# THE TWELFTH ANNUAL STORY PRESENTED BY MALTZ MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE





2020 YOUTH SPEAK OUT FINALISTS AND YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS



### WELCOME

Dear Friends,

You are about to meet 25 exceptional young people. Their voices will be heard, and their message is destined to be shared. They are part of a legacy of student upstanders with vision and promise to *Stop the Hate.*®

This year marks the 12th anniversary of the *Stop the Hate*® program. In that time, we have heard from thousands of students using the power of words to reflect on and respond to intolerance and indifference. As a museum that stands firmly aligned with diversity and inclusion, we are proud to support students who use their voices for good.

In eleven years, we have provided \$1.2 million in college scholarships and anti-bias education grants, and we have engaged over 30,000 students across 12 Northeast Ohio counties to stand up and speak out against hate.

Still, after 12 years, the world needs this kind of program now more than ever. The time is now to support compassion and empathy – not only for others, but also for ourselves.

No single person on Earth is exactly the same as another. We are all different. And we all matter. To all the students who have participated in *Stop the Hate*®, this is only the beginning. Your voices can and will make a difference. Never stop fighting for what you believe. We can't wait to see what you'll do next!

Sincerely, TAMAR & MILTON MALTZ



### **ABOUT STOP THE HATE®**

**Stop the Hate**® challenges young people to consider the impact of intolerance and the role of the individual in effecting change. The Maltz Museum initiative celebrates Northeast Ohio students committed to creating a more accepting, inclusive society.

This year we honor the memory and spirit of maestro Leonard Bernstein, one of the greatest artists of the 20th century, whose life and legacy is explored in the Maltz Museum's special exhibition *Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music*.

When speaking shortly following the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Bernstein famously said:

This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more devotedly than ever before.

Leonard Bernstein used his talents and abilities to positively impact the world in which he lived. He responded to the crises of the 20th century – from wars and assassinations to political upheaval and protests – with the belief that beauty and art could make a difference in the world by inspiring peace and harmony. As an educator, he sought to inspire future generations by teaching about music and sharing his passion with countless students. Bernstein was a man of action, advocating for what he believed in and using his position of power to fight for positive change.

We asked students to think about their own lives. Have you witnessed or experienced acts of injustice, racism, bigotry, or discrimination? How were you impacted by what you experienced, saw, or heard? What did you do, or what will you do, in response to these circumstances in order to create justice and positive change in your community?



#### 2020 Youth Sing Out Winners

Cleveland Heights High School - Tie First Place High School, "E.T.A.H" & "We Can Change Our World"

Midview High School - Runner-up High School, "Unjustifiable"

Wade Park School - First Place Middle School, "YOURS N MINES"

Newton D. Baker School of Arts - Runner-up Middle School, "Fight the Hate, Don't Discriminate!"

#### 2020 Youth Speak Out Grand Prize Scholarship Student Finalists

#### **GRADE 12**

Daijanae Crenshaw, Cleveland School of Science and Medicine
Vita S. Davis, Valley Forge High School
Kennedy Fletcher, Shaker Heights High School
Tatiana Lipert, Saint Joseph Academy
Leah Messemer, Hudson High School
Julia Newman, Hawken School
Kathleen Pagán Arzola, James Ford Rhodes High School
Savannah Patterson, Beaumont School
Nia Terrell, Charles F. Brush High School

#### **GRADE 11**

Faicia Giddings, Cleveland School of the Arts

#### 2020 Youth Speak Out Student Finalists

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David KuangNayeli OcasioBowen ZhangBeachwood High SchoolLincoln-West School of Global StudiesBeachwood High School

#### **GRADE 9**

Ethan BoggsJackie LonswayMatthew ThomasFirelands High SchoolMayfield High SchoolMayfield High School

#### **GRADE 8**

Tolga CavusogluProbir MukherjeeNoor SleikBeachwood Middle SchoolBeachwood Middle SchoolHudson Montessori School

#### **GRADE 7**

Eden G. AustinKelsey CohenRadha PareekBeachwood Middle SchoolBeachwood Middle SchoolBeachwood Middle School

#### **GRADE 6**

Annabel GreenGuneet KarraEric RobinsonHudson Middle SchoolHudson Middle SchoolHudson Middle School

Please note: Students have changed names used within their essays to protect identities.

### Daijanae Crenshaw

### 12th Grade, Cleveland School of Science and Medicine

I was in seventh grade when my teacher asked the new student to introduce herself. When she said her name, I noticed she had a very deep voice and a name that sounded very masculine. I was very confused, as were my classmates. We did not know if she was a girl or a boy. That year was very hard for her because she was bullied and teased because she was different. I felt so bad due to the fact that the people who bullied her were my own friends. They called her names, stole her diary, and read the personal things she wrote inside of it to everyone during lunch. When we got to Science class, everyone was laughing about what they did. The way they were acting disgusted me, so I told everyone that they were wrong for what they did to her. Many people remained silent but some tried to make themselves right when they were clearly wrong. After this incident my friends stopped picking on the new girl and we remained friends. I'm not a bully and didn't want to be friends with bullies so I started talking to her and sitting by her. We bonded from that experience and became friends.

During our eighth grade year, she finally told the whole class that she's a transgender female. Before I met her, I thought we were all either born a boy or a girl, and anything in between was abnormal to me. I supported her by using the pronouns she/her/hers when referring to her, by respecting her as a person and not treating her like an outsider, and by defending her against rude people and not laughing at their jokes. When we moved on to high school, we stayed in touch through Instagram because we didn't attend the same school. About two years later, she dropped out of high school due to bullying. I applaud people like her because she was brave enough to come out to her family and entire class about her identity. If I hadn't met her I probably would still be ignorant about the LGBTQ community.

Transgender people battle so many different obstacles that heterosexual people would not understand, like not being accepted by their families, struggling to find friends, and being outcast because of their sexuality and gender identity. As a result of her story I learned the importance of standing up for one another and not being a bystander. Before this experience I felt like whatever people did and went through was their own business and had nothing to do with me, now I know that if one person doesn't stand up for what's right then no one will. Additionally, this situation also helped spark my interest in psychology, leading me to take AP Psychology in 10th grade. Today I hope to pursue a career in Behavioral Psychology.

### Daijanae C.

Daijanae Crenshaw is a senior at the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine. She is very creative and loves writing poetry, listening to music, and discussing what she's reading with her book club. She will attend Wittenberg University and hopes to pursue a career in behavioral psychology.



### Vita Davis

### 12th Grade, Valley Forge High School

#### Superhero

Every challenge in your life turns into a lesson. You learn from these challenges; you grow from them. They are inevitable. Due to my innocence, I always thought of life as something that we will always have. I did not realize that death could come whenever it felt like it. I realized in ninth grade that I was wrong. May 19th, 2017, I believed that my life was over and that I would never be the same again.

I woke up not feeling right, something was not right. I was not sick at all, my heart was just really heavy and I could not breathe. I asked my mom if I could stay home from school and she luckily said yes. I went back to sleep hoping it was something I could just sleep off, but I was suddenly woken up from my sleep by my phone. I checked it and I found out my older brother, who was only 22, had passed away from senseless gun violence at 12:34 am.

That is what I was feeling. My spirit knew what happened before I knew. I was feeling many emotions: anger, sadness, disbelief. I had a lot of thoughts running through my head. I had just lost my superhero. The only man in my life who cared for me. He was my father figure, my favorite brother, my superhero. I told myself I would never get over it. Throughout the rest of that year, my heart was filled with hatred as I realized he was really gone. It was draining me. I could feel that I was changing. It was not for the good either, and I did not like it. It took a toll on my life and my school life. I did not like the person I was becoming; something had to change.



### Kennedy Fletcher

### 12th Grade, Shaker Heights High School

"You're pretty for a black girl"

"You're pretty for a black girl." This "compliment" weighs on my subconscious like a backpack filled with cement. When I felt like I didn't look my best I would instinctively question if having lighter skin would help. I don't ever recall these beliefs being directly instilled in me. Why did it seem like I automatically believed the lighter the better? I was in elementary school when a friend and I noticed how our skin color fluctuates from season to season. My skin was tanned from the excessive amount of time I spent outside under the summer sun. We compared our tans. She raised her radiant toffee arm up to my dull mahogany colored arm. I shoved my arm away. I was pained. The pain cut like razors across my veins. Why did I feel so inferior? I longed to feel comfortable in my own skin.

"You're pretty for a black girl." Somehow I would only ever hear these words if my hair was bone straight. There could be no threat of a kink or curl. I only ever missed one day of swim class from fifth to sixth grade. I wished I had missed one more. My mom made sure my braids were always tight and secure. I felt a pop in my head and quickly realized the rubber band holding one of my braids had snapped. I knew my hair would be a mess for the rest of the day but I refused to let this minor inconvenience stop me. I secured my hair as best I could and got in the pool. After class, I bolted to the locker room. I knew my hair was going to devour the majority of my time so I instantly got to work. My focus strayed constantly as the giggling began to consume me. My "friends" pointed and laughed. "Ew, why does your hair do that?" I laughed with them, demeaning my worth, my natural self. I attempted to banish these peculiar insecurities. Why did they laugh at my natural hair? Why did these laughs stick with me? The laughter

rang in my head like a broken alarm. I longed to feel comfortable with

my natural hair.

It took time for me to reach the point of total self-love. But, eventually I made it through watching the self-loving, confident black women surrounding me. I want to influence young black girls the same way so many amazing black women helped me. I've been able to make an impact on my local youth through participating in my Student Group on Race Relations (SGORR). Working with SGORR has brought me another amazing opportunity of working with Operation Beautiful, a club working with young girls - predominantly black - that helps build confidence and self-love. I hope to continue this work during college as well as continuing to strengthen my self-image.

### Kennedy Fletcher

Kennedy Fletcher is a senior at Shaker Heights High School. She is a member of the Student Group on Race Relations, the Raiderettes dance team, and the Student-Superintendent Advisory Council. She enjoys photography, hiking, and traveling. She wants to attend a large state school in a big city somewhere and is considering going to medical school.

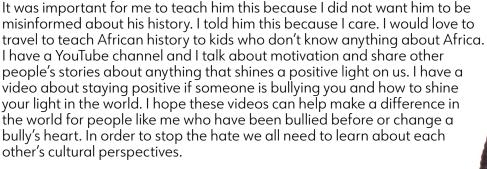


### Faicia Giddings

### 11th Grade, Cleveland School of the Arts

"Hey, do you eat with your hands, or do you dance around fire in Africa?" "Is it true that Africans don't know how to read or write?" These were just a few questions I was asked when I moved to America from Liberia. One thing I will never forget was my freshman history class. My history teacher was teaching a lesson about how the western world shares Africa like pizza. I knew the moment class was over kids would have something to say to me. Sure enough, a boy stopped me. He shouted, "Hey African!" When I didn't respond, he said, "Do you want to know why I don't like you or anyone from Africa? You sold us to the western world as slaves. You betrayed us, you sold us to the white men and the white men made us slaves. They abused my people and treated them like animals because of Africans."

I couldn't believe what he was saying about my cultural identity. I just stood there and listened to everything he was telling me. I could see the anger in him, so I did not say anything back. After a few days passed, I finally decided to talk to him. I went up to him after class and asked him if he would give me a minute to talk to him because I wanted to teach him about his African identity. When he said he wasn't African, I told him his ancestors were, "That's why your first name is African – because of your ancestors' history." I told him that Africans were once uneducated, and white colonizers saw this as an opportunity to fool them. The white men said, "give me some of your people in exchange for civilization," and since Africans didn't know what civilization was, they fell for whatever the white men said to them. They lied and used our African people to get slaves and African resources such as minerals, wealth, and diamonds, and they even benefited from African agricultural products and took over African land. We talked for about an hour and half about slavery. After our conversation he finally understood why Africans sold their own people.



### FAICIA GIDDINGS

Faicia Giddings is a junior at Cleveland School of the Arts. She loves to sing and write her own songs and is a passionate member of her school's choir. She likes to braid hair and upload videos to her YouTube channel in her free time. She plans to take nursing classes through Cuyahoga Community College this summer and eventually to study at Case Western Reserve University to become a midwife.



### Tatiana Lipert

### 12th Grade, Saint Joseph Academy

Sitting on an icy concrete stoop, I'm curled over the book in my lap. I attempt to focus on the fantastical adventure, but tears well in my eyes, making the words blur in my vision. I'm trying desperately to block out the laughter and excitement of my classmates ringing across the playground. I've tried dozens of times to join them, but each time I'm hit by a barrage of insults. "She can't catch anything... She's just a math nerd." The echoes of their voices are trapped in my mind, and I suffer alone. No one notices. No one cares.

Discrimination against girls talented in math and science is not limited to grade school playgrounds. Despite significant pushes to empower girls by providing more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) opportunities, and media efforts to show it's cool to be smart, girls still pursue technical careers at a significantly low rate. I believe this is due to perpetual social stigmas, just like what I've experienced and continue to face.

It's a hidden plague thriving on the rats of prejudice and intimidation which suppress our girls' natural talents and aspirations. Worst of all, this disease festers most among ourselves (girls) due to jealousy and insecurity. This kind of injustice causes girls to lose part of themselves, and their freedom to be who they are truly meant to be. Having endured this prejudice myself, my empathy compels me to help and encourage other girls to discover their own STEM potential.

I believe that by sharing my enthusiasm for technology I help support other girls in several important ways: I inspire interest and encourage participation in STEM activities, leverage leadership roles to ensure all voices and ideas are heard, and by my own achievements demonstrate real possibilities.

I founded a Techie-Club at my grade school to help inspire young students to use technology to improve our school. As a junior robotics mentor, I encouraged two young girls to become independent from their older brothers and find their own abilities to be key team contributors. On my all-girl high school robotics team, I use compassionate leadership to help the team learn how to overcome technical challenges. I advocate for girls to join me in participating on an all-boys school's robotics team. I help coordinate and host Science Club events to bring technically expert women speakers to share why they think girls should be involved in STEM. In recognition for my dedication and excellence in Honors Engineering, I was personally invited by the president of my school to represent our engineering program in a televised interview and in a promotional video. I also actively encourage my friends personally to explore their interests in science.

Through all of this, I have learned that if I don't buckle under the disparagement of others, I can be a tenacious force for change. It is my aspiration to surround myself with like-minded people in my future who will help me continue to demonstrate the value of women in engineering.

Totismo Zipert

Tatiana Lipert is a senior at Saint Joseph Academy, where she leads the Science Club, the Chinese Club, and the Robotics Team. She has been a Girl Scout for 13 years and received a Gold Award for her engineering service project. She loves to read and learn new things, and she hopes to study engineering and Chinese language and culture in college.



### Leah Messemer

#### 12th Grade, Hudson High School

"You are not normal!" shouted a fellow seventh grade student in response to seeing my hearing aids. "That is because I am unique and a limited edition," I shot back. It was the first time I had found my voice and began to advocate for myself. Since developing bilateral hearing loss two years prior, I had learned to develop a thick skin in order to combat such behavior, but the comment still stung. It was at that moment that I decided that I would not let my hearing loss or the negative behavior of others define my life.

I discovered the bitter taste of discrimination when I initially tried out for travel volleyball. My hearing aids drew stares from players and coaches. Wordlessly, without evaluating my ability, the coaches led me to the farthest court and ignored me. Determined to make a team the following year, I decided to try out without wearing my hearing aids and my strategy worked. After making the team and proving my ability, I proudly wore my hearing aids and gained the acceptance of my coaches and peers. During a volleyball game, a referee singled me out, yelling at me to remove my earrings. I patiently explained to him that these were hearing aids and I was entitled to wear them just like other players were entitled to wear their glasses.

The most shocking event didn't occur on the court, but in the classroom. A teacher was asking students about their college plans. When my turn came I eagerly stated I planned to study forensic biology and later forensic pathology. "Well like that's going to really happen," she snarled, ridiculing me in front of the class. Since I am an honors student, I was stunned by her response.

Although these experiences have been painful, I have learned to advocate for myself and others who may be facing similar trials. I volunteer for the Dane Foundation and Ms. Wheelchair USA, supporting individuals with disabilities. Serving as a hearing loss ambassador for my school, I visit younger students with hearing loss to give them a role model and to show they are not alone. I have also developed presentations for incoming freshman with hearing loss and served on a panel at Kent State University in order to educate audiology students. Currently, I am working to inform others about Ohio House Bill 243, which would require insurance companies to pay for hearing aids for children instead of classifying them as cosmetic devices. I have met with Representative Weinstein, a co-sponsor of the bill, to ask questions and offer support.

I try to use humor, patience, and education to teach others to embrace diversity and celebrate differences. Standing up against injustice and intolerance can be a lonely endeavor. When I get discouraged, I remember this quote from Maya Angelou, "Develop enough courage so that you can stand up for yourself and then stand up for somebody else." With this mindset we can empower ourselves and others to change.

### Leah Messemer

Leah Messemer is a senior at Hudson High School, where she is a member of the National Honor Society and the Random Acts of Kindness Club, and is the treasurer of the History Club. She wants to attend a school in the south to escape the Cleveland weather and to study molecular biology and forensic science. She plans to continue her ASL studies and to become a certified interpreter.



### Julia Newman

#### 12th Grade, Hawken School

I heard the steady noise of a drum as it got closer to my team's cross-country tent, and I watched as a group of boys flooded past me yelling "Go Warriors!" The leader wore a large headdress while others had red painted chests. Usually composed of eagle feathers, the war bonnet symbolizes honor and valor for heroic deeds in war. Did those "warriors" know the history of this important cultural symbol to Native Americans? Did they realize that while they celebrated their school mascot, they were also stereotyping an entire group of people?

The school I attend does not have any connections or affiliations with Native Americans and tries to champion equality for everyone, but why as a student body did we chant "Whoo Ha...on the War Path?" In my ninth grade year, I was eager to fit in with the girls on the cross-country team. When we huddled together before our first meet, we began to rock side to side and we chanted "Whoo Ha... on the War Path." I did not realize it at the time, but this chant had become ingrained in our school culture without anyone really understanding the meaning behind the chant. For many Native Americans, "warpath" is not a positive term; it is not simply a group of warriors going to battle. It is used by the dominant culture to deem Native Americans as savage and brutal in their actions during war and make them out to be uncivilized.

In the State of Ohio, there are approximately eighty-five high schools that have a Native American mascot. There are Warriors, Braves, Indians, and Redskins. While I cannot speak from personal experience about being Native American, I am committed to making a difference for what is right by seeking to eliminate these offensive mascots.

Native Americans are not historic relics or symbols to be used, but humans who deserve dignity and respect. As I learned about the marginalization of Native American culture in a recent history elective, I felt as though something had to be done in my community. As a senior leader on the cross-country team, I changed our chant, so we did not disrespect Native Americans. We also talked with other student leaders who were able to make sure that at the Homecoming pep rally the athletic department did not promote this cheer and our school would no longer perpetuate this stereotype.

In order to change perspectives, we must start at the local and state levels. I would like to petition OHSAA and the Governor of Ohio to follow other states who have legally outlawed the use of these mascots. In 2015 Adidas offered schools new gear if they eliminated these racist mascots; unfortunately, none in Ohio accepted the offer. While many school systems in Ohio may cite tradition as a reason to keep the mascot, Native Americans are not honored by these representations. Ultimately, the use of these mascots perpetuates and normalizes a stereotype that must change.

Julia Neuman

Julia Newman is a senior at Hawken School, where she runs cross country, plays lacrosse, and enjoys studying English, World Religions, and Art. She helps her family to raise guide dogs for Guiding Eyes for the Blind. She is interested in global affairs and wants to study abroad in England during college in pursuit of a degree in political science or international relations.



### Kathleen Pagán Arzola

### 12th Grade, James Ford Rhodes High School

Since I came to the United States, nothing has been easy. I've faced racism due to my accent and discrimination due to my disability. At first, I could do little to defend myself because I didn't know enough English; I knew just enough to know that I was being pointed at. People called me names that I still can't speak without crying. My parents had always treated me like others, but their love couldn't follow me to school. It could not protect me from the sticks and stones of my peers. While their words didn't break my bones, they almost broke my heart.

I will always be thankful to my parents for how well they raised me. I know it must have been difficult for them. I was their first child and I had a disability, but they never let me think that my disability would stop me from achieving anything. Their love made me realize that I was not just good enough; I was unique and amazing. I have learned that the eye of the heart sees the soul.

It's been said that "A strong woman looks challenge dead in the eye and gives it a wink." I know that this is true because it is my reality every day.

I've always done everything without complaining. I'm not the type of person to make excuses. Because I never quit, I came to understand that justice would prevail. Once I saw a picture of Lady Justice. In one hand she held scales to weigh the truth. In her other hand, she held a sword. Most importantly, she wore a blindfold to show that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law. I remember this when I face challenges.

The image of Lady Justice in my mind's eye has sustained me through many difficulties. Justice maintains our society to keep it calm and organized. I know that we all play a part in maintaining fairness. To do my fair share is my goal every day of my life. That's why I joined JROTC, where I work at food banks, collect food and toys for families at the holidays, help clean streets, and collect money for homeless veterans. I also tutor students with Esperanza. My gifts are my fluency in Spanish and my desire to help others. Those are gifts I share willingly. It is my mission to secure fair treatment for people, especially immigrants and those with disabilities.

That's why I want to become a lawyer when I finish high school. Ultimately, I'd like to earn a doctoral degree from Yale University. In the future, I plan to advocate for people with language barriers or people with disabilities. I want to be the voice of others to eliminate injustice as much as any one person can. My life so far has taught me many lessons. Most important of all, I've learned that any hand held out to others is perfectly formed.

### Kathleon Pagoin

Kathleen Pagán Arzola is a senior at James Ford Rhodes High School. She loves cooking Puerto Rican food, taking walks, and volunteering. She would like to become a lawyer to use her voice to represent underprivileged members of her community. She wants to begin her studies at Cleveland State University and hopes to move on to a doctorate program at Yale University.



### Savannah Patterson

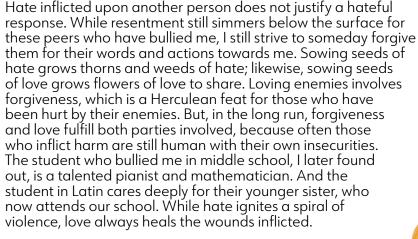
#### 12th Grade, Beaumont School

"The stupid kids are going upstairs."

I am no stranger to bullying because I am autistic. Nor will I fuel the fires of the bully by lashing out. But something in this student's words struck a nerve as I walked upstairs to take a Latin quiz. I took personal offense to the fact that they called me "stupid," when in reality I am academically far ahead of my peers in certain subjects. This occurred in middle school as well; after transferring schools, another student in my class overreacted to the slightest atypical reaction from me. If I said something odd or out of place, they laughed in an embarrassingly over-exaggerated way and repeated it to the whole class. They gave me confused or unamused looks when I bounced my leg, flapped my hands, or clapped while moving my hands in a circle. Finally, I stood up to them in band class, while they were mocking my actions yet again. After that, they attempted bullying other peers, but I would not stand for that, either. I told a teacher and they put an end to the bully's reign. Eventually and unfortunately, this student was expelled in eighth grade.

From the pediatrician's office to daycare to extended education, I have lived with autism. While reasons to celebrate this fact occur, at the end of the day, autism is nothing more than a part of a person. Diagnoses remain consistent, but the perception of the diagnosis always changes. Neurodivergent people can choose from three options: lament their difference and label it a disability, consider their difference an excuse for avoiding certain tasks, or accept the diagnosis and work to slowly push their limits. I choose the third option every day because a difference is a difference, nothing more. While this requires additional help and outside resources, I am fundamentally no different

from a neurotypical teenager. This year, I participate in two International Baccalaureate classes, balance school with theater, sports, and familial obligations, and enjoy strong friendships and relationships. I also plan to attend college next year locally and major in the English field.



### Savannah Potterson

Savannah Patterson is a senior at Beaumont School, where she loves to study English and foreign languages. She enjoys writing fiction, poetry, and her own songs and is considering a career involving languages or writing. She plans to attend Notre Dame College after high school.



### Nia Terrell

### 12th Grade, Charles F. Brush High School

"Make sure your brother doesn't get too close to the computers. I don't want them to think that he's stealing," said my mother as we walked through the electronics department.

"I'm glad that you're not ghetto like the other black kids," commented my white middle school friends as we worked on our history assignment.

"If you raise your hand and get this answer wrong, the entire class will believe that all black girls are dumb," drummed my inner conscience.

I can't remember a time where I could just "be." I can't remember a time when I let something other than my race determine my actions. It's exhausting. Black women are regularly misrepresented in media and entertainment and I feel that it is my duty to show the world that black women don't fit into just one stereotypical box. I want to show the world that we are a beautiful spectrum with overlapping layers of melanin. This responsibility is an overwhelming burden to bear. No matter how hard I try, the implicit racial biases that society possesses seem stronger than my best efforts.

Last summer, I attended an Artificial Intelligence camp and I was able to see how racial bias seeps into technology. In my time at the camp, I participated in a project that corrected racial bias in a computer software program.

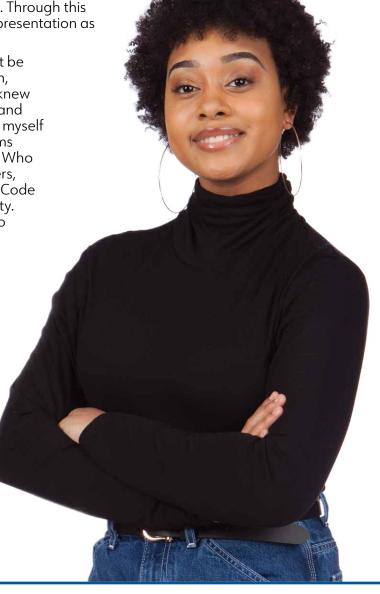
A risk assessment software known as COMPAS has been used in many states to determine how long of a sentence a defendant should receive. This software uses many factors to determine the risk assessment score, one of which is race. The inclusion of this factor into the algorithm results in African-Americans earning a higher risk score than any other race. Through this project, I was able to see the negative product of poor representation as racial biases of society transferred to the screens.

For any act of change to come about, a problem must first be acknowledged. If I was the only one aware of this problem, then I knew that it was up to me to bring about change. I knew that among women and people of color my age, interest and opportunities in computer science were low. I took it upon myself to take the knowledge that I gained in my various programs and share it with students at my high school through Girls Who Code. After finding the perfect facilitator, designing posters, and submitting documentation, I established a Girls Who Code chapter at my high school, turning my dream into my reality. Since its launch earlier this school year, I have been able to infuse girls with an increasing interest and knowledge of computer science that may one day close the gender and racial gaps in technology.

My response to the various biases that infiltrate society today is to make sure that the people behind the scenes, or the screens, properly reflect society so that one day, we can all just "be."

Jones Tomes

Nia Terrell is a senior at Charles F. Brush High School. She enjoys graphic design and likes to create logos and website mockups. She also designs clothing and films her own beauty and makeup tutorial videos. She plans to attend The Ohio State University to major in computer science and to become a software developer.



### David Kuang

### 10th Grade, Beachwood High School

My mother's name means virtue and love in Chinese. When written down, each character in her name serves as a pictograph. Each stroke of the pencil is like a stroke of a paintbrush in a painting. Its pronunciation is unique to the average American, with dramatic vocal contours and consonants that flow out of the mouth. By looking at my mother's name, you can already see the melodic symphony and linguistic artistry passed down through millennia that is the Chinese language. I, on the other hand, received no Chinese name and was given simply an American name. After all, one only needs a western name when trying to assimilate into the U.S., famously coined "The Great American Melting Pot."

The causes behind the need for immigrants to assimilate into American society are quite clear: when they haven't, they've suffered greatly. Taken against their will, enslaved Africans from colonial America adopted the last names of their white masters, their names and societal positions serving as a permanent reminder of their origins even today. After being forcibly removed from their lands to reservations, Native Americans were subject to cultural genocide by the U.S. government. Native American children were increasingly adopted by white families, erasing their connection to their heritage and generational culture. Additionally, Asian-American immigrants in the 19th century had firsthand experience of the harsh realities of deviating from societal norms in America. In response, modern-day immigrants have taken steps to blend into society and make sure they don't suffer for their differences. In elementary school, my classmates gawked at the Chinese food I had for lunch, which is why I incessantly begged my parents for Lunchables instead. Almost all of my parents' immigrant friends have either changed or considered changing their name to a western one. Even my sister had her name legally changed to

sound more American when she turned 18.

When trying to remember moments of injustice, racism, bigotry, or discrimination, I didn't have to think too hard; they're built into America's day-to-day society. They've left a scar on immigrants, who change their names and their lifestyles hoping to escape from societal oppression. However, without a diverse range of Americans, without many different instruments working together, the orchestra loses quality to its harmonic sound, and America loses the core foundations it was built on. Through reflecting on my experiences as a first-generation immigrant, I've realized the importance of both diversity and unity in a community. I've spread awareness about racial tolerance on social media, embracing my cultural heritage and encouraging others to be confident in their own. I've decided to take a Chinese course at my school in order to reconnect with my family's culture and learn more about foreign nations. I've also joined my school's diversity initiative in order to overcome racial barriers and eliminate prejudice. In the face of a world heavily plagued by hatred and prejudice to those who are different, at least I know I am able to make a difference.

### DAVID KUMF

David Kuang is a 10th grader at Beachwood High School, where he is a member of the Model UN and the Science Olympiad team. He has played violin for 7 years, he runs cross country, and he is an avid figure skater. He hopes to make a difference in the world in whatever career he chooses in the future.



### Nayeli Ocasio

### 10th Grade, Lincoln-West School of Global Studies

When I was in elementary school up until middle school, I was bullied very badly. I was always very anxious because every day some of the girls in my classes always had something to say. I was so afraid they would do something to me for the most insignificant thing, such as wearing glasses. When I was in sixth grade other students from my grade would constantly make negative comments about my glasses. Every minute at school was so bad, and I was so scared. I was just thinking about what they would say the next time they saw me. I was worried they would also say something about my appearance. That fear came true and the students did make hurtful comments about my hair and body.

Thanks to all of those experiences, I knew that I should not talk about people's physique, which could lower someone's self-esteem. That can sometimes lead to the death of that person since others do not know the problems one may have outside of school. People experience many different things, and others do not always have any idea what others are dealing with.

Everybody talks and judges but they do nothing. It's not that I can help much, but at some point if I see someone who is bullying another person I will not hesitate to intervene and help them. I really hope no one goes through the same thing, because people do not have any idea what that feels like. I do my best to help that person feel good about themselves, when I help them. I honestly feel good helping someone else, since no one helped me during my four years of suffering.

One experience I had where I helped someone was when I was with my friends and suddenly a boy started talking about the body of my friend. He had been saying that no one is going to love her because of her body. I saw her face, she was so sad. I got really mad because I know how it feels. No one has the right to talk to her or someone else in that way,

just to make them feel bad on purpose.

I raised my voice and I defended her, saying that he has to think about how she is going to feel before saying anything. I know that she is not going to feel better soon, but at least she knows that she is not alone. People have to start seeing that we don't need to have perfect bodies to be loved and accepted by society. Nobody is perfect and people have to understand that. No one can go through life judging people all the time and thinking that they will not have any effects on them. I want to show people that they are beautiful the way they are. They do not need to change because of what others say about them. In my opinion everyone is gorgeous the way they are

### Nayeli Ocasio

Nayeli Ocasio is a 10th grader at Lincoln-West School of Global Studies, where she is active in the JROTC program. She loves reading, spending time with her family and dog, and writing short stories in her free time. She hopes to attend the best college she can and wants to become a soldier or a lawyer.



### **Bowen Zhang**

### 10th Grade, Beachwood High School

I vividly remember having an identity crisis in 3rd grade. It was finally Chinese New Year and, dressed in a traditional Qipao dress, I couldn't wait to arrive at school and tell my friends all about the HongBaos I received and the ChunWan that streamed on television. I practically crashed through the school doors and proceeded to scan the sea of students for my friends. I was instead met with bewildered faces from my peers. Some people snickered and even made faces. When I got to my homeroom, a girl stepped in front of me and said mockingly, "What is that? You're supposed to wear normal clothes to school."

"Yeah, Qipaos are so weird. My... mom made me wear it," I stammered. My cheeks were burning so hot that I felt a pounding in my head. I was sad, embarrassed, then angry, not at the girl but at myself. I just sided with the classmate who was making fun of me! Why didn't I stand up for myself and my culture?

But I knew why. All I wanted was a sense of belonging, and I thought hiding what made me different would accomplish that. I thought pretending to dislike and make fun of my traditions would somehow enable me to fit in. However, I was far from the truth. I had let my classmate win by conforming to her judgments. I had become someone who spread hate, even toward myself.

When I traveled to China to visit my family, I still felt excluded. On a train ride with my friend, someone beside us muttered in Chinese, "look at those Americans; they don't even know how to speak their native language!" However, I did understand them, and their words had shattered my confidence. In China I was an American, but in America I'm Asian; at that point, I didn't think I could fit in anywhere.

Judging others just because they are different is never okay. The stereotypes, the excluding people, the hateful comments; it's like a deadly epidemic has infected our society, and we must stop it before its poison reaches other victims. I realize that some people are blinded by false prejudices, and it's our responsibility to stand up for what's right and educate those who cannot see past discrimination.

As part of my journey to fight discrimination, I attended a camp in China to understand my culture and its history. After this experience, I learned to embrace my multicultural background. I also gathered a group of friends to perform traditional dances at Menorah Park to showcase my heritage. Whether it's educating yourself or teaching others, I know that spreading awareness and knowledge will expose the hurt and wrongness behind prejudices and, consequently, create an inclusive society where everyone belongs. You can be a conductor of positive change right now by simply sharing your own story and encouraging others to accept diversity. Every day is an opportunity to educate, so don't be afraid to let your voice be heard!

### Bower Thang

Bowen Zhang is a 10th grader at Beachwood High School, where she participates in Science Olympiad, Destination Imagination, and the cross-country team. In her free time she loves playing guitar, reading, and exploring the stars. She plans to attend college to study biology or physics.



### **Ethan Boggs**

### 9th Grade, Firelands High School

It was the beginning of my cross-country career, and stakes were high. I had to compete against people twice my size, and my teammates were very competitive and fast. My coaches pushed me to be my greatest self all summer long during practice. At the first meet the officials called the team in to review the rules, and that's when I first really noticed him. His name is Tyler and he raced on my team, but I didn't really know him. He seemed like a nice kid, but he wasn't a fast runner. I went to the starting line of the race. Throughout the course I thought about him. I remembered that a few of the kids on my team would pester him because he was slower paced.

I finished the race and grabbed some water from the finishing booth. I thanked my relatives for coming to watch me and grabbed my bag. Just as I was about to leave, I saw Tyler come in. None of his teammates or relatives came to cheer him on. I walked towards him to congratulate him. As I approached him, I told him that he had a nice race. We talked a little bit, and before long I had to leave.

At the next meet I saw him at the starting line, so I went over to wish him good luck. A couple of our teammates were making fun of him so I pulled him away. I told him that there will be people trying to drag him down, and to keep his head up. He ran his fastest that meet and did very well.

The next year I begged him to join the cross-country team again and he did. All throughout the summer I trained with him. We built up our endurance together. He became a really fast runner. Throughout the summer I told him not to be dragged down by bullies and people trying to discourage him.

When I look back on the moment where I took time out to talk to Tyler, I realize I should have taken a stand with my teammates and encouraged them to be kinder. I feel like it would have made a bigger impact on him than me. I also think that it may have made the teammates stop and think for a moment about their choices. I am glad that Tyler is still a runner because it's not just a positive thing for him, but it has impacted the way I look at struggling teammates.

### Ethan Boggs

Ethan Boggs is a 9th grader at Firelands High School, where he is a member of the cross-country and track teams. He would like to attend college in the future, majoring in marine biology. He also plans to start his own farm one day.



### Jackie Lonsway

### 9th Grade, Mayfield High School

"Oh my God, can they go any slower?" A girl behind me groaned to her friend, gesturing to the line of special needs students that were crossing the hall – effectively blocking us from heading to our first period. The venom in her voice was transparent, clear hatred for these kids that couldn't help the disabilities they had been born with. Yet her compassion was nonexistent, only focused on making it to her own class. A boy within the small group of us waiting mumbled something angrily under his breath before announcing, "That's it, I'm not getting a detention for this." My eyes widened in shock as he swerved around a girl in a wheelchair, knocking a toy out of her hand. He didn't even look back, instead choosing to race down the hall before one of the exhausted looking aids could call him out. A few others followed suit, jostling kids who were just trying to walk across the hall. They threw no apologies over their shoulder, nor an ounce of understanding to what these kids were going through each and every day.

I was shocked by their actions, and as I look back I wish I had called one of them out and told them to wait. Disabled students do have feelings and to cut in front of them, disrespect them, and ignore them is unjustifiable. On some level I can understand, the prospect of entering late to class is never desired by anyone and sometimes your mind is racing to the point where you aren't realizing what you're doing. But even so these students are your classmates and to degrade them to the point where you don't have the courtesy to apologize for nearly knocking them over is horrifying. They're people too and they deserve your common decency, if not your respect for everything they've gone through.

After seeing this situation and witnessing similar circumstances as I passed by that area of the hall day after day I came to the conclusion that, while I may not be able to change all my classmates' minds then at least I could show these students some kindness. For the rest of the year I offered a smile and a wave to the students, and when they dropped their toys I reached down to pick them up. We all have the ability to make someone's day a little bit easier and bring a smile to their face. Everyone has their own problems, often hidden below the surface as they make it through the motions of the day, but small acts of kindness can make them feel like someone cares about them. What I did wasn't revolutionary or new, but sometimes it's not the big acts but the small ones that can make someone's burden a little lighter and their smile a little wider, and a help a little happiness flow into their hearts.

### Jackie Fonsway

Jackie Lonsway is a 9th grader at Mayfield High School, where she is a member of the Creative Writing Club. She is very artistic and particularly enjoys painting and ceramics. She would like to become a teacher and plans to continue writing, a hobby she loves.

### **Matthew Thomas**

#### 9th Grade, Mayfield High School

"Are you really Catholic?"

That's a question that I've heard many times and in many forms, but the shock that hits me doesn't change. Every time I go to church I know that people peer at me and my family because we look different. It felt like I was being judged for being an Indian who happened to be a Catholic. After each of these experiences, I was always left to speculate why some people couldn't accept that Indians could follow other religions like Catholicism.

I was in a place where I should feel accepted, but then why did I feel separation? Why did people doubt I was Catholic based on my race. This feeling of separation and judgment had made me feel sad and bewildered. I felt like a bridge about to collapse under the weight of my emotional burden. I felt trapped because I didn't understand how I could change my predicament.

I knew that the parishioners at my church were unfamiliar with Indians who follow Catholicism. I had felt that this unfamiliarity was the root of the dilemma but I didn't know the solution. Then during a Sunday mass, I had heard about the youth service program which had asked for more volunteers who would like to help serve the community. Then I had the realization that this could be the means by which to show my faith and to grow familiar with other parishioners. Through the service program, I assisted in serving the elderly food every month and also aided events at the church. Going out and helping the community granted me the opportunity to make friends and meet new people who were part of my parish. By helping others in the community I could show that my race didn't make me different from other parishioners, and I was able to feel like I was part

of the parish and not just an outsider.

### Matthews Thomas

Matthew Thomas is a 9th grader at Mayfield High School, where he is a member of the Science Olympiad and robotics teams. He loves biology and would like to pursue a career in science or technology. He hopes the path he chooses will be in service to others.



### Tolga Cavusoglu

### 8th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

Hatred is defined as "intense dislike or ill will." I believe it is much more than that. Hatred can come in many forms. It could be speech, online interactions, subtle body language. It could be intentionally leaving people out of games. I have experienced one form of hate.

I live an apartment building and on occasion, encounter a racist neighbor. This neighbor always asks, "Where are you from?" and "What is that accent?" The questions themselves don't sound that bad, but it is the way they are asked that makes the difference. This neighbor asks these questions as a way of implying that my family and I are inferior. This hurts because my parents and I are all U.S. citizens and I was born here. I am from the same place as my neighbor. There is no reason for my neighbor to be like that. These interactions leave me saddened by how hateful one person could be.

At that moment I did nothing. I still contemplate that to this day. Should I have said something to my neighbor, or should I have just kept on walking? Should I have stood up to a person who was trying to make me feel inferior? Now, writing this essay, I feel I should have. I should have stood up to that person. I should have told them how wrong they were.

Hatred removes the love of one's origin. Your culture is what you take the most pride in, and it defines who we are. When you are ostracized for your culture, it strips away what makes us human. This sort of racism does not affect only one individual, it affects a whole community. It leaves people devastated and wishing they were something

else. People need to know to stand up against insults. To restore pride in their origins. To let them know that they have the strength to stand up to this.

I live in a diverse school and have the privilege to learn about others' cultures. I have grown up like this so I know not to discriminate against others. I always extend kindness to others. I involve myself with diversity organizations. I attend events and try to learn more about the people around me. I refuse to allow people to suffer these injustices. If everyone spreads these ideas, we could "Stop the Hate."

### Tolga Corusoglu

Tolga Cavusoglu is an 8th grader at Beachwood Middle School, where he is involved in MATHCOUNTS and the Red Cross Club. His favorite subjects are math and science and he plays cello in the school orchestra. He plans to studying engineering and physics in college and hopes to work for NASA in the future.



### Probir Mukherjee

### 8th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

"Hey, India, shut up." Those were the hateful words hurled at my sister when she tried to help a young boy. She was walking home from school when a group of kids walked past her. One boy suddenly tripped and fell on the ground. My sister immediately stopped and went up to the kid to ask if he was okay. Another kid stepped in and responded with that hateful comment.

I was stunned and felt numb when she told me. How can someone be so racist and hateful? Aren't we all Americans? Although she has Indian parents, she was born here on American soil. What gives someone the right to classify someone they don't even know by one glance? My heart sank thinking that this is how minorities are treated in a country that is called a melting pot of different cultures. Every single person in this country came from an immigrant family at one point or another, so why should some immigrants insult fellow immigrant families? Yet the worst part of all was realizing that racism still hasn't completely gone away, even after the Civil Rights Movement and all the hardships people had to endure in protest of injustice.

I had always known racism was a problem, but I had never realized it could occur in my own community. A once seemingly far-off issue had now become very real and very present. I greatly encouraged my sister to talk to the principal about what had happened, and he showed great concern. The principal took action to the best of his ability, and I was amazed by the great support the community showed.

I believe that the only way to stop racism and bigotry is to spread kindness and awareness. Throughout middle school, I have engaged in discussions with classmates about racism and talked to them about the problems of it. I always try to learn more about other cultures and interact with all kinds of people, not just people I am with every day. I learn more about different religions through reliable books and articles. I recently became vice president of our school's Red Cross club, where we are hosting events to spread kindness through donations, fundraisers, and drives that aim to aid those in need and those who are desperate. Whenever I see friends sitting alone at a lunch table, I go sit with them, hoping to spread the idea of kindness and togetherness. I strongly believe that spreading kindness and awareness – even through a small act like sitting with someone alone at a lunch table – has a big impact and can stop ignorance and racism.

In conclusion, yes, I am of Indian descent and, yes, I am an American citizen. But no, I will certainly not "shut up" about what matters to me. The only way we can stop injustice, racism, and hatred is through kindness, respect, and proper understanding of each other. We have to come together to Stop the Hate.

### Probin Mheriee

Probir Mukherjee is an 8th grader at Beachwood Middle School, where he is Vice President of the Red Cross Club and a member of the Model UN. He also runs on the cross-country and track teams. He plays piano and guitar and one day wants to work on developing renewable energy sources.



### **Noor Sleik**

#### 8th Grade, Hudson Montessori School

I am Arab and, because of that, some people look at me differently.

I faced a situation at my school I never thought I would face in my life. One day I was just sitting in Language Arts class with other students while the teacher was giving us a presentation. One of the students looked outside and saw a woman who wore a headscarf walking up and down the parking lot. One of the students raised her hand and told the teacher, because of the statement that we were taught, "see something say something." But to me, the woman wasn't doing anything wrong. She just looked like she was walking.

The teacher called the office and the kids commented that she was wearing a headscarf. I was sitting quietly, as the students said something I never thought would come out of their mouths, but they said "She's gonna bomb us."

All of this time, I thought I really knew these students I was with, but I didn't, and it scared me. I don't think they realized that they were being rude. I sat there hurt, quiet, angry, and very discouraged. I came to school so I could get away from situations like that, and here it happened to me out of nowhere. This impacted me a lot because I realized how much talking at that moment could have helped, but I didn't, and it feels bad. I felt bad for myself.

In the future, what I will do is speak up more, and if I feel uncomfortable, then I will say it. If that means I will lose friends because they don't think I should be respected as a human, then they were never my friends to begin with. Having been through this has changed how I will deal with situations like this one. Even though it is not okay for situations like this, it taught me so many

lessons I will forever have with me now.

### Noor Sleik

Noor Sleik is an 8th grader at Hudson Montessori School, where she is a member of the Model UN. She also is an active volunteer and donates backpacks to new immigrants and refugees. She would like to become a lawyer and wants to become the President of the United States of America.



### Eden G. Austin

#### 7th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

"She's a monkey!"

How could three simple words so suddenly threaten my sense of friendship, comfort, and even my very identity? Lunch was our sanctuary — a place where friends came together not only to eat but also to laugh, joke, play matchmaker, gossip, and, believe it or not, actually discuss educational things. But in the midst of my eating my beloved choice of fruit, a banana, my friend had blurted out, "She's a monkey."

Although words are not sticks and stones and can't break bones, they have an enormous capacity to inflict greater damage. At that moment, "She's a monkey" challenged my sense of self — my place in the world, especially being an African-American, coming from a Caucasian friend. The casual comment insinuated racist undertones, making me feel as if I didn't belong. Historically, African Americans were dehumanized and called "monkeys," amongst other slurs. I rationalized that she most likely didn't intend to imply that I was an actual monkey. She probably was connecting the obvious relationship of a monkey to my choice of fruit — the banana. Nevertheless, the comment deeply offended me. My immediate response was, "No, you're a monkey!" Then I laughed it off and quickly changed the subject.

To this day, I still do not know the actual intent behind, "She's a monkey," although I suspect the remark was totally innocent. Perhaps my friend had no idea the hurt and distress those three words had caused me. I regret that my friends and I didn't seize the opportunity right then to address/clarify our truths. But since that experience, I myself practice and encourage others to simply talk. I believe one of our weaknesses as a society is simply our inability to communicate with each other. Our community's healing lies in our ability to communicate openly and honestly with one another, regardless of how uncomfortable the conversation might be. In addition, as a diverse community, we have a responsibility to learn about the history and culture of the people within our community so that we can promote understanding, healing, and acceptance.



### Eden Austin

Eden G. Austin is a 7th grader at Beachwood Middle School. She enjoys reading and playing sports, and she would like to travel the world to its fullest extent. She plans to major in science or law in college, while doing photography on the side.

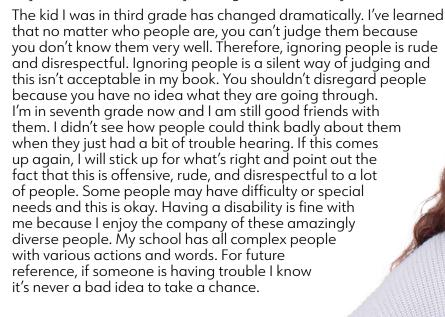
### **Kelsey Cohen**

### 7th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

Step, step. The kids passed by the boys in the hallway of the elementary school. Everyone just ignored them like they were invisible, even colliding into them without an apology. It was all because the boys weren't like them. The third graders deemed that the hearing-impaired boys weren't regular and that they did not belong. I was in third grade at the time, but I had my own mindset. Why? I can hear just fine, and I enjoyed the company of the boys. The books I read always mentioned that all people were unique, so I figured that we are all different and that is just that.

Our teachers, students, and helpers were all different. Diverse. We had a variety of races, genders, sexual orientations, etc. However, my peers and classmates still thought of these boys as acting abnormally. They were constantly at our recess and lunch. They were continuously in the hallways. These kids were throughout the school, but still, nobody paid any attention to them.

I had to fix this. I talked to my mom and she told me it is never too late to try. So, I did what she told me. I started playing catch with them at recess and soon enough they gave me a sign name. They showed me how to do it: Put my hand in a K configuration and put it to my heart. I knew I had done the right thing. These sweet boys were now my great friends. This kind of gesture of just saying "hi" the first time made the change. My friends started to get encouraged and soon most of us would go over and hang out with them. I never would've known these amazing boys without the advice my mom gave me that day.



### Helsey Conen

Kimberly Cohen is a 7th grader at Beachwood Middle School. She is an avid athlete and enjoys soccer, basketball, cheerleading, and softball. She loves hanging out with her friends at summer camp. She hopes her career and college plans include working with kids and helping others.

### Radha Pareek

#### 7th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

"Oh my gosh, that's so disgusting."

Those words pierced through me, leaving a mark I still remember to this day. It was the first day of school as I timidly walked into the cafeteria and hesitantly sat down at a table with unfamiliar faces. As soon as I opened my lunchbox, a heavenly smell of authentic Indian spices filled the air. However, I immediately realized it wasn't delightful to others. I tried speaking up but people just glared at me and pointed judgmentally. I decided to put away the container and sit there in silence, my face a crimson mask filled with shame and embarrassment.

This was just the first explosion of jagged words that were hurled toward me because of my culture. I heard things like, "What's that weird red thing on your forehead?" when I wore my tilak to school. Or "What in the world are you wearing?" when I wore traditional garments. Questions filled my mind, and I wondered what was so different about me. However, this curiosity was whiplashed shut every time I heard words full of prejudice. My curiosity slowly faded and I became afraid to express myself.

As I grew older, I started recognizing the perseverance and hard work of my parents, who did every bit to add to the flavor of this society without compromising their rich cultural heritage. I couldn't let my parents throw away everything they loved just for the sake of my acceptance. That day, there was something that encouraged me to stop veiling my culture and learn how to wear it with pride. I learned that by concealing my identity I was letting discrimination and injustice overpower me.

My ancestral roots in India and birthplace in America inspire me to be guided by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, who sacrificed their lives to establish equality and diversity in society. Deriving my strengths from their values, I decided to take affirmative steps to end the cultural ignorance of my peers. Eating lunch with different students, inviting them to my home, celebrating my festivals with them, and participating in their cultural celebrations were a few initiatives that I took to broaden our cultural understanding of each other. Since then I have made it my objective to empower others who are misjudged and to spread the message of celebrating our differences rather than criticizing our identities. If we can change one person's perspective, we have moved one step ahead in changing the world.

Today's globalized world allows us to celebrate diversity, to learn from different cultures, ideas, religions, and ways of life, to become mindful of our common human bond. To make our youth better "global citizens" we have to improve their cultural competence by exposing them to the diverse global environment at an early age. I strongly believe that unity in society does not mean its uniformity. With appreciative cultural exchange and compassionate communication, we can build a society where everyone can enjoy the true flavors of cultural diversity.

### Radha Parcek

Radha Pareek is a 7th grader at Beachwood Middle School, where she is the Vice President of the Student Council and a member of the Science Olympiad team, Destination Imagination, and the Model UN. She plans on pursuing a career in STEM and is passionate about art, swimming, and writing.



### **Annabel Green**

#### 6th Grade, Hudson Middle School

Leonard Bernstein once said "This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more devotedly than ever before." I can reflect on this quote because once I heard a racist quote at a Thanksgiving dinner.

One time, when I was at a family member's house for Thanksgiving, a family friend was invited. Before this incident, I thought this person was kind and fun. I got to know this person quickly when my mom married my stepdad and we had more family get-togethers. On this Thanksgiving, we sat down at the table and we all gave thanks. My siblings and I said the first thanks. I said I was thankful for my family. After my siblings said thanks, the adults did. Many of us said things like family, health, being together, and more. When it was the family friend's turn to say thanks, he started off by saying, "a wonderful Thanksgiving," but then, when I thought he was done he said, "and thank God there are no Muslims here, right?" The second I heard this, my face turned red. My mom took my little brother and left the table. I couldn't move. I thought, why would someone say something like that? Once my sister got up, I left the table, too. We both went down to the lounge area where my mom and brother were now sitting. I was asked why I left and I said that I felt uncomfortable.

I was impacted by this experience because I thought this man was a kind person to all and he turned out to be racist and showed prejudice toward Muslims. This means that even if you think someone has a good character, it doesn't mean they do. He made me feel uncomfortable, but imagine how he could make a person who is Muslim feel!

In response to this, I could stop hate by doing several things. I could do this by walking away, telling them that what they said was mean, racist, and socially inappropriate, or I could suggest they become more educated about people who are Muslim. I could tell them it was especially inappropriate in front of children who are still forming their thoughts on the world. I can also make sure I set an example by being kind to all people and appreciating diversity. These are just some of the many ways I can stop the hate that is everywhere.

In conclusion, Leonard Bernstein's quote reminds me that you can respond to ugly things with something beautiful. Mean words can be replaced with kind words and the world will be a better place.

### Annabel Green

Annabel Green is a 6th grader at Hudson Middle School. She loves science and also enjoys music, baking, cooking, and writing. She plans to continue fighting prejudice by educating others and hopes to become a teacher in the future.



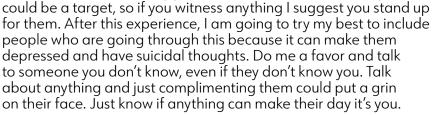
### **Guneet Karra**

#### 6th Grade, Hudson Middle School

I was just minding my own business until it hit me like a brick. A couple of boys were leaning upon a tall pillar in the cafeteria, towering over my classmate Joyce as if they were tall buildings. "What are you doing here?" they said. The boys would pick on anybody for no reason at all! She didn't even say a word, just staring at their evil grins. "Get out of my seat you weirdo!" The bullies started laughing, then she left out of embarrassment. Joyce had tears dripping from her eyes and down her throat, as she quickly scurried to the bathroom. This would happen almost every day, but she never did anything about it.

Most of the time, I would just watch and feel so bad as surges of guilt would engulf me. It got really bad, as they started to call her curse words, but I didn't want to get involved because then I would also be a victim. Usually, Joyce would just sit alone at the peanut table, but then I started to join her. Then the bullies knew that I was there for her, therefore they stopped being so hateful towards her. One day when I invited her to our table, she talked to me and my friends about the bands we liked and our favorite hobbies. We both liked alternative pop rock music and horror movies. Consequently, we became friends, and I would invite her to our table almost every day until she felt comfortable. I learned that you should never judge a book by its cover, as it really makes a difference to make someone's day.

If this happens to anyone, I suggest including them. Even if they're different from you, it doesn't mean that you should treat them the way you don't want to be treated. Joyce was a victim of this act of discrimination, and anyone



Smeet Karon

NOT YET PROVIDED TO US



### **Eric Robinson**

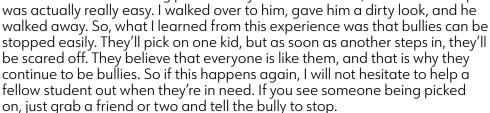
#### 6th Grade, Hudson Middle School

Have you ever met another kid your age with any sort of learning disability? You've probably seen how hard it is for them to do a lot of school-related activities. We all know that it's not their fault though, right? They've had this disability from birth and no one blames them for it. You may have previously thought that, but a lot of children with learning disabilities get picked on.

One day I was sitting with my friends when I turned around and I saw a friend from art class. He did have a learning disability, but he was still a really nice kid and a good friend. But when I saw him in between classes, he looked really upset. His face was red and it looked like he was glaring at someone. I sat up straighter to get a better look at what was happening, and when I did I saw that someone was beating him up! I recognized the bully immediately. He had always been kind of a jerk. He had called the kid names before, but my friend had never seemed too mad about it. I didn't worry about it though, because the lunch aids saw him too and took him to the principal's office.

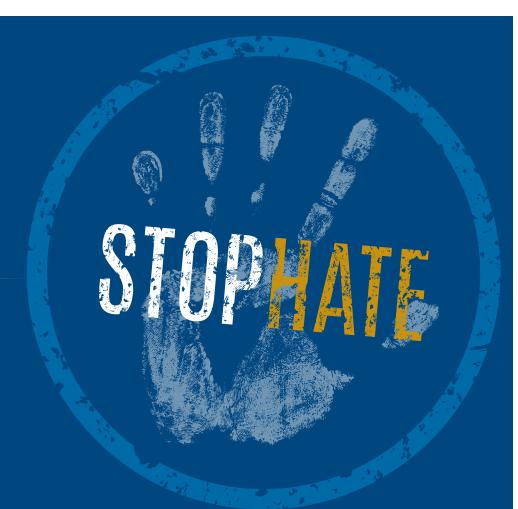
But the next day at lunch, the bully was walking around the lunchroom smiling, like nothing had happened. He thought that he had become one of the most popular kids at school, just because he beat up a disabled kid. I was really mad about it, but I didn't do anything about it, because I didn't want to be beaten up too. And about a week later, I heard from someone else that his water bottle had been stolen by the bully. The bully threatened to beat him up too, if he didn't hand over the water bottle. I still didn't do anything about it because I was still scared of him.

But when I saw a kid being picked on by him before class, I decided to stop it. I thought that it would be hard, but it



### Eric Robinson

Eric Robinson is a 6th grader at Hudson Middle School, where he enjoys studying math and is a member of the student council. Outside of school he likes playing tennis and video games. He would like to become a scientist in the future, working on fusion as a feasible source of energy.



HATE
It has caused a lot
of problems in the
world, but it has
not solved one yet.

- MAYA ANGELOU

"Dworken & Bernstein is proud to congratulate these impassioned role models for making a difference and inspiring others to be vigilant."

— Irving Rosner, partner





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### **ABOUT STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT**

### **Voices United for Social Change**

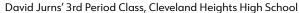
More than 1,000 students from 14 schools worked collaboratively within their classes to pen and perform songs for *Stop the Hate® Youth Sing Out*, an artsintegrated learning initiative that asks students to share their thoughts on discrimination after visiting the Maltz Museum. The annual program sharpens written and oral language skills while fostering a deeper understanding of historic human rights events. Students compete to win anti-bias education grants for their schools. Congratulations to all of the participants for using your voices for good!

Youth Sing Out is presented in partnership with Roots of American Music and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.



Donna Feldman's 4th Period Class, Cleveland Heights High School







### 2020 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS

#### "E.T.A.H"

David Jurns' 3rd Period Class, Cleveland Heights High School TIE - FIRST PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

"We dedicate this to all the hate in the world, we gotta do better... together"

Chorus:

E-T-A-H

That's how we reverse the hate

E-T-A-H

That means don't discriminate

Turn the hate around Without love We won't rise above There's so much hate We should all just appreciate

Be grateful, not hateful Don't hate, appreciate Love is the key to making our world great

#### Chorus

Oppression in the streets today Wages are unequal For different people Decades of unfair laws

Minorities are being shot And in the holocaust So many lives were lost We can build a better future

#### Chorus

E-T-A-H

We can make the world great
It's never too late to put an end to hate
They don't like anyone who isn't straight
But why is it that we segregate
Toss the hate aside
We're tired of the genocide
Let kindness be our guide
We should all take pride

### "We Can Change Our World"

Donna Feldman's 4th Period Class, Cleveland Heights High School TIE - FIRST PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

Chant (x2):

So much hate in the world So much pain in the world What's the fate of our world We can change our world

How long it will last No one can tell Sons are dying, Mothers are crying Death rates keep rising and rising

#### Chorus:

Hurting each other, killing the earth How much is this hatred really worth We should stand together Hand in hand This is our only land

#### Chant

Too much hate No time to converse If we don't act now It's gonna get worse

Chant

Chorus

David Jurns' 3rd Period Class, Cleveland Heights High School



### 2020 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS

### "Unjustifiable"

Justin Caithaml's 6th Period Class, Midview High School RUNNER-UP HIGH SCHOOL

Years ago in a cold dark place Where we judge each other by color or race How does it start Have you ever wondered why The pain in their hearts The reason why people cry?

#### Chorus:

Unjustifiable, Unjustifiable
The way that we live, the fear that we give
It's unjustifiable

We grow more shy, as time slips by Restrict our voice, stuck on the sidelines Don't be afraid, of what the others say Got to be brave, you don't know who you may save

#### Chorus

Tell me why the people are dying Yet we pretend that isn't real While people are wondering how Life without prejudice would feel

Unjustifiable, Unjustifiable
The time is right now, we need to speak out
Because it's...
It's unjustifiable

#### "YOURS N MINES"

Dorinda Wainwright's 6th Grade Class, Wade Park School FIRST PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### Chorus:

See me for who I am
Not what others see me as!
I am worthy to be respected
Not REJECTED, EJECTED, OR NEGLECTED!
This world is yours and mines (x4)

In this world we need you and me
We wear our crowns, we are kings and queens
And don't try to play my team
We are the best look at us you see

Respect is all we need, you'll get respect back...Guaranteed See us for who we are We all shine like shining stars!

#### Chorus

Give respect, show respect Not to just your kind If you respect me I will respect you And we will all be fine!

#### Chorus





Dorinda Wainwright's 6th Grade Class, Wade Park School



### 2020 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS

### "Fight the Hate, Don't Discriminate!"

Tamara Blair's 8th Grade Class, Newton D. Baker School of Arts RUNNER-UP MIDDLE SCHOOL

I just wanna go into the store, People staring at me when I reach the door I don't need this anymore This hate straight from the core

#### Chorus:

So don't hate, just be nice It doesn't matter if you're black or white We all deserve to feel great It doesn't matter if you're gay or straight

#### Refrain:

Fight the hate, don't discriminate It's not too late Hate is something that we just can't take This is the cycle that we must break

#### Chorus:

There shouldn't be cages
There shouldn't be walls no no hatred at all
We must break these chains
We must be the change (x2)

#### Refrain

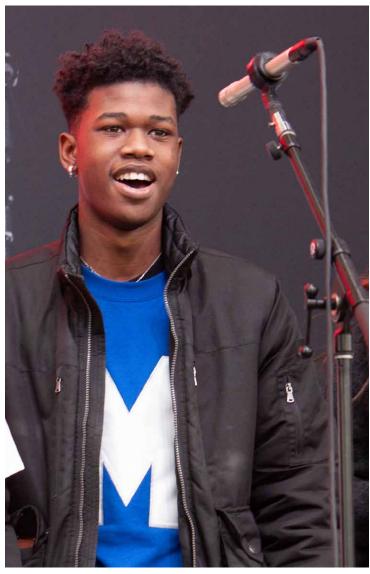
Chorus (x2)

Fight the hate, don't discriminate (x2)





Justin Caithaml's 6th Period Class, Midview High School



Donna Feldman's 4th Period Class, Cleveland Heights High School



### 2020 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SPEAK OUT ESSAY READERS

We are grateful to the 447 volunteers who generously donated their time to blind-score this year's Youth Speak Out essays.

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"There's nothing more important than standing together against hate. When you take one voice and add it to other voices, together your voice is much stronger."

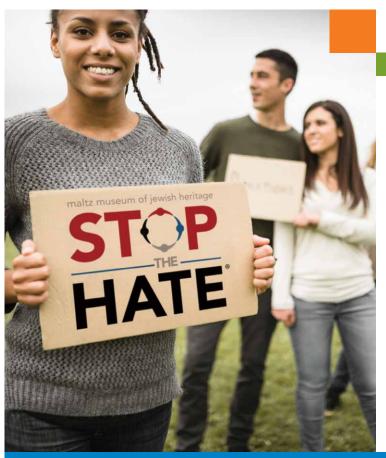
-Erika B. Rudin-Luria

The Jewish Federation of Cleveland congratulates these future leaders for their inspiring efforts to stand against hate. Mazel Tov!



J. David Heller, board chair Erika B. Rudin-Luria, president





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