

Teaching Positive Work

Through the words of
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School's first-grade class are the group project winners for this year's contest. The class is taught by Ms. Lori Tharp.



We Must Act Now For Respect - Mia Rimmer, continued from page 2

this nation is still spilling lies in its anthem's closing statement: "Justice for all." Stealing someone else's culture is a continuation of that oppression. We must act now.

If we are to end cultural appropriation, we have to educate citizens at early ages about the sacredness associated with symbols, actions, and other things that cultures partake in and how it's not okay to rip those privileges away from them. We must stop using races as symbols and mascots; we must show others that their people are more than just a logo representing a sports team. We must not take someone else's pride, steal it, and claim it as 'high fashion.' The influential civil rights activist, Martin Luther King, Jr., believed that we must act upon our oppression - in his book Stride Toward Freedom, Dr. King stated that we must stand up for ourselves or we're just as bad as our oppressors. As a nation, we must end this disrespect of those who have built this country - if not, we have no right to be called one of the most powerful nations in the world. This country needs to step up the respect and put down the stereotyping, theft, and disdainment of culture. We must act now.

We Must Act Now to Stop Gun Violence

Blood is the most grievous memory of death.

There was blood everywhere. The soul of a human being was destroyed when his own friend pulled the trigger with something small but strong enough to end someone's life. A gun was the reason that caused the 15 year old girl to do drugs, smoke, and sell herself. She had no choice but to live with the memories of her own parents getting shot right in front of her. The blood of her family kept following her. All she saw were dead bodies covered in blood. When she told her story, the answer was always the same: "Don't worry. Guns will not hurt anyone else. We have time to fix it." She remained calm but each night she watched on the news how more people were being killed. Even her own cousin. In the end, she pulled the trigger and killed herself.

On June 23, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr., gave a speech at the Great March on Detroit saying, "The clock of destiny is ticking out, and we must act now before it's too late." The time is always now. In the spring of 2014, my sister was getting ready for her senior prom when gunshots were fired past her head by people outside. We all laid down including my five year old brother who was shaking. I have lost many people in my family and now my own sister was about to be killed by a gun that is ending the lives of innocent people.

Martin Luther King did not waste any time. Everyday he marched, traveled, and risked everything because he knew if he wasted time, an African-American male would never walk home knowing that no white man would shoot him dead because of the color of his skin.

In my first year in America, I was sitting on the porch with my family when an African-American woman was chased down the street and shot in the leg. I asked myself, am I next? During the twelve years of my life in Rwanda, I have seen people who cried uncontrollably during the Rwanda Genocide Memorial months and realized how death can affect people.

We all live by our memories. My memory makes me think back and remember seeing a gun pointing and destroying lives every day and nothing being done to stop it. Most of the time at night I still hear gunshots which fill my mind with questions. We must come together and stop this calamitous of guns from destroying the world. As Martin Luther King taught: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Silence kills. We must act now before someone kills themselves with the gun that killed their Mother.

Biluge Ntabala

Second Place (9th & 10th Grade)
Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Grade 10



2nd



Mai Chue Yang

Third Place (9th & 10th Grade)
Rufus King International School, Grade 10

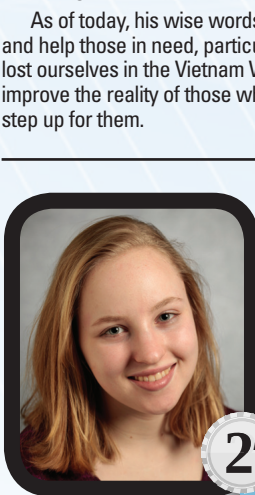
left behind and for this their lives were endangered. We became refugees who came to the United States just as any other immigrants who came for a better life. Standing here as a young Hmong woman, I implore you for your support to help the Hmong. That the lives of our dead soldiers were just as vital as the lives of the Americans who were lost in the war. We need to maintain our identity and culture about who we are and all the things that we have left behind.

Why must we act now to save more lives and the further ruination of an identity group's peace? The memories of an appreciable civil rights activist gave voice to the negative effects and about why he opposed the Vietnam War. In his speech in the Riverside Church, he argued, "Now, I've chosen to preach about the war in Vietnam because I agree with Dante, that the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a period of moral crisis maintain their neutrality. Yes, we must stand, and we must speak ... have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam." Martin Luther King, Jr. knew the destruction that the war would bring. King also said, "I

have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action; for they ask and write me, "So what about Vietnam?" They ask if our nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems and to bring about the changes it wanted." He knew that using non-violence would not be effective in this situation.

We Must Step Up and Act Now

The untold story of the Hmong people was locked up in our treasure box. Today, I will open to you the untold story that will melt your heart away. Not many people know about the Vietnam War and the destruction that it had done to both its allies and its enemies. These people included the Americans, Vietnamese, and the Hmong. After the war, the Hmong were



The Mountain Top Madison Kurth

Second Place (11th & 12th Grade)
Rufus King International School, Grade 12

Atop the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. Martin Luther King addressed thousands of individuals with his dream of racial equality and the hope to demolish oppression and segregation. He recognized that his dream could not be fulfilled alone though, thereby prompting hundreds of people to join his fight for freedom.

Presently, Milwaukee is in the midst of its own battle. Wars have broken out in the centers of streets and children go to sleep every night to lullabies of gun-fire and siren wails. The time has come for us to not stand idly by as our neighborhood parks transform into cemeteries; as family gatherings are consumed by candlelight vigils.

We must act now. Angelo Young had just graduated from high school when his life was taken from him, all for a material thing; its worth incomparable to that of a human being. The one who took his life grew up with the belief that it is easier to tear someone else down than build oneself up through integrity and hard work. So instead of working towards their own life, they worked to take another's. This mindset has spread amongst youth like wildfire, as some have unfortunately found it easier to reap what others have planted and what others have grown.

We must act now. To teach children the power of education and hard-work. That through determination you can climb the mountains which stand before you and cross valleys which are in your path. That there is no greater joy than to cross the graduation stage with the thought of "We made it. I made it." To work towards something that will build others up but not tear others down. We must teach them that obstacles are possible to overcome, and we are all stronger than we believe; because they are our future. And just like seeds we must nurture and water them so that they can blossom into the biggest and brightest flowers they can possibly be.

We must act now. To demonstrate the effectiveness of nonviolence and love; to support one another through trials and praise one another through success. The inability to recognize the power of love and recognition of self-worth has contributed in the killings of men, children and women, all over the city - they were not seen as unique individuals, but just recyclable beings of this world. And this is the ideology which is tearing down the columns and pulling up the floorboards of this supposedly great city.

We must act now. Because no female should fear walking home at night, and no victim should fear not being believed. No one, of any color, gender, religion or identity, should have to stand under a rain storm of hatred nor stand alone in the battle for justice. We must recognize the strength in numbers. Together we can pull each other up the mountain we must climb in order to see the "Promised Land" of peace and equality that Martin Luther King, Jr. once proudly declared to have seen in 1968; giving hope to thousands that there is a brighter tomorrow. But to get there, to reach the mountain top and the freedom to which all deserve, we must act now.

Because if we don't, who will?



We Must Act Now For Equality

Tori Johnston

First Place (11th & 12th Grade)
Eastbrook Academy, Grade 12

Slave owners, conquistadors, Nazis. We vilify people of the past such as these, but our society today perpetuates their crime of racial dominance. What Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once declared still applies today, "We must act now! It is a trite yet urgently true observation that if America is to remain a first-class nation, it cannot have second class citizens."

In 2010, The Milwaukee Drum reported, "People with 'white-sounding' names ... are 50% more likely to get a call back from an employer than those with 'black-sounding' names on an otherwise identical resume." Racial equality? Or perpetuation of the classes? In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education revealed that, "Wisconsin's high schools have the largest graduation achievement gap [between white and black students] in the country [at] 26.8%." Racial equality? Or perpetuation of two classes?

Dr. King declared, "People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other, they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other." Think about people around you, whether at the grocery store or your workplace. We rub shoulders with those different from ourselves daily. A woman of a different race than mine worked as a caretaker for the woman next door. Though she did not live in our neighborhood, we saw her come and go daily. "Hello" led to conversations, then dinners, then a life-long friendship. In fact, she supported my mother when my grandpa came to live with us for in-home hospice, and we took her to her first theater show ever. It all started with "hello".

Small things can make big differences. One small action I took was volunteering at Above the Clouds, which provides free arts education to diverse youth of Milwaukee. According to a 2009 study by Arts Education Partnership "Schoolchildren exposed to arts are often more proficient at reading, writing, and math." Programs like Above the Clouds can help close the 26.8% graduation achievement gap between blacks and whites.

Sometimes when we reach out to others different from us, there are risks and sacrifices. During World War II, Corrie Ten Boom and her family sacrificed their own safety to save more than 800 Jewish lives. In 1994, Hutu murdered 800,000 Tutsis. A Hutu pastor, determined not to let tribal differences stop him, hid seven Tutsis in a tiny bathroom for 90 days. Everyone survived, but only because the Hutu pastor viewed the Tutsis as his equals. We may not be facing terrorists or genocide, but we can make small sacrifices to achieve Dr. King's dream.

My parents' taxes pay for me to attend a prestigious, predominantly white, suburban school. However, my family chose to pay for me to attend Eastbrook Academy in Milwaukee, whose student body consists of 58% African-Americans and 31% whites. There, it's not about white or black or Hispanic or Asian. It's about one student body. In fact, our school's theme this year, which is based upon Romans 12, states, "We need each other. We belong together." Now is the time to communicate with one another. Now is the time for sacrifice. Now is the time to do our part to bring racial equality so that all citizens are truly equal. We must act now.



Donna Lewis-Taylor

Third Place (9th & 10th Grade)
Riverside University High School, Grade 11

Martin Luther King, Jr. was an African American leader who fought for civil rights. He has inspired many people to fight for what is right. Today our society often overlooks many issues that it feels are not important. One of the most crucial problems is runaway youth.

American citizens tend to overgeneralize the reasons that teens run away, instead of investigating. We create stigmas and false assumptions such as, "Children who run away are just a runaway" or "They are just rebellious, disobedient children, who choose not to follow the rules." However, there are far bigger problems than what we think. Many children are going through life-threatening events that need attention immediately. We Must Act Now because our runaway youth are in danger of sex trafficking, drug use, abduction, suicide, and murder.

In a study conducted by National Runaway Switchboard, it was found that each year 1.6 to 2.8 million of America's teens leave their homes. Most run away because of a family issue or life situation. Many face conditions such as molestation, abuse, neglect, conflict with parent, or any problem where they are forced or choose to leave their home. Many children do not feel comfortable telling anyone about their situation because of fear. Some children may not look for help at all because they don't understand or feel it is their fault. However, some do try to seek help before running away. Unfortunately, our child services seem to fail many of them because they feel that their issues are not as urgent as another. Many of our child services do not confront a situation quickly enough because it may not yet be considered "life-threatening." Could that child be running away to prevent escalation? What does it take for the government to realize that solving a problem before it escalates, may prevent more trouble from happening? In addition, some teens may run away because no one has reached out to them when they asked for help. So their only option is to remove themselves from the situation. Every child dealing with serious problems at home should be examined immediately. We Must Act Now.

The perilous life that our runaway youth are exposed to is extremely treacherous and should keep all of us awake at night. We wonder why so many young people are sex-trafficking, selling drugs and alcohol, or committing suicide, because many of them are runaway teens and they have nowhere to go. We don't seem to realize that we put our youth in more danger by refusing to help them. They are in grave danger from our perilous city streets, their homes, and themselves. Our government is responsible for investigating potential life threatening situations. We Must Act Now.

If we continue to disregard these critical threats to our youth, the runaway surge will increase. We must re-energize our child services. Many runaways, who live on the streets, hourly confront life and death situations. It is our responsibility to keep our youth in a safe environment and it is also our citizen's duty to help protect our children. We must promote the protection of runaway youth now. Our children are not only the new people of the world, but they are innocent lives who deserve peace. Now is the time that we must do anything we can as a nation, government, service, or citizen, to intervene in the circumstances of our children, because the moment that they walk out of that door, their lives are in jeopardy. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "The clock of destiny is ticking out and *We Must Act Now* before it is too late."

Runaway Youth Demand