



Smyrna School District

Essay Contest

2018

Student Winners

A decorative border of pencils surrounds the text. At the top, three pencils are arranged horizontally. On the left and right sides, pencils are arranged vertically. At the bottom, three pencils are arranged horizontally. In the bottom right corner, there is a pencil holder containing several pencils.

I ♥ the Smyrna School District

During the month of January 2018 we held the 17th essay contest to support the five Smyrna School District core values of *Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Integrity, and Compassion*. During “I Love the Smyrna School District” day on February 24, 2018, first, second and third place winners received medals and certificates noting their accomplishments.

The 2018 writing contest focused on the value of *Compassion*, and our local authors wrote some of the most sincere essays. This booklet contains the essays of first, second and third place winners at all levels.

We are pleased to present this booklet as a testament to our community’s dedication to our core values.

On behalf of our district, thank you to all who shared their personal stories and helped to celebrate the importance of compassion in our lives.

Patrik Williams
Superintendent

For the annual “I Love the Smyrna School District” essay contest, students were asked to write about *Compassion*, a core district value. Contest rules and writing prompts were disseminated to students (via their teachers) in December 2017. Ryan Buchanan, Supervisor of Instruction, prepared the prompt and assisted with coordinating the essay contest. Jamie Cox, Smyrna School District Curriculum Office secretary, completed the typing and formatting of the publication and assisted with the layout and editing of the publication. June Wicks conducted the contest and edited the final publication. District teachers encouraged their students to write and helped select essays. Appreciation is extended to all for their time and effort in making this publication possible.

Essay Contest

Contestants are asked to write a maximum 500-word essay on the following topic:

Compassion is having sympathy for others, often including a desire to help. For example, someone might show compassion to a person who has gotten bad news and try to help them.

Your school is having a writing contest. Use the writing prompt and questions below to help you craft a writing piece for the contest.

People often help each other. **Tell a true story** about a time when one person helped another, or when a group of people worked together to provide someone help.

STUDENT WINNERS: First (gold), second (silver), and third (bronze) place winners are selected at each grade level (K-12) in each building. Winners receive medals and certificates noting their accomplishments. All winners were recognized during the “I Love the Smyrna School District” day (February 24, 2018).

Table of Contents

Page

Clayton Elementary School

| | |
|---|----|
| Kindergarten, First Place Winner, McKenna Wisner | 7 |
| Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, Addison Barbee | 7 |
| Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, Lilyana Wall..... | 7 |
| Grade 1, First Place Winner, Paisley Massey | 7 |
| Grade 1, Second Place Winner, Elias Baylis | 7 |
| Grade 1, Third Place Winner, Olivia Shrewsbury | 7 |
| Grade 2, First Place Winner, Camden Jester | 8 |
| Grade 2, Second Place Winner, Olivia Aurand | 8 |
| Grade 2, Third Place Winner, Ryleigh Sheehan..... | 8 |
| Grade 3, First Place Winner, Rory Whitehouse..... | 8 |
| Grade 3, Second Place Winner, Kiley Ellingsworth..... | 9 |
| Grade 3, Third Place Winner, Chase Harrington..... | 9 |
| Grade 4, First Place Winner, Nyla Drobinski | 10 |
| Grade 4, Second Place Winner, Emily Everhart..... | 10 |
| Grade 4, Third Place Winner, Wren Sharp..... | 11 |

North Smyrna Elementary School

| | |
|---|----|
| Kindergarten, First Place Winner, Gracie Evans..... | 14 |
| Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, Jayda Powell..... | 14 |
| Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, William Spiess..... | 14 |
| Grade 1, First Place Winner, Connor Salzman..... | 14 |
| Grade 1, Second Place Winner, Kaci Burnette..... | 14 |
| Grade 1, Third Place Winner, Hayley Sandquist..... | 14 |
| Grade 2, First Place Winner, Leah Brown..... | 15 |
| Grade 2, Second Place Winner, Riley Schrader | 15 |
| Grade 2, Third Place Winner, Eva Pitts..... | 15 |
| Grade 3, First Place Winner, Madelyn Strange | 15 |
| Grade 3, Second Place Winner, Danica Colbert..... | 16 |
| Grade 3, Third Place Winner, Ousmane Ndiaye..... | 16 |
| Grade 4, First Place Winner, Gabriella Charles..... | 17 |
| Grade 4, Second Place Winner, Grace Smeltzer..... | 18 |
| Grade 4, Third Place Winner, Gabrielle Bowser..... | 18 |

Smyrna Elementary School

| | |
|---|----|
| Kindergarten, First Place Winner, Ryleigh Beck..... | 21 |
| Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, Caitlyn Rink | 21 |
| Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, Everlee Hall..... | 21 |
| Grade 1, First Place Winner, Stella Cassidy | 21 |
| Grade 1, Second Place Winner, Alaina Stokes..... | 21 |
| Grade 1, Third Place Winner, Lilianna Peffley | 21 |
| Grade 2, First Place Winner, Molly Marinelli | 22 |
| Grade 2, Second Place Winner, Brazil Burton | 22 |
| Grade 2, Third Place Winner, Tabiah Croom..... | 22 |
| Grade 3, First Place Winner, Maura Morris | 23 |
| Grade 3, Second Place Winner, Oriana Ray..... | 23 |
| Grade 3, Third Place Winner, Adrianna Navarro | 23 |
| Grade 4, First Place Winner, Briana Catalon..... | 24 |
| Grade 4, Second Place Winner, Rachel Kane..... | 24 |
| Grade 4, Third Place Winner, Henry Merrill..... | 25 |

Sunnyside Elementary School

| | |
|--|----|
| Kindergarten, First Place Winner, Colin Biddle..... | 27 |
| Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, Maura Mears..... | 27 |
| Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, Katelyn Bullock..... | 27 |
| Grade 1, First Place Winner, Brooke Krolick..... | 27 |
| Grade 1, Second Place Winner, Traniya Randall | 27 |
| Grade 1, Third Place Winner, Riley Wilson..... | 27 |
| Grade 2, First Place Winner, Julian Alvarez..... | 28 |
| Grade 2, Second Place Winner, Hunter Smith..... | 28 |
| Grade 2, Third Place Winner, Phoebe Schomburg..... | 28 |
| Grade 3, First Place Winner, Peyton Macfarlane | 28 |
| Grade 3, Second Place Winner, Kendal Gede | 30 |
| Grade 3, Third Place Winner, Liam Conway | 31 |
| Grade 4, First Place Winner, Jaylen Ryan | 32 |
| Grade 4, Second Place Winner, McKenna Wilson..... | 33 |
| Grade 4, Third Place Winner, Julianna Williams | 33 |

Clayton Intermediate School

| | |
|--|----|
| Grade 5, First Place Winner, Cooper Wynne | 36 |
| Grade 5, Second Place Winner, Channing Baker | 36 |
| Grade 5, Third Place Winner, Mia Davis | 37 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Grade 6, First Place Winner, Reaghan King..... | 37 |
| Grade 6, Second Place Winner, Hailey McCutchan..... | 38 |
| Grade 6, Third Place Winner, Jordan Hudson..... | 39 |

JBM Intermediate School

| | |
|--|----|
| Grade 5, First Place Winner, Zoe Thomas..... | 41 |
| Grade 5, Second Place Winner, Alexandra Passero..... | 41 |
| Grade 5, Third Place Winner, Mason Schulenburg..... | 42 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Grade 6, First Place Winner, Serena Foko..... | 43 |
| Grade 6, Second Place Winner, Pierce Hanshew..... | 44 |
| Grade 6, Third Place Winner, Caleb Jones..... | 45 |

Smyrna Middle School

| | |
|--|----|
| Grade 7, First Place Winner, Lorenzo Bishop..... | 47 |
| Grade 7, Second Place Winner, Liam Wilson..... | 47 |
| Grade 7, Third Place Winner, Azalynn Wood..... | 48 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Grade 8, First Place Winner, Isabel Wilson..... | 49 |
| Grade 8, Second Place Winner, Elizabeth Braunecker..... | 50 |
| Grade 8, Third Place Winner, Jessica Akyea..... | 51 |

Smyrna High School

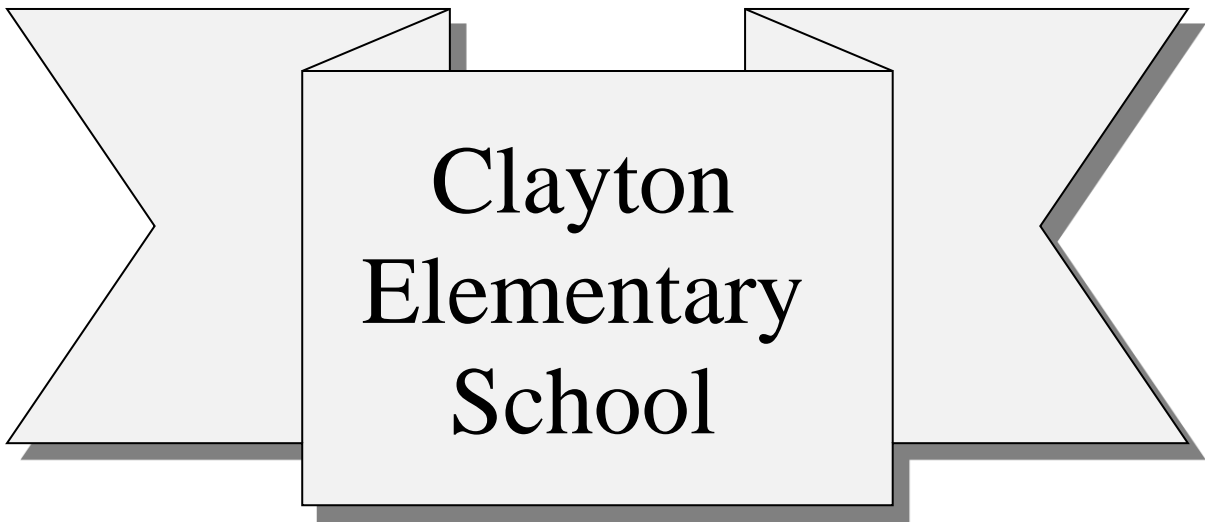
| | |
|---|----|
| Grade 9, First Place Winner, Corey Lacey..... | 54 |
| Grade 9, Second Place Winner, Anaysia Lee-Burton..... | 55 |
| Grade 9, Third Place Winner, Derrick Bivings..... | 56 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Grade 10, First Place Winner, Sarah Charles..... | 58 |
| Grade 10, Second Place Winner, Francesca Crumpton..... | 59 |
| Grade 10, Third Place Winner, Skylar Hass..... | 60 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Grade 11, First Place Winner, Kayla Saracoglu..... | 61 |
| Grade 11, Second Place Winner, Paolo Pesce..... | 62 |
| Grade 11, Third Place Winner, Katelynn Porter..... | 63 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Grade 12, First Place Winner, Alec Shalk..... | 64 |
| Grade 12, Second Place Winner, Erin Currie..... | 65 |
| Grade 12, Third Place Winner, Autumn Potter..... | 66 |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Honorable Mention..... | 68 |
|------------------------|----|



Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

Compassion is sharing with your friends. When a new friend came to the class I shared my Legos with him.

McKenna Wisher
First Place, Kindergarten

Compassion is helping a friend. I helped Caylie when she had a broken arm.

Addison Barbee
Second Place, Kindergarten

Compassion is being a friend. I helped Allison zip her coat when she couldn't.

Lilyana Wall
Third Place, Kindergarten

My mom showed compassion by helping others. She helps people with pancreatic cancer. She raises money and wears purple. I feel so lucky to have a good mom!

Paisley Massey
First Place, First Grade

My mom Armae showed compassion when I felt sick. She cared for me. My mom gave me medicine. I felt better. She is a very compassionate mom for taking care of me.

Elias Baylis
Second Place, First Grade

My friend Maddie showed compassion by sharing her snack with me. She helped me go down the slide. I feel so lucky to have a good friend.

Olivia Shrewsbury
Third Place, First Grade

Compassion is when you want to be kind to someone. Compassion is also being helpful to someone, feeling sorry for someone, and giving them a hug when they are sad. Mom took us to the park one day and there was an old lady who wanted to cross the street. She had a cane to walk. We made a plan so she wouldn't fall, hurt herself, and go to the hospital. We helped her cross the road and the woman was happy and grateful. Compassion is important because without it we would get hurt and be mean to one another.

Camden Jester
First Place, Second Grade

Do you want to know how I show compassion? First, it was Christmas morning and we opened presents with our Grandma.

Then on our way to my mom moms, we saw a homeless lady outside in her sleeping bag. It was colder than being in the North Pole.

Last, we went to Dunkin Donuts and we got her food and a drink of coffee. Wow, that coffee was hotter than ever. That's how we showed compassion. It made me happy to help someone.

Olivia Aurand
Second Place, Second Grade

How do you show compassion? Last year my friend's mom had knee surgery. Mommy felt really bad for her. She couldn't stand up for very long, so we made lasagna for their family. Finally, after the lasagna was finished, we went to their house and gave it to them for dinner. I got to play with my friends too. I love showing compassion! Do you?

Ryleigh Sheehan
Third Place, Second Grade

Compassion is like a newborn kitten because they both make you feel good. Compassion is caring about someone else. To show compassion you can participate in a charity too.

A world without compassion would not be pretty or nice. There would be trash and homeless people everywhere. There would be lots of fights, too. It would be a sad place without compassion.

I have seen different people show compassion but here are my favorite compassionate acts. My mom's Jeep Club shows compassion to people who have breast cancer and can't pay for their

treatment. They raise money for them. That shows them that they care about them and want to help them. It probably made them feel thankful and happy that they can get their treatment and live for longer.

My mom's Jeep Club has shown another act of compassion. They raise money sometimes for just one person if they are sick or hurt. There was a little girl who was in a bad condition and the doctor said she might not live. The Jeep Club decided to have a raffle as an event to raise money for her so that she has a better chance of living. That probably makes the girl's parents feel more hopeful and better knowing that somebody else cares for them.

Lastly, you should always show compassion because you can change the world with it. You can also save someone's life with compassion. You should definitely follow and share this advice.

Rory Whitehouse
First Place, Third Grade

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion" by Dalai Lama. Compassion is when you give people food if they are hungry. You can also give them clothing and shoes. Compassion looks like people helping others by giving people money, a home, a car, a bike, a phone, or a tablet. You can give people what they need. Without compassion people would not help other people or animals.

Miss Tiffany shows compassion by taking Kamryn, Kevin, Keely, and me places. Miss Tiffany takes my stuffed animals that I don't need anymore. She takes it into her job and gives them to Carl. He gives them to kids when their parents get in trouble and the kids are crying. The stuffed animals make them happy.

Compassion is important because there is always people to help other people. People should show compassion to each other because it will make other people's day exciting. It will make their life better.

Kiley Ellingsworth
Second Place, Third Grade

What is compassion? Compassion is being kind, loving, and caring. A famous quote I once heard was "Be dumb, be crazy, be silly, be weird, be whatever because life is too short to be anything but happy." So be compassionate.

Showing compassion is an easy thing to do. One time I showed compassion when my friend Tristan forgot his snack so I shared my snack with him. Another time I showed compassion by helping my friend Simon tie his shoes because I didn't want him to trip during the baseball game. I've also shown compassion by holding the door open for everyone.

In class we watched videos about people showing compassion to others. In one video, a guy walked onto the train and got his leg stuck. Everyone showed compassion by getting off the train and pushing the cart sideways to free his leg. In another video, there was a poor and hungry man at a park so a lady gave the man her food because she didn't want him to starve. During another video, a woman was trying to buy diapers, but her credit card was expired. The man behind her gave her \$20 so she could afford the diapers for her baby. These are all great examples of compassion.

Compassion is important in many ways. Our world would be a terrible place if we didn't show compassion. We wouldn't have kindness and caring people. I showed compassion and you should too!

Chase Harrington
Third Place, Third Grade

When I think about compassion I think about my friend Wren. She shows kindness in different ways. She thinks about others and always tries to include them.

Wren thinks about others. At Christmas, Wren bought Christmas gifts for some students in her class. She decided to buy the gifts because the girls don't really have any friends. She decided to go out of her way and buy the gifts for the girls at the "The Secret Santa Shop" with her own money. She wanted the girls to feel excited.

Wren always tries to include others, in games or group activities. One day at recess some kids were playing soccer. A student at recess wanted to play also but there were already equal teams. So Wren decided to give up her spot and play on the swings, so the other student could play. She doesn't like people feeling left out.

Wren is a very very compassionate person. She shows compassion with her friends and classmates. She is kind and puts others before herself. She is my best friend ever.

Nyla Drobinski
First Place, Fourth Grade

"Today is my sleepover!" I said. I am so excited!
(2 hours later at the sleepover)
(Kaia Ashley, Kylie VanHorn, Nyla Drobinski, and me)
"Hi, guys," I said. "Welcome."

Then we started playing all sorts of games, such as Twister, Jenga, Sorry, and Uno. A couple hours after dinner at night, Kaia was playing on her phone. Nyla, Kylie, and I were playing Tenzi. Everything was going fine. When we were watching TV, Kaia starts to cry.

"Why are you crying, Kaia?" I said.

(Nyla peeked over Kaia's shoulder.) "She saw a picture of her dog." Nyla said.
"How can we make her feel better, Nyla and Kylie?" I said.
"I'm not sure," Nyla and Kylie said at the same time.
"Ok, then let's just go to sleep," I said.
"Deal," they said.
"Wake up Nyla and Kylie," I whispered to them. Nyla jumped up first. Then Kylie.
"Ok," I said. "Let's get to work."

We first had to figure out what we were going to do. Then Kylie had a simple, but only "best friends would do" idea.

"We can all tell her about how much she means to us!" Kylie declared.
"Good idea Kylie! What do you think Emily?" Nyla asked.
"I say let's do it!" I agreed.

Finally Kaia woke up. "Hi Kaia" I said.
"Good morning," Kylie said.
"Yeah, good morning," Nyla said.
Kaia looked sad. "Listen, Kaia," I said. "We have something to tell you."
"Ok," Kaia said.
"Sit down."
"We know that you are sad, but you know you do have friends." I pointed to the rest of the three. Oh, by the way we call ourselves the Foursome. Anyway, back to the story. "I'm sorry about your dog," I said. "We will always be by your side and will make you feel better." Kaia stopped crying and smiled.

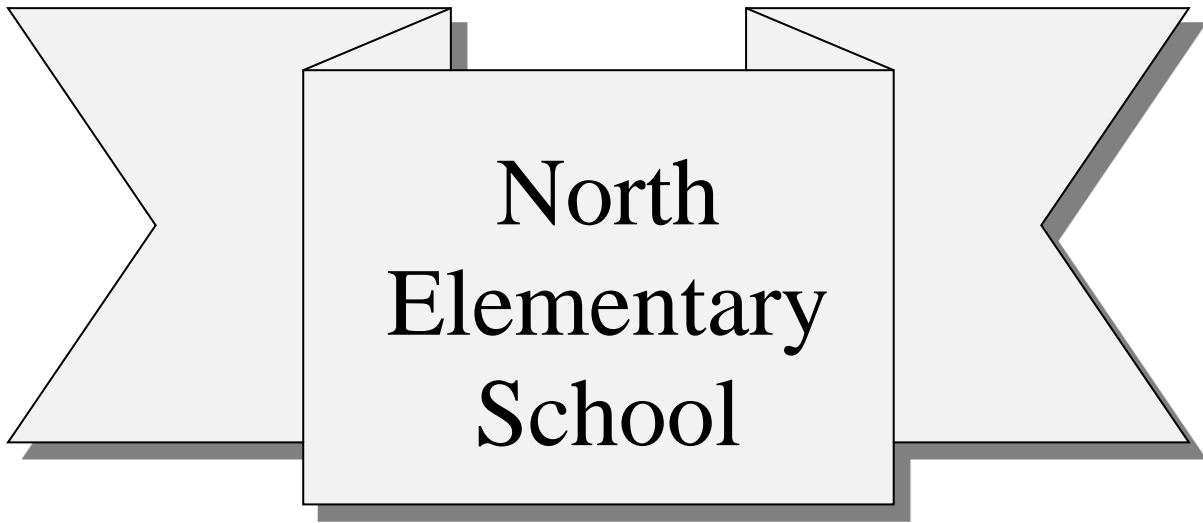
From then on, all of us became closer. It also made me realize something about compassion. It makes me want to make more people happy with compassion. Compassion is more than just a word. It can change somebody's life, and can brighten someone's day. Be a hero with compassion, not a hater.

Emily Everhart
Second Place, Fourth Grade

Once during winter break my best friend Nyla Drobinski, her brother Shane, his friend Joseph, my little sister Camille and I were in my front yard. It had just snowed and we had built up two mounds of snow. One was a sledding hill the other was still just a pile of snow. You see in years past our neighbors (the McClearys) would make magnificent snow forts with the snow from the road that the snow plow had pushed into their yard. Fun fact it is very relaxing to watch a snow plow do its thing. Anyway, their forts would have windows, multiple rooms (once they made one with a door), snowball stashes, and even periscopes going out the top. You see I had never made a snow fort, not a good one at least. So I decided to make that undecided pile of snow into something like a fort. First, I piled snow in the front to make "a gate." Then I went in our garage and after about five minutes of searching I found a shovel and started to carve the start of my fort. After that Camille went inside where I was trying to put a slab of snow/ice in

the top of the fort. I was doing that because there was a big hole in the roof and if I put that slab in it would fix it. When I was doing that I pushed a bit too hard and part of the roof fell on Camille! After that there were a few moments of silence, then Camille burst out crying! First, I noticed shortly after Nyla heard something and realized what was going on, then Shane and Joseph reacted with gasps and eyes as big as saucers. Nyla rushed over, kneeled down next to Camille and asked if she was ok while I was standing there speechless. The real way Nyla showed compassion was when she took Camille inside, helped her take off her snow clothes and put on her pjs. I have learned a lot from this but the main thing is to be aware of where people are physically and mentally because if you know that you will always be able to find ways to show compassion.

Wren Sharp
Third Place, Fourth Grade



North
Elementary
School

Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

I show compassion by hugging my sister when she cries.

Gracie Evans
First Place, Kindergarten

Lawren shows compassion by helping me.

Jayda Powell
Second Place, Kindergarten

I show compassion when he falls down. I pick him up.

William Spiess
Third Place, Kindergarten

I know some people who show compassion. I had liver cancer when I was little. My family showed compassion. They stayed with me in the hospital. I had surgery. They took care of me. They helped me and I am a survivor.

Connor Salzman
First Place, First Grade

Do you know someone who shows compassion? My sister, Kai, shows compassion. She is very loving! One time she made me breakfast in bed when I was sick. Another time she gave me a kiss and a hug to make me feel better. My sister shows compassion and she is the best!! I love her!

Kaci Burnette
Second Place, First Grade

Do you know someone who shows compassion? My dad shows compassion. He is loving. One time he helped me feel better when I fell down. Another time he kissed me and hugged me because I ran into the wall. My dad shows compassion because he is kind and nice.

Hayley Sandquist
Third Place, First Grade

Do you know what it means to show compassion? A person that shows compassion is Gale. She shows compassion when someone is drowning in the water. She swims up behind them and pulls them up to the wall.

Another way I see compassion is when my grandmother had cancer and we showed compassion by loving her. We let her sleep over. She didn't eat much. We gave her some food and then she rested. Compassion is something everyone should show to make the world a better place.

Leah Brown
First Place, Second Grade

My mom shows compassion. Compassion is being kind, nice, helpful and loving. My mom helps me do the dishes. She shows compassion. Cleaning the house keeps it from getting dirty. Charging my iPad for me keeps it at 100%.

My mom helps the community by picking up litter to make sure the water is clean. My mom is the best mom ever.

Riley Schrader
Second Place, Second Grade

Compassion is being kind to others without expecting anything in return. My mom shows compassion by being kind, helpful and caring. My mom is helpful because she helps me with my homework. She also helps others and takes care of our animals. My mom cares when I am sick. She also cares when someone else is sick or hurt.

Eva Pitts
Third Place, Second Grade

I think compassion is having sympathy for others and the desire to help them. Compassion is shown through actions such as saying kind words, giving hugs and having friendships. Compassion is important because it creates love and kindness in the whole universe. Without it, the world would be a mean desert named Misery. Let me tell you a story about the time I showed compassion and it brought one of my best friends.

Growing up, I always dreamed of having a kitten as a pet. On the day of my seventh birthday, my parents finally said I could have one. I was very excited and wanted the best kitten out there. My friend, Virginia, had a boy kitten that no one wanted whose mother had cancer. It wasn't the kitten I had planned on getting but I knew he needed a place to live. I quickly decided to be the one to adopt him and give him the best home there was. When we got home, I named him Whiskers because he had the longest whiskers I'd ever seen.

He was so small, cold and scared. I decided to wrap him up in so many blankets and cuddle him till he looked happy. I could tell that he said, “Thank you.” I gave him a spot on my bed to sleep and food to eat. That was the beginning of our friendship. From that day on, Whiskers showed me compassion in a lot of ways, too. He cuddled me when I was sick, played with me when I was bored and was always there to listen to me talk. That is a story about the time I was compassionate, and it gave me the best gift ever. It gave me my best friend.

Madelyn Strange
First Place, Third Grade

Compassion means being a supportive, caring person. Being compassionate makes me feel happy inside.

One day, I noticed my Granny was cold. “Are you cold, Granny?” I asked. “I am a little” Granny said. So I went to go get a heavy blanket from the closet. I covered her up with the blanket. “Thank you, honey, but I’m still cold.” So I turned the heat up. Now Granny is nice and toasty!

Later that day, she was hungry, so I made plates of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and watched a movie and that made her happy.

Granny was bored but no one wanted to do anything. She wanted to play Jenga so I played with her. We had so much fun and we laughed so hard. Granny is so good at Jenga—she beat me every time.

Being compassionate is fun and rewarding. It makes you feel good on the inside and out. Not only did I help Granny but she helped me show compassion.

Danica Colbert
Second Place, Third Grade

Have you ever wondered what compassion looks like or sounds like? This is what it sounds like. It was a sunny day and we didn’t eat lunch, so my family and I were driving to Costco near the Christiana Mall to get food. I went to go look outside and I saw a homeless person. He was wearing dark torn up clothes and was looking sad. The sign he held said: Working Father, Has Kids, Needs Money. I alerted my dad about the person and he opened the window and gave him \$5. I felt sad because he was always there and made fun of. When my dad gave him the \$5, he was close to a mall. That meant he could go to buy some food to eat and buy some clothes. Probably one day, you can show compassion, too!

Ousmane Ndiaye
Third Place, Third Grade

Compassion. It's something you learn all the time at school. You really might not know the real meaning of the majestic word, "compassion." What is compassion? Is it telling the truth even when no one is watching? No, that's integrity. How about never giving up? No, I'm pretty sure that's perseverance. What's really the definition of compassion? To have compassion, you have "sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others." Meet the person who does exactly that.

Farrah is my amazing older sister. Ever since I breathed my first breath, she has shown me compassion. If I'm sad, mad, or frustrated I can tell her and she'll understand. She understands me a lot, since she went through most of what I went through. She makes sure I'm okay and cheerful. Every single day Farrah talks to me when I'm lonely, cheers me up when I'm sad, and gives me terrific advice. I wish everyone had someone like Farrah.

I can't imagine a world without compassion. People falling in buildings and others stampeding over them. But of course, doctors wouldn't do anything, because they wouldn't really care. Surgeons doing lousy jobs, firemen putting a house halfway out, and policemen letting crimes happen. "Whatever," you might say, but what if that happened to you? What if your house caught on fire, and you broke your leg while trying to get out? There would be no one to help you. Luckily, the world isn't like that. Doctors and surgeons give their best in everything they do, and policemen do a splendid job. Firemen rush to the rescue and put the house all the way out. Wonderful and sweet compassion. Compassion that Farrah shares.

I remember when I was at the beach, and it was raining very hard. We still had to go to the gift shops to get items for me, my aunt, and Sarah. But, it was cold. Farrah, my uncle, and Nora decided to stay in the car. The rain trickled down my neck as I trudged along the boardwalk floor. My aunt pointed to a store that had nice items on display. I ran inside, relieved that I could escape the freezing rain. "Not for long," I thought. Soon after, we headed back to the car. I swung open the car door, not caring if the rain got on the leather seats. I was shivering vigorously when Farrah threw me my towel. "Thanks," I said as I wiped the water off my body and draped it around my shoulders. Later, after we got some sleep at home, Farrah talked to me about how sorry she was that I had to walk in the freezing rain. That definitely warmed my heart.

Farrah is a perfect role model for compassion and I wish that everybody can have someone so understanding and helpful as my wonderful sister, Farrah. Another example, Farrah loves to draw, so it rubs off on me. I ask her to teach me how to draw better, and she is kind and patient about it. Same thing about sports. I learned kindness, patience, and compassion is the key. It's the key to happiness, joy, and peace. Compassion brings smiles to everyone's faces.

Compassion has its own unique definition and I'm glad I personally know someone that shows compassion. Compassion is something you earn like a medal or a badge. You can just wave to someone who is feeling sad. Smiles look good on everyone. It might take time, like integrity or perseverance, but everything takes some time. It doesn't happen overnight. But with the right attitude, compassion can be yours. All yours.

Gabriella Charles
First Place, Fourth Grade

If you google compassion on your phone, you will find a picture of my teacher, Ms. Brewer. My teacher, Ms. Brewer shows compassion every day with her class. She's so compassionate, she even helps her teammates.

When students are crying, Ms. Brewer brings them into the hallway to talk. When they come back into the classroom, they are smiling and not crying. One time when I cried in the middle of class, she took me out in the hallway and gave me a hug. I told her that I was upset because my work was hard. After her hug, I felt confident to go back into the class and see my classmates.

When students are struggling or frustrated with work, Ms. Brewer pulls them to the side table to help. For example, when I struggled on work, she took me to the side table so I could understand. It was a math page and I just didn't understand it. Ms. Brewer sat next to me and told me the steps. After her help, I knew what I was doing and I did it on my own.

When teachers forget something, Ms. Brewer helps them. For example, Mrs. Hall gets mixed up so Ms. Brewer helps. Ms. Brewer also helps Mr. Bork when he gets mixed up on number corners. She explains things to them and talks them through it. After the teachers talk to Ms. Brewer, I know they know what to do because of the look on their faces.

Ms. Brewer is the most compassionate person I ever met. She shows compassion every day at North Smyrna Elementary. She is compassionate to her students and her teammates. I'm so lucky to be in Ms. Brewer's class.

Grace Smeltzer
Second Place, Fourth Grade

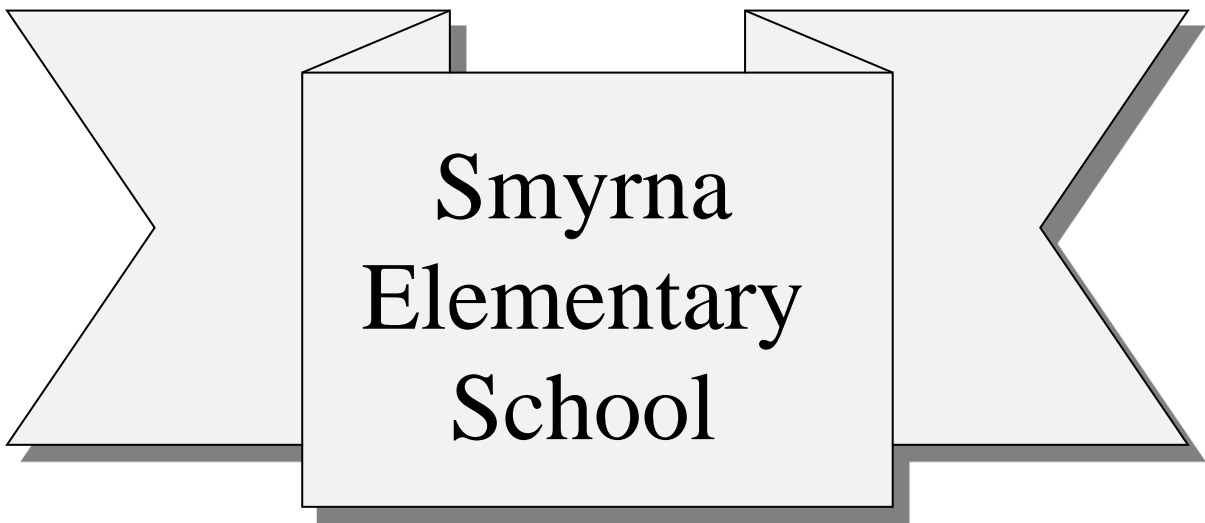
Compassion can be shown all the time. Personally, I think that if you are compassionate, you will have a better community. I also think you will have more friends. Most of the time people think that if someone's cool or popular than you want to be friends with them. But a better friend is compassionate and cares about you. I know a lot of people just in my family who show compassion.

When you think about it, service men and women show compassion every day because they care about us so they risk their lives just for us. I know this because all the men in my family were in the Armed Forces. My brother is in the Army now. Other examples are my Dad and mostly my sister. They go on mission trips. My Dad and brother rebuilt houses in Alabama after tornados hit. My Dad also rebuilt houses in Oklahoma. My sister helps at teen camps.

So, as you can see, compassion is very important. Compassion means to care for others or want to help people or having sympathy for others. So try as hard as you can to show compassion

everywhere because it will make our community a great place. That is why I think compassion is important.

Gabrielle Bowser
Third Place, Fourth Grade



Smyrna
Elementary
School

Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

Compassion is being kind. When my cousin got hurt on the sidewalk I got her water and an ice pack. I showed compassion by helping Emma.

Ryleigh Beck
First Place, Kindergarten

I showed compassion when Natalie was sad because she had no one to play with. I played with her.

Caitlyn Rink
Second Place, Kindergarten

Compassion is about when my sister gets hurt I give her an ice pack. I feel bad when my sister gets hurt. I like to make her feel better.

Everlee Hall
Third Place, Kindergarten

Someone in my life who shows compassion is my dad. My dad helps me when I break something like my dolls. He puts the head back on. He helped me when I hurt my foot. When I get sick he brings me food and Sprite and he give me medicine. My dad helps me when I need help. I think this is how my dad shows me compassion.

Stella Cassidy
First Place, First Grade

Do you know anyone who shows compassion? My mom shows compassion by keeping us safe. By keeping us in the car at my bus stop so we don't get cold and she makes sure I have my coat, my hat, and my gloves. Now you know why I chose my mom.

Alaina Stokes
Second Place, First Grade

My family shows compassion to me. My family helps me with homework. My family cares about me having boo boos by putting band-aids on me. They give me toast when I am sick.

They play with me when I have no one to play with. This is why my family is compassionate to me.

Lilianna Peffley
Third Place, First Grade

My school is having a compassion writing contest so I'm going to tell you a time someone showed compassion. Compassion is having sympathy and wanting to help others.

I'm going to tell you how my dad showed compassion to my brother. My dad taught my brother how to throw a basketball. First, Hunter was having trouble making a basketball go in the basketball hoop. Second, when my dad walked up from his computer chair to get something to pack and sell, he saw Hunter struggling. Third, that's when my dad got the idea to show Hunter how to throw a basketball. After my dad showed Hunter how to throw a basketball, he was so thankful for this act of compassion. Thank you for reading my true story of an act of compassion. Have you ever witnessed an act of compassion?

Molly Marinelli
First Place, Second Grade

Have you ever been compassionate to someone before? Compassion is being kind to someone who is struggling or needs help. When someone shows compassion they make you feel special and important like you're the only one in the world. Compassion is important because without compassion the world will be not loving or kind. The world will just be a mess without compassion. A example of compassion is my friend Allison. She is always compassionate. She always helps me with my work if I need help. She even helps the teacher. Everybody loves her. If she's down she always has a smile. I love Allison. She is the most compassionate person I know.

Brazil Burton
Second Place, Second Grade

Compassion is showing kindness. Without compassion the world would be miserable and very unkind. To be compassionate you need goals in life. My grandfather is always there to show compassion. If I have a big event he is always there when I need support. He is always there to say nice words when I need them. When I'm nervous but he is always saying word full or compassion. He is the best grandfather anyone could ever ask for. I love him so much for that! So remember always show compassion!

Tabiah Croom
Third Place, Second Grade

Have you ever had a friend that helped you every time you needed it? Well I have, and her name is Laney. She showed me compassion. When she helps me, I feel really happy inside. She does this for all her friends.

If you have a friend like her, you will love how she encourages you. She doesn't let you give up, she pushes you till the end. Like when Laney came over and she needed to finish her homework and study her vocabulary but she came over to help me study my spelling words so I could get a 100.

A couple of weeks later I had an ear infection. It was almost my birthday and I didn't feel well. My mom didn't think a party was a good idea. While I was resting, Laney and her mom were making me a cake and a card. After they were done, they came over. My mom came up to my room to wake me. When I saw Laney it felt like a mini birthday party!

When I was in the Nutcracker for the first time, I was really scared! My friend Laney came to cheer me on. I felt so happy inside that I danced with a cheerful smile on my face! Helping other people makes Laney happy too. That is how she shows compassion.

Maura Morris
First Place, Third Grade

What compassion means is someone who is kind, respectful, helps people, shares, honest, positive, encouraging, caring, truthful, confident, supporting, and capable. There's so much more anyway do you know someone who shows compassion? Well I do and his name is Eric Ray. He shows compassion every day to his friends and family. One time I got hurt and Eric made me feel better. Now do you know someone who shows compassion? Ps thanks for reading!

Oriana Ray
Second Place, Third Grade

There is this really compassionate person that shows me compassion every day of my life. She is my stepmom. She makes me feel awesome. She is a really great person and I am happy that she is.

When me and my daddy had no place to live, Amber my stepmom now offered us to stay at her place for a while. My daddy said "Sure, me and my daughter would love to." Amber said, "Please come in and meet my son Emile."

Emile said "Do you want to come play upstairs with me I have toy trucks out." "Sure, I'd love to." Amber said to Emile that it was time for him to go watch a movie. I said "Can I go watch a

movie with you?" Emile said "Sure you can." I ended up falling asleep. That's how I ended up in this beautiful school. I'm so glad I have a place to live now.

Adrianna Navarro
Third Place, Third Grade

Olivia B. matches the definition of compassion. The definition of compassion "is having sympathy for others often including a desire to help." To me compassion means to be kind and helpful to everyone in need of it.

Olivia is a thoughtful persona and doesn't always think of herself. For example, the past two years she gave up getting presents for her birthday. Last year, instead of gifts she asked for things for an animal shelter. This year she is asking for things for a wrecked classroom in the US Virgin Islands that were damaged by hurricanes. The reason why she is doing this is because everything got damaged the books, folders, papers, notebooks, etc. She is trying to help them by asking people to bring school things for them. To me I think that it's really kind to be giving things up for people who want you to think about them.

Olivia is helping people who need it by giving things up for them. Caring for people who aren't as lucky as us is like one of the most kind things to do. That is why I picked Olivia.

Briana Catalon
First Place, Fourth Grade

"Compassion is having sympathy for others often including a desire to help." What compassion means to me is always being willing to help and having sympathy for others. My church is a fantastic example of compassion. I know the people at my church because I have been going to this church almost every Wednesday and Sunday for almost my whole life.

I chose my church because they are always nice and welcoming to new people that join our church. For example if there is a new kid my pastor will say "Let's give him/her a big Jtown welcome." Like if his name was Chase the kids will say "What's up Chase." Also my church volunteers. Like almost every year or so they will take the adults and older teens to go help clean up communities. People at my church also volunteer to be one of the people teaching the kids at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday and Wednesday night. They are also always willing to stop and pray with you if you have something going on in your life. They will always stop and pray with you. I think my church is a good example of compassion because compassion means having sympathy and I think that volunteering, being nice and welcoming, and praying is a great way of showing sympathy for others. It's often including a desire to help and I think volunteering and praying with others is a great way of helping people.

Who's someone that you know that has shown compassion? So that's why I picked my church. I love my church.

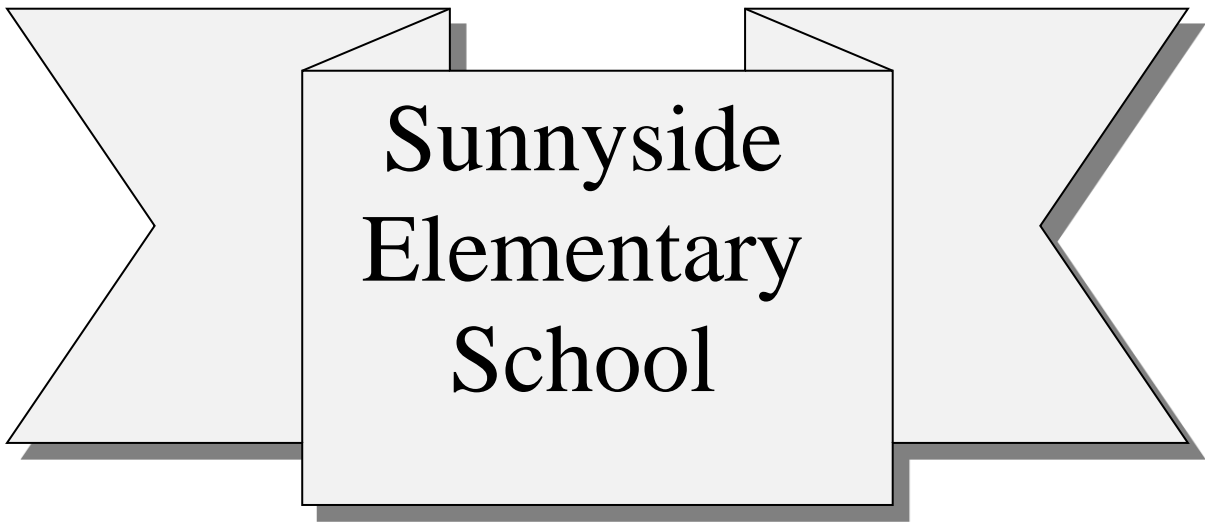
Rachel Kane
Second Place, Fourth Grade

The definition of compassion is “having sympathy for others, often including a desire to help.” I am writing about how the teachers and P.T.O. at S.E.S. are compassionate. I know them because I have two of them as my teachers right now.

I think the teachers and P.T.O. at S.E.S. are great examples of compassion. The P.T.O. and teachers are compassionate because they helped at the food pantry. They are great examples of compassionate people because they cooked a meal at the Ronald McDonald House. They also set up the soda tab fundraiser for Ronald McDonald House every year. They are helpful because if someone is sad or unhappy they make them feel better. The P.T.O. and teachers cooking a meal at the Ronald McDonald House is compassionate because they had the desire to help. Collecting soda tabs for the Ronald McDonald House is compassionate because they all had the desire to help. The P.T.O. and teachers helped at the food pantry which is compassionate because they had a desire to help.

The P.T.O. and teachers are great examples of compassion. They are examples of compassion because they all have helped at the food pantry. Do you know anybody that is compassionate?

Henry Merrill
Third Place, Fourth Grade



Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

Mrs. Simpson is compassionate because she helps me with diabetes.

Colin Biddle
First Place, Kindergarten

Lucy is compassionate because she gives me puppy kisses. She makes me happy.

Maura Mears
Second Place, Kindergarten

Aubrie A. is compassionate because she used her magic to same my arm.

Katelyn Bullock
Third Place, Kindergarten

Compassion means to show respect for people by helping others who are in need. I saw my Mom and Dad take food, toiletries, and dishes to a family in need. We also helped get their cat back to their house. Mom and Dad showed compassion. Having compassion for others is a great thing because it makes the other person happy!

Brooke Krolick
First Place, First Grade

Compassion is being nice to others. My cousin Sahmir shows compassion. One day my cousin Sahmir watched me fall. He picked me up. He got me an ice pack and a band aid. Then he put the band aid on. He carried me to the couch. I got to rest and then I felt better. I got to eat chicken noodle soup. It is important to show compassion.

Traniya Randall
Second Place, First Grade

Compassion is being helpful and kind to others. I showed compassion when I helped my Grandma get to the dinner table. She cannot walk yet because she just got out of the hospital. Compassion is important because it makes the world a better place.

Riley Wilson
Third Place, First Grade

Having compassion is a way to make a friend. Have you made a friend because of compassion? When I came to Sunnyside in Delaware I was sad. I missed my mom and dad. I was lonely and wanted to cry. There was a boy, Jeremyah who said “It is ok, I miss my dad and mom too.” At recess he gave me his gamer tag so we can play after school. At home we played MegaMen on the Xbox 360. I made a new friend and I wasn’t sad anymore. On the 2nd day of school he was not there. My heart was sad. I thought he will not come but he was just late. When we went to recess we entertained each other. We laugh and told each other jokes. The jokes were so funny that I fell on my side and I couldn’t get up. I’m so happy Jeremyah showed me compassion on my first day and now we are friends. Having a friend is cool. I hope you have a friend who shows compassion.

Julian Alvarez
First Place, Second Grade

Have you ever shown compassion? My uncle did once. My Uncle Zach saved my life when I almost drowned. Beginning one day I was swimming in the pool. When the waves turned on. My uncle jumped in the wave pool to save me. Then he saved me because the lifeguards couldn’t see me because I was under the water. He pulled me up out of the water so I could breathe. Finally he swam me to the shallow end. So I couldn’t drown again and so the waves couldn’t bring me back into the deep end. He felt happy that he helped me. I was grateful that he helped me.

Hunter Smith
Second Place, Second Grade

Since Mario was compassionate to me I’ve always been thinking about compassion. Here is what he did that was compassionate. My tummy hurt bad. So my teacher let me go to the nurse. I stayed there for a little bit. So the nurse told me to come back after lunch if my tummy still hurt. So I went back to class. I was complaining a lot. And then I THREW UP! Luckily Mario was there. He saved the day! He gave me a trash can and walked me to the nurse and Arabella packed my backpack and gave it to me. That was the worst day of my life! And that’s how Mario showed compassion.

Phoebe Schomburg
Third Place, Second Grade

It was a cold, brisk night, no leaves on trees, no flowers had bloomed, and the Macfarlane house was very quiet. No sound or noise was made. No screaming, yelling NOTHING!!!! Usually in a family of 9, it’s not that quiet! Two twin babies, two twin eight year olds, a 4 year old, and a

sixteen year old with a dog (AKA his fur brother). Usually it's babies crying, fighting, and having no privacy ANYWHERE!! But, a lot of the time it's the babies. Its' either they are hungry, sleepy, sick, or they need their diaper changed. But tonight, it's NOTHING!! Until shortly after dinner, things change A LOT!!!

All of a sudden, my baby brother, Jagger started crying out of nowhere. His face was red as a ripe cherry, and he was choking!!! My mom and dad were petrified!! We all knew something TERRIBLE was wrong with him. My dad took him to the hospital. I was nervous and scared. I didn't know if he was going to be ok.

The very next day, I had a lot of trouble going to school. I didn't talk to anyone. I knew I was missing something very important. I could not focus on my work. I tried my best, but I had to know where Jagger was and what had happened!

At recess, I felt like I was empty, with no joy or happiness inside me. The way he smiled, the way he laughed. I missed that little guy so much! The day seemed like no time was passing at all. It felt like a big pause in my life, and I didn't know how to unpause it. But the day went on slow and steady. The day kept going, going, and going.

A couple days later, my family found out Jagger had trouble breathing. He had to get a breathing treatment. We got pictures, and messages. It was very hard for me. My dad and him had to stay at the hospital for 4 nights.

I asked my mom "Is Jagger going to be ok?" "I don't know sweetie," she said. Then, it was time for dinner. Nobody talked. Everyone was miserable. Later that night, I dreamed about Jagger. I missed him.

The next morning, my mom called in a family meeting with Jaxon, Jett, Ryan, and me because she needed our help. "I need all of you to do all of your chores and make the house clean so when daddy and Jagger get back we're not scattering all over the house looking for clothes, toys, and burp cloths and things like that. No I also need help with sweeping and dusting along with some laundry, GOT IT???" my mom said. "Got it!" Jaxon, Jett, Ryan, and me all said at the same time.

So later that day, we all were cleaning, sweeping dusting, vacuuming, and doing our chores. We all were exhausted. But we knew we had to help out because mom was already stressed and we needed the house clean and free of germs for when Jagger got home.

When it was time for bed, the only word I could think of was...compassion. We helped each other out and we stuck together and did our part.

That morning, I went to school nervous, because Jagger and daddy were supposed to come back today. I was thinking "What if they don't come back?" The day went slow once again. At snack, I wasn't hungry. I had butterflies in my stomach, and my brain wouldn't stay STILL!!! All of my teacher's words were bunched up in one big ball in my brain!!

But FINALLY, school was over. I packed up SUPER quick! I was like a cheetah! When my bus was called I quickly ran out of the classroom door, and took off. I felt like I was flying.

On the bus I was as squirmy as a worm. “What’s wrong with you!?” asked Kaitlyn, the girl who sits next to me on the bus. “Jagger and my dad are supposed to come home today!!” I said back. “Oh cool!!” she said.

After I got off the bus I ran home as fast as I could. I flung open the door and.....

Jagger was there happily sitting on my mom’s lap drinking a bottle. For a moment I looked around and noticed how clean and tidy our house was. Then I remembered when we all helped out and did our part and worked together.

That’s when I thought of compassion again. We helped each other, we as a family stuck together, and our whole family learned a lesson. When bad things find our family, we as a family have to stick together and help each other out WHENEVER someone needs it. It does not have to be a big problem, we as a big, loveable family will ALWAYS be there for each other. My whole family showed compassion by helping when Jagger needed it. My family helped my mom make the house clean, so when dad and Jagger came home the house was nice and tidy, and it would be very easy to find things. That cold brisk night, with no flowers, turned into a night with a smell like flowers, the night felt warm inside, and happy and then the night went on smoothly.

Peyton Macfarlane
First Place, Third Grade

Compassion means to be kind to others and help them if they are sad, hurt, or in need. Plat once said “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a harder battle.” There are many different ways to show compassion. I showed compassion towards my friend when her dog passed away.

Once my friend Nora and I were on the bus and Nora was crying a little bit. I knew something was wrong. So, I asked her and she said that her dog had died last night. I said that I was so sorry to hear that. I was quiet for a long time because I loved that dog and I was sad for Nora. Then, I spoke up and told her a joke and she laughed a little bit. Then, I told her that she probably wasn’t the only one upset because our friends Caroline and Sydney would probably be sad too. I told her that she would get over it eventually. I helped her get over it by telling her funny jokes and tickling her a little bit. She was a little happier after that. After that, I said you can always pray for him because her family is very religious. Then, we got off the bus and went into our daycare. I make her feel a lot better, but she was still a little bit sad when her mom picked her up. Her mom made her happier and she was all better.

There are many ways to show compassion toward others. I felt that it was important to show compassion to my friend Nora because she was in need of a friend when her dog died. Showing compassion is an important part of life and being a good person. If I didn’t show compassion to

my friend Nora she would have still been really sad when we got off the bus and into our day care and probably still been sad when she left.

Kendal Gede
Second Place, Third Grade

Even on the worst day of my whole entire life, there was someone who showed me compassion. Compassion is if you see someone hurting, you go and help the other person get up. I am writing this story because someone in my life did a very nice thing for me. Compassion means a lot to me because it is a very nice thing to do when someone is hurt or sad about something.

I was playing outside with my friends and then my mom told me to come inside. She told me that my pop pop had passed away. All I could think of was my last words to him was “I will always love you. You are the best pop pop in the whole entire world.” Then my mom told me that we had to go to a funeral home. Plus I would know everybody there so they could cheer me up. So we had to get ready for the funeral and my sister was so not ready so we had to wake her up more. And then we finally went to the funeral and I knew most of the people there but some I had no clue who they were. The thing I most wanted to see was everybody praying for my pop pop so that he would be fine in heaven.

The problem I had was I was so sad that my mom had to get a person to help me feel better. My face was as hot as a hot pepper. It was so hard to breathe because my pop pop had just died. I really didn't feel like someone talking to me because I was so mad that my pop pop had died. So I had to sit with my friend's mom. She's the best. She can always help you if you're sad about something. Her name is Mrs. Kristi. She had never ever doubted me.

After my mom said “Liam needs some help to feel better. Can you please help him?” Then Mrs. Kristi came to talk to me about how was baseball going and how school was going. Her compassionate words helped me feel way better. When I started to feel a little more normal, I was happy that she talked to me and she made me laugh. She also let me know what she cared about me. I was a little worried because I then had a feeling that everybody would come over and say, “Are you okay?” But Mrs. Kristi was the only one to talk to me except my mom, dad, uncle, and aunt.

In conclusion, when I was at the funeral I felt as sad as a crying baby and as mad as a animal that didn't get the food that they were chasing. Mrs. Kristi's compassionate words were the best and most compassionate words ever. One was “You are the best person that I know.” That made me feel pleased that she felt that way about me. Mrs. Kristi is the best ever. Even on the worst day of my whole entire life, I was so lucky to have Mrs. Kristi to show me compassion.

Liam Conway
Third Place, Third Grade

I am writing about compassion. Compassion to me means caring about others, being helpful, and not being selfish. When you show true compassion you don't expect anything in return. You do it because you want to and have the ability to help. Eeyore once said, "A little thought for others makes all the difference." My first story is about my mom helping her friend Crystal when her mom was dying. My next story is about my mom giving blood and platelets to help people. My last story is about my mom helping my aunt with her son Blane. Now sit back and enjoy as I tell you about my compassion stories.

One experience I had with compassion was when my mom helped her friend through a hard time. My mom's friend is Crystal. My mom heard that Crystal's mom was very sick and was about to die. My mom took action and took Crystal's kids home from school. She also had to pick up her little girl from daycare. My mom made dinner and helped them with their homework. She also put them in the shower and put them to bed. It wasn't just one or two extra kids. My mom's friend has four kids. My mom handled five kids like a pro. That made me feel like I have an amazing mom. My mom felt good about herself too. Now my mom can look back and say she did something good for someone else during a difficult time. This showed me a lot about compassion and the meaning about it.

My next act of compassion is about my mom giving blood to people. My mom gives blood to people in need. She gets calls from the Blood Bank whenever they need her blood. My mom gives several times a year and this summer she donated double red blood cells and with that donation it is able to help more people. My aunt got really sick before I was born, but my mom didn't hesitate to help. My aunt needed a blood transfusion and my mom was able to help. Also, my Mom mom was diagnosed with cancer, so she gave blood to help her too. My mom said, "I'm healthy and if I can help someone in need that's all that matters." There was a student in my Mom's class and his brother was diagnosed with cancer. She donated blood in the blood drive. We wore shirts to help him too. That is how my mom helped some people she knows and people she doesn't know by donating blood. My mom went a few weeks ago for a test to see if she can donate her platelets to help people with cancer. She found out that she can, so she is going to donate them too.

Lastly, my mom showed compassion by driving my cousin to school every day for the last year and a half. We moved into the house right next door to my aunt and uncle. My Aunt Nikki had to drive my cousin Zoe to Clayton Intermediate School and then take my other cousin, Blane to Sunnyside Elementary. Once we moved next door, my mom told my Aunt Nikki that she would drive Blane to school and bring him home every day. This saved my aunt from driving to two different schools in the morning. I loved it because I got to see my cousin Blane more and more.

Now you've heard all about my stories of compassion. You've heard about my mom showing compassion to her friend. You also know about my mom giving blood and how she showed compassion to people. You also heard about my mom helping out my aunt with taking her son to school. My mom is my inspiration. I try to show compassion like my mom. I am very glad she is my mom. I want to be just like her when I am an adult.

Jaylen Ryan
First Place, Fourth Grade

Compassion is being kind and caring to the environment, everything, and everyone. Albert Schweitzer once said, "The purpose of human life is to serve, and to sow compassion and the will to help others." I love this quote because this really stands out in my life and in the compassion my Grandfather shows towards my Grandmother. Last year I wrote about my Grandmother persevering. My Grandfather's compassion would not be so great if my Grandmother didn't persevere so much. In my life my grandfather sows lots of compassion towards everyone, but I feel that my grandfather shows lots of compassion towards my grandmother the most. There were different events that led up to one story.

This happened just in the past year, 2017. First, at the end of July, my Grandmother fell and got MRSA. My grandfather never left the hospital, except to go to bed. Next, when she got out of the hospital 2 weeks later she again got MRSA. My grandfather stayed after closing hours to stay with her. Then the infection got so bad and she had to get her leg amputated. My grandfather had to drive farther away just to go see her. If you were him would you be compassionate enough to do that?

After my grandmother returned home, she had to relearn how to do everything without her leg. My grandfather helps her learn to do things by herself again. My grandmother only gets physical therapy on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Just in the past 2 weeks my grandmother's physical therapy got moved to the hospital so that she has enough space to do the therapy. She also needs the right equipment. My grandmother can't drive alone, so my grandfather has to drive her. He has to help her do things now more than ever. He doesn't leave her side to go to get things or to go home. Even if he feels like staying home he won't stay home. He will always stay by her side even if there is a fire. He won't just leave her side to eat he would starve just to be with her and help her.

Compassion is what comes from the inside and not the outside. My grandfather shows compassion on a daily basis. You know that compassion can be being kind. It will make a big difference with your act of compassion. One act of kindness could save one person and soul. It is so simple to be compassionate. Show compassion just like my grandfather every day.

McKenna Wilson
Second Place, Fourth Grade

Do you know what compassion really is? Compassion doesn't have to be a big or known deed. Compassionate people don't even think about credit for a second. I've seen many people that I know and people I don't know that show compassion to others, including me. One example is a couple on an airplane to Mexico who gave us M&Ms, because they saw we were hungry. I will never forget that act of kindness because it made my day much brighter.

Many people do amazing things, but I'm going to talk about my amazing, sympathetic, sweet, beautiful inside and out, and compassionate best friend. Her name is Alyssa, she is the best friend anyone could have! Alyssa does many deeds a day even if it takes time off of doing what

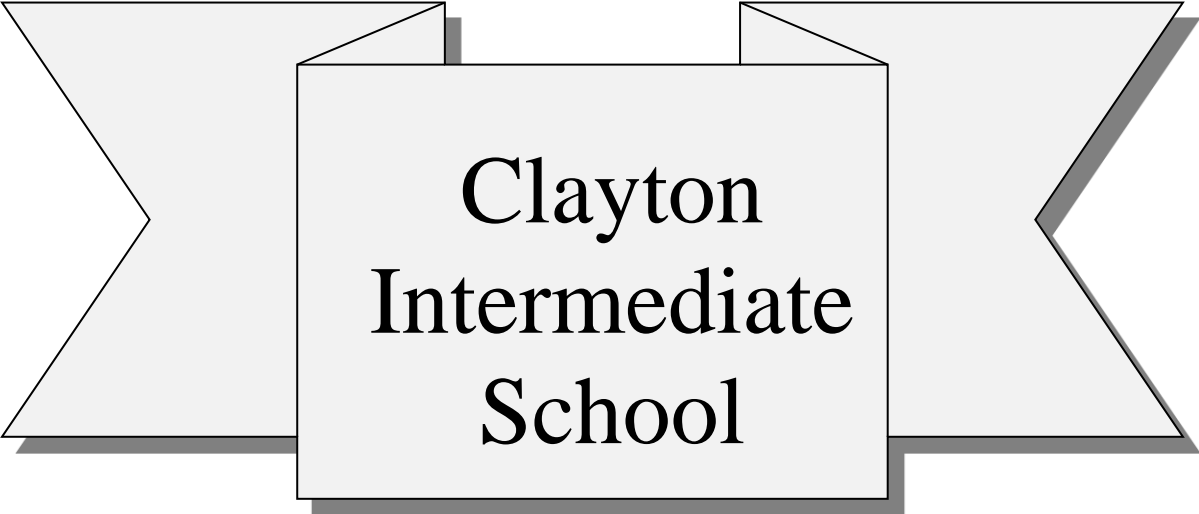
she loves. Alyssa is shy, but confident when it comes to a helping hand. Alyssa will help as much as she can. We even found a beautiful star ornament on ugly sweater day and we asked the teachers if they knew who it belonged to and they had no idea. We asked around and found who it belonged to.

Alyssa has a kind heart and soul. She gives hugs to people who are upset, she draws pictures for people, and she just helps people in general. With all the deeds she does, it's hard to tell which one is best!

People might think compassion has to be big and known, but even a simple smile can make others smile. This is why I chose Alyssa! Alyssa is cheerful, talented, and sensitive, but being sensitive isn't a bad thing. It allows her to feel how others feel even if it makes her cry. If Alyssa gets awarded she doesn't brag. Alyssa is a just perfect friend.

Compassion is a wonderful thing, it saves souls. Even if you don't get thanked, it still makes the world a better place. If you are a compassionate person you will be a happier person! Everyone can show compassion and you can too!

Julianna Williams
Third Place, Fourth Grade



Clayton
Intermediate
School

Grades 5 and 6

Do you know what compassion is? The dictionary says, “Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied with a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” To me, compassion is more than a feeling. It’s doing something to make things better. I believe my brother, Tanner, is a great representative of compassion. Daniel Goleman said, “True compassion means not only feeling another’s pain, but also being moved to relieve it.” That’s what my brother does.

My brother is a Unified Leader for track at Smyrna High, where he helps kids in all the track events. As a Unified Leader, he runs alongside of other students with disabilities. As he runs with those kids, he encourages them to not give up and to keep moving. When he is helping the kids, it’s not about him, it’s about the kids’ feeling confident and an important part of the team. My brother Tanner is also compassionate by volunteering to help the homeless. He spent 2 days at the Winter Harvest at Lake Forest High School. He helped to cook food and serve the homeless. He got to sit with the people he was helping and hear about their lives.

These are just some of the things my brother Tanner did that showed compassion. He shows compassion in the little things he does every day for me, my family, friends, and people he does not know. My message that I am trying to tell you is that the littlest acts of compassion can make the biggest difference! I know my brother makes a difference every day.

Cooper Wynne
First Place, Grade 5

Compassion means someone who shows kindness, love, and maybe sorrow for someone no matter their religion, race, or age. As Mason Cooley said, “Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment, we rise above ourselves.” I know someone who shows compassion like nobody else, Kelsey Lowman. She showed compassion by helping a kid who doesn’t have the best home life. She also found a girl sitting by herself at recess and invited her to play with us.

Two years ago, in the third grade, she helped a kid named Edward who didn’t have a ton of friends. I liked that the teacher did not ask her to help, she asked the teacher to help. Just as Mason Cooley said, Kelsey rose above everyone else. She showed compassion, because no one really knew Edward. The result was that Kelsey showed other people that Ed is a nice, funny, and happy kid. Now he has a place to escape his home life.

At the beginning of the year, there was a new girl on the playground. Everyone had their group of friends except for her. When Kelsey saw her all alone, she just walked away to go talk to her. Kelsey showed compassion by going up to someone that she has never met and giving her a friend. The result was that she now has friends she can rely on.

While I was writing this, I had to stop and think. These simple acts made an impact on not just two lives, but also mine. Now I strive my hardest to be like Kelsey. Maybe is she can change people’s lives, so can I.

Channing Baker

Second Place, Grade 5

“Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment, we rise above ourselves.” –Mason Cooley. Compassion means, “A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” Someone who is compassionate is Jocelyn Tejada because she always makes people feel better when they don’t feel well and she is kind and thoughtful. Jocelyn is compassionate to people no matter how they act or how they look. She tries to help people.

One day I was not feeling well and Jocelyn came up to me and told me jokes and things that would make me feel better. Compassion was demonstrated because she came up to me to try to make me feel better. Jocelyn was able to inspire me to try to make other people feel better. Jocelyn was able to make me feel better. Now that she did that, I can help other people too. I see Jocelyn going up to people and asking if they need anything or if they are okay. Jocelyn always checks on people to try to help them when they don’t feel good or when they need to be happy. Compassion was demonstrated because Jocelyn always cares to help and no matter who it is she will always try to make you feel better. Jocelyn has made other people feel better and hopefully inspired them to help other people to. She is very compassionate to other people.

The impact was that Jocelyn has made me feel like I can help other people too. She is kind and compassionate to me and other people too. No matter what they look like she will always try to help even if it doesn’t work. If Jocelyn does not feel good, she will still try. If I do not feel good or another person, Jocelyn will always make them feel better.

Compassion means, “A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” Jocelyn shows compassion because she makes people feel better and she is kind and thoughtful. She is able to successfully help me and other people feel good. She takes time out of her day to help people. Jocelyn tries no matter how she is feeling or who the person is and I am lucky she is in my life.

Mia Davis
Third Place, Grade 5

According to the dictionary, compassion is “A feeling of deep sympathy and sorry for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” To me, compassion means being kind to someone no matter what they look like. Daniel Goleman once said, “True compassion means not only feeling another’s pain, but also being moved to help relieve it.” Here’s how a single act of compassion changed my life.

On May 27, 2017, I was in Philadelphia with my mother and sister, Rebecca. We were there for a ceremony that recognizes student- athletes around the country with high grades. There was a ceremony in the morning and a dinner in the evening. So, we walked around Philly during the day. We got some water bottles and granola bars to hand out to the homeless people. Then, there

was this elderly lady in a wheelchair that was in a daze. Once I walked up to her, she snapped out of it. At first she saw the bar and the water, and when she looked up, she had the biggest grin and her eyes lit up. That moment changed my life.

She had an amazing reaction. She was so excited, smiling ear to ear, and her eyes practically turned into light bulbs. I felt amazing! I felt proud of myself for showing an act of compassion, and it felt great to make someone feel better. The biggest reaction though, is the idea that followed. I had an idea about an organization that provides those in need with what they need to survive, so they don't have to look like that when someone gives them food. This organization was a great impact on my life.

I went to my pastor with my idea. He loved it so I brought it up with his wife. I now lead my own ministry at my church, 4 the World Ministries. The ministry is called Blessing Bags 4 the World. We made customized drawstring bags, and have filled up five or so already. Our youth group puts them together. Our current goal is to make 150 Blessing Bags to distribute during a mission trip to Pittsburgh this summer, but our ultimate goal is to make enough to hand out to those in need in the Smyrna-Clayton area. A single encounter that lasted less than 30 seconds, a single act of compassion has blossomed into something that will change the lives of many people.

Reaghan King
First Place, Grade 6

“Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment, we rise above ourselves.” – Mason Coley. According to the dictionary, “Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” When I think about this quote, I think of my sister, Caitlin McCutchan. She demonstrated compassion to the kids she works with for her class. She works with mentally handicapped and mentally challenged kids.

My sister really enjoys working with these kids each week. When she is there, she feels as if she is making a difference in the children she works with lives. When someone needs something or someone needs help, she jumps right in to help them. She does have challenges sometimes, but she feels that those challenges only help her to be better at what she does.

She understands the students' limitations and disabilities and does all she can to make the world just a little better place for them. One of her biggest pet peeves is when someone makes fun of or says some rude comment about the students. She tells them, “You wouldn't want anyone to talk about you like that, would you?” She reminds them how important it is to think about people's feelings and think about how your words affect others.

I feel my sister working with these students has affected my life, because it has taught me that everyone matters, and how important it is to put others' feelings ahead of yourself. Showing compassion for others provides comfort, helps remove someone's pain or just helps make someone's day better. The challenges these kids face each day is far greater than most of us will

ever have to face. My sister, Caitlin McCutchan, has modeled for me the importance of compassion and being a compassionate person.

Hailey McCutchan
Second Place, Grade 6

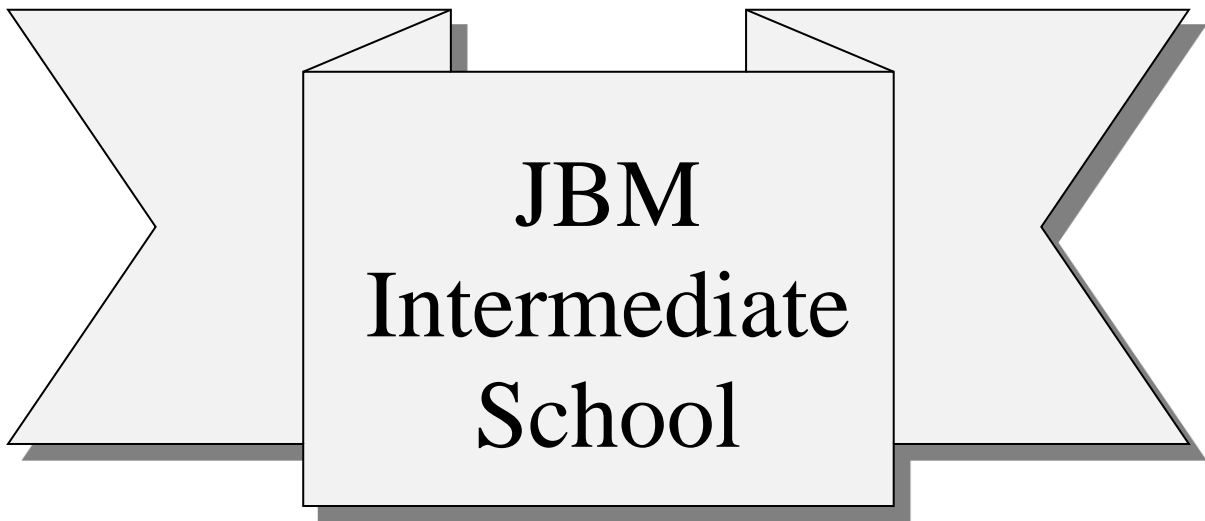
“True compassion means not only feeling another’s pain, but also being moved to help relieve it.” –Daniel Goleman. To me and my family, that quote means a lot. Every Thanksgiving there are people who are less fortunate and don’t have family to help them. They usually don’t have enough money to feed themselves or their children. They don’t have anyone to help them when they are down, and they need someone to lean on near that holiday. I haven’t experienced it first hand, but on multiple occasions I have seen someone that needs help that I could relate to how they feel. The reason I picked this act of compassion is because to me it is very fun to help people. My family and I make baskets with items inside that they would need to have a good Thanksgiving, but also last hopefully through the season and they can make bigger things out of what we give them to make them feel better.

My family and I make Thanksgiving baskets with food, drinks, and sometimes we give clothes and hygiene items and things you would need to stay warm. Once in a while we will give old toys or buy new ones for the kids. To do this we have to call Clayton Elementary School or go to meet the guidance counselor there at the school to get people’s requests about what they want and need for this Thanksgiving. We also get information about them and their hobbies, sizes, and likes and dislikes about what they would want this season.

The result of giving back to people, I know makes them happy. They send feedback to the guidance counselor. They tell her what a great Thanksgiving they had. Sometimes I think about what they feel or what they think when they get the boxes or bags filled with things that they would need to have a great Thanksgiving. Every time Thanksgiving comes around we love to go to the stores and buy all the items that the people requested.

When our family donates it is a great feeling for everyone around us. It is a very refreshing and nice feeling to know that just by putting in a little hard work you can make someone’s life very much better and happier. Giving back anytime gives me that feeling that I just helped someone in need in the world that appreciates it. I like to think that they feel the same way. I feel that everyone should help people that need it. Helping people is the best thing you could do to help the world. If there’s somebody in the world that needs help, you should help them.

Jordan Hudson
Third Place, Grade 6



Grades 5 and 6

Here in the United States most of us are blessed with plenty of food to eat and clean water to drink. Some people get only one meal a day or sometimes none at all. These people don't deserve to be treated like this. They deserve better. My church works to help these people that are all over the world. We want to help because nobody should have to live without their basic needs.

This past year, I joined in helping my church raise money for an orphanage in Nicaragua. We also gathered toys and crafts to send with volunteers that visited the orphanage. I also did something called Operation Christmas Child where I packed a shoebox full of goodies for children in poor countries like Africa for instance. It gets shipped there by Christmas time and most of the time it is the kid's only Christmas present. Their faces are probably lit up with joy. Inside there are goodies and a note from the church that says "God will always be with you. He will guide you for eternity. His love endures forever."

Our church does stuff like this a lot. We as kids can participate too, by bringing in money to Sunday School. The church raises money then sends it to a place that is poor or doesn't have much food or money. My church also helps around our local community by giving food, water, and money to those in need throughout the year.

One time I was up in New York City and I had twenty dollars in my pocket. I was planning to buy something to eat but instead I saw a homeless man asking around for food and money. I told my mom to stop so I could hand him the money. She did and I gave the man the money. The man said thank you and I left. My mom told me what I did was a very compassionate thing to do. I will never forget the look of hunger in that man's eyes, begging for food.

Albert Schweitzer said "The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others." It suggests that we all should help others who can't help themselves. I also believe the purpose in life is to help others who don't have as much as we do. Those people need help more than you or I. They get one meal a day or no meal at all. Imagine one meal a day, barely any water, and many kinds of diseases that could kill you. This is the reality of many others and I want to help those people as much as I can.

Zoe Thomas
First Place, Grade 5

"True compassion means not only feeling another's pain, but also being moved to help relieve it"
-Daniel Goleman.

John Bassett Moore (JBM) is the most wonderful group I have ever met. We have put together fundraisers like the Fall Fest, student vs. teacher basketball game etc. If I were you I would come to this school any day. This paper will prove that we are 100% compassionate to anyone in need.

JBM has a student who has a type of Leukemia her name is Jaydon Denson. She was supposed to be in Mrs. McGowan's class but she was diagnosed with leukemia right before the school year started so she couldn't come. We have put together a donation for her family. Students will bring

in change or money or whatever they can bring in. At the end of the week the office mails the money from the classrooms out to the family for food, medical bills, clothes etc. We are still raising money for Jaydon to this day, January 25, 2018. As a result they are so thankful that any spare bit of money could change anything for them.

Another way JBM has shown compassion is we had a Holiday Hoopla for the homeless. Student Council helped set everything up. There were 5-6 tables filled with presents, Santa came, coats, gloves, hats, food and much much more. I think that, that was awesome because they don't always get to do the things that we do every single day. As a result they were very thankful for everything and they left with smiles on their faces which made us very happy that we did this for them.

Also, JBM has shown compassion by having a Fall Fest and all of the proceeds also went to Jaydon Denson. At the Fall Fest we had a Haunted Hallway, games, a hayride, etc. In addition to the Fall Fest we had a Glow Dance. The proceeds also went to Jaydon and her family. At the Glow Dance we had food, glow in the dark face paint, a black light, and a DJ. It was awesome and I was so glad we could do all of this for Jaydon.

In closing, JBM is the best, most compassionate school I have ever been able to attend. They have done so much for the community. I will always remember this school as a compassionate, awesome group that I will revisit whenever I can.

Alexandra Passero
Second Place, Grade 5

“Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment, we rise above ourselves,” said Mason Cooley a famous American aphorist. There are a lot of people out there to change the world for the better, but the person I'm going to write about is me. Steve Jobs stated, “Those who are crazy enough to think they can change the world usually do,” and I am crazy.

There are people out there without shelter or clothes so I decided to hold a clothing drive at my school, but it took a bit to plan. First, I went to talk with my principal, and we figured out a time to start the drive. That day when I got home I burst through the door and shouted, “I did it. I finally got help and the clothing drive starts tomorrow!”

“Good job buddy!” said my dad excitedly. So after dinner my mom went upstairs and made some phone calls to find out where to drop off clothes once we got them. The next week I went to check on my donation box, and it was overflowing! We kept picking up clothes every week. It lasted two months.

The results we got were awesome. We got clothes, gloves, blankets, shoes, and scarves. We eventually ended up bringing around 20 bags of particles to Code Purple. The people who ran it were very grateful. It made me feel super good to do something good, to make others days, and also to make the community better.

I've wanted to change the world since I found out that I could, and now helped a little bit of the world. Any one person can change the world. To change the world you should start small. Also as Kid President said, "If it doesn't change the world don't do it." I hope that one day people spend more time being happy than sad. It is actually proven that it takes more muscles to frown than to smile.

Mason Schulenburg
Third Place, Grade 5

Hey, do you believe in God? If so then you know what his son, Jesus did to help us and how compassionate he was toward us. If not, then please read this essay and learn what Jesus did and how compassionate he really is. Who knows, you might even consider being more compassionate because of it?

First, I'm sure you know that Jesus died on the cross for everyone's past, present, and future sins. Now, I would say, "true compassion is helping others even if it hurts you." If so, then Jesus was definitely the most compassionate person in the world. He wanted to wash away everyone's sins, even if it killed him. This should tell you he was the most compassionate person ever and should always be remembered for that act.

Next, Jesus' death was something to be remembered. Even if it was sad I think Jesus knew what his courageous act would lead to in the future. The result of his death led to many tears by his family, friends, and disciples, but after Jesus came back to life to leave again to heaven his people lived on worshiping and doing what was right to God. They had the Holy Spirit. My reaction to his death was that I thought what he did was awesome, but still sad. Even if I wasn't there, I know from what I've learned that the disciples continued to be on Jesus' side and roamed the Earth helping those who needed it, which must be what he wanted. This is the same for people in the present who believe in Jesus and want to help people too.

Learning about Jesus' death changed me a little. When I learned about Jesus dying for people's sins in my Church I wanted to be more compassionate towards people. I asked my Mom if we could drive around looking for homeless people to give money. We did find one, but lost him while driving. Now, I bet you're probably wondering what this has to do with anything if we didn't give him money. Well, usually I wouldn't asked my Mom something like that, because I thought she was too busy with work. I was planning on helping people when I was an adult, but learning about Jesus's compassion gave me courage to tell her I wanted to help homeless people. Even if we didn't give away any money, Jesus's compassion with people showed me to be a bit more open about things.

In conclusion, Jesus's death led to 84 percent of the world's population believing in him. A lot of them might be the type of people who show compassion. It might be because they want to be good like Jesus or they just pity the people they helped. Either way, I think Jesus was a good person to write about because his compassion for people led him to inspire many. Any who hears his story better think about what he did for us and try to help others too. Even if you can't be as compassionate as he was. He did it to help and you should do that to.

Serena Foko
First Place, Grade 6

Have you ever experienced compassion? Well, of course you have. Almost everyone in the world has experienced compassion. Although, some people have experienced more compassion than others. The most compassionate person I have ever known is my mother.

My mother has been making her mark on the world for about 50 years. She was born in Detroit, Michigan and left home during her teenage years. Along the way, she met my Dad who was born and raised in Delaware. They got married in 1995, brought me into the world in 2006 and then settled in Smyrna. From the moment I was born she has shown me so much love, compassion, and kindness. Like any mother and son, we have our disagreements, but we both know that our disagreements will be short lived. During my younger years my parents got divorced and ever since then I have seen just how compassionate she is to everyone.

My mother has been a shining star to this community. She has donated so much time, money, and effort to help anyone and anything she can. Two years ago a little kitten arrived at our door, it was obvious she was sick. The kitten had lost her left eye and was having trouble breathing. Even though my mom did not feel we had the time for a pet she said that we should take care of her. Kitty still has some health issues but she is the best cat in the world. Recently our heater stopped working and because of the cold, kitty was getting sick. Mom not only took care of me she also bought our cat a new blanket. My mother will help any soul that she can.

My mother takes great pride in giving. Every year, for the past 22 years she has donated four hundred and fifty dollars, cooked dinner multiple times, and donated items to the Ronald McDonald House. She has donated to the food drive for more than 25 years. She gives 200 plus cans per year, fresh from the store. Unlike some, she doesn't use old, expired food from the pantry.

My mother helps people who cannot afford to buy their groceries. She has done it countless times. I asked her why she does it and she said "When I was young and on my own I did not have a lot of money. One time I was unable to pay for all of my groceries and a stranger helped me. When I asked why, she said "I'm paying it forward. And that's why I have been doing it ever since".

Hopefully after listing just some of the compassionate things she does, you understand why I wrote this essay about her. My mother is truly a compassionate person to her soul. She has done so much good for so many. To me, she is the definition of compassion.

Pierce Hanshew
Second Place, Grade 6

Some friends make you a better person. My friend Justice has a joint disability, which makes it hard for him to walk long distances. Over the last two years, I have learned about compassion by helping him.

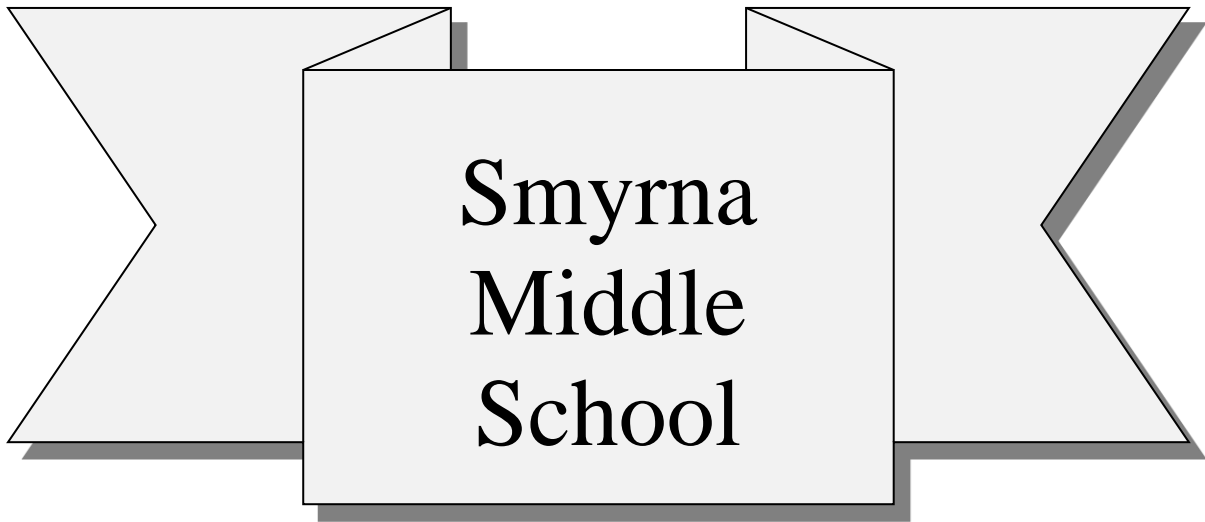
Every day, I help Justice go up and down the floors of our school on the elevator. When we go to Related Arts, lunch, and recess, he has to take the elevator, so, I help him. Every day, I meet Justice in breakfast and then go with him from breakfast to our classroom. Throughout the day, I help Justice get to lunch, recess, our classroom and the bus.

I go with Justice to help make sure he gets where he needs to go, but I also help carry his stuff. I help Justice by carrying his lunch tray, his books and his book bag. Justice can do these things on his own, but we make it easier for him by helping. Even when we get into an argument, I still help Justice. I hope that helping Justice makes him feel good.

If he falls, I help him back up. Justice sometimes falls when he is going too fast and when he is laughing and walking at the same time. Justice usually falls at recess because he walks fast and laughs and walk. Sometimes at recess, we carry Justice when we play tag to help him get to people easily. Even though Justice walks quickly with his crutches, he is not always fast enough. If we don't carry him, then it takes him a long time to tag people.

By helping my friend Justice, I have learned to become a better person. I have also learned to help other people when they need help. My friendship with Justice has positively impacted my life. Other people notice what I do for him and they thank me.

Caleb Jones
Third Place, Grade 6



Grades 7 and 8

Everyone should have compassion because compassion is not only a very important core value, but a life skill. People should care for other people even if you don't know the person simply because they are people, too. The definition of compassion is a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for other people's suffering or bad luck and a desire to help. People who show compassion have genuine concern for all of humanity despite the difficulties they have faced. We admire those who exhibit compassion and believe in the dignity, respect, equality, and justice of everyone. Organ donation is the ultimate final act that is more heartfelt than any other, and shows an individual's compassion for others, which I have witnessed for myself.

Pope Francis described organ donation "as a testimony of love for our neighbor." In my life there was a person that I will never forget that exhibited so much compassion through organ donation. My dad was very sick and needed a new heart, so a man gave his heart to my dad. The man had the most compassion I have ever seen in my life and because of his compassion, he saved my dad's life. This man gave life to my dad and now my dad will live longer because of that heart and "gift of life". Since 1974, Gift of Life - the organ procurement organization for eastern PA, southern NJ and DE - has helped save 39,000 lives through organ donation, and enhanced over half a million lives through tissue donation" (Gift of Life). My dad was one of those people who benefited from organ donation, and because of that compassionate person, I still have my dad.

My family and I will never forget this act of compassion in our whole lives. Because of that compassionate man, I have been given the gift of making memories with my dad. If it were not for this selfless act, my dad would have died. "This miraculous task of providing life-saving organ transplants to men, women, and children on the transplant waitlist wouldn't be possible without the selfless decision of donors and donor families who say yes to donations. The choice to donate - often made at a grief-stricken and terrible moment in life - is one that is far reaching and greatly beneficial" (Gift of Life). I am so grateful for the compassion of the donor's entire family. That man's family showed a lot of compassion because they had to sign a paper so their dad could give his heart away. In return, I admire that family because they didn't have to go along with that selfless act. Somebody lost their dad in order for me to get my dad back. This is the essence of compassion and for that, I am eternally grateful.

If people didn't have compassion, the world would be a miserable place. I'm a person that has lots of compassion for my friends, family, and people I don't even know. I have grown more compassionate watching my dad get sick and almost die, but then being resurrected by someone's compassionate gift. I want everyone to have compassion because I have felt its benefits and the feeling of greatness that accompanies it.

Lorenzo Bishop
First Place, Grade 7

Compassion is fundamental to our mental well-being and humanity. The dictionary definition of compassion is "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." In other terms, feeling compassionate for someone is feeling sympathy for their hardships

with a desire to make them feel better. Without compassion, you cannot be fully human, if you think about it. It's just instinct for us to care for each other for survival.

One great example of someone showing strong compassion was St. Francis of Assisi. Back in 1206, Giovanni Bernadone, the son of a wealthy merchant, went on a pilgrimage to Rome. While he was there, he couldn't help but notice all of the homeless beggars. He convinced one to trade clothes with him and changed the way he lived for good, as a result of compassion. He gave up everything to live in poverty. This eventually became one of the first great empathy experiments in history.

Another influential act of compassion was John Howard Griffin's case. Born in Texas, he decided to experience how it was to live like an African American in the south where they were discriminated against during 1959. He dyed his skin black and used skin-darkening medications, and nobody ever suspected him. Working as a shoeshine boy, he was subjected to not only verbal, but physical abuse as well. He was struck by how white people just stared through him without acknowledgement. In the end, his compassionate act ended up being extremely influential.

All in all, without compassion, we are not truly human. Our brains were made to show this kindness to aid us in survival as a species. Our mental well-being is just as important as our physical well-being. We take it for granted how good we have it, most of the time. Next time you're feeling unfortunate, just try placing yourself in another's shoes for a change.

Liam Wilson
Second Place, Grade 7

Compassion is a wonderful thing that everyone should show. What is compassion? Compassion is a feeling you get where you want to help others and show kindness in the best way possible. For example, one time in 5th grade during free time, I saw a girl not talking to anyone. I decided to introduce myself and now two years later, we are still best friends. That was me showing compassion, I felt bad for her, I wanted to do something to help so I became her friend.

Everyone has compassion in them, it is just whether someone decides to show it or not. Now I know everyone has bad days, but that does not mean you should be rude to another person. You should treat everyone with respect and show compassion, because whether you know it or not, you can make a difference in someone's life. You should make it your goal to say "Hey, that person is sad, or that person is having a bad day, what can I do to change that? I want to help." Let's say you are taking a walk around your town and you see someone in need of food or clothes and you have some to spare, you can do one of two things. You can walk away and keep your extra stuff to yourself or you can give them the extra food and clothes and make a difference in their life by showing compassion. (hint) Of course, the second option is the best choice because you would make a difference to that person and show some compassion.

There are people that are in your life every day that show compassion. For example, your teacher, your teacher takes the time every day to teach you and makes sure you understand

everything. Your parents are another example, your parents do everything they can to make sure you are healthy and happy. You are their number one priority, every day. If they see you struggling, they will do anything they can to try to help make things better. All of these people show compassion to you on a daily basis. You should be grateful if you have all of these people in your life showing compassion to you because not everyone has these people.

I know not everyone shows compassion to you, but I am also certain if you do your part to be nice to whoever doesn't show you compassion, they will eventually start to show compassion. It is important to show compassion to everyone because you do not know what they could be going through at home. The number one rule is to treat everyone the way you want to be treated. You wouldn't want to be called names or be ignored, so why would you do that to other people? Why would you want to make them feel horrible about themselves or be rude to them when you wouldn't want to be treated that way?

In conclusion, you should show compassion at all times. No one would be rude to you if you're nice to everyone and everything. Everyone is a human being and a human being is a very valuable thing. Treat others with respect and compassion because you know that's the way you want to be treated. Always have compassion for everyone and everything because even the smallest act can make a huge difference.

Azlynn Wood
Third Place, Grade 7

The Outsiders is a book that preaches the message of equality in hardships, no matter the cultural or social standards of the person. The main protagonist, Ponyboy Curtis, and his friend Johnny Cade are pushed beyond their limits after dealing with a traumatizing murder, difficult and painful family lives, and harassment from the "Socs", a gang of rich and tough cool guys that seem to have no problems. It would be standard to write about Ponyboy's character development or Johnny's displays of compassion through his short life. But I believe the most admirable of these characters is Dally, one of the older Greasers (the name given to Ponyboy's friend group of rule breaking hoods) that seems to always be there for Pony and Johnny through this whole ordeal.

Dally's character portrays a wild and uncaring hood, this is directly stated by Pony (page 10): "Dally had spent three years on the wild side of New York and had been arrested at the age of ten. He was tougher than the rest of us - tougher, colder, and meaner." But as the story goes on, he changes into someone who looks out for his friends, no matter the circumstance. This is a true representation of kindness, blossoming out of a character who seems completely cut off to any form of empathy.

After Ponyboy and Johnny had committed a murder, Dally helped them, despite the dangers that it brought about. He didn't care if it could get him arrested or worse. All that mattered was helping his two friends: a true show of compassion. Dally directed them to the abandoned church for them to take refuge in and told them how to stay away from the police. He even gave away his gun for Pony and Johnny to protect themselves with, something that was quite precious to

him. Someone who seemed so cold and hard at the beginning of this novel is showing the readers his true colors, which will continue to develop as the plot continues.

After the tragic fire, Johnny is injured and in critical condition. Due to Johnny's injury, you can start to see Dally cracking. His tough, outer shell is being hammered away at the selfless acts of Ponyboy and Johnny after they risk their lives to save school children from a burning building. The compassion of Pony and Johnny filled Dally with the same notion, even though Dally attempts to push it away. When Ponyboy and Dally are driving to the hospital, Dally says, "You get tough like me and you don't get hurt. You look out for yourself and nothin' can touch you..." (page 147) It's almost like you can hear the pain in this statement. Dally is reminiscing his hard past, wishing Johnny could be cold like he used to be so he wouldn't have gotten hurt. While talking about having no compassion, Dally displays it himself. This is apparent even more when Dally breaks down in the hospital after Johnny's death.

It seems as if Dally knew being compassionate brings pain and sacrifice. But, as songwriter and music producer, Amy Grant says, "But my experience is that people who have been through painful, difficult times are filled with compassion." Dally was put through some tough stuff and came out of all the mess with a caring attitude, even though he wasn't like that at the beginning of the book. His contribution to the story really tells the readers of The Outsiders a lesson on forgetting selfishness and embracing compassion for those in need. We, as humans, can take this beautiful example of kindness and apply to our own lives. Helping others is a part of human nature and it needs to become more common in this society. Little by little, we can continue to improve humanity by teaching ourselves compassion, just like Dally did throughout this novel. Who knows, one act of kindness could change someone's future and eventually, the world.

Isabel Wilson
First Place, Grade 8

"But my experience is that people who have been through painful, difficult times are filled with compassion." Compassion is a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for other people's suffering or bad luck and a desire to help. People who show compassion show sympathy and concern for other people because of the things that they have faced personally, such as the loss of a loved one or receiving bad news. The novel called The Outsiders is about a group of young men and boys who suffer through many hardships and have to stick together through thick and thin. One of the boys is named Sodapop Curtis, and he faces many challenges throughout the book which lead to him being compassionate towards his brothers and best friends. Sodapop went through many difficulties, but he handled them well and put others' needs first, even though the hurt in his own life. In the very beginning of the story, it talks about how Sodapop, Ponyboy, and Darry lost their parents in a car crash. Soda ended up getting a job and trying to help support their family along with Darry because it was just the boys now and their parents were not there to help. A little further into the book, it talks about how Soda had a girlfriend named Sandy, and they were very serious to the point that he was going to propose to her. Out of nowhere, it says that Soda was upset because Sandy had moved away and didn't care to have a relationship with him anymore, which broke his heart. At the end of the book, Soda had

had enough of Ponyboy and Darry bickering. Soda expressed his feelings to his brothers, and they all agreed that the fighting was something they would try to do less of.

In this book, Sodapop shows a lot of compassion towards his brothers and his friends. Throughout the whole novel, Soda was always looking out for his younger brother, Ponyboy. Even if Sodapop was having a bad day, he was always there for his brothers no matter the circumstances. As I said before, after Soda's parents died, he felt dumb and thought it was best for him to drop out of school and work to help support his brothers. In the novel, when Johnny died, Soda showed a huge act of compassion for Ponyboy by comforting him and helping him through it, even though Soda was hurting as well.

Compassion is a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for other people's suffering or bad luck and a desire to help. The challenges that Sodapop faced are things that no one would ever want, and they are heart-wrenching stories to think about. The hardships he faced included the death of multiple loved ones and a broken heart from the girl he was planning on marrying. He also had to listen to all the arguments between his brothers, which ended well when he confessed that he could not take it anymore. Throughout the whole novel, Sodapop was always compassionate and cared for others more than himself. He put others first, and that's a very important part of being compassionate. Sodapop was loving and helped his brother, Ponyboy, after the death of Johnny when Soda needed comfort as well. "But my experience is that people who have been through painful, difficult times are filled with compassion." – Amy Grant

Elizabeth Barunecker
Second Place, Grade 8

Have you ever had that one friend that stood by your side no matter what? The one friend who helped you through all your troubles and made everything seem just fine? Someone who was kind, loving and caring all in one? A person who showed compassion to you. Everyone has that one friend. We should all try to be that friend for someone. Be the one to have heart and to be kind. In the book The Outsiders, a character named Johnny Cade was that friend. We could learn from him to be better people. In the beginning of the book he showed compassion when he cared for his friends even though he had problems at home. In the end when tragedy struck in the most horrible way possible Johnny still showed compassion.

Johnny Cade cared for his friends and he put them before himself. Johnny was being abused at home by his parents. No matter his problems he cared for other people when it was needed. One example was when Ponyboy was being attacked by some older kids. Johnny stood up and defended Ponyboy. This led to more difficulties for Johnny as the attacker was killed. Johnny had to go on the run. Johnny showed that he loved his friend and would put him first, he helped despite the hardship it brought from himself.

During the story Johnny was on the run for killing the person who attacked him. His friend Ponyboy was with him they were hiding in an old church. One day they left the church come back to find the old church was on fire and that children were trapped inside. Johnny risked his

life to go and save kids trapped in the fire. He didn't even hesitate. Through this action he showed great compassion.

Johnny really risked his life by doing a brave, heroic action. Saving the children put him in the hospital. While in the process of slowly dying Ponyboy visited Johnny. Johnny knew that he was dying. In his last minutes of life Johnny's last words to Ponyboy was "Stay Gold Ponyboy. Stay Gold." (page 148). After all his troubles Johnny showed Compassion till his final breath. Johnny had problems in his personal life but never let that get to him. He stayed kind and caring and still had a heart. Johnny made everything seem alright with his compassion.

From Johnny we can learn to be a good friend. We can learn what how to be compassionate. We should all try to be more like Johnny and be there for others even if we have our own difficulties. On a bad day would you show kindness to others? Are you the friend that everyone else can rely on?

Jessica Akyea
Third Place, Grade 8



Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12

Compassion is defined as “a deep feeling for and understanding of others without regard to race, age, creed, or social standing. This includes kindness, generosity, forgiveness, caring, friendship, love and sharing toward all people, including the physically and mentally disabled” (SSD). In “Of Mice and Men” by John Steinbeck, George and Lennie are migrant workers who stick together. George shows compassion to Lennie by caring for him throughout the novel, getting them through every problem they face. When they begin to work on a ranch for a fresh start, they start to see that those different from “the norm” are treated poorly and are alienated from others. This caused characters to be bitter towards those who made them feel this way. The characters in OMAM are shown to be less compassionate because they are prejudiced and lonely.

Several characters in the novel are shown to possess little to no compassion because they discriminate against minorities. When Crooks, Candy and Lennie are talking in Crooks’ room, Curley’s wife comes in. When Crooks confronts her, he is quickly shot down and threatened. She says, “well, you keep your place then, n*gger. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy” (Steinbeck 81). This is not an act of compassion because Curley’s wife was not kind or caring towards Crooks. In fact, this was actually an act of hatred towards Crooks because he is black. According to “The Compassionate Mind,” “human suffering is often accompanied by beautiful acts of compassion by others wishing to help relieve it” (Seppala). Typically when people see others suffering, the most common reaction is to be compassionate and kind to them. If more characters had shown compassion towards Crooks, the internal bitterness and life of loneliness wouldn’t have evolved. Generally speaking, being prejudiced plays a key part as to why these characters don’t show compassion to those who aren’t like them, as well as why these minorities are often alone.

Another reason why characters in “Of Mice and Men” are more hostile than compassionate is because they are lonely. When Curley’s wife is talking to Lennie towards the end of the novel, readers learn that she is not content with her life because she did not get to live the life she wanted. She says, “I tell you I ain’t used to livin’ like this. I coulda made somethin’ of myself” (Steinbeck 88). She is also lonely because Curley doesn’t pay attention to her. This unhappy lifestyle that Curley’s wife endured helps suggest that she hangs around the men on the ranch in order to feel less lonely and receive the attention that Curley does not give her. In addition, “The Compassionate Mind” also explains that “social connectedness generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical health” and that “low social connection has been generally associated with declines in physical and psychological health as well as a higher propensity for antisocial behavior that leads to further isolation” (Seppala). If Crooks had a more positive relationship with the other men on the ranch, his social well-being would be more well-developed, and he wouldn’t be isolated from everyone else on the ranch. Also, if Curley’s wife had more social interaction with Curley and the other men on the ranch, she would not have been so lonely and would have been more kind and compassionate. Given these points, people that live unhappy lives often become bitter and alone as time passes. This ultimately causes them to show a lack of compassion towards others.

While most characters are hard-hearted, there were moments where compassion was the driving force of acts within some characters. Readers learn from the novel that Slim is a compassionate character because he tries to keep George and Lennie from being fired. In the story, after the fight between Curley and Lennie, Slim tells Curley, “If you don’t tell nobody what happened, we ain’t going to. But you jus’ tell an’ try to get this guy canned and we’ll tell ever’body, an’ then

you will get the laugh” (Steinbeck 64). Although it did keep Curley from trying to get George and Lennie fired, Slim did not make any drastic changes to the conflicts of the story, such as Curley’s hatred towards Lennie, confronting Curley about his decision to hurt Lennie, and Lennie being a burden to George. Another act of compassion was Candy’s attempt to stick up for Crooks when Curley’s wife threatens him. He says, “If you was to do that, we’d tell.” [...] “We’d tell about you fraudin’ Crooks.” (Steinbeck 81). This was very nice of him to do, considering the possibility that no one has done that for Crooks before. Unfortunately, he was quickly shot down as fast as he spoke up for Crooks. Therefore, everything Candy said became irrelevant. Overall, these few, minor acts of compassion did not have a significant impact on the actions and hearts of those in the story.

In other words, the characters in “Of Mice and Men” are clearly less compassionate than compassionate. The characters that were prejudiced, lonely and lived a joyless and unsatisfied lifestyle were consequently unable to be compassionate. If compassion was present more often throughout the story, some of the characters wouldn’t have ended up the way they did, such as Crooks being isolated on the ranch because he was black. While there were times when compassion was demonstrated, it was never enough to ultimately change the unhappiness among the majority of the characters.

Corey Lacey
First Place, Grade 9

Stabbing a friend in the back could be more compassionate than it is wrong in certain circumstances. Compassion is not only the emotional response to one's feelings, but also the desire to help. Compassion is defined as a deep feeling for or understanding of others disregarding their race, sex, social standing, etc. including kindness, generosity, forgiveness, caring, friendship, love and sharing toward all people even the physically and mentally disabled. According to the article *The Compassionate Mind* “compassion is a natural and automatic response that has ensured our survival” (Seppala 1). In the novella *Of Mice and Men* George Milton is a character that shows a great amount of compassion towards others through the way he cares for Lennie and by allowing fellow migrant workers such as Candy to join in on their dream of living “off the fatta’ the lan’.”

George shows compassion by taking care of Lennie throughout the story in various ways, including by showing him kindness, love, and friendship. George protects, defends, and understands Lennie. He knows and understands Lennie's condition. He knows if anyone finds out about Lennie's condition, Lennie would be treated wrong and separated, so he protected him. According to the novel *Of Mice and Men*, “George broke in loudly ‘Oh! I ain’t saying he’s bright. He ain’t. But I say he's a goddamn good worker. He can put a four hundred pound bale” (Steinbeck 22). This quotation from the novel shows exactly how George defends Lennie so he wouldn't speak and draw attention to his disability. George understood they would send him away and treat him badly if they found out he was disabled; George tried to prevent that.

George also demonstrates compassion when he allowed Candy to join in their dream. George and Lennie had an American Dream. In their dream, they would purchase their own ranch and

live “off the fatta’ the lan””. George let Candy be a part of their dream. According to the novel *Of Mice and Men*, “you (Candy) and Lennie could get her started an’ I’d get a job ‘n make up the res’ an’ you could sell eggs an’ stuff like that ... Jesus Christ! I bet we could swing her” (Steinbeck 60). This quotation from the novel shows how after George let Candy join, he got excited at the thought of actually getting their dream. George shared the dream with Candy. This also caused a chain reaction of happiness. Later, the dream was introduced to the African-American in the bunkhouse, Crooks, and he was happy he would no longer be lonely. According to *The Compassionate Mind*, “Happiness spreads, and if the people around us are happy, we in turn become happy” (Seppala 4). They were all happy to be a part of the dream George shared, demonstrating that he was being compassionate in doing so.

One might argue that George lacked compassion when he made the decision to shoot Lennie at the end of the novel, which is not true. That decision was actually one of ultimate kindness and compassion. The bunkhouse men were going to kill Lennie regardless. The bunkhouse men just wanted the death to be long and painful. George killed Lennie so he wouldn’t have to suffer. In the novel, George gets Carlson’s gun and finds Lennie, but before he shoots him he told him, “No, Lennie. I ain’t mad. I never been mad, an’ I ain’t now. That’s a thing I want ya to know.”(Steinbeck 106). George understood that Lennie didn’t do things on purpose or to be mean. He didn’t deserve to suffer, so George made the death quick and painless. The other bunkhouse men thought Lennie killed Curley’s wife to get to Curley, they wanted him to suffer the consequences. But not George, George got to Lennie first to kill him quickly.

In the novella *Of Mice and Men*, George Milton is a character that shows a great amount of compassion towards the other characters in the story. George did a lot of brave things throughout the story, more for someone else than for himself. George was understanding and did things for others, making him compassionate. According to the article *The Compassionate Mind*, “when you do something for someone else, the state of self-focus shifts to a state of other-focus” (Seppala 3). George worked for others more than himself. He was not lonely or depressed when he was working towards his and Lennie’s dream. Now that Lennie is gone, the dream Lennie and George originally planned together will no longer feel the same. George lost his friend and will no longer feel the same. The significance in this topic revolves around the fact that humans need friends to survive. According to the article *The Compassionate Mind*, “strong social connection leads to a 50 percent increased chance of longevity.” This explains that strong connection such as, kindness, friendship and caring help increase our life spans. For example, Curley’s wife was a character feeling lonely, which led her to do things for attention and she started conflicts amongst the other characters. She was not showing any kindness, friendship, or care to other characters; the outcome was she didn’t live a long life. On the other hand, George showed kindness, friendship, and care to others the outcome is he lived a longer life than Curley’s wife.

Anaysia Lee-Burton
Second Place, Grade 9

Compassion is defined as “a deep feeling for and the understanding of others without regard to race, age, creed, or social standing. This includes kindness, generosity, forgiveness, caring, friendship, love and sharing toward all people, including the physically and mentally disabled”

(SSD). The novel "Of Mice and Men" takes place in Soledad, California and revolves around two migrant workers named Lennie and George who travel together. Due to Lennie's mental disability, George takes care of him and keeps him out of trouble during their travels. During the majority of the story, when working with the other workers on the ranch, the characters in "Of Mice and Men" lacked compassion because of selfishness and being prejudiced toward others.

Several of the characters in the novel show little compassion because of their selfishness toward others. For instance, Candy and his dog parallel the relationship of George and Lennie because Candy's dog is a loving companion that he takes care of, just like how George cares for Lennie. Carlson, being insensitive, suggests that the dog be put out of his misery due to his old age and because he stinks. With much hesitation, Candy finally gives in and entrusts the task to Carlson. The fact that Carlson even suggests to kill Candy's dog shows that he gives little thought as to how lonely and hurt Candy would be by the dog's death (Steinbeck 61). Secondly, Curley displays selfishness by treating his wife as his property by not letting her interact with the other ranch workers (Steinbeck 31). This shows that Curley is selfish because he shows little to no interest in how his wife feels. Because of the selfishness that the characters displayed, this leads to a lack of compassion because the feeling of others are neglected to even be acknowledged. Whether it was treating someone else as property, or suggesting an insensitive act, the characters showed no regard toward others' feelings. Also, according to "The Compassionate Mind," Seppala states, "Depression and anxiety are linked to a state of self-focus, a preoccupation with 'me, myself, and I'" (Seppala). This quote explains that people that display the type of behaviors such as self-focus and a selfish preoccupation, are more prone to anxiety and depression. This applies to many of the characters that made selfish decisions in the novel.

The characters in "Of Mice and Men" also lacked compassion because of their discrimination toward minorities. When Curley's wife invaded the conversation between Lennie, Candy and Crooks in Crooks' room, she was asked to leave. Curley's wife retorted by saying, "Well, you keep your place then, n*gger. I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny" (Steinbeck 81). Curley's wife used Crooks' race against him in order to get what she wanted and to keep him from telling on her. While she did this, Crooks' feelings were never once taken into consideration. According to the article, "Empathy...is the visceral or emotional experience of another person's feeling (Seppala). Where was the empathy for Crooks? Simply put, there was none.

However, some characters in the novel actually are compassionate. For instance, going back to the scenario including Candy, Crooks, Lennie, and Curley's wife, Candy actually tried to stick up for Crooks briefly by saying, "We'd tell about you framin' Crooks" (Steinbeck 81). This would have been an excellent example of compassion, but the compassion displayed was quickly dismissed when Curley's wife reminded him that nobody would believe him. As quickly as compassion was shown, it was taken away before it could actually have an effect. Secondly, in the novel, Lennie had a conversation with Curley's wife where she told him how lonely her life was on the ranch. Originally, the reader assumed that Lennie showed compassion because Curley's wife opened up to him and talked about her personal problems, all while he listened. However, the whole time Curley's wife talked about her predicament, all Lennie could think about was his future rabbits. Though there were a few times that a character, or characters, showed compassion toward others, overall the characters were still racist and prejudiced. Even if

the characters made a nice act here or there, it ultimately didn't make much of a difference on the ranch.

In conclusion, there were many characters that cared little about others' feelings and instead displayed acts of selfishness and prejudice. If there was a mental scale comparing the compassionate acts vs. the non-compassionate acts, it would be obvious that the non-compassionate acts outweigh the others. Even though there were a few times that compassion was shown, it either was not taken into consideration, or it simply made the situation worse. With that being said, the characters in "Of Mice and Men" were selfish and discriminated against others, not caring about their feelings, causing a severe lack of compassion in this novel.

Derrick Bivings
Third Place, Grade 9

The ability to bring different people together to work toward a common goal is the mark of a good leader. While rigidity and authoritarianism are common practices in the workplace, research shows compassion is a far more effective leadership style. Compassion, defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as "the sympathetic consciousness of others distress along with the desire to fix it," is often viewed as a weakness in leadership, however leaders who are kind and compassionate have workers who are productive and loyal to their jobs.

A consistent attitude of compassion as opposed to the abrasiveness seen in today's work setting results in higher productivity. This is because there is less stress, which inhibits productivity. As stated in an article titled, "Why We Need More Empathetic and Compassionate Leaders," by Ray Williams: "When the expression of empathy is part of a company's culture, its stress level will be lower. All of these advantages lead to a more committed workforce with a greater motivation to perform beyond expectations." When leaders change how they interact with others, they effectively change the atmosphere and culture of the work place they are in. Failure to do so results in an increase of the stress present in a work environment, which negatively impacts employees' productivity. Dr. James Doty, a neurosurgeon from Stanford University explains the science in the article, "Why Compassion Is a Better Managerial Tactic than Toughness" by Emma Seppala, "Creating an environment where there is fear, anxiety and lack of trust makes people shut down. If people have fear and anxiety, we know from neuroscience that their threat response is engaged, their cognitive control is impacted. As a consequence, their productivity and creativity diminish." The way people feel in a workplace greatly affects the quality of their work. Creating an atmosphere of compassion and kindness is an effective and tangible way to increase quality work productivity.

Compassionate leaders have loyal employees who stay in their jobs because they share positive connections with their boss. According to Seppala, "A study by Jonathan Haidt of New York University shows that the more employees look up to their leaders and are moved by their compassion or kindness (a state he terms elevation), the more loyal they become to him or her." When a leader chooses to reach out in kindness, they create a sort of connection that allows employees to trust them and better unite with the purpose of the company in which they work. This gives each worker a sense of purpose and inspires them to work with more dedication.

Companies with compassionate bosses have more productive and faithful employees. They are able to work in an environment where they are respected, and are able to better connect with the cause of the company. Leaders have the ability to make a significant impact in the lives of people they work with. When they make the choice to lead with compassion they leave lasting legacies that go far beyond office doors.

Sarah Charles
First Place, Grade 10

Compassion is one of the most important and crucial human traits. It unites people, making everyone stronger, especially in the workplace. As a leader, compassion is one of the best tools to better a community. Showing compassion is a way to gain respect and loyalty from employees or civilians. This creates a safe and happy environment that will improve productivity and encourage them to show compassion as well. When someone in a position of power shows compassion to their employees, they invite their employees to confide in them and take creative risks. This can result in unique ideas that improve work in the community.

Having a position of power can make someone seem intimidating, especially when their reputation relies on their employees' work. Showing compassion means being kind and level headed when people make mistakes and using these mistakes to teach a lesson. Many leaders choose to let their anger get the best of them, causing tension and stress in the environment. Yet, showing compassion can help you form bonds with people, earning their loyalty and respect. The article, "Why Compassion Is a Better Managerial Tactic than Toughness", shows that, "feelings of warmth and positive relationships at work have a greater say over employee loyalty than the size of their paycheck," (Seppala). Employees and civilians who look up to their leaders strive to be more like them, so if leaders are showing compassion, so will others.

Another huge impact of demonstrating compassion is creating a safe and happy environment. Not only will leaders get more loyalty and respect, but they also form friendships with their employees. Having a community of support in a workplace is one of the most important things for each person, including the people in positions of power. This makes all employees feel safe and calm, letting them be productive and helpful to each other. Emma Seppala writes "brain imaging studies show that, when we feel safe, our brain's stress response is lower," (Seppala). When employers are kind to their employees, especially when the employees are stressed, it can calm them down and make them happier and better at their jobs.

Discipline has been used to correct the mistakes of workers for years, and some say this is the best way to keep employees in line. Yet, while this teaches individuals to learn from their mistakes, it also scares them and prevents them from taking risks and being creative in the future. Compassion makes employees feel open, and when they aren't afraid to make mistakes, they take risks and make unique, creative choices. These choices could benefit the leader and their work. So many people decide not to follow up on their amazing ideas because they fear severe repercussions from their bosses. Compassion from leaders will benefit the entire team because it encourages creativity that will result in great learning experiences.

Compassion is contagious, and leaders have the ability to spread this kindness and positivity to affect many people. Not only is this a smart tool for leaders to use to improve their work, but it's also their responsibility to be good role models and show compassion. Showing compassion can earn leader respect and loyalty from their employees. It also creates a happy and safe environment for everyone. It can improve productivity and shows the leader's support for unique and innovative ideas from employees. Compassion brings people together to support and better each other, without it leaders would not be able to improve anything.

Francesca Crumpton
Second Place, Grade 10

When describing an ideal leader, people tend to shy away from descriptions akin to compassion, as it brings up an image of someone who is weak or lacks the ability to lead, qualities that are typically not desired. Yet leaders who demonstrate compassion are often more successful than those who do not; they are able to garner respect from their peers and maintain it. Many people, current and future leaders included, fail to realize that compassion is not a weakness but rather a strength that is extremely beneficial, not only to themselves but to everyone around them. To improve society's future, prospective leaders need to learn to embrace compassion rather than shun it.

Compassionate leaders are able to gain an invaluable trait from those whom they lead, a trait that every leader strives to obtain, loyalty. When a leader becomes too harsh in their means of discipline, their employees or peers, may become wary of putting their complete trust into their leader, therefore becoming less loyal. On the other hand, compassionate leaders are much more successful in creating and maintaining loyalty among their employees simply because they treat others in a caring way which results in a stronger bond between leader and employee. Emma Seppala explains a study which proves this, in the article "Why Compassion Is a Better Managerial Tactic Than Toughness": "In particular, a study by Jonathan Haidt of New York University shows that the more employees look up to their leaders and are moved by their compassion or kindness (a state he terms *elevation*), the more loyal they become to him or her." Yet the common notion that a compassionate leader is weak, and an iron-fisted leader is strong, continues to stick around. The thought that harsh discipline makes it less likely for an employee to replicate their mistake in the future is what steers leaders away from compassionate guidance. But that negative response is more destructive to an employee rather than beneficial: "Not only does an angry response erode loyalty and trust, it also inhibits creativity by jacking up the employee's stress levels," (Seppala). Loyalty is highly beneficial to a leader as they will have employees that will follow them, through thick and thin, and a leader is nothing without those who they are guiding.

The future of society is uncertain; all that is set in stone is that leaders will be the ones who guide the course of history. It is an internal choice for every leader to make: whether to lead with compassion or harsh discipline. While loyalty and trust are much more easily garnered when a leader is compassionate and understanding, these traits are slowly eroded over time when a leader becomes harsh. It could become possible to create compassionate leaders in the future by

realizing that compassionate, as a description, does not equate to weak, but rather expresses a quality of the some of the strongest people.

Skylar Hass
Third Place, Grade 10

Many tend to state that “money makes the world go round,” but this is a logical fallacy, just as “money can buy happiness”. What truly keeps the world going positively is compassion: A deep feeling for others without regard for race, age, creed, or social standing. This includes forgiveness, caring, love, etc. With about 7.5 billion people on this planet, nothing can be achieved without compassion. In today’s society it’s vital to alleviate the suffering and to help those in need. Compassion ranges from as little as helping elderly cross the street, to donating toys to your local toy drive for kids on Christmas. You never know what someone is going through no matter what kind of expression appears on their face. This is why compassion is more than a noun. It’s more than just a core value. To me, compassion is like an everyday accessory that I wear on my sleeve daily. As a future leader in society, demonstrating compassion is a necessity for the benefit of our future for helping those in need and making a difference in others’ lives where it counts.

As the world continues to grow in hatred with wars and terrorism, the societal need for compassion is growing on a daily basis. On the night of Sunday October 1st, 2017 a gunman opened fire at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival in Las Vegas, Nevada injuring over 500 people and killing 58. A truly heartbreaking night for the country and those families who were affected. As gunshots were fired, many ran, but few stayed. Strong individuals were volunteering and stepping forward to help others in human shielding, escape rides, and exit routes. As helping others should be a normal instinct, in this case it’s not always someone’s first reaction to protect another person in terms of life or death. This is where the most heroic people come into play, their compassion and generosity soar above all the hate and negativity. For example: Johnathan Smith, 30, saved 30 people before shot in the neck. As he recovered, he realized he may live with the bullet for the rest of his life. These sacrifices have huge impacts on others’ lives and that’s how compassion should be spread. Without it, the world won’t go around with positivity. This is where it counts making a difference in others’ lives even if it means risking your own.

Moving forward, as the gunshots continued many ran, but didn’t know which way to go due to the echoes of the bullets being fired. First responders, police officers and security guards were all among those rushing in to help. They directed people, drove their own vehicles as ambulances, and piled many into small cars to help those in need escape the tragic scene. One security guard was shot in the leg outside the suspect’s hotel room before the police breached the hotel room. This heroic figure in society also stepped in to protect others, risking his/her own life in the process through compassion. Many don’t see the importance and value of compassion, but who would there be to depend on if certain volunteers didn’t step up and help? Then what would be left? Law enforcers or not, anyone that protected another person displayed compassion and will forever be known as a hero from that night on. Many lives were lost, but through hard work and

compassion many lives were saved and it couldn't have been done if leaders in our society weren't there to help. Their generosity is forever appreciated.

Compassion is a way of life. Whether we take kindness for granted, we must spread love and understanding to others who need it the most. As we remember the 58 lives lost the night of October 1st, we honor the heroes and continue to spread the same kind of compassion they did to save lives. Helping those in need is a vital step in life that shouldn't be missed. Even if it's not as big as saving a life, someone will remember it for the rest of their life and be encouraged to do the same for someone else. This is the compassion chain. You spread kindness and it keeps going. Again, compassion is a necessity for the world. To make a difference in others' lives and to help those struggling, compassion is needed and this is why it makes the world go around.

Kayla Saracoglu
First Place, Grade 11

Compassion is a feeling of deep empathy for those in strife and a strong inclination to aid those in need. Compassion is a crucial core value to the Smyrna school district and all of humanity. Compassion has inspired people, united people, and has even saved lives. The importance of compassion can be exhibited through the men and women who convey compassion and are defined as heroes by many. Some of the most influential people in history highly value compassion and compassion is the core of some of the most significant campaigns in the history of our race.

In 2017 alone there were countless natural disasters, terror attacks and atrocities that required the aid of compassionate people. During the multiple hurricanes that struck the United States, Caribbean, and Central America countless men and women aided. They saved the lives of those stuck in the rubble, brought food and shelter to those left homeless, and comforted those who had lost everything. Without compassion their lives would not have been saved, and they would have no consolation. After attacks of terror orchestrated by people who lack of any compassion, the victims were aided and comforted by first responders with a surplus of compassion.

Some of history's most influential figures have stressed the eminence of compassion. Albert Einstein, one of sciences greatest minds, once stated; "Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature and its beauty". Albert Einstein is not alone in his beliefs. Nelson Mandela, John Lennon, the Dalai Lama who is the leader of the Tibetan Monks which are some of the most peaceful people on earth, as well as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. all strongly advocated the insurmountable importance that compassion has to the human race.

When Jesus Christ performed the undeniable miracles that saved many and rose from the dead to attenuate the sins of humanity and proclaim the word of God, compassion was in his heart. When Dr. King marched through D.C. to advocate for equality, his heart was full of compassion, as was the hearts of all of his fellow advocates for equal rights. When countless men gave their lives to free a suffering people under the control of the Nazi regime, compassion was within

them. Compassion catalyzed some the greatest efforts in human history. Efforts of which the after effects are still felt and cherished to this day.

Compassion is the reason humanity as we know it exists today. Compassion is the reason lives are saved and the needy are aided. Compassion is the reason our community is so tightly knit, and composed of people willing to sacrifice for each other. Compassion is the reason I love Smyrna School District.

Paolo Pesce
Second Place, Grade 11

By societal definition, compassion is defined as a person who helps others in need when life has struck them down and they don't know if they can get back up. Today's society is a lot more different than it was twenty years ago. The economy isn't at its best, the government had shut down for the first time since 2013, the planet is undergoing many peculiar changes; many changes are occurring in the world. The world could always use a little more kindness and help to make a change for the better. However, if one looks a little closer at the big picture, they will see that it's not just the world that needs help, but the people in it. Small changes can have the biggest impacts.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Our human compassion binds us the one to the other-not pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future." Mandela implies that we can all help others get through tough times by relating to them. Most people feel that they are misunderstood and no one could possibly ever understand what they are going through. They just need that one person to show them they have been through the same thing and that they are still standing. It is possible to get through it. That's exactly what compassion is; letting others know that they are not alone.

I remember when my Poppy-grandfather passed away when I was in eighth grade. My mom pulled me out of school during gym class which was last period and I walked out to see her coming up to me and my Omi-grandmother in the car with tear stained cheeks. I didn't know what was happening, then my mom told me that my Poppy-her father- had just passed that day. I was devastated, how can something so scary and seemingly unprecedented to me happen in one day, in such a short amount of time. I was close with my Poppy and so was my mom, aunt, and uncle. I didn't understand why it had to happen to us, and most of all, to my mom and Omi. It brought many changes to our life. We could no longer visit the beach house he owned where we had made so many memories at every summer, my uncle had to fill in a big role to run the family machine shop, my mom no longer had a photographer pal to help her edit pictures and look at new places to take pictures. She didn't have her dad to share everything with anymore, and that broke my heart more than ever. My Omi had to adjust to being on her own too. And I no longer had someone to help me with my math problems, to tease me that my face is breaking out when it isn't, to pick me up after school, or to just hang out with.

The pain I felt was nothing like I had ever felt before in my life. I felt like no one would understand how I felt. But then I realized that talking helped, talking with my friends about it

helped a lot. And I never realized that a lot of them had gone through the same thing too. They told me that it was hard and that at that point in time, it seems like it's an impossible hurdle to jump over. But then my friends told me that we shouldn't forget about my Poppy, but remember him as he was: funny, caring, smart, witty, determined, hard worker, and creative. But we shouldn't keep wallowing because that would make it worse and he wouldn't want us to live like that. One of my best friends told me that he would want us to live our lives to the fullest because tomorrow isn't promised. Even through one of the hardest times, my best friend understood what I was going through and knew exactly what to say. That, I believe, is when I think I fully understood what the word compassion meant.

Katelynn Porter
Third Place, Grade 11

Compassion is a solution for many of the world's problems. Its importance cannot be overstated. Yet world leaders and government agencies fail to realize this. Governments are often guilty of devising complex, intricate policies that don't work as expected. But some of the most effective solutions to the global crises are actually quite simple. Such plans are uncomplicated in their appearance and straightforward in their execution. Yet the results they produce are far more appealing than complicated, technical solutions devised by many governments. These simple plans share one important characteristic that makes them effective: compassion. Whenever kindness and empathy for other human beings is the answer to troubling problems around the world, the best outcome is always achieved. Throughout the world, many examples of compassionate solutions to global crises have demonstrated the power of kindness, and world leaders should take note of this. Although complicated social and economic policies are the most common solutions to global issues, compassion is the main force that will alleviate the suffering of people around the world.

In Syria, where a 6 year civil war has left almost half a million dead, one of the biggest problems is deciding what to do with the Syrians who hope to escape the violent conflict. The ongoing violence has displaced millions of Syrians, creating the largest refugee crisis since World War 2. In an attempt to stem the flow of refugees from the country, the United Nations has continued to sponsor peace talks between the belligerents who have caused the conflict. But such talks continue to fail, leaving millions of Syrians without a safe place to live. However, some countries have taken these refugees in with open arms. Rather than waiting for convoluted peace talks to produce a meaningful solution, countries like Turkey and Lebanon have realized the power of compassion. Although they might have refused to accept such refugees and hoped for a solution to work itself out, Turkey and Lebanon instead provided displaced Syrians with a safe place to live. Where peace talks have failed, kindness has not. Turkey and Lebanon continue to set up refugee camps and provide Syrians with opportunities for moving on with their lives. Just beyond the borders of Syria, compassion has helped alleviate the pains of millions of people.

Poverty is a perennial struggle in the United States. According to the census bureau, 45 million people are considered to be living below the poverty line. In the most extreme cases, 500,000 of them are homeless. And all too often, government efforts to alleviate poverty boil down to arguments over welfare and government spending. While elected officials argue over the best

way to eliminate poverty, other groups like the Salvation Army and the Poverty Eradication Program have employed compassionate measures to help those in need. Such organizations provide shelter, meal assistance, and employment assistance to those living in poverty. Because of the kindness exhibited by the volunteers and leaders of these organizations, impoverished citizens have a place to turn to when they need help.

For some, the most pressing issues of today are unsolvable without carefully calculated and elaborate policies. But more often than not, such policies are riddled with problems and are ineffective in dealing with the crises they seek to solve. Where these policies fail however, compassion and kindness succeed. Despite being an uncomplicated solution, compassion is a powerful force in solving global problems. Showing compassion to others is a surprisingly simple way of alleviating the suffering of people across the globe.

Alec Shalk
First Place, Grade 12

The concept of compassion closely relates to empathy. Within the Down Syndrome community, families of those with the disorder actively show compassion to support each other. This empathic behavior can be shown emotionally or through coming together in efforts to raise awareness for the disorder, which may also be done by those who do not personally know an individual with the disorder. Recently, I have become more involved within this aspect of compassion through participating in such events and getting to know families affected by Down Syndrome. Becoming more active within the Down Syndrome community has revealed a new level of compassion in my life.

About a year ago, my little sister Riley was born two months premature with Down Syndrome. Due to this disorder, she encountered multiple health issues that caused her, along with my mom and step-dad, to spend the first three months of her life in A.I. DuPont, a children's hospital. This was a very emotional time for my parents; they had to cope with seeing Riley's health fluctuate for months, hoping that it would improve quickly so they could bring her home.

Since my parents practically lived in the hospital for this period of time, they got to know many other couples going through similar situations. As they got to know these individuals, they exchanged stories and became close, providing each other with emotional support. Although not all of these parents had children with Down Syndrome, they were all going through similar situations, so they were able to empathize with the situation of my parents. Through creating a support system based on empathy, these individuals showed compassion towards each other.

The National Down Syndrome Society hosts events in which people come together to support those with the disorder. One event that my family and I recently participated in is called the Buddy Walk; the Buddy Walk is "a one-mile walk to promote the understanding, inclusion and acceptance of people with Down Syndrome," (NDSS). At this event, we were able to meet and interact with individuals with the disorder and their families. Along with this, we raised money through receiving donations from friends and family that go towards keeping the National Down Syndrome Society, a non-profit organization, functioning. This organization is important,

especially to those affected by Down Syndrome, because it is the “leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down Syndrome,” (NDSS). Through attending, supporting, and donating towards such events, individuals show compassion towards those affected by the disorder.

Through getting to know those affected by Down Syndrome and becoming more involved within the Down Syndrome community, I have gained a new perception on compassion. Those who are a part of the Down Syndrome community are able to empathize with each other, which allows them to form an emotional support system for themselves. This is often beneficial for coping with the obstacles experienced by these families, such as my own. Along with this, many individuals within this community support the non-profit organization that is known for Down Syndrome advocacy, which shows that they support the rights of those with the disorder. The support and empathy that is displayed by those within the Down Syndrome community exhibits the very essence of what it means to show compassion.

Erin Currie
Second Place, Grade 12

According to the Huffington Post, in the United States alone, there has already been eleven school shootings that took place in January of 2018 (Frej). All around the globe, natural disasters are wiping away cities and states to piles of mere nothingness. Hurricane Harvey and Irma devastated much of the lower portion of the United States, in addition to Mexico and other countries that were in the paths of these relentless forces. A recent earthquake in Alaska caused mass hysteria when a tsunami warning was put into place. With countless other tragedies that occur throughout the world, it is hard to imagine how humans cope with the threats that they endure on a daily basis. However, the solution to overcoming these dangers is simple. Anytime disaster strikes, humans always display compassion, no matter the circumstances. Compassion is prepared to meet others wherever they are, no matter their troubles. In today’s time of war and misfortune, there has been countless experiences that have shown the true meaning of compassion and how one person can make a great impact on the lives of others.

The day was September 8th, 2017, and the small community of Smyrna, Delaware was buzzing with excitement. It was the very first football game of the season- the state championship rematch between Smyrna High School and Middletown High School, also known as the “Harvest Bowl.” But a seemingly dismal atmosphere filled the air. While everyone was gathering around and enjoying themselves, Hurricane Harvey had just ended five days ago, and completely devastated parts of Texas and other states. As citizens in Delaware were gossiping about the opposing team and scrutinizing the referees, first responders and other volunteers were relentlessly operating search and rescue missions, all while attempting to distribute sparse amounts of food, medicine, and water. But, to many people’s surprise, these two communities who seemed to completely resent each other joined forces to create a drive called “Stuff the Bus!” A local organization, Cadia Healthcare Rehabilitation Broadmeadow, donated a bus to these communities to allow for volunteers from the Cecilton Fire Department of Maryland to drive it down to Texas with a bus full of supplies that range from pet food to human hygiene products. These products were asked to be donated during the Smyrna versus Middletown game

by those attending the game. As a member of the Smyrna community, it was astonishing to see how these schools came together in a time of need for a community that is thousands of miles away to aid in rebuilding their city and rescuing those who need it. Both of these two small towns were the epitome of displaying compassion and teamwork, despite their long-time rivalry. Both districts set aside their differences and came together to alleviate the suffering of citizens who had been going through one of the most traumatic experiences that they might ever endure and help to carry the burdens that the communities affected by Hurricane Harvey were encountering.

Every show and article of clothing that a child has when they are young contains either a superhero or a strong, courageous princess. Children grow up with the mindset that these superheroes and princesses are just parts of their imagination and completely fictional. Although flying superheroes and princesses becoming frogs are completely fictional, superheroes are not. Real-life superheroes are simply called First Responders. My father, Randy Potter, was once a volunteer firefighter in the Smyrna Fire Department. While the duties of a firefighter are always noble, my father had one experience in particular where he showed compassion that went beyond his normal call of duty. One night, a house was engulfed in flames and a family was trapped inside. Firefighters rushed into the house, where they attempted to rescue the children who had unfortunately inhaled too much smoke, and were pronounced dead on the scene. Their mother was still alive, but had severe burns, and an even more severely broken heart. Each and every firefighter that was there felt disappointed and sorrow. My dad then insisted that while they could not bring the woman's child back, there was more that they could do for her. The firefighters then worked together to find this woman a new home, a grievance counselor, and money for food and other supplies she may need to rebuild her life. My father's idea was a prominent example of going above and beyond the usual responsibilities that firefighters are expected to uphold and is one of many examples as to why he is a role model. His willingness to go above and beyond exhibits the true meaning of compassion that everyone should uphold.

With so many negative events happening, it is a comforting feeling to know that in times of need, citizens and individuals within a community will be willing to step in and make a change in someone's life by showing compassion. Whether the gesture is small-scale or a global movement, compassion is what keeps the world spinning. Everyone should strive to find a way to display compassion, even if it includes just helping a friend through a rough time. Without this vital value in place, the world would be a desolate place, filled with even more hate, crime, and overall dismal days.

Autumn Potter
Third Place, Grade 12

HONORABLE MENTION

CLAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Adelynn Ramsey | Kindergarten |
| Alexis Justice | Kindergarten |
| Emmalyn Messick | Kindergarten |
| Allison Bromberg | Kindergarten |
| Mia Arnold | Kindergarten |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Aiden McLaughlin | Grade 1 |
| Eric Warner | Grade 1 |
| McKenzie Boylan | Grade 1 |
| Peyton Downing | Grade 1 |
| Aubrey Burris | Grade 1 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Rowan Watras | Grade 2 |
| Samantha Mancini | Grade 2 |
| Shauna Fisher | Grade 2 |
| Zuri Blackwell | Grade 2 |
| Dayton Russum | Grade 2 |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Jaden Sullivan | Grade 3 |
| Makayla Lecates | Grade 3 |
| Gabriel Stevens | Grade 3 |
| Caleb Barnes | Grade 3 |
| Tyson "Avery" Fenderson | Grade 3 |

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Grace Holt | Grade 4 |
| Teddi August | Grade 4 |
| Madison McFarlin | Grade 4 |
| Elizabeth Hufschmidt | Grade 4 |
| Kylie VanHorn | Grade 4 |

NORTH SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Destina Karaman | Kindergarten |
| Teniyah Newson | Kindergarten |
| Bryce Carrow | Kindergarten |
| Olive Ash | Kindergarten |
| Lawren Geist | Kindergarten |

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Diamond Burroughs | Grade 1 |
| Colten Sturgis | Grade 1 |
| Nyla Stewart | Grade 1 |
| James Hiers | Grade 1 |
| Eli Baker | Grade 1 |

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Noah Hyde | Grade 2 |
| Khloe Humbertson | Grade 2 |
| Ashlynn Gillespie | Grade 2 |
| Sky Wilson | Grade 2 |
| Moses Blonner | Grade 2 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Donasia Fountain | Grade 3 |
| Maliah Hopkins | Grade 3 |
| Dominic Rosania | Grade 3 |
| Mairin Curran | Grade 3 |
| Jordell Leyva | Grade 3 |

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Keely Coleman | Grade 4 |
| Emily Painter | Grade 4 |
| Alyssa Spicer | Grade 4 |
| Reed Schultz | Grade 4 |
| Xavier Terrell | Grade 4 |
| Faith Gomez | Grade 4 |

SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Colt Collett | Kindergarten |
| Ella Harmon | Kindergarten |
| Justis Seeney | Kindergarten |
| Adam Morris | Kindergarten |
| Axel Coker | Kindergarten |

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Elijah Allcock | Grade 1 |
| Kylie Hopp | Grade 1 |
| Gabriel Carroll | Grade 1 |
| Summer McElrath | Grade 1 |
| Jordan Poole | Grade 1 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Shylah Bruce | Grade 2 |
| Liseth Morales | Grade 2 |
| Kaydee Jewell | Grade 2 |
| Tolbert Nyenswah | Grade 2 |
| Nia Prophete | Grade 2 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Myah Samonte-Schaffer | Grade 3 |
| Natalie Cote | Grade 3 |
| Griffin Klingmeyer | Grade 3 |
| | Grade 3 |
| | Grade 3 |

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Justin Akyea | Grade 4 |
| Amani Scott-Clemons | Grade 4 |
| McKayla Kirch | Grade 4 |
| Riley Murtha | Grade 4 |
| Samya Yarbrough | Grade 4 |

SUNNYSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------|
| Jaedon Wells | Kindergarten | Amaure Hendley | Grade 2 |
| Reese Fillo | Kindergarten | Corrine Crenshaw | Grade 2 |
| Thomas Dillman | Kindergarten | Ashlyn Robinson | Grade 2 |
| Ryan Brewer | Kindergarten | Simeon Brumbaugh | Grade 2 |
| Anari Griffin | Kindergarten | Alyssa Harris | Grade 2 |
| Lily Dixon | Grade 1 | Madelyn Margavage | Grade 3 |
| Jaycee-Jo Sadlowski | Grade 1 | Calley Carter | Grade 3 |
| Nikolas Clendaniel | Grade 1 | Mya Lopez | Grade 3 |
| Jake Tominovich | Grade 1 | Kelile Miro | Grade 3 |
| Gianna Harris | Grade 1 | Natalee Clendaniel | Grade 3 |
| | Andrew Jones | Grade 4 | |
| | Jonah Taylor | Grade 4 | |
| | Cameron Estrada | Grade 4 | |
| | Mia Ericksen | Grade 4 | |
| | Leanna Hess | Grade 4 | |

JBM INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Alexandria Clendaniel | Grade 5 |
| Emmani Corinthian | Grade 5 |
| Sherry Lin | Grade 5 |
| Alexander Gaynor | Grade 5 |
| Destiny Lloyd-Wheeler | Grade 5 |
| Ronald Jackson | Grade 6 |
| Victoria Hawkes | Grade 6 |
| Aleexi Beatrice | Grade 6 |
| Taliyah Jackson | Grade 6 |
| Olivia Sheppard | Grade 6 |

CLAYTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Richard Shimp | Grade 5 |
| Patrick Watts | Grade 5 |
| Olivia Rassoli | Grade 5 |
| Jake Countey | Grade 5 |
| Millie Skaggs | Grade 5 |
| Yasmina Gall | Grade 6 |
| Kendall Wiley | Grade 6 |
| Makhiah Canon-Peak | Grade 6 |
| Kate Grabowski | Grade 6 |
| Ju'wel Hopkins | Grade 6 |

SMYRNA MIDDLE SCHOOL

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Finn Cullin | Grade 7 |
| Christian Rosario | Grade 7 |
| Trinity Berry | Grade 7 |
| Savannah Mills | Grade 7 |
| Reese Nacrelli | Grade 7 |
| Pavel Tabor | Grade 8 |
| Autumn Springer | Grade 8 |
| Jessica Payton | Grade 8 |

SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| Skyla Fernandez-Gonzalez | Grade 9 | Tyler Yeomans | Grade 11 |
| Gianna Hannum | Grade 9 | Sara Miller | Grade 11 |
| Hannah Osborne | Grade 9 | Te'Quan Brooks | Grade 11 |
| Ondre'a Dudley | Grade 9 | Denis Torres Ruiz | Grade 11 |
| Kati Guzman | Grade 9 | Jasmine Jenkins | Grade 11 |
| | | | |
| Dominic Buszko | Grade 10 | Max Lattomus | Grade 12 |
| Ziymereth Seth-Trotter | Grade 10 | DaJae Grigsby-Buckner | Grade 12 |
| Cameron Mitchell | Grade 10 | Kathleen Coppage | Grade 12 |
| Jackson Reynolds | Grade 10 | Kaelyn Press | Grade 12 |
| Leila Sebastian | Grade 10 | Amber Norman | Grade 12 |