

**TIAIRRA VARNER** is a ninth grader at Cleveland Heights High School. She enjoys cheerleading, along with writing, reading and being with family and friends. She loves animals, especially dogs, and would like to be a veterinarian.

An act of discrimination has highly upset me. There's an epidemic that happened to a lot of people that crept up on us. It was the epidemic of racism. There has been a "never forgetting" event that happened in my life the day my younger sister was a victim because of the color of her skin.

It was the day when my younger sister was in school and there would be absurd comments sent back and fourth between people. The words that were coming out of their mouths was hurtful and mean as in "you look like dirt, you look like a tar baby, if we put you up against a black wall you would blend in, they would turn the lights off and say where you go?" As my little sister sits there disturbed by the aggression they put on her all because of the color of her skin. As you watch her sitting there aghast by the agitated acts that came upon her. The tears that filled her eyes were devastating. She would come home wondering why she was so different, so dark, and everybody lighter than her. I took her by the hand and lead her over to the bed and told her that she is a special gift from God. Remember that you are beautiful in the inside and out, don't let people bring you far down, keep your head up and keep going. I tell her about her history, her historical background, and how people that's African American made a lot of contributions to life society, and someday she will to. I feel that people who have no respect for people and their race or background have no respect for them and their mother, father, aunties, uncles, grandparents, great grandparents, and the people that came before them. It is simply no morals of common people.

There are a lot of things you can do to avoid and stop the hate that is continuously affecting a lot of us. We have to annihilate discrimination now or it's going to be too late. We have to gather up people who want to put a stop to this and have them talking at school to students, boys and girls clubs, hand out flyers to support them on stop the hate. Talk to them about discrimination—what it is and how it's still going on and it has to cease. We have to especially talk to our younger ones because we might actually have a chance to have them make a change and let them think about it as they get older. We have to yell it out from a crowd and tell them "hate is a disease and it is spreading and we have to catch it before our young ones become a victim of it." We could form an alliance, a club and it will be about discrimination and teach them about the topic. I say that change don't happen until change starts within ourselves.