

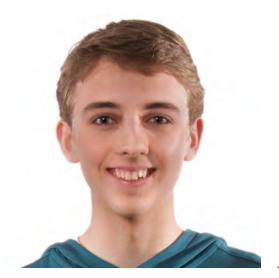






STOPHATE
AWARDS CEREMONY
PRESENTED BY MALTZ MUSEUM













WELCOME

Dear Friends,

You are about to meet 20 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 15th anniversary of the *Stop the Hate*® program. Each year, we marvel at the 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.

Since the program launched we have provided \$1.5 million in college scholarships and anti-bias education grants, and we have engaged over 50,000 students across 12 Northeast Ohio counties to stand up and speak out against hate.

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 together we celebrate those differences. To all the students who have participated in **Stop the Hate**®, this is only the beginning. Your voices can and will make an impact! 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® YOUTH SPEAK OUT

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 honored the courage and spirit of activists of the Civil Rights Movement whose legacy was explored in the Maltz Museum's special exhibition, *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*. Inspired by lyrics to the African American folk anthem, "This Little Light of Mine," sung as an expression of unity in the fight for equality and justice for all, we invited students to share how they were shining their light as an agent of positive change in their communities.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

STOP THE HATE® SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

STOP THE HATE SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR

Together with our partners Lake Erie Ink, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and Roots of American Music we offered FREE songwriting and essay writing workshops to schools and educators. These anti-bias learning tools taught history, literacy, and the arts for middle school, high school, and homeschool groups. Every school that participated in a workshop was eligible to receive anti-bias education grant money from a pool of \$30,000 that is split evenly.

Congratulations to Broadway Academy at Mount Pleasant ACCEL School, Charles F. Brush High School, Cleveland Metropolitan Remote High School, Collinwood High School, Design Lab Early College High School, East Technical High School, Facing History New Tech High School, Garfield Heights High School, Garfield Middle School, GlenOak High School, Harding Middle School, Hathaway Brown, Hudson Middle School, Kimpton Middle School, Langston Middle School, Maple Heights High School, Mary McLeod Bethune School, Massillon Junior High School, Max S. Hayes High School, Mayfield High School, Messiah Lutheran Elementary, Midview High School, Milkovich Middle School, Monticello Middle School, Mound STEM School, Newton D. Baker School of Arts, Orange High School, Positive Education Program Hopewell, Rhodes School of Environmental Studies, Shaw High School, St. Vincent-St. Mary High School, and Twinsburg High School.

STOP THE HATE TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

In addition, with our partners the Maltz Museum named two *Stop the Hate* Teachers of the Year. Each received a \$1,000 cash prize in recognition of their personal commitment to anti-bias education.

Congratulations to Anetra Howard of Milkovich Middle School and Laverne McLain of Max S. Hayes High School.



2023 Youth Sing Out Song Writing Contest Winners

Mayfield High School – First Place High School, "Where Does the Fault Lie?"
Midview High School – Runner-up High School, "Life is Full of Color"

Milkovich Middle School – First Place Middle School, "Harmony"

Newton D. Baker School of Arts – Runner-up Middle School, "Respect is a Two-Way Street"

2023 Youth Speak Out Grand Prize Scholarship Student Finalists

GRADE 12

Carmen Cicerini, Hawken School Naomi Glass, Green High School Misa Huls, Avon Lake High School Gianna Miller, Rocky River High School Myla Miller, Berea-Midpark High School Aditi Sanghavi, Aurora High School

GRADE 11

Diya Chaterpal, Rhodes College and Career Academy Avelyn Cleary, Lakewood High School Simone Davis, Solon High School Gabryella Glenn, Rhodes College and Career Academy

2023 Youth Speak Out Student Finalists

GRADE 10

Kyle Carroll, Hudson High School **Ezra Ellenbogen,** Shaker Heights High School

GRADE 9

Katie Smith, Firelands High School **Isabella Swol,** Hawken School

GRADE 8

Ritika Iyer, Beachwood Middle School **Annaya Jain,** Beachwood Middle School

GRADE 7

Olivia Piazza, Learwood Middle School Tia Tian, Hathaway Brown

GRADF 6

Grace Claassen, Hudson Middle School **Stella Sipos,** Hudson Middle School

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

Diya Chaterpal

11th Grade, Rhodes College and Career Academy

A wedding is a strange setting for murder, but that is where it actually happened.

During the last night of a Hindu wedding, the men celebrate without the women. At my brother's wedding in Guyana, three strangers showed up. They were under the influence of drugs they were planning to sell. Uninvited, they took seats in the banquet hall. My grandfather told them to leave because this was a family ceremony.

There was yelling, swearing, and threats. The guys got mad, but they left. These men had bad records with the law, but we were not aware of that. In retaliation, they went to the parking lot and started breaking windshields. My male relatives went out to stop the vandalism. When the vandals saw my relatives, they drew knives from their belts and threatened my grandfather. My brother interceded and was stabbed in the stomach. The last I saw of my brother was in the crime scene photograph.

Losing my brother to hatred changed my life. It made me realize how fragile our place in this world is. One minute my brother was a vital part of my family; the next minute his spirit had left his body. Traditionally, Hindu women stop hate in its tracks. I believe, had women been present, the situation would not have spun out of control. In waking nightmares, I wonder if I could have saved my brother's life.

I suffer from "survivor's guilt," but guilt is not always a bad emotion. To honor my brother's memory and assuage my guilt, I joined a nursing program. I have always been a caregiver. When I was 13, I took care of my grandmother when she battled cancer. I gave her medication, bathed her, helped her use the restroom, cooked for her, and helped her at mealtimes. Some kids might not want to do these things, but I felt blessed to be able to help. Helping my grandmother in her final year showed me how to care for others on a personal level. It is this service mentality that is the light I shine to stop hate.

At school I joined a cosmetology group. We braid hair, give manicures, and supply hygiene products. These are crucial parts of mental well-being. While we braid hair and polish nails, we listen to the people we are serving. By making them feel attractive, we allow their light to shine. When people feel seen and heard, they are mentally healthier.

The best way to stop hate is to sow seeds of love. I have no idea what trauma made men like those who killed my brother commit such a crime, but I'm sure they suffered from mental illness. My career goal is to be a psychiatric nurse; I want to work with people who suffer from mental illness to help them get better and feel part of society. I am only one person with one light to shine, but I will shine my little light on others' darkness to stop hate.

Diya Chaterpal enjoys cooking seafood boils, taking photos of the sunset, being a part of the cosmetology club at her school, and traveling to New York to visit family. In the future Diya plans to study nursing and work with mental health patients to make their lives easier. She hopes to attend Case Western Reserve University because it is the best nursing school in Ohio.

Carmen Cicerini

12th Grade, Hawken School

"All Puerto Ricans deserve to be shot." My mom remembers these words more than 20 years after they pierced her ears at a social gathering. A man sitting a few seats from her shared that someone he knew was shot and robbed in Puerto Rico, which prompted his cruel words. Surrounded by business professionals and close acquaintances in a crowded restaurant, she felt isolated. Her heart dropped to the bottom of her stomach, creating a deep, unsettling pit. However, the most gut-wrenching thing was what followed. Silence. The bustling restaurant table that was previously filled with laughter and chatting turned eerily quiet. No one was brave enough to speak. A few moments passed before someone finally said, "Raquel's Puerto Rican," but the damage was already done.

Growing up, my mom shared this experience with my two sisters and me, not to make us anxious or worried about how our culture is perceived, but to empower us as young Latinas, and to warn us of the dangers of remaining silent when encountering uncomfortable situations. I was stunned to hear her story. I never imagined that something so offensive could happen to someone close to me. I was enraged that my mom endured the pain and humiliation of not only the man's insult, but also of the silence of those around her. I realized the negative impact of becoming a bystander rather than an upstander when witnessing animosity towards other people. I understood that silence can inflict the same damage, if not more, as any hateful interaction.

Learning about my mom's experience, I recognized the importance of speaking out against injustices. I knew I didn't want to perpetuate the silence my mom and many others with similar experiences have endured. As a future filmmaker, I want to use my love of visual storytelling to make a difference in how people are treated and perceived by sharing the stories of people we don't often hear about, whose lives might be different than our own, to encourage empathy and understanding.

Over the summer, I used my filmmaking skills to learn more about the Latinx community in Cleveland. I interviewed three Latina leaders who provided perspective on the issues and challenges that Latinos in Cleveland face every day, including lack of resources and discrimination. Through filmmaking, I hope to enact positive change by providing an outlet for minorities and people who are discriminated against to share their stories, and inspire others to become involved within their communities, as in Ava DuVernay's 13th. This Netflix documentary exposed how racial injustice corrupted our justice system and revealed to me the power of visual storytelling in creating systemic change.

To fight hate and discrimination, we should use our talents in writing, poetry, art, film, or performing to shed light on the challenges people face daily. Looking at negative situations from a different perspective, focusing on eliminating hatred by spreading awareness, and encouraging a call to action will unite our communities rather than divide us.

Carmen Cicerini participates in Hawken's Philanthropy Board and House System and is varsity captain for the Hawken girls' soccer and basketball teams. Carmen loves photography and hanging out with friends. In the fall she will attend New York University to major in film and television and will play on the women's soccer team. She plans to continue to tell stories about underrepresented communities through film and to advocate for more representation in the film industry.



Avelyn Cleary

11th Grade, Lakewood High School

"You're damned to Hell! God could never forgive you!" An exuberant phrase shouted at us as we paraded around, exemplifying pride and joy for one another. Disgust in objects and words were thrown at us from inside metal pens along the streets—just like animals in cages—although we were the ones being watched and taunted. I even witnessed families with young children dehumanize us. In fact, the crowd stopped for a moment, and I saw a mother whisper in this little girl's ear, and the girl shouted, "You're laughable, you gays!" The most unfunny and hilarious thing I have ever heard. A small girl being coaxed by her family to shout berating things at those expressing who they are. How laughable. How horrifying.

The words of hate didn't stop there. We were spat on, told we were pigs, gawked at. Nevertheless, we continued our parade, expressing our pride, acceptance, respect, love for each other and who we are. Unfortunately, this isn't something that just happened to me, friends, family, or anyone else who was in that crowd. This happens daily. Whether it be at other pride parades, online, or even between strangers on the street, this happens everywhere. All the time.

The disgusting comments and actions made toward individuals in the LGBTQ+ community are degrading and harmful. Not only is this the reason why people feel like they can't be themselves, but it also causes everyone to feel as though they are doing something wrong. Those who are already struggling with higher rates of body dysmorphia and depression have to sit through strangers telling them that their lives are sickening. It's sickening. Sickening to believe that someone could throw that much hate and disapproval towards humans simply trying to love who they

love, and be who they are. The LGBTQ+ community ends up feeling that what they are doing, the way they feel, and how they are is wrong. It causes those already high rates to be higher. It benefits no one. Not only are people impressing young kids to say and think such horrific things, but they are creating a dangerous environment for everyone. No one deserves that.

Witnessing such comments in person causes some lost hope in humanity. Hope will not be lost forever though. While it seems dark, there is still some light, and with some effort, it should continue to grow. Light is seen as that hope. It is the end to the hate and the beginning of peace. While people have caused hate, it is people who can be the light. Those at pride parades, the community, allies, and those who

I, just like many, will continue to parade and share online resources to express love, pride, and acceptance toward others. It is okay to love who you do. To be who you are. Fighting through the negativity to shine on the world will bring light.

have experienced disgust thrown at them are the light.

Avelyn Cleary is interested in astronomy and all things outer space, and she is currently taking a class in engineering at school. She also loves music, playing cello in the school orchestra and piano on her own. Avelyn plans to attend college, to major in astrophysics or astronautical engineering, and to pursue a career in those areas. She also plans to travel around the globe to experience all kinds of life and culture.

Simone Davis

11th Grade, Solon High School

The papers have become wrinkled and soft between my fingers, ink smudging. I am trying to get to everyone in the cafeteria—I jog to the musicians, stride to the swimmers, walk to the freshmen—each group requiring a different tactic to get more signatures.

There has been a new dress code instated at our school this year, and I have been circulating a petition to get it changed. "It is sexist and biased against curvier frames." "It's anachronistic." "It'll be your beanies next."

After one week, the petition has garnered 154 signatures and widespread attention. The dress code has been in place for two weeks now, and it is on every girl's mind as she walks into school. Administrators stalk the halls, ignoring basketball players in wife beaters and seniors with obscenely printed shirts, finding their prey in a freshman girl who happens to be wearing a scoop neck. They pounce, escorting her to her locker and watching as she zips up her jacket. They pounce, emailing all her teachers, assuring them she will not be showing unwarranted skin again. They pounce, and the freshman girl trudges to first period, face burning and confidence destroyed.

Our generation often talks about how important it is to be an agent of change. To be a source of light. Social media tends to water down discussions of feminism, tending towards easy slogans rather than direct action. My experience with feminism until that point had been ensconced in a warm bubble of Instagram infographics aglow with gutsy maxims against patriarchy. It is easy to slip away, scrolling through the echo chamber of Twitter or TikTok and not see the rampant sexism that permeates every inch of our reality.

I am brought quickly down to earth as I stomp around the cafeteria explaining how the dress code is misogynistic. The petition has been my first experience attempting to change a policy that I consider unfair, and the biggest surprise is how personally I am taking it. I did not expect to take each refusal to sign as an emotional offense, but it is hard to keep my eyes from stinging every time a lanky freshman boy grunts "nah."

Ultimately, the principal shut down the petition after an emotionally charged 45-minute meeting. Nevertheless, instances of dress coding have plummeted since then. Over 200 students from a variety of backgrounds signed. Students of different races, religions, and sexualities all agreed this was an issue worth fighting for.

What I have learned from the experience is that being a source of light is difficult. Mainstream media advocates pressing a button, essentially turning on the flashlight on your phone. But creating lasting change is more like starting a fire with damp wood. It may not light the first time, but if you have courage, if you are persistent, if you connect with others to find common ground, and if you continue to advocate for change, it may just catch and provide you with light and warmth in the darkest of nights.

Simone Davis plays the trumpet in her school's show choir band and jazz band. She is president of GirlUp and a peer educator for Planned Parenthood. She enjoys getting food and listening to music with her friends. In the future, Simone hopes to continue to do advocacy work and help less privileged women.

Naomi Glass

12th Grade, Green High School

My hometown is a predominantly white city that I've lived in since I was a baby. I've heard and experienced various racist or ignorant comments since I was young. I've been told, "Black kids are so adorable I just want to put a leash on them and walk around." Or "Your hair is fake, right?" I could deal with the ignorant comments, however the people of my community really crossed the line on February 25, 2022.

Last February, my school decided to host a "Soul Food Fest" to honor Black History Month. They served fried chicken, watermelon, greens, banana pudding, Kool-Aid, and cookies—all stereotypical "black people" food. My parents, brother, and I agreed it was cultural appropriation and straight-up offensive. As a result, that Sunday evening I sent an email to my principal expressing my disappointment in the school. My principal responded by claiming the intent of the "Soul Food Fest" was not cultural appropriation but cultural celebration. My principal did realize it was offensive, however, after a post about the event went viral on Facebook.

The impact this situation had on the small black community in my town was a combined feeling of disrespect, disappointment, and shame. The situation also impacted my personal life because my plan was to go through school with my head down and earn good grades. Emailing my principal was the first time I stepped out of my comfort zone and said something about the ignorant racism in the school. And I am glad I did it because now my principal is very active in learning more, I have a helpful relationship with the head of my school, and now we have a committee to prevent further injustices. The response from the parents not only impacted the high school but also made the entire district rethink how they are handling racist situations, and

how to prevent non-white students from receiving hate or disrespect.

When thinking about the metaphor of light in this situation, I believe my mother is the light in all of this. My mother has always demonstrated standing up for what you believe in and knowing your worth. Without her role model example and encouragement, I don't know if I would have had the courage to email my head principal or accept the invitation to be on the Student Diversity Committee. By being on the Student Diversity Committee, I am helping my sisters have a better experience than what my brother and I had growing up and I am also helping teachers and parents understand why they need to have the tough conversations about loving each other through our differences. By telling my story, I hope to help other non-white students who believe that keeping to yourself and getting good grades isn't always the way to go when you know you live in a community that could be and needs to be doing better for you and your culture.

Naomi Glass is in her school's all-girl acapella group, Fermata Nowhere, and participates in the student diversity group. She also volunteers in her church's nursery. Naomi plans to attend Hampton University in the fall, because it's one of the best historically black universities. Eventually she plans to attend medical school to become a doctor.

Gabryella Glenn

11th Grade, Rhodes College and Career Academy

People say hindsight is 20/20. Looking back at 2020, I see why some call it "The Year from Hell." The pandemic, the protests, and the president were all unprecedented. Life changed in the blink of an eye for the world. For the first time in my life, I felt our country faltering. The election and the tragic loss of George Floyd caused madness. There were worldwide BLM riots alongside hate-fueled rallies, even while COVID-19 was still fluctuating.

My family believed that a new leader could save us from the chaos the former had caused us. My father started taking me to rallies so that I could engage in civic discourse under his supervision. The hate we encountered was ridiculous. The rally that sticks with me the most took place in downtown Cleveland. Here, I was called the "N word" multiple times. We witnessed protesters pushed to the pavement and nearly trampled. My father and I were pushed by the crowd. This almost ended in a way bigger altercation.

We were among only a few people of color against the mob that was slowly ramping up. My father started to debate with the crowd. He asked how many times they'd actually discussed opposing viewpoints. None of them knew how to answer. I laughed to myself because it showed how little knowledge they actually possessed.

Before leaving the rally, my father and I were approached by a police officer. The police officer said he had been told my father had a firearm on him. This was a lie. I was hurt and shocked. In this climate, I knew the hatred behind that lie could be fatal. How could someone be so reckless knowing that many African Americans were being murdered by police?



Misa Huls

12th Grade, Avon Lake High School

My new high school, in a small, predominantly white town, was in high contrast to the diverse South Jersey suburbs of Philadelphia where I grew up. I quickly noticed that I was often the only person of color in a classroom. Early on, I experienced racism and microaggressions, which I had never dealt with before.

One impactful situation was when a fellow student, someone I had no prior exchange with, commented on my curly hair as smelly, since "you know, they put fish oil in it." A dozen responses and emotions flooded my mind over the course of the hour, but I sat stunned among my silent classmates as the teacher carried on in the moment. Later that night, the same student sent a Confederate flag to the class group chat: "If this flag offends you, I don't care." Given our previous interaction and being the only black student in the class, I understood it was meant for me. Initially I felt alone, anxious, and even angry—dark emotions for my affable nature; yet this unfortunate occurrence also helped to kindle a passion for social justice.

I shared my experiences with my counselor in hopes to improve the climate at my school. One outcome of those conversations was an opportunity to pilot the Peer Leadership Program, a group of leaders tasked with fostering a more inclusive school culture. When I decided to tell my new friends about my experience, I worried they would gaslight me, but instead I was met with empathy and they wanted to help.

Ultimately, shedding light on my experiences and offering a different point of view helped me to gain a deeper connection with my school community because, on the other side of those challenges, I learned that I have allies

and that I can use my voice to help others. While the process can be arduous, the upshot of putting diversity in the spotlight, especially when inclusion is an overarching goal, can bring people together for a common good and make a positive difference.

In my faith, believers are described as lights, not to be hidden but to be shared for others to benefit. Light is synonymous with truth and hope, which in my view applies to my personal fight and goal toward a more inclusive and just world. While the scale may seem small right now, bringing to light issues of diversity and inclusion looks like everyday interactions—working with fellow students through Peer Leadership, inviting a classmate without a partner to join my workgroup, sharing an inclusive perspective in history class, taking courses like Contemporary Social Issues that challenge my own worldviews, and talking openly to friends at lunch about our shared and different experiences and perspectives.

I will bring the success and lessons from these interactions with me beyond high school as I build my toolkit and explore these issues deeper to accomplish far-reaching change. I hope that my story will spark others to share their story and shine their light for good.

Misa Huls enjoys reading, especially dystopian fiction, and watching criminal mind documentaries. Her favorite classes are AP Psychology and AP Literature. Misa currently serves as a Core Leader for the Peer Leadership Program at her school and volunteers regularly as a member of the National Honor Society. Misa plans to attend The Ohio State University as an exploratory student, where she hopes to explore her interests in social justice and human behavior.

Gianna Miller

12th Grade, Rocky River High School

I was sitting in the back seat of my mom's smoke-filled car when the police knocked on the window. My mom was higher than I had ever seen her, and the officer determined she was putting herself and others in danger. Differing from her previous arrests, we were on my elementary school's campus, as she was picking me up from aftercare in second grade. Unluckily for me, all of my classmates were playing outside waiting to be picked up. Everyone saw my mom get arrested. This is when the bullying started.

Classmates began looking at me differently, but quickly it progressed to much worse. Beginning in second grade, I had to sleep over at my mom's house on Tuesday nights, and on Wednesdays I showed up to school with dirty clothes smelling like cigarette smoke, embarrassed at my hygienic state after being at her house. People stopped talking to me, but rather started talking about me. An older student I rode the bus with told me that my family being different was a bad thing. I stopped wanting to go to school and was embarrassed not only of my mom's addiction but also of my family dynamic of a broken home.

Growing up, my dad was the light that I needed to be able to separate my identity from my mother's battle with addiction. My dad helped me deal with the negativity coming from my classmates and my mother, as well as my own self-deprecation. Although I grew up in a neighborhood where my situation was unique, as I get older I realize that there are many other children who grow up having to suffer the consequences of their parents' addiction. Although I had my dad to guide me through the situation, I know that many children do not have any form of light in their lives.

Throughout my high school career, I have volunteered with a local rehab center in order to try to make a positive impact. Although it has been difficult for me to share my story due to the initial response I received from my classmates, it is my goal to be a light for other children whose parents are addicts. I did not have anyone my age to be a light when I was struggling with my own identity despite my mom's addiction, which is why it is my goal to help someone in a similar situation.

In situations like this, it is important to shine a light on the reality of the circumstances for everyone involved, in order for addiction to become destigmatized. I was treated poorly by my classmates because no one understood what I was truly going through. By shining a light on my situation and being a light for someone in a similar situation, I can help destigmatize addiction and ensure someone else does not have to endure the same situation I experienced.

Gianna Miller has been swimming competitively for 10 years, and she is the president of the school math club. She also volunteers with a local rehab center. Gianna will be attending Brown University in the fall, where she has committed to the swim team and plans to study neuroscience. She is especially interested in the wide-ranging effects of addiction and other neurological and psychological disorders.

Myla Miller

12th Grade, Berea-Midpark High School

"Hey, guys, we should braid each other's hair!" I hear as I come down the vibrant-colored slide on our elementary school playground. I assumed there was a group decision to end our infamous game of tag, and I was relieved since I was getting a bit burned out. As I followed the rest of the girls I was playing with, they all sat down in a line, one girl behind the other, twirling their fingers throughout their long, silky hair.

I've always wanted to have my hair braided, but since it was a bit of a task at home, I thought it would be nice to finally have someone else do it, especially one of my peers. However, as I sat down in front of another girl, I was told that my hair was "weird" and "too rough." At the time, I didn't completely understand what they meant by that and overlooked how they rudely dismissed me from the "hair-braiding line." Throughout the rest of the day, I did wonder if what they said was true. Is my hair really that weird? Eventually, I began to wonder why I wasn't good enough to be included; was there something wrong with me?

Later that day, I pleaded with my mom to straighten my coarse hair, since I was determined to be in the next "braiding line" the following day at school. I could tell my mom was taken aback by my new request, and I explained to her why this was so important: so that I could finally fit in. With a look of concern, she said something to me that I will forever carry: "Baby, you don't need to change who you are to fit in; you are beautiful just the way you are, and if people can't see it, then you just keep doing you." From then on, I realized that I did need to be myself. At the time, I was willing to do whatever it took to be a part of something that really wasn't meant to be; however, having that discussion with my mom truly did help with finding self-acceptance.

I believe we can find "light" in these situations by having these conversations with our young black girls to instill that it's okay to be different—it's what makes us special. I want to shine my light for positive change in my community by forming discussions for not only young black women but also for other women of color who have struggled with discrimination just because of their appearance. I am currently a member of my high school's "Realizing Your Potential" program, a group that encourages diversity and inclusion in our student body. I truly believe that if a safe space is created through this program for young women of color to discuss hair and colorism and promote self-love, many of us will be able to conquer those dark obstacles of discrimination in order to see that we all really do shine.

Myla Miller is absolutely in love with fashion, her soul is filled with music, and she loves to bake! Her favorite subject is science, and she's studied Spanish for 5 years. Myla is Jamaican, and she loves her Caribbean culture. In the fall Myla plans to attend Kent State University in the Honors College. She then plans to earn a degree in medicine and become a dermatologist to promote self-care for her patients.

Aditi Sanghavi

12th Grade, Aurora High School

"Have you seen the tweets yet?" my friend rushed to ask me as I walked into my government class that morning. Naturally, I had no idea what was going on, so I asked, unprepared for what was to come. She held up her phone, and her brightly lit screen illuminated my face as my jaw dropped in awe. Tweet after tweet, she scrolled. Some were violent statements telling a girl to kill herself while criticizing the color of her skin, and others targeted LGBTQ students, calling them slurs. I looked up from the phone and saw the culprit of the hateful messages walk through the door and sit in his seat as if nothing had happened. How could he not have any remorse?

The tweets got leaked to the principal immediately. I and many others wondered what the punishment would be for the boy. Soon, we discovered he had gotten suspended for three measly days. That's all he got after the harm he had caused? Then, I remembered there is a reason: he is a wealthy, white male. I watched as male peers in my government class clapped when he returned from his suspension. I knew that if I or another student like me had committed a similar act, the punishment and reactions would have been far worse.

There, I realized how unjust my school actually was—how it strongly favored the rich, white people. I also finally understood how oblivious my classmates were to blatant harassment and discrimination, all because they cared what others thought of them. While the girls at my school began to fight for the victims, the boys continued to interact with him. Although I wasn't directly friends with the people targeted, I still stood by their sides, giving them support.

I had lost all faith in my school. I thought all hope was lost and we had officially gone dark. However, I was proved wrong. I realized that I should not be focusing on the people who are ignorant, but rather the ones who are fighting for change. They acted as the beacon of light in the momentary darkness. I knew I also had to reflect and take action. Luckily, I could use my resources to my advantage.

I began Z Club, a women empowerment club, in my sophomore year. The club works to advocate for women's rights, educate others, and create awareness. Because of this injustice, I knew that Z Club could be used as illumination for the future to prevent situations like this. I hope through this club we encourage others to take a stand for what they believe in, no matter the judgments received. We need to stop acting on others' principles and start acting on our own to become our own light.

Aditi Sanghavi is president of Z Club, a woman empowerment club at her school. She has participated in Bharatanatyam, Indian Classical Dance, for more than 11 years and is on track to complete her Arangetram (a dance "graduation ceremony") in the summer of 2023. Aditi hopes to attend college on a pre-law track and then attend law school to become a lawyer.

Kyle Carroll

10th Grade, Hudson High School

A great example of an injustice in the world today is the current war in Ukraine. I cannot think of anything that could be much worse than invading another country for no reason other than to conquer, kill, and destroy. In addition to all the suffering in Ukraine, it is an injustice how the people of Russia are being lied to about this war by their dictator and by the leader of the Orthodox Church in Russia. The patriarch who leads the Russian Orthodox Church has condoned the invasion and called it a "holy war," even though the Orthodox Church condemns war. The patriarch's closeness to the Russian president has intimidated many Russian priests into remaining silent about the war. In addition to this, many churches in Ukraine are under this patriarch, so he has supported the killing of his own parishioners.

Reading about how the Patriarch of Moscow is allowing his church to be corrupted really disturbed me. My family attends an Orthodox church, and what this patriarch has been saying is definitely not what the Orthodox Church teaches. I was glad my parish is not under this patriarch! I was very disappointed, because if the patriarch had spoken out against the war, the Russian people would have believed him. I feel that since he did not speak out against the war, the blood of all those who have been killed in this war is partly on his hands.

I think "light" is a good metaphor. In darkness we can't see where we are going or what we are doing. In light, we can see the correct path to take and also all the wrong paths to take. In this tragic situation, I think we can find light in how the world has stepped up to support Ukraine. We are shining our light by letting the world, and Russia, know that killing thousands of people in a war of conquest is totally unacceptable. By assisting Ukraine, we are letting the people of Ukraine know that we support them and potentially preventing many more people from dying.

We can find light in the way the Ukrainian people have withstood so much suffering and have defiantly fought back against the attacks. Another example of light is in an article I read about a priest in Russia who did stand up and denounce the war, and got in a lot of trouble because he did have the courage to speak out and shine his light on what is happening. Because the Russian government tried to suppress his message, it was made even louder.

Kyle Carroll enjoys reading and learning about history, science, and current events. He runs for the high school cross country and track teams, and he is a member of the high school choir. Kyle likes to cook, play piano, and spend time with his family. He plans to attend college in Ohio to study math or science, as well as international history to help people understand what is going on in the world so we can improve it.

Ezra Ellenbogen

10th Grade, Shaker Heights High School

It's pretty typical to find out that something you thought of as common knowledge is actually not. Usually, it can be a silly moment of realization. However, during my ninth-grade history class, it was a moment of troubling revelation. Growing up as a Jewish child, I was always well-educated on the Holocaust. When we reached the Holocaust in my Global Studies class, I was interested to see how the coverage of the event might differ from what I had been taught at Sunday School. What I wasn't expecting was a very short summary with a few non-analytical questions attached. I was shocked that we did not read any first-hand accounts or engage in serious reflective discussion. The Holocaust was just another event to memorize in our curriculum. I walked out of class sick to my stomach. I felt like my ancestors' history was being erased. I felt like my teacher failed to understand just how vital proper Holocaust education is to students' development.

In general, people grow up trusting what they learned in school. When coverage of the Holocaust is inadequate, students will grow up without much of a recognition of how the Holocaust happened (which can lead to denialism) and without recognition of why. They will not recognize the signs of subtle bigotry, propagandism, and scapegoating that are all too common in today's political environment and exist parallel to the strategies of indoctrination that led to Hitler's rise to power.

We need a public that is capable of understanding the origins and antidotes to fascist tendencies, and our best avenue for imbuing this understanding is our public school system. Students who understand more about the history of the Holocaust will be less likely to fall for antisemitic propaganda, and therefore the connection

between better Holocaust education systems and a less antisemitic

population is clear.

I believe there is always the chance of light in such sorrowful situations. To me, the metaphor of light in a dark situation signifies finding a way out. In a dark room without a light, we can always turn on a flashlight. In situations of despair, hopelessness, ignorance, and bigotry, there is always some way out, because none of these is a natural characteristic of our lives. My own attempt at shining light into the room was taking decisive action to spread awareness. Not only did I discuss the issue with my peers to ensure they understood the signs of fascist beliefs and the dangers of misunderstanding the Holocaust, but I wrote an in-depth paper highlighting the current nationwide inadequacy of Holocaust education curriculum.

The paper was shared with a local curriculum director, with whom I had a productive discussion on the issue. By shining a light, I hoped to not only honor the memories of Holocaust victims, but also to help ensure protection for future generations. I, myself, will feel much safer in a world in which everyone understands their duty to combat the irrational fear and hatred of Jewish Americans.

Ezra Ellenbogen loves reading and writing, especially nonfiction. They love to learn about and discuss philosophy, literature, and history. Ezra values contributing to their community by volunteering at the Shaker Nature Center, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, and the Kid's Book Bank. They also love to travel to Israel, especially for the food and the abundance of cats in Tel Aviv. Ezra plans to become a professor of philosophy or English, as well as a prolific author and committed political activist.

Katie Smith

9th Grade, Firelands High School

In 8th grade I made friends with a group of people who were kind and helped me when they could. Something was different about them. They dressed a little differently, they listened to different music, and they had different tastes when it came to decorating their bedrooms. We were considered the "emo girls" of our class. We shared our English class with the "popular girls," so we stayed in our own lane in that class and didn't associate with them.

One day during English class, my friends and I were sitting in the corner on the beanbag chairs working on our essays. We didn't realize until our lunch period that something bad had happened. I received a frantic text from one of my old friends who was in the popular clique. "Katie, Katie! Georgia took a picture of you and your friends in class and posted it with an awful caption!"

"What?" I was stunned.

I asked my friend to send me the picture, and it really was horrible. The caption said, "The Suicide Squad," and it was of us peacefully working on our essays in English class earlier that day. I skipped lunch, and my best friend and I went to the office and reported the picture. I don't know what happened to the girl who took the picture, but I hope she had the day she deserved.

Saying hurtful things about people who could be struggling is wrong, and it happens more often than it should. This behavior can cause people to react in harmful or destructive ways that they may later regret. My friends and I were hurt by Georgia's picture and accompanying caption. We weren't ever suicidal. We just looked different from other kids, and there is nothing wrong with being who you truly are.

Finding light in situations where it is mostly dark is definitely a difficult thing to do. Something that helped me find the light was learning to be persistent in my beliefs and to never let someone get to my emotions. One way that I started and continue to do this was by dressing in ways that make me feel comfortable in my personality. I encourage people in my community to be who they truly are and never let the haters get to them.

Creating a safe environment for people who are different from society's normal is important to make people feel comfortable and to prevent incidents like what happened to me from happening to other people. One way to do this is to be more accepting of things that aren't considered "normal." Stepping out of your comfort zone and being unique is a great tactic for breaking down social norms and helping others do likewise. We can help people feel more included in society by becoming more open-minded to different styles and people.

Together we can stop the hate, one day at a time.

Katie Smith loves bowling; she competes not only for her school but in personal tournaments as well. She enjoys vacationing with her family in Florida and looking for seashells. Katie's favorite subject in school is biology, because she likes the way it challenges her. Katie puts a lot of time and effort into improving her bowling skills, and in the future she hopes to win a state title for bowling.

Isabella Swol

9th Grade, Hawken School

My grandmother and I are very close. Thanks to her, I am now a very talkative person. I have grown up knowing to never be afraid of asking questions and wondering about the world around me. Through the questions I have asked, I've had the opportunity to learn things about my family and my grandmother's life. My grandmother was born in Pennsylvania in 1944 to a seamstress and a paint store owner. She was the middle child of five and moved to Ohio when she was little. She grew up and eventually went to college in France in the 1960s. That's how she met my grandfather, who was stationed with the American Air Force in Germany during the Vietnam War.

Something I distinctly remember from asking these questions is that my grandmother's father employed a man who was African American. She told me that he was a hard worker and a good employee, and he eventually bought the shop from my great-grandfather when he retired. However, one day he went over to my grandmother's house for lunch. Naturally, her mother served him lunch on a plate, but when he left, she threw the plate into the garbage. At this time my grandmother would have been a child. She told me she would never forget this moment, and she hasn't. Nothing was wrong with the plate, and she knew then and there it was because of his race.

When I found out about this action I must have been around eleven years old. It made me reflect on the segregation and stereotypes African Americans faced throughout the 1800s and 1900s and currently today. Even though our society is nowhere near perfect, it made me notice the progress we can see today, and be aware of. To this idea, I think the light in this situation is that my grandmother grew up to be a kind woman who is full of love and endearment. I view her as a role model for this reason.

I hope to let my light shine as she does and be a kind person to all. Everyone deserves to be loved and have equitable chances in life. Shining my light allows others to be included and feel as if they belong in the world, which they do. Something I already do to shine my light is volunteering in two different places after school. I help tutor children in an underprivileged area and volunteer at a program with physically disabled children. I believe the world was made for all of us, and I think that helping people who may not have the same opportunities as I do might help bring people closer together.

I think the main idea I can conclude from my grandmother's story is that the world we live in has had its dark moments, but

story is that the world we live in has had its dark moments, but to overcome those moments is to show we acknowledge the mistakes we have made in the past so we can move towards

making a bright future for all.

Isabella Swol is interested in reading, drawing, and photography. She loves to travel and see various parts of the world. Isabella plays soccer and softball at school. Outside of school she volunteers at Youth Challenge and tutors at a learning center in Chagrin Falls Park. Isabella hopes either to use her literary talents to become an author or to use her talents in math and art to become an architect.

Ritika Iyer

8th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

"What is that? Sour cream?"

"No, it's-"

"I personally wouldn't want to eat that."

August of 2017 was when I moved to the United States for the second time in my life. Having lived in India five years prior, I was still not used to the customs and mannerisms of Americans. Lunchtime in third grade was really when I got to absorb everything; these new sights and sounds taught me a lot and helped me to fit in more. What did not help me fit in, however, was my lunches.

Every day I brought Indian food to school, a cuisine that not too many people at the time were familiar with. One look at my food would spur questions upon questions, making me really flustered. All of them were very obviously condescending, which didn't help. Do I answer the question and make it weirder than it needs to be or make people mad by circumventing the situation? These thoughts always swirled through my head because, at the time, making myself appear normal to other people was my top priority.

Unfortunately, these stares and questions did eventually make me stop eating my food: my wonderful, delicious food that my mom woke up early every morning to make. The guilt in my chest only continued to build, but at the time I would have rather been like everyone else instead of embracing my culture.

depriving myself of nutrition and good food.

In a place like America where we're in our own box in terms of cultures, it's very easy to side-eye the things other people do and judge them for it. The initiative that I can take to become more aware of other cultures is to ask about them, and not judge people for it. Many people in my area are Jewish, so they take a lot of days off toward the beginning of the year. Because of this, I have come to know a lot more about Jewish holidays,

Sure enough, I started to be left alone when my food wasn't present to everyone. I was happy but very internally conflicted because I was

and this is just one culture. In general, by just asking the simple question "What do you do for this holiday?" or "What is this food?" I can become more aware about world cultures. It also makes it easier for me to understand other people and the things they do rather

than judging them for it.

Your culture shouldn't be something that shames you; it should be something you display and are proud of. It is unfortunate that, as Americans, we are in the dark about our peers and their ethnicities. If in the vast expanse of blackness, I can be a tiny shimmering light that sheds some light on this topic, I will be taking the initiative to help Stop the Hate.

Ritika lyer loves to cook, play tennis, and learn about world languages. Biology is one of her favorite subjects in school. In the future she may work in a data analysis field. In her spare time, Ritka also wants to travel the world and experience new cultures.



Annaya Jain

8th Grade, Beachwood Middle School

"Stop honking your dang horn, kid!" My brother had honked the horn once. Well, maybe not once, but not enough to get bothered by. I would assume that these people had never had kids before; my brother was only 8 years old. These would be the acts of any ordinary child. But my brother isn't ordinary.

He's more than ordinary—extraordinary perhaps. He's had behavioral problems his whole life and is definitely on the spectrum somewhere. So many people have neglected him in so many places without even knowing his story. "I don't wanna sit next to you, you have problems!" The words of his own classmates in school.

"Hey kid, you're on my driveway again. SCRAM!" Our neighbor. Cruel, cruel neighbor, who seemed like he hated kids (especially my brother, apparently). My little brother has this electronic red car that he rides around the neighborhood, and he is very famous for it. It's like everyone in the neighborhood knows him as the "kid who rides that red car around." Every single day, this neighbor comes out and starts screaming at my brother for riding the car around his house. I'm shocked at how much he cares—it can't be bothering him that much. Consistently screaming at an 8-year-old boy with no regrets. Because of how far the situation went, my mom even had to call the cops. I was horrified at how careless and cold-hearted people can be, even with kids on the spectrum. They don't understand how hard life can be with a child with severe delays.

All of this just makes me feel bad for my poor little brother and especially mad at these kinds of people. Whenever these things happen, I always ask myself how people can be so heartless. It's easy to tell if someone is slightly on the spectrum

or not—and that's okay! Everyone is different, with different abilities, disabilities, and conditions.

We need to turn this community into a world that shows care and compassion towards everyone: people of different backgrounds, different sizes, races, genetics, and on the spectrum. The innumerable times that I've seen my brother being screamed at, humiliated, neglected, or hated on has made me want to strive for a change for the better, more and more each time. Of course, when the situation is dealing with adults, my parents take care of it, but whenever I witness something like this in front of my eyes, I am determined to make a change.

In response to these events, I have made it my duty to educate anyone disrespecting kids with autism and disabilities. I can be the light source, and by enlightening people on this topic, I can eventually spread this light for change. Together, we can light up this huge community called Earth and strive to

really stop the hate.

Annaya Jain enjoys graphic design, coding, and computer science. She is interested in biology, math and also likes writing. She plays tennis and is a member of the Science Olympiad and MATHCOUNTS clubs. In her free time Annaya loves listening to music and spending time with family. She visits her family in India every year. In the future Annaya plans to design and code platforms, databases, and websites, possibly related to the genetic/biomedical sciences.

Olivia Piazza

7th Grade, Learwood Middle School

I can hear the words that people speak, but I'm not sure if others can hear. I've heard hurtful comments spoken loudly as if it's a proud thing to say. It feels like I'm drowning in a pool of hate. No one sees me drowning and yelling for help.

Racial microaggressions are offensive, unjust, racist beliefs that can be said intentionally or unintentionally. Unfortunately, I understand too well. One day in class, a boy blurted "Ching Chong" when an Asian man appeared in the video. Everyone laughed.

I was so uncomfortable and aggravated. Being half Korean and understanding the struggles my mother and grandparents faced because of their race, I was really hurt by that comment. The mocking wasn't intended for me, but in reality it was. Obviously, my classmates had no regard for me. At that moment, I could finally realize the pain my mom probably went through when people made fun of her eyes. Then I could feel the hurt of my imagination—the realization of how many others in real time are feeling the same pain, if not more.

I quickly searched for the only person in the room who could make this stop. I looked over at my teacher, who clearly saw and heard everything. There she was, watching and choosing to do NOTHING.

When my own teacher, who is responsible for the culture of our classroom, chose to stand down, how was I supposed to stand up? I was the outsider, overreacting to a joke.

behavior was acceptable, and this allowed the class to continue racial microaggressions and forced me to rationalize it as just a joke. Luckily not all stay silent. Recently, a teacher told a boy in class to quiet down. He called her a racist. Our teacher explained how using the term racist unrelated to the situation or as a joke was making fun of racism, and people die from racism every day. The aggravated boy angrily and ignorantly replied, "How?" She said, "Defenseless, innocent people get shot or get assaulted just because of their race or religion." She mentioned George Floyd. He replied that Floyd deserved it. My teacher demanded more information about Floyd. The boy tried to be funny and started looking for facts on the Chromebook. She called him a racist. When she took the time to address his behavior, it gave me such relief. She truly advocates for all students and expects us to be good people. She gave

What was I supposed to do? The teacher showed us that this

As I write, I realize I can stand up for someone else, but I'm still afraid to stand up for myself. I think it's because when I stand up for someone else, there's two of us. We stand together. But if I stand up for myself, I stand alone and it's scary. Hopefully, when I face this again, I'll choose to speak up, but I hope someone else chooses to stand with me.

me hope. Can I stand up too?

Olivia Piazza likes to draw and create art. She also loves to read; her favorite book series is *Percy Jackson*. Olivia's favorite places to visit are Disney World and the beach. She is considering becoming a doctor in the future, and making time for fun in her own art studio.

Tia Tian

7th Grade, Hathaway Brown

I can't always be perfect. That's my first thought as the scores are projected on the screen for the Kahoot game we just played. I know what it'll say, and I have a sinking feeling that I know what'll happen next. Cheering and laughter fill my ears and then the shouting starts. "I beat her!" "Ha! She didn't win!" "OMG!" "She isn't first!" These are the words that I hear, but in my head I hear the hidden meaning behind their words. "I'm better than her." "She lost." "She isn't good enough." On the outside I'm smiling and laughing along, but on the inside I'm sinking a little deeper into the part of my mind that believes and agrees with all the words they don't say.

Their words were fists punching me until I was black, blue, and bloody. I wanted to run to the bathroom and cry, but I didn't want to let them know how their words affected me. My teacher had just turned on the light, and as the ceiling lights glowed like fireflies in the night, the laughter finally faded and my whirlwind of thoughts and emotions started to calm.

Some part of me realizes that what they're doing is wrong and that it doesn't matter what they say. I also know that I don't have to be perfect all the time, but three years ago I was someone who was always looking for approval from people. I had grown up with Asian-American parents that had raised me to always get good grades and do the best. To me, that meant that I had to do everything right, get every question right, and get a perfect score on everything. Somewhere along the way, I think that my classmates had started believing that me making a mistake was some kind of miracle and something to be pointed out, shouted about, and something to have a spotlight shone at for everyone to see.

Looking back, I'm glad that it happened even though I was young. I'm glad because it taught me to be strong and to believe in myself even if nobody else does. It also taught me how to be confident with myself and be happy with my best and not others' best. Though I've moved on, I'll always remember how that one moment completely changed my opinions and perspective. I'll always remember how I had started dreading the class I used to love and how I started getting panicky and anxious every time we played the game.

At my school, we have affinity groups for many minority groups, and I'm part of the Asian affinity group. I want to be able to shine a light on this bias toward Asian-Americans and show people that it happens and how it affects people. I also want to tell people about the lasting effects these incidents have on the victims so that we might all be able to help make a change and maybe make someone's day a little brighter.

Tia Tian plays the piano and likes going to museums. She enjoys all her classes at school. Tia really wants to see the Eiffel Tower and to go to Italy. She wants to improve on everything she does now so she can make use of her talents and interests in the future.

Grace Claassen

6th Grade, Hudson Middle School

Did you wear a mask? Did you not? This was the million-dollar question during the COVID-19 pandemic. But the real question is, does it matter enough to hate ANYONE?

The school year of 2020–2021, my school gave the option of doing virtual school and my parents took the opportunity. When I came back the next year, my parents enrolled me in a mask-required classroom instead of mask-optional. In that year, I was shocked at how many people showed hatred toward those who "masked." I was also shocked at the number of people who showed hatred toward those who "unmasked." Masks are there simply to keep people safe, and whether or not a person wears them is simply an opinion of how effective they are. The purpose of masks is safety, not hate. They are a small garment; how can something so small be a sign of such great hate? When I talked to my friends, sometimes they would say things like, "Why won't you just take your mask off? It's safe, who cares what your parents think!" Or they said, like it was a bad thing, "Oh right, you're in a masked class." On the other hand, the kids in my mask-required class would talk about how "stupid" and "unsafe" it was to unmask. They were arguing over a belief, an opinion, a value, and yet, hate.

Did the world always hate this much? I believe the answer is no. Every time someone hates someone or something for any reason it spreads. Moreover, when the world shut down, hatred spread more than ever. Why? For a very simple reason: because there was an overlap, two VERY different things overlapped and became a stereotype that

fueled hate. The stereotype was that anyone who wore a mask must be a Democrat and anyone who didn't must be a Republican. Political parties are divided right now in our country. When political matters overlap health and safety concerns, then it causes another huge divide. Most people think that their party is superior to the other one, so most people value their opinion more than anyone else's.

Kids follow what their parents say, and if their parents choose hate then that hate will spread. Ruby Bridges once said, "Hate is a grown-up disease." What she meant by this was that adults are the ones who spread it. She said no one is born hating anyone. So if one chooses to hate, then many more will choose hate.

Personally, I am a very privileged person. I have not experienced much hate past what I have described here. As someone with as much privilege as I have, I have to use it to let my light shine. I cannot use my privilege against others. If there is any way to let my light shine, to stop the hate, it is to be the light, to influence others in ways against hate. By doing this we can make love the ever-spreading disease not just for adults but for everyone.

Grace Claassen plays soccer for the Hudson United Soccer Club and trumpet in the 6th grade band. Grace also enjoys playing piano, reading, petting her guinea pig, and eating candy. This summer she wants to earn her sailing certification. In the future, Grace wants to be a microbiologist or a biochemist.

Stella Sipos

6th Grade, Hudson Middle School

Have you ever had a friend who was a bully but stayed friends with them so you would not get bullied too? Because I did. She would throw food at people, push people, and hog the playground equipment to herself. I sadly did nothing about it, and I regret staying quiet about it. I stayed her friend because I did not want to be the victim of her bullying too. I just didn't know how to say I didn't want to be her friend anymore. I was actually scared of my friend. My friend would get really jealous if I had other friends, so I had no other friends but her. I would try to make friends, but she would just bully them too. Since I did nothing to help my new friends from her wrath, they did not want to be my friend anymore and I couldn't blame them.

One day I decided it was enough. I don't know what gave me the courage that day, but I told her, "If you keep being a bully to other people, I don't want to be your friend anymore." Standing up to her really made her mad. She was so mad that she pushed me to the floor. I was shocked. Why would she do that, and especially someone who was my friend. From that day on, I became the person she bullied the most. I ignored it, and eventually she got bored and started bullying other people. After she would walk away from the other people she was bullying, I would go up to them and tell them to ignore her, because then she would get bored and stop.

I tried to talk with my teacher about this girl who was being a horrible bully to me and friends, but she did not believe me. I talked with my mom, and she believed me and helped me by talking to my teacher. With the help of my mom, who emailed the teacher and gave her examples of what this bully was doing, we stopped it.

Bullying happens for many different reasons. I think the number one reason people bully others is not having confidence in themselves. Bullies look for people's weaknesses. Bullies could be deflecting onto others, so you can't see how they are possibly hurting inside too.

I learned a lot from this experience, on what to do and what not to do when dealing with a bully. I will never be afraid to stand up to a bully again. If my friend was being a bully, I would tell them that they were out of line. If I was the one being bullied, I would not be afraid to stand up for myself anymore. I have learned that if you can't handle the situation by yourself, it is okay to get a trusted adult involved. That could include a principal or your parents. This is not tattle-telling. It helps you if you can't get the problem solved yourself.

Stella Sipos loves all animals, especially horses. She takes horseback lessons and is learning to jump in the style of English riding. Another of her passions is rollercoasters, and her goal is to ride all the giga coasters in the country before reaching high school. Stella would like to work with animals in some way, maybe by becoming a large-breed veterinarian.

ABOUT STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT

Voices United for Social Change

More than 1,000 students from 75 classrooms in 11 schools worked collaboratively within their classes to pen and perform songs for *Stop the Hate® Youth Sing Out*, an arts-integrated learning initiative that asks students to share their thoughts on discrimination after taking an in-person or virtual "Stop the Hate" Maltz Museum tour and a virtual "Power of Music and Protest" Rock & Roll Hall of Fame tour. 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.





Behind the Scenes Photos from Songwriting Workshops









2023 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS

"Where Does the Fault Lie?"

Kari Beery's 6th Period Class, Mayfield High School FIRST PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

Bullets rain we drop to the floor Were the comments really worth the war? Distorted values and ugly things said Morph to regrets in the days ahead

Chorus:

Words are bullets Words trigger guns Words are piercing Don't Stop... Run!

It doesn't make sense; yes words cut deep But now they're shooting back at rapid speed It doesn't make sense how small things said Could turn to bullets flying towards our heads

Chorus

If only someone had a change of heart Fewer lives would have fallen apart Can it be solved with words? Or do laws have to change? Schools become a shooting range

Taking action through kind things said Could bring harmony in the days ahead Yes, we should be kind; lift each other high But at the end of the day, where does the fault lie?

"Life is Full of Color"

William Lawton's 1st Period Class, Midview High School RUNNER-UP HIGH SCHOOL

100 to 1 hated for things out of your control
Don't care to understand getting too comfortable
There are always people saying that you're this or that you're that
But it feels as if it's from the draw of a hat

Everywhere you turn, feelings are so tense I guess there is that saying that ignorance is bliss

Chorus:

Life is full of color, why would you hide it Life is full of color, from red to violet Like lights in the dark, we're alive

We are all one, think of the things you really can control Hold the door, flash a smile, make others comfortable There are no people who should be made to feel alone We all deserve an equal pull from the wishbone

Everywhere you turn, feelings are so tense I don't understand how all of this makes sense

Chorus

It's not black and white, why do we have to put up a fight It seems so obvious, it's whats inside of us

Chorus





2023 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS



Mayfield High School FIRST PLACE HIGH SCHOOL Recipient of a \$3,500 Anti-Bias Education Grant Congratulations to Kari Beery's 6th Period Class

Midview High School RUNNER-UP HIGH SCHOOL Recipient of a \$2,000 Anti-Bias Education Grant Congratulations to William Lawton's 1st Period Class





Milkovich Middle School
FIRST PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Recipient of a \$3,500 Anti-Bias Education Grant
Congratulations to Mary Matisak's
5th Period, 3rd Quarter Class

Newton D. Baker School of Arts RUNNER-UP MIDDLE SCHOOL Recipient of a \$2,000 Anti-Bias Education Grant Congratulations to Tamara Blair's 7th Grade, 1st Period Class



2023 STOP THE HATE® YOUTH SING OUT WINNERS

"Harmony"

Mary Matisak's 5th Period, 3rd Quarter Class, Milkovich Middle School FIRST PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Chorus (x2):

Harmony is music to my ears When we come together there's no fears I got no tears 'cause my brothers are here Real is real, and that's what it is

Let's come together for peace forever Let's forget about the hate, we could make the world better We wanna see a change, change like the weather Stay unified and fight to keep peace in our center

We can't split apart, we gotta stay together
If I say you're my brother, you're my brother forever
We're protectors, take care of each other
So if you play with my brother then it's up with whatever

It's too much violence, let's stop being mindless We gotta put the differences and problems behind us Stop all the killing, the hate's becoming timeless So we gotta try to fight it til the sun ain't shining

Chorus (x2)

Let's fight for rights, the time is right We gon shine forever and ever and that's without the lights We stay together no matter the type We gon always stand together, we gon put up a fight

Let's make the world a community
We're all unique it's time we live in unity
Togetherness is what we need and receive
We know love, hope and peace is the key to be free

And harmony can help make us great Release us from hate and any love that is fake We need change now, the world cannot wait We gotta come together, if we wanna see change

Chorus (x2)

"Respect is a Two-Way Street"

Tamara Blair's 7th Grade, 1st Period Class, Newton D. Baker School of Arts RUNNER-UP MIDDLE SCHOOL

We were talking
I was being respectful
Then all of a sudden
You made me feel resentful
Respect goes both ways
In life you get what you give
Just be nice and let people live

Chorus:

In peace and love Just be free like the birds above You don't need to judge me Just let me be free Respect is a two-way street

Hate is a vast sea
Love is an infinite thing
You haven't seen what I've seen
Hate is a person without a team
Hate is a sword unsheathed
Look at the bigger picture please
Can you hear our dream, let people live

Chorus (x2)

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