





# Cultivate

youth arts magazine

2021

*HopeWorks' mission is to support and advocate for people in Howard County affected by sexual and intimate partner violence and to engage the community in creating the change required for violence prevention.*

"One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen, can change the world."

- Malala Yousafzai

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COVER ART: MOM'S MAKEUP BY ANIKA AMIN

## DISCLAIMER

*The artistic expressions in this publication are those of the individual authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect the philosophies, position or policies of HopeWorks.*

CULTIVATE ARTS MAGAZINE IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE COLLABORATION AND ASSISTANCE OF HOPEWORKS' YOUTH LEADERS.



*Cultivate* grew out of years of inquiry: who am I, where does violence come from, what is my role in creating a world where everyone is safe and valued? What do I have to offer?

The questions came from participants in the HopeWorks' Youth Leadership Project. Since 2011, high school students involved in the Project have been asked to question the status quo, to reflect on the people and the issues that are important to them. They learned about the journey and power of finding their own voice.



Now, 10 years later, it seems natural to evolve and offer a space where youth can be expressive, reflective, and connected. What better vehicle than the arts?

Creative approaches to empowerment are timeless, accessible, and healing. The artistry offered in Cultivate is heartfelt, curious, honest, and courageous.

Congratulations to each voice presenting itself to the world in these pages.

*Vanita*

*Vanita Leatherwood | Executive Director  
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*HopeWorks is Howard County's sexual and intimate partner violence center. We are here for our clients completely.  
And we are agents of change. Hope builds momentum and momentum creates change...when we work together.*

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## A WINTER DAY

BY HOPE HAN

I cuddle into the warm, fluffy blanket.  
The snow outside howls.  
Snuggled up in my heavenly blanket,  
I go up to the window.  
Pressing my fingertips against the window,  
Almost immediately my fingers turn pale.  
The window feels like a freezing ice cube.  
The white world outside is so bright, I can't see any colors.  
Everything is whirling around.  
Suddenly, everything stops, and is still.  
Everything is beautiful outside,  
Like a picture painted for me.

© 2021 Hope Han

## WINTER TREE STUMP BUTTERFLY

PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY JACK PORTER



© 2021 Jack Porter

# DAUGHTER OF DEAFNESS

CHARCOAL AND COLORED PENCIL

BY SHIVANI VARIA



© 2021 Shivani Varia

## IT IS SILENT

BY ANNA HAN

The forest is silent. Pale leaves hang tremorously from dry, gnarled branches, yet not a rustle can be heard, for the afternoon breeze that lies dead now never does—and never will—revive itself again. The quiet, trickling melody of clear streams and the happy gurgling of little brooks have faded away long ago. Here, where birdsong once rang out in majestic clarity, remains only the infrequent clicking of bristly legs on small, shining beetles that scuttle among the roots of trees. And when the beetles have gone on their way, almost always never to return, there is nothing left but silence. Glaring rays of sunlight pour through the sparse foliage; the sun has been shining hotly on the faded soil for many, many years. Tree trunks that once boasted every shade of green and brown have dulled to pale remembrances of a spring that came and went long ago. And yet the forest is full of color. Bright red soda cans, crushed into crumpled masses of metal, lie scattered amongst the trees alongside colorful, torn bags glinting under the sun's harsh stare that still hold the dry, salty remnants of long-gone potato chips. Vivid streaks of neon spray paint slash the faded, peeling bark of dozens of trees. It is the last forest on Earth. And it is silent. But straining ears might hear, even now, the overwhelming muteness of a humanity that no longer cares and the approaching buzz of saws.

© 2021 Anna Han

# LET US BREATHE

BY ESTELLA ELKIS

Air pollution is an issue that affects us everyday.  
It causes issues all around the Chesapeake Bay.  
The fossil fuels we burn for electricity and fuel  
Are now becoming a destruction tool.  
These non-renewable sources produce pollutants;  
Nitrogen oxides are harming us humans.  
They threaten people's health and harm the lungs  
And other issues for the environment have begun.  
The nitrogen oxides create dead zones in water  
Which can't support grasses, fish, or even otters.  
These nitrogen oxides also contribute to climate change  
When they trap heat from the sun's rays.  
Global warming intensifies smog  
Which is a mix of smoke and fog  
Smog inhibits animals and harms plant growth  
And causes symptoms that people loathe.  
This cycle will continue if people don't take action.  
Luckily, Fred Ferguson came up with a contraption.  
The Waterotor generates energy from water;  
It's a creative turbine... but why bother?  
The portable turbine can work in waters  
That only move at 2 miles an hour  
It works without fuel, instead using the flow  
So it will work in any water that goes!  
The invention won't hurt marine life  
And doesn't have a super high price.  
The truth is we need to target the source  
Of nitrogen oxides from fossil fuels, of course!  
Power plants are where this issue originates  
So here is how we can improve our state's fate:  
The Howard County Council should create a rule  
That 50% of power plants that burn fossil fuels  
Must be replaced with Waterotors  
Placed throughout Chesapeake waters!  
Afterall, with this new policy  
We will improve our air quality.  
We will protect the environment, slow global warming,  
And reduce health-harming pollutants that are forming.

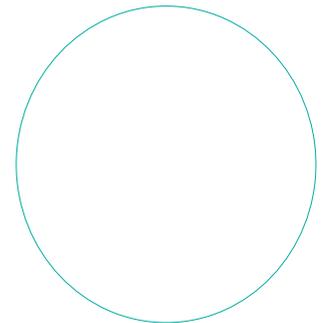
© 2021 Estella Elkis

# SPRING TIME

By ANVI PATEL

The flowers slowly bloom  
I am out of my room  
There is nothing I have to broom  
No more classes on zoom  
I am free to fly  
I pretend I am up high  
I want to have a piece of pie  
The Sun has come out  
I have no more doubt  
No time to pout  
My mind is not like a drought  
It is springtime  
The sun is about to shine  
I pretend to swing from the vines  
I draw outside the lines  
The clouds are up high  
The sky is blue  
I have no loose screws  
It is springtime  
Time for a nice drive  
I count to five  
I feel so alive  
It's springtime

© 2021 Anvi Patel



# A LETTER TO MOTHER NATURE

By ANNA HAN

Beautiful  
Your trees whose branches dance in the breeze  
Your buzzing bees that alight gracefully on  
wildflowers  
Your birds that sing despite the chill paleness of  
early morning  
Your storms that light up the night and send  
torrents to rattle our gutters

Thank you for summer afternoons  
Lying on my lawn  
Staring up at  
A rich, blue sky  
And clouds that leave long, wispy trails  
Chalky white  
Like the tails of frolicking horses  
Or smudges of flour on kitchen counters

Thank you for that long-awaited autumn day  
When I step outside  
And my favorite smell of all is in the air  
That distinct, oh-so-crisp *eau d'automne*  
And I know that the trees will be just like  
A painting  
Where my street is a landscape of beauty  
And yet each and every leaf is its very own  
masterpiece

Thank you for being forgiving  
For letting the swans return to their canals  
For letting the mountain peaks appear once more  
For letting the smog clear in our darkest cities

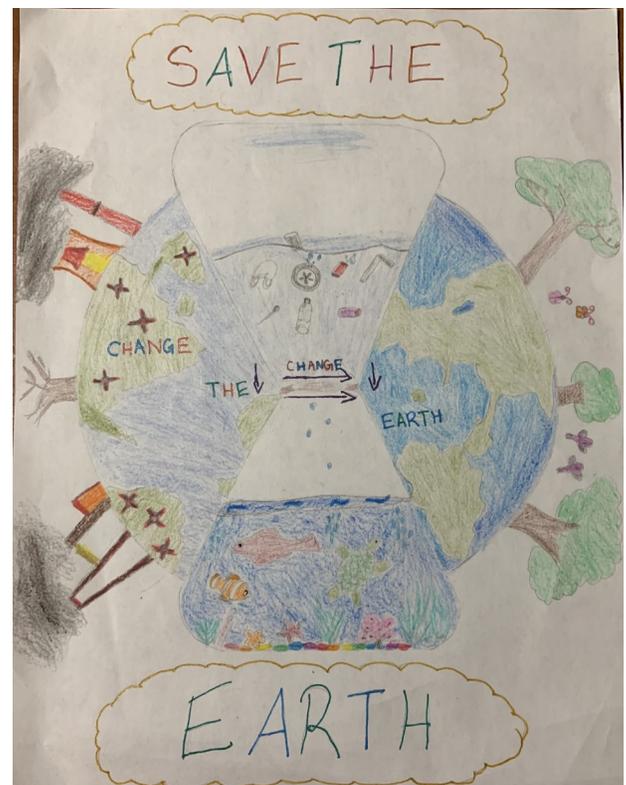
And I'm sorry that it took  
A tragedy  
For humanity to step back  
And let you breathe

I'm only seventeen  
I have a lot of dreams  
A lot of hopes  
For the future  
My future  
And for the sake of my future  
Our future  
I hope that the petitions, the policies, the choices  
we make today  
Make your future  
Beautiful

© 2021 Anna Han

## CHANGING AND SAVING THE EARTH

DRAWING  
By AKSHAINI PALLIKONDA



© 2021 AKSHAINI PALLIKONDA

## GO GREEN

BY ANVI PATEL

I look around outside  
Everything looks so divine  
Green Trees. Green Grass  
But no green Brass  
The Plastic fills the water  
I think of a plot  
I think of a lot  
No time to play in the Parking lot  
It chokes the turtles  
Hurts the air  
Makes me sad everywhere  
Time to action  
No time for fractions  
Stop throwing the plastic on the beach

Instead, eat a peach  
I need to be taller to reach  
For the go green beach  
Go Green  
No time to mean  
It is time to go green  
I want to see the color of aquamarine  
Reduce  
Do not be a moose  
Reuse  
Be a hoot  
Recycle  
So you can follow the cycle

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## THE VALUES OF LIFE

BY DAVID OKONKWO

There are a lot of things we take for granted.  
Whether it's the water that has poured or the plants  
that have been planted.  
In life, there is more to value that meets the eye.  
It's not gold or money in an enormous supply.  
But it is the things that have an everyday impact.  
The things that keep life intact.  
The true values that are often ignored,  
But also stand out on its own accord  
One of the gifts that our life provides,  
Are the people we interact with in our everyday lives.  
Our family and friends look out for us everyday,  
And that kind of value can go a long way.  
Another value we should be grateful to own,  
Is the warmth and shelter of a home.

And instead of worrying about wealth,  
Another value could be our health.  
We should be grateful for our gifts.  
Some people have families that are unstable.  
Or don't have food everyday on the table.  
Or don't have a home where they can reside.  
Or afford all the gifts that our life can provide.  
So for us to truly understand,  
We must offer a helping hand,  
To the people we really don't notice at first,  
Because what if the roles were suddenly reversed?

© 2021 David Okonkwo

## SEAGULLS

BY HOPE HAN

The squawk noisily  
With such a happy life, what  
be grumbling about? If I were a seagull, I'd never stop singing.  
I'd play with the little crabs  
the wind. And when  
under the  
dream

seagulls  
in the breeze.  
could they possibly  
and glide through  
night fell, I'd dance  
moonlight and  
of tomorrow.

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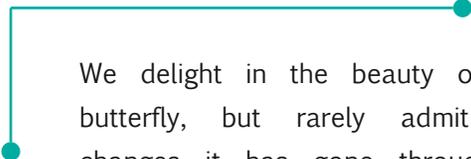
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## SMILE

BY ANVI PATEL

I step on the tiles  
Run to the next isle  
I go through the files  
Look up at someone and smile  
A smile can hurt  
A smile can heal  
A smile can help people peel  
Peel away their sad layer  
Make them someone new  
Help them decide  
It is all up to you  
It will make you feel like you flew  
You never know what is going on in their brain  
They could be in pain  
Maybe they feel they are buckled in chains  
So look around  
Give a smile  
Trust in is worthwhile

© 2021 Anvi Patel



We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

— Maya Angelou

# MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL

BY SITARA CHAKKAMADATHIL

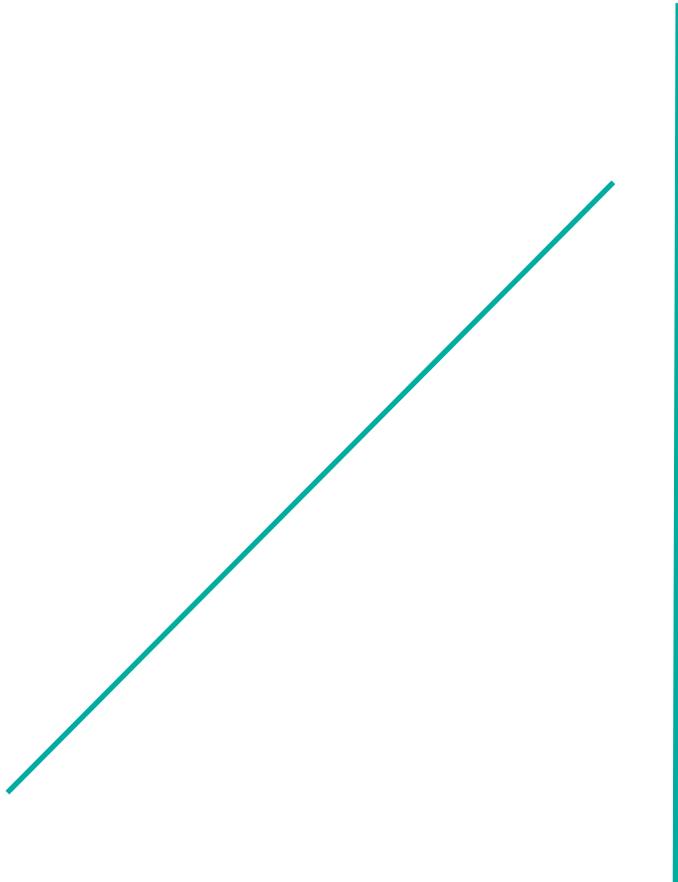
Mirror mirror on the wall  
Who even am I overall  
If you could sum me up in a word, what would it be  
Am I special compared to everybody  
My future has so many possibilities  
Too many opportunities  
What to choose, without fear of regretting  
Fears holding me back from living

Tell me mirror on the wall, the answer to my questions  
To cure my obsession  
With my future  
The future I am eager to see  
The future I am scared to see  
The future I never want to see

Mirror mirror on the wall  
Somedays I just want to grow up, but other days I don't want to at all  
The uncertainty of the future that scares me so  
Will I perhaps laugh at my fear as I grow?

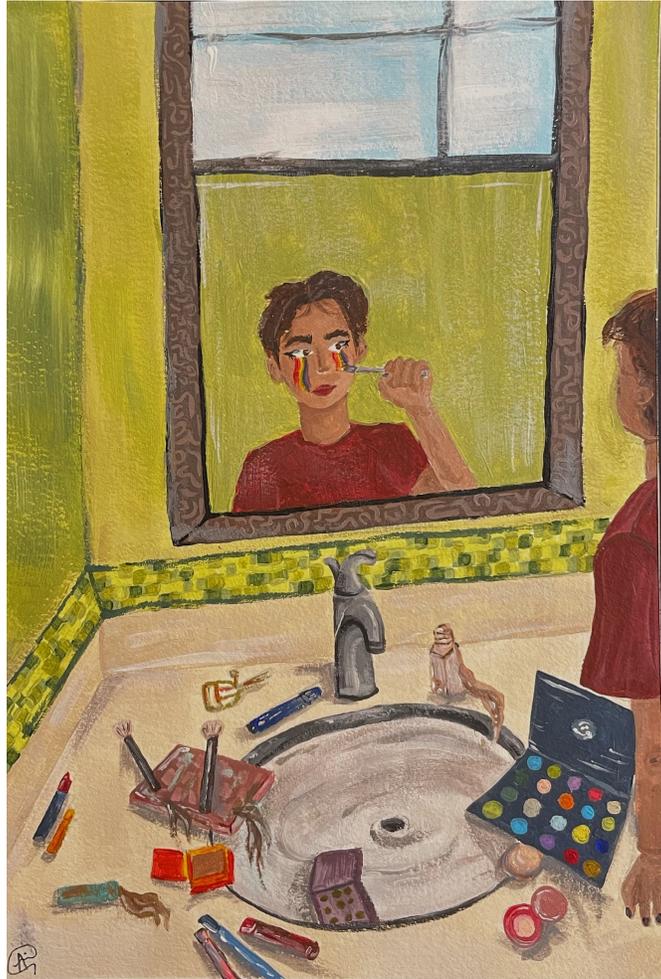
Mirror Mirror on the wall  
Please don't answer my questions at all  
Somethings in life are better left to fate  
As for my future, that I await

© 2021 Sitara Chakkamadathil



## MOM'S MAKEUP

PAINTING  
BY ANIKA AMIN



© 2021 Anika Amin

## THE CHOICE

BY KHUSHIKA SHAH

I had two choices,  
I faded all the noises,  
That told me to pick one,  
But I just couldn't.

I had chemistry with both,  
But this was about history,  
If I pick one, the other would loathe,  
How will I ever get rid of my uncertainty?

My brain tells me to choose wisely,  
My heart stays in silence,  
Then silence becomes a complicity,  
I long for some guidance.

I don't want to go deeper,  
In this endless nightmare,  
And so I chose neither,  
And picked myself.

© 2021 Khushika Shah

# BEAUTY

BY REBEKAH HUGHEY

The most meaningless, but meaningful word.  
Hobo Johnson said "Life isn't fair, life is like a fair.  
Only lets in white people with blue eyes and blond hair,  
big hips and small waist  
Let's cut-paste the same face the same smile.  
The same type. That's been stuck here for a while."  
This is so true. Society has created standards.  
In reality, no one wants that, we only want answers.  
It seems as though there's only one type of person to want to be  
But why no one can achieve it, will forever be a mystery to me.  
Or maybe because no one will truly be happy with what they have.  
Always wanting more, wanting less. Changing this, changing that.  
And the sad part about it, is no one can be perfect.  
But everyone knows that, they just refuse to show it.  
So they try and they try, to reach a goal that's unreachable.  
An accomplishment, achievable. And somehow still, unteachable  
That there's no point in trying, if there's nothing to try for.  
It will just end up as something, to endlessly cry for.  
And that is not something that I want to stand by for.  
Because beauty is not something that is buyable.  
It is not a specific type, and it is never reliable.  
Beauty has no category. No group, no race,  
So, you can stop trying. There's nothing to chase.  
No more pressure, anxiety, from such a disgrace.  
As you lie in your bed.  
All these thoughts that are fed to your head.  
As you think, to yourself. By yourself All alone, like I said.  
Beauty.  
Such a meaningless, but meaningful word.  
Like a disease uncured.  
Enough to get your thoughts stirred.  
Or even, preferred.  
By everyone, and everything.  
You. are. beautiful.  
Don't you ever deny it.  
Your hair, your eyes, your smile every bit.  
So stop chasing something, only stay strong.  
No need to chase something, when that something is wrong.

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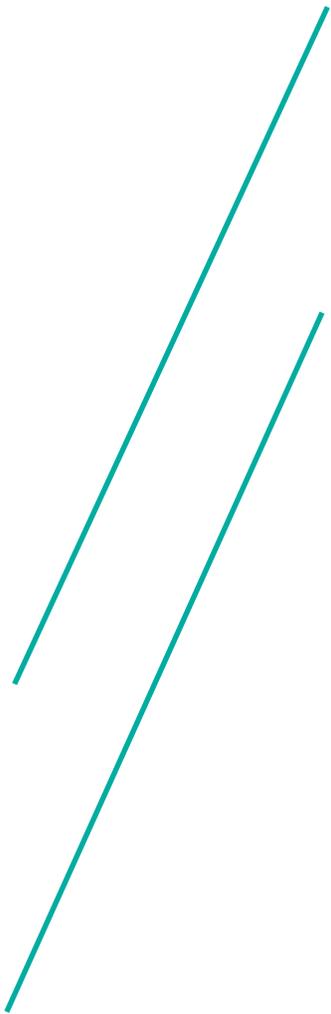
# A SLIVER OF HOPE

BY SITARA CHAKKAMADATHIL

A sliver of hope  
A slice of the moon shining ever so brightly in the night sky  
A rainbow coming out after the rain  
A drop of rain satisfying the the thirst of a villager after a drought  
A reassuring smile in a crowd of strangers  
A ray of sunshine peeking out from behind the clouds  
A child waking from a blissful dream

Lingering everywhere after escaping Pandora's box  
Hope gives you the motivation to keep going

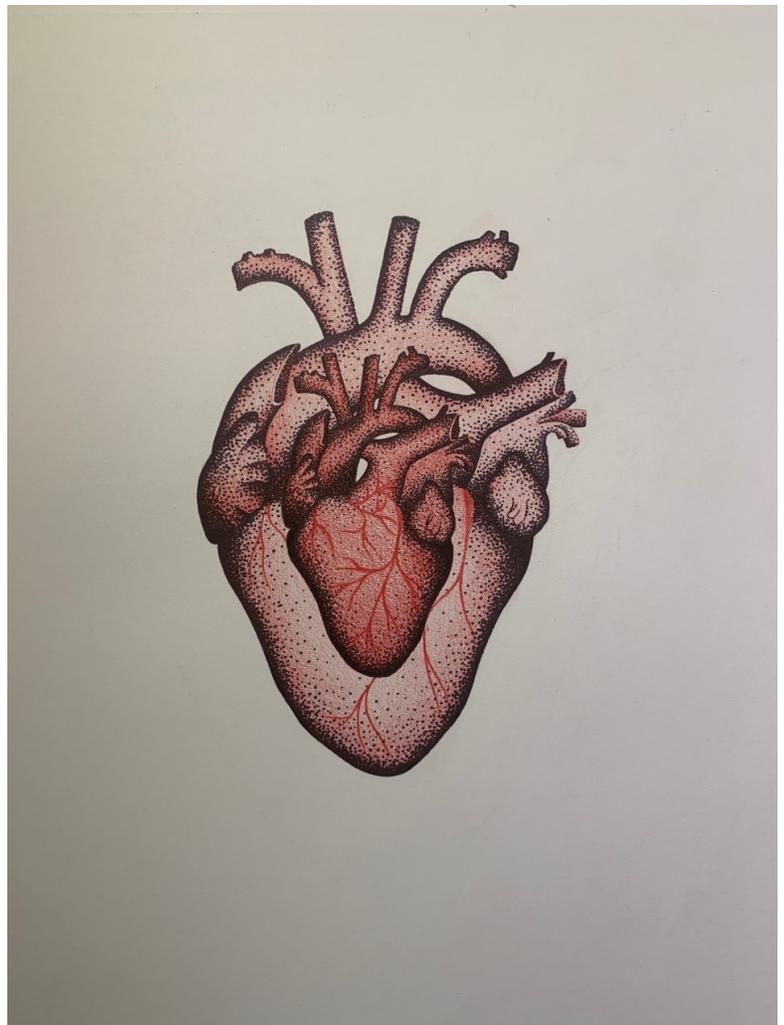
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# HEARTBEATS

COLORED PENCIL AND MARKER

BY SHIVANI VARIA



© 2021 Shivani Varia

# IT'S JUST A BAD DREAM

BY SITARA CHAKKAMADATHIL

My eyelids flutter in between dream and reality  
But then it's there and I'm trapped in a nightmare  
Suddenly I awaken, opening my eyes for reassurance, exclaiming "it was just a bad dream"

But my eyes don't see an empty bedroom, all I see is my greatest fear  
A single tear drops onto my pajamas, but I don't notice  
I sit there, shaking in shock, whispering "It's just a bad dream"

Instinctively I curl up and whimper trying to hide myself from it  
I try to blink away my fears, but it doesn't work, it never works  
In a last effort, I cover my ears and scream

Footsteps, worried faces, and the light is turned on  
I melt into their arms  
Tears stream down my face, but it's gone, it was just a bad dream

I'm still broken but I can feel the cracks click together  
I drift back to sleep  
I repeat to myself, it's just a bad dream

© 2021 Sitara Chakkamadathil

# REFLECTIONS ON HEALING AND CARING FOR OTHERS

DRAWING

BY ZOEY WEIDEMANN



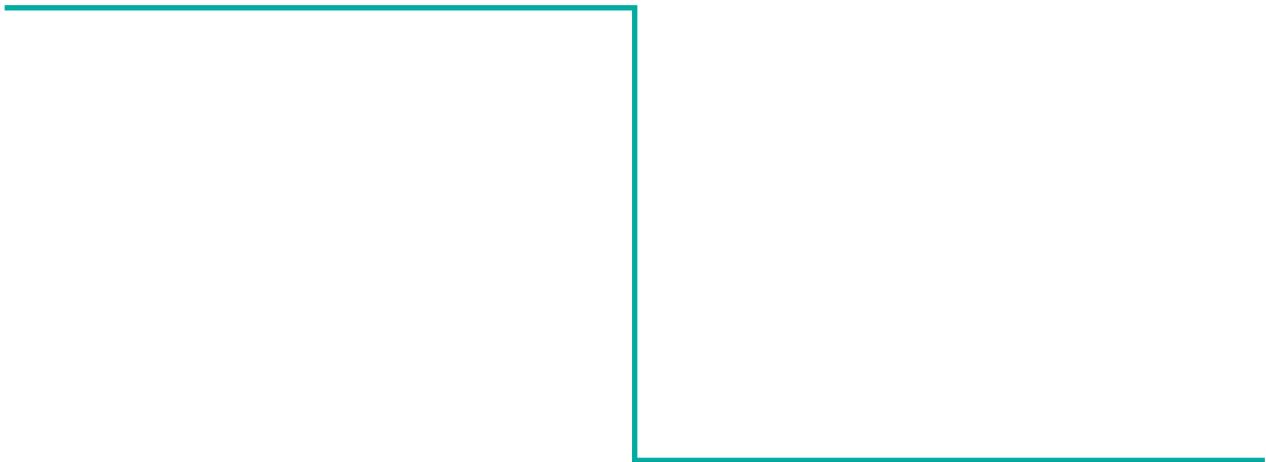
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# THE HEART OF THE MAZE

By KRISTINE WON

I wish there was a perfect answer to everything  
A straight path to lead me to my ideal future  
A gentle prod on my back as I venture into the unknown  
But it's never that simple  
Maybe it's the worry, the fear, the hesitancy...  
That makes each step quiver  
Sometimes I have courage to pick up the pace  
Only to find myself rushing back  
But staying too still causes trees to sway vigorously  
As ash rises around, hindering my view  
Through the obstruct pathway I must walk  
Making decisions without knowing the resolution  
If the decision was favorable or not, I do not know  
Only time will tell  
But the only thing I can do as of now is trust that I will take the right steps  
Because staying still will only impede my future further  
As I continue on my path, I will eventually realize that I have been walking in a maze  
Even so I will be fine  
Because no one unlocks their maze  
And those with one clear, romantic pathway will not blossom  
Continuing to get to the heart of the maze is difficult, I know  
Because finding out exactly what your heart sings is as difficult  
But as closer and closer we get  
The more we'll realize how fortunate it was that we chose to keep going on

© 2021 Kristine Won



## BREAKING FREE

BY KHUSHIKA SHAH

I'm scared of my own thoughts,  
All jumbled to one giant dot,  
Trying to get out of this maze,  
And erase all that I had drawn,

I will break free,  
My thoughts do not define me.

© 2021 Khushika Shah

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## GROWING UP

BY DAVID OKONKWO

Growing up is a hard thing to do  
Sometimes you don't want to leave the good days behind  
The days where you just play in the sun  
And you play in the mud but your parents didn't mind  
Or the times where you play with imaginary friends  
And talked with them throughout the night  
And play with real friends  
And also flying a kite  
People say they miss the day  
They first knew how to play  
But now that life has passed them by  
We can treasure those days if we try  
But it's time to live life  
Some don't like it because the strife  
But if we give ourselves a closer look  
Our life was all worth living

© 2021 David Okonkwo

# TRAVEL JOURNAL

COLLAGE

BY KARA RIVENBARK



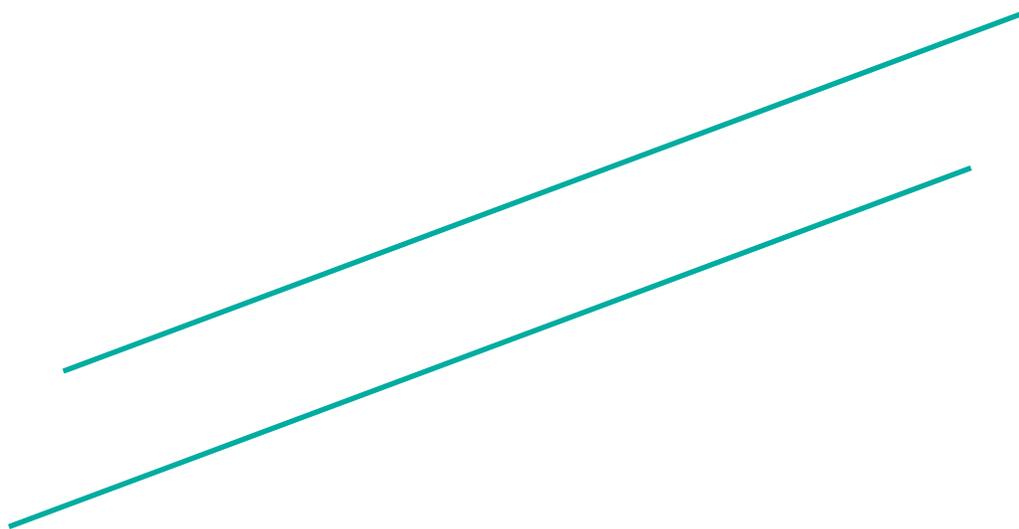
© 2021 Kara Rivenbark

## A TIMELESS DANCE

BY ANNA HAN

The clicking of glossy black high heels on cold pavement sounded crisply in the fresh September air – a rhythmic *click, click, click* punctuated by the occasional squeal of a new leather purse. It was an early, early morning, and she had the street all to herself. A peeling metal bench, once painted a blue nearly as bright as the clear, cloudless sky above, sat by the sidewalk, where it had dutifully borne rain, snow, and weary passersby longer than anyone could remember. She sat down upon the bench and stiffened almost imperceptibly as her hand brushed against the frigid metal, sending icy shivers down her arm that somehow managed to slither down her spine. With a demure sniff, she placed the hand carefully in her lap and glanced at a delicate watch around her wrist. The street was so quiet that she could just hear its oh-so-precise *tick, tick, tick*. Soon, however, the sound was drowned out by the lively twittering of birds frolicking gaily overhead, whose unrestrained antics caused the dry, dying branches of gently swaying trees to creak and snap. Leaves scattered everywhere on the grass below, bathing the ground in the autumnal majesty of a thousand crimson and golden hues. And amidst it all, the sun's rays darted to and fro, flickering into and out of existence like the beating wings of radiant, ephemeral butterflies in a timeless, eternal dance. A faint breath of wind ruffled a lock of her hair, startling her out of a reverie that primarily concerned leather purses and a busy day ahead (so many things to do!). With a twitch of annoyance, her slender fingers patted the lock perfectly back into place. She checked her watch again – *tick, tick, tick* – and just on time, as it did every morning, the bus stopped in front of the faded blue bench with a squeal and a cloud of thick, gray smoke. *Click, click, click*, went the glossy black heels, and she stepped briskly onto the bus and was carried away. And yet the rays of the sun continued to dance their timeless dance.

© 2021 Anna Han



# A LEAP OF FAITH

BY JOYCE CHOU

I had never performed on stage before. At least not like this. I patted my scalp, attempting to push down the stubborn bangs that hung from the side of my head. We clustered together in the darkness and positioned ourselves behind the shimmery curtains. My leggings clung tightly to my skin, and my face was painted with an excessive amount of makeup. Placing my hands on my hips, I turned toward the stage and planted a large smile on my face as the curtains opened. The familiar upbeat jazz music rang in my ears as I tapped to the beat, exercising the choreography I had rehearsed for the last five months. My black dress, covered with large pink polka dots, swung from side to side as my tap shoes moved with ease, overtaken by muscle memory. I scanned the audience for a single familiar face, and as expected, my mom was in the first row, armed with a phone in her hand, snapping pictures, despite clear instructions to avoid phone use during the performance. There was something missing. No. There was someone missing. My dad, as expected, was not there, but I just kept dancing. As the show came to an end, the cheers were replaced with the sound of photos being snapped. My mom did the same, telling me to smile for the camera, but I found no reason to do so. During any accomplishment, I could never share that joy with my father in the same manner in which my friends could since his job is based thousands of miles away in China. As the daughter of first-generation immigrants, I did not grow up surrounded by typical American traditions nor did I understand the meanings behind them. My parents, like myself, attempted to fit into this country by adapting to the novel way of life. While we all learned in parallel with one another, we adopted differing values and matured with varied experiences. For the longest time, I did not understand why my dad left to pursue his career on a different continent. Was it to financially support us? Was he prioritizing a job over his family? I was conflicted by this idea until I came to the profound realization that he was just following his dreams. My dad visited twice every year: once during spring break and another time over winter holidays. As a child, I would eagerly present my carefully designed art crafts that I created in school upon his return. However, as I grew older, I no longer had bright crafts to showcase. They were replaced with report cards and awards which represented my hard work in school. His approval regarding my academics created a sense of validation. With no father around, I was responsible for helping my mother, who took on the arduous task of raising four children on her own. When she was on business trips, I took charge of household finances, preparing meals, and taking care of the rest of the family. This situation created an environment that required independence, proactive behavior, and a quickened state of maturity. Similar to how I approached dancing, I took a leap of faith and believed in myself. I planted a smile on my face and remained strong for my family. Initially, I prioritized academics for the sake of my parents, as they always stressed the value of education, but as I matured, that motivation became intrinsic. I studied and helped my community because I wanted to, not because they did. While I may not have had a helping hand to catch me when I fell, I always had the heart to fulfill my duties and attempt to exceed expectations, even when my dad was working hard to support our family thousands of miles away.

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# I AM MORE THAN A TWINKIE

BY JOYCE CHOU

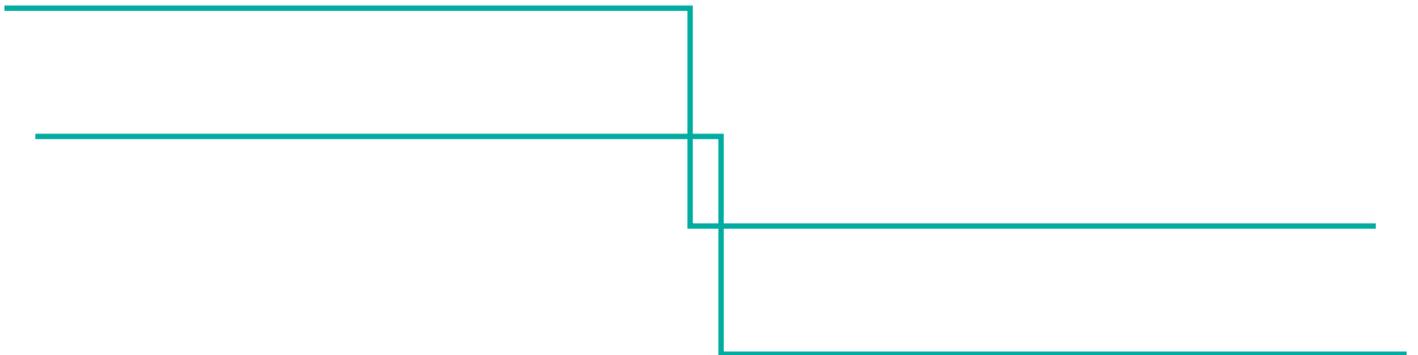
I never imagined that I would get compared to twinkies and bananas. Although most believe them to just be snack foods, the social implications are much larger. These snacks are enveloped by a yellow outer layer that covers the white substance within. Supposedly, they represent me: an Asian on the outside with American attributes ingrained within.

When I was younger, I felt deeply connected to my Chinese culture. Mandarin was exchanged effortlessly at home between myself and my parents, who are first-generation immigrants. The carefree days of wearing traditional Chinese dresses and speaking only Mandarin, however, ultimately came to a halt when I entered elementary school where speaking English became a necessity and Western articles of clothing were practically a requirement to fit in.

Conformity eventually transformed into abandonment, as I began forgetting bits and pieces of my native language. My parents felt compelled to converse with me in English in order to improve my collective speaking skills. Despite their efforts, a slight accent remained, followed by stereotypes and acts of racism that were unavoidable due to my physical features. I always flushed with embarrassment when I couldn't communicate fluently with my Chinese relatives and community, but it was this realization that gave me the urge and responsibility to relearn the language again and become more in touch with my Chinese roots and culture. I insisted on communicating in Mandarin with my parents and researched Chinese cultures and holidays as well as Chinese-learning apps. I also welcomed new Asian foods and incorporated Chinese values into my own life.

There is always a societal pressure to sacrifice one's culture for the other to fit in. To be labeled as a banana or twinkie suggests disguising or covering a part of my identity; however, I am not an American disguised as an Asian or vice versa. I identify with and embrace both cultures and values. As a proud Asian-American, I will not diminish my identity to fit into society's expectations.

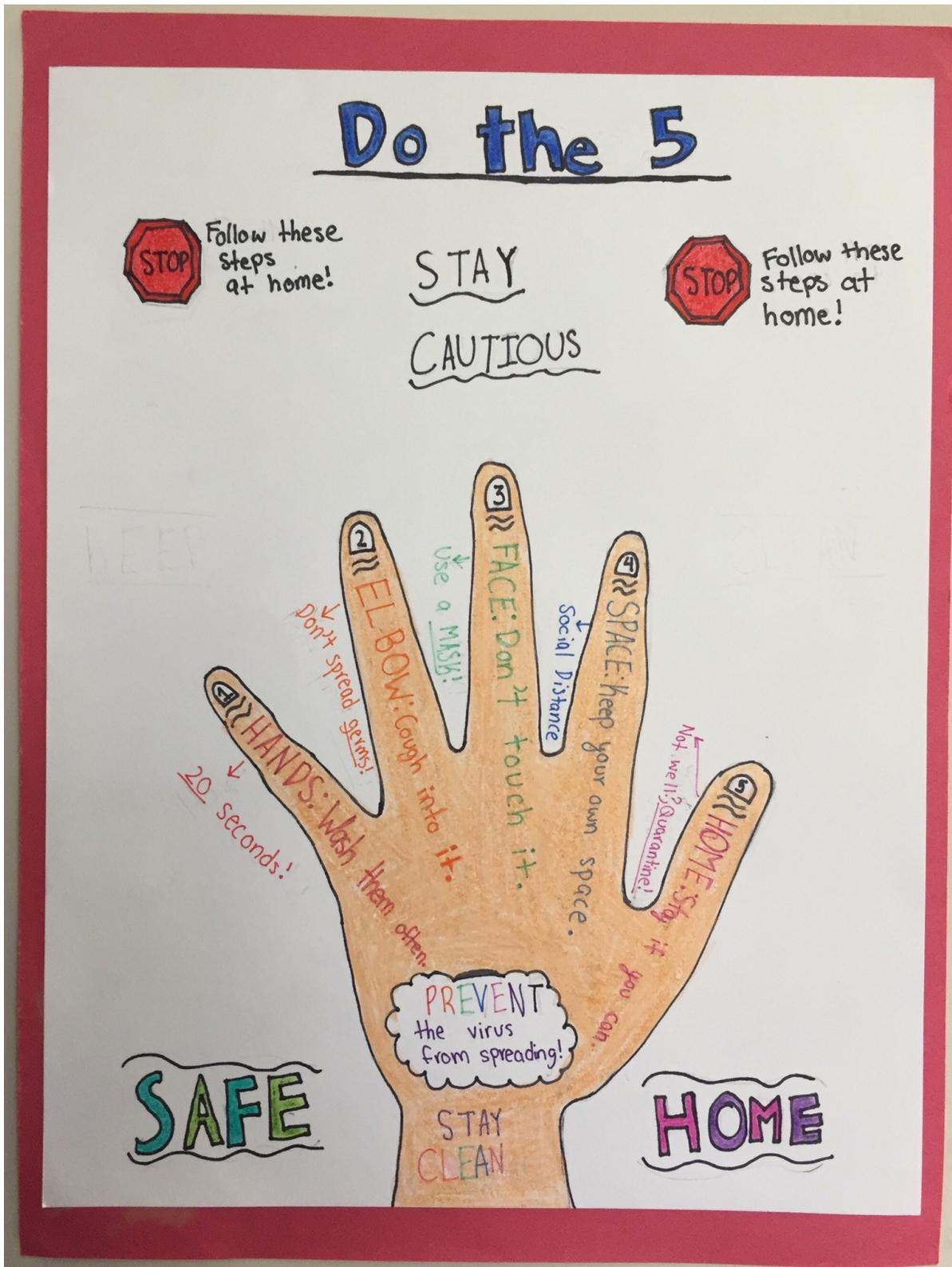
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# PRECAUTIONS OF COVID

DRAWING

By AMITHA SABBANI



© 2021 AMITHA SABBANI

# TAKE A STEP

BY ASHBY OLIVER

Dark thoughts lurk inside your mind  
You think there is no point in trying  
    Deep inside you are crying  
Then you choose to take a chance  
You see a light and take a glance  
    You feel warmth and happiness  
You take a step out of the darkness  
Dark thought disappear like ashes in the wind  
    You feel like soaring till no end  
    So go ahead and take flight  
There is no longer a dark battle for you to fight

© 2021 Ashby Oliver

# SPEAK

BY KHUSHIKA SHAH

She once spilled words like water,  
Transparent and without limits,  
She flowed and flowed and flowed,  
Till there was nothing but silence.

Then she felt so much and so little,  
Feeling the water, she flinched,  
Coarse and running through her body,  
It burned when she spoke now.

To open and see those faces,  
Waiting for a reaction,  
A reaction that holds so much weight -  
That she fell down every time.

She learned to rise later,  
She swallowed the lump in her throat,  
She threw up the stares and the giggles,  
She grew with the people she loved.

Now,

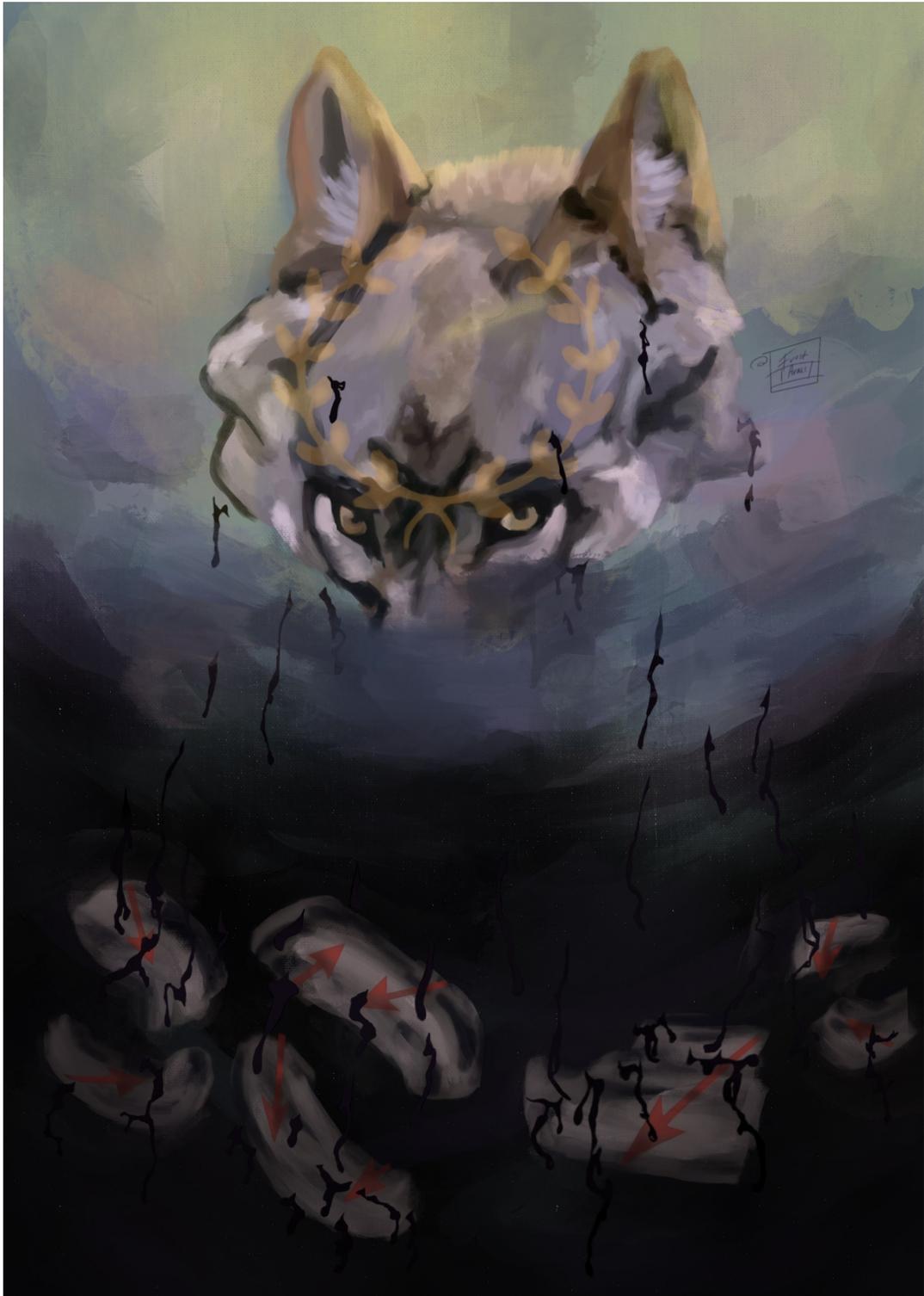
She spills words like water,  
Transparent and without limits,  
She flows and flows and flows,  
There is no silence.

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# RESILIENCE KNOWS NO CHAINS

DIGITAL ART

BY REEMA AYACHE



© 2021 REEMA AYACHE

# 2020+1

By PIERCE PEARSON

The hopes and dreams of many were cast aside last year  
There were seniors who'd thought their graduations would be an occasion of happiness and cheer,  
And parents who'd thought they'd spectate that occasion with joy, and maybe shed a tear  
But little did they know the year would predominantly bring destruction and fear

Even in 2019, the major world powers did know  
About a deadly coronavirus that originated so long ago  
However, they kept it secret, attempting not to sow  
A seed of disruption that would interrupt their money flow

In China, Brazil, Italy, London, the breakouts were severe  
And there was no denying by the wintertime that the virus would soon arrive here  
And when the quarantine struck, schools ran amuck, and immigrants had nowhere to go,  
What did the authorities do, did they attempt to help a soul? No.

In the U.S, it seemed the government was against us,  
At least that's what it felt like when White supremacist cops took arms against us  
And shot our brothers and sisters down, kneeling on their necks  
Until we suffocate, fluctuate, and veer from the treks toward

Freedom, Equality, and everything we deserve  
As persons, humans, God's people on this earth  
But we won't stop, shan't stop, can't stop fighting,  
But the more we keep fighting, the more people keep on dying

And as if that was not enough injustice, moving to 2021,  
Or should I say 2020, the year of oppression and suffering, plus 1  
As people have forgotten what it means to be a democracy  
Which was evident when people raided the capital and killed innocent people for the sake of one  
man's hypocrisy  
And the soon-to-be president had to fear for his life  
Because the loser of the election used Twitter like a knife

But I'm tired of oppression, and I'm sure you all are too  
So let's stand together and end this ongoing feud  
There may be casualties, lost hope, but know that together, we cannot lose  
And to 2020+1, I say "We've already conquered you"

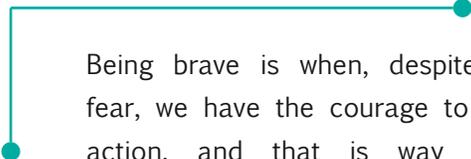
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# CHANGING THE WORLD

By DAVID OKONKWO

The world is an interesting place  
It keeps changing at a constant pace  
But there are some changes in life we don't expect  
Because it has that mysterious effect  
Change starts with you  
Each one of us is unique and smart  
We each have a brain and a heart  
Sometimes we just don't know how to use it  
We all have the ability to change the world  
The question is, Do you want to?  
Because even though you may be small  
You can still accomplish big things  
Even if you think you might be weak  
You can still carry a huge amount  
If you think you are too scared  
The bravest thing you can do is face those fears  
Applying change is like a road  
You know where you started  
And you know where you are  
It's just you might not know where you're going  
Until you make it there  
You might have some troubles along the way  
But to reach a certain destination requires you to move forward  
Again, we are all capable of change  
We must have the mentality to do so  
And in order for you to change the world  
You must change yourself first  
Because we all can grow smarter, braver, and stronger  
But we can't do it alone  
If you have a heavy car, can you push it by yourself?  
Some may be strong enough but is it efficient?  
We must rely on others to help us  
So, are you ready to change the world?

© 2021 DAVID OKONKWO



Being brave is when, despite the fear, we have the courage to take action, and that is way more powerful and inspiring than being fearless.

— Michelle Poler

# MORE THAN A BACKBONE

BY JONETTA LAH

How do the largest social movements of the last two centuries relate? I found the answer at the intersection of my most salient identities.

Trailblazing Black women are behind campaigns like Black Lives Matter, Me Too, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott— all of which have created pivotal change across the nation. Black women igniting such influential movements is a consistent theme throughout the history of the United States. Therefore, it is comprehensible that in 2020, a year characterized by social unrest like no other, they were once again spearheads of social change, evoking every bit of “good trouble”.

Black womens’ impact has denoted them the “backbone of our democracy”, as Vice President-elect Kamala Harris said. Unfortunately, while Black women have championed social justice and equality for decades, they are astoundingly overlooked by the same communities they aim to progress.

In early July of 2020, I came across the cover of Rolling Stone’s monthly magazine on my Twitter timeline. Painted by Kadir Nelson, the art was titled ‘American Uprising’, visibly featuring a Black woman with a tenacious expression and her unwavering fist in the air. The disposition of the portrait is symbolic: a diverse crowd of people remain in the background and below her, while the woman and her son are left vulnerable in the foreground to lead the group. Although the artist might have had intentions to empower and appreciate Black women, I found the artwork to be an example of the media irresponsibly expecting Black women to perpetually uplift those around them, despite how it may leave them unprotected and contribute to their mistreatment.

I was shook to my core in realization of how the cover maintained the intersectional discrimination Black women face. As a youth leader and volunteer at HopeWorks—my local center for domestic violence—I receive training on the social components of domestic violence cases, especially as it pertains to dynamics in marginalized communities. The constant stress of facing intolerance on two fronts, combined with the perceived obligation to protect others, identifies the reason why Black women are more vulnerable to sexual assault and poor mental health than women of other demographics. Portraying Black women as indestructible also further exaggerates their reluctance to report their experiences; while 1 in 5 women in the U.S report their assault, only one Black woman will do the same out of *fifteen*.

By emulating their leadership and empathy, I can only aspire to create the progressive strides in our world that women before me have once done. While an intrinsic desire to fulfill these positions should always be celebrated, the recruitment of young girls to defend a country that has repeatedly disrespected the Black woman is absurd. Although revered as backbones, Black women need other members of society to act as their femur, vertebrae, tibia, and more—the fight against division and intolerance cannot be fought alone. Empowerment through empathy, action, and collaboration is the example we must follow in order to enact the social revolution America needs.

© 2021 Jonetta Lah

# YEAR OF THE OX: A NEW BEGINNING

DRAWING  
BY STEPHANIE WANG



© 2021 STEPHANIE WANG

# THE SHADOW OF INJUSTICE

By ISHI SONDHI

Our nation is founded on the fundamental principles that all men are created equal, that we are endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights. America prides itself in being the refuge for all individuals, regardless of their background; however, as a nation and as a community, we have not upheld such ideals. Our history is tainted by the injustices towards minorities and those who are unorthodox. Throughout our history, the egotistical, privileged individuals felt threatened by the notion of democracy, as it allowed all to participate, regardless of social status. Supporters of social justice have worked hard to reduce the effects of long-standing racism in the United States. The issues confronted and society's approach to eliminating such issues have evolved; people have recognized that the progress made by past social movements is insufficient in today's community. America needs to be reformed to pave the way for a progressive society and culture, by learning from our past mistakes and acknowledging the long history of fear and racism. We must bridge the divide to "forge a union with purpose", and "compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters" (Gorman).

It is impossible to address racism if the country is reluctant to acknowledge it. Racism is essentially prejudice, discrimination, violence directed towards people on the basis of their race or ethnicity. It is the belief that certain groups of people possess distinctive characteristics, abilities, and qualities, often on the basis of skin color and ethnicity, to distinguish these groups as inferior or superior to the other. Every time we deny the existence of racism we reap the benefits of the privilege we have. Addressing racial justice is essential to our community, as racism and stereotyping can start as early as three years old according to the American Psychological Association. Being racist is not something that we are born with but rather a set of values ingrained by society and the people around us. It is easy to do what is convenient for you, but sometimes, what is easy is not always right. Some amount of unconscious bias is inherent within us; however, it is necessary to move past our individual bias by sticking to our morals. The acknowledgement of racism is not about placing blame on the offender, but the offender taking personal accountability for their actions and doing their part to stop inequality.

The supreme law of the United States, the Constitution's introduction, "We the People", is misleading. The individuals referred to, those given freedom and inherent rights, were white men. Although many may object, this claim is continuously supported by our history, including the landmark Supreme Court Case, Dred Scott V. Sandford. In 1857, a black man was taken into a free state as a slave; however, shortly after his owner died. He argued that due to his residence in the state, he was legally a free man; however, the court ruled against him. Chief Justice Roger Taney arrogantly stated that black people "[were] not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word 'citizens' in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States" (Taney). The horrifying incident enforced the conception that black people were disparate from white people, to the extent that they were not to be considered citizens, further creating a racial divide. There was no semblance of equality for women either, because they were essentially the property of the men in the house, and did not have additional basic rights, including the right to vote. Throughout history, American leaders and citizens have constantly ignored and forgotten the true meaning of "We the People", as well as the ideals with which the United States was founded. The United States must become a society unlike the one imagined by our forefathers; an inclusive, progressive nation.

Throughout the 17th and 18th century, African Americans were kidnapped and forced into slavery, overseen by their white masters. This continued throughout the 19th century until 1865, when slavery technically ended; however, significant social challenges still awaited black people. The South instituted Jim Crow laws, which gave certain legal rights to blacks, but withheld various other powers, typically benefitting the white population. Most black Americans were free but lived in extreme poverty, having been denied education and pay. From 1865 to 1877, Congress passed and enforced laws for African Americans by adding three amendments to the United States Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 guaranteed African Americans the rights of American citizenship,

CONTINUED

# THE SHADOW OF INJUSTICE (CONT.)

By ISHI SONDHI

and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 bestowed black men the constitutional right to vote. However, there was still a substantial amount of segregation and racism in the 20th century as well. Sadly, African Americans were one of the many minorities affected by the shadow of racism. In 1831, the largest act of ethnic cleansing in American history when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, resulting in the destructive Trail of Tears. One hundred thousand Native Americans were displaced from their homes, to make way for white settlers. The unfortunate natives were forced to walk on a challenging trail that spanned over 2,200 miles for months, resulting in thousands of horrific casualties. The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited all immigration from China for ten years, and those of Asian descent, already in the United States were severely discriminated against, by both the government and citizens. In the tragic aftermath of the Pearl Harbor bombing, Japanese internment camps were instituted. The mass incarceration of over one hundred thousand Japanese citizens was unethical; it consisted of harrowing living conditions, constant food shortages, and unsanitary environments. These historical incidents along with several others occurred as a consequence of racial intolerance; they were inhumane and unconstitutional. These destructive events consisted of discriminatory laws, practices, and violent actions against racial or ethnic groups. They faced restrictions on their political, social, and economic freedoms throughout most of the United States history. Manifest destiny was a widely held societal belief in the 19th century, at the core of which was the confidence in American cultural and racial superiority. The idea was that people of color were uncivilized, illiterate and would tarnish the integrity of the country. This thought led to the notion that it is necessary to maintain white, racial purity. Another prevailing sentiment in history is that women were inferior to men. Many constitutional rights were withheld from them, including the authority to their own person. Gender inequality emerged from the notion that females were not of similar status to men, mentally or physically, and were unfit to handle significant problems. America possesses a prevalent history of ignoring and undermining its women and people of color. These acts have always been committed in the interest of 'national security', however this should not justify the outright denial of constitutional rights and protections. The United States is a nation built on stolen land, resources, and cultures; however, racial prejudice against various ethnicities or minority groups has existed in America since its beginning. Historical events that don't portray the country in a favorable light are constantly disregarded, but we should learn and grow from this history.

History does not repeat itself, but ignorance and xenophobic values are constantly recycled. The world has come a long way, however, many minority groups still struggle and are faced with more hurdles than their white counterparts. In recent months, the video of George Floyd's murder sparked outrage across the nation and inspired an important conversation about systematic inequality and a need for police reform. George Floyd was killed by a cop kneeling on his neck, applying pressure for a period of time long enough to kill him. He ultimately received justice, however, his murder initiated social awareness and protests. This event brought attention to a political and social movement, known as BLM or Black Lives Matter. The purpose of BLM is to acknowledge structural racism in place and recognize how individuals and society contribute to it. In recent months, there has been a national outcry for the need for police reform. Police brutality is the unwarranted, excessive, and often illegal use of force against civilians by law enforcement. The justice system should be held accountable for its actions because police shootings are excessive and too frequent. People of all backgrounds are subject to police brutality, but the two groups who face the most substantial risk of being targeted are low-income Americans and Black Americans. Black people are 3.23 times more likely than Caucasian Americans to be killed by police, and this rate increases to 3.5 in areas with more elevated concentrations of poverty. In 2020 the police killed 1,127 people, and in over fifty percent of those situations, police were responding to alleged non-violent offenses, where crimes were unreported. The veil of secrecy over police misconduct remains a massive problem, as the public deserves transparency and accountability from the justice system. However, all police shootings should not fit into the same narrative, because it would be immoral to "create false villains to serve the greater good" (French). Black Lives Matter has, on occasion, been utilized in a manner that disregards factual evidence to twist the narrative and favor a certain political viewpoint, thereby demeaning the integrity and purpose of BLM. In the case of 16-year-old

CONTINUED

# THE SHADOW OF INJUSTICE (CONT.)

By ISHI SONDHI

Ma'khia Bryant, her mother called 911 because she was advancing towards another girl with a knife, and a police officer arrived on the scene. Bryant was attacking, and the officer was unaggressive in his approach, and his gun only came out of his holster after Bryant lunged towards the other girl with the knife. Recognizing the potential for a possible casualty, the officer shot Ma'Khia. Her death was tragic because she was young and had much potential; however, Ma'Khia's death was inaccurately compared to George Floyd's murder by prominent voices. A knife attack is legally known as attempted murder, meaning she remained an active threat to another individual, and that fact should have taken priority in that instance. People would argue the demonization of this police officer by the media is wrong. I highly sympathize with Ma'Khia's family because it is a devastating loss, however, indicating she is a victim in a scenario where she was not, is immoral. If the events had turned out different, people would have been outraged if "an incompetent officer" allowed this event to occur "when he possessed the power to stop the crime" (French). It is critical to acknowledge when the media incorrectly portrays a person and event because it degrades the integrity of a noble cause. No matter what political party an individual supports, it is necessary to be adequately informed and unbiased, and differentiate between right and wrong. However, many cases of police brutality are catastrophic events that are a result of systemic and institutionalized racism and could've been avoided. George Floyd, Daunte Wright, Daniel Prude, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson, Stephon Brooks, Botham Jean, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, and countless others are victims of police brutality; they deserved better. Many police brutality cases did not warrant a police encounter, much less death. Throughout history, colored individuals have been regarded as 'less than' Caucasian people, and this sentiment continues today, to some extent. The idea is to promote and emphasize fundamental human rights and racial equality for black people, to demonstrate that when we refer to "all people's" rights, we need to include black lives, and by extension, other marginalized groups that are discriminated against. The Covid-19 pandemic also brought to light the closeted intolerance of many individuals, with a spike in racism against Asian Americans. The pandemic originated from China, which led many people to believe the Asians who lived in America were 'infected' with the virus and carriers of it, which led to an anti-Asian sentiment and racism-based attacks. A 65-year senior Asian woman was assaulted by a man, and there were multiple bystanders but they did not intervene. This demonstrates a hideously grim side of America, a tendency to spread hate and violence towards people of other backgrounds when we feel 'threatened.' Other instances like these were observed after 9/11, with a spike of xenophobia and Islamophobia, with multiple counts of attacks against Muslims, Sikhs, and South Asians. On August 5, 2012, 11 years after 9/11, a mass shooting took place at the gurdwara, a place of Sikh worship, causing eight deaths, and multiple other injuries. This was witnessed before in 1987, with the rise of a hate group, The Dotbusters, in New Jersey, harassed and murdered members of the South Asian and Hindu community. America continuously replays history, in various forms. However, newfound awareness and activism has provided the hopefully realistic possibility where colored people are not the minority, rather the leaders and heroes. They have dispelled the stereotypes of what we have perceived to be the future for colored people and provides hope, by taking accountability for historical injustices.

The exhausting fight for freedom has existed for decades, as people realized that society was extremely conservative and restrictive for minorities. Individuals have made an effort to evolve society by speaking on controversial issues of the time, and slowly those predicaments were resolved. America's constrictive and cruel history would have an impact in the futures of people of color, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ groups, due to the negative connotations associated with them. As the issues in society continued to worsen, the severe difference between minorities and Caucasian people's experience in America became apparent. Individuals overcame injustice in the past and witnessed a nation that did not provide equitable opportunity for everyone as it should have, and society continues fighting for emancipation every day. It is recognized that "justice too long delayed is justice denied" and for there to be change and improvement, history must be recognized and amends must be made (King). Society is progressing to explore and enable possibilities that would have been inconceivable, like the presence of our current Vice President Kamala Harris who is female, Black and Asian, as well as the daughter of immigrants. As John F. Kennedy said, "Too often, we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought." It essentially means

CONTINUED

## THE SHADOW OF INJUSTICE (CONT.)

By ISHI SONDHI

that often, people prefer to live within their privileged bubbles remaining ignorant to others' difficulties. Many individuals are blessed to not have faced negative experiences fueled by racial biases; even so, choosing to be uneducated is a thoughtless action. Making the conscious decision to disregard the atrocities of society is an action lacking all empathy. Howard County, despite being exceptionally diverse, is a community that is not exempt from the lack of awareness of other colors and cultures, especially within the school systems. Personally, being South-Asian American, I have never been in situations that I would refer to as anything more than microaggression, but growing up, there were always comments that made me feel alienated from my community. In the South Asian community as well as the American society, there is a stigma around darker skin. I've always had a more uneven, brown skin tone that is typically dependent on the season. When I was younger, I remember being so ashamed of my brown skin that I tried to scrub the color off. I held the belief that white Dove soap would somehow erase the brown from my skin, and that it would become whiter. I imagined that once I had whiter skin, I would get blonde hair and blue eyes and get to be the pretty, popular girl in school. I also have other Indian friends who went through similar experiences. Two of my friends had darker knees in summer, and felt extremely insecure about themselves, to the point where they did research on how to achieve lighter knees. So, before going out, they cut cucumbers and placed them on their knees, and sat there for the next fifteen minutes, waiting for their knees to get lighter. Obviously, it didn't work. It is really funny to look back on these experiences now and joke; however, growing up these were significant insecurities for students like me although they should not have been. These are Eurocentric beauty ideals that have been enforced for centuries. Often darker skinned children are told by family members to "stay out of the sun, so [they] don't get darker" or told by strangers "you're pretty for a dark skinned girl". These are extremely degrading comments. People tend to fetishize certain Eurocentric features, while insulting other ethnicities and their prominent physical attributes. This sentiment is prominent in certain social media apps, like Snapchat, which has various camera filters; however, it is obvious that a vast majority of these filters' main audience is light skinned people. These filters either make your skin much lighter, or are meant to have a 'tanning' effect that looks clownish and strange on my brown skin. They are, quite evidently, meant for much lighter skin tones. The target audience for social media apps are younger audiences, and this has the potential to be harmful to an individual's self-confidence. There were also awkward moments in the cafeteria when I had any sort of Indian food. I remember in elementary school, I brought Indian food for lunch, and one of the kids at my lunch table made this disgusted face and said, "What's that smell?". The kid went around the table and sniffed everyone's lunch, and when she came to mine she frowned and said, "Oh, it's your lunch." I remember feeling so upset, holding back tears for the rest of the time. It made me extremely insecure about the food I was eating, and I really just wished I could have Lunchables like all of the other kids. Many students are also ridiculed due to their cultural practices. Muslims wear hijabs and fully covering clothes, and on multiple occasions, uneducated kids say insensitive things and mock them. They say, "Oh don't you get too hot?; What do you wear to the beach?; How do you even survive in that clothing?". While these seem like typical questions, they come across as extremely judgmental and somewhat rude. In school, whenever there was a teacher with a heavier accent, many kids thought it was amusing and appropriate to make fun of them, and they would laugh behind their backs and attempt the accents. I grew up so embarrassed and ashamed of my culture and Indian people in general, and it originated from other kids' lack of understanding and appreciation for ethnicities. These are experiences that many people of color have been through, especially growing up in a predominantly white society. As I grew up and was able to understand that my culture is beautiful and a large part of who I am. I learned how to embrace it.

Many stereotypes simply originate from people's mindsets; however, these mindsets are largely fueled by Western media. When there is a lack of contact between ethnicities people look to "media stereotypes to formulate ideas about people outside of their own race" (Scholars). Growing up, two of the most popular kids' TV shows, Jessie and Phineas and Ferb, each featured one secondary Indian character, Ravi and Baljeet. Both of these characters fit into impressionable stereotypes that are inconsistent with reality. They

CONTINUED

# THE SHADOW OF INJUSTICE (CONT.)

By ISHI SONDHI

had exaggerated Indian accents, they were weird, antisocial, nerdy, geeky, awkward, and the kids who were made fun of at school. The Western media portrays itself as superior, and displays other countries, such as Africa and India, in a manner demeaning to their culture and lifestyles. They portray them negatively as dirty, overpopulated developing countries. Thus, when someone refers to one of these places, they immediately think of people living in teepee huts, which is inaccurate. The media fits an entire culture and country into a small box of negative traits, which leads people to formulate incorrect assumptions about races and ethnicities. These media stereotypes are often reflected in society; however, it is our responsibility to grow past negative biases and initiate understanding of other cultures.

Discrimination and unequal opportunities harm people of color, and therefore, affect everyone by “prevent[ing] us from achieving our full potential as a country” (Opportunity Agenda). Racism has multiple effects on society including “the wealth gap, employment, housing discrimination, education, banking or public health access, government surveillance, incarceration, drug arrests, immigration arrests, and infant mortality”(Elizondo-Urrestarazu).. Racial inclusion and income equality are key factors that drive economic growth, and are “positively associated with growth in employment, output, productivity, and per capita income, according to an analysis of 118 metropolitan regions” (Opportunity Agenda). Areas that were more equitable in the 1990s had reductions in “racial segregation, income disparities, and concentrated poverty were shown to have greater economic growth” (Urban Org). America will never truly be a land of opportunity and dreams, if racial inequity persists, and ensuring equal possibilities for everyone is beneficial for our shared economic and societal interest. Quite simply, society naturally functions better when all groups have an equal chance in life.

Racism is deeply ingrained; thus, it may seem impossible to remove. However, there are numerous things we, as individuals, and as a society can do to lessen the impact of racism, and hopefully remove it all together. Conversations about racism belong in the classroom, especially because racial stereotypes start from a young age. Too often in school, negative historical events are simply glossed over. When discussing black history, teachers simply refer to Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks as the only aspirational black figures; however, this act is misleading. Furthermore, there is not much variety when referring to world history or other countries and cultures, which leads to the lack of awareness. This is in part due to large corporations funding all textbook material. As shown in a New York Times study, the material in Texan and Californian textbooks is very different. They each have an inherent bias within their material, “shaded by partisan politics” (Goldstein). This makes for a somewhat unethical, prejudiced school system, discouraging students from forming their own opinions and exploring differing viewpoints. The education system is not meant to teach students what to think, so much as how to think. It is important to have in-depth, sensitive conversations about racism, while tailoring it to the audience’s needs, to mitigate the effects of racial trauma and discrimination. To increase representation in workplaces, there should be a greater effort to motivate people to pursue certain fields that they historically have not filled. Additionally, public policy change and legislation change is a necessary step for freedom. For example, immigrants face issues when receiving much needed health care because of limited insurance coverage, language, and cultural barriers. Legislation may mitigate these issues by putting policies in place that provide English learning programs and organizing community health centers. When it comes to prosecution, all lawmakers and prosecutors should ensure there is fairness in the decision making process, by requiring bias training, addressing racial inequity within the system, and acknowledging the racial impact in performance reviews for prosecutors. There should be shared information about police interactions to encourage transparency and accountability, as well as a level of trust between the public and justice systems. Rather than abolishing justice systems all together, the police can be defunded, which would reallocate funding from police budgets into services that would greatly benefit communities. Currently, police are taught to react, rather than correctly analyze a situation and attempt to peacefully mitigate the issue. This calls for reforming systems that exist and working to create alternatives, such as social workers equipped to handle public safety with training for mental health situations. We have made significant progress, however it would be immature to assume that we have completely moved beyond

CONTINUED

# THE SHADOW OF INJUSTICE (CONT.)

By ISHI SONDHI

it. Everyone in society has a responsibility to understand and analyze the causes and effects of racism in America, while educating themselves, and learning how to openly talk about it. Furthermore, we must acknowledge and respect our cultural differences without dividing ourselves because of them.

Everyone knows and interacts with people of different races and ethnicities, and we typically treat one another with respect; however, Americans, unintentionally have inherent biases of people around them, even if they make an effort to ignore them. Despite this, as a society we have a responsibility to recognize that some people face more problems than others in achieving things because of who they are, what they look like, and where they come from. It is important to move toward the ideal that we should live up to our own potential and ensure others have the opportunity to live up to theirs. America is meant to be a country founded on the ideals of opportunity and equality and we have the responsibility to live up to these values. It is necessary to be aware of how collective bias has shaped our history, the progress we have made, and where we currently are. I look forward to the day when we may see past color and race, and live in unison, respecting each other's beliefs, cultures, and experiences.

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THE 2021 HOWARD COUNTY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY  
COMMISSION ESSAY AND POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

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"Injustice anywhere is a threat to  
justice everywhere. We are caught in  
an inescapable network of mutuality,  
tied in a single garment of destiny.  
Whatever affects one directly, affects  
all indirectly."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



# DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY

BY JORDYN BENNETT  
LAKE ELKHORN MIDDLE SCHOOL

What is injustice? Merriam-Webster describes injustice as the absence of justice, a violation of one's rights, unfairness. To me, injustice is when a decision is made by a person in power that violates basic human rights or mentally affects someone or a group of people negatively. Slavery was unjust. Segregation was unjust. Voter suppression is unjust. The killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor were unjust. The lack of immediate action following these devastating events was unjust.

Following the series of racial injustices that have been occurring on a national level, I took action. I began to create a website called "The Black Library." This website contains 41 unheard stories of African-Americans who made and continue to make a revolutionary change. The purpose of this website is to shine light on the Black community during times that are difficult for everyone. I am extremely excited about the completion of "The Black Library." Though I cannot be sure of the impact that this will have, I hope it will encourage and inspire young people with big dreams and bring positivity to everyone during uncertain times. Some people may question the difference that writing can make, but I know the difference writing can make because of the difference Amiri Baraka, Daisy Bates, Alice Allison Dunnigan, Francis Harper, Ida B. Wells, and Carter G. Woodson made.

The injustices I referred to and stood up against happened on a national level, but injustice can occur right in your community. Many people may not see it this way, but I believe that the Howard County grading policy for elementary school students is unjust. In every class, students are graded on their effort. This is based on their task completion, class participation, the quality of their work, and their timely submission of homework and classwork. The issue with this is that effort is something that can change based on your circumstances, and what you're going through personally, emotionally, and mentally. There is no way to

know how much effort someone is truly putting in. When someone is truly trying their best and they receive an effort grade that is subpar, it can be discouraging. I brought this concern to my former elementary school in perfect timing for their "ACT4GES" program, which encourages change in the school. The principal invited me to some of their meetings that were otherwise only for adults. There, I will have an opportunity to share my ideas and make change hopefully on a county-wide level because I would have spoken my truth and voiced my opinions. Like "The Black Library," this is a change that is in the process of occurring, but I believe in the potential impact that will be the outcome of me speaking my mind and standing against what I believe is unjust.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Through my actions against injustice, I am not only discrediting the words and actions of my enemies, but I am empowering the voices of my friends. I truly hope that I can continue to act against injustices, just as Dr. King did.

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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. POSTER

DRAWING  
BY DALIA KINTISCH  
THUNDER HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



© 2021 DALIA KINTISCH

# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY

BY MIRA SHAH  
HOWARD HIGH SCHOOL

From the minute a child is born, they are labeled. A box gets checked. The hat is blue or the hat is pink. The baby is either a boy or a girl, and that label will likely follow them for the rest of their lives. My whole life, my parents have told me that I can do anything. So what my sister and I are girls? We can do anything we put our minds to. Girls can do anything that boys can do. There's no such thing as girl things and boy things. These are the messages that we have heard repeatedly throughout our childhoods. Due to this, I have always believed that women's rights are very important and are worth fighting for. So a few years ago, when I had the opportunity to participate in an event to stand up against injustice towards women and girls, I was very excited to take part in it.

In 2017, when I was ten years old, I participated in a Sister March with my mom, my sister, my aunt, and my cousin. This Sister March was in Howard County, Maryland, and it was a smaller version of the massive Women's March that was taking place in Washington, DC. This Women's March took place the day after President Donald Trump was inaugurated. President Trump had made- and has continued to make- numerous statements and comments that are negative and derogatory towards women. Women and girls from all over the nation came together to show unity at the Women's March, and at Sister Marches in many areas, to protest against injustice and raise awareness for women's rights. The march in Washington is still, to this day, the largest single-day protest in United States history. I am so proud to say that I was apart of this huge stance against injustice. My family and I marched around Centennial Lake, and we all held up signs as we walked. Mine read, "We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back. -Malala". This quote resonates with me because Malala's words are so true. Fifty percent of our world's population consists of women. Strong,

CONTINUED

# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY (CONT.)

By MIRA SHAH  
HOWARD HIGH SCHOOL

bold, inspiring, powerful women, who deserve to have a voice, and who are entitled to every bit of respect that their male counterparts get.

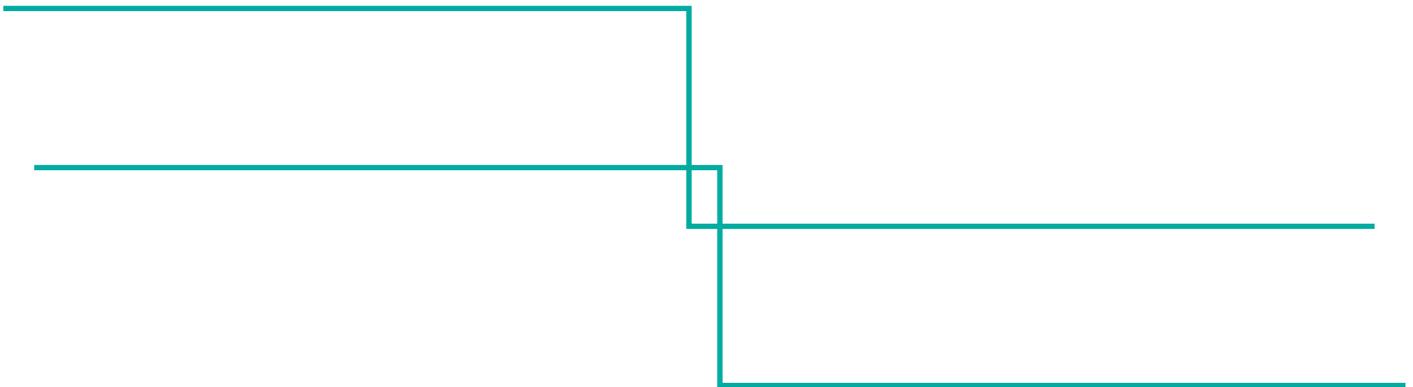
While my taking part in this demonstration of unity didn't necessarily make a large impact alone, the fact that millions of people- especially women- stood together to stand against injustice made a lasting impact on our nation. The year following the March in 2017, record numbers of women expressed interest in running for political office. Also, the #MeToo movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment was revived. The Women's March likely inspired a lot of this change, because it made people feel less alone. I helped inspire these changes, just by showing up at the park to stand up for what I believe in, that day in January of 2017.

This fight against injustice, and for women's rights and gender equality, started many years ago, beginning with the suffrage movement. This movement began in 1848, it continued through Dr. Martin Luther King's time during his work for the civil rights movement, and it is still one of the most prominent movements today. People have continued to fight for women's rights throughout the past two hundred years. Despite the fact that women have been fighting this fight for so long, gender discrimination and bias has remained a current issue. One of the main reasons that the Women's March took place when it did was because of insensitive and inappropriate comments from President Donald Trump. It is because of the comments and actions from people like him, that women are still being held back in our country.

Years after the march, at the age of fourteen, I am still thinking about these issues. I am still thinking about what I can do to support women and the women's rights movement.

I am so inspired by the many incredible, strong role models of the past, the present, and even the future, who believe that women's rights, in addition to human rights, are important. People like Malala, people like Dr. King, who have been unapologetic, and have fought hard for what they believe is right. It is people like them who inspire me to participate in things like the Sister March near me, or even current fights against injustice, like Black Lives Matter rallies and protests. I know for a fact that Dr. King's incredible work made an impact on millions of lives around the world, and it is my hope that I can try to stand up against injustice and do the same for people today. I hope that my actions in the past and the actions I will take in the future will positively impact at least one little girl out there. I wish that I can inspire someone, the same way that Dr. King inspired so many. I hope that one day little girls won't be held back just because their box was checked with "It's a girl." I know that I will continue to fight for what I believe in, and Dr. King is someone who has inspired me to do that.

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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY

BY TERESA CHERIAN  
BONNIE BRANCH MIDDLE SCHOOL

"In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends", said Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a Christian minister and activist who led the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from 1955 to 1968. Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech delivered during the march on Washington on August 28, 1963, became one of the defining moments in the fight for civil rights. Dr. King was a prolific writer and an excellent orator. The "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, and "I've Been to the Mountaintop," delivered on April 3, 1968, in Memphis, are examples of some of his greatest speeches. Through his activism, nonviolent resistance, and grass root organizing, he made immense progress towards racial equality in America. "And sometimes I will even go so far to say that it may be that the great tragedy in this great period of social transition is not the glaring noisiness of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.", said Dr. King during his "Some Things We Must Do" address delivered on December 5, 1957, in Montgomery, AL. Dr. King was addressing the fact that many moderate whites at the time were afraid to speak out against racial discrimination and injustices out of fear of social, political, and economic reprisals.

"In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Dr. King said these powerful words in the context of the lack of support from good people for the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King called out then the appalling silence of good people, and even now this quote is still relevant. What matters is not just what our enemies do, but more so what our friends fail to do. Being silent is being complicit and letting our compatriots suffer from our silence is wrong. Speaking up is not easy, but it is something we all must do. As Dr. King said in a speech delivered on April 4, 1967, in New York City, "And some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak." He was criticizing Lyndon Johnson's stand on the Vietnam War.

I recall myself a time when I had to take a stand against discrimination. This was when I transitioned from elementary to middle school. At my elementary school, the kids were generally from the same neighborhood. In middle school, the kids came from different neighborhoods and many spoke English as a second language. This is where I noticed a problem start to arise. My friends from elementary school decided to just stick to themselves and not welcome the other kids because they saw them as different. I felt this was wrong and spoke against it. Regardless of what neighborhood people lived in or what language they spoke, they should not be discriminated against. It is important to raise our voices against injustice, inequality and discrimination.

Mr. John Lewis, the civil rights leader, wrote in his final essay, "Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe." After seeing the systemic racism, divisiveness, political disarray, and excessive use of force by law enforcement on people of color, that our country has been going through the last few years, it is truly disappointing to see silence from our leaders. Although, it is encouraging to see people of all ages, race, and walks of life protest against the unlawful killing of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, and many others, all of America, regardless of race, religious beliefs, or political affiliations, need to stand up against racial injustice.

In conclusion, being silent is equivalent to doing nothing against the injustices we see all around us each and every day. COVID-19, the ongoing global pandemic, has taught us that our fellow citizens' health and wellbeing is dependent on each other. As Dr. King inspired us, let us break our silence and speak up against injustice, inequalities, and discrimination, so that we can all live "in one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY

BY CORINA TARHON  
RESERVOIR HIGH SCHOOL

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere": Martin Luther King, Jr.

2020 has brought and underlined existing injustices to this year not only in the U.S., but also worldwide, such as the rampaging amount of systematic unfairness towards the African American community, the ongoing unfairness in the workplace happening to women, and the large gap of affected minorities. Internationally, the unspeakable horrors occurring to Uighur Muslims made the headlines as another human rights abuse.

The tragic killing of George Floyd, a 46 year old black male, was one of the rude awakenings of 2020 and one that affected our nation at its core. The headline didn't make the news until bodycam footage from one of the police officers at the scene was leaked to the public media. The graphic video portrayed a vulnerable man with a knee to his throat; minutes of pain and pleading causing even the most emotionally stagnant people to be overcome with emotion.

The outrage of emotions led tens of thousands of people to protest in their cities and also in other countries, in solidarity with the U.S., against the systematic racism the black community still endures. The echoes of "No Justice, No Peace" could be heard everywhere, yet those protesting a good cause were still attacked by those who once swore to protect and serve the nation and its people. Hundreds of protestors after heroically exposing themselves to the COVID-19 virus were admitted to hospitals or arrested after clashing with the police forces. All of the suffering and the frustrations felt this year related to COVID-19 culminated in to one of the largest generational wake up calls.

While the protests slowed down due to the CDC's regulations, people like Breonna Taylor and Miciah Lee are now looking at us from above in hopes our generation continues to fight against racism. So many injustices are occurring in our world, yet blind eyes seem to be turned to them on the daily, as mainstream news sites haven't reported them all, such as women who are still not equal to the other gender. There are proven pay gaps in the average workplace, evidence of murders and trafficking of women and increasing rape allegations. Our rights to liberty, life, and happiness the founders once guaranteed are being violated and taken away from us as a society.

There are great correlations between race, poverty, and one's level of education. Racial minorities including Hispanics and African Americans are much more likely to experience poverty as well as have lower education levels (or drop out of college and other school levels) compared to the Caucasian race. The minorities of today's society are still pushed aside due to the systematic inequalities, we as a society still face. The educational levels in our society greatly vary, depending on region and race. Students attending these schools in some areas simply have trouble competing with those who attend schools with better/wealthier communities. Educational opportunity is compromised, causing the influx of minorities with little to no education to have a lower quality of life standard compared to those with larger or average education. The larger the educational opportunity gap the less likely these minorities can find high paying jobs. Adding to the lower level of education, lower income allows for even less opportunities for minorities.

There are many ways one can maintain and support the minority groups of our society, even when physically apart due to COVID-19. Because these racial and ethnic minority groups are being negatively affected in everyday life as well as during the pandemic, it is more important than ever to support these groups like one supports their own family members from day to day. Creating community bonds, visiting and volunteering at homeless shelters, and supporting small businesses owned by minority groups are some ways my family and I do.

Donating to charities is also another way to sustain minority groups. Every action we take to make other people's lives better matter, so during the holiday seasons, as well as times we usually gather together as a family, we think of those who do not have this opportunity, and donate money or volunteer to help those in need. Other ways like donating blood, books, toys, and other materials to stores like Goodwill and charity events and boxes (the boxes can be found in parking lots of stores and malls) is creating an invisible but undeniable bond with those in need.

Standing up to injustices are equally as important during these times, as many are affected. As MLK

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## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY (CONT.)

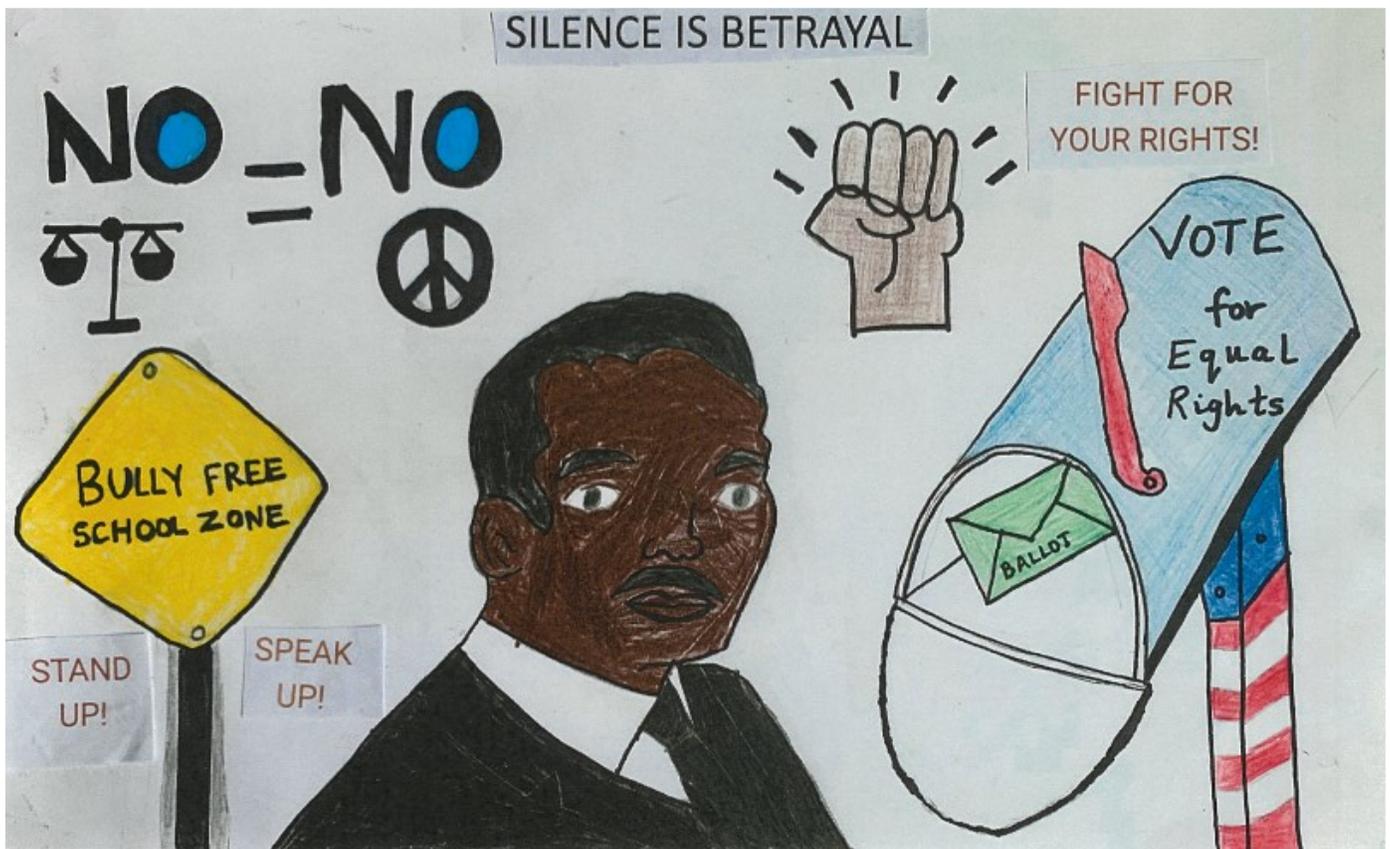
BY CORINA TARHON  
RESERVOIR HIGH SCHOOL

once said, "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." And we should be and act on MLK's words now more than ever! Why not donate to foundations like the Black Lives Matter foundation, or the Feminist Majority? Or sign petitions on Change.org as well as other petition sites? Many of my friends and I have been reposting important current news articles depicting for example, Black Lives Matter, and how one can advocate for change on our Instagram stories. Even though these actions may not seem like a lot, we can all work together as a whole and fight the systematic racism and unfairness our society contains, as "everyday is a great day to make a difference for someone." MLK's dream is still alive in us, embedded into our DNA and awaiting to be fully fulfilled as "darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." United we can make change.

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## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. POSTER

DRAWING  
BY NEIL DEEPAK  
ILCHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY: FIGHTING INJUSTICE

By SARAH KC

HARPER'S CHOICE MIDDLE SCHOOL

People have been fighting injustice for many years. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for many issues such as civil rights and poverty and he encouraged people to fight for what they believe in by organizing nonviolent and peaceful protests. Fighting civil injustice is important because everyone should be treated equally and not be discriminated against due to their race, gender, or skin color. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. played a very important role in progressing civil rights and he also won a Nobel Peace Prize as a result of his efforts in fighting against racial inequality. Unfortunately, racial inequality is still happening to this day, causing people to fear getting hurt while doing tasks such as going outside/in the public. However, due to activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and their push against racial inequality, protesting and advocating against issues has become more common. His legacy has caused changes that still affect the present, such as his goal of achieving equal rights for all, through nonviolent protests. People should not have to be afraid to take a stand against injustice, and they should be able to fight for what they believe in.

A time when I took a stand against injustice was when my friend was being racially discriminated against in school. She had just moved from another country, Mexico to be exact, and could not speak English very well. She didn't really know anyone and I wanted to get to know her so I decided to try to become friends with her. Although she couldn't speak English very well, she could understand English and over the course of a couple months, I became better friends with her. However, one day when we were in the cafeteria having lunch, a student walked up to our table and started insulting her. He was mocking her English, as she was still learning to speak it better, and making rude comments about her race because she was Mexican. After this, I asked the student to stop being rude to her, but he kept making comments and ignored me as well, even after I asked him again. He was being very offensive and therefore I decided to go and tell one of the lunch monitors about his disrespectful behavior.

This experience shows that racial injustice is very common, and not only happens to adults, but it also happens to children as well. The Pew Research Center states that "More than four-in-ten Americans say the country still has work to do to give black people equal rights with whites," which is a problem because everyone should have equal rights and no one should be treated differently or criticized. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. supports this by saying "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," which shows that he believed that people should not be judged by their race. The impact that my experience had on me was that I became more interested in learning about how race affects people's rights and how they are being treated differently. Eventually, I decided to participate in the Unheard Perspectives Showcase at my school because I would get to learn more about innovators in history whose perspectives were underrepresented. I would also like to continue learning about injustices by participating in more opportunities, such as taking part in campaigns, volunteering in local activist groups, and doing more research. Through Unheard Perspectives, I got to learn and research about people such as Mahalia Jackson, who inspired Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to write his "I Have a Dream" speech, which remains one of the most famous speeches in history to this day. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a major impact on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which stated by the National Park Service ensures that "The Act outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, required equal access to public places and employment, and enforced desegregation of schools and the right to vote." Although this act did not end discrimination altogether, it was a big step that allowed further progress to occur. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY

BY REBECCA DONOVAN

CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL

For weeks I had been racking my brain for a time when I took a stand against injustice, but I could not seem to remember any significant moment. I began to think I may not even be able to enter an essay in the contest, seeing as I had no way to answer the question: when did you take a stand against injustice and what was the impact? But then, during a volleyball camp, it hit me.

"Ouch!" I yelled instinctively. My back stung in the spot where it had just been slapped. "Sorry! I was just excited, that was a really great hit!" the offender said. I was standing in a huddle on volleyball court 4 and we had just won the first point of the match.

"My name's Emily," the short blonde girl said. Since this was a training camp right before tryouts, we were all focused on improving fast and hadn't bothered with introductions when the coaches first put our temporary team together.

"I'm Becca, This is 17s right? I wasn't sure what court to go on but I recognized the coaches," I said, referring to my age group.

"Yeah, it is but some of these girls don't really seem like they should be playing on this court, like look at that girl over there," Emily pointed to the girl farthest across from me. I recognized her from a previous camp. I couldn't remember her name but I remembered her being shy and unsure of herself. She was the textbook definition of a shy girl: her eyes down as she fumbled with her hands.

"Her name is Megan and she doesn't know what she's doing! She can't hit or pass either!" I was trying to think of how to respond, when I was saved by a volleyball rocketing over the net towards Emily.

As the ball rocketed toward Emily I ran up to the front of the court, right next to the net. This is the best place for the setter to be, as it gives them the option to set all three hitters. But Emily was not ready for the furious ball. She misjudged where the ball would land and was too far back causing her to have to fling herself towards the ball. The awkward pass started flying down to the middle of the court, significantly reducing my setting options. I realized the only place I would be able to set properly was to the outside hitter. I lined my body up with the far right corner of the court and lifted my hands over my head. I felt the ball fall into my hands and I sprung them, launching the ball back up and towards the direction of the outside hitter. My eyes followed the ball's route and as it was coming down I realized that my outside hitter was not in a good position to hit the ball. Megan was too close to the net, forgetting to transition off after she blocked, and so the ball was falling straight on top of her head. She attempted to swing at the ball but she was so close to the net that she had to reach behind her to touch the ball and caused her to be off-balance, sending the ball flying backward away from the net. As the ball touched the ground, we lost the point. Immediately I ran over to Megan and talked to her. "Hey good try! You totally got the next one!" She smiled, "Just make sure you transition off the net before you hit, otherwise you won't be able to get behind the ball and properly contact it," I finished, hoping the advice could help her. She looked relieved that I hadn't yelled at her, but as I turned to return to my serve receive, I saw Emily shoot her a glare. I walked over to Emily to get in my position and she said, "did you see that she totally shanked the ball!" I looked over to see if Megan heard what Emily was saying but she was staring down at the ground seemingly focused with her shoes. "I think she's just starting volleyball," I replied, "Cut her some slack" Emily shook her head and focused on the server. Emily was saying mean words but they would not hurt the other Megan if she didn't hear them, right? Emily wasn't a girl I would want to be friends with, but arguing with her would not help. That's what I thought, until I was on defense and received the first ball. The ball began hurtling towards Megan and she looked ready and determined to pass it. But as the ball collided with Megan's forearms, Emily ran into her, causing the ball to fly off in the opposite directions and us losing the point. "That was my ball!", Emily yelled at Megan.

Megan looked down at the ground, probably feeling embarrassed. As Emily began to berate Megan, I turned to her and told her to stop, I could not take it anymore. "Megan had every right to pass that ball, it was

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## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY (CONT.)

BY REBECCA DONOVAN  
CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL

closest to her and it was unreasonable for you to get it. You were the one who collided with her and messed up her pass," I said. Emily sulked back to her corner and Megan smiled at me. After that, I noticed a difference in Megan's playing: she was so much more confident, which made her passing, serving, and hitting much better.

After that experience, I learned how important it is to take a stand against injustice, no matter how small.

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## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ESSAY

BY BRIANA EGGLESTON  
HARPER'S CHOICE MIDDLE SCHOOL

I have personally never stood up against injustice, however, I will gladly speak up about it because no one should ever feel like they have to be a certain skin color or feel like they have to be a certain weight or gender! If I was getting discriminated against, I would tell them that it's disrespectful. But I would not want to say something rude back or try to start anything because that is just stooping to their level. However, if it was someone else who was getting discriminated against, I would immediately protect him/her from the situation. I would take them away and make sure they are okay. Then I would tell the person who was discriminating against him/her that it is not okay.

Ever since I have heard of Martin Luther King, Jr. in school, he has always been an inspiration to me! Whenever we read books about him, I am excited! He worked so hard to help change the world. Because of him, I know a lot about equality and how to deal with discrimination and issues that have not only been happening in the United States, but worldwide. Even though I have not stood against injustice, there are still many issues that I would like to talk about, but first let's talk about Martin Luther King Jr!

Martin Luther King, Jr. was an amazing man. He boycotted, protested, and made many different speeches. Because of King and so many others, all races are allowed to go to school together, they do not separate bathrooms and restaurants by race anymore and so much more! I am extremely grateful for him because he changed a lot in the world. But now it is our generation's turn to take a stand against discrimination!

I think that there are a lot of different topics we should start talking about in school especially since we are getting older. For example, we should start talking about different cultures more because there are many different beautiful cultures in our school, and it would be fun and interesting to learn about them! We should also learn more about black history, native history and so many more. We should start learning about these things because a lot of us had ancestors who were alive during that time and we want to know what they had to go through.

As a lot of you may know, there have been many protests to stand up for equality, People are getting killed and discriminated against because of their skin color, gender, and religion! For example, George Floyd died because of his skin color. It makes me sick to know that someone can die because of these things. This needs to stop now.

There are so many things we can do to prevent and spread awareness about the discrimination that is happening in the world! For example, we can boycott brands that have discriminated against people! Also, you can sign petitions and tell friends and family about what is happening in the world right now! Lastly, remember to respect everyone's opinions because listening to someone else could change what you think of something. Lastly, you can vote! Every single vote matters!

In conclusion, I am beyond thankful for Martin Luther King Jr. and so many others who have helped, but there are many issues that need to be talked about still!

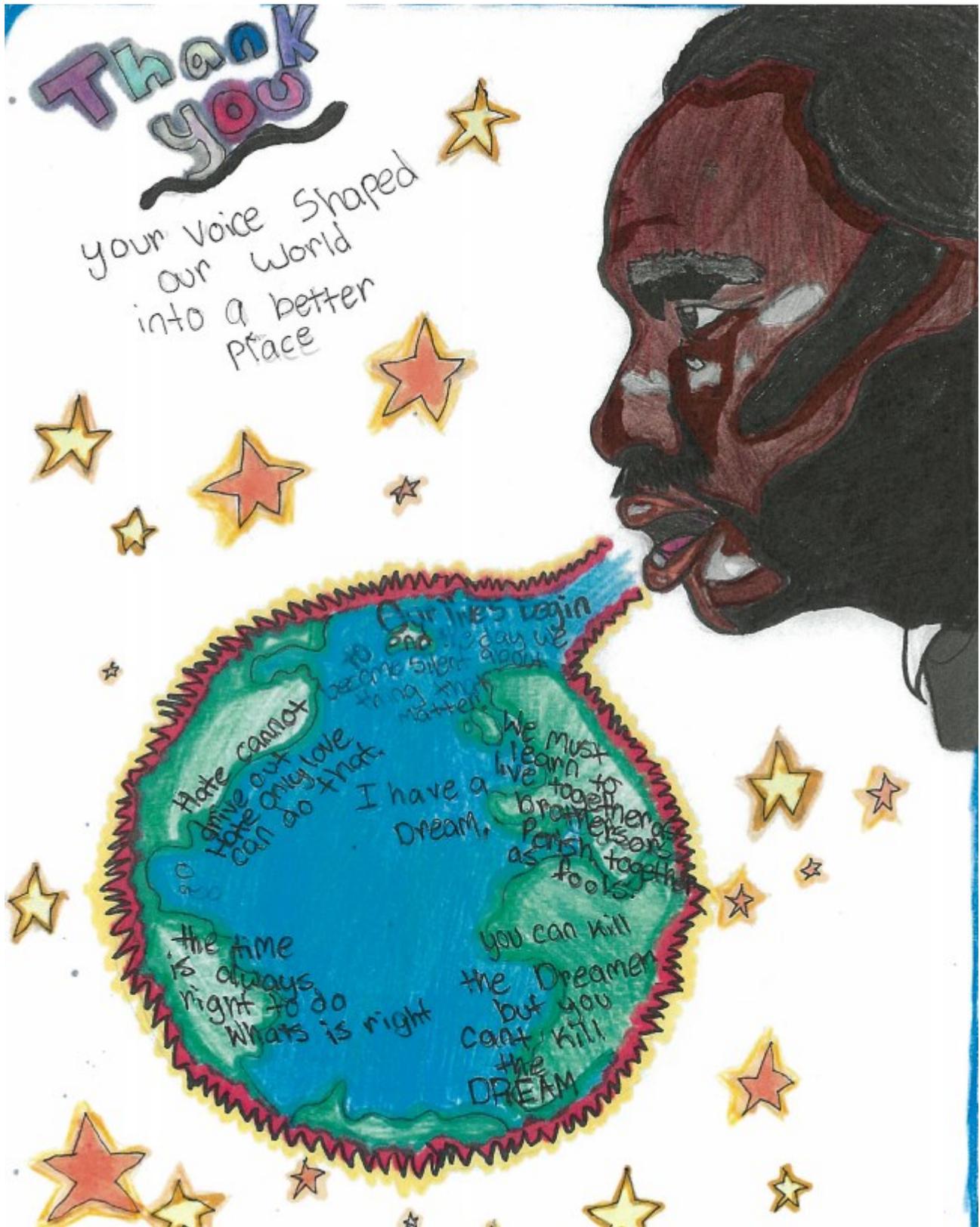
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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. POSTER

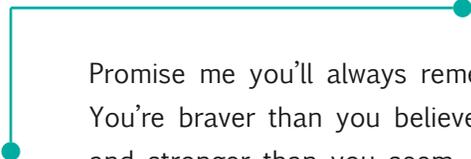
DRAWING

BY NIKA GUTH

BOLLMAN BRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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Promise me you'll always remember:  
You're braver than you believe,  
and stronger than you seem,  
and smarter than you think.

— Winnie the Pooh

## ARTISTS' BIOS

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### **ANIKA AMIN: PAGE(S) COVER, 12**

The title of this piece is "Mom's Makeup" to represent a young person in the LGBTQ community that is discovering their self-identity and trying to transform into their most content self.

### **REEMA AYACHE: PAGE 24**

Reema Ayache is a 14 year old artist who is self taught. A versatile artist, her favorite media include colored pencils, digital art, and graphite, and her favorite style is realism. Reema is very passionate about producing art that conveys stories and messages, such as this piece "Resilience Knows No Chains," that shows empowerment and how one can emerge stronger like a wolf from the chains of hardship by expressing themselves through their own creativity.

### **SITARA CHAKKAMADATHIL: PAGE(S) 11, 14, 15**

Sitara Chakkamadathil is an eighth grader living in Maryland. She enjoys dancing, reading, and writing in her spare time. Sitara has written several poems and stories over the years.

### **JOYCE CHOU: PAGE(S) 20, 21**

Joyce Chou is a high school senior attending Atholton High School. She placed 2nd at the county level for visual arts in the PTA Reflections Program 2020-2021 and was also published twice in the Cultivate 2020 Magazine. As a Chinese American, she hopes to teach others about her culture and experiences and spread awareness through writing and drawing.

### **ESTELLA ELKIS: PAGE 5**

Estella Elkis is an 8th grader at Mayfield Woods Middle School. She takes interest in nature, science, and reading. In the beginning of middle school, she discovered her love for writing stories. Writing poems has proven to be an art form she can rely on to express her feelings or experiences. Through recent tough years, Estella discovered a passion for numerous art forms. Estella Elkis continues finding ways to spread various messages through art.

### **ANNA HAN: PAGE(S) 4, 7, 19**

Anna is a junior at Marriotts Ridge High School. She has loved to write ever since she was little, and even though school seems to take up most of her time these days, she still loves to express her thoughts through writing. She loves that words can inspire and encourage people in powerful ways. In her free time, she also enjoys spending time outside with her family and making music.

### **HOPE HAN: PAGE(S) 3, 9**

Hope Han is a fifth grader at Waverly Elementary School. She likes to write poems, short stories, and memoirs from her own life. She enjoys writing because it allows her to express her hopes and imagination. Other than writing, Hope likes to read, bike, and watch Disney movies.

### **REBEKAH HUGHEY: PAGE 13**

Rebekah is a seventh grader at Thomas Viaduct Middle School. She enjoys singing, writing, and dancing. When she is older, she wants to become an activist for social justice. Rebekah uses her writing to spread positivity and focuses on topics that anyone can relate to. She hopes the reader enjoys her poem as much as she did writing it!

### **JONETTA LAH: PAGE 28**

Jonetta Lah is a 2021 graduate of Atholton High School and member of HopeWorks' Youth Leadership Project. Born and raised in Howard County, Maryland, Jonetta is a first-generation Liberian immigrant with a passion for marginalized women's health and suffrage, social justice, and global health. Jonetta plans to study Sociology and Global Health on a pre-med track at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall.

### **DAVID OKONKWO: PAGE(S) 8, 17, 26**

David has always loved writing, but he never knew it as a kid. His teachers encouraged his writing skills, so he submitted a poem to a Fine Arts Convention two years ago and won the chance to go to Nationals. Now, he writes often. He attends Reservoir High School in 11th grade. He also likes walking, traveling, and reads to relax. He lives with his parents and has one older brother living in Texas.

## ARTISTS' BIOS CONTINUED

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### **ASHBY OLIVER: PAGE 23**

Ashby is a creative woman who is trying to explain how she is on the inside because she masks it on the outside. Explaining how she is in poem form is the easiest way to help people see how she really is, showing "Hey, you may see this but you will never see this unless I show you." Like everyone, she has her secrets.

### **AKSHAINI PALLIKONDA: PAGE 7**

Akshaini is a 6th grader at Patapsco Middle School. She has an enjoyable time reading, doing art, spending time with family and friends, going outside, and listening to or playing music. She always occupies herself with the work she likes to do.

### **ANVI PATEL: PAGE(S) 6, 8, 9**

Anvi Patel is thirteen years old and loves to write poems and short stories based on real-life. All of her poems have impacted her in some way, and she hopes to continue writing when she grows up. She has an awesome little sister, they love to bake with one another and bake new creations every weekend. She cares about fighting what she believes in and loves to debate about topics she is passionate about.

### **PIERCE PEARSON: PAGE 25**

Walter "Pierce" Pearson IV, an honors student at Centennial High School with a cumulative 4.57 GPA, enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing basketball, and singing with the Washington Performing Arts Children of the Gospel. Over the past few years, he's discovered a passion for writing. In these trying times, Pierce wrote several poems to reflect on the world's current state and promote social justice.

### **JACK PORTER: PAGE 3**

Jack Porter is seven years old. He is in the first grade. He has a dog named Kodi. Jack likes to watch birds, ride his bike, read, and watch TV. He describes himself as silly, funny, happy, and excited.

### **KARA RIVENBARK: PAGE 18**

When Kara was 10, her family took a one year trip around the world. They experienced different cultures, architecture, lifestyles, landscapes, and foods: all opening their minds up to the charming things the world beholds. And so, through a combination of imagery from their own photographs and text from personal diary entries, Kara created multiple illustrated travel journal pages that displays her family's adventures around the world.

### **AMITHA SABBANI: PAGE 22**

Amitha Sabbani is currently in 6th grade at Patapsco Middle School. She enjoys watching movies, acting, and talking to her friends. She decided to participate in the Cultivate Art Magazine because she wanted to have her art in a magazine and wanted to tell what people learned and did during covid.

### **KHUSHIKA SHAH: PAGE(S) 12, 17, 23**

Khushika Shah is a junior at Mount Hebron High School in Maryland. She loves to read and listen to music. She writes from her experience and receives inspiration to write when she sees people going through the same.

### **ISHI SHONDHI: PAGE 30**

Ishi Sondhi is a 13-year-old girl in the 8th grade, who has resided in Howard County for the past seven years, currently attends Dunloggin Middle School, and will be attending Mount Hebron High School next year. Her interests include writing, painting, dancing, and reading. She has traveled to multiple countries and enjoys sightseeing. She loves meeting new people and is a very social person.

### **SHIVANI VARIA: PAGE(S) 4, 14**

Shivani Varia is a sophomore at Mount Hebron High School, and is a participant in the Mount Hebron art program. Aside from art, she loves STEM and she is an avid member and leader of many STEM clubs at school. One of her hobbies is teaching kids about engineering and advocating for the importance of STEM. She enjoys making artwork that is a reflection of her life and family.

## ARTISTS' BIOS CONTINUED

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### **STEPHANIE WANG: PAGE 29**

Stephanie Wang is 17 years old and a current junior at Atholton High School. She is an experienced artist and dancer and actively performs community service in her local area. Stephanie enjoys hanging out with friends and family, watching movies, trying different things, and meeting new people. She hopes to continue growing, attaining new experiences, and helping others.

### **ZOEY WEIDEMANN: PAGE 15**

A 2nd grader at Pointers Run Elementary School, Zoey has a giving personality and her interactions show how much she cares about other's well-being. Being a caretaker and healing others come naturally for her, usually starting with a big hug! Zoey's other activities include soccer, basketball, gymnastics, Tik Tok, and being creative with her friends and sister Taylor.

### **KRISTINE WON: PAGE 16**

Kristine Won is a high school student in Maryland who enjoys art and writing. She hopes that readers will be able to feel comforted and inspired through her writing.

## ARTICLE

At HopeWorks, we use the arts in three important ways to accomplish our mission: to support survivors in their healing; as a vehicle to increase awareness; and to imagine creative solutions to bring about social change. Each year we are excited to introduce you to folks who also know the power of the arts.

### “OAKLAND MILLS ONLINE” A CONVERSATION WITH AMY BROOKS

**Alicia Swirsky (AS):** Thank you for joining us today! Our first question today is, what was your inspiration for creating Oakland Mills Online (OMO)?

**Amy Brooks (AB):** Great question. I teach at Oakland Mills High School, and in 2019 we started something called the Scorpion Speaker Series, named after our mascot. The premise was that you don't have to look far to find excellence in Oakland Mills. We would invite people from our community to come in and speak about their profession or area of expertise. It was great. And then during Women's History Month 2020 everything was shut down due to Covid. We had our last speaker on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. She came in and talked about being an Afro-Latina woman and did a live poetry reading. The next week, we had scheduled Christiana Rigby and Sabina Taj to talk about women in politics. Fortunately, they agreed to come online when I came up with this idea that we could continue to stay connected virtually. So that was a program that went from being in-person to online. We realized that people could come online and mix and mingle. And we would learn from each other. I liked that premise. And I felt very strongly that we didn't have to wait for any other organization to facilitate that; we could learn and grow together. So, Jessica Mahajan created the website and we started off that first day on March 16th with a journaling session. And then it kind of grew. We had exercise classes, book clubs, and knitting workshops. Eventually, we even made masks together. The programming went from 8am to around 8pm. It began more kid-focused, and then it became more adult-focused. Now we have a balance of age groups represented in our programming- from toddler to teens to adult.

**Rebecca Leger (RL):** That's really interesting. I know that you touched on this a little bit, but does the site mainly cater towards teens or adults?

**AB:** I hope all of the above! One thing that I think has been really important is for us to be responsive. Whatever we hear people asking for, we shift gears to meet their needs. In the beginning, we didn't have anything for babies or toddlers. I am a high school teacher, and I was the advisor for Book Club and the GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliance). We carried over some of that and had teen book groups; we read quite a few series together. We also have book clubs that are more geared towards adults. We have featured fiction and nonfiction titles. And then that kind of splintered off to a podcast series discussion group.

There are a lot of things that we've worked on in partnership with the Horizon Foundation, HopeWorks, the Howard County Library System, and even local PTSAs. In terms of advocacy, for our LGBTQIA+ community, we had petitions and forums for pronoun changes, gender neutral bathrooms, easily accessible name changes, inclusive curriculum, a more diverse workforce, comprehensive sex ed, welcoming hiring practices, and Rainbow Ribbon Schools.

**AS:** So, you just said a couple things about this. But our next question is what kind of resources do you have for teens-- like I guess social activities, but also involving social justice and things like that?

**AB:** Well, the GSA and book club in the school building were like “hangouts.” It's always just like-minded people coming together and just being 100% themselves in a safe space. And we started a Pride celebration, with a week of activities at Oakland Hills High School when I first started as GSA advisor, but then last year, we couldn't do any of that due to Covid. So, when we took it online, it was tough because it felt more like a class. You know what I mean? Like we're meeting and I'm there; it felt like the same as all the other

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classes. So, we also started doing a GSA game night where kids could just come and play games. And we had people from all over the county and different high schools attend- that was pretty cool for socializing. And then you asked about resources; I think the biggest resource we offer is the opportunity to connect with others; heart-centered networking, if you will.

OMO started a mentoring/networking program in February called REACH (Relating, Expanding, Achieving, Challenging, Helping). The goal of REACH is to connect young women of color with women who are already in the industries they might be interested in. We started meeting on a monthly basis, and using the Stacey Abrams book, *Lead from the Outside*, as inspiration. We've been meeting since February, and there are women who are currently working or retired from leadership positions in Howard County. And then we also have our "rising leaders"- that's what we call our students. It's been cool because they've gotten to know each other over time; to share and listen. So, I think that's the biggest resource- you know, being in a breakout room with somebody who is making moves throughout the county; decisions that directly affect your life.

In terms of resources, I always think about one of our most popular sessions. We hosted a community forum for teen activists in Howard County, and we had 18+ teen-run organizations, including young leaders from HopeWorks. They presented to everybody and were basically like, "this is who we are, and this is what we're doing, and this is what we need to be successful in improving our community." And the audience included every elected decision-making leader in Howard County I could find. We had 100 people attentively listening to teenagers-- we asked that they didn't interrupt or ask questions- they just had to give their undivided focus to one teen group after another. People reached out to me for a long time after that; I think that was a real game changer. It's very rare that the young people get to just be centered in this way for an extended time. This is what we want- rising leaders and unique voices connecting with decision makers.

**RL:** Yeah, I remember hearing about that event, but I wasn't able to go. But it just seemed really interesting. I don't think I've ever heard of an event that's just centered around teens, just talking about what their issues are to people who make decisions. I think that's powerful.

**AB:** Our hope is that we're occupying a unique space between the many amazing organizations that already exist and what could be; we're not trying to replicate what others are already doing. We really emphasize that if we come together, and we have a lot of overlap and intersection, then we'll be stronger if we collaborate. When you work in a bubble, it's harder to figure out how you fit in the grand scheme of things. So even attending one of our community forums and seeing what other people are doing, you have a sense of what other groups are doing.

**RL:** Our next question is, do you think the type of website was necessary before COVID-19 hit? And was it long overdue? Or is this the kind of site that is most helpful when students don't have any other ways to connect with each other?"

**AB:** I think it's going to continue to evolve. In the fall, we're going to pick up Scorpions Speaker Series again, at school in partnership with OMO. Ideally, community members can join us as guests in our school's media center, for example. So, if you want to meet a certain speaker, maybe somebody you admire in the community or you're curious about their work, you can join us! I'm thinking that the website could be a hub for people to connect in an ongoing way- that alone will be an amazing resource for folks in Howard County. I envision it as a hyper-local website because people can always Google things. But there are certain resources that, if you're local, are often hard to track down. Giving representatives and leaders a phone call or sending them an email can be very impactful. It's important to make it easy for people to connect because we're all busy folks.

**AS:** So, our next question is, what were some of the most successful programs

that were created or are currently occurring on the website?

**AB:** It is funny how you're referring to the website. While the website is super important, we tend to think of it as a non-physical thing, like an information hub for our live, interactive programming. Now that more and more people are vaccinated, we're starting to meet in-person in addition to our online workshops, like on our Women's Retreat. The OMO website facilitates all of those different events. It's clear that OMO could stand for Oakland Mills Outdoors, or like Oakland Mills On-the-road. I want it to have kind of like a rotating third word, because it'll definitely still be online for folks who want to access it from around the world. We've had community forums and book clubs that were really big. For example, we did an ongoing group study of The NYTimes 1619 Project, which was a huge hit. We say everything is rooted in Oakland Mills, but the branches go really far.

*Untamed* by Glennon Doyle was one of the popular book clubs that we offered. So many women showed up because they wanted to process their own lives the way that the author does. Doyle talks about coming out with her love for Abby Wambach and their subsequent marriage and kind of blowing up her entire identity and life that she had. And so, a lot of women wanted to talk about that.

Do you know Kazu Kibuishi? He is the author and creator of *Amulet*, a series of best-selling graphic novels. A friend of OMO tweeted him and told him what we were doing and asked him if he'd lead a workshop. We had hoped he would lead something for 20 mins, but he was having so much fun, he stayed on for over an hour! And kids are asking him questions and he was drawing some of his drawings from Harry Potter and he recreated some of the kids' favorite characters from the *Amulet* series. He explained every tool that he uses, and he was talking while he had multiple cameras set up. And it was so cool.

**RL:** Is it difficult to talk about certain social justice issues with teens? And do you think that there are currently enough discussions happening involving teens and how they can create change?

**AB:** I don't think it's tough to talk to teenagers about anything! I think talking to adults is a little tough, sometimes. I think the conversations that we're having in our county (and our country) are what students and parents want from public education. There is a groundswell of people who want to be a part of the conversation about the direction we are heading in the US. Many of us want to encourage the school system to facilitate these kinds of conversations you're referencing- social justice and talking about equity and talking about what it means to be an inclusive, proactively inclusive space for *all* students. And, honestly, for everyone on staff too.

**AS:** Our next question is pretty similar. How do you think that today's social changes and social climate are affecting teens and kids growing up-- especially teens and kids who don't have the spaces to talk or access ways to communicate about it?

**AB:** Well, I'm an English teacher, so naturally, I feel like books are the answer to everything! We have books now that more explicitly address the impact of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination. My students have read *Speak*, which is a novel about teen rape, and we talk about it. I think it's important to touch on the fact that we have restorative justice spaces, we have community conversations, but what if teens don't have space to explore these topics at home or at school? I think sometimes if you're introduced to a source of knowledge, books, organizations, trainings, or programs, then you can continue to explore on your own. When it comes to teenagers, if there's a book in your house that parents have made available, or at school in the library, then teens can educate themselves without a direct interaction with a teacher or parent. Empowering young people to be independent, life-long learners is a really important gift.

I also think that having an environment where you see yourself, your image, your stories, authors who have lived some of the same experiences; I think that's huge in Howard County. We have a lot of proximity without

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a lot of intimacy. And I think our books can facilitate that because we can be like, 'Oh, I see myself in that.' And people are like, 'Oh, is that who you are?' And then we have a new, separate space to explore together without anyone feeling like they are being put on the spot. We're reading *The Hate You Give* and *Just Mercy* right now. My students are processing similar themes together and talking about the role of Black Lives Matter and the mass incarceration human rights crisis. I don't think that would normally come up in conversation but reading these books and understanding that millions of Americans have personally been impacted by the judicial system in our country, is critical for us to understand.

I think that there's a lot of context gained once you read a book about an issue that may be unfamiliar to you; you're more likely to feel comfortable when you hear that tough topic brought up later. Once an idea has been introduced in a non-combative, conflict-free space in a book, many of us are more prepared to process a live interaction with someone who's talking about that same subject. That's a big deal- feeling comfortable with uncomfortable topics means people are less likely to shut down or run away.

**RL:** Yeah, and it was really interesting when you mentioned how all these changes have been happening very recently. I think that last year, my senior year of high school, was the first time that we ever talked about police brutality in class that I can remember. That was not openly talked about in classes before. It's been really fascinating just seeing all the changes that have happened over the past year or so.

**AB:** What about you at Atholton [High School], do you know the history of the Harriet Tubman school and how our county was delayed in integrating schools?

**RL:** Yeah, I think it was mentioned like once. And it was like, the Harriet Tubman school was the African American school before integration. And how it did take like a while for like Atholton to become integrated, I think but yeah, it wasn't talked about, you know, very deeply.

**AB:** Fleeting references made?

**RL:** Yeah.

**AB:** Well, Atholton was a white school. And Harriet Tubman was a black school. And so, my question to you was, is, why wasn't the Harriet Tubman school integrated with white students? Why did they shut down the Harriet Tubman school? That happened throughout the United States-- integration meant shutting down black schools that were doing fine, and integrating them into white spaces, but not bringing the teaching staff over. So, there are a lot of black teaching professionals, educators who lost their jobs.

**RL:** I have noticed that the teaching staff is not diverse at all. I've never had a black teacher at Atholton. I remember, like my cousin was talking about how she had a black Math teacher, Mr. Thompson, and I was like, 'Oh my gosh, you're so lucky.' Most people don't get that. I mean, I can count on one hand how many black staff members we have at Atholton. It's very, very small, which is why it's also important to have organizations like the BSU just to have other people that look like you and also the fact that the teacher sponsor is Black, so you are surrounded by that kind of reference who again, looks like you. And so yeah, [for] the teaching staff at Atholton the diversity is definitely an issue.

**AB:** And why don't we have more black teachers? Who hires them?

**RL:** White people.

**AB:** Yeah. Well, that's part of it. There are so many layers to staffing; from college recruitment, county HR departments, to individual school leadership that we can improve upon. But also, regarding school integration- my dad was a principal in Harrisburg and they wanted to restructure the

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district so that it wasn't so segregated. One example- one mostly Black elementary school and one mostly white elementary school- needed to be addressed, but they couldn't figure out how to move people here and there, so what they decided was they split the two schools in half. One school was kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade and then all of them came to my dad's school for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. I just learned the story during quarantine, and I thought it was brilliant...and so simple! Instead of everybody arguing about who went where, they just decided that everybody from those two schools would go to both buildings!

**AS:** Another question about OMO. How was the response to it when it first came out and throughout the pandemic?

**AB:** It's been warm. We've had a lot of people locally be like 'this is great.' There are some stories that make me get a little choked up because people are like, 'I was really down during quarantine and couldn't get out of bed. And then, because I was leading a session, I got up that day and I showered and got dressed. It was the first time I felt like myself in months!'



*Amy Brooks*

That means the world to me because it's not just for the participants; a lot of times it's for the facilitators and workshop leaders, too. Everybody can be a leader; we all have things that we can teach or share. I think a lot of people just have never been invited, no one has ever tapped them and said, 'I'd really love to learn from you' or 'I'd really love you to lead something.' The OMO philosophy is that it's necessary to invite people to share their brilliance.

**RL:** Our final question is what do you think creating equity in Howard County looks like?

**AB:** I think that you have to have the right people in the room- where the decisions are made. The make-up of our county's decision-makers have to change unless we want more of the same. We're seeing this across the country with people who are getting elected into offices and laws are changing, and protections are being put in place and policies are being revisited. That's it. You "rising leaders" need to be in the room where it happens; you need to be at the table, you need to be the advocates, you need to be the voters. I think what is happening now is that a lot of seeds have been planted, a lot of seedlings have been watered, and things are starting to bloom all over, not just Howard County, but all over the world. You see so many women who are leading by example and acting in a supportive yet persistent way. Things are shifting, and it's not someone coming in yelling and taking power. it's not a coup, actually it really is a ground swell; it is an uprising. It's communal. It's collective. So that's our new motto. We started with 'OMO: we learn and grow together,' and now our new add-on is 'learn, grow, *and lead* together,' because it's not just about one elected official. Each elected person represents so many of us. It's critical that we all have to move together in order to make sure leaders have the power they need to make the changes we want.

**AS:** Thank you so much for all your answers today, they were all really explanatory and were really good. Thank you for giving us your time today.

**AB:** It was 100% my pleasure!

Amy Brooks is the founder of OMO and an English teacher at Oakland Mills High School. She also helps aspiring authors and has penned several books herself.

For more information about Oakland Mills Online, visit [www.oaklandmillsonline.com](http://www.oaklandmillsonline.com).

This magazine was published  
with the assistance of...



The HopeWorks' Youth Leadership Project is a service-learning program dedicated to empowering teens to challenge systems of oppression and prevent relationship violence in their community. This project creates a space for students to grow in understanding themselves and the world. Facilitating self-care and social justice projects, youth leaders engage in frank discussions, raise their social consciousness and participate in creative projects and activism.

This project provides an affirming and safe space for all students.

Open to teens, age 13 to 18, participants explore many topics related to violence prevention including healthy relationships, media literacy and the safe use of technology, social constructions of femininity, healthy masculinity, self-management and self-care, environmental justice, body policing, bystander intervention, healthy sexuality, cultural relativity, bullying, gender dynamics, and understanding intersectionality and root causes of oppression.

## WHAT'S PLANNED

- \* Explore self-care and social justice in our monthly meetings (September-June)
- \* Learn to plan and conduct workshops
- \* Publish a Youth Arts Magazine, *Cultivate*
- \* Experience producing HopeWorks' podcast, *Transforming Together*
- \* Stand up for environmental justice by participating in our community garden, "The Our Earth Project"
- \* Earn community service hours



**Questions?** For more information and an application, contact Community Educator, Victoria Rain, at (410) 997- 0304 or email her at [vrain@wearehopeworks.org](mailto:vrain@wearehopeworks.org).

HOPEWORKS OF HOWARD COUNTY

# THE OUR EARTH PROGRAM

*CULTIVATING PEACE, JUST SUSTAINABILITY AND CONNECTION*

**YOUTH & ADULT  
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

**SIGN UP  
TODAY**



*This program is part of  
the Organizational  
Self-care Project*



**Join members of the HopeWorks community (Youth Leaders, Staff, and Volunteers) as we plant, tend and harvest a community garden that will benefit residents of HopeWorks' shelters.**

Located at Freetown Farm, a part of the Community Ecology Institute on Harriet Tubman Lane in Columbia, the HopeWorks Peace Garden is a 1,000 square foot plot of land on a farm that includes a variety of ecosystems, including fields, meadows, woods, wetlands, and two small streams. In addition to the benefits of connecting with nature, The Our Earth Program is a backdrop for discussing important topics such as safe space, food deserts, civic ecology, community health and the environmental injustices that disproportionately affect those who are oppressed.

The Youth Leadership Project does not meet during the late spring/summer months and so it is especially important for staff and volunteers to take the helm during this time.

**Ready to spend some time in the sunshine? No experience required!**

**Volunteers & Staff:** Sign up by contacting Community Engagement Coordinator, Sandra Price at: [sprice@wearehopeworks.org](mailto:sprice@wearehopeworks.org)

HopeWorks ● (410) 997- 0304 ● 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive ● Suite 300 ● Columbia MD 21046  
[wearehopeworks.org](http://wearehopeworks.org)

# We Are HopeWorks.



Founded in 1978, HopeWorks of Howard County is a private nonprofit agency. HopeWorks' mission is to support and advocate for people in Howard County affected by sexual and intimate partner violence and to engage the community in creating the change required for violence prevention.

We are proud of our strong tradition of service provision and survivors will always need the specialized care our dedicated staff provides on a daily basis. Critical also to our mission is engaging the entire community in the work of changing the conditions that allow sexual and intimate partner violence to occur in the first place. This part takes all of us. Sexual and intimate partner violence are not inevitable realities in our world.

We all benefit when individuals are free to live self-determined lives without the threat of sexual and intimate partner violence – not just survivors. Parents, law enforcement, businesses, students, day care providers, doctors, nurses and teachers, men and boys benefit. Families and friends will all be better off without these threats.

Prevention takes an entire community working together – challenging and changing the beliefs, attitudes and culture that allow them to exist. And it takes hope. Hope builds momentum and momentum creates change...when we work together. Our community can be stronger and better and safer when we are all engaged in this work together.

## WE ARE HOPEWORKS. EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.

### ADVOCACY SERVICES

- 24-Hour Helpline for callers seeking crisis counseling and referrals regarding sexual and intimate partner violence
- Providing comfort, support, and advocacy to survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence at Howard County General Hospital

### SAFE SHELTER AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

- Crisis shelter for victims and their children
- Transitional housing
- Individual case management and educational programs and life-skill trainings

### COUNSELING FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL & INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (WOMEN, MEN & CHILDREN)

- Crisis appointments
- Individual and group counseling

### LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- Brief advice, information and referrals for victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse
- Representation, consultation in peace & protective order matters, divorce, and family law proceedings
- Information and support through the Volunteer Legal Advocacy Project staffed at the District Court daily
- Criminal accompaniments to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault

### ANTI-TRAFFICKING SERVICES

- Safety planning for survivors of human trafficking
- Intensive case management
- Human trafficking peer support group

### ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION & AWARENESS PROGRAMS

- Workshops and trainings at schools, faith communities, businesses and civic organizations
- HopeWorks' Youth Leadership Project: a service-learning program for teens ages 13 to 18
- The Our Voice Project: Survivor's Wellness & Leadership programs
- Arts-Based Programs for the general public to enhance wellness, build community and create change
- Self-care & Social Justice workshops for the general public to facilitating conversation, transformation and liberation
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Outreach and participation in community events such as school fairs, health fairs and awareness events

HOPEWORKS 24-HOUR HELPLINE 410.997.2272