

ROBERT EDWARDS SCHOLARSHIP FINALIST



ROBERT EDWARDS

is a senior at Max Hayes High School. He enjoys reading, writing and computers. Robert writes poetry, songs and short stories. Robert plans to attend Cleveland State University and major in chemical engineering. He then plans to start a nonprofit organization for teens with mental health issues and make the world a safer place to live.

As I looked in my friend's dead eyes, the feeling of devastation rushed through me. Too numb to cry, I rushed home and went back to sleep, hoping that this was all a dream. The next day I awoke to what seemed like a nightmare, my friend hung herself. Yesterday we were laughing about reality television, and everything was fine.

In middle school, I became good friends with a new student. My school was predominantly African American; she was Caucasian. She was discriminated against from the first day that she walked into our classroom. Names like cracker, slut, and white trash filled the room with laughter as she sat down. I was the only one who was not laughing. We both enjoyed reading poetry, writing songs, and art. Since we had so much in common, we became close friends. I walked her home every day to try to protect her from bullies. One day, I was sick and had to be absent from school. Her parents called and told me that she had been brutally attacked by more than ten students. I rushed over to the hospital to visit her. They broke both her legs, and fractured her ribs. It took almost a year for her to recover. Through it all, I was there for her. Her life was getting better. At least that's what I thought.

She wrote me a note in science class that read "things in your life and everyone else's life will be awesome tonight, come to my house around seven p.m." I did not think much about the note; I was trying to focus on my science work. I walked to her house and arrived there at exactly seven o'clock. The front door was open, and I heard screaming. I rushed into her house and up the stairs to her room. I couldn't believe what I saw, my friend hanging from the ceiling with a thick rope tied around her neck. Her parent's cries filled the room as my heart shattered into pieces. My friend was gone. Why? One word, BULLYING. She left a suicide letter saying how grateful she was to have me as a friend, and that she couldn't endure the bullying any longer. I was depressed for what seemed like an eternity.

In my freshman year of high school, I joined an online group (The Experience). Through this website, I can share my personal experiences and prevent suicides among other teens; I have also joined many online teen sites that deal with issues in society like bullying, rape, and suicide. A few of my poems have even been published in a book "Poetic Power". I do not feel that society is taking bullying as serious as it should be. Teens are taking lives every day because of bullying. School shootings are usually committed by victims of bullying, and suicide is at a higher rate than it's ever been among the youth. How much louder can teens scream this message?