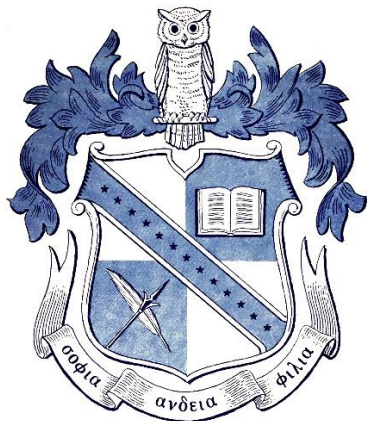
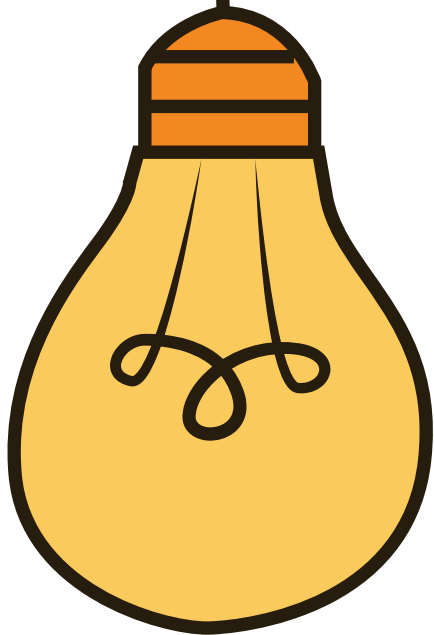


National Literary Competition

2016-2017




GALLAUDET
UNIVERSITY

YOUTH PROGRAMS

High School- Poetry

1st Place- Rebecca Giuntoli

from the land of a thousand sun.
searching for my lone moon.
I came, only to find a moon-
basking in glow of a sun.
one day, I shall find
a moon who glows
not from a sun-
but from her love
she shall radiate

2nd Place- Dalinee Vang

Let It Go

Insecurities kill me.
They let me rot until my bones are ashes,
And bury my mind
With images of my imperfections.

They watch me turn every single shade of black.
Watch me wither like a rose while they laugh.
Tear my heart into pieces
While I try to be my very best.

They corrupt my soul
Like a demon deceiving an angel.
And pour hurtful words down my throat,
Telling me every day to drown myself.

They can't seem to let it go
Like I can't let it go.
They've become a part of me
That I need in order to breathe.

They stay until I'm okay
Then disappear for a while
Before they drag me back down
And then restart the cycle.

They whisper names
That punch me in the gut,
And leave me black and blue
While stepping on me with their Gucci shoes.

They dig holes
Make me bury my soul,
Never giving me chances
To reach my own redemption.

They lead me to my sins.
Forgiveness from God

Is like another galaxy
That I can't even see.

They capture me
And wind me up like cotton candy.
Mold me like play-doh
And shape me like clay.

Throw me into the ocean
While they let the sharks play.
But I can't let it go.
They refuse to let me go.

They read me like a book
Fold my pages till they rip.
Damage my spine
And color all over my surface.

Vulgar words are displayed
On my worn out body
That no one, not even me,
Can look at and appreciate.

I skip the hospital bed
Dive straight into my grave
Cry my name
And I'll tell you a lie that I'm okay.

I tried to be my own person
See the light through my own eyes,
Taste a touch of normality
That I so desperately seek.

I wanted to be a better me.
But how could I be
If all that is in my head
Are the insecurities.

I tried my hardest
Not to let the voices in.
Fight them with quotes
Of strength that I know

I wake up every day
Feeling the need to change
Yet I can't seem to take the first step.
Because something is holding me back.

I am tired.
I am tired of being forced to suffocate in my own shame.
I am tired of letting my insecurities dictate my life.
I am done.

They can say what they want,
Inflict pain on me
But they cannot
Take away my right to be happy.

I will let it go.
Even if they kick and scream
And tie me up with ropes or words,
I will break free.

I didn't know how to swim before
And nearly drowned in my sorrows.
But I learned that all I needed
Was to learn to float and stay above the water.

Let me be,
Insecurities.
Just let me be.
Let it go.

Honorable Mention- Zane Smith-Rhyne

A Painter's Piece

Standing here, I'm looking at
a painting in a painter's flat.
"It doesn't look like much", I say,
but I guess the painter was a little cray-cray.

Here I am, trying to guess
what this is, this colorful mess.
"It could be anything", I say,
but I guess I'll think in shades of gray.

The borders are red, the frame is blue,
and the center is made of a crazy hue.
Around that is green, with a slight touch of pink,
do all these colors have a meaningful link?

The colors are swirly, the designs are neat,
sometimes it looks like a gem or a pleat.
I still don't see any relation,
I guess I'll try my imagination.

It could be a sea with a fishing boat,
or maybe a fortresses outer moat.
It could be a candle or Red Riding Hood's fleece,
Nothing has more possibilities than a painter's piece.

It could be the sky falling down,
or perhaps a bride's wedding gown.
It may be some bacon covered in grease,
Nothing has more possibilities than a painter's piece.

Maybe it's the bedspread of Atilla the Hun,
or just a hotdog's soggy bread bun.
It may even be some green goblin geese,
but nothing has more possibilities than a painter's piece.

Standing here, I'm looking at
a painting in a painter's flat.
"This could be anything", I say,
so I let my imagination wander and play.

Middle School- Poetry

1st Place- Justina Miles

“Stop! Stop!” I cried, begging.
I didn’t want to go through this again.
Tears were rushing down my face.
Empty beer bottles were crashing, breaking.
Punches were flying.

It was dad.
It was dad’s usual temper tantrums all over again.
Except this time,
This time it was worse.
Way worse.

Dad’s drunken self had his hands around mama’s neck, as usual.
I just wanted to help.
I’m sick of seeing mama get hurt
It was time for a change.
I tried to pull him back.

That was a mistake,
a big, big, mistake.
His attention turned away from mama
and right to me.
He grabbed me by the shirt.

It was all so slow, to me at least.
I could see every fist getting bashed into my skull.
I could feel the blood flowing out of my body.
He was persistent until I couldn’t breathe.

My eyes started bruising up faster than he was punching,
My busted lips gushing out uncontrollably.

Fear rushed throughout my body,
I was mortified.
Finally, he stopped.

“Lemme see one more tear fall out of that eye,” he threatened.

“What’s my rule number one?”

“One tear, one punch.” I whimpered with fear.
Boisterous, dad stormed through the room,
Charging straight for mama,
With the eyes of a bull,
Red and evil.

This time, he pulled out his .45 caliber and held it up against her throat.

This was normal, to me at least.
But I couldn’t take it this time
I ran into the kitchen to grab a knife.
Yet, another big, big,
Mistake.

He must’ve heard me because
When I turned around,
There he was, glaring down at me

“Bringing a knife to a gunfight, eh?” He chuckled.
“C’mon babygirl, you know I taught you better.”

As his chuckle turned into a laugh, I stared
eye-to-eye down the narrow
.45 caliber.

2nd Place- Talia Boren

The Beach

I see the beautiful sea,
the waves crashing on the sand.
A heavy surfboard floats on the flat water.
The sea turtle glares tartly at the seaweed.
The crab pops out of the sand and grabs the snail.
A shark shirks the fishermen on the boat.
A little girl curls up on the warmth of the sand.
A group of kids search for shells to sell.
A couple sits on the dune and tunes the music to the sunset.

Honorable Mention- Noah Ziegler

Some people say I am one thing
Some people say I am many.

I spin, I kick
I move like Jagger
I hip hop
I sweat.
Do what I feel
Keep rhythm to the music.
I am a dancer.

The crowd roars.
Touchdown!
Go Big Red!
I scream enthusiastically.
I am a Husker.

I hear the birds
calling my name.
It's peaceful,
quiet, beautiful
prairie land.
I am nature.

$6 \times 4 = 24$
I problem solve
I think,
add
subtract
multiply
divide
I am math.

Some people say I am one thing
Some people say I am many.

High School- Creative Writing

1st Place- Zane Smith-Rhyne

“Take it easy, now! Slow...”

The Courier sat up, his eyes warping the surroundings. Brown, white, and yellow lights filled his vision, and slowly rearranged into the shape of a room.

“Careful, now, you were shot, you’ve been out for quite a while, you know,” a ragged voice urged.

The Courier watched as an old man seemed to appear as his vision focused.

“Your name, do you remember it?” the old man continued. The Courier slowly shook his head in response, and, without warning, quickly sat up.

“... not a race! Take is slow!”

The Courier grabbed the man by the shoulders.

“Where’s the man who shot me?”

“Well, I, don’t kn-know!” The man stuttered. “I just know that Victor found you, and got-”

The Courier interrupted him.

“Who’s Victor? Where is he?”

“He’s jus’ an ol’ securitron, came from the Lucky 38 Casino in Vegas. He’s normally loiterin’ around Goodsprings...”

The Courier pushed the man aside and ran past, but the man put his hand on the Couriers shoulder.

“If you’re gonna be going anywhere out there, you should probably take your supplies with you.”

The man dropped an old 10 mm pistol by the Courier, and pointed towards a large, leather trench coat that hung on the wall.

“That’s all that you had when Victor found you. I don’t mind you taking a few of my supplies, but-” The man was interrupted by the Courier, who quickly grabbed his brown trenchcoat, put it on, and slid the 10 mm pistol into its inner pocket.

“I, uh, could use some stimpacks, uh, please.” he stuttered.

“Well, all right, but only take what you need.”

He finally found Victor wandering around the streets of Goodsprings. His one wheel made creaking noises as his large, T-shaped frame lumbered about.

“Hey, wassup?” Victor inquired. “I watched you get shot, buried, then I dug you up, and then-”

The Courier interrupted him. “Who was he?”

“Oh, I really don’t know,” Victor responded in his normal cheery voice.

“But, he headed in the direction of Vegas. Might wanna ask around there.”

Sighing, the Courier ran off, but not before stocking up on ammunition and weapons. On the border of town, the Courier took a moment to eye his surroundings. A vast desert stretched before him, with cliffs and the occasional tree stretching out of the old, irradiated dirt. He looked back into Goodsprings. What was once a town filled with people and green trees only 30 years ago, was now just a hollow husk, filled with dilapidated buildings and withering plants. Although most of Nevada and the Mojave was not directly hit with nuclear weapons, the effects of the 3 Hour War spread quickly through the world.

He turned back once more, facing the Mojave, and began the journey to Vegas.

Rubble and scaffolding blocked the way into the South Vegas gate. Power Ganger attacks in the area had caused the shopkeepers to block all access into South Vegas, which is where most of the shops were. Only one entrance remained, and it was guarded by mercenaries.

“What do you want?” A man with a large, built frame and a plasma rifle inquired almost mockingly.

“I’ve gotta get to North Vegas,” the Courier stated.

“Hmph.”

The man stepped back, allowing the Courier access into the city. South and North Vegas were separated by a fallen overpass. The only way around was traversing the slums and dilapidated alleys in South Vegas, which were inhabited by junkies and thieves.

Graffiti covered the walls and rubble. Beggars and bodies lined the streets, and bandits called out warnings as the Courier passed by.

When he finally arrived at the gate to North Vegas, a posse of securitrons stopped him.

“What’s your business here?”

“I’m here to do some... uh... gambling,” the Courier lied.

“You know the rules,” the securitron stated.

They opened the large, mechanical gate that led into the Strip. The Courier stepped through, looking back as it closed behind him. Before continuing on, the securitron stopped him.

“If you cheat, steal, or kill, you’ll have to answer to Mr. House.”

The Courier nodded, and walked on.

He eyed the Strip with anxiety. Colored lights flashed everywhere, drunkards and securitrons stumbled about, and noise polluted the air.

He walked into the first casino: The Tops.

A man in black stopped him.

“Hand over your weapons.”

The Courier gave the man his guns, but secretly kept a knife. He continued on.

The Courier approached the bar addressed the bartender, “Hey, I’m, uh, looking for somebody. You seen a white guy with a checkered tuxedo?”

The bartender responded by pointing into the gambling hall. There, the Courier saw the man who shot him – the man in the tuxedo. The Courier straightened up, and boldly walked towards him.

“... his face! He looked like a pupper getting scolded when you pulled out your gun!”

One of the tuxedo man’s accomplices laughed.

“So, when you gonna-“

Their words trailed off as they saw the Courier walk towards him.

“You know, it’s kind of rude to leave me for dead without telling me your name,” the Courier stated with a furious look.

“Whoa, watch it, buster – I ain’t lookin’ for trouble here... why don’t we go up to my suite and have a little chat, huh? Clear a few things up...”

“Leave your buddies here,” the Courier ordered.

“Your name?”

“Benny... Yours?” Benny asked in return while pouring a glass of vodka.

“Thanks to you, I don’t remember.”

“Well, where is it?” The Courier inquired.

“I... Don’t have it.”

The Courier didn’t buy it. He jumped up and slammed Benny against the wall.

“What did you do with it?!”

“I... I don’t...”

The Courier pulled his knife, and pressed the point against Benny’s throat.

“Where is it?”

Benny squirmed as the Courier pressed it deeper.

“It’s... in my pocket.”

The Courier groped around in Benny’s pocket, until he felt the small, etched Poker chip. He snatched it out, still keeping the knife at Benny’s chest. The doors to his suite burst open, and Benny’s accomplices stumbled through, brandishing their silenced .22 pistols.

“I think,” one said, “it’s in your best interest to drop the knife and give back the Platinum Chip.”

Infuriated by the sudden interjection, the Courier slashed Benny’s throat! The Courier ran to the window, shattering it as he jumped through. 13 floors down, he landed in pool. Bullets seared around him into the water as Benny’s accomplices shot from the window above him. He climbed from the pool and left the casino. Behind him, Benny’s accomplices shouted and fired their weapons.

Before him stood the Lucky 28 Casino, his destination. No man had ever stepped inside; only securitrons were allowed in. However, the doors opened widely for the Courier, and a voice spoke.

“Come in, quick! My securitrons will deal with them.”

He ran inside, and the golden doors slid closed. Before him was an empty lobby with an elevator.

“Take the lift to the top,” the voice said.

In no time, he arrived. The chrome doors of the elevator opened, and the Courier reeled in shock as a massive face on a screen stared down at him.

“Welcome to the Lucky 38,” the face spoke.

“Are you Mr. House?” The Courier mused.

“I am. I suspect you brought my package?”

The Courier dug in his pocket, then presented the chrome Poker chip.

“Ah, the Platinum Chip. I’ve been trying to get it again for many years,” Mr. House breathed.

“What’s so special about it?”

“Slide it into my port, and I’ll show you.”

The Courier found a small slot in Mr. House’s console, and slid the Chip in. After a moment, Mr. House’s face was replaced by lines of code on the large screen.

“These,” he said, “are the nuclear codes from the 3-Hour-War from over 30 years ago.”

“Why do you need them?”

“When the Chinese began bombing the U.S., I used these codes to destroy the majority of bombs that would have hit Vegas.”

The Courier had even more questions now. “But why Vegas? Why not Los Angeles, or New York?”

“Vegas has extreme potential, unlimited cash flow, it is near the Mojave and it mostly escaped the nuclear war.

“Now I control Vegas because others would use the chip to access the nuclear codes and dominate the Mojave. If that happens, the remnants of the Old World may be lost and destroyed.”

“So it’s all for the betterment of mankind?” The Courier pondered.

“No. It’s for the continuation of mankind. You’ve done your job, Courier, and now I’ll do mine.”

With that, the Courier walked out of the Casino and out of Vegas, back into the Mojave. The sounds of the city faded behind him as he wandered further. The Courier wandered in search of jobs, and each one brought with it an adventure. Soon, there would be only one path left to walk, and it is one the Courier would have to walk alone...

2nd Place- Hailey Burton

“Mom?” I called out, rapping my fists twice on the pine door. No answer. I move forward, feeling the wood floors creak beneath my feet.

“Hello, Sophia.” The automated computer voice chimed from behind me. A large metallic stick propped onto a steel-like pallet that hovered three inches above the ground; and at the head of the stick was a large computer touch screen, the face of a woman within smiling back at me from inside. She seemed to sit at a desk, dressed in white, with a singular white wall behind her and long blonde hair cascading down her shoulders. She spoke with a British accent, her hair bouncing as she greeted me. Its name was Siri, version four-point-oh-one. Two long “arms” protruded from the body, three grey wires woven around the metallic limbs from the computer screen to the three soft padded prongs at the ends of each “arm” like hands, used to grip and carry.

“Hi, Siri.” I nodded back. “Have you seen my mom?”

“No, I have not seen your mom. I believe she has not yet returned from her trip. Would you like some tea while you wait?” The voice was void of compassion, hollow and as if the words had been strung together to form some form of intelligent response.

“Yes, please.” I nodded again, slipping off my jacket and throwing it over the arm of one of the lounge chairs in the main room as I made my way to the back door.

“The usual, miss Sophia?” It asked again, following me into the kitchen.

“Yes. Chai. Whipped cream and cinnamon too,” I unlocked the door, opening it just enough for a little white cat to walk in, weaving herself between my ankles as if to say hello.

Siri Four-Point-Oh-One moved to the coffee machine, the Keurig Brewer with a white mug already placed inside. The coffee machine automatically clicked and buzzed, the front light button glowing red, meaning that the water inside was now beginning to boil. The updated Siri could now connect through the Wifi connection to any object, as long as there was an internet connection. Apple and Google had merged back in 2032, and together, they’d redefined what it meant to be a universal controller when they updated the SiriBot. Now Siri could connect to any piece of technology using the house Wifi.

I’d thrown myself onto the lounge chair, the cat jumping up onto my stomach, and flipped through the channels

using the thin arched aluminum-steel remote that fit lightly the palm of my hand, until I'd reached the CNN channel. Images of foreign war-torn states and obese Americans and of spokeswomen with caked faces of make-up went by in a blur, followed by updates on the 2050 GOP presidential election, and represented by a man and a woman. She turned up her nose and batted her eyes, and her cheeks and eyes were void of color when she smiled for the camera, and he glowered scornfully at her whenever he had the chance to. Neither, I felt, were right for the presidency- she was always either too loud and egotistical, coming

forward as extreme, and he had always been a pompous bigot who, like many others who'd run before him, couldn't contain himself.

"Your tea is ready. I will bring it to you now." Siri chimed from behind, clenching the mug with its three padded pronged "fingers", two on the sides and one supporting the underneath.

"Thanks." I nodded, looking back at the TV screen.

"Honey!" I could hear my mom call out as she stepped in. She hurriedly made her way to the main room, dropping her things in the hall and hugging me as she saw me. She squeezed my body tightly, and smiled as she let me go.

"Would you like some tea, Miss Greene?" Siri spoke behind us, lightly tapping Mom on the shoulder for attention. She nodded yes, and the droid turned back to the kitchen. She turned her head to watch as her tea was being made.

"You know, it amazes me sometimes. How far technology's come in the last hundred years. Fifty years ago, we didn't have Siri or even Wifi, not like we have now. No, that wasn't until I was born that I think we really developed that. Actually, now that I think about it- life isn't all that different from when I was a kid."

I frowned. "How so? I thought it'd changed a ton, that's what my history teacher said anyways."

"Yeah, of course, but you still go to school, and you're planning on going to college, aren't you? So did I, at sixteen. I had a dog and a cat, and I had an Iphone, and a Kindle, and my

own laptop. Sure that was a hand-me-down, but things today are the exact same. Except people are more gender-fluid than before, Siri's been developed into a house robot, and medicine is better than it ever was. We still have sports and sports teams, that won't change. And while America is still obese, more people my age are going into fitness and becoming active. College isn't free, but it's better, and cheaper. But you go to school, you come

home, you make mistakes, and people begin developing cities and building skyscrapers and thinking of new designs for cars and Siribots. You go to school and you have homework and extracurriculars, and learn the same old stuff I learned way back when, too. Life isn't dystopic and nor is it based on dystopic values, and no matter what's changed, people adapt and become used to it." She smiled sadly, and I could see the thought behind her eyes, the way she analyzed and processed everything. She spoke the truth, I knew. It made me wonder about my life, fifty years from now.

Things wouldn't have changed much either. Just the clothes and the buildings, the medicine, and maybe Siri would be more realistic looking, rather than the basic stick-shift brand it is now. Maybe our "Hoverboards" would actually be strong enough to carry a person to and from places, whilst actually hovering. There are ideas to renovate the Apple Watch into glasses and contacts, and plans to establish a colony on Mars, though that probably won't ever happen for a while.

"Oh," she laughed, her face suddenly lit with amusement, "and every ten years, there's always someone who thinks the world is going to end."

Honorable Mention- Makayla Hoy

He woke up to a sudden vibration in his skull. He had gotten an alarm implanted in his skull when he was thirteen so he could always wake up on time. Eddie was still lying in his bed under the thick purple sheets, staring at the ceiling.

“Good morning, Eddie,” Eddie’s computer assistant, Lori said with her usual monotone voice.

“Morning, Lori. What time is it?” Eddie asked, still in bed.

“It is 09:00 hours, and you have a meeting with Allen at 09:15 at the Myers Cafe,” she responded. Eddie ripped the sheets off himself and jumped off the soft bed. He ran to the closet and opened it.

“What do you want to wear?” Lori asked.

“My black jeans with my black sweatshirt, and I’ll wear my Converse that I bought at the antique auction,” Eddie said frantically. He stepped into the closet and Lori dressed him head to toe. Once she was done, he ran out of the closet. He made it to the door and put his hand on the silver handle.

“Eddie, let me open that for you. And do you also want me to do your hair?” Lori inquired.

“No, Lori, I’m good,” he replied. Then the door opened on its own.

“Eddie, don’t forget the news...” Before Lori could finish, he ran out the door and down the old rugged stairs to his sweet, black 2017 Porsche. He got in and put his seatbelt on and started his incredibly epic car.

“Oh, how I love this life,” he said, he pulled out of his crummy apartment parking lot and hit the road. Eddie absentmindedly turned the radio on just as the news was describing a theft,

“An ancient weapon known as a 1933 Colt New Service Revolver has been stolen from the Ancient History Museum. Sources believe that Bonnie ‘The Fox’ Vixon has stolen it. Please report to the police if you see it. Barbara Garfield out.”

“Hmph, interesting.” He thought. Then he surfed the channels looking for his favorite style of music from the 90’s. Then “Thunderstruck” blasted on his radio. He just loves AC/DC. It took him 10 minutes to arrive to Myers Cafe. He pulled in and parked, and saw his buddy Allen standing by the door. Allen was wearing his usual black shirt with his black sweatpants, well, everyone was really. Color was deemed unnecessary in clothing a long time ago when drones started running the factories.

“Hey, man, how you doing?” Allen said right after he spotted him.

“Good,” Eddie replied. Eddie went to open the door to go in. Then Allen grabbed his hand.

“No, Eddie, the computer will get it,” Allen said. Then the door opened automatically. They went in and everyone in the cafe stared at Eddie and whispered to each other.

“What’s going on, Allen?” Eddie asked as they went up to the counter.

“Oh, so you didn’t see the news like usual...I’ll tell you once I order my stuff and sit down,” He said.

“What can I get you gentlemen?” The robot at the counter asked .

“I would like a Vanilla Chai tea,” Eddie said.

“Man, that’s ancient, Eddie. I would like a normal coffee, thanks,” Allen said. Then the robot handed them their drinks.

“300 credits.” The robot said. Allen chuckled and said “awesome” as he gave the robot his palm to scan the barcode on his palm.

Eddie started to walk towards an empty table. Then Allen grabbed his arm.

“No, Eddie, let’s talk outside,” Allen said in a serious tone. This is not the Allen he was used to, he was rarely serious. They exited the building and walked into an alleyway.

“What’s going on?” Eddie said nervously. Allen looked hesitant at first. Then he stood tall.

Eddie, I’m so sorry to tell you that you’re going to die,” Eddie immediately went into shock and dropped his vanilla chai tea. He fell down to his knees. Tears were streaking down his pale face.

“No, No! This can’t be!” He screamed and screamed. Then a few minutes later he leaned on the the ancient brick wall of the alleyway.

“Allen, when do I die? Who kills me, and how? And where?” he asked quietly. Allen pulled out his iPhone 41 and showed him a picture of a beat up, bloodied, face down Eddie. Eddie started to cry again when Allen showed him that picture.

“This article said your time of death is 23:18.30 June the 6th 2050. You were killed by one of the most notorious gangsters, Bonnie ‘The Fox’ Vixon,” Allen said as he read the article off his phone.

“I have nothing to do with Bonnie Vixon, so why do I get killed by her?” Eddie asked.

“Cause of death: bullet wound to the chest. It seems like you were beat up and then shot,” Allen said.

“Great, is there any way to avoid it?” Eddie asked.

“No. Everyone who tried has failed, because you can avoid death that moment, but you will die another way instead...”Allen paused and took out a gun.

“And this is why I have to do this,” Allen pointed the gun and put the tip to Eddie’s forehead.

“Allen what are you doing? And is that a 1933 Colt New Service Revolver?” Eddie asked scared out of his mind.

“Well do you prefer to get beat up and bloody, and shot in the chest, or just get shot in the head and get it over with? And yes, this is a 1933 Colt New Service Revolver.”

“Allen, I thought Bonnie ‘The Fox’ Vixon stole that.”

“No she did not. I did.”

“What the heck have you gotten into?”Eddie said.

“Bonnie... I love that woman so much I had to give her a present.” He paused, and looked at the gun.

“The gun that supposedly belonged to Bonnie Parker. A 1933 Colt New Service Revolver.”

“Then if you love her and she loves you then why did she kill me?”

“A misunderstanding. Eddie, she obviously abducted you so she could get me to come, and give her Bonnie Parker’s gun. But I didn’t get there on time and you were dead already. I’m sorry. Do you have anything to say

before you die?”

“Allen please don’t do this. Please!”

“I’m sorry,” Allen said and Eddie cried and cried.

“One, two and three,” Then a sound echoed through the alleyway. Eddie laid dead on the concrete of the alleyway. Allen leaned down and stared at Eddie’s body.

“I’m sorry Eddie, but I couldn’t let Bonnie get to you because of what I did.” Allen stood up and walked away towards the hazy red clouds of pollution in the city.

Honorable Mention- Austin Graf

Mark Twain once said, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born... and the day you find out why.” I went most of my life without understanding what that quote meant. My story to understanding that quote began when I met my best friend, Pete, in junior year of high school.

We were very different people who hung out with very different cliques but we were always there for each other. Pete wanted to become a physicist and I wanted to become a director. I had always been in love with the world of movies. I wanted to entertain people, not with my words but my work.

By the time senior year came along, reality began to drift away, but it wasn't obvious at the time. As soon as we graduated, I vanished. I wasn't going to become a director in a small town like Hudson. I started a new life, in a new city. But over time, I began to realize something. Nothing was interesting anymore, nothing was new, plots were always the same. How was I going to be creative in such an unoriginal society?

The movie industry was dying, I was out of work, I had no money. People rarely watched movies in theaters anymore, theaters were becoming something of the past. Pete, “The Son of Physics” had gone on to be a successful physicist. You'd see him in magazines, the news, he was everywhere. He had been working on something called “Project Perception.” No one knew anything about it, I had always wondered what it was myself.

November 16th, 2050- Present Day

So here I was, in a coffee shop in New York City, the city that never sleeps, trying to write a script but nothing was coming to my head. I looked out the window at all of the people then faced my computer again and slammed it shut. I left the coffee shop and headed home, it was getting late. Walking down the street, listening to my music, I noticed something, something familiar. I turned back and saw Pete, I hadn't seen him in person in ten years.

I did the awkward jog you do when you're crossing the street, trying to catch up to him so I wouldn't lose him. I pushed past the crowd of people. I grabbed him by the shoulder and he turned around, startled. He looked me in the eye for a few seconds, it seemed like forever then grinned.

“Look who it is. How long has it been? I missed you.”

I didn't know what to say, I did vanish from the world. “Ten years, listen... I'm sorry. Can we go somewhere and talk about it?”

We headed to the Summit Bar a few blocks down. We grabbed a few drinks and sat down at one of the corner

tables. We caught up for a while; he became a rich, successful scientist and here I was, a failing director. We were practically opposites.

“What happened... I mean you left the day we graduated, you disappeared. I lost my best friend,” Pete questioned.

I attempted to explain to him my reasons for leaving. He then asked how things were going; I lied and made up stories about my success. He looked at me and knew I was lying, he remembered I'd always been terrible at lying.

He briefly told me about “Project Perception.” Though we hadn't talked in a decade, he trusted me. The government and Pete had been working on something I could only explain as travelling to different dimensions through a portal; it was going to new worlds. The thing was, no one had been inside of it, it was too dangerous; there was only a 14% chance making it back to our world. He described the portal as a metal door, once opened, it was like looking at a glimpse of space.

As he kept talking about projects he had been working on, I began to think, I had an idea. See, looking at my life, I didn't have much to live for: no family, no loved ones, no friends, and no money. What if I entered into this portal? If I didn't make it out, there would be no one to mourn my loss and if I did, can you imagine what kind of film I could make? Pete waved to get my attention; I was so busy thinking about what was behind that door. I told him my idea. He obviously seemed very skeptical and denied it at first. I tried to convince him and he did seem very curious. He added my number to his phone and said he would contact me in two weeks.

Two Weeks Later

I was watching the news on my hologram transmitter when I received a call from Pete. He gave me an address, it was out of the city. I grabbed my camera and jacket and ran out the door. It was a long drive so I had the car on auto-pilot; I figured I could use some rest. I was awoken by the car, notifying me we were near the destination. There was one building, almost cubed-shaped, black, and it was in the middle of a field. I slowly walked towards the door. There were cameras everywhere, it looked empty. I knocked and I could hear muffled voices on the other side. Pete opened the door and looked around outside to make sure I wasn't followed. It was dark inside and very echoey. He whispered, “Stand up straight, don't talk unless needed.”

He put his hand on a security scanner to open the next door. The voice of a robot said “Identification confirmed, welcome Peter Quinn.” We walked in a room and a general sat at the table on one side, Pete sat next to him, and I sat on the other side. The general stared at me with no emotion, he looked so empty. He spoke in a deep, slow, grizzly voice, “Mr. Quinn has told me quite a bit about you. Tell me your plan.” His voice was so low, it was hard to understand.

I summarized what I was thinking, why I wanted to do this. The general nodded slowly, “We’ll do some testing on you, make sure you’re... capable enough.”

About an hour later, I was sent to a medical lab nearby for some testing. Pete picked me up in his BMW XX. It was one of the most advanced vehicles of our time, no wheels, it was matte white, and the engines were unlike anything I had ever seen. He handed me a suit to wear when I go: black, the joints of the suit lit up and were powered by human cells.

We had some small talk. “Are you sure you want to do this, there’s such a small chance of coming back. Is that a risk you’re willing to take?” If this worked according as planned, it would give me a new chance at my life. But of course, nothing works according as planned in my life. I looked over at him and nodded slowly and continued looking at old photos on my camera. I should have swapped SD cards before I left.

We pulled in the driveway of the facility, the same one in which I met with the general and Pete. I went into a room to put my suit on, I put my camera strap around my neck, and I headed to the door. There were tons of people, of all kinds in that room. Doctors, government officers, and reporters; I guess this wasn’t so secret anymore.

Pete handed me a radio transmitter to put around my wrist to get in contact with him, if I could even contact him, once I entered inside that door. The room was dead silent, the sound of my heartbeat was the only thing I could hear. This was either the end of my sad, depressing life or the beginning of something new. I walked towards the platform, a few feet away from the door.

I looked back, didn’t smile, didn’t say a word and walked in the door slowly as if I moved any faster, something would explode. I could see millions of stars..

2 Days Later

I had never seen anything so bright in my life. All I could hear was the ringing in my ears and my vision was blurred. I had made it back, alive. I was the 14% that survived. No words could express what I was thinking at the time. All I had left to say was this: Mark Twain once said, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born... and the day you find out why...” My name is Blake Carter and at that moment in time, I knew exactly what he meant.

Middle School- Creative Writing

1st Place- Courtney Bronson

The street was empty. The doors of houses hung limply opened. Windows were cracked and broken, glass shards littering the ground. Tall buildings were crumbling to nothingness. Sands were stretched out on highways. A single tumbleweed rolled across the road in the hot, dry wind. The city was void of life. In fact, the whole world was like that. Not a single human remained . . .

“Doctor? I think I found something!”

Dr. Robot Riley approached her young student, Robot Ben, who was crouching on the dirt, next to a hole. The hole was six feet in length and two feet wide.

Dr. Robot Riley gasped, “Is that what I think it is?” Robot Ben nodded eagerly. “Yes, I think that is what you think it is!”

Inside that hole was a human skeleton. It was in perfect shape except for maybe a few cracks here and there. The skull grinned eerily at the two robots as if to say, “Yes, you found me.”

Thirty Years Ago

Human children ran around on the street, laughing. They were playing tag, a very popular game for the little ones. Teenagers curled up on their beds, playing and texting on their iPhone 10. Seniors were asleep, tired after a long day. Adults were busy at work, holding stacks of papers, following their bosses’ orders, or drinking coffee. Nobody paid any attention to the meteor that was creeping closer and closer very quickly. Nobody even saw or heard the meteor’s loud roar. Not a single person noticed it. The meteor flew closer and closer, yelling in delight. That was when a baby looked at it, giggling, thinking that it was a ball coming to play. A few seconds later, the world was on fire.

Present Day

“And that is what happened to the humans,” Robot Samantha said before sitting down. “Good job, RS.”

Very informational,” Mr. Robot Keith smiled at the class, very pleased with their progress.

“Now, please open your science book and go to page fifty.” The whole class scrambled for their book in their desk. And a moment later, everyone was ready and alert. Well . . . almost everyone . . . Robot Uriah’s backpack which contained all his textbooks and papers spilled everywhere. He hastily hurried up to organize the mess.

Mr. Robot Keith then said, “Now, read the chapter, and, when you’re finished, tell me about our environment.”

Science Book, page 50-53

Thirty years ago, before the humans went into extinction, the animals were not like of today’s. These creatures were of the biological kinds, the ones with hearts, blood, nerves, brains, and living organs. They wouldn’t last forever like today’s animals. The biological animals would grow old and die or be eaten by predators. All animals now, including the “predators” like lions, bears, wolves, tigers, and cheetahs, only need to stand under the sun for five minutes a month to stay alive, which is very easy. The current creatures don’t have those complex systems like before . . . They are made of metal, with wires and other mechanics underneath the “skin.” Plants and trees are made of flexible steel, which are stronger than the brown trees.

You will learn about the following in Chapter Four: Animals’ System- How Robots’ Bodies Function

“Me, me, me, me!” many of the students called out, hoping to capture Mr. Robot Keith’s attention. “Alright, alright, hold on! I’ll pick someone!” he chuckled. His lightbulb eyes darted over the students swiftly for a count of ten seconds before he chose a student.

“Robot Jerry! Can you please tell us about the pages you’ve just read?” The poor student rose to his feet, trembling. In his program memory, he was rarely chosen to speak in front of the whole class.

“T-the a-a-animals t-that w-w-were a-a-alive thirty y-years ago had this c-complex system that o-only lasted f-f-for a s-s-short time before they’d g-grow o-o-old a-and die, o-or be eaten b-by p-predators. A-and the trees w-weren’t made of s-steel l-like now. They were m-made of those brown . . .”

“Woods,” Mr. Robot Keith supplied.

“Yeah, w-woods,” Robot Jerry continued. “And the p-plants had those f-floppy green stems and s-stuff.”

Then he sat down, red-faced.

“Well done, RJ!” boomed Mr. Robot Keith, then he turned to the class, a small grin on his face. “Can anyone tell us how were the robots created? And how they developed an advanced civilization?”

“Uhh,” one student mumbled. Everyone turned to her. Robot Taylor went pink. “Yes...?” Mr. Robot Keith inquired.

“Uhh,” Robot Taylor said quietly. “The first robot was created by humans before the meteor, and when the world blew up, the robot survived. Exactly how, we don’t know, for his body was similar to a human’s body except for wires and more advanced programs. He actually woke up due to the electrical charge the meteor had caused.

Then he started building more and more robots thanks to the scraps from blown up buildings . . . My mom, the robot who built me, told me.”

“Good job, RT! Give yourself a pat on the back,” Mr. Robot Keith grinned. And she did. Robot Jerry did, too, due to one of his friends’ insistence.

Before Mr. Robot Keith could say, “School’s over!” Robot Ben stumbled into the room, his wires spinning loudly due to running. “What’s wrong, RB?” Mr. Robot Keith asked urgently.

“W-we f-found it! Well, I-I found it! Not an animal skeleton this time!” Robot Ben practically yelled.

Everyone gasped and raced out after Robot Ben, Mr. Robot Keith right behind them. They ran several miles in ten minutes before arriving at the digging site. Somebody was already waiting for them.

Dr. Robot Riley ran up to Mr. Robot Keith, smiling hugely.

“Ken, we found it!” she gasped. “I know, RB told me!” Mr. Robot Keith whispered back excitedly. “Now, where is it?”

Dr. Robot Riley grabbed his hand, which surprised everyone who were watching the two carefully, and raced over to the hole. Mr. Robot Keith’s mouth fell open, causing the class to run forward to the hole, and they exclaimed loudly when they saw what was in the hole.

“I-is that . . .?” started Robot Hannah. “No way!” Robot Ethan shouted. Everyone was whispering and chatting excitedly. For ten years, they have been looking for a single one. “Yes, it is, my class,” said Mr. Robot Keith. “Behold, the first human skeleton ever found!”

And, my dear readers, is how this story ends. Robots finding a human skeleton was known as the First Wonder of the World. If you wish, continue the story . . . with your imagination.

2nd Place- Ian Fraas

“Breaking News! Global warming melted most of Antarctica, revealing natural resources and beauty. Many countries, including North Korea are competing to seize control of Antarctica. We want you to go to the nearby recruiting army station. We accept any gender and hue. We also want some deaf volunteers too!” Jason came into his living room in Jacksonville, Illinois. He saw his parents Jason Sr. and Grace McMurray huddling together, watching the holographic TV. Jason Jr. sat down and watched his holographic interpreter. He signed to his parents, “What’s going on?”

Jason Sr. replied, “We are at war with some other countries... the government is calling for deaf volunteers to enlist in the army.” He hesitated. “President Berdy passed an act to allow deaf people to enlist in all five military branches for the first time.”

Jason Jr. thought, “Mm... maybe I could join, but I’m too young. Fortunately, I would turn 19 in July, only one month from now!!” He asked his parents if he could join the army. They said no.

Grace explained, “You don’t know anyone!” Jason Sr. said, “Even if you have CVR goggles to understand what other people said, you don’t know how to talk to anyone!!”

“Fine! I don’t care then.” Jason Jr. blew up.

“July 11, 2050: One month into another great world war, known as world war three. Estimated casualties are 1,900,000. U.S., Canada, Australia, and England (known as the English Power) are about to start an invasion on November 22nd.” The news blaring, Jason Sr. and Grace crept upstairs to say happy birthday to Jason Jr., only to find an empty bed.

Jason Jr. enlisted in the Marine Corps without his parents’ permission or blessing. He was sent to Base Quantico, marine base, for four grueling weeks of drill. Finally, he graduated at the top of his class and was assigned to Illinois’ 992nd squadron, nicknamed Gallaudet Corps because the first and only deaf person to enlist and graduate was... just Jason. He then traveled to Antarctica in a plane, Hogwarts B-10 Thunderbolt that can land vertically like a helicopter. When he arrived, he got the CVR goggles and was able to comprehend what other people said, despite the peripheral vision loss while wearing them. Jason and 10 other men were assigned a mission to seize control of an invaluable fort, the only one that could stop the rest of the English invasion to Antarctica. There’s a rumor that Germany is controlling the fort known as Fort Blitzkrieg, which means lightning war.

Jason made a friend, Jana Bustanos, who knew sign language because her mom was deaf. Jason also had some enemies. There were four of them; Taylor Decker, Andrew Johnson, Adam Lexmark, and John Smith. They all believed or thought that deaf people were inferior to hearing people. Of these people, Adam was the worst bully. He said, “Hey! Hey, are you deafo! Come on! Turn around if you can hear me! Deafo! Deafo! Turn around you dummy deafo! Here’s what I want to say.” Adam leaned close to Jason. Jason could smell couscous and mushroom from Adam’s breath. “We don’t need deafos like you!” Adam cackled like an idiot. The rest of

the Marines Jason was assigned ignored Jason. Some even acted like he was an annoying fly.

Jason and his company went inside a headquarter tent and discussed their plan for taking control of the fort. All of them have to go through a field full of vaporizing mines. Jason remembered from his drilling that if somebody stepped on one, the mine would vaporize him/her! After weaving through the mines, they'll have to overcome the garrison (a group of people that defends a building; usually a fort) of 35 soldiers that were heavily armed with AK-47s. Some even have anti-tank guns and rocket launchers. The garrison even included several mortars (which are devices that fire projectiles at low height and short distance) crews. Jason and his company would launch a surprise attack tomorrow at 0500 hours, Pacific Standard Time.

On August 13th, 2050, in Antarctica about one league (three and a half miles) away from Fort Blitzkrieg, Jason and his company collected their weapons including several rocket launchers in case for tanks, laser guns that could burn or kill enemies and are similar to rifles. Jason and the other Marines left and they weaved through the vaporizing mines. They were able to avoid some mines because they could see humps of freshly dug dirt and some mines weren't completely buried. As soon as they got through a quarter of the league (3 and a half miles), some soldiers, including Adam, stopped for a rest. Adam walked to a boulder and sat on it. Suddenly, a mine vaporized Adam without him uttering a sound. Jana yelled for others to find some cover and avoid boulders.

A sentinel, back at Fort Blitzkrieg, saw a flash, so he took out his binoculars and saw two Marines rushing for cover. He signaled the mortar crews to start firing at the minefield.

Jason and Jana got behind an old log along with Taylor and one more Marine. Some hid behind a giant boulder. Two marines tripped over each other and fell on a mine; fortunately, they rolled away. The unfortunate part was they both got hit by shrapnel from a nearby mortar. One hit a girl's head and another found its mark on a boy's back. When Jason rose to see who was still alive, out of nowhere, an enemy sniper from Fort Blitzkrieg shot Jason's face. At the same time a mortar fell in front of him, splashing shrapnel around. He got blown away and then crumpled to the ground. Jana screamed, "NO!!" she crawled over to Jason and saw that he wasn't hurt. His CVR goggles blocked a bullet from entering his brain. Shrapnel got stuck in his goggles. Nonetheless, he was unhurt. If the goggles weren't there, he would've died. Jason took his goggles off and then crawled to see who was alive and who was dead.

After discovering that only three died, the remaining Marines waited for the mortar crews to stop firing. Jason signaled his only sniper, John, to pick off some enemy snipers. After John completed his task, the Marines crawled toward the fort. Within an hour, they arrived at the wall without any incidents due to Jason's keen eyesight. Since he's deaf, he relied on his eyesight more often than his hearing. As a result, he was able to concentrate on his task more than the other Marines because he's oblivious to noise. Shortly, the Marines seized control of Fort Blitzkrieg and took at least 20 German prisoners. Jana radioed the English camp, reporting that they took the fort.

After the war ended with English victory, Jason went home and was hailed as a hero in his hometown even though he didn't think that he's a hero. He's just Jason doing his duty like any soldier would. Meanwhile,

Antarctica was divided into 4 parts for the English power to share. Back in the U.S., Jason and his company received a medal of honor for their actions. Jason got two Purple Hearts for being wounded by a sniper's bullet and getting hit by shrapnel. He also got a medal for heroic action in guiding his company to safety. For these reasons, he also got promoted to brigadier general.

A few years later, in 2054, he reenlisted as brigadier general and was deployed to South Korea to guard the border between North and South Korea. After five years of guarding, Jason came home. He got a chance to go and meet president Berdy, who was in his first year of his second term as the president of the U.S. Jason recommended some modifications to the CVR goggles such as; more peripheral vision, captions right above the nose bridge, and that they should be shaped like avatar goggles. Jason knew that if deaf people enlist in the army, there would be more soldiers that could use their keen eyesight to find any hidden mines and booby traps. Also the deaf soldiers would be more focused on their missions than other hearing people because deaf soldiers wouldn't hear what's going on. After having his recommendations approved, Jason married Jana, had three kids, and later six grandkids. Jason lived to be 83 and passed away peacefully in the year 2114. After Jason's death, the U.S. built a memorial statue of Jason in Antarctica near Fort Blitzkrieg. The statue was a life-size replica of Jason taking his goggles, with the bullet and shrapnel in it, off. The statue was made out of the same shrapnel that pierced his goggles.

Honorable Mention- Jayvon Harmon

I'll tell you what REALLY happen, and I really mean REALLY, but keep it between us, okay? Good, so, uh, I'm Jayvon, and I am one of the time travelers. I only time travel to the past, because they said I'm still a novice, so I can't travel to the future. But I might got sucked in a portal to the future by accident. Yeah, that's what happened. So here I was, in the future, in a city I had no idea about. Interesting fact is, cars really do fly here, and they have REAL hoverboard that REALLY flies! I walked around a fast food restaurant that looked like McDonald's in the future.

I froze when someone screamed "ALIEN ATTACK!", all people on the street, including me, looked up and saw a gigantic, Titanic-like spaceship flying toward the city. I squinted my eyes because I recognized the spaceship. It was the Dragonius spaceship. Someone putted on the jetpack and activated it in a flash. Then he flew up on a two story building and shouted "THROW THE CHEESE!". People took their cheeses from their jackets or pocket or wherever they took it from, and threw them at the spaceship. That was a stupid idea, but it managed to push the Dragonius toward the sea. The Dragonius exploded at the sea. You can even see the flame and smoke like 25 feet above the sea. How can a bunch of cheeses defeat a BIG, BIG spaceship?! It felt like I had my head in the cloud. Wait, I might be dreaming! I began pinching myself. It really hurted, but I kept pinching myself. I stopped when a girl stared at me like I'm a weirdo. I wanted to tell her that I'm not a weirdo, I'm trying to escape my dream! But hurting myself was no use. Maybe I was really a weirdo. "Uh, hey" I said as I waved to the girl. The girl slowly waved back and walked away. Okay, I just needed to be as cool as a cucumber.

I went to explore the city. Apparently I'm in New York, because I saw the Statue of Liberty. I explored the city more other than viewing the Statue of Liberty. According to some signs, I was in a city called Academia. In the neighborhood, I heard a yell. "Who parked the bike..." The voice shouted. I looked to where the voice was coming from. I saw an angry looking man standing beside a REALLY awesome, cool bike. "...on my potato?!" The man roared. I looked at the bike tires. Yeah, I saw a squashed potato below one of the tires. "Heh, I did!" the other man said. The angry man started cursing, he even rapped! There is a sentence that were appropriate to put in. He said "YOU TURTLE! TU-TU-TUR-TU-TU-TU-TURTLE!". I just walked away from them. It weren't my problem anyway. In the next neighborhood, I noticed there were a school group. "Welcome back to school." the teacher said. A guy in a school group began talking. "Josh, you get a F for the rest of the year for talking!!!" The teacher hissed, pointing to the talking guy. I looked around the neighborhood, and saw a cop taking an handcuffed boy to a house. The police knocked the door. The door opened and there were a woman. I went closer as possible, avoiding detection. "Madam, I'm afraid I caught your son doing..." I was expecting the police say something a boy can mischievously do, like stealing and stuffs, but. "...chores" the police continued. Wait, that boy were arrested for doing something most teenagers hates to do?! It was clear to me everything will be weird in the future. I do not want to stay in the future anymore. Suddenly a guy

screamed. I ran to the guy. "What's wrong?!" I said. "GIANT FLYING SHEEP!" The guy shouted as he pointed to the sky. I looked at the sky, confused. "Those are clouds..." I said. The guy suddenly dropped down the ground and screamed so loudly windows could break and he could make my ears bleed. I avoided the guy. See what I mean?

I woke up. I was still in my bedroom. I looked at my iPad. It was still 2016. It was just a dream. I got up and went to the kitchen. I found fortune cookies and ate them. Yes, I eat cookies for breakfast. I read the piece of paper. It said, "DREAMS CAN COME TRUE"

Honorable Mention- Jaylynn Moreno

Hi, my name is Will and no, I'm not the famous actor, Will Smith. My full name is William Johnson, but my friends call me Will. We are in the year 2050 and I'm excited because I'm going to turn 13 soon. Last night, I had a dream about that one night. Oh yeah, you don't know what happened that night because I just introduced you into my life.

One night, it was bitterly cold because that same night it was snowing. I saw three guys in an alley way, but I thought it was safe because we have robots in our town. I walked down that alley way, but before I took one more step to get on the road on the other side, someone put a bag over my head, making no light shine through. When they uncovered my face, I found that they had taken me into an abandoned warehouse and my family was there, tied to a chair like I was. We waited there forever, then when I was just about to fall asleep, a guy came into the warehouse and said, "I am going to help you guys, I am with the police."

I didn't believe him. He didn't look like he was the kind of guy that would be a policeman. He was skinny, looked like he hadn't eaten for days, smelled bad, and was in casual clothing. I wondered where the abductor had gone. Maybe the police apprehended him.

My mom said, "Thank you" after he had untied us.

The policeman said, "I am going to drive you guys home. Let's get out of here before the guys that kidnapped you come back."

My family and I went outside and I saw the policeman's car was a beat up Honda. My mom got in the car and I got in alongside her with my little sister who was on the far end of us. The policeman started driving and while he was driving, my mom started asking him all kinds of questions. The policeman started to get nervous because he was stuttering and sweating profusely. He looked back at my mom and wasn't looking at the road. We were heading straight for a lake. I yelled out, but it was too late we had already hit the water in a few seconds. I quickly grabbed my mom's hand, but my grasp loosened and I let go and I watched her sink towards the bottom. There was a robot nearby and it jumped into the water to save us, but it only got me out of the water and then didn't jump back in to save the others. I started yelling at the robot to save my sister and mother, but it didn't respond and just sat there.

I started to hit the robot, crying, "Save my family!!"

All it said was, "I can't. You had the highest chance of surviving, not your little sister or mom."

Now I'm living with my auntie. I haven't told her that I've been having those dreams because she could freak out and get me a shrink. It's almost Christmas and my auntie is bugging me, asking me what I want for Christmas, and I keep saying that I don't know. I think she finally gave up because she hasn't once asked what I want for Christmas since. She is probably not going to get me anything or she is going to buy me something and make it a surprise.

Today is Christmas Day and my auntie called me into the living room so she can give me my present,

and guess what it was, a robot! When I saw him, I fainted and when I woke up, I was on the couch with a cold towel on my head. I saw that my grandma was in the kitchen preparing all the food for dinner, with the robot. I walked over to where my auntie was and the robot said, "Hi, Will."

I pulled my auntie into the living room so we could talk about the robot. She said that I needed a friend to play with because I was lonely so she got me a robot. I said to her if she remembered what happened two years ago, with my sister and mom. She got quiet.

In a few seconds, she replied, "Yes, but I thought you will bond with this robot. You know not all robots are the same, they have different personalities."

I was shocked, I just stood there reliving the day my mom and sister died. I ran out of the house and took my bike from the garage and biked all the way down to the beach. My favorite place where my mom and I used to come down here all the time. My auntie came and got me at the beach, she knew that I would be there. When I got back to my auntie's house, I saw the robot making gingerbread cookies and I thought that maybe I was overreacting.

When I woke up from a strange dream I had the next morning, it wasn't about that day. This dream was different but at least I got a little bit more sleep in me this time. It was when I went into the kitchen to get myself a glass of orange juice that I smelled something pleasant. It smelled like pancakes, sausages, eggs, toast, and bacon. My auntie doesn't usually bake those things. I usually eat what's in the fridge. So I thought that maybe we had guests over, because she usually only cooks when we have guests over. When I went into the kitchen, I saw the robot and my auntie cooking away. She said that I am up early and that I should come and help so we could eat in a little while. I asked if there are any guests here today and she declined. I was surprised. She said that the robot had recipes built into its system and that she wanted to try a few new ones. I went over and helped the robot make cinnamon buns which were my favorite. The robot was nice to me. He helped me measure the water, flour, and milk to put into a bowl so we could mix it.

After we put everything in the oven and to cook on the stove, my auntie and I sat down in the living room and the robot was watching everything so nothing would burn. I made us hot cocoa and we talked about what we are going to do today. We discussed going shopping, browsing the museum, swimming, or going to the amusement park. I chose going the movies first then swimming. As I was planning the day with my auntie, I smelled smoke. I ran to the kitchen and I saw the robot spraying white foam from its chest. He put out the fire, my auntie and I ran outside to get away from all the smoke inside.

About a month later, the robot and I bonded and we are now best friends. We go anywhere with each other. Then something happened. One day, when we were walking on the bridge, it shut down all of a sudden. I ran to the robot repair shop and told them that they had to come to the bridge to repair my robot. They picked it up and put it in a truck. I went home and I ran to my room and flopped onto my bed and started to cry myself to sleep. The next day, the robot repair shop called and said that they fixed it. I was so excited for it to come home. The robot walked in the door and I can tell that it was different. It didn't come and give me a hug like it used to when I had gotten off of school and it didn't pet the dog when he ran up to it. It was different. When I came up to

it to give it a hug, it was stiff and hug me back. I ran to my room, closed the door, and locked it. My auntie ran to my room and when she found that it was locked she stood at the foot of the door and said that my robot's memory had to be reformatted and had a new memory card. I yelled at her to tell them that we didn't want the new robot. I heard her sigh then walked to the front door and whispered something to them. I heard the door close and after that I fell asleep and woke up to the smell of food and sound of laughter. I unlocked my door and went downstairs. I forgot that we were having guests tonight. I went into the kitchen and saw the most prettiest girl ever. I went up to her and said hi. She was the daughter of my auntie's friend. I no longer needed to have a robot as a companion.

High School- Essay

1st Place- Courtney Bronson

Journey into the Deaf World

I think one of the most important issues facing the Deaf community is the lack of awareness about Deaf artists including actors, dancers, and artists who draw, paint, mold and make things with their hands. Deaf artists need to be recognized and promoted more consistently. Once deaf artists are more recognized and promoted, their reputation will improve. I would like to use magazine advertisements to promote a few deaf artists per month. Additionally, I would create and use Facebook page to share the same article and to share the advertisement on Facebook. If the magazines or making a facebook page would help deaf people get more recognition, the public would be aware about Deaf culture, deaf people's skills and deaf people would be able to get any type of job in a public place. Deaf people need to have more recognition for their skills so that they can be more accepted by the public. In the Deaf community, many people who are deaf have so much talent, they can dance, make music, draw or paint, and so much more, yet their talent is not recognized. The only artists who were recognized before are Marlee Matlin, Nyle DiMarco, Sean Beady and a few other people who were involved in public movies and in art galleries. Nyle DiMarco is famous for winning "America's Top Model" and "Dancing With the Stars". He was also asked by Hillary Clinton to do a short video for Hillary. He is also actor, model, and activist. Marlee Martin was the first deaf person to receive the "Academy Award for Best Actress in Leading Role for Children" and also got an Emmy Award nomination in 1994. Last but not least, Sean Beady is American actor and is currently playing a role for Switched at Birth, one of the main characters. He also was the Mr. Deaf teen for ISD (Indiana School for the Deaf). These are a few deaf people who have been recognized for their talent but they are only a select few. I want to change the number of deaf people who are recognized for their skills and achievements.

On the other hand, there is one artist who is not fully recognized in public places and his name is Warren Snipe. He is a deaf DIP-HOP (similar as Hip- Pop) rapper. Rosa Lee, Wayne Betts, Chuck Baird, and many other deaf artists are artists who are not recognized much. We also have a lot of ASL films that are not shown in public. Some of the famous musicians who actually involved deaf people include Nancy Rourke Ingrid's music video called "Hell No" and John Legend's video "Love Me Now". These are the popular people who wanted many cultures to be involved and recognized within the world of art.

I have two specific medias that I would help deaf artists get more recognition. The two medias I would use are magazines and Facebook. For Facebook, I would use blurbs such as hashtags and sharing about artists of the week. If my hashtags grow to become more noticed, many people will know about each deaf artist. When I create a Facebook page, I will call it Journey Deaf Artists (JDA) to inform people why we are doing this. I want to inter-

view many deaf artists, ask them what skills they are good at, how long they have been doing them and how do they feel about their awesome skills. I would work to communicate with two specific magazines to feature some deaf artists. Every month I would request the magazines to add a few artists and write a paragraph about them. Media is a great way to get some attention. We should be thankful for Nyle, because if it was not for him, the Deaf community would not have a good reputation, not much attention, and none of the hearing people would have known what deaf people are like and the talents they share.

I really would like to have you join me to support this idea by encouraging some children to become artists even though they are deaf or hard of hearing. Our children are our future and it would be better for them because of this. If you or someone you know is very good at something, for instance, many deaf people do not realize how much potential they have and sometimes they do not think they are good enough. We have so many flaws that we do not realize how much it would affect the Deaf community. Once we have recognition, our confidence level will eventually develop. This is why we need more recognition so that our life would be a lot better, we would have a better reputation, improved communication access, and receive equal treatment. “Deaf people naturally make great performers because of the way they communicate is already very expressive. ASL is a three-dimensional visual language that uses manual signs, body language, and facial expressions to convey meaning (Bacon).” This information supports the idea that there are many deaf people who are skilled and talented. We need to work hard to make sure deaf artists are recognized for their talents.

2nd Place- Dakota Ronco

The Deaf community is thriving; it blossomed with Nyle DiMarco's influence and the Spring Awakening's showcase; it became more aware as more parents discovered their child's deafness; it expanded as American Sign Language became increasingly popular. Despite the positive circumstances, there are still challenges to be overcome. Communication is the barrier between the Deaf community and the rest of the world. The bridge is still being built, slowly, painstakingly, and with all of the effort included. It is still not enough. The hearing community needs to realize that the Deaf community is not temporary and will last as long there are Deaf and hard of hearing people. We came here to stay and to live our lives to the fullest without restrictions.

Social media is embedded in the modern society. It is accessible to the majority of people, which makes it the perfect tool to establish a solid communication access for Deaf and hard of hearing people. We should take social media and take advantage of what it offers. It is a common belief of the hearing community that since we cannot hear, we are not as equal as they are. Social media can be used to transform that belief. What would the hearing community think if we were to post series of statistics of Deaf and Hard of Hearing college students, those with high ACT and SAT scores, those with jobs of good pay, those who became parents, and so on? What if we were to post several videos of the daily life of a Deaf person? Syria children are earning attention since people are posting videos of children screaming for their parents and hiding from falling bombs. The views are over thousands for each video. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, comments on how to help out. There are hundreds of shares. This could happen to the videos we post if our community works together. Not only these could boost communication access in our community, hash tags can be used in our favor.

#whyisign caught the attention of signers, which in return spread awareness in the hearing community. Hash tags are spread virally, with the option of clicking on the link to see the results of others. For this very reason, the Deaf community can improve its communication access. A new hash tag should be created: #sayhello. Since many people are unsure how to approach people, communication is denied. This could be added to videos or posts, empowering the people to not be shy. #hearingprivilege became viral, but it seemed to erode at the Deaf community because instead of pointing out the beautiful things the Deaf community has, it describes the negative aspects of being unable to hear. However, it did educate the hearing people how much Deaf and Hard of Hearing people miss out. Communication is the key to life. There are plenty of ways to expose the hearing community how much it matters to the Deaf community. One addition along with hash tags are captioning.

Captions are how the Deaf community understands the hearing community through social media. Although more and more videos are being captioned, there are still some that denies captions, such as the Live feature on Facebook. A new feature needs to be added: the ability to type out what the user has to say. Sure, the user can wait until the session is over before typing out a reply, but that is saying our priorities as a Deaf community is

lower than a hearing person. On the other hand, there are still some television shows that do not have captions. Does this mean the Deaf community has to deal with it and find another way to watch it? That is unacceptable. The Deaf community is equal with the hearing community, and therefore should have the same access. There needs to be a policy enforced for every company that ensures captions are added to every video that is released. One positive outcome of doing this is that those companies would gain new clients, customers, and fans that would support their success. It would add diversity to their companies, providing an improved reputation.

Without communication, the Deaf community is constantly being ignored, deprioritized, and deprived of our rights as human beings. This will take some changes that social media can step in to educate others. While the communication barrier is slowly being removed, it will be years, decades even, before we are truly equals with the hearing community, with equal access to everything.

Honorable Mention- Jacob Stevens

One of the biggest issues facing the Deaf community is equal recognition compared to the mainstreamed society. Our deaf world is not well known to the public and as a result, we are often left feeling the lack of communication, education, interaction with the public, and employment. We are also feeling isolated and depending on where we are, lacking the necessary resources to receive proper support. The deaf people around the U.S.A. and globally possibly do not even know the Deaf community exists. If deaf children and their parents in addition to people who work with deaf children knew more about the issues and resources needed to support deaf children, I believe deaf people would have a greater chance of succeeding in life and they would feel more equal.

Lack of communication is one of the factors which leads to Deaf people feeling isolated. The real world is harder for deaf people that had been in hearing world, meaning people who are not deaf and hard-of-hearing, for their lives in the public community with no equal language access. One thing as I mentioned before is that deaf and hearing people are still not equal because of miscommunication and access to communication. Deaf people's favorite way of getting equal access to communication, I believe, is through interpreters. For example, I went on a field trip recently for my one of my classes from my school to a public voting place, but there were no interpreters provided for us. The general public does not always have interpreters making deaf people find another way to communicate with hearing people. Not all deaf people can talk to hearing people, sometimes in public when deaf are forced to find another way to communicate with hearing people. Both deaf and hearing people tend to get really frustrated because sometimes they both cannot say what they really mean and it can cause problems.

Miscommunication happens often with the law enforcements, and other important community figures. Because miscommunication can happen very often, that can cause bad tension between the hearing and deaf people. One recent case is a deaf person named Daniel Harris who was fatally shot by a police officer on his front lawn because the officer was scared of him trying to use sign language. That is one example of miscommunication and sign that the deaf community is also isolated from the hearing world which I will explain in the next paragraph. Another case was in January 2014, a deaf person named Pearl Pearson was abused by an officer because he was disobeying orders he could not hear. He was arrested at his car but on his car was an obvious sticker that showed he is deaf. He was not provided an interpreter, which he should have by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is another example of no equal access to communication.

In the public it is also harder for deaf people to find jobs, due to unequal communication. Most or some jobs require people to hear because if you work on a dangerous job you need to hear danger is coming, or one involving teamwork, you have to hear each other. By dangerous jobs is such as trying to handle extreme wildlife, or experimenting with dangerous chemicals and elements. Another thing the employers want full communication with their workers, and not all deaf people can do that because it depends on their boss. If they are hearing with not ASL knowledge, and the Deaf person can't speak, then they both will have to resort to another way that can be slower or harder to do and/or use. Another reason is because it can be harder for them to find jobs because of their way of life and education in public schools. Not all hearing impaired people in a public school gets hearing aids, cochlear, or interpreters, thus causing isolation and lower grades. Lower grades also lower their chances of getting better jobs. If you have good grades, you get a higher chance of getting scholarships. Sometimes when a deaf student goes to a Deaf school from a public school for most of their life without knowing ASL, they can only

communicate through talking. In rare cases, that deaf person would still be isolated because they are not used to the new world they just joined beside in a deaf school, there can be kids that do not like people speaking because they prefer ASL and the fact they are in a deaf school, they would maybe try to bully that kid into isolation.

During elementary, I was in a deaf group but they were my only friends and I barely had any contact with the hearing kids. It was only until 5th grade I made contact with kids around me. I did because I lost contact with everyone becoming the only deaf in the school. Middle school year was a lot worse because it was when bullying was a problem for me since it happened to me very often. Because I was being bullied and didn't interact very well with not a lot of people to rely on I became increasingly more isolated. I only had my interpreters and deaf specialist. The whole point of this paragraph is that for deaf people in a public school, life can be hard due to isolation and bullying depending on where they are. It happens due to the lack of knowledge of the deaf community. My mother is also deaf and didn't know about deaf schools and communities until she was 39 years' old. During those times, things was pretty difficult for her too. Bullying and isolation can cause lower self-esteem which may lead to lower grade depending on how hard it does impact them.

The way to share information about this issue is through making a movie about a deaf kid who has been isolated from the Deaf community and to explain their experiences. This would allow people from both worlds to get a good view of what I am talking about, and they could be able to compare it today's reality. If I can be able to make a movie about these varies experiences that deaf people go through, so the public audience can get a third-person view on what some deaf people isolated from deaf community may encounter during the public years. Once they can see what I am talking about, they can help us prevent that by spreading awareness. We could possibly get the attention of an anti-bullying campaigns to help spread even more awareness. I do know that not all deaf people will be willing to leave their public school, I will still support their side. I never found about deaf schools and community until I just joined eighth grade. Throughout those times I was very isolated even in elementary and middle school. The Deaf community and the world is gaining progress and recognition thanks to Nyle DiMarco and Spring Awakening which is a deaf play. But the problem is the media is being focused on just those two main points instead of the community to help make it better, though some people out there are trying. But the deaf community remains still isolated and hard to find out about it. My mother and I are an example of what I mean by it being hard to find out about the Deaf community, meaning not knowing about other deaf people and supports available to deaf people.

To put all together, the deaf world is still a long way from achieving good status as the hearing world. Deaf people still have communication problems. Miscommunication can be very dangerous for deaf people. It is also harder for deaf people of varies age to find jobs and do well in education. The deaf community is gaining recognition, but it remains unknown to many people. It is not only isolated to hearing people but deaf people too but if both the deaf and hearing community is able to work together even more, we can get there even faster possibly creating an almost equal world. Many people still think deafness is a disable, but slowly I believe it is a culture. If I am allowed to believe it is a culture, so should others. Making movies is one way to use media to bring greater attention of these issues to the public community. Providing greater access to information through movies will help the deaf community become more well-known and people in the public will have the chance to learn more about deaf issues and resources as well.

Honorable Mention- Lillie Brown

I'm Deaf. So What?

“Do you mind repeating that again?”

“I don't understand. Please speak slower.”

“Never mind.”

Within the Deaf community, communication access is an issue we still face every day. Ever since deafness was first conceived to our world, people called us “hearing impaired.” People believed we were broken and we needed to be fixed. I believe that communication is still a matter that needs to be addressed and adjusted to everyone's needs so hearing people can talk to deaf people and deaf people can talk to hearing people.

One frustrating situation I've experienced is communication complications when going out to eat. I love going to Chipotle, it is my favorite restaurant of all time. Chipotle is a grill and buffet kind of restaurant where they cook all kinds of Mexican foods. It is limited, but the food makes me feel rejuvenated, especially the guacamole. The lines are always long and the servers seem to have no patience when they encounter a deaf person ready to order what they want to eat. No matter how many times I ask for a paper and pen, ask for them to type on my phone to respond to my meal requests, they still make me read their lips, listen to them, or just wave me away to focus on the next customer. The outcome is always my meal with a few mistakes.

The majority of deaf people know that people make mistakes, we make mistakes too, but it's the redundancy that makes us discouraged with hearing people who can't seem to just listen. Using the media and technology we have today in a positive way, we could post videos that explain our struggles as a deaf person. We could caption them ask someone to voice our story so hearing people could understand us. We could have PowerPoints, articles, and lectures on YouTube about our Deaf history. We could even use TED talks! Most of all, hearing people can find us intimidating. As a solution to that, we should be an inviting community to curious bystanders. Some people are proud and ready to dive deep into the community; some want to stand at the sidelines and just take baby steps. Either way, we should be welcoming so we can aid in making communication easier.

Another assumption others make about deaf people is that hearing people think we have no voice. We do. Some of us do. Some deaf people have the ability to talk, some don't. Some choose to speak; some choose not to speak. Some sign and some don't sign at all. It's their choice. Either way, we still have a voice regardless. We speak in ways that you can't even think of right on the spot. You might think, “Oh yeah, they speak through an interpreter.” No, we speak through art, sign language, music, law, writing, filming, and so much more. We even speak on the news, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and Facebook! Daily Moth and Deaf Nation is one of our most known, informative sites. The point is people speak up for us, while we highly appreciate that: we can do the speaking up ourselves too. We just have a different way of doing it. Again, communication barriers are here. All of us live in a nation where perfection is the ideal image. What happened to foibles and imperfections that made us beautiful? Society changed us, time changed us, and history changed us. History is written down so we don't repeat the same

mistakes twice. So, let's avoid something like Alexander Graham Bell happening again or the protest we went through for a Deaf President at Gallaudet University.

Just like any other average human, deaf people drive, have kids, go to school or work, go to the doctor, etc., so why do hearing people feel sorry for deaf people? Some deaf people are not proud to be deaf and prefer to label themselves otherwise. Some deaf people are proud to be deaf. People keep saying, "I'm sorry. It's a shame. You're missing out." We aren't missing out. Hearing people think we're lacking on life because we can't hear. Have you seen the deaf guy who travels the world and meets other deaf and hearing people, tries the country's foods, does things that people wouldn't do? His name is Joel Barish. He's amazing! Have you seen Nikki Poynter who is a YouTuber that speaks and talks about her experiences with her deafness? She's inspirational! Have you seen Tyler Albert, a deaf MMA fighter? He's tough! Jordan Manges and Jamal Garner that won at state with their spectacular track abilities? (Also, Illinois School for the Deaf alumni! Woot Woot!) They're fast! Have you seen Nyle DiMarco that won America's Next Top Model and Dancing with the Stars? He's not only a gorgeous model, but a great role model for our community as well! The one thing people need to keep in mind is our ears aren't working, but everything else in our bodies is functioning just fine.

Tying all ends, communication is an impeding barrier between the Deaf community and the hearing community. Even though we've charged at our obstacles with pitchforks, punches, axes, trees, and fire, our communication barriers still remain; it's just battered and dilapidated. However, someday, we'll get there. Someday, that barrier will burst open and everyone will have a breeze at understanding each other. Someday, someone will hear our voice in the media and take action. It's just a matter of time before everyone accepts everyone and appreciates the diversity our world has to offer.

Honorable Mention- Vergena Chee

I think one of the most important issues facing the deaf community is oppression. Oppression means some people take over the control for deaf people. The deaf people face and encounter oppression on a frequent basis through communication access such as not having enough interpreters in public places and not being able to access information for special cultural events. I am a Navajo student who values learning and communication, however I do not always have the language access I need to understand and appreciate my culture. The deaf community has frustrations with the need to have communication access. One way to help share information about communication access is by writing and publishing articles in different newspapers. It is important for the public to know more about deaf rights and our need for communication access for special events.

Communication and the ability to understand other people is crucial to your future life and will help you be successful in life. The most oppression for deaf people is when communication breakdowns occur. There have been times in my life when I visited events to celebrate my culture. The Native American community encouraged me to pray with them, follow their ways, and be respectful. Sometimes I did not know what the people in my community were telling to me do. For example, I went to my great cousin's celebration so they wanted all of the people to go to the Hogan for the prayer. I did not want to go inside because I could not hear them and yet they required me to pray with them. I tried to explain to them that I am deaf but they were obsessed with the idea that I participate in the prayer and they assumed I could hear. The Native Americans in my community seemed to not accept what I learned from them, because I am not skilled at their use of oral communication and cannot understand when they speak in Navajo. This needs to change. I want to tell my Native American community that I am fully deaf and have been since I was born. Being deaf in a Native American community is not easy. It is important to have full communication access during special cultural events with the use of a certified sign language interpreter so that I can understand what my people are saying and teaching, and so that I can share the information with my future family.

I would work to use media by writing quarterly articles to the Navajo Reservation to teach them about the importance of providing an interpreter for deaf people like me at their cultural events. I think using media such as writing to quarterly articles to the Navajo Native American Reservation to publish articles in the community newspaper will be a positive way to bring attention to the issue of communication access for Deaf Native Americans living on the Navajo Reservation. The Navajo Nation publishes a magazine called Navajo Times. Navajo Times is a newspaper that is published for the Navajo people every day. Navajo Times is the "Best source for American Indian news, sports, commentary, features, politics, photos and more about the Navajo Nation" (Navajo Times). I will write about important issues facing the Deaf community on the reservation and share with the Navajo Times to make sure my articles are published. Specifically, I will talk about the disability and communication access issues which deaf people face. I will also share my own experiences and give examples of times when I did not have an interpreter for special events. I think the articles would be helpful to people in my community to understand my experiences and views more as a deaf person and my need for communication ac-

cess. I think the articles would be helpful to people because it is a good way to share information as many people read the Navajo newspaper.

I can also use newspaper as a media tool and share the same articles which I write and send to the Navajo Times to the New York Times. For instance, if I can be writing articles about my experience as a deaf Native American girl who needs communication access to cultural events, I can also send these articles to the New York Times. I think this is one way that would allow me to get my support from my community. One article noted that "Program Participation found that 22 percent of the American Indian and Alaska Native population has one or more disabilities (McNeil, 2001). This is the highest rate of disability when compared with all other races in the United States. Being deaf is one of these disabilities and it is important to share the rights of deaf people such as having interpreters to provide full communication for special events. Writing articles to the newspaper will help the deaf community because the public will be more aware of their needs for communication access during special events.

Deaf people are strong individuals yet their lives are not always easy because of the challenges they face with communication access and the oppression they often feel. This is an important issue to address. I think writing and publishing articles in The Navajo Times and New York Times would be a great way to support and help deaf people. This issue about communication access is very important to the deaf community. We need to build awareness and stop the oppression.

Middle School- Essay

1st Place- Sabrina Firl

A basketball coach tapped me on the shoulder and I turned to look at her, seeing that she has the paper in her hand. "I'm so sorry that you can't hear." a woman wrote on a piece of paper. I felt annoyed. And, it wasn't the first time. "No, don't be sorry. I can do everything expect to hear." I wrote back in response. That's first time that I realized that I was suppressed. The woman turned on her back and walked away, looking vain and angry. From that day and on. I wanted to show hearing community that we can do everything expect to hear. Yes, I want to change the future for the better. I have seen many television shows about "Little people, big world," "Big love," and "Chrisley knows best" and there is many more. But, where's "Deaf family"? There was a process of "Our deaf family" But, the producer left to act a new show. Right now, the deaf community can help to make a new deaf reality show, For example: Nyle DiMarco, Rosa Lee, or Ella Mae Lentz, it has many more deaf people that is well-aware.

Hey, we can change the theories of A.G.B associate. When Nyle won the Dancing With the Stars, Meredith Sugar commented that ASL is fading away. Nyle has commented that Deaf communities are stronger and more aware that before, first. Meredith Sugar seems wants to suppress deaf language from succeeding. But did we give up? No. We are stubborn for supporting Deaf language and deaf children's needs, That's very good. Hearing communities whose have a deaf child, they need to let them learn ASL and success. How?: Tv shows, Books, Companies, Flyer, Plays, Movies, a deaf or aware of ASL tourist, and there's many, many more. DEAF community can succeed! People just need to believe, and spread the word. Many people will be aware of the deafness. As Bridgetta Bourne-Firl stated, "We can!" It means that we can, we actually CAN change the world. Maybe Gallaudet university won't be the only one deaf university in world. Lastly, I want to focus on children. Did you know that when a baby was born, The baby have access to sign the basic ASL, like, "milk," "mom," "dad," "trees," and many more. Even when they have a hearing parents.

The baby can't speak right away. The baby needs to learn slowly to memorize. They sign to make their parents to understand what is happening with the baby, what they want. But, hearing parents is not aware to how to take care of the baby, They see A.G.B for help. They said that it is best to teach them oral, spoken language. They're wrong. The parents have to let the child grow up in their world. Every parents care about their child, and wants them to be succeed.

But the A.G.B kicked it out. They sometimes lead the child to depression, not having access to communicate. That's sad. Very. My goal is to change the A.G.B's theories. They need to realize that they're wrong. But, HOW? We do not give up. We need to be more like Nyle DiMarco, Ella Mae Lentz, Rosa Lee. Then, we can change A.G.B's theories, mind, teaching. Our life is going to be better. We just have to be patient and wait. Our dreams will come true. We can change the world, together.

2nd Place- Gifty Graybill

I think that the most important issue in the deaf world is when hearing parents have children and they find out that their child is deaf they go straight to the doctors. When parents go straight to the doctors, they will most likely tell the parents to do all kinds of ear tests like doing surgery on their children or they will just suggest the parents to get hearing aids for their child. The only problem is that when get all those hearing tests and hearing aids, that doesn't mean they will hear. The only thing that deaf or hard of hearing people possibly could hear is something that is loud that hearing people would most likely find agitating. I think instead of going to doctors, parents should respect their child for who they are and try to help them by sending their child to a deaf school instead of sending them to a hearing school where they will most likely not understand 70% of what teachers are saying. And if parents send their child to a hearing school it will not help their child in the future. If you have deaf child and you started sending them to a hearing school their level would not match their grade but if your deaf child started in a deaf school their level would match their grade. Like if you put a whale in fresh water it will not survive, it is the same with deaf and hearing child.

When parents think that they are helping by sending their child to doctors to have surgery they are actually hurting them. It will hurt their child and it will cost a lot of money. It will hurt them because every time you they take them to a doctor appointment the child will think of their parents differently like do my parents care about me or what do they really think of me, or do they really love me. Every Time they do that to your child will start thinking those bad things. That is what I mean when I say that will hurt their child.

I think that if people who have deaf kids really want to help their child, they should try to finding some deaf schools for their child. Also they should learn the language that their child is learning at school so that they can talk to their kids. Not only should parents learn the language but they should encourage their deaf child to play sports or tell them if someone is bullying them at school or anywhere. If their parents learn the language, they can talk with their child about anything.

If this problem was in my hands I would tell hearing people that if they have a deaf child they should try to embrace their child's deafness. Try to help their child, try to learn the language. What I think is the most important thing is never try to change your child but care about them and love them for who they are.

I have seen many parents try to change their child just because they are not hearing or they are different from them. I have had a lifetime of people trying to change me because I am deaf. When I came to the USA, I could hear a some but my hearing started getting worse. So my parents took me to the doctor and the doctor said that I was losing my hearing so doctor told my parents that if they didn't want me to loss all of my hearing the best option was to have surgery and then get hearing aids so I could hear. So my parents decided that they did not want me to lose my hearing so they called the doctor and asked when should I come in for my surgery. That day when my parents called the doctor I started seeing my parents differently.

On the day I had my surgery, I did not like it at all. I was supposed to stay home from school for two weeks but the doctor said I had to have two more weeks at home for my other ear so after four weeks of staying home I

finally could go to school. After the surgery my hearing aids were really bothering me. I used my hearing aids for two years then I just could not take it any more. Before I knew it I was going to have another surgery. The doctor said that I needed another surgery for my right ear but after that things seemed to start going downhill. Some kids at school started making fun of me about my hearing aids and I lost all my friends. I was the deaf kid at my hearing school and everyone did not really like me. Even my brothers did not like me because I was different. I think the one problem parents never consider what they would do if they walked in their footsteps. If they took one day to walk in their kids' footsteps they would see a whole different world.

As you can see that I have face the experience that nobody wants to face, I know that I am not the only one. Many people in the world experience what I experience. However, we do not have a way to share our experiences together. We have to raise this awareness through media. I say this because deaf people have been pushed around too many times. I want to show the media that hearing people cannot keep pushing us deaf people like we don't have a voice. If deaf and hearing become a problem it will be like repeating history of black and white. We cannot repeat history, this isn't a new problem of not respecting our kids. We should respect our kids that come in different ways like small, big, tall, short, fat, thin, black, white, deaf, or hearing. This is something that makes me inspired being deaf does not make you black, being hearing does not make you white.

One way we can stop repeating history is by using the media to show that we are not as different as people think we are. I would use the radio for hearing and I would use the news for deaf to explain the problem in the deaf and hearing world. The reason I would use the radio and the news is because if I use the radio deaf people can't hear that is the reason I would use the radio. The other reason I would use the news is because I would sign to the deaf world and they would understand me that is why I would use the news. It would not make sense if we just use one because if we just use one one of them would not understand what I am saying for example if I use the radio deaf would not understand me because they are deaf and if I just use the news and sign some hearing would not understand me so that is why I would use both the news and the radio to show the media that we are not different as we seem.

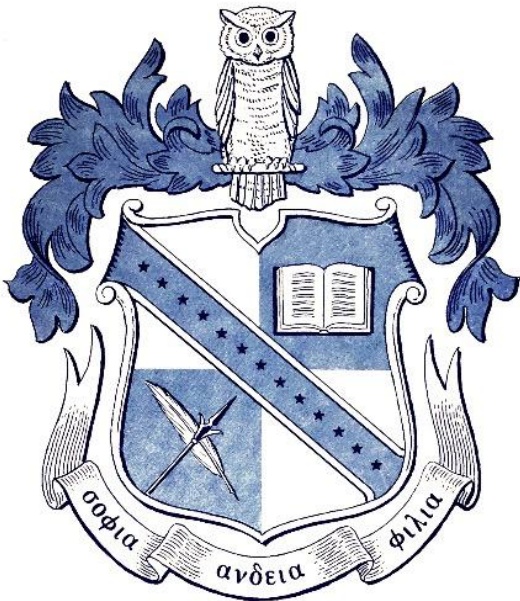
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