



Do the Write Thing

Zanesville



2022

Zanesville City School District
middle-schoolers share how
violence has touched their lives
and how they choose peace



DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

As Ohio's Attorney General, I am so pleased to have partnered with the Zanesville City School District for the *Do the Write Thing* program. In the district's first year to participate in the program, Zanesville students hit it out of the park!

I am amazed by the passion, thoughtfulness and self-awareness these middle-school students brought to their writings. Their words are powerful, and their commitment to making this world a better place is inspiring.

Talking about violence isn't easy. But shining light on the uncomfortable reality in many of our homes, schools and communities is critical to turning the tide and creating a brighter tomorrow. These students are our future, and we need to listen to their voices. In Zanesville, we hear you loud and clear!

I encourage everyone to take time to read the essays in this book. You may be surprised by what you learn, but I know the students' work will leave you proud and optimistic about the generations to come.



Yours,


DAVE YOST
Ohio Attorney General

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

It is both a pleasure and an opportunity for Zanesville City Schools and Zanesville Middle School to have been selected to partner with Mr. Dave Yost and the Attorney General's Office to provide our students a voice in *Do the Write Thing*.

This national writing program provides a platform for our students to express how they have been personally affected by difficult challenges that are mostly outside their control and to describe potential solutions to those challenges.

It is both heartbreaking and inspiring to read stories written through the eyes of a 14-year old — and, for the adults in the community and beyond who have the power to make positive and lasting changes, to again view the community through the eyes of a teenager.

It is our hope that these insights will initiate the momentum needed to encourage us all to become leaders in creating the type of communities we desire to live in.

Sincerely,

DOUG BAKER, Ed.D.

Superintendent
Zanesville City School District



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This book contains a compilation of writings by Zanesville City School District middle-school students who were selected as the top 10 finalists of the 2022 Zanesville *Do the Write Thing* program. This book will be shared across the community in recognition of all the students who accepted the challenge to share their voices and help create a safer, more peaceful society.

Overview of Do the Write Thing

Do the Write Thing is a unique national program designed to give middle-school students an outlet to communicate in classroom discussions and then in writing how violence impacts their daily lives. In addition to exposing the causes and effects of violence, students are asked to share their ideas for how to reduce violence in their community.

The program asks students to express in stories, poems and songs, or any other written forms the violence they've faced, with an emphasis on exploring key questions:

- How does violence affect your daily life?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you as an individual do to reduce youth violence in your community?

The benefits of the challenge are many. Students gain a greater empathy and understanding for victims of violence and realize that their positive actions can make a difference in their own home, schools, and neighborhoods. Teachers gain a better awareness of what is happening in their students' lives and in the school culture. Community leaders benefit from greater understanding of the impact that violence has on youth and learn from the students' stories and ideas for reducing violence.

Do the Write Thing in Zanesville, Ohio

During the 2021-22 school year, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost partnered with the Zanesville City School District for the *Do the Write Thing* program. The program, in its second year in Ohio, was well received, with nearly 500 seventh- and eighth-grade students submitting essays.

Zanesville community and business leaders volunteered their time to read each essay and choose the 10 submissions most responsive to the key questions. From the top 10, two students were selected to become Ohio ambassadors to the national *Do the Write Thing* conference in Washington, D.C.

A special thank you to all of the community volunteers, teachers, principals and school administrators who helped make *Do the Write Thing* such a great success in Zanesville.



Do the Write Thing is the flagship program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence and has been in existence for 27 years. It operates programs in 28 cities in 17 states. Over the past 27 years, more than 1.2 million middle-school students have participated in the program.

National sponsors include the Kuwait-America Foundation, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, the Marriott Foundation and Southwest Airlines.



ESSAY 1

ABIGAIL BAISLEY

Zanesville Middle School

Why do we have to live in a world where youth violence is a thing? Violence is leaving its mark on our world and we're letting it. Potential world changing and inspiring voices are lost to violence. In fact, according to the 'Geneva World Health Organization' over 1.6 million lives are lost to violence per year. Violence is on the rise to becoming one of the top causes of death in people ages 15-44. And for what? We lost all of these lives because someone was upset?! That is unacceptable, sickening, and incredibly childish.

Growing up I have lived in an environment where it's getting progressively more unsafe to walk down the street by myself. I have witnessed a lot, drug deals, bloody fights, potential kidnappings, as well as creeps who like to get just a bit too close to my friends and I. I can recount dozens of stories of where I have felt unsafe and everytime I think, "why does it have to be like that?" Here's the truth, it doesn't. This writing contest is called 'Do the write thing' but may I ask, what is the right thing? Is the right thing telling on somebody who's done something wrong and getting called a snitch or a tattletale by your peers? Or is it defending yourself or someone else and getting punished for picking a fight with another person? Violence has affected my life so I don't know what's right or wrong, what's good or bad, or if anything is truly good. I feel uneasy around crowds of people because who knows if somebody is planning on attacking my friends or myself. I am quiet and I prefer to work alone. For this reason I have earned a collection of potentially hurtful nicknames and hurtful thoughts from people through the years. Including, nerd, potential school shooter, mute girl, weirdo, and my favorite phrase of all, "Oh I didn't even know you were in this class." They may be saying these things with the intention of joking, but these comments can hurt and can damage your self esteem. I have always gotten anxious when I have to talk in front of people, partially because I get worried that people won't like me if I talk too much. Kids like me have to live with this worry because of the verbal violence we have received from the people around us, whether they realize they're doing it or not.

What are the causes of youth violence? I believe that there is no one cause for why violence occurs, but rather a collection of reasons. Some children don't have the best upbringing. They may experience abuse at home and neglect. These kids who fight and bully may not realize just how wrong it is. Our personalities are influenced by the people around us, how we talk and act. These kids are projecting what they see.

Another reason youth violence is such a consistent problem is because nobody puts a stop to it. I've seen parents, teachers, and students just watch an argument or fight go on and not even try to put a stop to it. In reality, teens often encourage fights with their peers. These fights could be easily prevented if someone had told a teacher or parent what was going on. The problem is these parents and teachers don't help, at least not enough. They try to resolve a problem but in the end make a new problem. So we tend to not speak out and only do it as a last resort. However, fighting isn't the first choice either. It is often peer pressure that causes the fights. One person says you're weak if you don't fight, and the need to prove yourself appears. Lastly, the media plays a major role in this too. While posting pictures on your social media may seem harmless to you, others have to deal with the criticism and harassment that comes with it. I've had a friend who tried to commit suicide due to the harassment she received on her instagram posts. Students telling her to kill herself, and judging her looks. I don't plan on going to my friend's funeral anytime soon and I don't believe you're planning on going to yours either. It isn't just your friends, it could also be your child or sibling.

What can I do about youth violence? What can we do as a whole? We can use the media for good by spreading awareness of youth violence on the internet. People who aren't in school are not aware of how awful this problem is. We can spread positivity, it might just save a life or make someone's day brighter. You never know what other people are going through. We can try and stop the fights we see, fighting is not a solution, it's just an awful choice which will eventually lead to more issues. We can stand up for ourselves when faced with peer pressure. Friends don't do that to each other and if your "friends" do, just know there are better people out there who would love to have a friend. We can make children and teens feel more comfortable coming to parents, friends and teachers for help. Teachers can encourage students to talk to them with their problems and help them before it is too late.

Finally, we don't have to live in a world where youth violence is an issue. Together we can put a stop to the awful violence we've all sadly gotten used to. Only then can we all live in a world where we don't look over our shoulder for danger. We can walk down the streets without pepper spray or a rape whistle. We can feel safe around people unfamiliar to us. All of us can make it safer for the following generations to come. However, all of this won't be possible without your support and help. Help us stop youth violence, and live in a safer world before it is too late.



ESSAY 2

KAIDENCE BURKETT

Zanesville Middle School

According to *Why Incorporated*, “Over 3.2 million students are victims of bullying each year.” I am a student at Zanesville Middle School and I am a victim of bullying. I live in fear of what could happen at school. Living with the constant worry of what another student might do or say mentally drains me. After I had been threatened at school I have been afraid to walk the halls. I feel the constant need to look over my shoulder. I overthink which way I will walk to classes to avoid the bully, oftentimes making me late to class. After the most recent verbal assault I was anxious and afraid that she would actually do something. I replayed all the words in my head that she said to me that day, “I’ll beat you up”, “No one likes you”, “You don’t deserve anything”, “You can catch these hands”. I began to worry so much to the point where I just cried and panicked, not just panic but a full blown panic attack. I couldn’t breathe, I was suffocating in my own thoughts. I cried in my head but couldn’t get the words out. I was scared, I wasn’t alright, I didn’t feel safe. I wasn’t sure what to do, I felt like I was alone. I cried out for help, but no amount of words or reassurance could stop the hurt the bully had caused. You see fear, and worry is worse than the words of a bully.

Youth violence can be caused by a number of things. It could be how the child is treated at home, jealousy, the group of students the child is hanging out with or even thinking it’s “cool” to act in this way. For example, If a child is treated poorly at home the child would then grow up thinking that it’s okay to treat others that way. This can lead to bullying and picking on others. It can hurt many kids’ feelings. It may also cause them to be afraid

of trying to make friends and go to school. To stop this, schools need to talk about why bullying is unacceptable starting at a young age. This can help teach kids that it’s not okay or cool to act out in this way. It may also lower the amount of kids that get bullied yearly. Hopefully also result in how they treat themselves and encourage people to speak up and take action. Unfortunately many kids come to school to be loved. How can we do better You ask? Let’s all love one another. Realize that we are all different and that is okay. Embrace the wonderful craziness that makes us each human. No matter how we are treated, do not follow the lead and instead be kind. We need to find ways of breaking the cycle.

There’s many things that I can do to help stop youth violence. One thing I could do is, Stand up for others. If I notice another student being mean to someone I can step in or notify an adult. I feel this is important to help them because, I don’t want anyone to feel the way I have felt and feel. Nor should someone ever feel like they are alone and worthless, I want to be part of the solution and not the problem. I want to mentor other youth to be kind and speak up for themselves and others. Share a smile, a loving word, or do random acts of kindness. We need to make kindness cool again.

How would you feel if you were the one being bullied? I can tell you how I felt, worthless, hated, sad, scared, and alone. Negative words should not have this power. If you are someone who is being bullied I highly encourage you to reach out to a trusted adult. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. There is and always will be *HOPE*. In the words of *The Beatles* “All you need is love.”



ESSAY 3

TRU CAMPBELL

Zanesville Middle School

Laughing At You

Imagine getting a brand new pair of shoes for the first day of school. They may not be new but they're the nicest pair of shoes you've ever owned. You wear them proudly as you enter the school. A group of kids approach you and laugh. They point at your shoes and say they're off brand. How would this make you feel? How would you feel having every shred of confidence you had peeled away?

Things like this are pretty common in Zanesville, Ohio. They don't happen as often as they do in Columbus, but they still hurt a person all the same. At Zane Grey Elementary, violence affected us all one way or another.

I've seen fellow classmates leave and never come back. I've seen kids with the brightest personalities fall into pits of despair. At what point does laughing with you become laughing at you? At what point will someone not smile and laugh when you point out something about them?

In fourth grade at Zane Grey Elementary, there was a girl named Becca. Becca's family wasn't the wealthiest so they couldn't afford the things other kids owned. She was a prime victim of bullying by almost every other kid. People were too blind by materialistic items to realize that Becca was an extremely nice girl.

I vividly remember when our teacher promised a reward for us if we all came to school with finished homework. Every other kid in the class except for Becca had her homework done. I remember the groans and complaints when Becca said she didn't have her's done. This gave people another reason to bully her.

On the playground people treated her like she had a disease and if they touched her, their skin would fall off. And if anybody ever did touch her, they would be avoided by everyone as well, until they "passed it on" to someone else by touching them. This was an everyday

thing that happened and it changed Becca tremendously

When we had free time in math, our teacher brought out a art set for us to color and draw with. Another kid in our class asked Becca if they could use the oil pastels and all of a sudden she raised her voice at them, and threw the oil pastels at them before stomping off. The student had no intention of being mean to Becca and just asked if they could use the pastels. This is one of many examples of when Becca acted very ornery. She never used to act like this.

It was close to the end of the year when one day Becca was gone. There was no warning and she didn't tell anybody about her leaving. It turned out that her parents moved her to another school. Becca told this all to our gym teacher before she left. He gave us a very needed and long speech about how bullying can affect a person. After the talk he gave us, I saw a lot of kids change the way they act. After that day, I never heard anything about Becca and I guarantee all the kids most likely forgot about her the day after she left. Wherever she is now, I hope she doesn't have to go through what she did here. At Zane Grey, she was bullied, laughed at, and avoided by most. Its worrying that seeing the consequences of their actions finally make these kids feel a little bit bad about what they did, when all they had to do was feel a little sympathetic. All they had to do was put themselves in her shoes and think about how it affects her. Being kind to people is the bare minimum you can do for somebody. Something as simple as a smile or a compliment could turn somebody's whole world around. You don't necessarily need to be friends with everybody but a basic level of respect and and human decency should always be present. Next time you see somebody, I want you to smile at them, give them a compliment or even have a conversation with them. The positive impact this will cause is beyond anyone's imagination.



ESSAY 4

ELISE CLARK

Zanesville Middle School

Have you ever been afraid to leave your home, that someone might be out there waiting for a perfect chance to explode or that you might run into someone who just particularly doesn't like you? Violence is so common among us that most are more prepared for someone to attack them than they are for rain. Personally I have been surrounded by violence since I was a kid sometimes it would just be my family arguing or people yelling at me nothing that is seen as to bad in our society but the first time i've faced physical violence was when I was nine. Firstly I had just gotten home from school and it was my nephews birthday like most days I was in a bad mood because I was in a very depressive state with a lot of stress going on at both home and school. First thing I did when I got home was head straight for my room and not long after, my nephew came banging on my door asking me to hang out with him and I kept saying no but he didn't stop banging on the door until I opened it and yelled at him to stop. I'm not happy about the way I used to treat my nephew. Suddenly my sister who was babysitting him came and yelled at me for what I had said to my nephew then not a moment later came my older brother he was older than me, my sister, and my nephew and the first thing he did when he got up to my room was push me, I had fallen back a bit and hit my head right against my wood closet door and all I heard was different family members yelling at my brother, and that wasn't the end of his tangent but that was the last part I was included in I just sat in my room not sure what to do and scared about what I was meant to do. After my mom got home I didn't even want to be in my house. I just sat in her car waiting, not sure what I was waiting for but it never came. Even now im uncomfortable around my brother and whenever me my nephew and my brother are alone in room together me and my nephew always try to get out as soon as possible just us three being in a room together can remind me about what happened. Also it reminds me that my nephew had watched everything happen all on his birthday and I wouldn't be surprised if my nephew is reminded of the moment every time its his birthday because he always seems to remind me that he was there and he remembers it better than even I do, but thing I know for sure was that neither me nor my nephew got an apology.

Violence is something that we learn when in a state of fear

no matter how much humans like to separate from other animals in some ways we are still exactly like any other predator. Animals are known to get aggressive when backed into a corner and that's what we do and a lot of times we pass that anger to others. Kids are likely to be violent when they're scared of another cause of violence and it's a never ending cycle of fear. Nobody wants to be on the bottom of the food chain so we fight for our right to feel calm and without worry. The only way to stop violence is to find the source of why a person is developing anger. What we normally do is blame the violence on the person without trying to help them, violence is not something that can be excused but a lot of people probably feel unheard when no one can understand why they're angry. Most cant help others who are violent because of fear we don't understand that there is a reason for everything so instead of helping we yell we fight and we go right back to the beginning of the violent cycle. Also I can tell for a fact the reason my brother was violent towards me and my nephew was because there was a lot of stress in his life between his unhealthy relationship with his girlfriend and his nightjob he was at all the time and I wouldn't be surprised if he had trauma from his dad by the way my mom spoke of his dad but since my brother was dealing with this alone his emotions turned into anger. Since my brother was angry it had caused him to be violent and helped me find an excuse to myself for my anger towards him.

When we try to stop violence we talk about telling people to stop being violent but a way to stop violence is to make more safe and accessible places for people who are violent so they can try to figure out why they feel so angry and to stop the violence at the source. Another thing is that just telling someone that being violent is wrong, won't always change a person anger. Another thing is we can educate why someone might be violent whether its stress or something going at home or even at school, we need to let them know it's okay to talk to somebody and that there are places they can get help and schools need to enforce rules against violence because just giving someone a slap on the wrists for being violent will only make a new source of violence. Finally let's try to make it so the outside world doesn't have to be scary.



ESSAY 5

JOSEPH EWART

Zanesville Middle School

“When the power of love overcomes the love for power the world will know peace.” This is one of my favorite quotes because when violence is applied here, it’s no different. All violence is bad, especially youth violence. To fix that, we need to make a stand up against youth violence, so everyone can be safe, and not worry about it.

In a few ways, violence has affected my life, and those around me. Although I don’t see or receive too much violence, when it happens, it hits me hard emotionally. For me, it’s worse if I see it rather than receive it, because I am a humble person, and I care more about others’ lives, rather than my own. One time back in October, I was at a football game for our home team, and in the middle of the game, I heard rumors that a fight broke out, and what followed was swarms of people leaving the stands to video it. There, I didn’t think much of it, but now, I still don’t know the reason for the fight, so I wonder how and why it started, so I know how I should approach the situation if I come across it in person. I truly feel bad for these types of people, because the more they talk about the situation, the more likely it is to start violence over an issue. If this is what all problems lead to in the world, our planet will soon not be a safe place to live.

Lucky for me, I was able to grow up in a home where everyone cared and loved each other. But, I do know that some children, whether it be my age, younger, or older, aren’t as lucky as I am. This can lead them to steal, deal drugs, and teach themselves to survive. All of these can lead to violence if the wrong decisions are made. Context to the fight I was talking about earlier, I was walking up there about 5 minutes prior to the fight, and I soon came back down to the bleachers. When the fight was over, I learned that a police officer had

to stop the fight from going on. What makes me mad is what led them to violence, and why no one tried to stop the fight before the police officer came. While the fight was happening, instead of helping to stop the fight, most, what I believe because of the people coming out from the bleachers, took out their phones to video it. I say most, because some could be standing there, not knowing what to do, and others might be telling the police officer about the fight. Because I wasn’t there, I can neither confirm nor deny if that happened, but if it did, good on them for trying to stop the fight.

In this situation, people like me would stop at nothing to try to prevent the fight from going on any longer. That is why I like those people. Not because they are like me, but because they also want to prevent violence in the world. Although I can’t be everywhere at once, there are still a few ways I can help my area, including setting up a group of people to stop violence in school hallways, events, etc. I could also persuade the school to do an assembly about youth violence, and how to prevent it. One last thing I can do to stop youth violence is to have the school reward students for trying to stop a fight before authorized personnel arrive, with rewards such as a free day off school.

In conclusion, violence is everywhere. Nobody can deny that, whether it be country against country, country against its people, person against person, etc. But if nobody tries to stop all the violence, the world will be a much worse place than right now. Although one person can’t be everywhere in the world at the same time all at once, you can be a part of trying to repair the world. To repair the world by ridding all the world from violence, and make a world with peace across the planet.



ESSAY 6 | AMBASSADOR

TRIOVANNT'IAS LADD

Zanesville Middle School

We live in a great, big, beautiful world. One that is ruined by hate. All over the world people ruin it in many different ways. With drugs, alcohol, violence, and racism. Some people even ruin the lives of children with bullying. This has lead and still leads to different things like suicide. If not stopped it can lead them down a misleading path of pain which can ruin their lives. We need to stop this before our big beautiful world is no longer worth living in.

I was bullied mostly all throughout elementary school. I have spent most of my life so far thinking that I wasn't good enough, thinking that I wasn't worth it. And even though I felt like it, I knew I wasn't the only one. I know people go through this today, I know people go through things even worse. I know mothers and fathers cried every night knowing their child took their own life because they couldn't take it any more. And I know that most people that are suicidal don't really want to die, they just want the pain to end. And when they reach out, they don't get the help that they need.

I went through self harming, depression, low self-esteem, and overwhelming amounts of stress. The bullying that I experienced took me to extreme lows. But the worst part, I had no help. Everytime I would ask a teacher for help it was always "they're just teasing you" or "what do you want me to do about it". They made it clear, I was on my own. I had to handle it myself. But it got so bad to where I thought fighting was my only option. I was wrong. It only gave me a bad reputation to where even when I fought out of self-defence, I would always get in more trouble no matter what.

But I know I'm not the only one who went through this. I know that people go through things like this

and things that are worse every day. I know that when people finally reach out for help from a teacher or the principal, they get ignored. And when they get professional help, it is already too late. This needs to stop. People come to school so they can learn and only learn. They're growing up to hate school because they get treated so terribly. A teacher's job is to teach the students important things that they can use in their life so they can succeed and become great human beings. They can't learn anything if they are getting bullied, and they probably won't learn anything if they hate school. You're the adult, you have the power to handle it and if you don't understand that then you shouldn't be a teacher. People need help and most of the time they can't handle it themselves. Some of the things they experience are far worse than others. From bullying, to getting beat up, then just to straight abuse. I know a kid who got bullied because he painted his nails and he was a male. It isn't right, it isn't fair.

I believe that everyone deserves a healthy and fun childhood. They deserve to be treated right and to be respected. In order to stop this we need to speak up. If you see someone getting bullied, say something. If you see someone who needs help, do something. And if you're doing something as little as "teasing" someone, think about the consequences. Not the consequences of you getting caught, but what they might do to themselves. If they can't do it alone, then we need everybody to help. Because if everybody does something, only just saying something to the bullies. You might save a life. We are strong alone, but together, we are unstoppable. Stand up, speak up, help someone in any way, and you just might make our big beautiful world a little bit better.



ESSAY 7

CANDICE LEASURE

Zanesville Middle School

Not everyone is perfect nor does everyone have a perfect home, parents divorce, fight, argue etc. So therefore youth violence comes naturally when that's their home environment. I never had a perfect home either, my parents divorced, I was completely cut off from my mothers side of the family and I moved hours and hours away from my hometown.

Youth violence is unfortunately a normal thing in every community, it doesn't matter what background the kid comes from, how much money they have, or how good their doing in school it always depends on their home life and the people they surround themselves with.

Violence is common in my day to day life; you see fights in school, arguments, bullying, drama, and so on and so forth. I've personally experienced violence in several types of ways, growing up as a kid my parents always fought and argued and I was always in the middle of all of it. They've divorced of course but the yelling, and screaming, and throwing things always stuck with me.

Definitely one of the main causes of youth violence is absolutely bullying, hands down is the reason why youth violence is such a huge problem in today's society. Not every kid is gonna have the next best thing, or the newest pair of shoes, or the newest iphone that just came out. And of course when other kids who have those things know others can't afford those or can't get them they resort to bullying. They automatically feel

higher or above that person, just because they are able to have things others can't. I specifically remember a teen boy taking his own life due to severe bullying, and it's absolutely terrifying and depressing knowing it happens all the time. In my opinion there's many solutions to youth violence, for example: In order to stop bullying schools could resort to uniforms! If kids all wore the same thing it automatically doesn't matter who's wearing what. If everyone steps in and helps stop youth violence all together we would have a safe and loving community again.

I've always stepped into a situation where I have seen bullying, no matter who it is I'm dealing with or who is getting bullied themselves. I never want to see another kid go through what I did in elementary school. I could easily make an announcement, or tell the principal, teacher, just somebody about a situation I felt was unsafe for an individual. And it would be fixed immediately.

Youth violence is such a big deal in today's world, it's a really big issue and it needs to be recognized as a bigger problem than it is. The situation really gets no spotlight or recognition because we're just kids and it's considered normal for us to act out and get violent. When it's absolutely not. We have to do better and learn how to treat each other with more respect, and learn how to cope and find a better solution for youth violence.



ESSAY 8

DILLON RUSH

Zanesville Middle School

A chain reaction has been going around for a while now. This is a chain reaction with hate, smoking and drugs. This chain reaction has affected everyone. Let me explain:

The chain has gone on for quite a few reasons, one of which was the family of the people extending the chain. If their parents did drugs or smoked, their kids have a larger chance to do drugs or smoke. Kids usually look up to their moms or dads as role models. They might also look up to their brother or sister. If the parents and older siblings never did drugs or never smoked, the possibility of this would go down a lot.

Another reason the chain has gone on is because of all the hatred being thrown around in the world. A lot of the fights I see around my school are created from hate. If there wasn't so much hate being thrown around in the world, these fights would decline a lot. We need to stop hating each other and try to understand the other. There probably wasn't too much of a reason to hate each other to begin with. The last reason for this chain reaction comes from peer pressure, and trying to look cool with something that isn't cool at all.

Violence has affected my life in quite a few ways. First, my mom used to smoke when I was younger. If she didn't quit a couple of years ago, I might think that smoking was okay to do today. Second, my aunt's ex-boyfriend had my aunt do drugs. Now that my cousins

know that their mom (who they look up to and want to be like) did drugs, they might believe that doing drugs is fine. I have also seen fights around my school that may lead to more pain and hatred pointed toward each other. This may lead them to believe leaving the other in a pool of blood is the right thing to do. I remember seeing people around my community vaping so other people would think they looked cool. I didn't think they looked cool with something that could easily end their life in their hand.

Everybody could help stop the violence around the world, including me. I could help stop violence in my community. I could help by telling the people who hate to show love. I could tell people the effects of drug usage and smoking. I could show less hatred to other people. I could help out the people who are starting to think about harming their body with drugs and smoking, and help them stop thinking about it. I could tell the adults about the effects of smoking and drug usage near their kids. I could also tell them not to smoke or do drugs in the first place. I could tell people to try to understand the other person before hurting them.

This all happened because of a chain reaction. We need to get some bolt cutters and cut it to start over. It's time for you to decide what your future holds. It's time to start a new chain reaction without hate, smoking or drugs. It's time to start one with love, happiness and, most importantly, no violence!



ESSAY 9 | AMBASSADOR

MACAILA THOMPSON

Zanesville Middle School

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi “An eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind.” This quote along with many others has a wonderful meaning behind it. The quote means revenge isn’t always the best idea. That sometimes it can result in someone getting hurt or worse. This fits into the idea of my essay because bullying and abuse is just like an eye for an eye. What I mean by that is if someone acts out or someone is mean to you that doesn’t give you the right to hurt them. Whether it be physically or mentally.

Speaking about violence is a hard topic for just about anyone. Some have to go through getting physically abused, some get mentally abused while others just witness it. Although I can not speak for the physically abused children and teens. I can speak for the mentally abused children and teens, and say it hurts just as bad as getting physically abused. According to Domestic Violence and Abuse, “*You may think that physical abuse is far worse than emotional abuse, since physical violence can send you to the hospital and leave you with physical wounds. But emotional abuse can be just as damaging — sometimes even more so.*”

Being a victim of mental abuse, I can say even if you get away from the person it takes a lot to forget what they said. When you close your eyes you can hear their voice. You can feel the tension in your body. The yelling, the throwing things. Them telling you, you will never be good enough. You start to think if what they said was true? Was I really the reason he left? Was I really the reason he started smoking or doing drugs? Was I really that ugly he didn’t want to be seen around me? Was I really that fat that he had to hide all the snacks and only put out healthy food? What if I started wearing makeup? What if I started losing weight? What if I just shut up? What if I just distance myself from him so he wouldn’t have to deal with me? Maybe I should stop being myself. All of these Questions is what ran through my mind every night and every day he wasn’t around. Now imagine all that in a 7 years olds mind. I was 7 years old when he decided to just leave. I was 7 years old when he just gave up on me. Not even a look back just kept walking. I was 7 years old when my “Father” left me. I remember this one time I was at the hospital and I saw this little girl no more than 6 years old. She was bruised and had a broken arm and was playing with some toys. I went over and started playing with her.

I asked what happened and her response almost broke me. She responded with “My daddy got mad like he always does and threw a bottle at the wall. My mom asked him to stop and he punched her. Then when I went to go check on her he grabbed me and yelled at me. I tried to get away and he pushed me down. But it’s ok because that’s just how daddy is when he’s mad.” I was 10. I was 10 when I found out that I wasn’t the only one. I was 10 when I told my Family all these horrible stories. I was 10 when I finally got to open up to someone when I finally got to tell my story when I finally found out that it wasn’t ok. I was just 10.

Kids don’t have self confidence anymore. They are focusing on what society thinks about them. What makes them a guy? What does the lady like? What makes them Perfect? All because they don’t think they’re good enough. There’s a 10 year old who knows how to cover up a bruise because it’s all they have been doing their whole life. There’s 16 year olds having babies but still staying in the same abusive relationship. There’s kids who think It’s ok to bully because that’s how they grow up. They think If you do something to my family that war. There’s kids getting pressured into gangs and getting shot and beat up because that’s just how their family is. Kids have so much punishment and it’s the adults that ruin it.

What should we do? How do we stop it? Well if we are being honest we can’t stop it for good there is always going to be that one person. Although, we can try to help. We can try to prevent it. Volunteer at your local church and talk to the people and give them cards of people who can help. Offer a home to get away. Offer a job to get them on their feet so they don’t have to rely on people. Try to get the kids to open up. As long as they are open with a social worker you can get them to a better home. If you are looking to adopt, don’t just pick the behaved younger kids, maybe choose older kids ones who you can connect and relate to. You can try to help and show that not everyone is a bad person.

Whether it’s Mental and or physical abuse is abuse, and we need to put a stop to it. So, if you see someone hurt, ask what’s wrong. If you see someone getting hit or worse, go get an adult. Do whatever you can to help. This is the time to speak up and not stay quiet. Make a change. Save a life, And always remember, In the words of Mahatma Gandhi “An eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind.”



ESSAY 10

CORBIN WARD

Zanesville Middle School

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. — Mahatma Gandhi

Violence doesn't solve anything, it just gets pasted on until someone stops it and many do not try to stop it. Fights are like blights spreading, never helping, only hurting. Violence is like a plague seeping and spreading through people, contaminating one after another. Threats as fast as a raging fire never stopping, only spreading faster and faster. Violence can cause self doubt, depresion, hate, and more violence. Someone who experiences violence is more likely to be more violent toward others.

Violence has affected my life in many ways. Everyone's life is affected by violence somehow, no matter what. For one, we live in subconscious fear of what is going to happen next, if our school is next. Bullying has created a layer of doubt in me, always afraid I am going to mess up and get made fun of. Even at young ages we learn of violence we are taught how to fight and escape from a fight. We can't go anywhere without seeing violence or hearing of violence.

One cause of youth violence is everybody is in their own little world and not worrying about others. Another is that most people don't want to stand up to people and help those who need help, they think they don't interfere and they don't get picked on. One main cause is nobody wants to put themselves in others shoes, to be the bigger person, to take the final blow, to be a human

being. So many times people are constantly going back and forth because neither wants to take the final blow. When someone can just be a bigger person and stop it.

What we all can do to help stop violence is be a human being. We can put ourselves in their position. We can just be nice and give a nice compliment, it can make someone's day. We can help someone stand up to others. We can give them the support they need to continue. We can just be there for those who need it, just being there for someone in their darkest time is underrated. Recently one of my friends was talking to me and she had said that she had been bullied and was stressed and I told her that if she ever needed to talk I was there for her and that made her feel better.

As I said earlier violence just equals more violence. It just hurts self esteem and egos. It causes internal conflict and self doubt. It leads to more pain and suffering. In some it causes questions of why they should continue, if they matter, if they have a purpose. Does that sound like something we should let happen, especially to the younger generation. But there is a happy note to this, we can stop this. Talk with people that have experienced problems. Show them there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Be their beacon in the darkness. We may not be able to completely stop violence but we can slow it down and limit its effects.



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