



Do the Write Thing Cleveland



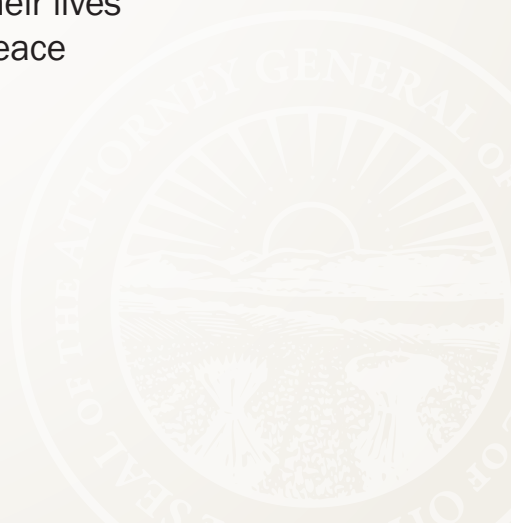
2025

Cleveland Metropolitan 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 Cleveland Metropolitan School District for the *Do the Write Thing* program for the first time.

Through *Do the Write Thing*, Cleveland middle-school students have the opportunity to write about violence and how it has affected their lives. As always, the students embraced the chance to share their experiences and offer their ideas for a safer community.

I was so impressed with their honesty, insight and compassion. These essays most certainly were not easy to write, and often tough to read, but the impact of their words is invaluable to our search for understanding and a more peaceful society.

I commend Cleveland Metropolitan Schools for recognizing the benefits this program brings to the students, teachers and greater community. Giving our young folks a voice and truly listening to what they have to say will leave an impact on their lives that will have untold benefits in the future.

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

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Yost". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dave" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Yost".

DAVE YOST
Ohio Attorney General



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Students,

I want to take a moment to congratulate and thank you for your participation in the *Do the Write Thing* program. Your willingness to share your thoughts, experiences, and ideas through writing is truly inspiring.

By taking part in this program, you have used your voice to bring awareness to the impact of violence and to explore ways to make a positive difference in your community. Writing is a powerful tool, and through your words, you have not only expressed yourself but also contributed to an important conversation about change.

I hope this experience has helped you see the strength in your voice and the impact that your ideas can have on the world around you. Your words matter, and I encourage you to continue using them to stand up for what you believe in, inspire others, and create the future you want to see.

Thank you for your hard work, dedication, and courage. I am so proud of you and excited to see all the amazing things you will accomplish!



With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr. Warren G. Morgan II". The signature is fluid and cursive.

DR. WARREN G. MORGAN II

Chief Executive Officer

Cleveland Metropolitan School District

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This book contains a compilation of writings by middle-school students who were selected as the top 10 finalists of the 2025 *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 on reducing violence in their community.

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

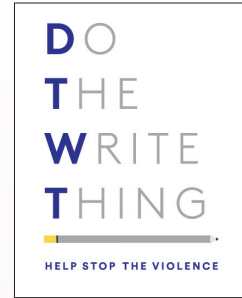
Do the Write Thing in Cleveland

During the 2024-25 school year, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost partnered with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for the *Do the Write Thing* program. The program was well received, with 155 seventh- and eighth-grade students submitting essays.

Cleveland community and business leaders volunteered their time to read each essay and chose the 10 submissions most responsive to the key questions. From the top 10, one student was selected to become Ohio's ambassador to the national *Do the Write Thing* conference in Washington, D.C.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated readers who gave their time and voices to support this program: The Executive Administrative Assistant for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio; Vice President of Economic Development; President & CEO of the YMCA of Greater Cleveland; CEO of Celebrate the Arts Performance Academy; Representatives of CMHA; Senior Director of Public Affairs of CRCC; Head of Hospitals and CMSD Board Member Diana Welch-Howell; Chief Todd of the Cleveland Division of Police; Deputy Sheriff Major Alfred Johnson with the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department; Chief Development & Investment Officer, United Way of Greater Cleveland.

A very special thank you to Mr. Prentice Howard from Albert Bushnell Hart for guiding his students in creating the powerful "Be the Change You Want to See in the World" art gallery. Your work added depth and creativity to our ceremony and reminded us all of the impact young people can make through artistic expression.



Do the Write Thing is the flagship program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence and has been in existence for 30 years. It operates programs in 29 cities in 15 states. Over the past 30 years, more than 1.5 million middle school students have submitted writings to the program.

The national sponsor for the Do the Write Thing program is the Kuwait-America Foundation.



ESSAY 1

ANALIESE BURGOS

William Rainey Harper Elementary School

To be Hurt, To be Afraid

Violence withing young communities is very common these days

In school, at home, online, or outside.

Nowhere feels safe, either for you, a friend, or a stranger.

To come, to stay, to be hurt, to be afraid.

Bad experiences often cause mistrust and hatred of others or of one's own life. Bonds that have broken or

changed also create problems between youth.

Bullying stems from bullying, a chain reaction.

To circle, to hate, to be hurt, to be afraid.

Our part to reduce youth violence can come a long way.

To be kind, communicate with others, do the best you can every day.

Talking instead of fighting.

To stay strong, to heal, to be brave.





ESSAY 2 | AMBASSADOR

CAROLINA CORNIER-MARIANI

William Rainey Harper Elementary School

One way that youth/gun violence has affected my life is by making me be afraid at home and causing me to have anxiety. The violence that I saw and experienced made me afraid about being at home. It all started like a normal day. I was just in the bathroom when my parents were arguing. I thought nothing of it at first, until my mom started to scream. I quickly left the bathroom to find my mom getting choked by my dad. I screamed for my dad to stop choking my mom. When he stopped, he grabbed his keys and left in his car. My mom called the police and soon they came. That day is still traumatizing for me. It gave me anxiety and I was always afraid that more violence would happen at home.

Another way that youth violence/gun violence has affected my life is by making me worry about my cousin. I was enjoying my dinner when suddenly my mom told me about how my cousin tried to hang himself. When I heard this my heart dropped. I tried not to show that I was sad, but I could feel the tears starting to come. I went to my room and cried. I wondered to myself how, why, why would my cousin think about committing suicide. That is when I found out the truth. He tried to suicide himself because of a bully. After that, I looked at bullying differently. I thought bullying could only cause insecurities not force someone to take their life.

The last way that youth violence/gun violence has affected my life is by making me worry about my family. I was just relaxing when my mom told me about a shooting near my auntie's house. Again, my heart dropped. I know that were my aunt lives is dangerous because creepy weirdos hang around and shootings happen, but I never thought that a shooting would happen near my aunt's house. I got scared; it made me think that this could be the last time that I see my family. After that, I always cherish the time that I have with my family because you never know when the last time you see them is.

One thing that I think causes youth violence is social media. People spend a lot of time on social media. Sometimes it can make people feel insecure or unsure of themselves. This can cause suicide and lots of mental problems. Social media can also influence people to do something violent because they saw someone else do it and thought it was

cool. Whatever the reason they chose to do this, social media might have impacted why they did This.

Another thing that I think causes youth violence is video games. Video games can cause the person to rage and become violent. I have seen this happen to people in my own family. Video games can cause a person to have more anger and be more violent. This can lead to violent arguments with other people or just lashing out when they get angry. Then when they get angry, they can harm others or themselves.

The last thing that I think causes youth violence is family or friends. Family, especially friends, can force someone to make a wrong decision. This can happen when you are trying to show off. For example, if one of your friends tells you to do a "harmless prank" that involves violence you might do it because they are your friends. This could get you in trouble with the law and it goes on your permanent record, making it harder to find a good stable job.

One thing I can do to reduce any type of violence is by organizing a protest for gun and youth violence. This could help the community because the people come together for a peaceful protest of violence. It could show the community that we do not like this and that we want more protection from the state. This in turn could help reduce youth and gun violence for future violence.

Another thing I can do to reduce any type of violence is reach out to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency to come and talk to my school. This would help educate the students about youth violence and gun violence. This would also help students that suffer with this get the help they need. This could have a significant impact in decreasing youth and gun violence.

The last thing that I could do is educate people in my community about youth violence and gun violence. I could ask the right authorities and organize a talk to where I tell people about the impact youth and gun violence. Then after the talk we can have a charity event and donate the money to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency. This in the end could have an enormous impact on my community and the world.



ESSAY 3

SOPHIA GARCIA

Joseph M. Gallagher Elementary School

What are the causes of youth violence.

Violence has effected my life. My biological mother was with an abusive guy. I was terrified of her with him because he's crazy and it scarred my life because she wasn't supposed to be with him.

My little sister and little brother got taken away to the foster home. I was cyberbullied before and it caused me anger issues.

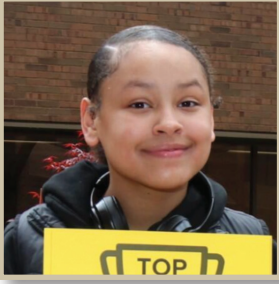
Violence can cause people to murder others and/or commit suicide. Youth violence can cause people to vape

and smoke and make them drop out of school. Violence could be caused by someone threatening them or making them really mad. If people are being made fun of they can murder or harm other people.

I can help reduce youth violence by creating a no bullying group. I can discuss it with the mayor to help create the group and tell the city to help with making the group. The community could help with some of the work and the building. I can help the people that need help to stop getting bullied and I can help the people that are getting threatened.



Participating students from Joseph M. Gallagher Elementary School



ESSAY 4

DA'LIANA HARDY

Luis Muñoz Marin Elementary School

Violence Is to hurt or kill somebody. Violence can happen in many ways as in shooting, stabbing, or running somebody over.

Violence has affected my life because seeing my uncle pass away in the hospital gave me trauma and it has brought me down. It scared me to hear that my uncle has passed away from getting shot 6 times in his back and will not be able to live anymore. I have been so traumatized ever since and I was 10 years old when this happened, I really didn't know anything about losing a family member but as I got older, I knew what It was and I got a better understanding of it but it broke me the most to hear that had happened to my uncle I wanted him to watch me grow up and make my family proud. I still think about what happened until this day it's a very emotional moment for me to talk about it but I have to fight strong and make my uncle proud but that was very sad for me to hear if I could do anything in this world it would be to bring my uncle back to life and spend more time with him because I wasn't as close with him If I knew that was going to happen I would've been more closer with him and spent more time with him. I wish I was there for him more because it was unexpected, but it has changed me ever since he got shot. It hits me the most when I'm in school or at home during the night. I got a flashback of the last time I saw him and held his hand while he was in the hospital bed. It broke my heart to see him in a casket, he was the only one I had to talk to and open to I trusted him. He was my motivation to keep going every day, but I fought hard to get over that stage of my life I would not wish that on anyone.

People's negative emotions cause violence to be like this like someone anger or fear can cause violence to someone else. People in this world think violence Is the answer or the solution to everything. Violence does not change someone's life in an effective way, it changes someone's life in a bad way. The consequence behind violence is bad, you will regret what you did when it comes down to the bottom of everything. How could someone just choose violence on a human? Does that not make them feel guilty about themselves or make them feel bad. That's

sick why Is this world like this when everybody could come together and get along and become successful together. People that choose violence can change and hurt someone else's life. I don't understand how people could choose violence and have no type of caring feeling about the other person's family. Violence can change someone life forever and violence is something that can never be forgotten or forgiven when you do It. That's the worse thing to do in your life and people will look at you so differently. I would never choose violence against someone because I care for people's feelings. If I could help people in this world to not choose violence I would. There are other solutions Instead of just violence these days people do not think communication can help but communication can help with a lot of things Instead of choosing violence. If there were not any weapons or objects that could injure someone people would think of other ways to solve problems.

I will start programs to help my community reduce youth violence. I will start group programs around the world to bring people closer and help everyone realize that we all can get along in this world to work together and help people stop violence. I have experienced so many things because of violence. I know how someone would feel to lose someone they really loved. It is not easy at all. I will get counseling for people who think that way some people may even choose violence on themselves it does not always be violence on other people, people will give up on themselves because of depression or because they are stressing. Life Is not easy at all, but I would like to stop violence in my community I want to help everyone come together and get through the struggle together. I would not wish violence on anybody. The type of pain that comes with it is draining. I will support children and adults to change their mindset or get out that type of mindset because feeling that violence is the key to everything Is not right. That makes everything worse than what It already is, but I will take time out my life to motivate people in this world to stop violence. I will fight strong to prevent violence in my community because that can affect someone's life in multiple ways!



ESSAY 5

DERYL IDOM II

Walton Elementary School

This is a fictional story, not based on true events.

This story is based on a boy; his name is Jacob Dolan.

Have you ever felt you're in the wrong because of the color of your skin? Our lives have been altered because of violence. We lost loved ones because of it and alcohol.

Everybody always thinks I'm doing something wrong because of the color of my skin and I'm getting tired of this. It's not fair, I'm always in and out of jail for stuff I didn't even do. I was just trying to hang out with my friends and go to the park and play basketball but when we got there we were having and just play then the cops pulled up and told us to get onto the ground but then my friend Lamarcus stepped in and tried to protest it.

That's when the police used his force and pushed him to the ground and punched him and kicked him. That's when the crowd formed around the park, that's when people started to record it and put it on the internet and protest so that cop gets fired. That's when Jacob went into the hospital and was brutally beaten, he could barely even move because each time he moved it hurt badly. That's when the cop that beat up Jacob came to see him in the hospital and his family wasn't having it, they wanted to get fired from his job. So, they went on with the protest and they would not stop till he was fired.

So, they were protesting up and down the streets also on social media. They were typing stuff like free Jacob, and he doesn't deserve that. When they were marching, they ran into that same police officer that beat up Jacob. Then the cop was trying to apologize for what he did to Jacob, but

they didn't want his apologies. That's when it happened, they finally got him they got the new one on the tv it said police officer that brutally beat kid finally got fired from his job and that made headline around the world and now more people start protesting now. So now cops can't just beat people up for doing nothing wrong and there finally putting an end to it.

How has violence affected my life? It affected it by understanding why some kids might be angry or sad or depressed. It also affected my life by my parents they caused a lot of violence in my life not my mom just my dad he used to put hands on when he got mad so that made me a nicer person to females and that how violence affected my life.

What causes youth violence? I think parents can cause youth violence because they set an example for the kids so if the parents are arguing or fighting the kid can see that and think that's okay to do but it's not. I also think kids in the streets can see people get shot and do bad things to people and they can think that that's okay and that's what I think what causes youth violence.

How can we reduce youth violence? The thing we can do to reduce youth violence is to have parents set better example for their kids for example besides fighting they can work it out so their kids can see what they're doing and look up to them. What I also think you can do is be more protective like do let your kids be in the streets hanging around with the wrong people and that's what I think we can do to reduce youth violence.



ESSAY 6

SONIELIZ IRIZARRY

Joseph M. Gallagher Elementary School

Violence has not affected my life, but it could have a negative effect on someone else's life. If someone experienced violence as a child it could be very bad. If a child saw something violent, the child may be violent to someone else. Witnessing violence could make someone scared and feel unsafe. Violence has not affected my life and I'm lucky it has not.

People can do bad stuff like steal from a store or break into peoples home's to steal money or jewelry. They may have learned that from somebody else.

Another cause of youth violence could be if someone tells you to do it. We need to Teach kids not too give in peer pressure.

We can help reduce violence by not doing bad things and being safe at school.

Having security guards around the school can make someone feel safe.

Schools can do assembly and teaching them things that are good and bad.

And they can have signs up about youth violence. It is important for kids to feel safe at school and having people around that are good influences.

And they can break into peoples car and they can drive off with it and the next day not there



Participating students from Walton Elementary School



ESSAY 7

KINIDI MCMICHAEL

Dike School of the Arts

This story is fictional

All the blame

Kayla, today you will be watching your siblings. I watched them last week. Well do you pay bills or have a job? No, but they are not my kids. You live in my house, so you listen to me also, when I get home this house had better be clean. Yes sir.

Ok now class can anyone answer this question? How about Kayla? Um I think all pass. Why I know you know the answer. What is the question? The question is who is the 11th president? The answer is James Knox Polk. Thats correct. That ends class, for today everyone is dismissed except for Kayla. Mrs. Little, I really must go. Do not worry dear, it will not take long. Kayla you are a smart kid, why don't you want to share your thoughts with the class? I really must go. Kayla, can you just answer the question? Ok I just feel that keeping my comments to myself is better. Since you really need to go, and you answered the question, you are free to leave but I would like to hear more about this. Yes mam.

Kyree and Kira since dad is at work and won't be back for 2 hours, I am watching you so can you be on your best behavior? I must clean the house so just stay here do not touch anything and watch tv. ok. I guess I can start with the dishes then sweep and clean the windows. Kayla! What's wrong? We broke the lamp. I told you not to touch anything. We're sorry. It's ok just help me clean it up before dad gets home. What happened here! Um They dropped the vase off the table by accident. How could you let this happen? Kyree and Kira go to your room. It was our fault. Now! Kayla, I told you to watch them. I was doing what you told me to I was cleaning the house and then they dropped the vase. You're not listening. I'm trying but you're not listening to me either. You must want to pay for that vase. It is not even my fault. Who was watching them. Well, it's not like I wanted to. What was that? Nothing, I'm sorry, I will clean it all up. Good and finish the rest of the house as your punishment. Yes sir. Ouch you don't have to throw glass. Tuffin up you break it you can take it.

Hopefully I will have a better day today. Kayla! Why are you

so lazy. What do you mean? There are dishes in the sink. I washed all the dishes yesterday. Since there are dishes in my sink you will be punished. It's not even my fault. You want to talk back too. Ouch why would you do that? Crying I didn't even hit you that hard. Now get to school so you can finally learn something.

Class will begin in a minute, but Kayla, can I see you in the hallway for a minute. Kayla, I hope you started thinking about what I said. I did and I just don't want to share with the class. Wait why are you wearing this big hoodie? I had to rush out of the house this morning. Well, I can't see your face. Stop! Is everything alright? My face is a little bruised and red but I'm fine. Do you need a nurse? No, I told you that I'm fine. Do you want to talk about it? Um a little. By your face I think that this has something to do with violence? Yes, actually it does but I didn't know who to tell. I might send you to a counselor. If that's ok with you? Yeah, I agree that maybe it's time I tell someone my story.

Hi Kayla, I am your counselor Mrs. May, and I heard from Mrs. little all about your story. Yeah, it isn't the most ideal life. Well, I am here to help you get through it but first I want to ask you a few questions. How has violence affected your life? I mean I just feel like I must grow up too fast and get in trouble for nothing like he is always mad and takes all his anger out on me. It has also made me the shy, insecure person I am today. I feel like sometimes I don't want to go home. Ok and what do you think causes violence like this? I really don't know how a person could be so angry and mean. Can you think of any reason why? I mean maybe he has bad days and thinks it's okay to take his anger out on others, especially me. Or maybe he is used to doing this and forgot. All I know is that he is very angry all the time. Ok and for our last question of the day what can you do, or we do as a community to stop violence like this or reduce youth violence? Maybe we can make programs or raise money to keep people out of situations like mine. I don't Want people to feel the way I feel. I want everyone to know how important they are. These are good answers Kayla. I used to be in a situation like yours and that is why I became a counselor to help people like you reach your goals, you are special and never forget that, I think we should have more sessions together. A lot of progress can be made here.



ESSAY 8

JOSLYANNIS RAMOS DALMAU

Luis Muñoz Marin Elementary School

This writing is fiction based on a girl we will call 'Milla'

I sit in the interview room, the interviewer named Stacy, and the camera man named Vex sitting in front of me. The room was nice and comfortable they were sitting across me in velvet textured green chairs the floor was deep brown solid wood next to us is a desk while behind the chairs are book shelves a microphone was placed in front of me and the interviewer Stacy signaling to begin speaking when I feel comfortable the cameras start rolling and I take a deep breath before speaking.

"I have never been able to feel safe in any supposed 'safe space.' No matter how hard I try I always feel like somebody is going to raise their hand like my mother once did. I cannot believe that something like violence could affect me so harshly like this, I have read stories but never imagined it happening to me. I cannot go out without feeling I will see my mother and get hit; it is something I have never been proud of and wish I were not so worried about. It is not like I was a bad child, I had always had good grades, nobody would complain to me, my things were always kept neat including my room and I would always dress in dresses just like she wanted me too."

"What led to all of this happening? If you do not mind saying it of course" Interviewer Stacy asks "It's okay, I was planning on saying it anyways" I continue talking.

"I was coming home from school like any other day, my backpack slung over my shoulder as I walked through the all too familiar street. I reach the house and unlock it with my very own keys, the silence far too loud, the usual church music that would play through the house no longer there. I hear faint sounds of yelling from my parent's room, I walk upstairs quietly, the door surprisingly cracked open even though it was always shut. I drop my backpack next to my bedroom door and quietly move towards my parents' door. I slowly sit next to the door, hearing the yelling. This is when it all started. My father stormed out of the room walking right past me, my mother chasing after him as he grabs his keys and walks through the front door, my mother watching by the front door as he leaves. She suddenly walks

back up the stairs then goes up to me. I remained sitting on the ground quietly, staring at the floor completely stunned. She then grabbed me by my hair and took me to my room. From then the situation just got worse"

The interviewer Stacy nods "I know this is a touching topic and I'm so glad you feel comfortable enough to share your experience with us, do you mind me asking some questions?" I smile "Go ahead and ask, it's no problem"

Stacy nods and looks down at some papers before speaking "What do you think are the causes of violence against the youth?"

I go quiet trying to think of what to say "Well, there are a lot of things that could cause youth violence, and it could really happen by anyone. Parents, teachers, siblings, family in general and really anyone. Most causes I hear about are stress, anger, jealousy, drugs, alcohol, a bad break up or divorce and poverty. In my case it was caused by a bad break up which was led to substance abuse then to anger and well it went from there."

"Yes, youth violence could be caused by anything and anyone. What can you do to reduce youth violence?"

"I could make more people realize how much of a problem youth violence is. People do not really realize that it could be happening to a friend or familiar of theirs at any time. I could also attend events or spread the word that an event against youth violence is happening and I can also participate."

Stacy smiles "Thank you for coming here and sharing your experiences, I know it takes a lot of courage to talk about something so personal."

From there I said my thanks to all the people there for having me before grabbing all my belongings and leaving. My shoulders felt so light with relief while walking to my car, I could not stress how good it felt to be able to talk about my experiences so freely and finally not feeling scared. Youth violence is not something that should be ignored, I hope by sharing my experiences more people will understand how much of a problem youth violence really is.



ESSAY 9

ELLIANA SZCZERBAK

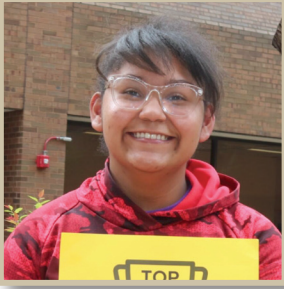
Dike School of the Arts

My life story

Hi, My name is Nelly. I'm going to tell you about how my life has been like ever since I was a little kid. So, growing up I lived in a toxic household with my dad and mom. My dad used to always abuse my mom along with my older brother. Eventually my mom got out of that situation along with my older brother. My dad ended up getting mad because my mom had plans for my mom to take me somewhere and my dad got mad even though my mom would always let him get me anytime he wanted but because my mom said no that she has something planned to do with me. So, because my mom said that she had something she wanted me to do with her my dad called the police officers and they said to go to court so my dad got the papers and took her to court for it. Thankfully, my mom won, and she got all rights over me while my dad has truly little rights of me. But every time i would go to my dad's house he would always fight with his wife and yell at me even if I did not do anything to deserve to get yelled at. Although when i would go over there he would not always yell at me, he would sometimes hit me too. He got so controlling over me too. One day he was so controlling that he took my phone, put it on the table, and he told me to go into my room. He turned all the lights off and put a coin on my phone to make sure I would not touch it to call my mom and tell her

to pick me up. Also, he and his wife would go through my phone to try to find something to tell my mom or yell at me for. My dad was also very overprotective, and he did not want me having any social media on my phone put because my mom gave me permission to have social media on my phone I had it considering that i live with her. The only reason I think my dad is doing this is because of the way that my mom lets me be free and do anything I want but she still lets me have fun while also keeping me safe.

I am not sure what y'all could do about this but i just wanted to share my story because I believe am not the only one who has gone through this or is going through this. I want to give words of encouragement to anyone who might be going through this or has gone through this. So, I just want to say to anyone that is and has dealt with this that even if it seems like you will never make it, and it seems inevitable just know that if u just push through as much as u can I believe u can and will make it through this. Keep pushing no matter what and know even though it may seem that no one is their supporting u or the one person who helped u cope it gone to just know that they will always be with u, u just must believe they're still there and never forget there is always someone there to support u even if u don't see them.



ESSAY 10

TIANA TANNIEHILL

Luis Muñoz Marin Elementary School

This story you read is non-fictional with a fake name.

Mental Abuse/Awareness

My name is Ashes, I am 13 years old. I grew up with stealing, mental abuse, verbal abuse, and more. Others think mental health is a joke, my father thinks my mental health is a joke. Since I was 9 my dad made fun of my anxiety and depression, he never understood what went on. I started cutting in 4th grade thinking it'll take away my pain and hunger. My anxiety started due to bullying at my old school and yelling everything was very bad it always felt like I couldn't breathe and id panic very bad I would even fall off the bed crying and panicking. Now loud noises, yelling, and arguing trigger tics \jerking movements, zoning off, or my panic attacks.

In 5th grade it got worse my dad never let me vent or talk he just made me feel bad. My arm had new cuts each pain daily, he nor my mom never saw them because id cover up my scars and fresh cuts with my hoodies. Once my mom noticed my cuts old and new and my old school saw that I wasn't eating, they came to an agreement that I couldn't go to school without going to the emergency room to get checked. My life flashed before my eyes the happy little girl rushing back wanting daddy's attention. Only problem was he was always on his phone looking at YouTube, Pluto tv, or playing cookie jam. I panicked needing him to tell me it's okay he's here for me, but he was at home on his phone.

The only people there was my mom and oldest brother. As I went to the back of the emergency room to the

mental hospital there, I was wishing life was okay and better. In 6th grade I went to bluestone mental hospital for treatment, watching the door shut only crying not able to say bye to my mom crushed me. Once I got out my dad always called me names to hurt me it got worse, I went into my habits but worse. Bullying got worse also never being heard, crying, everything was a trigger to me. Now in 7th grade I bully others, tease them, make them feel like nothing.

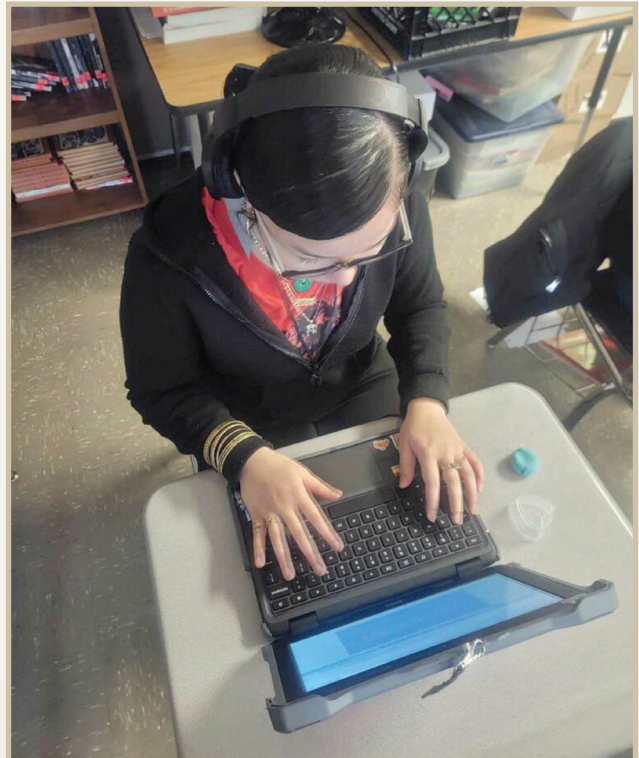
I used to be a sweet happy loving little girl. This all changed how I see myself, the world, others, and my family. Now my family is separated, no dad that ever-paid attention to me. I'm failing classes, listening rock more often, always wanting a relationship for security, wanting piercings, and tattoos. This all took me downhill to suicide and self-harm. I'm trying to better myself but it's a process.

No matter what you can end violence it is hard, but we will get through it. Don't end yourself and ruin your life for others pleasure. You are loved and cared for, lets end violence together be kind to one another. It will one day come back as a blessing, you don't know what the person is going through until you step into their shoes. Check on one another because pain can be masked by happiness. That is my story this could be relatable to others or triggering and I apologize if it was triggering and I will help to make it known to others, myself, family, and everyone. Spread awareness to this. I can help by getting help on bullying others etc. and help spread awareness about how serious violence and mental health is.





A group of distinguished members of the community take part in reading the student essays.





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