



SETH M. KUBAITIS is a ninth grader at Kenston High School in Chagrin Falls. He was adopted from South Korea as an infant and has four brothers and sisters who were adopted from Russia, Siberia and South Korea. He enjoys marching band, tae-kwon-do and sports. His goal is to attend law school and support causes that promote tolerance.

Discrimination takes many different routes in life. It can lead to acts against genders, races, religions, using countless reasons that aren't logical to the world around us. The world sees discrimination as a normal thing in childhood, and that just isn't right. We shouldn't be raising kids to discriminate against others because another person is different.

After the horrific event at Virginia Tech in April 2007, another fellow student and I were blamed simply because we are South Korean. The Virginia Tech shooter was South Korean, and we were immediately blamed the next day by many of our fellow classmates. While we were being scapegoated, our friends stood by. Some even agreed with the persecutors and targeted us. I felt alone, paranoid, and always expecting the worse from every person I saw during the weeks following the incident. Eventually the event went away, and then life went back to the usual: classes, girls talking about the latest gossip, boys talking about last night's basketball game, and getting ready for the playoffs. Except that I still carried all the horrible and painful words that the people around me told me countless times.

When the people around me accused me of these things, they didn't realize it hurt me. They were wrong. They had no place to tell me that I was the cause for an event that happened in Virginia just because I was Asian. I believed that there were people who wouldn't agree and would speak out against this discrimination, but I was wrong. No one came to help. No one came to stop them. I was alone. I felt like a single person fighting the world, the world that I knew could be torturous and evil; I thought that world had changed, but I was wrong.

I did and have always tried to end racism in my school, but the battle hasn't always gone my way. Sam* has been like a torturer for my whole life. He has constantly been in my life hurting me more than helping me. People who commit these crimes against minorities don't usually see it as a wrong thing; they usually follow along with what the majority is saying.

What I've done is that I've embraced my heritage. I've gone to a camp strictly to learn about my Korean culture. The people there also face the same things that I have faced all starting at a young age; however, it's heartening to hear that people are trying to fix these problems by giving people the tools to fix them. I have tried to change the view of people and to tell them that they are wrong. They're wrong for agreeing with people who view racism as a right thing. I've changed people's view to see how wrong racism is. Additionally my high school has increased its intolerance of racism. Discrimination will always be a problem to combat, but we will always need people fighting against it.

** Name has been changed*