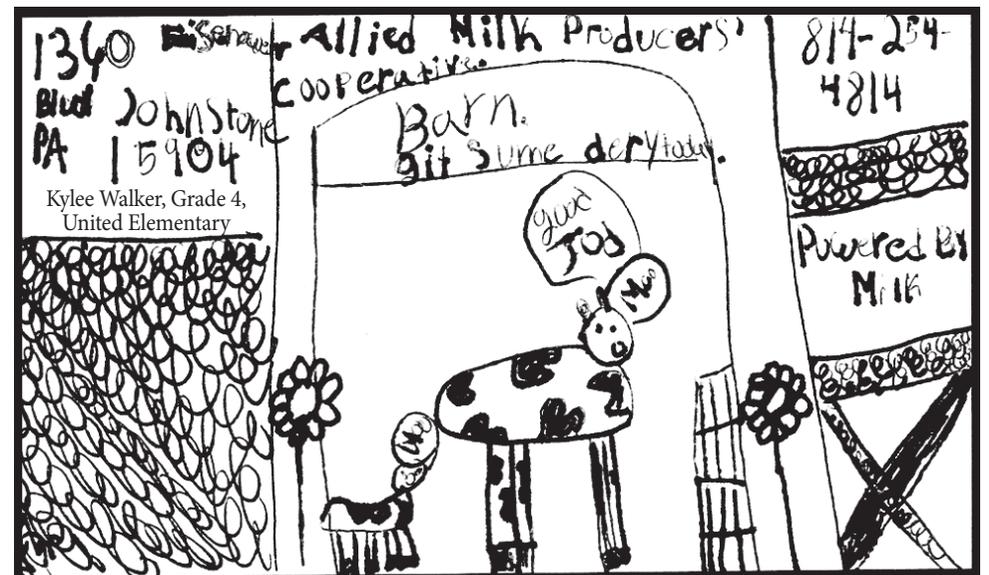
See **ADAMSON: 13**



**RACHEL ADAMSON**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 11



Aubrielle Toland, Grade 4,  
Apollo-Ridge Elementary



Kylee Walker, Grade 4,  
United Elementary

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## Acts of kindness in our schools

According to the CDC, 7.4 percent of children ages 3-17 years (approximately 4.5 million) have a diagnosed behavioral problem. 7.1 percent of children ages 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have been diagnosed with anxiety. 3.2 percent of children ages 3-17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have been diagnosed with depression. Many believe that this large increase of reported mental illness in teens is due to the 2020-2021 pandemic. Starting in mid-March of 2020, schools across the nation were "temporarily" shut down for the safety of students, teachers, and administrators. Unfortunately, as the coronavirus surged through the United States, the remainder of the school year was sensibly put on hold as schools went online. All extracurricular activities, school field trips, and senior events were canceled, leaving students devastated.

The global quarantine lasted for almost the remainder of the year before businesses, workplaces, community environments, and schools finally began to reopen. During the start of the new school year in Au-

gust, 2021, many schools remained online or worked in a hybrid setting, where the school's attendees would go in-person every other day. During the four months of isolation during the height of the pandemic and the stressful and chaotic start of the new school year, many children and teens began to feel lost or unheard. Millions of these students also have had to deal with the loss of a loved one from the virus. This caused a large spike in mental health issues in teens all across the country.

Though, as the rise of mental illness becomes broader in teens, a new wave of enthusiastic and animated ideas are being brought to life by local students. In the Northern Cambria High School, members of the dis-

trict's National Honor Society spread encouragement and brightened the halls of their school through what they called "Acts of Kindness In Our School." Starting the first week of February, the juniors and seniors of the organization had prepared to display positive words and quotes to boost morale and show that all everyone is united in making the building a happy environment filled with warmth and high spirits. Eleventh-grader Mary Kudlawiec, who coordinated the event said, "I wanted to help put a smile on students' faces. Hopefully now more students will be encouraged to spread kindness throughout school."

Throughout the third week of February, the high school participated in an outfit-themed spirit week. Having no school on Monday, the theme week started on Tuesday. Students dressed up in pajamas for their first theme day. Days earlier, teachers and staff nominated outstanding students who have shown acts of kindness in the school. The nominated students were gifted a bag of candy Tuesday morning and were entered in a drawing contest for a Sheetz gift card. On Wednesday, the kids dressed up in mix-match clothes and each student was given

a Valentine's card with a lollipop during homeroom.

On Thursday, students dressed up in neon and tie-dye clothes. Friday, the kids wore Black and Gold to show their school spirit. During homeroom, the winners for the gift card drawing were announced. One boy and one girl from each grade won for their outstanding acts of kindness seen throughout the school year. These small activities gave students a chance to connect with everyone around them and make the school day more enjoyable. The Northern Cambria National Honor Society plans to continue this event annually due to high participation.

Events like these could make the difference in a school attendee's daily life and are essential to keeping students together as a strong community.

## Dancing through life

**ADAMSON:** From 12

There are hundreds of types of shows from ballet, to jazz to upbeat hip hop. There a style for everyone and for every emotion whether it be stress, frustration, or even joy. It can help relieve feelings of stress and anxiety and help put things in perspective.

All in all, dance is a spectacular "feel good" activity for spectators as well as participants.

Dance is often referred to as "the universal lan-

guage" because it's not necessarily a language that we can talk to each other with, but it is a way we can express ourselves and communicate with others, even if there is a cultural barrier. Dance is a wonderful way to unite, and bring us together. Whether participating in dance itself, or observing it, it's a great way to relieve stress, anxiety and uplift others.

Lee Ann Womack put it best, "When you get the chance to sit out or dance, I hope you dance."



**EMILY MONTANARO**  
Northern Cambria  
High School  
Grade 12

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Eden Kimmel, Grade 4, WA McCreery Elementary

# Writing contest for the best feature story

## How we can help each other

Over the past few years, current events and foreign complications have led to much more stressful and challenging situations for teenagers.

A teenager's toughest enemy is their inner conscience, always wanting to be better and constantly doubting themselves.

With these issues and challenges making teenagers' lives more stressful, much can be done to help out each other.

In our everyday lives, there is a lot that teenagers can do to help each other

navigate the world we live in everyday.

One of the best ways to help each other is through supporting one another. This can be anything from good advice to talking someone through a bad situation.

In my experience, this can always make someone feel better about themselves, and the current situation they are in. Most of all, it calms the person down and shows everything will eventually be just fine.

Another good way to lift someone up is to be a good listener when something happens.

When someone listens to



**NOAH PELES**  
Purchase Line  
High School  
Grade 12

another person, it shows they care, which is sometimes all it takes to bring someone's mood up. Sec-

only it helps to get a lot out of someone's mind and let off some steam. This is something that is critical, for it can really help to clear the mind of a friend, and it shows that you are a strong, supportive person for them to count on.

A third way to lift another teenager up is to make plans with people who are struggling with issues.

Once again, this shows that you care for them, and it provides another opportunity for you both to burn off steam and cool off together. This also provides something for you and a friend to look forward to, which is something that can

make a week a lot easier to get through. Along with this, it is just something relaxing and fun after a long day a week.

Lastly, one of the best ways to help yourself feel better is to help others. Recent studies published by The Conversation in the Los Angeles area have been conducted which suggests that helping others can improve your own health.

The study recruited 99 high school-aged teenagers who completed 10 surveys through 10 consecutive days. On days when the teens helped another person, they were shown

to have a more positive attitude outcome for the day.

Based on this study, it is supported that helping others also helps yourself.

Overall, though mental health issues can be dealt with by doctors, there is still a lot we can do to help each other.

To do this, we can support each other, listen to each other, and make plans with each other. Along with this, helping others also helps to make ourselves happier.

In the end, lifting others up not only helps other people, but can also help ourselves.

The Indiana Gazette: In print and online. [www.indianagazette.com](http://www.indianagazette.com)



Nathan Beuten, Grade 6, River Valley Middle School

# Writing contest for the best *opinion column*

## Why schools should not require uniforms

Required uniforms are common for a lot of schools around the world.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, "Nearly 20% of all public schools have adopted uniform mandates." There are about 98,750 public schools throughout the world. Twenty percent of that is nearly 20,000 schools.

These mandatory uniforms block students from creativity, prevent them from learning to dress themselves, and make most students uncomfortable in different ways.

Uniforms do not impact academic performance in a positive way. Freakonomics says, "...we find little evidence that uniforms have lasting impacts on achievement, grade retention,

or the likelihood of students switching schools or leaving the district for all genders and grade levels." They do not help you focus better, do more work, or work harder. If anything, it's a distraction when the students are uncomfortable in the clothes they're wearing.

A way to prevent them from being uncomfortable would be to let them wear their own clothes. Schools should focus more on ways to help students improve on their work instead of enforcing school uniforms.

School uniforms also block students from expressing themselves and experimenting with their style. Kids have role models they like to dress similar to.

Being able to choose their look, kids can experiment with what jewelry, clothes, makeup, and styles they like or feel



**HALEY KOVALCIK**  
United High School  
Grade 7

comfortable in. They get these role models from TV shows or bands or even people they meet in public.

In addition to helping them express themselves, clothing can improve self-confidence. Students usually get excited over the outfits they get to show off or feel good in, and schools shouldn't take that happiness away from them.

For this year's "Write a Column" contest, students in grades 7 through 12 were asked to write a column supporting something they feel strongly about.

The essays were judged by staff in The Indiana Gazette's and The Blairsville Dispatch's editorial department. Here are the winners.

Schools usually choose what they want their students to wear based on gender when designing uniforms.

Uniforms for girls often assign skirts, while requiring khakis for boys and a button-up collared T-shirt for the tops. Those choices of clothing usually aren't what kids find comfortable. Kids often prefer sweatpants and loose T-shirts.

Most kids find school uniforms uncomfortable and that could be really distracting in classes.

Sometimes the uniforms won't fit the way they want it to (like being tighter than they're used

to), it's not what they would usually wear, or they don't like the type of material. Students would be tugging at their pants or skirts in class or trying to find a comfortable way to sit just because they find the uniforms uncomfortable.

Nordanglia Education says, "Uniforms remove one more thing from the 'to-do' list of mums and dads every day."

Uniforms are not any less work than regular clothes. They still need to be washed for the kids, put away like regular laundry, and probably take just as much time to try to get on the kids in

the morning.

Students often disapprove of school uniforms because it's probably not what they would choose to wear.

Schools should want their students to be excited to go to school each morning, not dreading it because they have to wear the same school uniform every day.

The demand for school uniforms blocks students from dressing themselves, makes students uncomfortable, and does not improve academic performance.

I believe schools should not require school uniforms.

Weekends are leisurely!  
The Gazette's Leisure section is made for weekends.

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Lennon Resenic, Grade 4, Eisenhower Elementary

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Lydia Repine, Grade 5, Blairsville Elementary

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## School students need personal days

A personal day is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “a paid or unpaid day of leave from work for reasons other than illness or vacation, taken at the employee’s discretion.”

While school students are not employees of any business, they are required by law to attend school. Education is no easy task and requires a lot of work. Everyone deserves a break from work. School students should be permitted personal days every school year.

Just like adults, students have obligations that they need to attend to outside of school. Many activities conflict with the school day. There are many activ-

ities that a student can encounter such as community activities that are not tied to school districts. An example would be a musical group that gives a performance during school hours or a sports team that has to travel for a playoff game. Other activities are religious events and family events. While schools do allow students sick days, bereavement days, and vacation days, an excuse must be presented or an unlawful absence is issued. For this reason, oftentimes students must make the difficult decision to miss these activities.

If students are given a certain number of personal days each school year, they will learn how to manage their time responsibly. This will give students real world experience for whenever

they begin working for an employer. Students will understand that it is not easy to take time off on a test day or whenever a project is due. Students will need to make up that time missed, which will help them learn to make better decisions later in life. Allowing students personal days will

help train them for future experiences.

Students should be allowed to take off personal days to prevent mental and physical exhaustion. Work is defined as an “activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a purpose or result.” Many school students put in a seven-hour day followed by hours of homework in the evenings. This gives very little time for relaxation.

Many students also strive to do their best. With less time for relaxation and the pressure of wanting to do well, stress can build. Students sometimes need a break from the pressures that can form.

Too much stress mentally and physically can lead to illnesses of many types. A good way of avoiding this would be to allow a student time away from work without requiring an excuse. If a student would be able to call in the morning and give a notice that they will not be attending that day, and just say that they are taking a personal day off, it would give that student an opportunity to enjoy a day off from work.

While school is very important, providing personal days will be a huge benefit for most students. If students knew they had a certain number of days off that they could use however they would like, it would give students more opportunities to participate in the community.

It would also teach students how to manage their time off and be a learning experience for when they join the workforce. Most importantly, personal days would create less stress in the lives of students. Just as adults are able to enjoy taking time off, students should be able to do so as well.

Student personal days would really benefit all school students.



**JOHN ST. CLAIR**  
United High School  
Grade 7

## Importance of the USA building more factories on American soil

The United States of America was the most industrial country in the world until 2010 when China took the title. Currently there are nearly 300,000 factories in the United States, but sadly around 270,000 of these factories have less than 100 employees. Only 846 of all factories in the United States have over 1,000 employees, even though there are over 15 million manufacturing employees in the U.S., and this number is gradually decreasing as 3,000 companies have their factories in other countries. These cost a massive amount of resources.

Shipping across the Pacific is extremely expensive and uses tons of fuel. In one year, shipping used 224.4 million gallons of fuel. That’s worth \$426.36 million. This money could be used to increase the quality of manufactured goods made in America, so it wouldn’t increase product cost more to have American factories. This increase in quality will make the products last longer, which increases the integrity of the product and the American workers.

America shouldn’t have to rely on other countries’ imported products. America should trade for the natural resources that it doesn’t have or that it has little of such as niobium, strontium, tantalum, and most importantly tin. The United States should trade the raw materials it has a surplus of, such as bauxite. In 2020 the United States harvested 408,000 metric tons of bauxite. Bauxite is used in aluminum alloys, so if America



**SULLIVAN WATERHOUSE**  
St. Bernard Regional  
Catholic School  
Grade 7

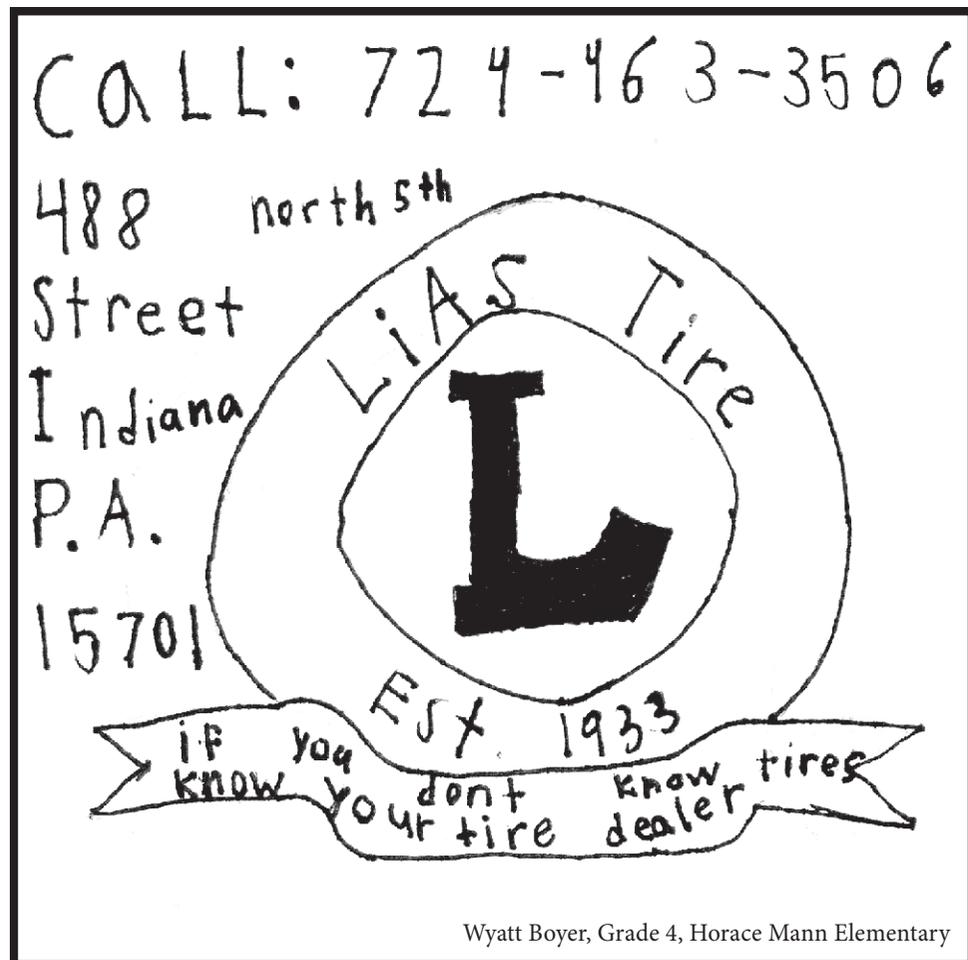
had more bauxite refineries, they would quickly gain 204,000 metric tons of aluminum alloy, which could be moved to factories where it is then turned into airplane parts, foils, and kitchen utensils.

These products will increase the American economy, allowing us to build more factories. The more factories and quality products we make, and the jobs for American citizens will better our economy. A strong and stable economy can support our military and schools.

Since 1980 the number of workers for manufacturing has decreased greatly. In 1980 21 percent of all working U.S. citizens worked in manufacturing. In 2020 11 percent of all working U.S. citizens worked in manufacturing. Since 1980 the number of people working in manufacturing has decreased from 20 million to 15 million. This is a big deal because those 5 million people that no longer work for manufacturing are replaced by cheaper labor from foreign countries such as China and India.

American jobs are being sold to the lowest bidder. The main reason for moving to these countries is because of cheaper labor, and in China the labor is

See **WATERHOUSE: 17**



Wyatt Boyer, Grade 4, Horace Mann Elementary

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Importance of the USA building more factories on American soil

**WATERHOUSE:** From 16

only 4 percent cheaper. It makes a little more sense to be stationed India because labor is less than \$2 per hour, but most India companies are operated mostly by machines, so the cheaper labor isn't as valuable. If many of these companies moved back to the United States it would provide many more jobs and it would be a massive boost to the American economy. American products being made in the United States would prevent ports from being clogged, and it would ensure fewer shipping delays.

American products, made by Americans, in America, is truly the American way.

Stay current with local happenings — read Inside Indiana, Fridays.

## Why baton twirling should be in the Olympics

Several years ago, when I was 4 years old, I watched a girl perform a routine at a local festival. I was in awe and instantly told my mother that I wanted to do it. Now, ten years later, I'm performing in the festival by myself, and with my team in front of my town and others.

When saying that something is a sport like volleyball, for example, you often think of a ball, bumping, setting, and most importantly running. Twirling baton involves many other things; it can involve balls as props, but you can't twirl a ball, so they're not used constantly. Baton twirling is, "A sport involving the manipulation of a metal rod (baton) with the hands and body to a co-ordinated routine," as said from the World Baton Twirling Federation (WBTF) website.

There are different ways to twirl as well including one, two, three, and four baton, along with rhythmic twirl, artistic twirl, and duets. There are also different types of team routines

including novelty routines, production routines, strut team, and many others!

And baton twirling is not just a female sport; there are many male twirlers. One example is Bower Sarra, who is a national-level Collegiate twirler. Though there aren't many that you see, there are male twirlers, just like there are male cheerleaders.

There should also be more recognition for baton twirling in schools, starting in elementary school. When you start in middle school, you don't have the same experience as you would if you started when you were 5 years old. There should also be more chances to twirl in school, like twirling at basketball games. Very few schools incorporate twirlers in other events following the football season.

Competitive twirling, on the other hand, has no "off-season," as many other sports do.

We are constantly working to advance, perfect, and attempt different tricks and routines. And it is no easy feat; you can get extremely hurt doing tricks. You can break, fracture, and sprain different parts of your body and even more. Despite



**DANICA MARSH**  
River Valley  
Middle School  
Grade 8

the possible dangers, you must have a lot of perseverance when performing. You must continue smiling even when you get hurt and finish your routine. It can be hard, but you persevere through the pain and focus on the task at hand.

You must also be physically and mentally strong. Twirlers are faced with challenges all the time, and always have to push through. You're not always going to have a good day, but always look on the bright side. You never know if you'll win or not, even with a bad routine.

Often when twirlers aren't practicing baton, they're working to build up stamina, strength, and poise.

Twirlers must have the stamina of a cross country runner. Twirling routines, especially solo routines, have a lot of tricks packed into about a two-minute routine. During the routine, you either have to twirl to the beat of a song or twirl as fast as you can, while still controlling the baton. Twirlers must be strong enough to throw the baton up, with enough revolution, and do gymnastics, leaps, or illusions (a rotational, full-body kick) under the baton.

Lastly, twirlers must be very poised because even though it is a fast-moving sport, you still have to look graceful while performing.

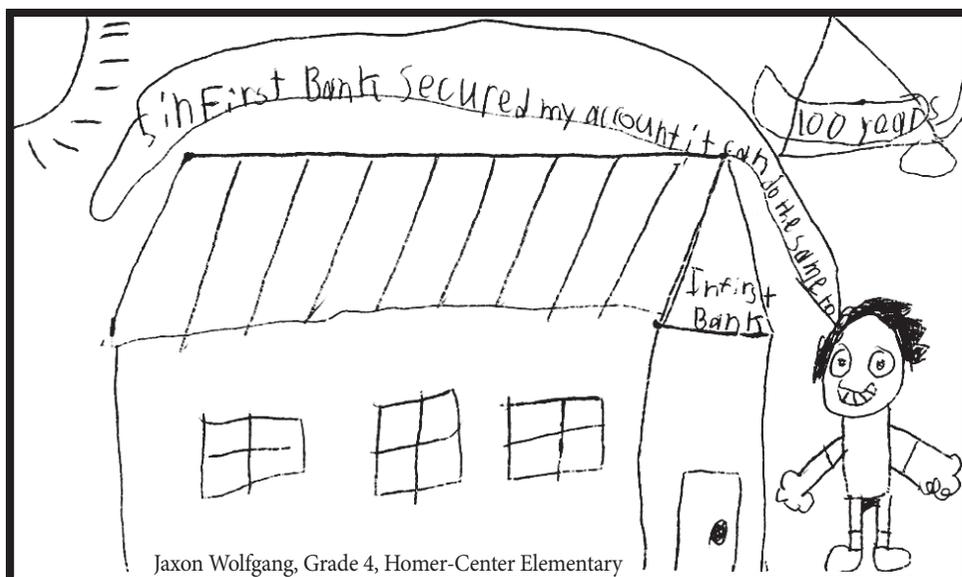
Baton twirling should be an Olympic sport because twirlers, whether they're high school majorettes or competitive twirlers, all work extremely hard to be the best athlete they can be. A petition in 2017 by Emre Cakir states, "It is a constant hustle to work, achieve, practice, and perfect what has been given to them. It is not a sport that you can learn overnight. A lot of these men and women have started anywhere between 0 and 6 years old." And, "They have a lot of the dance technique

of a rhythmic gymnast. The flow and movement with a prop of some sort are exactly the kind of bodywork a twirler has. (...) Baton twirlers have the leg strength of a gymnast. Those leaps on a concrete floor do not just happen. They have the reflexes of a fencer and the hand-eye coordination of a ping pong player. If you are standing under a flying metal stick and only have a short time to think good timing, spotting and reflexes can come in handy."

This all proves that baton twirling should be an Olympic sport.

If you watch the Olympics, winter or summer, you always hear that the athletes started their selected sport around ages 3-6, and around their 20s and 30s they're what people would consider "professionals." Twirlers still twirl even when they're out of college whether they're teaching their own students, or they're still competing. As I quoted before, "It is a constant hustle to work, achieve, practice, and perfect what has been given to them. It's not a sport that you can learn overnight." Though by the

See **MARSH: 18**



Jaxon Wolfgang, Grade 4, Homer-Center Elementary



Kade Kunselman, Grade 4, Homer-Center Elementary

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Why baton twirling should be in the Olympics

**MARSH:** From 17

time twirlers are in college they can be considered professionals or “pros” at what they do, there is always room for improvement and advancement. I am currently a level three (beginner) twirler; I’m almost a level four (intermediate) twirler, but I never stop working to improve and advance myself. There’s a lot that goes into competing, and it is very costly. We have to buy costumes, which can cost between \$150 and \$400, and even dresses, which cost from around \$175 to even possibly \$750. Plus on top of the costs for dresses and costumes, we must also pay for different events, pageants, batons,

makeup, shoes, earrings, adjustments to costumes, lessons, and more.

There’s a lot that goes into twirling such as the equipment, the outfits, the routines, and more, but overall it is a sport that keeps people coming back for more. It can be a challenge but when doing so, you often come out a better person than you were before. Twirling is an elegant, fast, and hard sport and it won’t become any easier. There are always new things to learn and you’ll always be challenging yourself, but you must overcome and persevere through. I know that I love the sport and never want to stop doing it, and I hope that others feel the same way.

### Pollution

One day I was walking on the beach and I saw a poor turtle choking to death. It was choking because someone threw a six-pack yoke into the ocean. Unfortunately, we are seeing things like this happen more often than not. Over 1 million marine animals die every year because of pollution. Water pollution can be very dangerous to aquatic animals. We need to stop this because it hurts innocent animals like turtles, penguins, sea birds, and other aquatic life. The question on the minds of many is how do we do this?

There are many ways we can stop water pollution from occurring. One way is to recycle your plastics and stop littering. The pollution is not only harmful to



animals but can also cause global warming and climate change. This can then cause acid rain from power plants and cars releasing stuff from the exhaust. Climate change and pollution can really hurt the environment.

Thankfully, people are

helping by cleaning the oceans like Team Seas, International Union of Air Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection Associations. Team Seas cleans 1 pound of trash out of the ocean for every dollar donated; so far they have cleaned more than 30 million pounds of trash out of the ocean.

Air pollution is also a very bad thing. Long-term health effects from air pollution include things like heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory diseases such as emphysema. Air pollution can also damage people’s nerves, brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. Some scientists suspect air pollutants cause some types of birth defects. Pollution in general has a large and negative impact on human health.

Pollution disproportionately kills the poor and the vulnerable. Pollution is closely tied to biodiversity, pollution is neglected, and pollution is costly. Pollution also causes increases for waste management and ozone layer depletion.

Here are some common everyday ways you can help stop pollution. You can make sure you reduce the number of trips you take in your car.

You can also reduce or eliminate fireplace and wood stove use. If possible, avoid burning leaves, trash, and other materials. Lastly, try to avoid using gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.

Pollution is a big problem in this world. If everyone starts helping with this no more animals or people on the Earth would be hurting.

### Welcome animals!

Did you know that about 70 percent of American households have at least one pet? Maybe this is because owning a pet has many different benefits for you. Besides being very cute and lovable, pets can boost your immune system. Believe it or not, owning a pet can keep you mentally healthy, too. Finally, owning a pet can keep you physical-

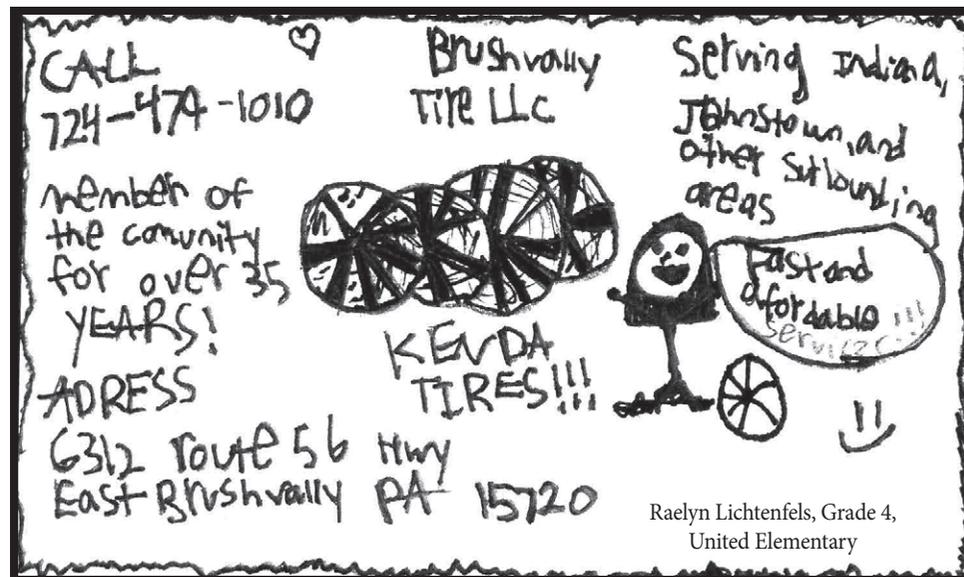
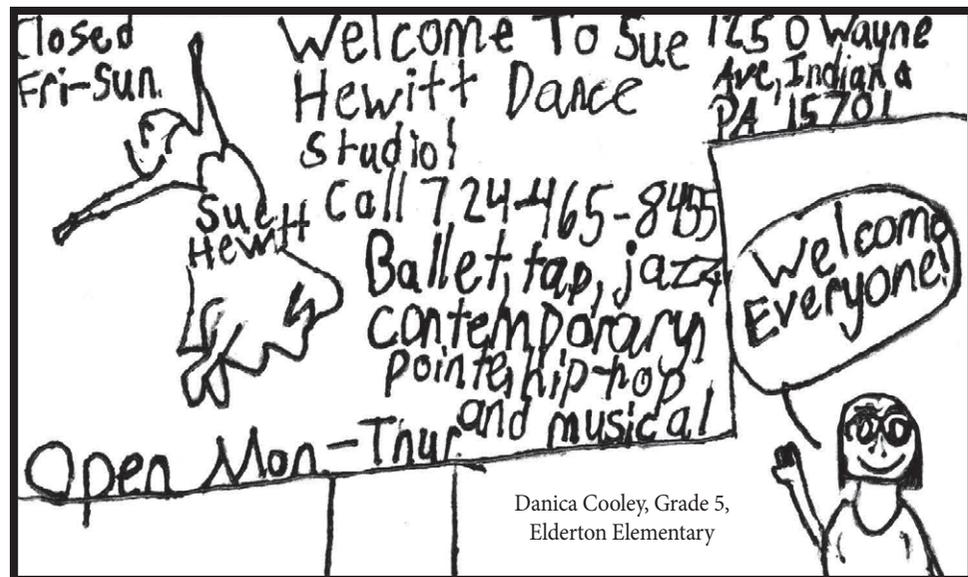
ly healthy. Who knew that owning a pet could help you in so many ways? People should own pets.

You need to be healthy in different ways for your whole life. One way to stay healthy is to have a strong immune system. Owning a pet as a child can help with this. According to The Nation’s Health, “Some studies suggest that children who are exposed to furry pets as infants are less likely to

develop allergies.” Studies show that children who grow up with pets are less likely to develop asthma, hay fever, or eczema. “Dogs may also change the makeup of dust bacteria in the home over time, leading to fewer allergies.” (WebMD) Owning a pet will keep your immune system strong and healthy.

Physical health is crucial,

See **WALLS: 19**



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Untitled

We've all heard about the endless push from businesses and the public to be "carbon-neutral" or have "net zero emissions." Around the world, this goal of accord and synergy between the natural world and humans is trying to be reached by using alternative renewable energy sources. Solar and wind power are the obvious answers to our increasing electricity needs, right? Putting solar panels on our homes or choosing to get our electricity from a wind farm can save a lot of money. But are these options really helping the environment like we think?

Our lives are consuming more electricity every day, and by studying other parts of the world, we can learn how to be smarter when choosing our energy sources.

Germany has put millions of dollars into transforming its energy supply from coal, oil, and natural gas to solar and wind power. In 2016, Germany installed 4 percent more solar panels than it had before and generated 3 percent less electricity from solar than it had in previous years. Maybe it was a cloudy year. If it was cloudy, it was probably windy, right? Germany installed 11 percent more wind turbines in 2016 compared to previous years, but it got 2 percent less electricity from wind. Maybe it was cloudy and it wasn't windy!

There will be times like this, and what do we do if we cannot produce enough power through these times? Many people suggest batteries, but batteries are very expensive, and we don't have the technology to create a battery system that



**JOHN MICHAEL DUNN**  
United High School  
Grade 9

supports the entire world right now. Renewable energy is not the solution to a future with clean energy.

What are the other options if renewable energy isn't the future? What do we have now that we could use? Coal? Coal is cheap. That's the main reason why it's popular. Coal power has one major downfall — it is

very dirty, inefficient, and old. There is only so much coal on earth, and eventually our supply will run out. Also, nearly half of all deaths related to electricity are caused by cancers and lung diseases from the pollution from sources like coal plants. What about oil? The price of oil changes very often, and like coal it is dirty and non-renewable. Why is oil still a main source of energy for so much of the world? Oil is easy to transport to parts of the world that cannot access it locally, and it is easier to transport compared to coal. It is simple to burn, and it is abundant as of the current supply. Oil is still inefficient and produces too many greenhouse gases. Let's keep looking. Natural gas? It is cleaner than oil or coal, but more expensive and harder to refine. Natural gas is still

a natural non-renewable resource, so it will eventually run out.

What about nuclear energy? Most nuclear reactors in use today can be classified as "light-water fission reactors." This type of power plant was developed and put into mainstream use in the 1950s and 1960s. It was available, it was relatively cheap, and little research needed to be done to use the technology because it had been in testing for many years. There are other types of reactors, too, most notably "fusion"-type reactors. Fission reactors split atoms and fusion reactors put them together. Both release large amounts of energy very efficiently, but fusion reactors are more complex, and the technology is still in the testing and research stage. Many experts think fusion energy is where

our electricity in the future will come from. Nuclear reactors are clean and can be cheap. Fusion reactors of the future will be incredibly efficient, clean, and inexpensive.

Another reason why nuclear is such a reliable source is it can work in any weather. Nuclear works in all weather, even if it isn't sunny or windy. Also, because nuclear power is so efficient, the resources needed will practically never run out.

Ask almost anyone, "What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear 'nuclear power?'" and the common answer is "ka-boom!" Everyone knows about the famous accidents at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania, Chernobyl in Ukraine, and Fukushima in Japan. The

See **DUNN: 20**

## Welcome animals!

**WALLS:** From 18

especially in the winter when nobody wants to go outside. You may not know this, but owning a pet can keep you physically fit. If you own a pet, it's important for it to get exercise, just like humans. "Taking a dog for a walk, hike, or run are fun and rewarding ways to fit healthy daily exercise into your schedule." ([www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org))

Having to take an animal outside acts as motivation for you to get out and be active. Owning a pet is a great way to stay physically active not just in the winter, but all year.

Though some people may say that pets are too much work, there are pets that are low maintenance. When people think of owning a pet, they think cats or dogs. Pets can be anything; whether it's a lizard, fish, snake, cat, dog, pig, or any other animal. Even if you do

think that pets are too much work, if you own something like a fish, you would only need to feed it a few times a day and clean its tank every week. If you want a pet that's a little more work, you could try owning a cat. Cats will take care of themselves most of the time, but they still need some attention. Last but not least, if you want a pet that is sometimes a lot of work, you should get a dog. Although dogs can be difficult to handle at times, this will give you a loyal companion to play with.

One of the most important advantages to owning a pet is that it is great for your mental health. Studies have shown that in lockdown, more than 90 percent people had pets that helped them emotionally ([www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com)). Being in lockdown alone can be very hard for most people, so having a pet by your side

will help you stay healthy mentally. "Interacting with animals has been shown to decrease levels of cortisol (a stress-related hormone)..." ([newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov)). Most people have stress at some point in their life, but having a pet will decrease these stress levels. Stress can be caused by many things, but knowing that you can go home to your loving pet can calm you. You should own a pet to keep you mentally healthy.

People should own pets for various reasons. Pets can boost your immunity to certain illnesses. This is very important for everyone. Also, owning a pet can keep you fit. Exercise is crucial all year, and pets can help with that. Finally, pets can keep you mentally healthy.

Everyone needs to have a healthy mind to have a healthy life. Go out and either adopt a pet or buy a pet today!



Colton Neese, Grade 4, Rayne Elementary

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Untitled

**DUNN:** From 19

endless fear and hatred for nuclear power continues, mainly because when a nuclear accident happens many people die at once. Most people forget about

what the greenhouse gases produced by other means of electricity are doing to our lungs every day.

Millions of people have died from cancers and diseases related to every

other source of electricity other than nuclear power.

What most of the public doesn't realize is that the accidents of the past were all simple human errors that can be fixed and prevented in the future.

Most famously, the Chernobyl power plant in what was at the time the Soviet Union was different

from many other power plants in the rest of the world. These plants had no safety precautions like American-designed plants do, such as a large cement dome around the reactor.

These plants in the USSR were designed to be cheap and easy to run. They were not meant for the stress and strain that

was demanded during the routine testing that caused the plant to explode.

At Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, the lies from the corporation running the plant about local safety caused many people fear and hatred that could have been avoided.

All of these errors could

have been prevented and can be fixed for future generations of nuclear power plants.

The future of humanity demands more electricity than our current sources of energy can handle. The future demands nuclear power to continue innovation of clean and efficient energy.

## Untitled

The school has failed us.

Through my years of education, I have observed a disconnect between the relationship of the students and the school board. The school board and its decisions have become a mystery to its students.

How do we fix this error? I have a strong opinion that an elected student representative would not only fix the lack of communication

but benefit both the students and the school board in many ways.

Every year in history class I have been taught revolution after revolution. And through all those revolutions I have seen one common denominator. The similar factor is people's need for democracy in their lives.

Students want a say in their environment, and they want a little control over their daily lives. I am asking

for a reform in our school system. I think that there should be a student elected to represent the students of the school.

Some people would argue that students are too immature to be on the school board. How would the school board know if students have never been given the chance? Not only that, but we make daily choices about our future, like what credits we want to take for college, programs that

would benefit our future, and what classes would help our future careers.

Not only would this allow the students to learn about democracy, but it would also give students a direct experience of it.

Students spend seven hours a day for 180 days a year for many years in school, yet students have no say in the environment they spend the majority of their time in.

For example, there is the

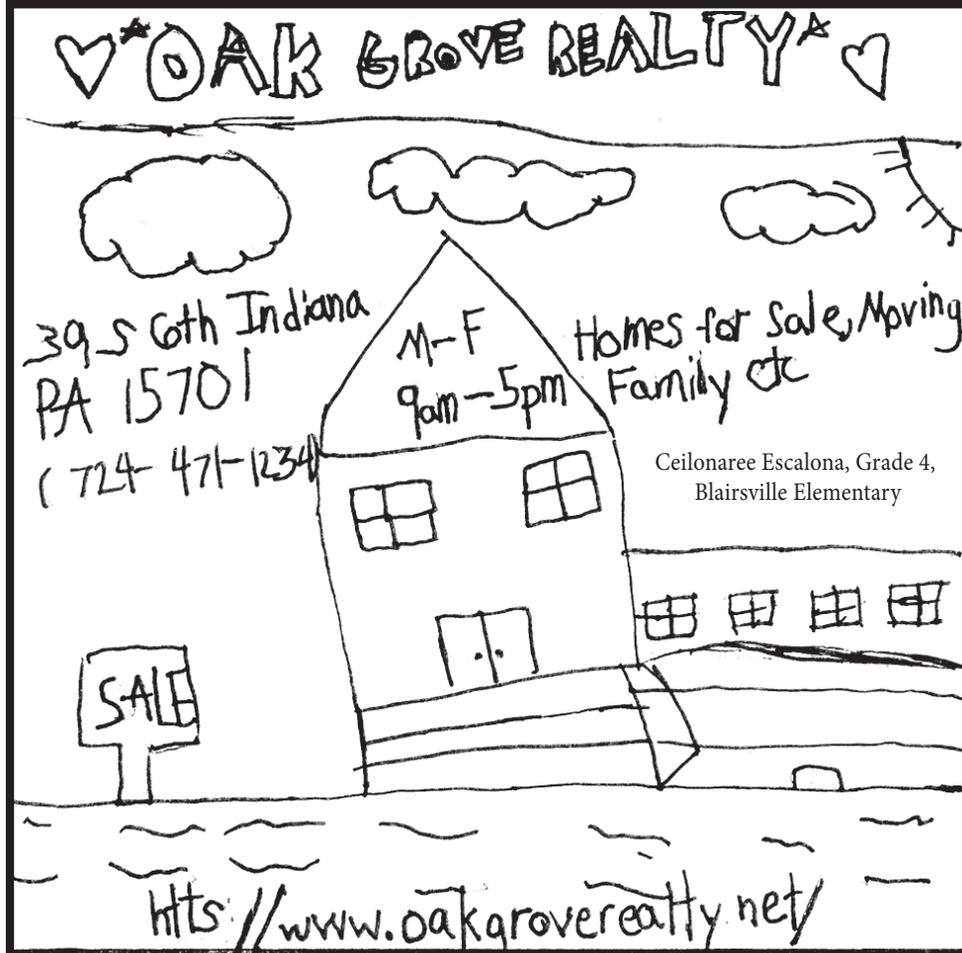
entire COVID-19 pandemic. All of the decisions about COVID-19 were made without the students. Sure, students' opinions were taken into consideration, but what outlet do students truly have for our opinions?

I think there should be a student to directly represent the student body's opinions and feelings, especially during times like COVID-19. Students had to

See **BOWERS: 21**



**MARISSA BOWERS**  
United High School  
Grade 9



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Untitled

**BOWERS:** From 20

live with whatever choice the school board made. After all, the school board decisions would affect the students the most. Why should students not get a vote about what is dictated in their lives?

Because students spend so much time at school, they see how the school works on a daily basis. I would even argue that the students know more about how the school runs on the inside than the school board.

The school board makes decisions to regulate what goes on in the classroom without spending real time in the school. Stu-

dents see how the classes run every day, they see the good and the bad of the classes.

The school board has scheduled appointments for observing the classroom, but doesn't that kind of defeat the purpose of seeing how the teacher and students are performing in the class if they have planned observations? Furthermore, students could provide an important insight to help better our education and explain possible misconduct going on in classrooms.

Students can also provide insight to the school board about how to connect with the students.

The school board is often having assemblies to try to persuade students. Whether it is to join a club or a presentation on safety around the school, the school board is constantly presenting to students. I think a student on the school board would improve these presentations.

Students could offer advice on how to better connect with students and offer advice on how students can easily be persuaded.

Many of the presentations I have seen have often only included flashy benefits of programs. Doing this can make students feel belittled and like the school board

thinks the only way to get students to join a program is to hold something flashy in front of them. Therefore, I believe having someone to communicate these issues would improve the efficiency.

The school can still make up for the gap they have built between the school and the school executives. Having this one representative would destroy that gap and create a bridge to not only keep students informed but give them a voice.

I feel that this is very important for our future education and could benefit the school in many ways and that we should push for action on this subject.

## Untitled

Has your voice ever been heard?

Many people have a bias towards men. Women and men deal with different social issues each day. Women have to deal with the social standard of men being more prone to being in charge.

Women and men should be treated equally. In everyday life, you see the differences in the lives based on gender. The gender of one should not define how one is treated. Women deserve to be treated the same as men.

Rarely, women are in leadership positions over men. In a sense, men are primarily chosen over women. If more women become involved in the world around us, the world can be a better place.

For example, in this day



**MELINA FRY**  
United High School  
Grade 9

and age, it is sad to hear we have just received our first female vice president. Over the years in America, there have been a total of 49 vice presidents, and only one has been a female.

The leadership of our new leader is showing the power of a woman. For example,

See **FRY: 22**



Trevor Brice, Grade 6, WA McCreery Elementary

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Possible effects of climate change

How can climate change affect the planet? As time has gone on, the amount of differences that are noticeable in everyday life in terms of climate change are very noticeable.

It's become a very big problem, including problems with geography, food, etc. It affects things like our water, agriculture, human health, energy and our wildlife.

Climate change can discontinue or slow down the growth of the world's food. The temperatures have been up wildly. The summer of '21 has been one of the warmest summers on record. With temperatures rising, it could affect the growth of our plants and production in several ways. But it's more than a simple

yes or no answer. It deals with the science of plants. Photosynthesis plays a big part of this. There are possibilities and not just one simple answer.

Science teacher Michael Thom and I discussed the possibilities on how high temperatures could affect a plant's growth. We came up with when tempera-

tures rise, CO2 levels can increase. CO2 is good for plant growth, which could increase food productions, or at least plant production. If temperatures increase too much, it could cause the enzymes to denature or stop working, which could possibly slow plant production down. However, look at the jungle. The jungle has temperatures that are high, and it's an overgrown environment.

While temperatures can help there be a greater amount of CO2, how does that affect water availability? There could be more precipitation with higher temperatures because of the rising water levels and evaporation. But what if there's too much precipitation? The plant could drown. But what if there's

See **BARTLEBAUGH: 26**



**BELLA BARTLEBAUGH**  
Purchase Line  
High School  
Grade 10

## Untitled

**FRY:** From 21

out of 100 senators, less than 25 percent are female. In the House of Representatives, less than 30 percent of females are in the role. Currently, out of the nine justices on the Supreme Court, three are female. With there being less than 35 percent of females in each branch of government, it stands out as an obvious issue. This stands out as an issue since many women are highly educated. Women outnumber men in college enrollment. Women go to school, work hard, and become educated but still can't break through the stereotype of a man being in charge. In a college atmosphere it is proven to show that women have better grades and drop out less frequently. The women do the work, get the grades, and most importantly, get the education they need to find a job. An average woman's yearly salary at the same job as an average male is less than the males.

With this issue, it leads to another problem. The problem is the pay gap between men and women. In recent studies, it has been shown on average that women make around 84 percent of

what men earn. If both men and women are completing the same job, each person should make the same amount of money. The task asked for the men to complete would be just the same as the woman's. For example, for every dollar a male makes, a female makes 84 cents. That is a 16-cent difference. To most, 16 cents isn't a lot of money, but a little goes a long way. Women deserve to earn the money they worked hard for. The small amount of 16 cents could be the difference between food for the family or starvation. Women deserve to be treated equally for all the work they put in.

The discrimination toward successful women is bitterly concerning. Some people hate to see people succeed, without even knowing them personally nor their morals. Societies with equal rights for all are more healthy than the rest. Equality is an important figure and role, which affects not only women but everyone. Equality is the idea of everyone living their life to the fullest. Women shouldn't have to lower their dreams since men get the job position over them, or they can't support their funds or fami-

ly. Everyone's dreams should be lived to the fullest.

Without equality, it prevents women's dreams from coming true. The 16-cent difference can crush one's hopes and dreams.

Some may happen to think men deserve to be treated more respectfully and be in charge. I find that opinion appalling due to thinking gender shouldn't define your job choices, your say in government, nor your salary. Throughout the world many changes need to be made. To start with, women need to be respected for their accomplishments. A solution to this worldwide issue is to offer women a chance and to start treating them with the respect they deserve. Women outnumber and typically excel their way through college earning a better education, while men have a harder time in school. Therefore, with women and men doing the same job, they should earn the same amount of money.

Also, in the U.S. government right now, less than 35 percent of members in each branch of Congress are female. The difference between how different men and women are treated is made obvious.

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Alayna Lundberg, Grade 5, Purchase Line Elementary

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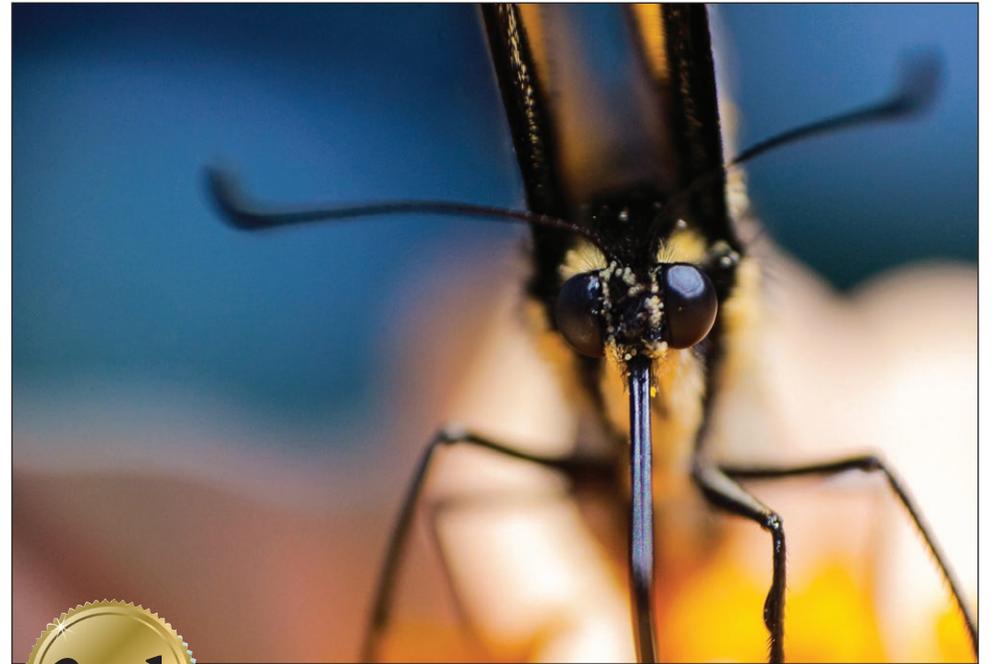
**MARGARET LOWERY**  
Indiana Senior  
High School  
Grade 12



# NIE contest winners for **BEST FEATURE PHOTOS**



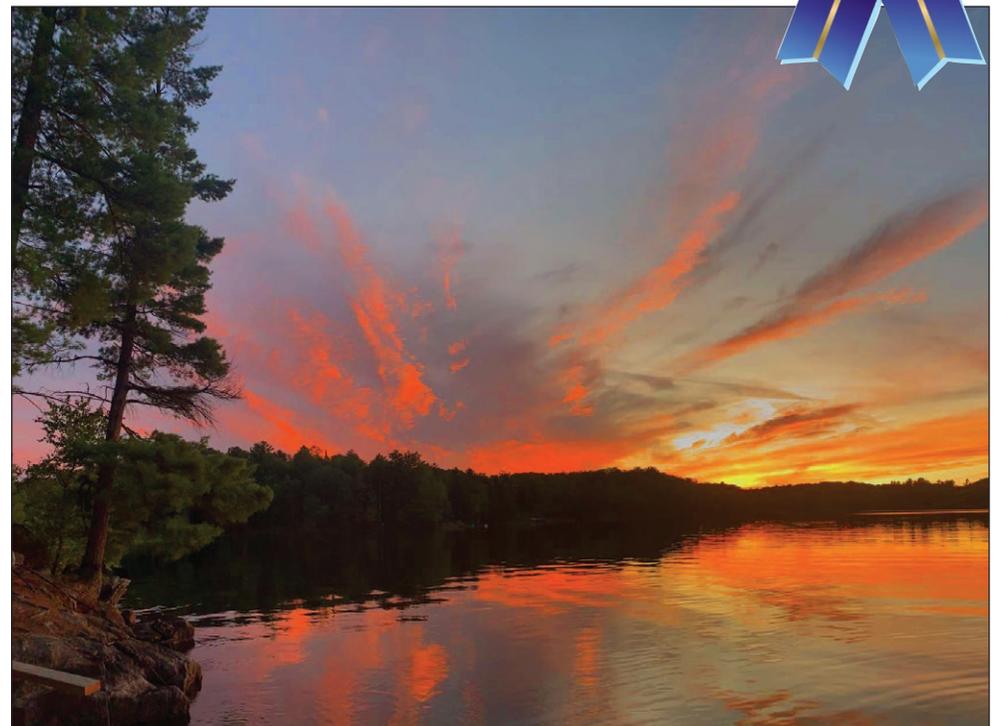
**CAROLINE ALBERT**  
Indiana Senior  
High School  
Grade 11



**CAELIE JONES**  
Learning Tree  
Homeschool Fellowship  
Grade 9



**SYDNEY DUVALL**  
Indiana County  
Technology Center  
Grade 12



# NIE contest winners for **BEST SPORTS PHOTOS**



**DAKOTA ROBINSON**  
Indiana County  
Technology Center  
Grade 10



**ANGELO LAMANTIA**  
Indiana Senior High School  
Grade 11



**MAKENZIE WELLS**  
Indiana  
Senior High  
School  
Grade 12



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Possible effects of climate change

**BARTLEBAUGH:** From 22 a drought? The contribution of high temperatures mixed with no water intake could dry them out.

But in general, the earth has different geography, temperatures, and cultures. There are different needs for different places. In different environments, some plants can vary and some plants can be succeeding in growth.

For example, bamboo is a very crucial plant. It is good for oxygen, animals, construction, energy, and the large roots keep the ground from erosion.

However, studies show that within the next century, there is a likelihood that China will experience a setback in the growth of bamboo.

Research shows that our garden vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, and lettuce are not fond of the high temperatures. High temperatures can cause them to bolt or flower.

However, there are plants like tomatoes that prefer the temperatures to be in the 95-degree range. However, once temperatures reach to the 100s that's when it becomes a problem. Along

with tomatoes, things like sweet potatoes, sunflowers, and okra plants grow well in warmer climates.

As well as there being changes in plant/food production, there are ways climate change can and will affect human health as time goes on. Things with air pollution, allergens and pollen, more drastic temperatures, and so much more.

It can also affect people besides all of those reasons. Natural disasters such as floods, forest fires, and raised water levels can affect a person's situation. It could cause them to lose

things or even everything, damage, money problems, etc.

With everything being warmer, in the so called "normal" summer, there are mosquitoes, fleas, ticks, and other diseases carried by certain bugs and vectors. But with everything being warmer for a longer time, these certain critters stay around longer. With this, there's more room for diseases like yellow fever, Lyme disease, the normal bug bites, and a lot more other things.

Research shows that climate change, besides raised water levels, there

are problems involving water. Things like erosion runoffs as well as agriculture, can include fertilizer, manure, pesticides, chemicals like asbestos, lead, arene, radon, and many more. These are connected to them running off into large bodies of water. These are linked to waterborne illnesses and infections. Overall warmer temperatures can expose us to more chemicals.

Climate change has affected us already, but continue to affect us. Not all bad, but some good possibly. Time will tell.

There isn't just the mat-

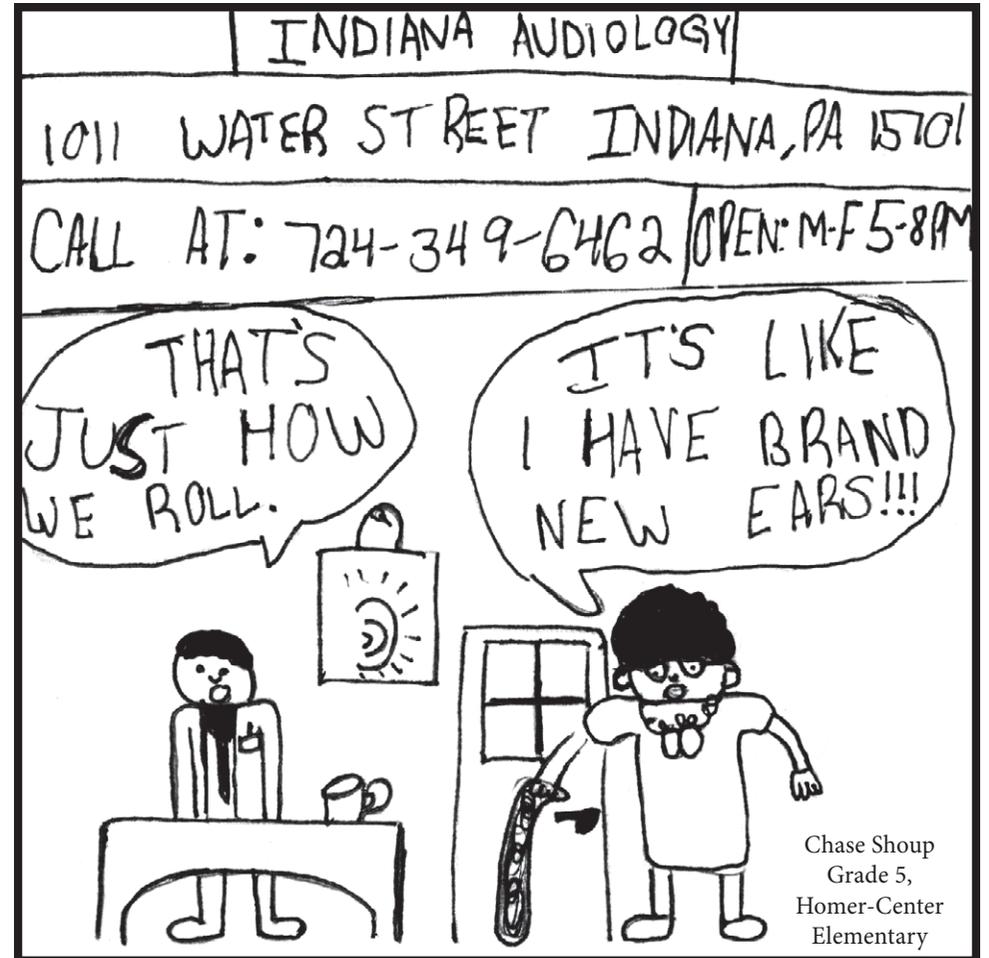
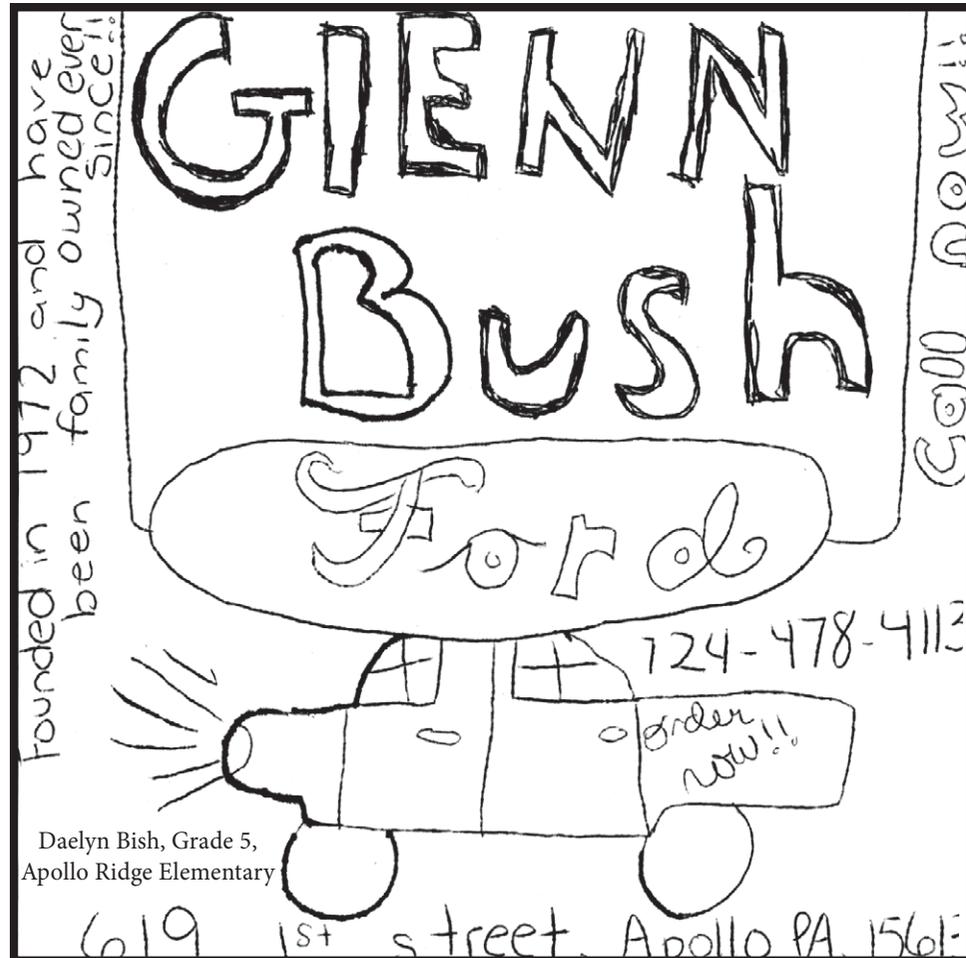
ters that are listed. Things like walking, running, and cycling could help with the air pollution, which affects the ozone layer.

Eating vegetables can help with less energy use because they don't take man-made energy sources to produce. Things that are as simple as recycling can help.

As for the near future, this upcoming summer is predicted to be another hot summer with hot days. There has been a 1.96-degree increase in temperature throughout the previous year.

Only time will tell.

See news happening? Reach us on Facebook or call (724) 465-5555, ext. 283.



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## How social media affects people

All over social media platforms, users and influencers use filters, edit and even Photoshop most if not all of their images.

These images are posted for millions of people to view and can impact us negatively. These pictures can present unrealistic beauty and body standards for our generation.

Almost 90 percent of teens ages 13-17 have at least one social media account and visit these daily. Unrealistic pictures that are posted can cause eating disorders, especially in younger females.

Social media itself is not the problem, however; extreme uses of editing and Photoshopping are. Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia can develop over time with both males and females.

A study was conducted in a public school by PMC Labs in Pakistan and showed 39 percent of young females were found to be anorexic. This was because of both trends on social media and seeing unrealistic edited images that were portrayed to them.

Along with eating disorders, these filters and edited images can influence some people to change things about themselves. These can include piercings, hair color and tattoos.

Teens are often put under pressure and receive feedback on these platforms in the comments. This can lead to them feeling left out and pressured to get these things done to themselves.

Senior Haley Anderson expressed her views and thoughts about social media and how it affects her.

She explained the platforms she has and said, "I have a lot of social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, VSCO and more. I use these apps to contact my friends and family along with posting pictures for people to see."

Anderson talked about her usage of social media and explained, "I use Snapchat and Facebook almost daily; the other apps I use when I'm bored or have nothing else to do. I try not to over-use the apps and my phone because I feel better when I'm moving and staying active."

Using social media plat-



**JALYN BUTERBAUGH**

Purchase Line  
High School  
Grade 10

forms can affect everyone differently. Some people say they feel happier and more confident about themselves, while others say they feel worse.

"These platforms don't really change my mind about myself but if anything, most of the time it's definitely more of a boost of confidence," said Anderson.

She continued to talk about the way these platforms make her feel when she uses them daily.

"I don't really feel happier when I use these platforms but it does give me a way to text my boyfriend. I also get to see the other cool, fun things people may be

doing and keeping up with what they are doing when I don't see them," Anderson explained.

Her views on Photoshopping on social media were talked about as well. "I do believe some of the pictures on this app are Photoshopped just because if you know how someone really looks and their posts look completely different, you just start to think how. It's almost like I don't see in person what they post online," said Anderson.

Junior Abigail Goncher also expressed her views and thoughts about how social media affects her.

Goncher talked about the apps she uses daily on her phone to access social media.

"I use Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Twitter. I use these platforms to contact friends

and family and see what they are up to when I don't see them," she said. Out of all the social apps she uses, she explained that her usage of Snapchat and TikTok is greater than the other apps such as Twitter and Facebook.

Goncher explained how these platforms make her feel about herself and said, "I think specifically TikTok and Instagram hit both sides of the spectrum. They both make me feel good and bad about myself at times. A lot of good messages are posted on both platforms. I also think they present a lot of unrealistic standards."

These unrealistic standards can make many people feel worse about themselves such as not having tiny waists, long legs, being tan but not having it be unnatural and sharp facial structure.

Similar to Anderson, Goncher uses social media mostly when she has nothing else to do and her life does not depend on it.

"I don't think social media makes me feel happier because I think it is a temporary distraction from problems and reality. I usually feel guilty after I sit on my phone for longer periods of time," said Goncher.

Her personal views of social media is that Photoshopping is involved especially for celebrities.

"I believe that a lot of pictures are Photoshopped and edited because there are a lot of unrealistic beauty standards. I think many girls try to reach these standards and do so by editing and filters. I also think there are a lot of unrealistic standards for how bodies should look, both girls and boys," Goncher said.

## Untitled

Mandates, protests, vaccines and new COVID-19 variants are all things that are seen and heard about every day. Ever since the United States began to shut down on March 15, 2020, our federal, state, and local governments have been trying to navigate this pandemic.

One popular way to fight this coronavirus is vaccination. Many governments have been encouraging vaccination since the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was released under Emergency Use Authorization. However, these governments soon found that just recommending vaccination would



**LIAM KING**

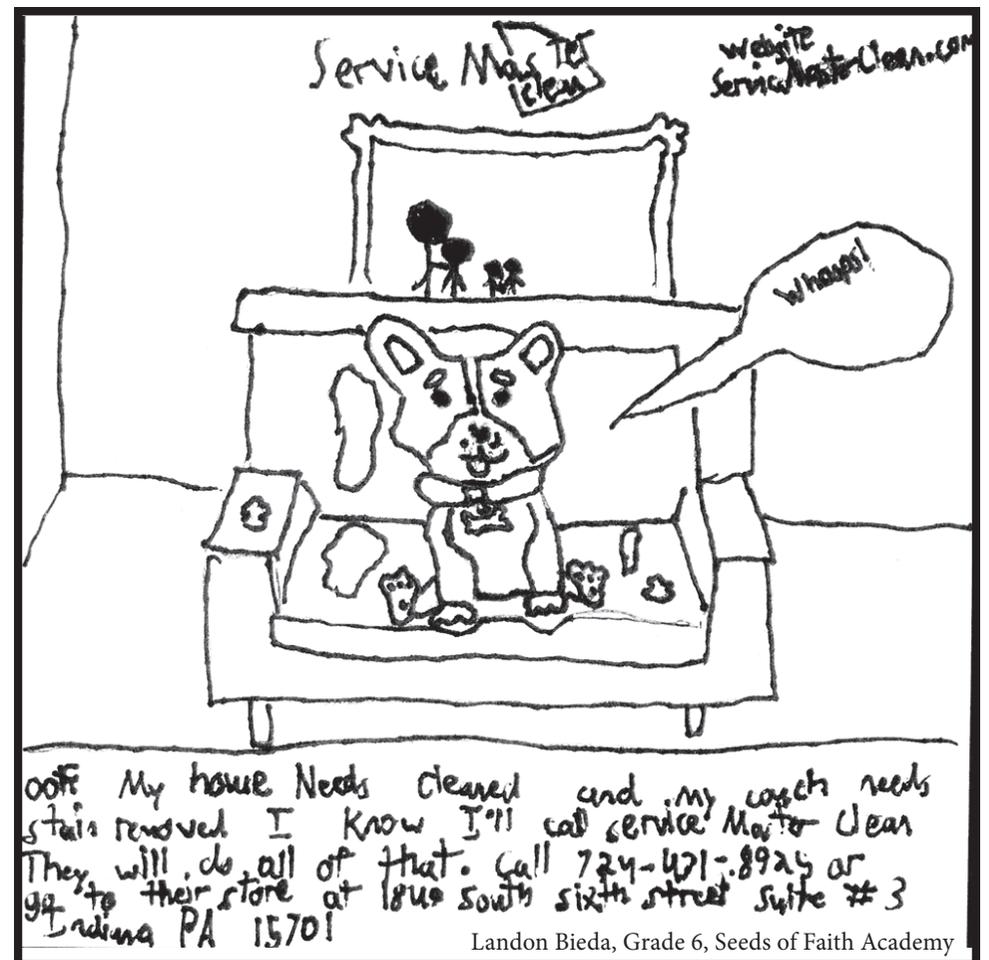
Calvary Baptist Academy  
Grade 10

not be enough. Vaccine mandates were enacted in many different states (there are currently 22 states with some variety of vaccination requirements) to further the COVID-19 vaccines. These

decisions are considered by many Americans as one step too far, and there are two major reasons why.

The first reason is that, in many cases, no exemptions are allowed, one must get the vaccine. In some workplaces, there is the option to wear a mask and receive weekly or daily testing instead of vaccination; however, this is not a true exemption. And, some states do not even give this "exemption," meaning that one must either be vaccinated or be excluded from work. This problem is seen most commonly among healthcare workers and state employees.

See KING: 28



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Untitled

**KING:** From 27

Some schools are even suspending students for refusing to wear a mask if they decline COVID-19 vaccination. It is unacceptable to deny complete exemption from COVID vaccination, especially considering there are legitimate reasons to refuse vaccination.

This brings us to the second reason: All of the vaccines available to the public are still in an experimental state. There is

no knowledge of the long-term effects these vaccines may have. There have already been reports of blood clots, heart attacks, and similar complications due to vaccination. And, while all of these reactions are somewhat rare, there is still too much uncertainty to mandate vaccination, even for healthcare workers.

COVID-19 vaccination is a decision each individual must make for themselves; it should not be made by the government.

Take us with you!  
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### Blowing the whistle

\*Boah\* The buzzer sounds. 35 sec. 33 sec. 31 sec. 30 sec. 29 sec. 28 sec.

You've made your best time, thinking you'll be first on the podium, but you look at the time board and see you are second by nine seconds. The first-place time was 19.55; your competitor broke the record of the fastest time swam in your age group, but that woman hasn't always been a woman, she's been a trans woman for barely a year.

One fatal swoop, the integrity of the women's sports divisions has been demolished; all of the hard work women have done training was for nothing.

I am a female athlete who has been swimming for 10 years, and I am currently a junior in high school.



**AVA SMATHERS**  
West Shamokin  
High School  
Grade 11

As of now, I have never swam against a transgender woman, but it is evident that it is happening to female swimmers, at the highest collegiate levels. This has upset swimmers and spectators in every league.

For those who aren't aware

of the recent events of the Zippy Invitational, there was a transgender woman who goes by the name of Lia Thomas participating. She created controversy when she broke records in the women's 200 and 500 free-style and won the 1650 free-style by 40 seconds in the women's division.

Many have voiced their concerns on the topic if Lia should be allowed to swim against biological women. A rule created by the NCAA grants trans women the right to swim in the women's division, after undergoing one year of hormone therapy. In Lia's case, she has gone through two years of hormone suppressants and before her transition she competed on the Penn team for three years prior as a man.

This starts to make the

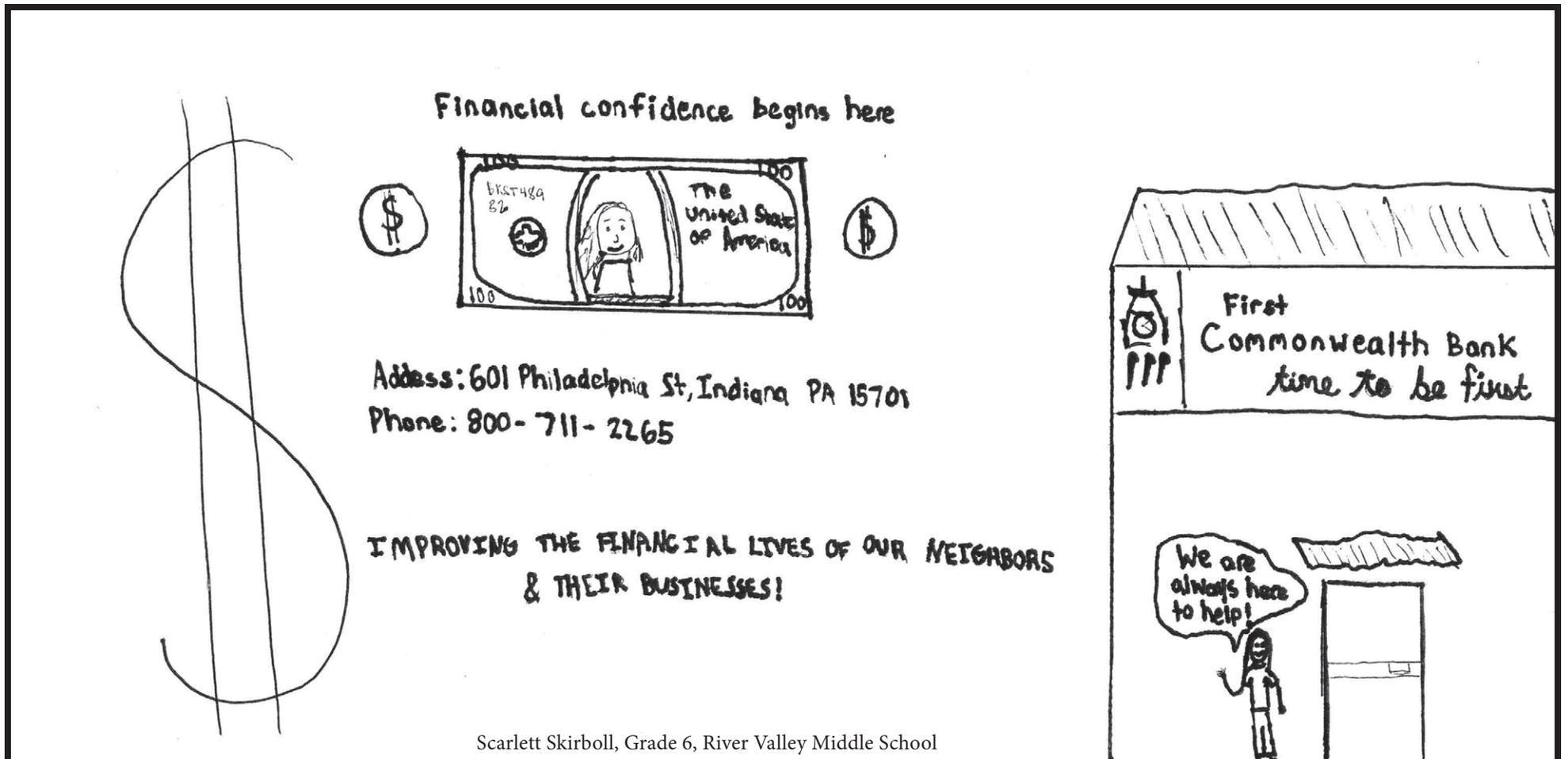
water murky; while she identifies female, she still retains the benefits of going through male puberty.

When boys start puberty, they develop more muscle mass, increased lung capacity, and a longer, more stream-line body because of the increased amounts of testosterone. Females don't have these high levels of testosterone; our bodies aren't designed for the same purpose as males' bodies.

I am a young woman who isn't fully developed yet but, like all women, I can't change the fact my body is made to bear a child. When studying the anatomy of humans, the bone structures differ from men and women.

Men have broad shoulders, which, in the case of

See **SMATHERS: 29**



Scarlett Skirboll, Grade 6, River Valley Middle School

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Blowing the whistle

**SMATHERS:** From 28

swimming, gives them the advantage of being able to pull more water back. Women are born with wide hips to carry a child, which slows a woman's ability to gain speed as her hips create drag in the water.

Teammates of Lia have also voiced they "will never make it" to the winner podium as long as Thomas is still on the team. The statement by these swimmers shows how women's sports are in danger of becoming obsolete.

I can't imagine how much confidence is lost from all the women who have raced Lia and have had their records destroyed. Every day knowing their training, hard

work and success to compete as the best of the best to just have Lia shatter in seconds. Title IX was created to protect women's sports, but no one really cares. Even though girls are able to compete in sports, girls aren't encouraged to. The highest level is the Olympics or a small-time, major league team not many even know exist. Men's sports have always been put first and if we let anyone who claims to be a woman be able to compete in the women's division, women's sports will become a thing of the past. My father has said that it will be the men's division and other men's division.

I hope in this essay I have been able to prove to you why transgender women

shouldn't be able to compete in female sports. The advantages men have over women create an unfair playing field. I believe that all decisions have consequences and that biological males should not be allowed to compete against cisgendered women. One solution would be to make the men's category open and the other category be only for cis women.

As an athlete, I believe everyone should be able to compete and I support any person wanting to become a trans woman or man, but once personal decisions start to hinder the success of others, corrective measures must be taken to protect all athletes, no matter gender, race or sexuality, and ensure a level playing field.

### Acknowledging teen burnout can help reduce stress

High School. Teenagers. Homework. Classwork. Sports. Activities. Home-life.

Did you feel stressed reading that? I did. Most teenagers can relate. We constantly have activities going on inside and outside of school. It's hard to manage everything.

A study mentioned by NL Times in 2014 suggested that close to or more than 75 percent of teenagers experience burnout. Burnout is when a teen enters a state of chronic stress that can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion, detachment, anxiety, depression, lack of feeling and more. This can cause teens to go through de-



**RYLEE LEE**

Purchase Line  
High School  
Grade 11

pression, anxiety, making poor choices, not sleeping, eating disorders, physical pain, health issues and differences in behavior. These things are not easy to go through, especially alone.

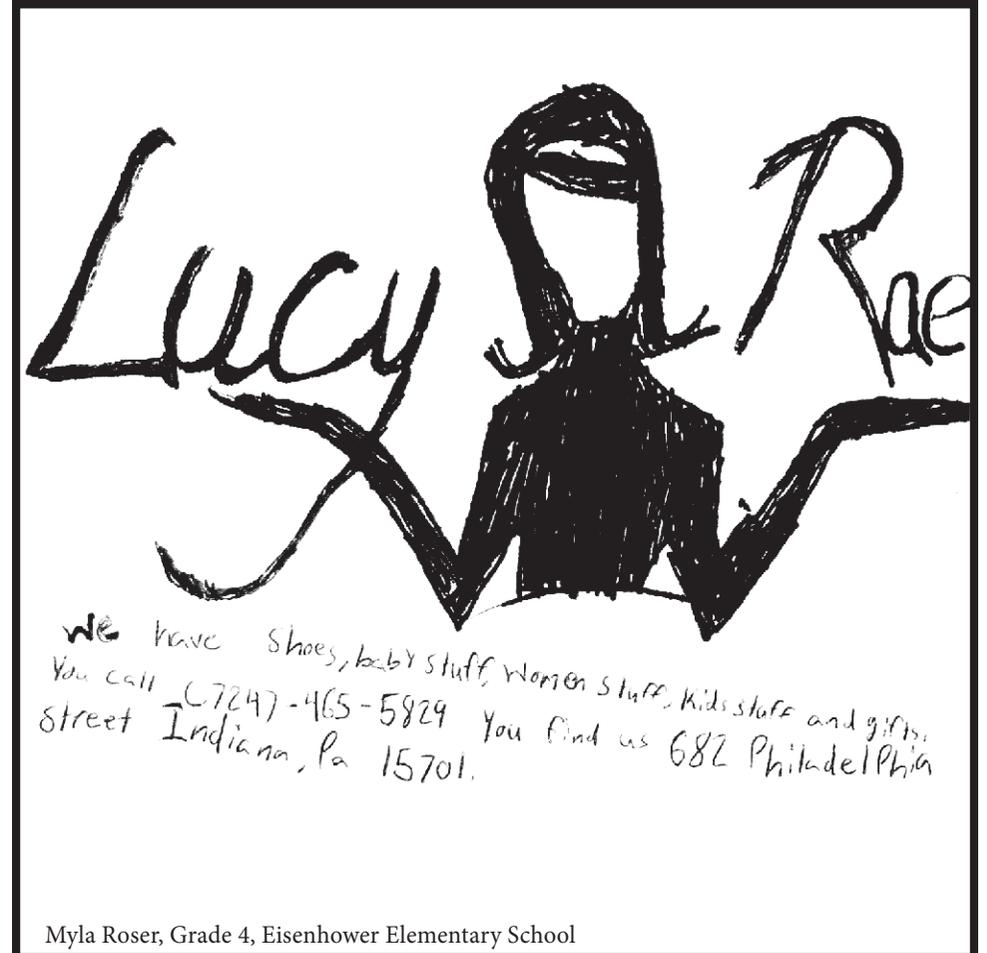
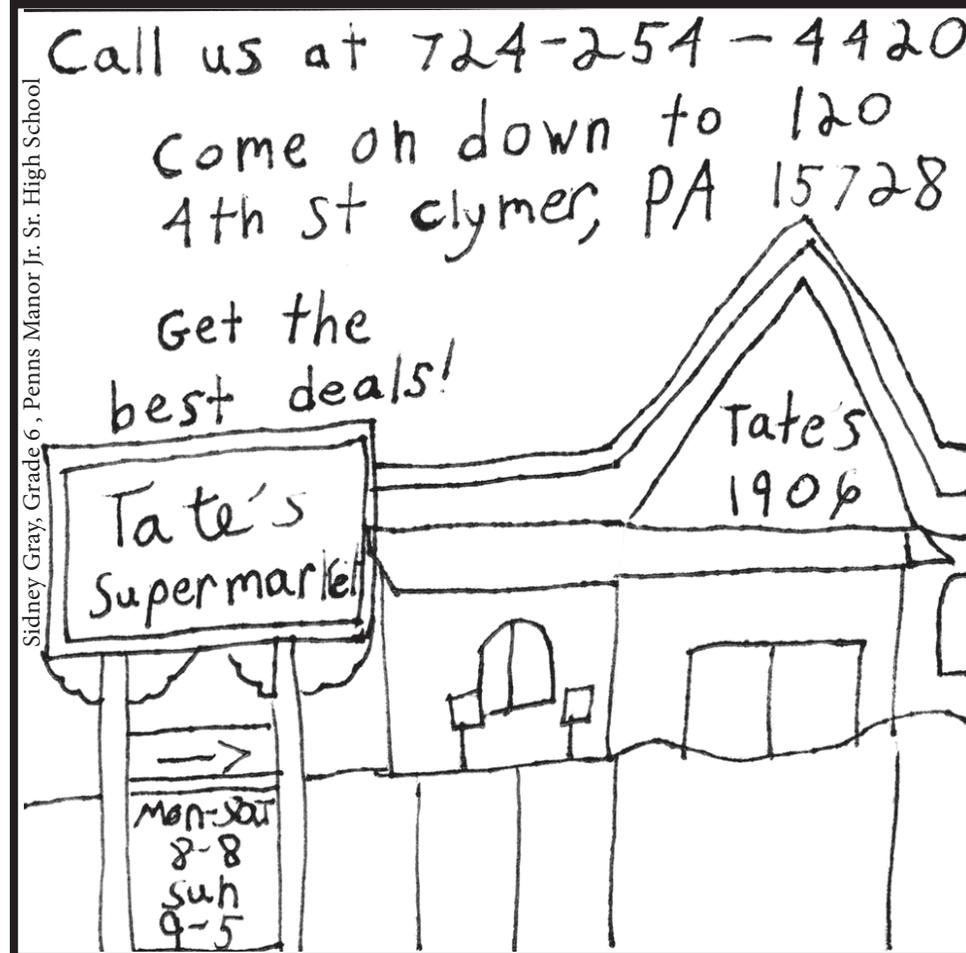
Learning ways to help students in these situations can help decrease burnout among students.

Personal experiences with burnout can create many emotions. I myself have experienced burnout. In one of my classes I asked my peers what stressed them out the most.

The answers were fear of the unknown; not being in control of what can happen; balancing work school and life; school in general; family problems; and time management. The thing is that most teens encounter all of these stressors plus more. So how can we help teens? Let's find out.

How can teens help other teens with burnout? Other teens can help their peers by letting them know that they are not alone and being by their side. They can talk to them about their problems and listen to them. Teens can also

See LEE: 30



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Acknowledging teen burnout can help reduce stress

LEE: From 29

help by doing things with their friends to try and distract them from the dark place they are in.

How can teachers help teens with burnout? I think all teens can agree that teachers and school are a leading cause of stress and burnout.

Having a ton of school work and homework is a lot to handle. Then a lot of teens are involved in sports, after school activities, clubs, councils, etc. There is this stereotype that teenagers are lazy and do nothing.

Have they ever thought that they are depressed and don't want to do anything? That they are anxious so they shut down plans? Maybe they are so drained that they can't gain enough sleep? That video games, arts, music, and more are their only escape from life? I believe in all of these things.

Teenagers are lazy. Teenagers are addicted to social media. Teenagers are up to no good these days. We as teens hear these more often than not.

I don't know about you or your teenager but I take great offense to these com-

ments. I feel that adults don't know the full story of teens these days. This causes me to feel that they do not deserve an opinion of us. They are not in our shoes, they don't feel what we feel nor deal with what we do.

I am not saying that adults didn't go through things when they were teens, but they should think a little more before they talk.

Let's talk about things teens go through in their day to day lives. Many teens have a ton of schoolwork, which also means homework. Teens also participate

in sports, clubs, activities, councils, jobs, applying for colleges and scholarships, and so many more.

Many teens also go through mental health trials. Also, let's not forget home lives, which is a very broad category.

Do adults think about the fact that the child might be rude because that is how they are treated at home? Do they think about the kids who are anti-social because their opinions do not matter at home? I think that they don't usually think about these things when they make rude remarks.

There is also an effect on students and teachers. This effect is when teachers who are stressed or anxious and show it in the classroom can pass this effect and their feelings onto their students.

The students can start to feel the stress from the teacher and carry it with them.

This can happen the other way as well. Students can have feelings that they express, then these feelings carry onto teachers. After a while this cycle starts to repeat and become continuous. This continuous cycle can be exhausting.

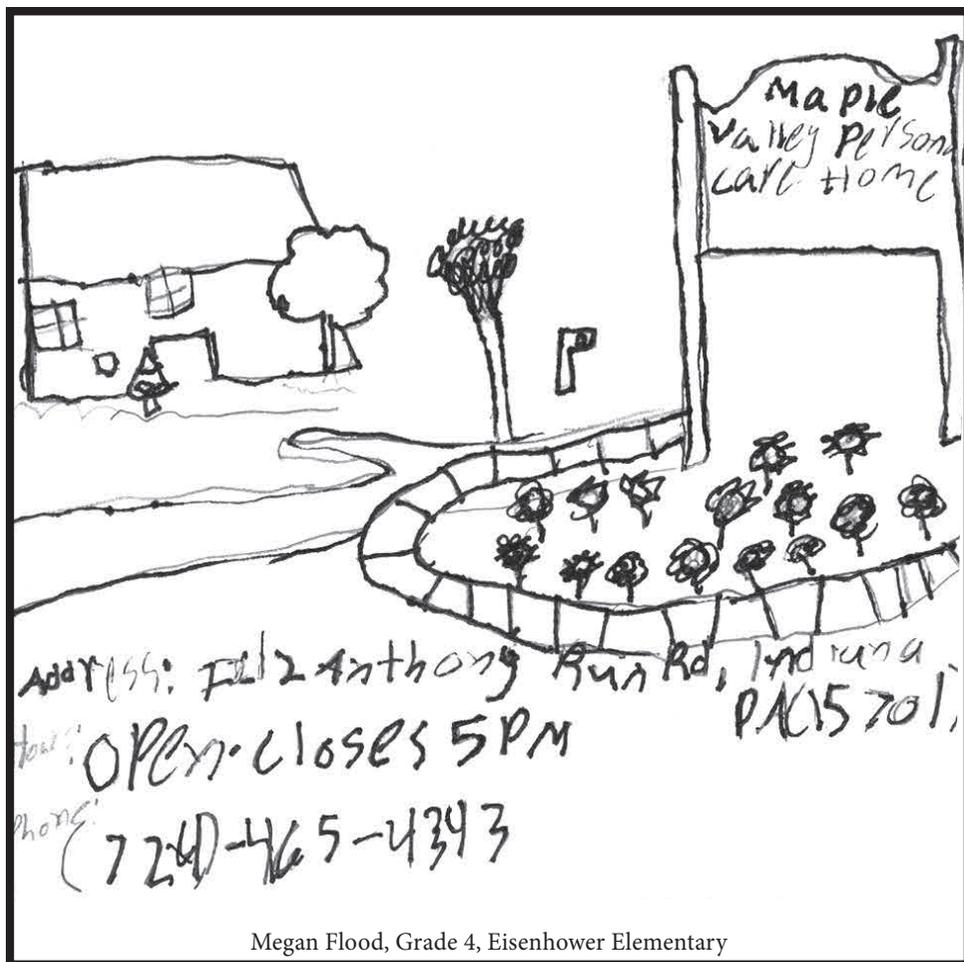
All things considered, we need to keep an extra eye on our teenagers. Also understanding what they might be going through and letting them know that they are not alone.

I want to change the stereotypes on teenagers and help them through it. I believe that starts with everyone.

Teachers, peers, coaches, the teen themselves can start to help someone through their experiences with burnout.

Decreasing the numbers on burnout would benefit everyone!

Don't be so serious! Leisure, weekends in the Gazette.



Megan Flood, Grade 4, Eisenhower Elementary



Carter Schweissing, Grade 5, Eisenhower Elementary

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## COVID-19 mitigation: A disaster for children

We have entered the third year of COVID-19, a pandemic that has arguably brought about the most tumultuous and charged national political discourse the United States has seen in generations.

Every individual has his or her own opinions on the virus, mitigation techniques and personal risk assessments. In an environment where information about the virus differs based on the reporting news source, and rules and regulations change continuously, it takes little time to understand why the ongoing pandemic has caused such hostile political tensions.

There is no piece of information, however, that is known with greater certainty than the knowledge of COVID-19's extraordinarily disparate impacts between age groups. Our senior citizens are most threatened by the virus, with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reporting an infection-mortality rate for seniors above 85 years old to be 370 times greater than that of 18- to 29-year-olds.

Sitting on the opposite end of the spectrum are America's children. As of Dec. 22, 2021, 7.5 million children aged 0-17 are known to have been infected with COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, but only 790 have died.

These figures mean that, at worst, minors have an infection-mortality rate of 1-to-10,000, which does not account for researchers' beliefs that less than half of all COVID-19 cases are reported.

Nonetheless, no segment of the population has been impacted more adversely than our youngest. The world that they previously knew was uprooted in 2020, and factions have only returned incrementally or partially. This reality was finally recognized by main-



**LUKE RAINEY**  
Penns Manor Area  
Junior/Senior High School  
Grade 12

stream media figures at the end of 2021. CBS legal correspondent Jan Crawford appeared on the network's "Face the Nation" episode on Dec. 26 and highlighted the "crushing impact" of COVID-19 mitigation policies against children.

"It's hurt their dreams, their future, learning loss, the risk of abuse, their mental health," she stated, adding that "they will be paying for our generation's decisions the rest of their lives."

The transition to virtual learning is the most striking example of "learning loss" that has already raised fears about long-term consequences. Unfortunately, early indications revealed that stringent COVID-19 policies against schools would trigger an imminent educational fallout. An article published on March 30, 2020, found that one-quarter of the 106,000 students in Los Angeles' schools were not fully participating in online learning, with over half of this subset not having connected on a single day of the two weeks they were conducting virtual learning.

Nonetheless, 60 percent of schools remained entirely virtual at the start of the 2020-21 school year, and the closures' academic impact has already begun rearing its ugly head. Reports have found that elementary students are behind previous standards in mathematics by five months, with a similar gap found in reading

metrics. This gap is only exacerbated when focusing on lower-income households and neighborhoods, which are statistically less capable of creating a conducive environment for virtual learning.

For adolescent youths, the pandemic's impacts have accelerated trends of depression, anxiety and suicide attempts that were already reaching alarming rates in the 2010s. The American Psychological Association reported in February 2021 that 81 percent of teenagers experienced higher stress levels as a result of the pandemic and changes in academic instruction.

Another dramatic indicator rests in surges in suicide attempts and mental health emergency appointments among adolescents. On June 18, 2021, the CDC reported a year-over-year increase of 50.6 percent in teenage attempted suicides.

A survey of more than 15,000 adolescent parents in the United States also suggests a sharp increase in all demographics for chronic absenteeism. Figures in California schools at the start of the 2021-22 school year parallel the findings of the survey, with select districts reporting figures ranging from 26 percent to 39 percent of their students had attendance below 90 percent.

In the long run, this is likely to reverse a previously improving trend of high school graduation rates. Studies estimate that chronically absent students are 5.5 times more likely to fail to finish high school compared to their peers, and with this pool increasing, it can be expected for the dropout rate to also rise in upcoming years.

One of the most fallacious modes of thinking incorporated into pandemic policy, particularly in its earliest months, was an "if it saves one life" mentality exercised by select officials. Given the alarmity associ-

ated with COVID-19 in March of 2020, the panic convinced swaths of Americans and citizens in almost every modern country to focus singularly on handling it without a concern of negative tradeoffs. Whether it has involved economic restrictions, mask and vaccine mandates or school closures, addressing each issue with an exclusive focus on eradicating the virus — an impossible feat demonstrated by the pandemic's continuous impacts in every country in the world — was a misguided attempt to solve a problem with one-dimensional thinking.

Even if one believes that certain preventative measures are sensible precautions, it is difficult

See **RAINEY: 32**

## Untitled

In December of 2019 Tom Wolf signed a bill allowing hunting on three Sundays in 2020. One Sunday for archery, one for bear in rifle season, and one Sunday for deer during the firearm season. The game commission chose what Sunday for each season.

You may believe that hunting on Sunday just came about a few years ago. Well, what you may not have known is that hunting on Sunday was actually banned in 1682 when Pennsylvania was a British colony. They had what was called a blue law. It banned hunting on Sunday to ensure settlers attended church on Sunday.

Now yes, I know not everyone will agree with me on this, but some will. I believe hunting on Sunday is wrong. In Exodus 20:8-11 God says for us to keep the Sabbath holy. So I believe we need to go to church and worship God like He says.



**NOAH MECKLEY**  
Calvary Baptist Academy  
Grade 11

The best way to keep the Sabbath holy is to fellowship with local believers in church on Sunday. This all goes back to the beginning why they banned it in the first place, so you don't miss church.

Everyone will have different views on this topic. After reading this you may have a different view on this topic. God should always be first in your life, so this upcoming hunting season what will you decide to do?

Ian McGlenn, Grade 5, Eisenhower Elementary

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**TIRE EXPRESS**

# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## COVID-19 mitigation: A disaster for children

**RAINEY:** From 31

to justify extreme restrictions against children when they face little risk from the virus, and the destruction of their daily functions has triggered severe ramifications that, unfortunately, were foreseeable. The future of all civilizations rests in its children, but the United States' inappropriate consideration of children's needs during its collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic has ultimately done a substantial disservice to the country's future.

### Untitled

My Lola was born and raised in the Philippines. When she was around nine years old, she was forced into the Bataan Death march. The year was 1942 and the march began on April 9, and it lasted for eight long days. It was a torturous, 65-mile trek with no breaks. If you stopped, you were shot dead.

At least 650 American prisoners of war died but around 10,000 Filipinos died. It makes me feel sick to think about all of the casualties. Lola easily could've been one of those victims.

Around the same time, Japanese U.S. citizens were put into internment camps for baseless reasons. It took 20 years for the interned Japanese people (keep in mind there were

over 80,000 people incarcerated) to be given reparations for what happened to them. They lost their jobs, their businesses, and were treated with hostility just because of their race.

One would think that after all these years, the U.S. would've changed just a little bit when it came to treating everyone equally. But nothing really changed. African Americans are still being senselessly killed by police officers, the Black Lives Matter movement is being targeted because of "black supremacy," the KKK *still* hasn't been labeled as a terroristic organization. Muslims are being stereotyped as terrorists, and Asians are being discriminated against due to the pandemic.

These past couple of years have not been good for people of Asian de-



**EMILY JACOBS**  
Northern Cambria  
High School  
Grade 12

scent. I always see news segments about hate crimes toward Asian Americans. The percentage of Asian hate crimes skyrocketed by at least 73 percent in the year of 2020, but it's still getting worse.

One of the most recent cases that made the headlines was when Christina

Yuna Lee, a 35-year-old woman of Asian descent, was stabbed to death in her apartment after being stalked through Chinatown. Although the case has not yet been ruled as a hate crime, it is still tragic and certainly strikes fear in Asian Americans all over the country.

Although all of these deaths are incredibly gruesome and senseless, one of the cases that really sticks in my mind was the death of an 84-year-old Thai immigrant named Vicha Ratanapakdee. This happened last year on Jan. 28.

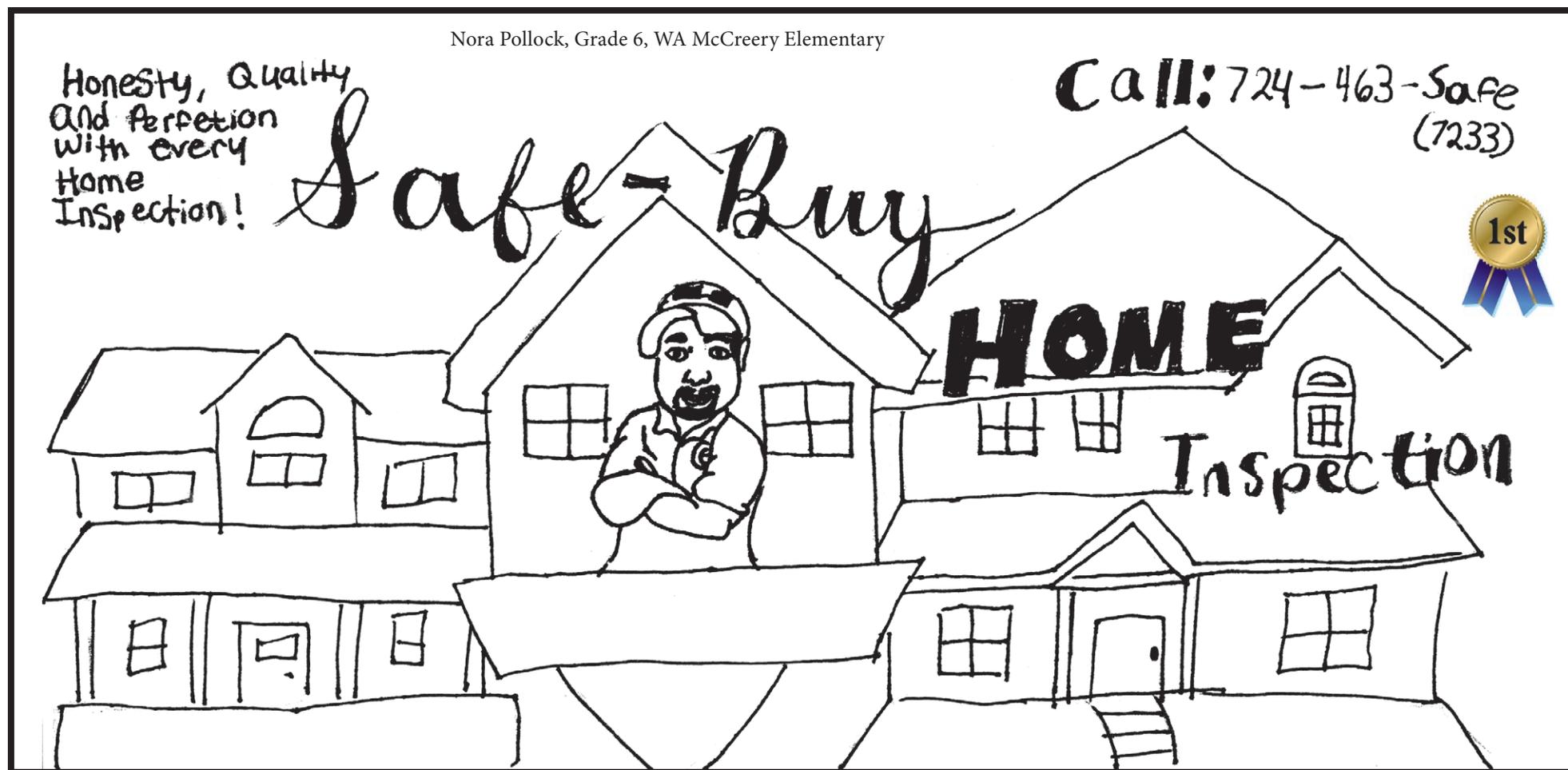
Having just recently been in heart surgery nine months prior, Ratanapakdee took his usual, early morning stroll through his neighborhood when he was suddenly pushed to his death by a 19-year-old man. It was indeed a hate

crime, and Ratanapakdee's death sparked outrage in the Asian American community.

Ratanapakdee was *eighty-four* years old. He had a family. He had a wife and children and even grandchildren. He did not deserve to die the way he did, and it pains me because my Lola is 86 years old. She usually takes a long walk through Blue Spruce Park, and the idea that somebody, anybody, can see her and associate her with the so-called "Kung-Flu" or "China Virus" and just kill her is absolutely terrifying. Lola has lived a vibrant life full of hardship and joy, surviving something unimaginable and having to live in a world where one is constantly judged by the way they look.

See **JACOBS: 33**

Nora Pollock, Grade 6, WA McCreery Elementary



# Writing contest for the best opinion column

## Untitled

**JACOBS:** From 32

Yet all it takes is one single push. One push can end someone's life. Just think about that for a moment.

It's not just Chinese Americans being attacked either. *Every* Asian American has a target hovering over their head.

The reason for this misplaced anger is misinformation, and one of its well-known catalysts is former president Donald Trump. Trump frequently used the term "Kung Flu" and spewed out all of his racist ideology during his speeches. His words riled up thousands of people, springing them into action against innocent Asian Americans.

Everyone turned against their neighbor, viewing them as their enemy even though they are far from it.

And yes, the coronavirus *did* originate in China, but it wasn't every single Chinese citizen's fault. That's completely irrational.

Around 78 percent of Americans are unsure about what they hear on the news. However, this information mostly depends on their sources. Networks such as Fox News and Newsmax parade around a lot of coronavirus misinformation and also use the terms "China virus," "Kung Flu," and various other offensive terms that link Asians to the pandemic, thereby endangering them.

It has to stop now. People that live in Chinatown shouldn't need to have police officers guarding their streets. They shouldn't go to sleep fearing that they could be the next victim of a hate crime. *I* shouldn't have to worry about any of my relatives becoming the victims of Asian hate crimes, but I am, because this is our reality. People can either accept the cold, hard truth of the coronavirus epidemic or turn their backs on it and continue killing each other.

No one should have to bury a loved one because of this. Racism is the *real* epidemic in this case-scenario and, believe it or not, it's much harder to stop than a virus.

## Untitled

Money is something that comes and goes in the blink of an eye. America is a free country, and the way we gained that freedom wasn't cheap. War, repairs, food and shelter all cost a ton of money. Though there wasn't much money, they still paid for it by use of credit. Credit isn't in itself bad, but it needs to be taken care of as soon as is possible. What has the government done to repay the debts? Nothing; in fact, they have added to it.

Politicians are the worst when it comes to money. The United States today has a national debt of over \$30 million, which is an amount nearly equal to 130 percent of America's gross domestic product.

Politicians, instead of saving money, have only



**MIRANDA POUNDS**  
Calvary Baptist Academy  
Grade 12

spent more. Politicians give away money for votes. Welfare is one of the main issues of this problematic issue. Welfare is acceptable for the true disabled people who have no way of making money, but in this corrupt world today most people are lazy and just don't feel like getting a job. Greed is the number

one problem behind debt. Money in and of itself isn't wrong, but the love of it is. In 1 Timothy 6:10 in the KJV Bible it says, "for the love of money is the root of all evil..."

Where is the money going? Places like schools, businesses, banks and governmental jobs are the money-sucking operations. Money used in the right manner can be an amazing thing, but you should not waste it. Politicians throw money away and around as if it's just not important. Selfishness is another sin that flows into this topic; when one only thinks of himself, it makes it worse for others. So why is America in such debt? Simple: Money isn't being used in the right manner, and if we want to become a better country this issue needs fixed.

## 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

For this year's third-grade writing contest, students were given the question, "What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?"

### PURCHASE LINE ELEMENTARY

(Kerri Mountain)  
ALLISON SPENCER

Spreading happiness brings joy to all people. A way you could do that is by making someone a gift.

I am in Girl Scouts and we make something for our local community firefighters and a senior center every time we meet!

One time when a session started, some people from the firehouse and the senior center came and thanked us

for all of the gifts we made them and gave the Girl Scouts a big hug. It warmed my heart to know that they liked the gifts.

Another way to spread joy is to do something nice for people. My mom's friend asked for donations and it took a long time to get enough money, but I'm sure it was worth it. She took the money people donated and she cooked hundreds of Christmas dinners. She made sure that they were warm and took the dinners all around. She gave the dinners out for free!

The people who received the dinners started posting and posting on social media websites because they loved it so much. It was so kind of her to do that.

One final way to give joy all around is by being nice

to people even if they are mean to you. It doesn't mean you have to be their best friend. Just to be nice really makes a difference. It will make you feel good about yourself. Everyone needs someone to be nice to them.

Those are some good ways to spread kindness.

### CALVARY BAPTIST ACADEMY

(Lyndsey Nicholson)  
GARRETT MORTIMER

There are many ways to spread joy and happiness. I can spread joy to the elderly. I could play board games and card games. I could also



See **MORTIMER: 34**

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Emma Griffith, Grade 5, WA McCreery Elementary

# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**MORTIMER:** From 33 give them a gift or tell them a joke.

I could sing to them. I can encourage them that they will be all right. These are just some ways to spread joy.

There are many ways to spread joy when people are sick. I can go encourage them that they will get better soon. I can do jobs for them while they sleep. I can make them breakfast, lunch and dinner to eat in bed. I can read a book for them. These are just some ways to spread joy when people are sick.

There are many ways I can spread joy every day. If someone is on vacation, I can feed their dog. I can help a friend do his homework. If someone forgot their lunch, I can give them something from mine. I can

give a gift. These are just some ways you can spread joy every day.

Are you ready to spread joy and happiness?

## LEARNING TREE HOMESCHOOL FELLOWSHIP (Sara Grantz)

**ZARYA SANDEEN**

I think spreading joy and happiness is not some-

thing only grownups can do. I could be kind to someone.

If they feel happy, they'll

be more likely to be kind to others.

I could also stop other people from being mean to each other. If I see friends arguing, I can try to stop them and figure out a solu-

tion without fighting.

I could also be kind to lots of people at once. I could invite others over to play or organize an outdoor activity for people at my church or school.

I think a way to spread joy and happiness is to be nice to others. It's simple and easy, and it works!

The following are entries from the participating third-grade classes.

## APOLLO-RIDGE ELEMENTARY (Kelly Ziencik)

**BRIGGS ANDREE**

There are many ways I could spread joy and bring happiness to others. I think it might be important because if I do it, they will do it and it would make everyone's heart happy.

First, I would make a de-

licious dinner. I could do this for my family, friends, neighbors and grandparents. I would try my best to make a hot and healthy dinner.

Also, I would pull weeds. My brother and I do this for my grandma Nana. We always do this on the weekends.

Finally, I would shovel snow. I have done this for my grandma and other older individuals. I do this so people don't fall and get hurt.

These are three ways I can spread joy and happiness to others.

**JORDAN COLEMAN**

One nice thing to do is donate to charity. One charity you can donate to is an animal shelter or children's hospital.

Another nice thing to do is give to the homeless things like socks, underwear, shirts

and pants. Something else nice is walk dogs, not for money but for joy for you and others.

One other thing to do is bake a cake for others, maybe even with them.

Those are a few ways to spread joy and happiness to make the world a better place.

**AVA HILLIARD**

There are many ways I could spread joy and happiness to others. I think doing this might make others feel they are loved and that they have true friends.

If my grandma was coming home from somewhere I would help her come up the stairs. I would also help my grandma carry her bags she has. I will also help my grandma walk up the driveway because of all the ice and snow. She could slip and fall.

Another thing I would do

is not buy something for someone, but make it! First, I will collect items and then make the thing for that person. I would give it to that person and I hope they like it! That is when you make them feel cared for.

That would be some of the ways that I can bring joy and happiness to the world around us.

**AYDEN ARNDT**

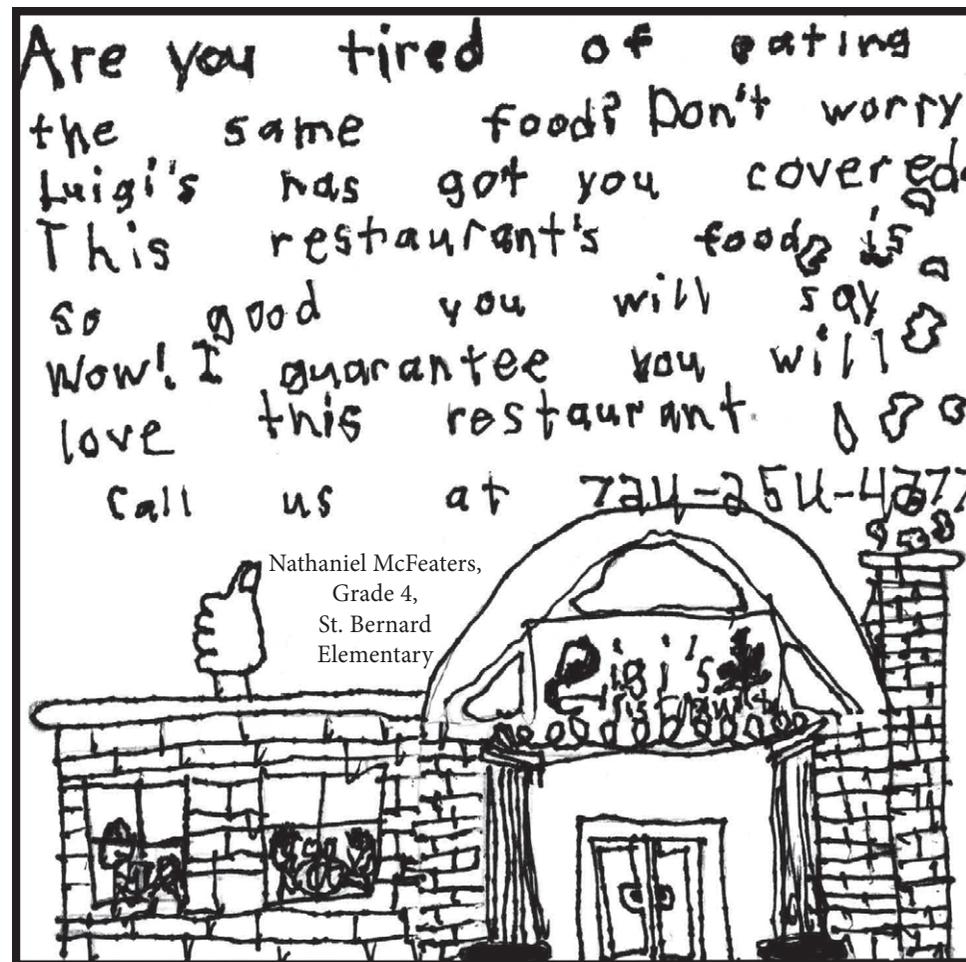
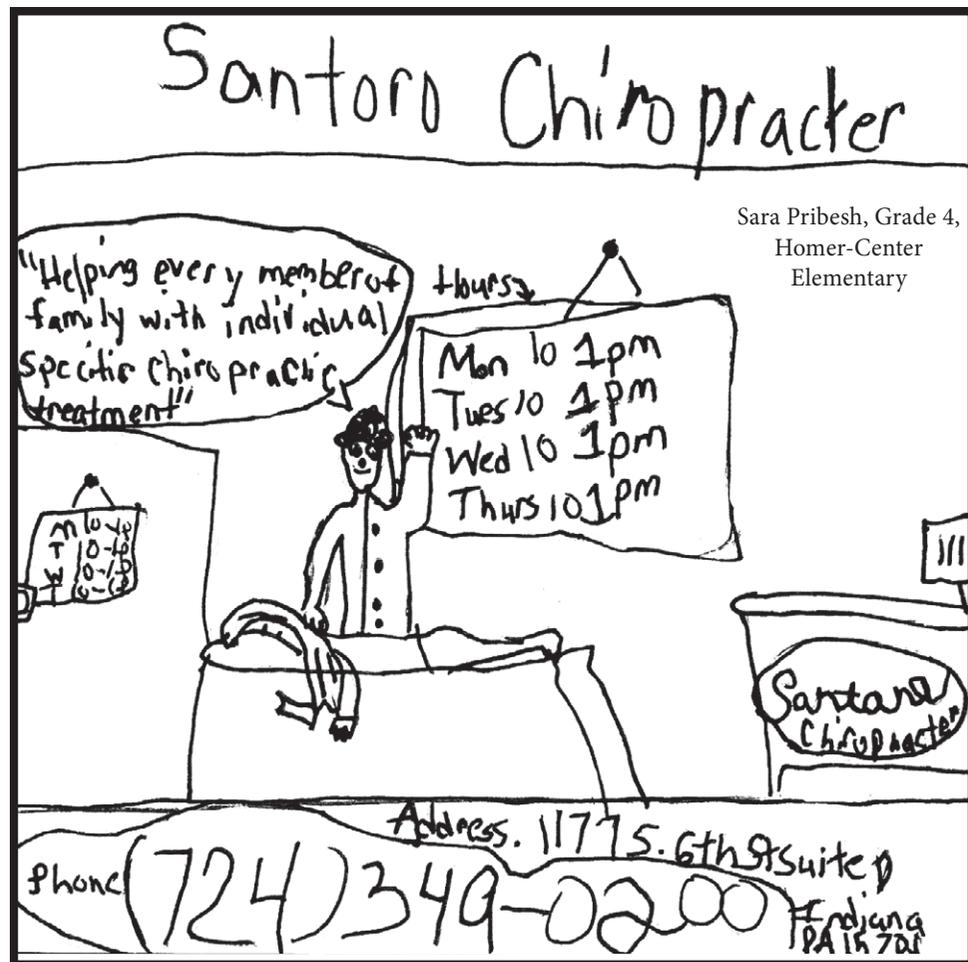
There are many ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others. I think that is important because people will be happier.

I can do the dishes for my mom. I can clean my room for her. I will feed the fish.

Another thing I can do is that I can push someone's cart if they can't. I can rake the leaves for someone.

Those are some ways I can spread joy and bring

See **THIRD GRADE: 35**



# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 34 happiness to others.

**BEN FRANKLIN  
ELEMENTARY**

(Jill Kaszubowski)  
**KARLEE HAMILTON**

Being nice to someone can make them smile and make their day!

One way is to say a compliment to someone! You can say you are kind, nice, respectful, you are good at telling jokes and you are a nice friend. That is a compliment you can say!

Another way is to not bother or disturb others! A way you can not bother or disturb others is not talking when others are talking, and not making noises.

Another way to spread joy is to share with others! A way to share with others is sharing your toys or your

stuff! That is a way to share with others!

These are ways to make others happy!

**DALLYCE NORRIS**

Do you know how to spread happiness? One way is to play with someone that is lonely. I help everyone that is lonely.

One way is to buy something for someone who can't afford it. I ask if they want something and bought it for them. Once I bought someone a doll.

One way is to ask what game do you want to play. I ask what game do you want to play and I play it with them.

This is why kindness is important.

**BROOKE FALGIONE**

Do you know how to spread happiness? One way is to give a hug or have them come over to your house. I went over to my friend's

house on Sunday for the Super Bowl. I also gave her a hug when I left.

Another way is to give them a pat on the back and smile at them. I gave my sister a pat on her back for trying something new. She has never tried lobster before!

I play games with my friend Mia and her brother Anthony. We have lots of fun. We play tag, hide and seek, cops and robbers and floor is lava.

Being kind makes it fun to be with each other.

**EMMETT SHARBAUGH**

Do you know how to spread happiness? If no, read this.

Share with others, do not be greedy and take everything. We share our toys with other classes at VPA. We are not selfish and share with the other classes.

Also, you can be friendly and do not yell at someone

for no reason. To be friendly, don't sit in the corner and stare at everyone. Spend time with them, don't walk away from them, talk, don't stare at them.

You can have a sleepover at their house, have a playdate at your house or the other way around. Now you know how to spread happiness!

(Ed Kocinski)

**JOLINA SPEIGHTS**

Have you ever been super joyful and happy because somebody said something or been very kind to you? Well, then you should be kind to the person or thank them.

One way you can be very kind to someone, is be their friend. Lots of people need a friend, especially when somebody is being mean to them. One time I realized some of my classmates were being mean to another.

So, I thought I could be her friend to make her feel better. Then she felt good for me to be her friend.

Another way is helping others. Helping others is a great way to spread joy and happiness.

Another time I cleaned the whole house when mom was not here. When mom came back she was proud.

The last way is to hug someone. Anybody can be sad at any time. Everybody needs a great big hug, any day. Lots of times I have hugged people. One time someone was very sad because they were bullied. Even though I did not know them, I gave them a hug anyway. It made them feel really good that time.

These are reasons that being nice really changes the world. You have to be kind, it is important.

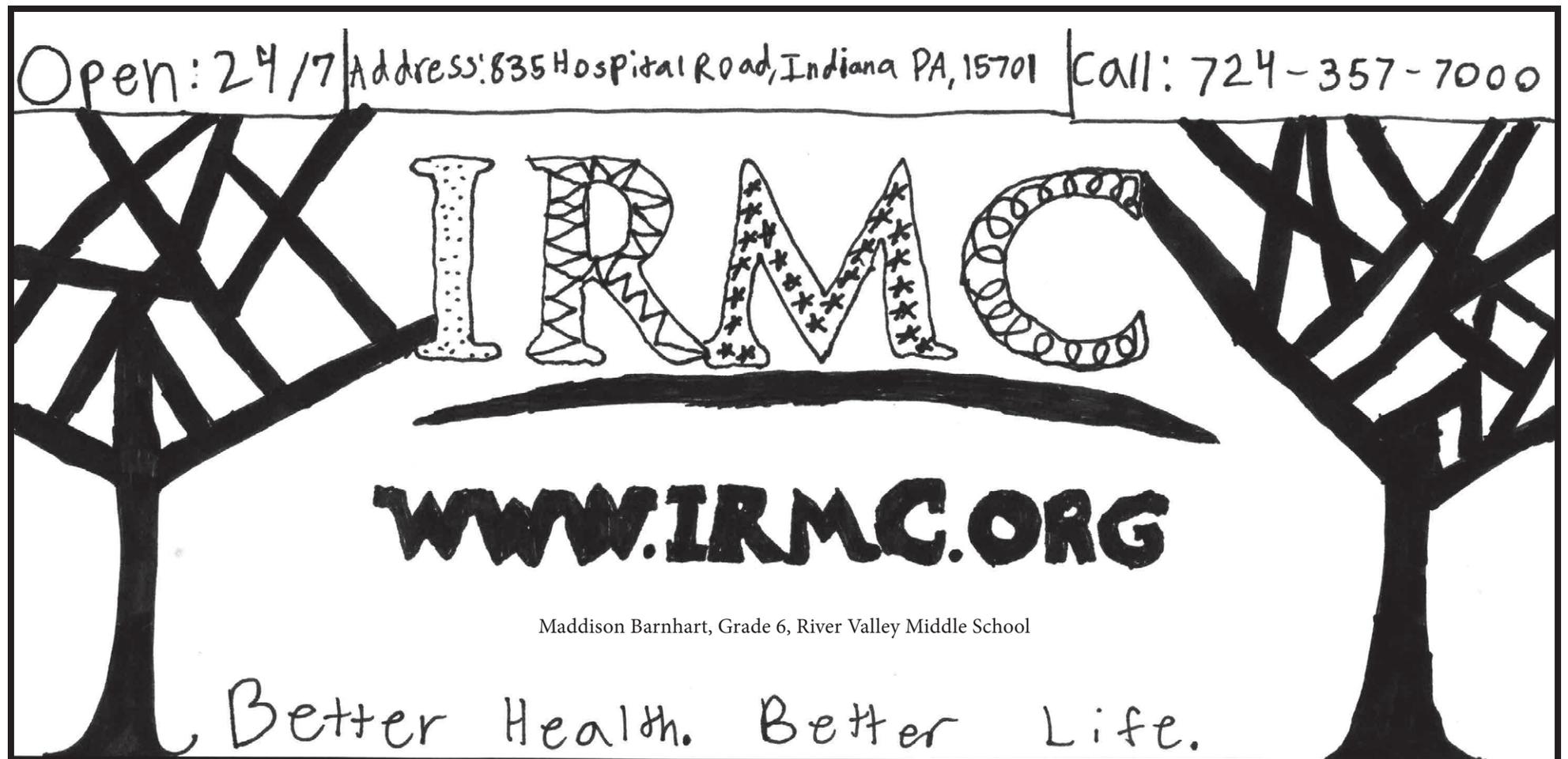
**ELIANA PANGONIS**

Bringing people happiness and joy always makes me feel happy! Like when I give them a compliment they have a smile on their face, which makes me have a smile on my face and it makes me and them feel good.

You can make them feel good if they got new shoes and you can say you like them. That will make them and you feel good. If someone gave me a compliment I would feel really good. Also, it will make them feel happy too.

Maybe your parents put a card in your lunch for a holiday or your birthday. It will surprise you and make you feel really happy. My parents put a card in my lunch and I was so happy. When I got home they asked if I

See **THIRD GRADE: 36**



# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

## THIRD GRADE: From 35

liked the card and I told them I loved it and they were happy that the card made me happy.

If someone did not have anyone to play with, I would play with them and that would make them feel good inside. I also would feel great inside because it made them feel better and we would become friends! If I did not have anyone to play with and someone came over and played with me, I would feel very happy. I also would have a new friend to play with every time.

I feel really good when I bring people happiness and they will feel good if they brought me happiness!

### COLE BURDA

Have you ever made someone happy before, or has someone ever made you happy? I have made

someone happy before.

One way to make a friend happy is give them a hug. My friend made me happy one time because he hugged me because I wasn't at school for two days because I was sick, and the person who hugged me was Dominic.

One way to make someone's day is to smile at them. Someone smiled at me once and it made me feel happy. They smiled at me at Giant Eagle.

Another way to make someone's day is to make a homemade gift. One time I made my grandparents a homemade gift for Christmas. The gift made them feel really happy. They also gave me a big hug.

These are some simple and easy ways to spread joy and happiness.

### GAVIN VENNARD

Helping people is an ex-

cellent thing to do! One way is to help each other.

One day my dog had a broken leg and one of my friends helped me protect him and I was filled with joy.

Another way to make happiness is to help people with their homework. I came home from school and my homework was too hard. I asked my mom for help and she said yes. I was filled with happiness.

The last way to spread joy is to help people in need. One day I was at school playing with Legos and someone knocked it over, and my friend helped me rebuild it. I love it when people help me.

### (Laura Lansberry)

### EMMA KASS

Do you like helping others? Well, I do! If someone was sitting alone at recess and looked very lonely, you should go talk to them. I

saw a girl at recess and she looked lonely so I asked, "Do you want to play with me?" She said yes!

Next, if a girl is getting bullied at recess and looked very sad, I would include her in my game. On the playground I saw a girl and she was getting bullied by some boys. I said to the boy, "leave her alone," and after I went to play with her.

If someone looks sick, help them. I saw a girl outside and she looked sick so I took her to the nurse, and on her way down she threw up on her blue shirt. I'm glad I helped her.

I hope you learned how to be kind!

### ANTHONY AKERS

There are many ways that I can spread happiness. I will help others when they need help. I will help my sister do her sight words and tell her how smart she is.

I will surprise someone with lunch. I could pay for the person behind us at a drive-thru. Smile and say hello when I pass someone. I will say hello when I make eye contact with people.

I hope this gives you some ideas.

### CAMERON REEGER

Spreading cheer makes you happy. You can cheer someone on in a sport! You can cheer someone up when they are about to

score the winning point! Yell, you can do it. This could give them confidence.

If someone is having a bad day, you can ask if they feel okay! You can say everything will be okay the next day!

You can smile at people! You can smile at someone when they walk into the room!

I hope you learned some good examples to cheer someone up.

### OLIVIA LEONE

Would you like to know how to be kind and helpful to people? Well, let me tell you!

If you see someone who looks sad or upset, you can help them feel better. I went outside and I saw my friend and my friend looked very upset and sad. I went over to my friend and asked what the matter was. My friend did not want to talk but I told my friend a joke and gave her a hug.

If you see a homeless person, you could help the person. If you see a homeless person, you could go over and see if you could help them, like get them a blanket and pillow. That would probably make their day.

You could give a gift to an old person that is in the hospital. You could give them a card of flowers. Lastly, you could just go visit them and

give them a smile.

I hope you learned how to be kind and helpful to people.

### (Angela Petroff)

### KOBE FLINT

If there was one thing I want you to do, it is spread kindness or even help a friend because you never know what they are going through. Just smile at them, they might smile back at you. It might make their day, so just smile at someone right now.

Help a friend with homework or a test, well, study for a test or even help with something at home. Just last week I helped my friend Lia. She had math homework and I love math so much, so it was easy for me to help her.

Give a compliment to someone, you never know, it might make a change in how they're feeling. You can say, "I like your hair" or "you are fast," even you can say, "you are cool." Anything is good.

So if there was one thing I need you to do, it's help everyone, respect others and stay safe. Always, no matter what. That's what I need you to do.

### BRYNLEE GENCHUR

Ways to spread happiness, you're wondering. Do you

See **THIRD GRADE: 37**

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Reagan VanHorn, Grade 5, Learning Tree

# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 36 know how to make others happy or just be kind? Let me tell you some ways.

You can just smile or just say hi. For example, if you see someone that looks sad, you can smile. You could have made their day. Ask someone if they want to play with you, like if someone has nobody to play with.

You can hold a door for someone. So if you are leaving a store and somebody is too, you can hold the door for them.

So now you have so many ways to be kind.

**DAMON JAMISON**

I would like to see everyone in the world to be happy! That's what I would like to see through my own eyes, to be kind to your friends.

You should let them come to your house and let them be your guest. You can help your neighbor. I help my neighbor by shoveling her porch and ramp so she can feed the cats.

You can smile at someone and do not bully at school. I often see sadness and mean things come out of people's mouths, and you can fix that by telling a teacher or let them play something with you.

Start today, be kind to EVERYONE!

**RAYA McCOMBIE**

Have you ever wondered how to spread joy and kindness to others? It is not hard, you could simply smile. It could make someone's day.

I spread joy and happiness by helping my mom unload the groceries. Every time my mom gets groceries, I help her unload them. I help my dad with responsibilities with my dog. I get my dad the treats, shampoo and conditioner to help him give my dog a bath.

One more way is to help someone when they fall. I don't just mean falling down on the ground either. If you see someone who fell, go and help them up. But you could also help someone up

by brightening someone's day by saying kind words or doing kind actions. In school, one time I earned a Hero band, which means hero behavior. I earned it when I played with someone who had no one to play with.

Now you know ways to be kind and spread joy to others. I hope you will start now!

**(Shannon Redinger)  
ARIEL McEACHERN**

Howdy, I am going to give you some examples and ways to be kind.

If you're in the cafeteria, say please and thank you because they work very hard to make the food for us and our school. Do: try to organize your home. Don't do: Do not ignore your family, school or safety patrol. Listen to your teacher and give people joy.

If you need to say something rude, you need to keep it in. You need to not hurt people. If you want to spread joy, just give a hand or a gift.

Those are some ways to be kind.

**NORA GROLL**

There are a lot of ways you can spread happiness. One way is you can play with someone if they are lonely. If you are playing with someone, ask the other person if they want to play with you and your friend.

A second way is you can have a surprise party for someone you know. You can have a surprise party when someone is going through something tough, and it will take their mind off of it.

One last way is you can help someone who is hurt. If someone fell, ask if they are OK.

There are a lot of ways we can spread happiness, joy and kindness. You can spread it too!

**BRYCE KYLER**

You and I can spread joy and happiness to others by doing some of these things.

One way is to cheer someone up. After my sister had a bad day at school, I cheered

her up by giving her a cookie.

Another way is to pay attention to someone. I paid close attention to my mom so I did what I was supposed to do.

A final way is to help get someone what they need. I helped my dad get the screwdriver.

Those are some ways that you and I can spread joy and happiness.

**BRADY SMITH**

Here are some ways to spread kindness.

You can hold the door for another person. When my grandmother comes over, I hold the door for her.

Always say please and thank you. When I am getting lunch, I say please and thank you.

Also, if someone drops anything, pick it up. If my mom drops her purse, I will pick it up.

Now you can spread kindness.

**(Dawn Shaffer)  
LIBBY SARNESO**

These are some ways I can spread joy and happiness, I hope you like them!

I like to cheer my friends up in a lot of funny ways (and lovingly too)! When my friend was sad I told them this joke about a shoe and they laughed and laughed.

Surprising people will make them smile, and I like smiles. Once I surprised my dad when I was hiding and he gave me a bright smile.

Just a simple wave might make someone feel good inside. I gave my friend a smile when I passed them in the hall and they smiled back.

I hope you liked my three ways to make someone feel joy and happiness inside.

**OLIVIA RATAY**

These are a couple ways I spread joy and happiness to others. By helping my friend with math. The other day I helped her with multiplication.

Another way I spread happiness is helping my mom with my baby brother. At night I give him his milk. I

also help my dad by chopping wood in the summer.

And that is how I spread joy and happiness to others.

**ELLA MILLER**

Here are some ideas to bring joy and happiness to others.

You can smile, give hugs, be kind and help everyone, respect others and be happy. I helped my friend when she fell down. Be nice to others and do what your parents say. I help my mom with the dishes after school.

Be delightful, help someone when they need help and use your manners. When my grandma needs help, I help her. And that is how to bring joy and happiness.

**KORTLYND GALLO**

This is a way I can spread joy and happiness. I can include everyone. Also, I can be kind to others. I will let everyone play and join in. I

will smile and give hugs too. I will help others and respect others. Help my mom cook and clean the table up. I will listen when someone is talking. I will make everyone feel accepted, so if someone teases them I will stick up for them.

And that is how I will bring joy and happiness.

**CALVARY BAPTIST  
ACADEMY**

**(Lyndsey Nicholson)  
XAVIER DAVIS**

There are many ways to spread joy and happiness to my friends and others.

I can help with the dishes for mom, shoveling snow for my neighbor, or helping my sister with her homework.

I can bring joy by playing with others. I can play out in the snow with my sister and brother, tag with my friends, or the Wii with my

grandpa.

I can bring joy with my mouth. I can tell funny jokes, make funny faces, or tell others about God's love for them.

Go bring joy to others.

**ALIMAE GEORGE**

There are so many ways to spread joy and happiness. The biggest way is to be kind. Here are ways to be kind. Play with others or tell some jokes. Help others up if they're hurt. Pray for others who are sick. If someone drops something, pick it up. Do things with others that they like to do. Start being kind.

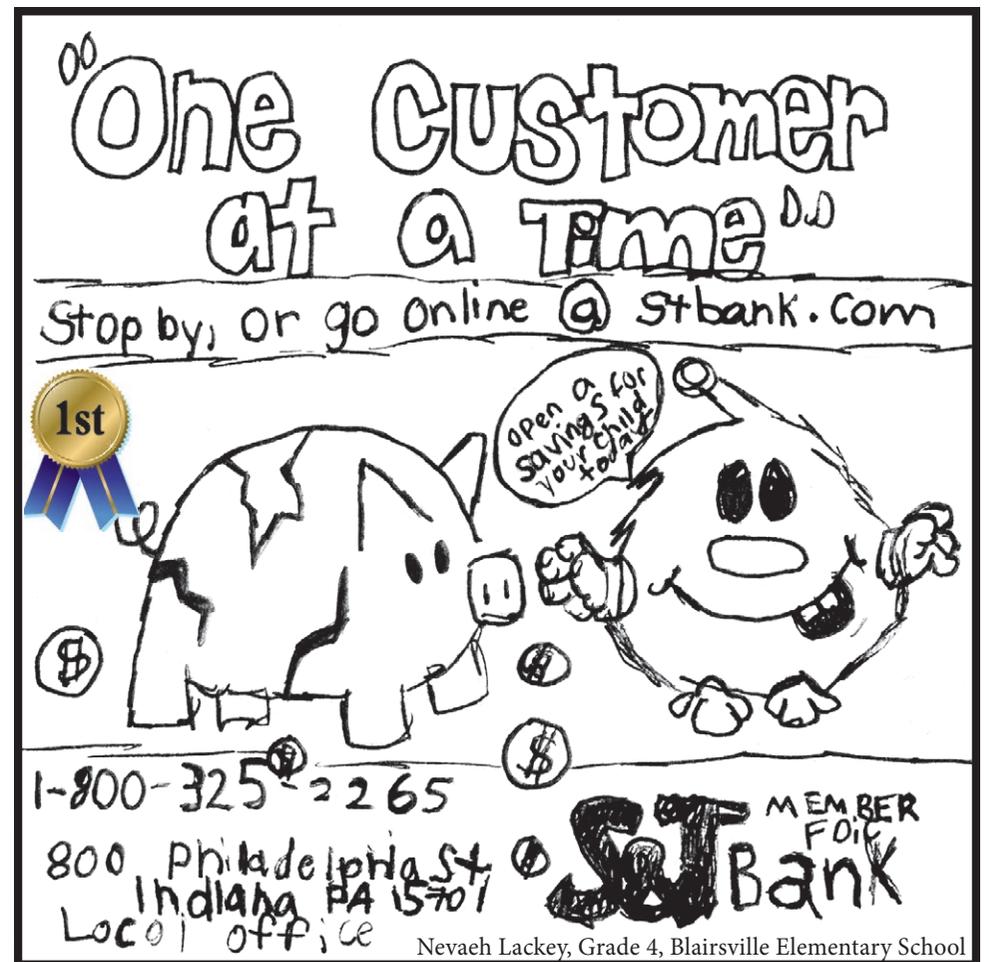
**JOHNNY NELSON**

There are many ways to spread joy and happiness.

You can spread happiness with words. You can tell funny stories. Tell others about God. Or just say hi!

You can also spread

See **THIRD GRADE: 38**



# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 37 happiness by doing. You could hold the door for them. Watch a funny movie with your family. Or you could go to the circus.

There are many ways to spread joy by caring. You could help the elderly get around. You can help someone who is hurt walk. You can help someone sick by sending them a letter. That is how you can help someone by caring.

Would you spread joy and happiness?

## BRAYDEN NICHOLSON

I spread joy and happiness in these ways. This is how I try to bring joy and happiness to adults I do and don't know. I sing for Patch Club at church and smile while I do it. I write letters to relatives. I try to listen to my teacher.

This is how I show joy,

happiness and laughter to young people. I make faces at babies. I tell kids jokes. I can fall in many different funny ways.

Would you try?

## ELBERTON ELEMENTARY (Rebecca Lear) KATELYN COOPER

Why take when you can give? Giving is nice. When you give, people feel very grateful and happy. There are many ways to spread happiness. Be nice, be helpful, and give to others.

There are many ways to spread happiness. Be nice to others. Help them when they are hurt. Another way is to hang out with them, always make them happy. I can make them smile when they are sad or hurt. These things make people very happy and thankful.

Spreading happiness is very good. Give friends

gifts, play with them, and be kind to them. You can make them things.

Happiness is a good thing to share with others.

## MADELINE RUPERT

Why be mean when you can be nice? Being nice makes people happy. Being nice also makes me happy too. There are many ways to spread happiness, like being nice, helping others and complimenting others. It's easy to spread happiness and joy. Say are you OK or how are you? Give someone a pencil if they need one. You can say I like your shoes.

Doing things like this makes me happy too. There are many ways to spread happiness. I compliment others. I love to spread happiness and joy!

## ISABELLA LAMISON

Oprah once said, "Know what sparks the light in you

so that you in your own way can illuminate the world." You can find happiness, then once you found it you can spread it.

There are many different ways to spread happiness like including people. If people are lonely, you can play with them. You can say nice things to them, and you can buy them a gift.

I can spread joy and happiness in many different ways. You could include them. I could say nice things to them. I could get them a gift. I could compliment them.

Spreading joy is good. All of these things are nice things to do.

## JANESSA SCHAEFFER

Have you ever made someone's day better? There are a lot of ways to make someone's day.

You could make someone happy by giving a gift, surprising them or helping them. We can spread joy and happiness by not being mean. I think you can give a gift if a person is poor or homeless. You could invite someone to your house. Or you could surprise them on their birthday or a holiday. You can invite them to play.

If you see someone that is hurt, you can help them. If they are sad, you can make them smile.

Don't be mean when you can be nice.

## (Brittany Weaver) MACKENZIE BRANAN

Have you ever put a smile on someone's face? How many times did you put a smile on someone's face? This is a way of spreading kindness to others. I have. It made them happy and it made me happy.

There are many ways to spread happiness, like saying nice words, helping with reading, and helping with homework.

There are many different ways to spread joy and happiness. One way is to say nice words like please, thank you and you're welcome.

Always say nice words.

God would really like it.

Another way is to help with reading, like pronouncing a word when reading a chapter book. One last way is to help with homework, but do not give them the answers.

Say nice words, help if needed for reading and work. You could put a smile on someone's face.

There are many ways to spread happiness. One way is to say nice words to others. Another way is to help with reading a word. One last way is to help with homework. You can just be kind to others.

## VALEN FENDER

Have you ever put a smile on someone's face? I have put a smile on someone's face. It made them feel good. It made me feel good, too. There are ways to spread happiness, like helping with homework, saying nice words, and helping take care of pets.

I can spread joy and happiness in different ways. If a friend needs help with homework, it would be nice and helpful if I helped them. I can spread joy with nice words because it is nice to say nice words. It is not kind to say mean words.

Taking care of pets is helpful and it could be kind and nice if you do. It would make them feel happiness too. Spreading joy and happiness is kind and respectful and nice.

Spreading happiness is the best way to make others and yourself feel good. I could help them with homework or if they make a mess I could help. I can be nice and kind, so I could say nice words. If they need help taking care of something, I could help them take care of pets and siblings.

I help others with many things.

## AVIYA HECKMAN

Have you ever wanted to make someone happy? I can help by giving joy to others.

If you can spread hap-

piness it will spread more. There are ways to spread joy, like helping them with chores, playing games with others and doing things you should do for someone.

Spreading joy makes someone happy and it might make you happy. One way is you can give them a gift like a box of chocolate. Another way is to give them a hug when they are sad. Doing something for someone will bring happiness to others.

These are ways to make someone happy with joy and it will make you happy. Spreading joy will make people be even more joyful and I can share joy and happiness to others. I would play with them and help them with things that are hard. I can give gifts for someone or do something for them.

Spreading joy and happiness will spread more and more.

## ZACHARY SMITH

"It is love that gives joy to happiness." So give a lot of joy and happiness to others. You can spread joy and happiness by spreading love.

There are many ways to spread happiness, like saying good job, you can share and ask if someone wants to play.

We can spread joy and happiness in many ways. One way is to compliment someone. Saying good job and well done will make people feel good. Another way is to play with someone. I could say, "Do you want to play with us?"

A third way is to share, like sharing a toy. There are many ways to spread joy and happiness like these.

Spreading happiness is the best way to make others feel good. One way is to compliment someone by saying good job and well done. Another way is to share with someone. A third way is to play with someone. There are still a lot of ways to spread joy and happiness to others.

See **THIRD GRADE: 39**

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Harli Edwards, Grade 4, Rayne Elementary

# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 38

**HOMER-CENTER  
ELEMENTARY  
(Nicole Neal)  
ZOEY PLOWCHA**

Have you ever made someone smile? I have. Making someone smile is a great way to bring joy to others.

Kindness is usually contagious, so someone will probably smile back. Smiles naturally bring out the happiness in us, so why not spread cheer with your smile? When we show others a kind smile, we feel relaxed and energized and someone else will smile back.

Spreading joy and happiness to others is one way to make others happy.

**PEYTON BOCZ**

How do you feel if someone gives you a compliment? I feel happy! Then I will say "Thank you!" or "Thanks!" I will give a compliment like, "I love your shoes!" or "I like your shirt."

When you give compliments you will make them happy, trust me! I feel happiness when people give compliments to me. Sometimes you just need a compliment to cheer you up! Just remember, it brings happiness to everyone. What compliment would you use?

**BRADLY JUAREZ  
VASQUEZ**

You can spread joy and happiness to others by being a good friend. If you see a sad boy, you can be his friend, play together, tell some jokes, take walks, ride bikes or eat together.

You can talk about your favorite animal, share things or sing your favorite songs or draw things.

**LOGAN PENNINGTON**

I can spread joy by saying nice things like good job, thank you and you're the best person ever, you're my most favorite friend in the world.

**(Lauri Shoup)  
OLIVIA GORONCY**

To bring joy to as many

as you can, you can give people compliments. Help someone clean something. Donate to a couple of charity organizations. Show kindness, respect, love. Give gifts to kind people. Keep your hands, feet and unkind words to yourself.

**TRISTAN ELLING**

If someone is lonely, go over and play with them. That is a way to bring joy. Saying nice things to someone is another way to bring joy. I can do my mom's chores even if she does not ask. I can clean the dishes for my dad. I keep my hands and feet to myself. I hold the doors for others. I smile and wish others good luck.

These are all ways to spread joy and happiness.

**EMMA MILLEN**

Make people smile. Share with other people. Be kind. Say a nice compliment. Encourage people. Be helpful. Help around the house. Play with other kids. Help around the school. Give nice people gifts. If a person is sad, try to cheer them up. Help your teacher. Ask to be their friend. Let them borrow something. Say happy birthday if it's their birthday.

**ROWAN BOWERS**

There are many ways to bring joy and happiness. I can bring happiness by smiling at people. I can be nice by helping people. I can smile to brighten people's days. I can say nice things to people. I can buy them gifts. I can draw pictures for people. I can do chores for my mom.

I feel successful when I am nice.

**LEARNING TREE  
HOMESCHOOL  
FELLOWSHIP  
(Sara Grantz)  
ELLIE JONES**

There are multiple ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others.

Some of the ways I try to spread joy and happiness are by considering other people's needs. I like

to make cards for people when they are sick or going through trials. I also help rake my neighbor's yard during the fall. I try my best to include others in what my friends and I are doing.

It's important to me to spread joy and bring happiness to others because God tells me to love others more than myself, because God loved me first by sending Jesus to die on the cross to save me from my sins, it makes it possible for me to love others.

**NATALIE VANHORN**

I can spread joy and happiness to others by smiling and saying hello and being their friend.

I could spend time with them, be nice to them, play with them and not run away from them. I could try inviting them to my house and maybe give them a gift.

**PURCHASE LINE  
ELEMENTARY  
(Leslie Hanley)  
HANNAH SWANIK**

There are so many ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others. Compliment others and use cheering. Cheer them up if they are sad. Tell them a funny joke.

A great compliment would be "I like your hair, it is lovely!" If they play a sport, you could say "go team!"

You could spread joy and bring happiness to the whole world!

**SCARLETTE PALASCHAK**

There are tons of ways to spread joy and happiness to the world. To make others feel good, you can help them, compliment them, cheer for them and cheer them up if they're sad. And don't let them feel left out.

A way to cheer someone up is to give them a hug if they're sad. If somebody looks lonely, you can ask them to be your friend. You can include others by including homeless people in holidays. You can also include people at school by letting somebody join your game at recess.

The world would be a better place if we do these things.

**EMERY TURNER**

There are so many ways to spread happiness! Kindness makes people all over the world happy.

To be kind, you could send someone an uplifting card. If you saw someone having a bad day, when you get home maybe make a happy card. That could really make their day!

You can also cheer people on. If you see one of your friends nervous before a sporting game or a dance recital you definitely cheer them on. They would probably feel more confident.

The world needs happiness, so let's all spread it!

**ALEXIS WEBSTER**

There are ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others. Making others feel good about themselves is

one way. Send them a card and help them out with stuff. Say, "you can do it," and cheer them on.

Including others is good too! Ask someone who does not have anyone to play with to play with you.

Spreading joy and happiness is wonderful.

**(Robin Laney)  
ZOEY BORING**

These are ways you can spread joy and happiness.

You can play with them at recess. You can compliment them. You can be their friend. These are some ways to spread joy and happiness.

**ANTHONEY CAMPBELL**

How to bring joy and happiness. I like to help people a lot to make them happy. I play with others to make them happy. I love to give others candy. I will help other people with their homework.

As you can see, I like to help people a lot.

**MORGAN DAVIS**

Ways to spread joy and happiness. I will spread happiness and joy to others around me.

I will say nice things to other people around me. I can do nice things for others. I will smile at people around me. I love bringing happiness and joy to others.

**DAMIAN KEENER**

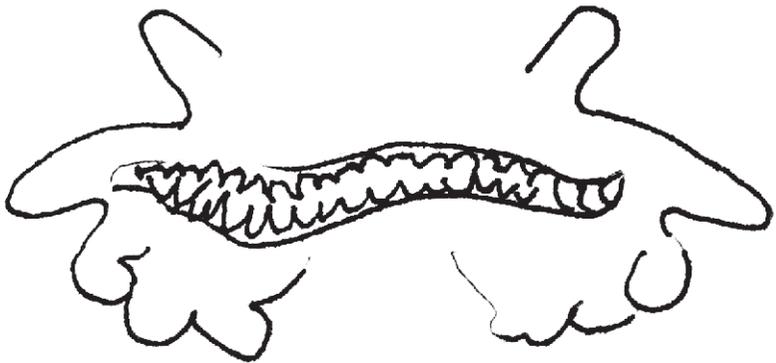
Spreading joy and happiness. These are ways I can spread joy and bring happiness to others. I will help cook dinner for families. I can send cards to the old age home. I will always smile because it makes people happy.

This is how to spread happiness.

**(Kerri Mountain)  
ADDIE HOWELLS**

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Sophia Stewart, Grade 4, Horace Mann Elementary

# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 39 spread joy and bring happiness. I can help to care for others. Sometimes, I bring my friend's book bag over when we come back from math because she rides a van. But there are other ways to care for others. You can help them by giving them things that you have and don't want anymore. Another way is to give them a card to show that you care. This year, my class sent cards to veterans. Then, we sent Christmas cards to a senior home. I help to be kind in other ways too. I can console them if they are feeling down in the dumps. When it was sad on the last day of school, my friend cheered me up and she told me that I will see everybody next year and I will get a new teacher. She also told me

that I will learn new things. There are many ways to spread joy and bring happiness. I thought these were the best ways.

**KENZLEE DOYLE**  
Spreading joy makes people happy. A way you can do that is by consoling them if they feel down. A way you do this is by spending your entire time with them. When you do that, you can make a new friend! Plus, it is a nice way to spend your time with them.

For example, when my cat died on Halloween, my mom let me go ice skating with my uncle when he comes home from Alaska!

A way you spread happiness is by lending a helping hand. That is a way of spreading joy that is important.

**LUCY FAUGHT**  
Spreading joy cheers others up. You can support

them if they are feeling down in the dumps. You can cheer them up by complimenting them.

One of my favorite things to do is surprise them. My class sent cards to veterans. They were so surprised! My friend surprised me when she got my book bag out of my locker.

Caring for others is a kind thing to do. Once, I was riding my bike with my sister. She fell off her bike. I got off my bike and helped her get back on hers.

I also can compliment people. You can also lend a hand. You can give a gift.

That is why helping people is important.

**MALEAH SHAFFER**  
There are lots of ways to spread joy to others. You can play with them. When I'm lonely, my brother plays with me and I feel happy.

You can ask to be their

friend and welcome them. When it was the first day of school, we all asked each other to be friends and Miss Mountain welcomed us and now we're all friends.

Another way to spread joy is to treat them. Once we made cards to veterans and to a senior home. Miss Mountain took them to the senior home and she said that they were so happy to get a card. It made me happy because they liked it.

Those are some ways to bring happiness and spread joy.

**RAYNE ELEMENTARY**  
(Reneé Tiesi and Lisa Nelson)  
**JOSEPH BAILLY**

I can spread joy and happiness by giving compliments and being kind. A kind word or deed can change a bad day into a good day. I like seeing the

smiles on my friend's face when I tell them a joke. I like to help donating toys for kids in need and animals. Even though I don't get to see them enjoy it and play with it, just knowing it makes a difference warms my heart. Making people happy makes me happy.

My favorite part of being kind is knowing I made someone's day better. Giving joy and happiness can give others a better day or make them feel better. Kindness can make the world a better place.

**PARKER HEIGLEY**  
If you want to spread joy and happiness to others, here's how to do it.

You can give pillows and blankets to the poor or you can give food or volunteer at a soup kitchen.

Another idea is to give money to charity or donate toys at Christmas. Spending

time visiting with the elderly is a fun thing to do.

Lastly, starting at home, by helping parents with chores and grandparents with housework.

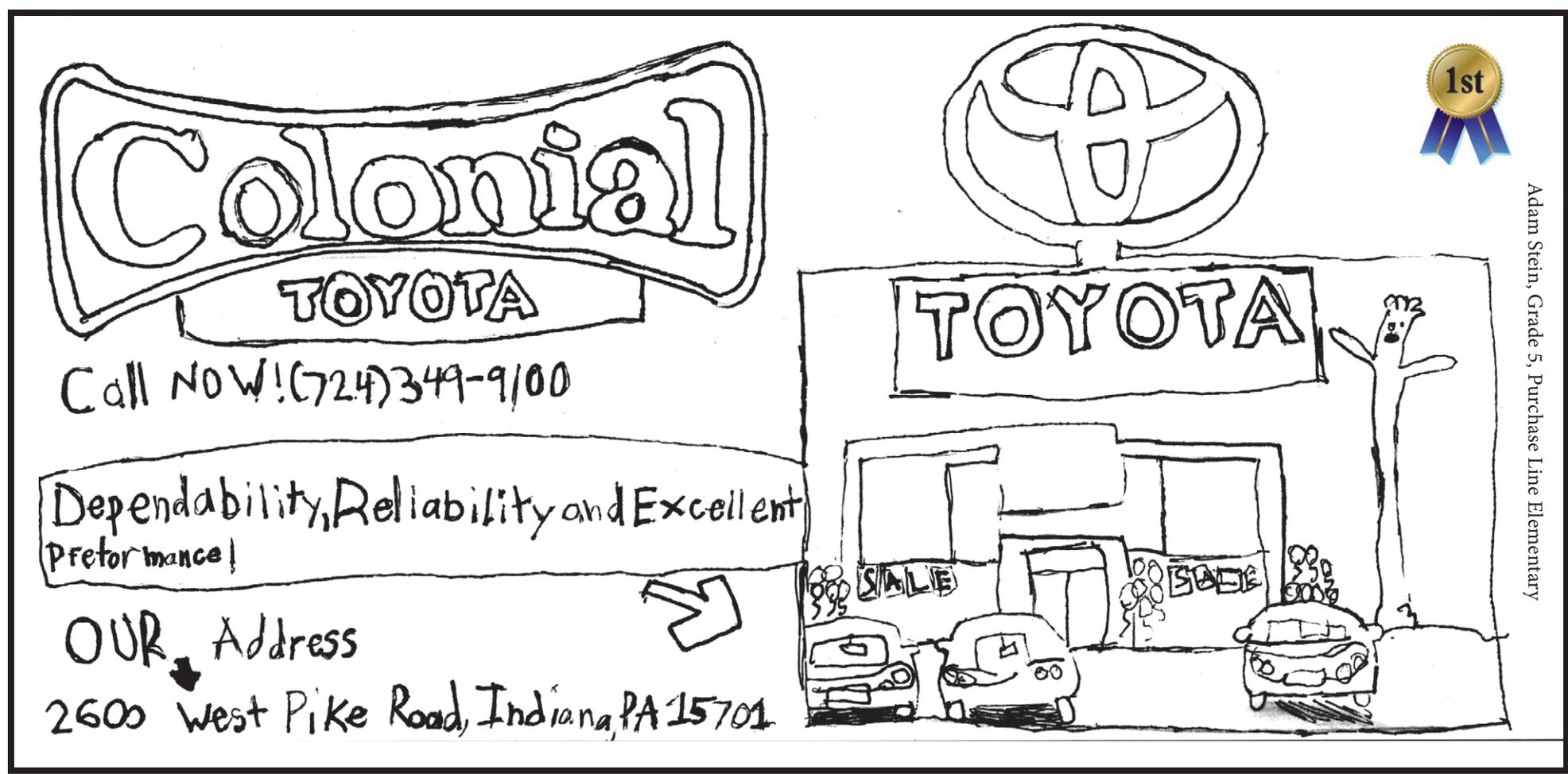
**LAYLA SMOCHKEK**  
The best way you can spread joy and bring happiness to the world is to follow the golden rule, which is to treat others the way you would like to be treated. We can do this through small acts of kindness every day.

Smile at others, give a compliment, offer a helping hand and treat people equally.

If we all do these small things, we can make a big difference and make the world a better place.

**KATELYNN WESTON**  
The things you can do to spread joy and happiness are help others. Like help

See **THIRD GRADE: 41**



# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 40 around the house or in school. Be kind. If someone is not playing with someone, you can ask if they want to play.

And never be rude, what always happens in the dark always comes to light. And remember to always be kind. Be nice. Help each other.

**(Reneé Tiesi)**

**JORDIN BUCHLEITNER**

I could be happy to spread happiness. I could visit someone. I could play with someone. I could talk to someone. I could give to someone. I could share with someone.

I will do what I need to do. I am going to be kind. I could take care of things. I could help my family. I could give a card to someone. I can be good to my family. I could do my homework. I could clean my room. I could take care of my dog.

I love to be happy! These are some ways I can spread joy.

**GAVIN DAY**

To bring joy to others, I will respect them. To bring happiness to friends, I will help others and my mom and dad. I will help my mom by helping her with dinner and to take good care of my sister. To make my dad happy, I will hug him.

Being kind is nice.

**KARTER KINZEY**

A few ways I can spread joy and happiness is give a gift to a friend or family member. Give people things when needed. Help people when they are sick. Say thank you when people give you a hand. Take care of people and care for them. Give them flowers if they are not feeling good.

Be a nice friend to people. Say I love you to your mom or dad. Save animals if they are sick. Give people money if they don't have a lot of things.

These are a few ways I can spread joy or happiness to

people and animals.

**LUCY MEYER**

To be a good person, I could be nice by giving people a hug.

Second, I could be nice by saying hi to someone.

Third, I can be nice to someone by playing with them.

Fourth, I could make someone laugh.

Fifth, I can message someone to let them know we love them no matter what.

This is how I can spread joy and happiness to others.

**ST. BERNARD  
REGIONAL CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL**

**(Vera Leonard)**

**MADDOX BENNETT**

What can I do to spread happiness and joy? I can donate to small companies, give to the poor, clean other people's messes, help others carry stuff, help blind people cross roads and start a kindness movement.

**CROSBY CAMPBELL**

I can spread joy and happiness by sharing my things. I also can love others. I can give people a home. I can raise money to donate. Finally, I can show happiness and joy.

**WYATT KASKAN**

How can you bring joy and happiness today? I can have them over to play. I can help clean up a mess. I can give a gift. I like to spread joy and happiness.

**CLARICE COLATCH**

I can spread joy and happiness by giving someone a hug when they're mad, angry or sad if someone they knew passed away. The someone could not feel well. Someone could have broken their heart.

You should always give someone a hug to spread joy and happiness.

**SEEDS OF FAITH  
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**  
**(Shanda Buterbaugh)**  
**BRANDON CROSBY**

I like to help people and share food with the poor.

And I help the community and I help when things are hard to lift up, and I give out money to the poor and sometimes I give out joke books and people laugh.

**HUDSON ECKENRODE**

I spread joy and happiness into the world by preaching the Bible to others. I can also spread joy by celebrating Jesus' birth and by doing card ministry.

**JOSHUA PHILP**

Spread the good news of Jesus to others and give money and so much more.

Do it again for the poor and the beggars and the ones in the hospital.

Donate food and water and money with supplies like a tent or pillows and blankets to the poor.

**JESIAH HOPKINS**

I can spread the word of God. I also can send cards to people who are sick. I can also invite people to church so they can sing songs in praise.

I can throw a party for people that just found out about God. I can also preach to other people and help them do Godly things.

I can tell people this, God will lead you to happiness and joy. I can also tell people that God is coming back to earth and is taking us to heaven.

**UNITED ELEMENTARY**  
**(Mary Carpenter)**  
**EMILY RUMMEL**

I spread joy and happiness to others in many ways. First, I spread joy and happiness to others by giving a compliment and saying hello to strangers and friends.

Secondly, I invite others to play with me, like when I play tag with others.

To end, this is how I spread joy and happiness to others.

**ANTONIO HERNANDEZ**

I spread joy and bring happiness to others in many ways. To start, I spread joy and happiness to my friends by asking "are you okay?" because when

they get hurt you can ask them that.

Next, I spread joy and happiness to my friends by helping them not to cry.

I spread joy and bring happiness to others in many ways.

**HENRY CONCEPCION**

I spread joy and bring happiness to others in many ways. First, I spread joy and happiness to my teacher by smiling, doing my work and listening. Next, I spread joy and happiness by making my grandma breakfast.

To end, that's how I spread joy and happiness.

**GRAY BEACOM**

I spread joy and happiness in many ways. First, I spread joy by helping people up when they fall on the ground. Next, I help people by letting them play with me when they have no one to play with.

To end, these are the ways

I would give joy to people.

**(Mary Douglas)**

**MAKENZIE JOHNSON**

I would spread joy by being nice to them. If they are mean I would be nice to them to cheer them up.

I would be helpful by helping them clean up even if I was not playing with it, and if they were being bullied I would stick up for them.

If they were sitting alone and sad, I would go to them and sit next to them to cheer them up. If they need help, I would help them. If they need help to spell a word, I would help them.

**DONEVAN COOK**

The ways I can spread joy and happiness is by being kind to people and showing that we care about other people. I can also provide food for all the people that don't have a lot of food. I also could build more hous-

es for the people that live on the street.

I want to make people happy and have a good life!

**AUSTIN FRAMPTON**

I could spread joy and happiness if someone doesn't have anyone to play with at recess and offer to play with them.

I can also spread joy and happiness by donating to people in need. Another way I can spread joy and happiness is by donating my toys to the kids in need.

In conclusion, I would ask people if I can play with them at recess, I would donate to the people in need, and donate my toys to the kids in need.

**MADELYN OLIVER**

A few ways to spread joy and bring happiness are, I could help people and give them shelter, food and

See **THIRD GRADE: 42**

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Caleb Carbajal, Grade 6, Elderton Elementary

# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

**THIRD GRADE:** From 41 clothes. Another way to make people happy is to be with people who no one was with. One last way to make people happy is to help people who are going through something rough in their life.

In closing, a few ways to make people happy are to help people in need, be with people who are alone, and help people who are going through rough times.

**(Aimee Erwin)  
ASHTON CHERO**

Ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others. Stand up for a friend when they are getting bullied. Help someone who has dropped something. Pick up trash when you see it. These are the ways to spread joy.

**ZAELIA ADAMS**

Ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others.

Help others pick up their things. Play with others that are lonely. Help others with a problem. That is a way to spread happiness.

**THEODORE  
LICHENFELS**

Ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others. Leave someone a kind note. Say "hi" to someone new. Finally, invite someone new to play with you. Those are my ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others.

**KARTER McCULLOUGH**

These are the ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others. I like to help my mom with dishes. I play with a friend if they are lonely. I like to donate money to charity.

These are ways to give a smile.

**(Chanie Henning)  
BLAINE BARNER**

There are many amazing ways to spread joy. First, I

would walk up to them and tell them a joke. I would give them a letter and tell them how much I love them and care about them.

Next, I could smile at them and give them a hug or draw a friendly picture.

Last, I could give them cookies and help them carry groceries in the house even if they don't ask me to help.

This is what I would do to make people happy.

**CAMDEN FORSYTHE**

These are a few ways to spread joy and bring happiness to others.

First of all, if someone doesn't understand a problem on a test, you could ask them if they want help.

Second of all, you can ask someone if they want to play with you if they don't have anyone to play with.

Lastly, if someone needs a pencil because they lost

theirs, you can give them one.

These are a few ways you can spread joy and bring happiness to others.

**WESTON McNUTT**

There are many ways to spread joy. First of all, I would bake cookies. I will find out what favorite cookies they like, then I would make a big batch of them.

Secondly, I would go up to them and I will tell them a joke. I will give them a joke book if they like it, and I will read the jokes to them.

Lastly, I would play with them, and I will play games. I will play tag and hide and seek, we can watch TV and read books and a whole lot of stuff.

These are the ways I can spread joy.

**AIDAN CLARK**

There are many ways that I can spread joy and bring happiness to others. First, I can write letters to friends and give my friends gifts to cheer them up. I can also make cookies to give to friends.

Second, I can make friends and make games for friends to have fun times.

Lastly, I love to do activities with friends like go to the park, color, and make paper airplanes to throw.

These are the reasons how I spread joy and bring happiness to others.

**W.A. McCREERY  
ELEMENTARY  
(Alyssa Phillips)  
ANNA POLLOCK**

Spreading joy and happiness is better than a summer day with sweet smelling flowers by the ocean with a sunset in August. I could spread joy and happiness to my family because I have a 100-year-old great-grandma and sometimes we go visit her.

I could also spread joy and bring happiness by giving compliments to my friends and family. After that, I could make a card for a person in a nursing home or for the school employees.

I could invite a friend over to play if they are having a hard day or just call them to say "hi." After that I could donate a little bit of money to a fundraiser. I could spread some joy and happiness to maybe help with my cats and chickens, because it takes a lot of work to take care of pets.

I am only 8 years old, so I could encourage other people to do the same thing as a little third-grader. If other people are doing the same, I think Indiana County could be a better place. If the county is joyful then I think it will bring lots of happiness to the people who visit. I know this will work,

I just need people to

spread that joy!

**KATELYN CAYLOR**

Spreading happiness and joy is like the sprinkles on an ice cream cone. One thing I can do to spread joy and happiness is help with our cats. I can feed my cats.

Another thing I can do is clean with my parents and help with cooking. I can also spend time with my grandparents and keep them company. But if I can't go see them then I will call them and say hi to them.

I can also help my parents with things around the house by doing chores. I can play with someone if they are lonely. And if someone is under the weather and not feeling well, I will say nice things to them and make them really happy.

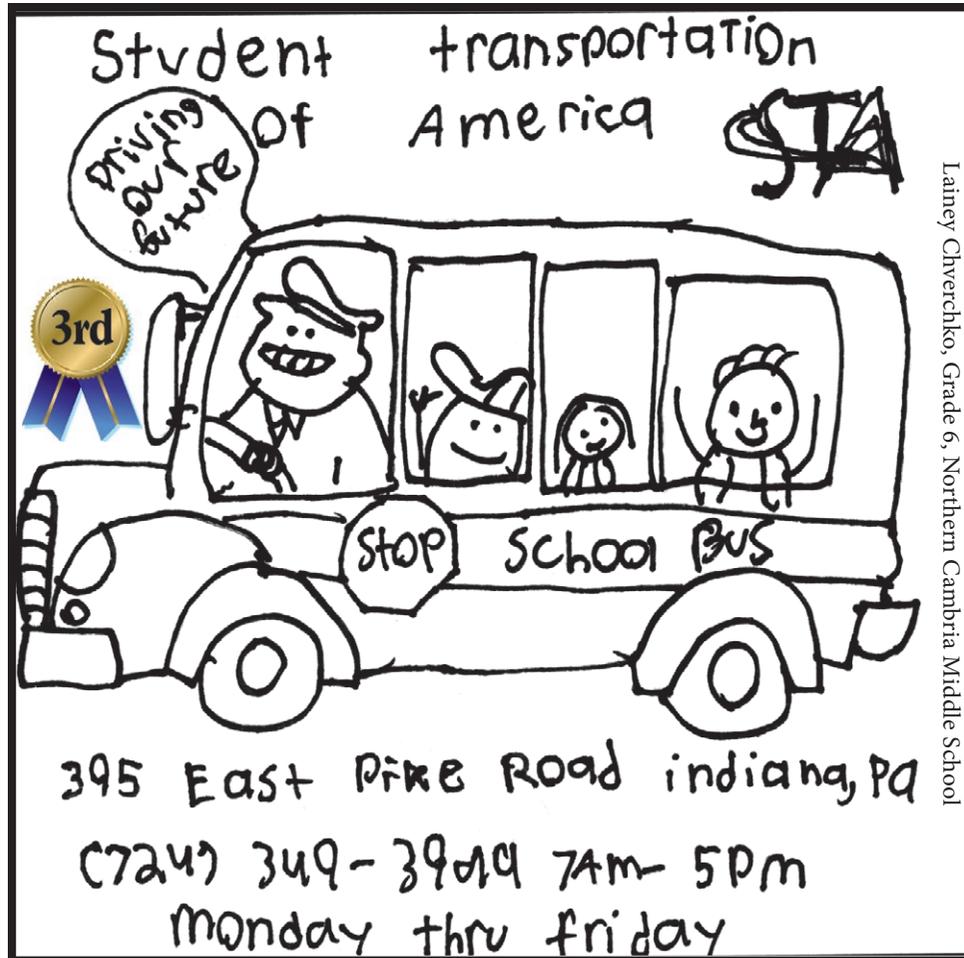
I can go to a store and get my mom and dad a gift because they help us and work hard for me and my brother.

These are some ways I spread joy and happiness to people and our world!

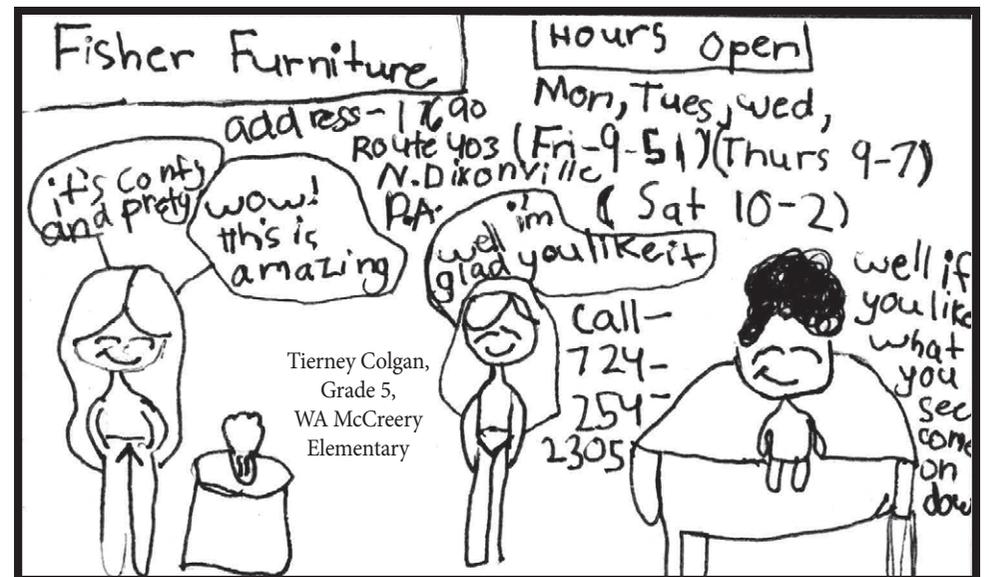
**LEAH KAMINSKY**

There are thousands of ways that you can spread joy, like you can compliment someone or help someone if they drop something. Everyone can bring happiness to anyone. You can give someone a gift, call someone just to say "hi," you can compliment

See **THIRD GRADE: 43**



Lainey Chivorchko, Grade 6, Northern Cambria Middle School



# 'What are ways you can spread joy and bring happiness?'

## THIRD GRADE: From 42

someone you don't even know, or you can spend time with a loved one.

What I would do is help my mom cook dinner or help clean up after dinner or help with taking care of my sibling, help pick up my brother's toys, help with my dog's food by helping with the money.

If I would give someone a Pokémon card, they would be so happy with me and I would be happy that I made someone happy.

I could make a song up for someone because I'm a singer. I would be so happy if I could make up a song for someone and make them happy!

I hope for people to help out others like I do.

## MARYBELLE PARK

I'm still a kid, but I can still bring happiness. I could say, "You look so pretty today." I can help pick something up when someone drops something, you help them. Help with pets, sometimes pets can get goofy.

Call someone to say "Hi, how are you doing today?" For Christmas I gave people gifts. Help cook if somebody needs help.

Invite someone to your birthday party, it is going to be so much fun.

## HADLYNN BROWN

Spreading joy and happiness is a way to make someone's day. But how will I spread joy and happiness?

Maybe compliment someone you don't know or a friend that said they were having a bad day.

Maybe I could spread joy and happiness by giving kind comments. I have a lot more ideas! If a friend or family member is not feeling well, you could help them with their needs! Help cook for Thanksgiving or other special occasions. Help the cook out with the cooking, surely you will see a smile on their face!

If you're in school and see a boy or girl getting bullied, say, "Stop! Leave her/him alone!" Be friends with the person that was being bullied!

Spreading joy and happiness will not just make their day, maybe it will even make your day!

(Elizabeth Smathers)  
LUKE BURNS

Here are ways to make the world a little more joy-

ful. You can invite someone that wants to play the game you're playing at recess. You can try to be somebody's friend. You can buy somebody a gift for their birthday. You can help somebody in computer class. If there is a new kid, you can help them in the classroom.

These are ways to make the world a little more joyful!

## GABRIELA BRYANT

I spread joy and happiness like I spread peanut butter on bread.

One way is making someone a card. Giving someone a compliment if they were feeling left out. I would try to make a friend.

I would invite someone to play with me, smile. Share with someone. Share snacks with my classmates. Give

someone a gift, do a puzzle with someone. Cheer someone up, say nice things.

If someone needed a pencil I would give them one. If someone is new in school and they did not know which way their classroom was, I would show them.

These are ways I can spread joy and happiness.

## WYATT MILLS

Spreading joy is like the cherry on top of a sundae to me. One thing I could do is share some of my toys or video games. Another thing I could do is if someone is left out, I could invite him or her to play with me.

Lastly, I could give someone a compliment. I would tell them I like your shirt, I like your hair, or I could ask if they want to play a game.

In conclusion, this is how

I spread joy.

## GAGE PARK

I may be a kid, but I can spread joy. One thing I can do is be kind. The second thing is helping someone. The third thing is smile at people. The fourth thing is make a friend. The fifth thing is invite others to play. The sixth thing is say nice things.

These are the things I can do to spread joy and bring happiness.

## MYLES KUNKLE

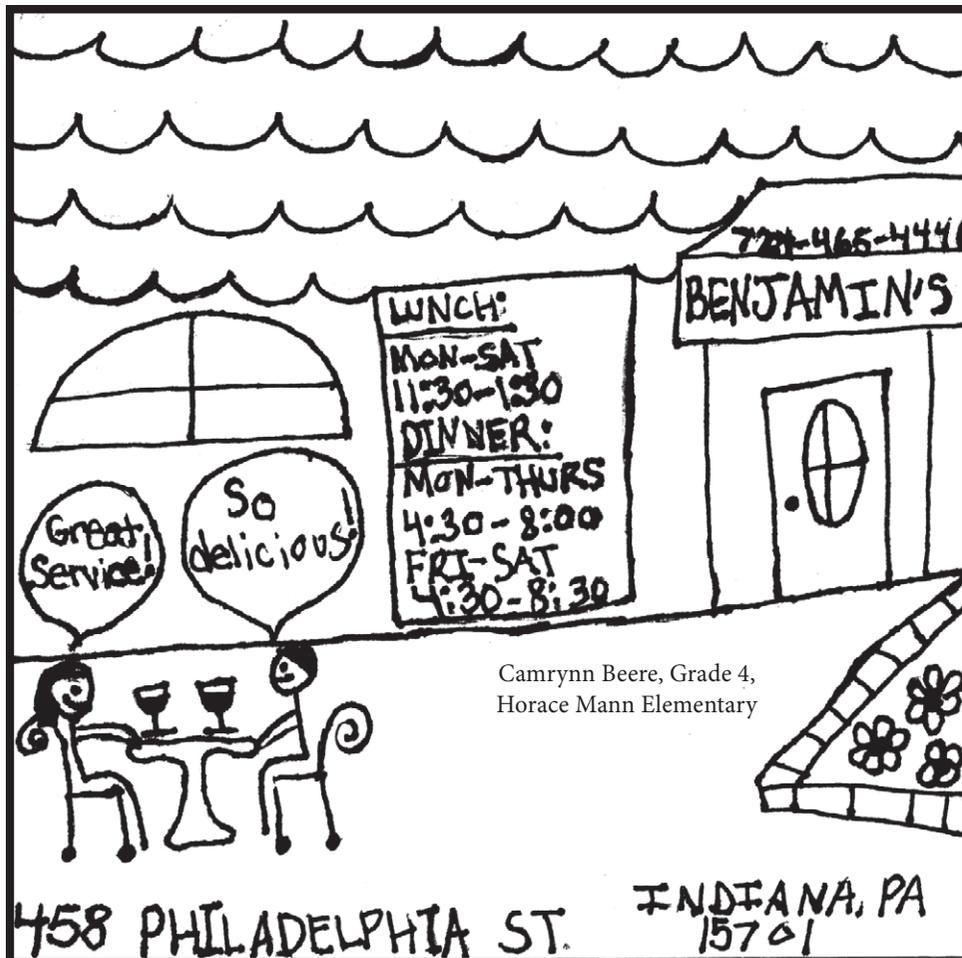
A way I can spread joy and happiness is helping someone if they need help.

Also, I can make a card for someone to cheer them up.

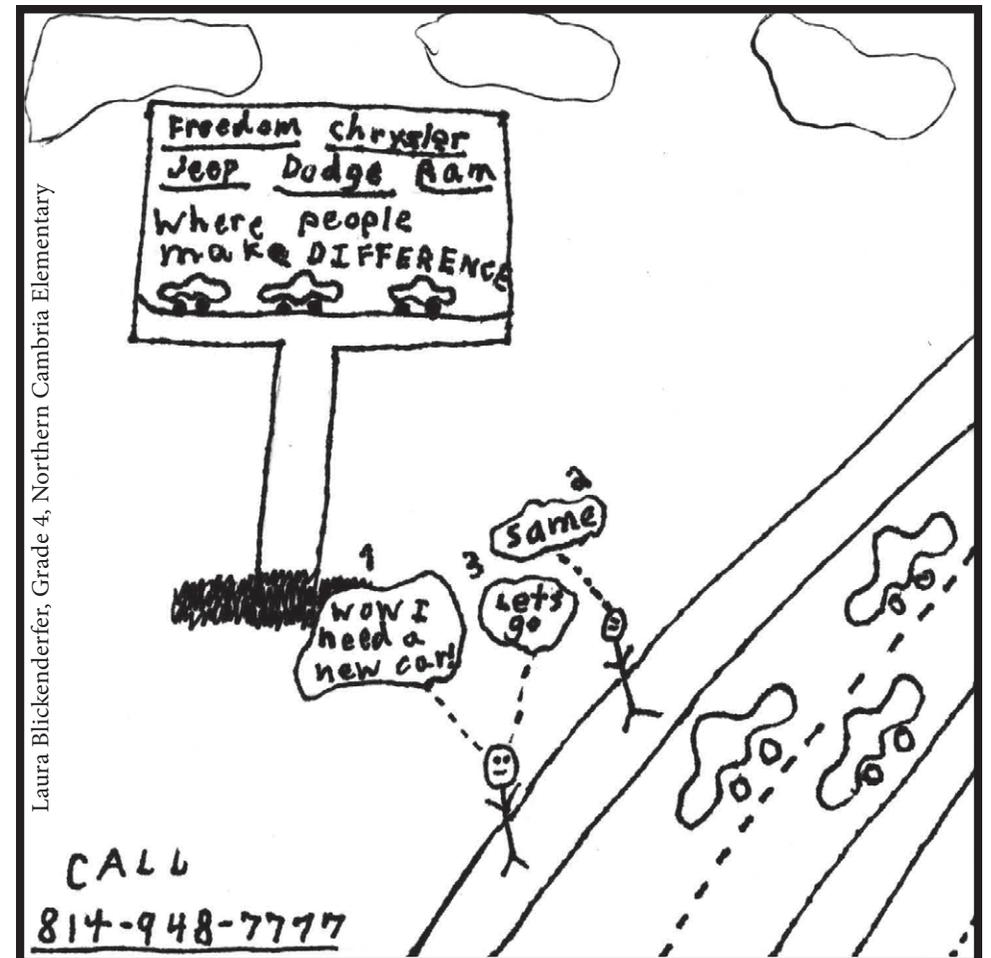
Also, I could give someone a gift.

These are the things I would do to spread joy and happiness.

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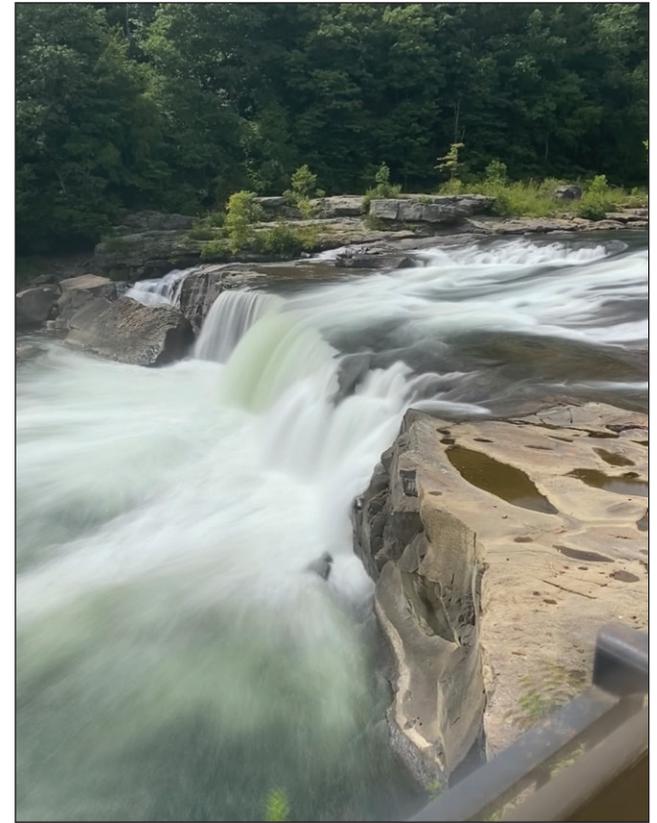
Camrynn Beere, Grade 4,  
Horace Mann Elementary



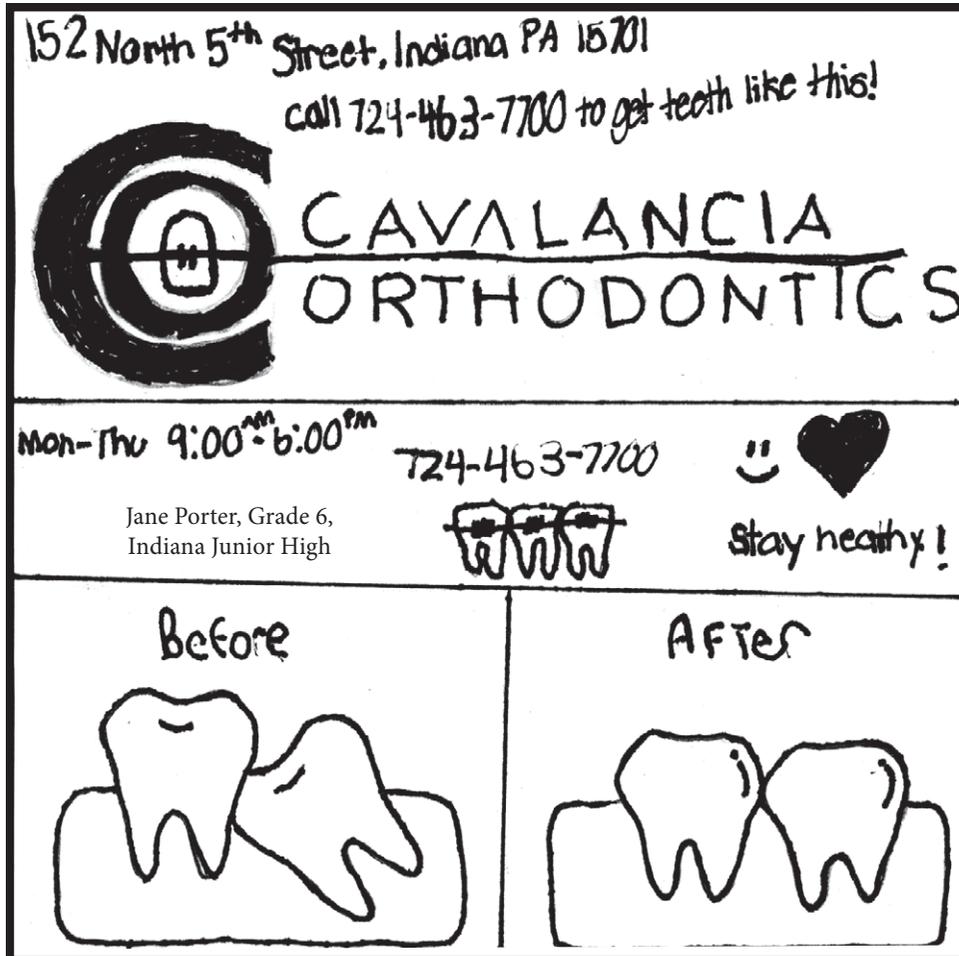
Laura Blickenderfer, Grade 4, Northern Cambria Elementary

# PHOTOGRAPHY HONORABLE MENTIONS

Colin Knickle,  
Indiana County  
Technology Center,  
Grade 10

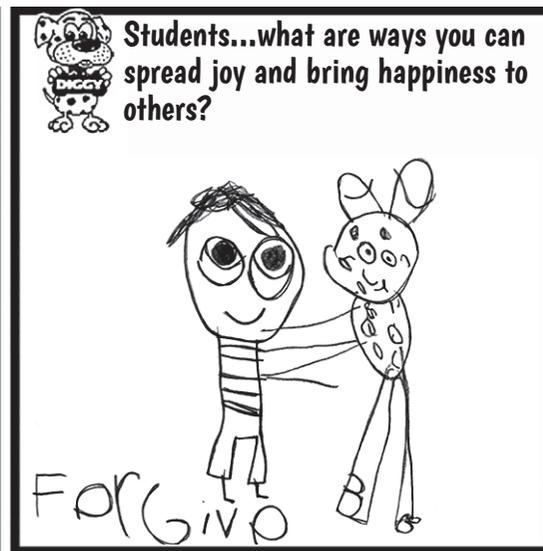
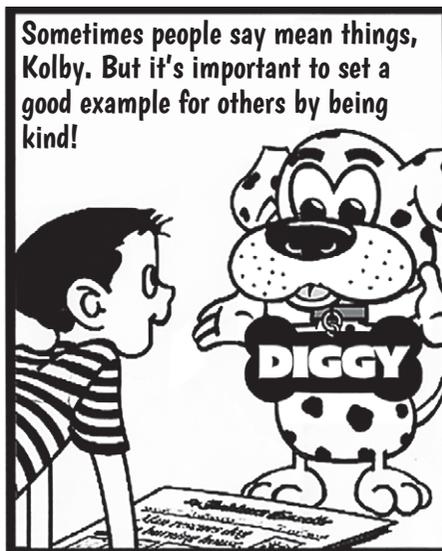


Ella Myers, Indiana Senior High School, Grade 10

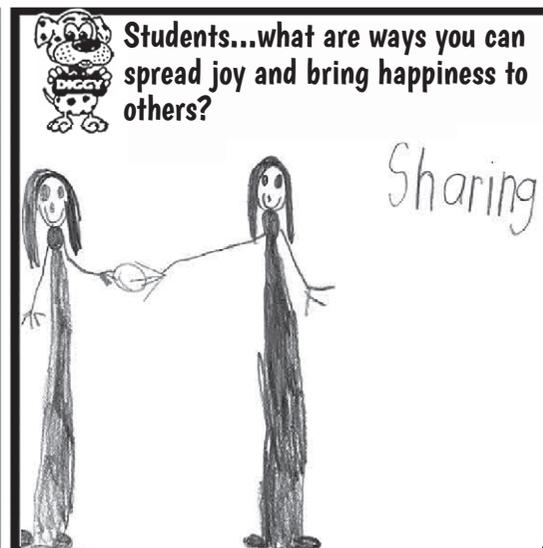
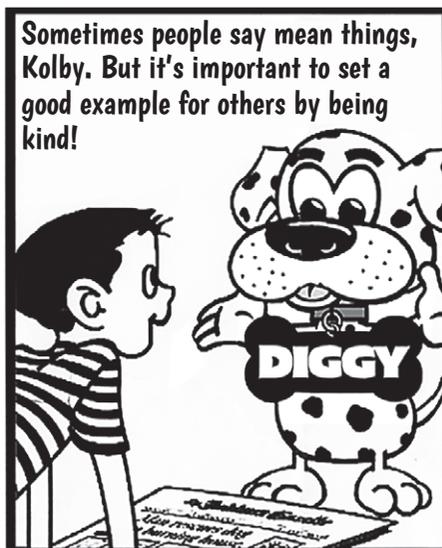
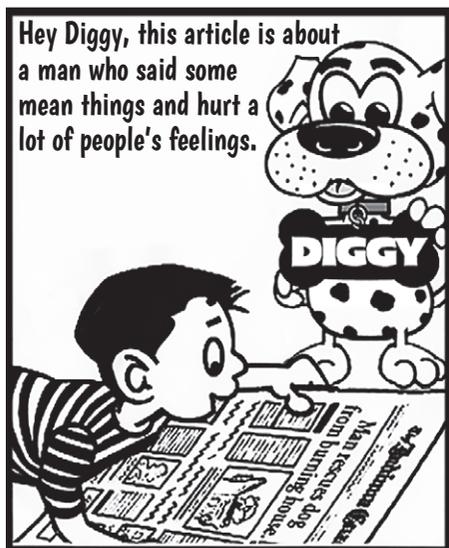


Lillian Keith, Grade 4, Northern Cambria Elementary

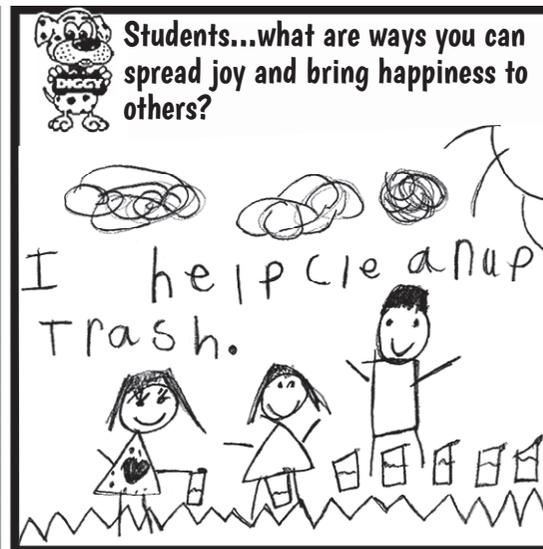
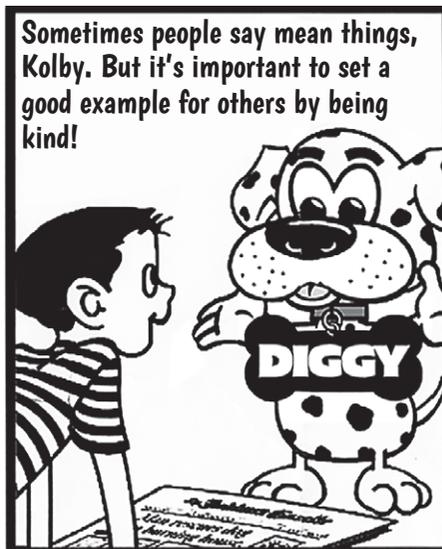
# Kindergarten classic comic winners



**JOSIE PRUSHNOK**  
St. Bernard Regional Catholic School

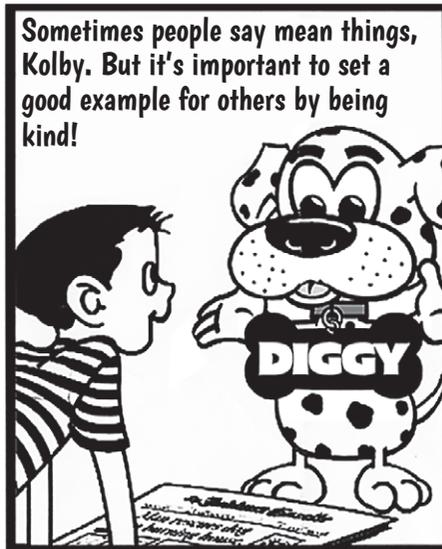


**ABIGAIL EDWARDS**  
Calvary Baptist Academy

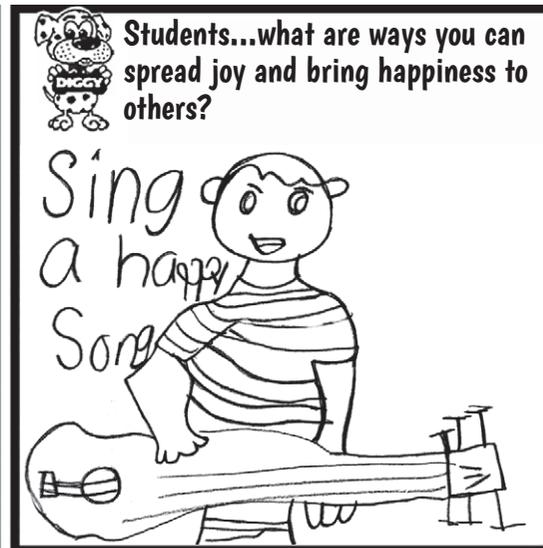
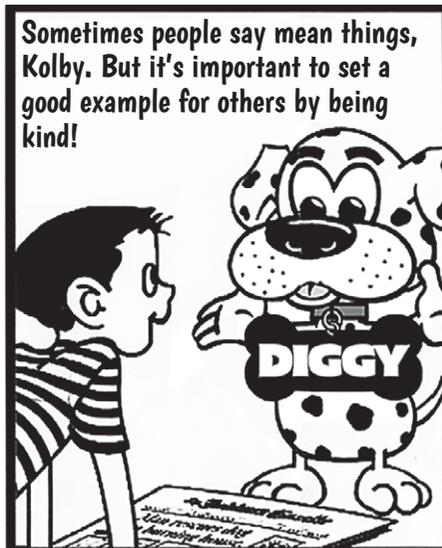
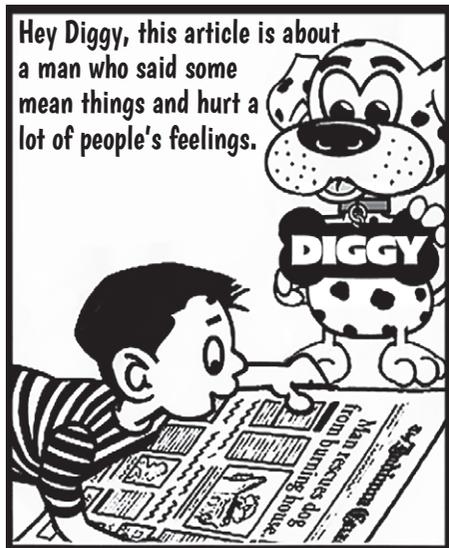


**LILLY DEPNER**  
United Elementary

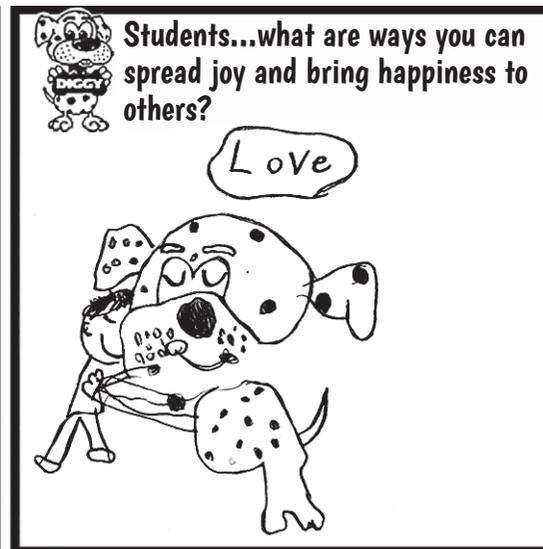
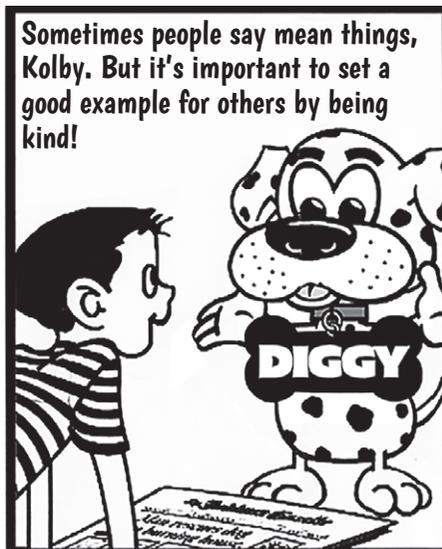
# First-grade classic comic winners



**MADLYN KOSGEI**  
St. Bernard Regional Catholic School

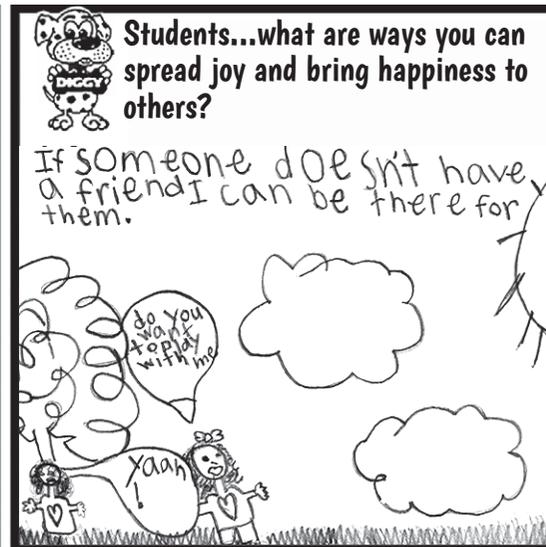
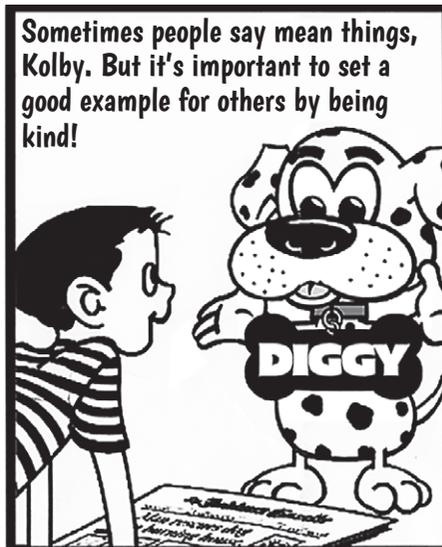
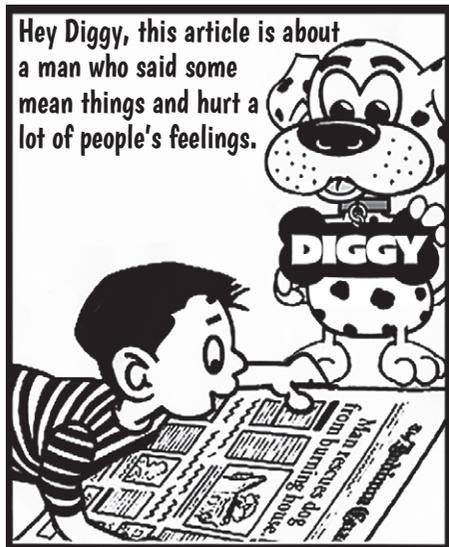


**ADDISON BLOUGH**  
Blairsville Elementary

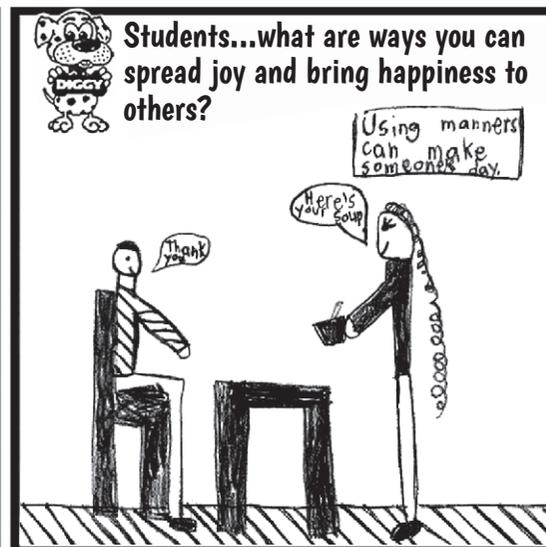
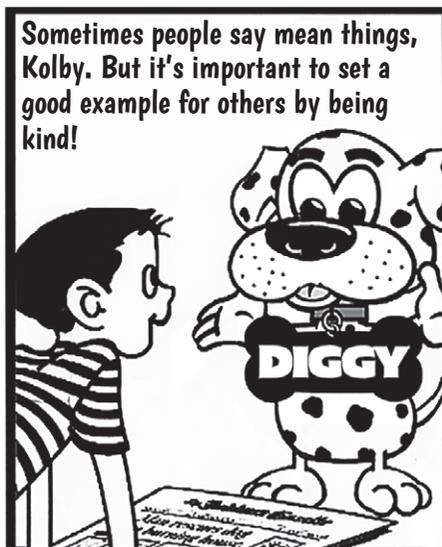


**JAELYN HICKOK**  
Northern Cambria Elementary

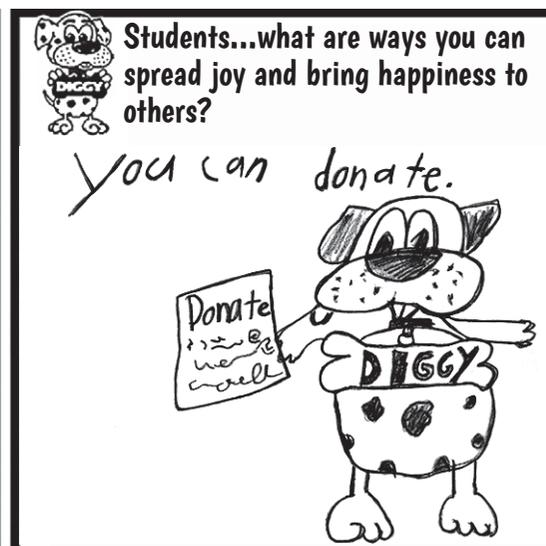
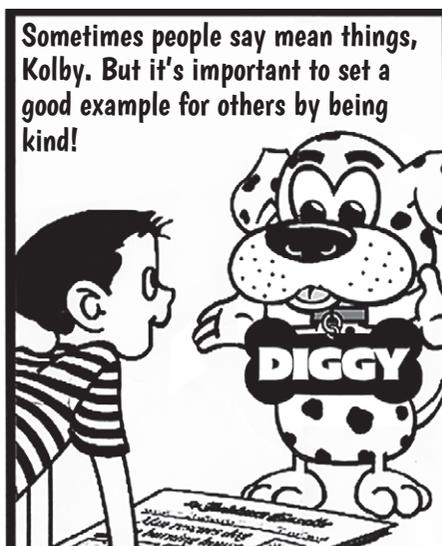
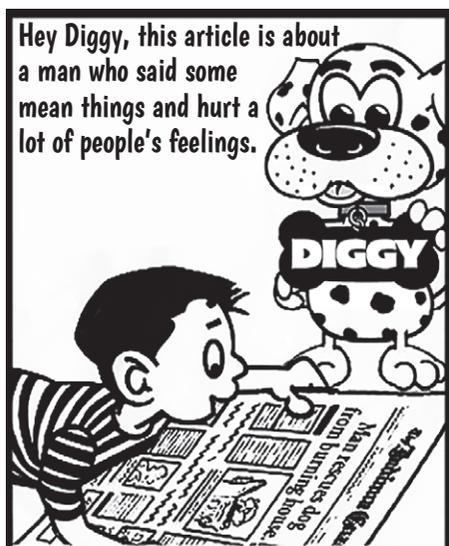
# Second-grade classic comic winners



**ZOEY NICHOLSON**  
Ben Franklin Elementary



**JUDE RENSKO**  
United Elementary



**CAMERON KLINE**  
Purchase Line Elementary

# THANK YOU

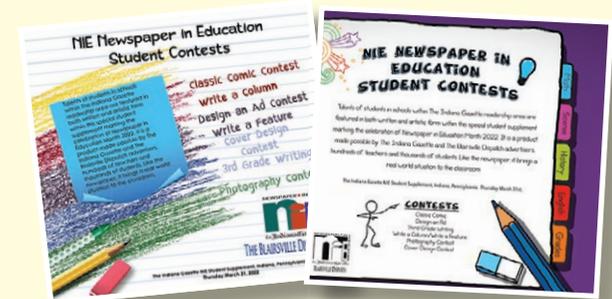
## 2022 N.I.E. PARTNERS

### YOU help make this program a success!

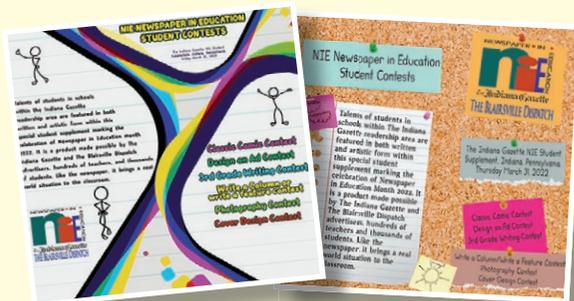


- 9th Street Deli
- Affordable Interiors
- Allied Milk Producers
- Ameritas Financial Services
- Benjamin's
- Bork Farms
- Brush Valley Tire
- Cake Shotts

- HobbySpeed.com
- Housing Authority of Indiana County
- Indiana Audiology
- Indiana County Chamber of Commerce
- Indiana County Humane Society
- Indiana County Solid Waste Authority
- Indiana Eye Care
- Indiana Floral
- Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC)
- InFirst Savings Bank
- Learn to Love Technology
- Lias Tire
- Lucy Rae
- Luigi's Ristorante
- Luther Ford
- Mahoning Physical Therapy
- Mains Chiropractic
- Maple Valley Personal Care



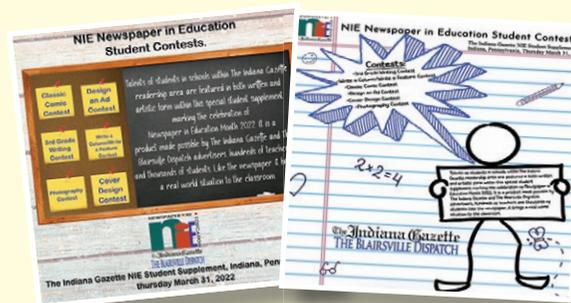
LEFT Cover Design Contest submission by Gavin Jordan  
RIGHT Cover Design Contest submission by Sierra Hart-Fabbri



LEFT Cover Design Contest submission by Shelby Murphy  
RIGHT Cover Design Contest submission by Dakota Robinson

- Cavalancia Orthodontics
- Charlsons Furniture
- Colonial Motor Mart
- Colonial Toyota
- Delaney
- Elderton State Bank
- Environmental Pest Management
- First Commonwealth Bank
- Fisher Furniture
- Freedom Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram
- Glenn Bush Ford

- Marion Center Bank
- McDonald's
- Miller Plumbing & Heating
- Mohawk Lanes
- Naser Foods
- Oak Grove Realty
- Poseidon Waterproofing
- RC Indoor Archery
- Rowley Family Chiropractic
- S&T Bank
- Safe Buy Home Inspection
- Santoro Chiropractic
- Service Master
- Student Transportation of America
- State Rep. Jim Struzzi
- Sue Hewitt Dance Studio
- Tate's Supermarket
- The Dan Smith Candy Company
- Tire Express Service Center
- Upstreet Financial Advisors
- William G. Mechling Insurance Agency



LEFT Cover Design Contest submission by Sydney Duval  
RIGHT Cover Design Contest submission by Easton Cook