



CARLI YOHO

is a 10th grader at Kenston High School in Bainbridge.

She likes to travel and see new places. Carli participates in soccer at school and is particularly fond of boating and being on the water.

She enjoys writing and art and her interest in the ways people interact leads her to consider a career in psychology.

“Gas chambers didn’t begin with bricks; they began with words” (Abraham Foxman). I’m in high school where through the halls we feed off hate. The hate we project onto others raises our status among peers. This is the unspoken opinion among most. A way to witness this striving for social dominance is on a bus full of middle and high school students.

“Everyday Guy” comes to the back of the bus, generally where the older kids sit, and sits in a seat. On his journey down the aisle, he says to one kid, “I hate you!” When he’s past the boy and is in front of upperclassmen, he says, “I wanna kill that kid!!” Every day this happens, and do you know how the upperclassmen respond? “Go on Guy! Go! Go beat him up!” When people are hateful, I feel furious, hurt, and disappointed; disappointed because these people believe the hate they’re spreading through their words, and through their action they’re teaching others hate. I’m furious towards people who are telling hateful lies by spreading them as fact. There are some who don’t believe the racist jokes, the stereotypes and the hateful words as true, but spread them anyway. By doing this they’re continuing to say that hatred for others is ok, that there’s not a problem with horrific stereotypes, hateful jokes, and discriminating words. In any of these cases people are being hurt by others and that shouldn’t be accepted.

In my experiences the bullying, hateful words, and racial or ethnic jokes have been told because of an audience. I confront bullies in front of an audience.

I have started my plan. I want to stop hate and discriminations that float around my high school, especially on the bus. When someone does or says something detestable, I address the person committing the act immediately. I ask a series of questions: “Why would you feel the need to say that to someone? How is that helpful to them?” The usual reactions I receive are to be made fun of myself or a silent glare. When hate and discrimination are spread around me, I say something. There are people who’ve stopped their unneeded hate, at least while I’m around. No matter what the reaction I keep taking my stand because when I make a stand it makes a difference: to the victim, who is thankful the focus is off of him or her; to the person who has committed the hateful or discriminating act because my ability to stand up will be remembered; to the bystanders, who sit and watch hate happen. The message I try to send is I can stand up for what I know is wrong—you have the ability too.

Once we accomplish an abolishment of the hateful words, actions and thoughts from our high school society, we will be an example to the community that without hate we have a mutual respect towards each other and therefore are able to accomplish more.