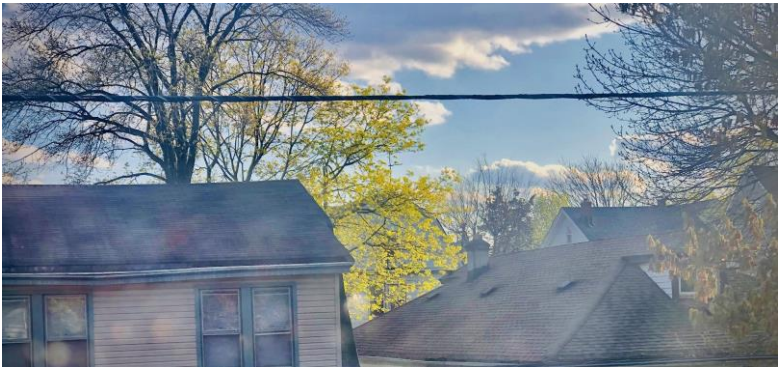


SCHOLAR VOICES

Summer 2020



The Calm While the Storm...

Photo taken while a number of incidents were occurring, not only in Newark but throughout America. After being on lockdown for a month, after a man was found hanged at Branch Brook Park, and after the lockdown date in New Jersey was extended for a month - the sky remains still and calm. Oblivious to the pandemics. Symbolizing peace and happiness to come.

By Hervly P., Arts
High School, Grade 11

INTRODUCTION

Judith Berry Griffin, President, Pathways to College

Literary: (adj). *Relating to literature, especially of the kind viewed as having artistic merit: of or relating to writers, pertaining to authorship or description of artistic works...*

Magazine: (n). *A publication that is issued periodically, usually bound in a paper cover, and typically containing essays, stories, poems, illustrations, etc. by many writers.*

To our Scholars, other students and supporters, and all members of the Pathways Family:

Welcome to the 2020 issue of *Scholar Voices*, the Literary Magazine of Pathways to College! This has been a year when our success must be celebrated twice - once for living through the fear, sadness and isolation of COVID-19, and again for living through the fear, sadness and anger of the racial tensions brought to light by acts of brutality that left many people not only deeply hurt and discouraged, but also re-committed to working for justice and equal treatment for all.

Although these circumstances left us drained and disappointed, still, we learned a number of important lessons. We now understand that wearing protective clothing and staying distant from others can help keep us healthy when pandemics and epidemics of this type occur. And through weeks of protest marches by thousands of people, here in America and across the world, we also learned that citizens of all ages, races and nationalities want hatred and racism to end.

Although exchanging ideas and working together virtually has been difficult, we at Pathways to College have become more determined than ever to expand our work and influence by supporting the abilities and aspirations of our Scholars. We, and the many friends who assist us know that our work - ensuring our Scholars' academic and personal success - is more critically important than ever. Thoughtful, well-educated people will keep our country strong not only by being productive citizens, but also by living their lives exhibiting care, concern and respect for all others.

Inviting submissions to *Scholar Voices* is one of the many ways in which we encourage our Scholars to think productively about some of these ideas. The poems, photos and stories we receive often describe challenges overcome and difficulties that have encouraged our Scholars and others to become even more thoughtful and determined. Sharing such ideas is especially important in times like these, when encouragement is certainly needed! So in addition to the literary works selected this year, we are re-publishing in this issue writing from previous editions that we hope will confirm for our Scholars and other readers how important it is to keep moving ahead in confidence, to set goals and stay focused on them, and most important - **to absolutely believe in your ability to achieve**. Scholars - remember that your success both in school and in life is very important - not only to you personally, but also to your community, and to your entire Pathways family.

Recording thoughts, efforts and dreams of achievement is not always easy, but doing so is an important first step toward making them real! Writers and other artists and thinkers through many centuries have shared their thoughts and passed their ideas on to people they would never meet, but who have been influenced and inspired by learning from those who lived before them.

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The Epiphany

Steve P., Arts High School, Grade 11

It's Saturday, April 28, 2018, 7:00-8:00 P.M., in Arts High School auditorium. The Latin Band is in the middle of its show, and while I truly enjoy playing as one of the two main pianists in this concert, surrounded by those I would consider my second family, there are some thoughts that I just can't seem to shake.

What if you never make it big?

What if you spend all of your time trying to pursue a career in this field only to receive a minimal reward?

Since I was 14, I have always had a desire to make music, and to share my music with the world. But as I entered my freshman year of high school and did more research on it, I came to realize that it's hard to become a household name being a simple producer, and often times, you never end up making the millions that get you those big houses that you see all over social media.

But as I stand before my band members playing Gilberto Santa Rosa's *No Te Vayas*, I homed in on the lyrics pouring out of Juan, our vocalist:

No te vayas

Si tu cruzas esa puerta

Me vas a matar de pena mira

It was here that I had an epiphany. It was here that I began to get emotional to the point where tears rolled down my cheeks. *It was here, in the middle of the chorus, while I was sitting backstage waiting for the song to conclude, that I told myself: it doesn't matter whether you have one hundred fans or one million. It doesn't matter whether you're making a thousand dollars a week or one million. At the end of the day, what matters is that you're happy with what you do, Steve, and the journey it took to get there.*

Here, in the Arts High School auditorium, sitting backstage, watching the maestro play the piano so gracefully and joyfully, I realized that happiness, not the number of fans or size of a bank account, determines success.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2017

The Drive to Fight

Liliana N., East Side High School, Grade 12

In life we have to have goals and be willing to
make our greatest effort to achieve them.

This way our lives will be full of optimism
and joy in achieving them.

Times in life can get difficult and stressful
but having in mind what want we want
drives us to fight through everything until we get to the top.

Let Go

Skylah J., Central High School, Grade 10

Sometimes you can't let go
I tell myself not to sink to her low
I sit here loathing, found out she was a wolf in sheep's clothing,
Just posing
Now I'm not sure about the path I've chosen
Should I forgive & forget?
Or get back by using my wit?
Regretfully I chose the latter of the two
Because if I knew what would happen, I would never do
What eventually just made me down and blue
Embarrassed and humiliated, found out I was baited
...I should have waited
But I didn't, I was an impatient fool
Did what I thought would make me cool
But they found out about my masquerade
And I got punished for all the trouble I made

Untitled

Isabella P., East Side High School, Grade 10



This picture reminds me of a secret entry, to a magical place. Waiting for someone to find it. The beautiful trees, leaves, and stream. The smell of clean air and a nice breeze, as if it was a scene from a movie. The thought of water hitting the rocks and running through your feet. The thought of being under the bridge and walking through the water or sitting on the rocks and taking a small breather. The picture is simply beautiful and gives off happy vibes.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2017

Dark Skin Burned on a Hot Day

Davinya M., New Tech Innovative Institute, Grade 12

Sun arising and she hears "massa" calling her name
Another day in a world where her people are tattered and maimed
Day in and day out, her back hunched over, picking cotton
Her hands and feet hurt, her back and teeth rotten
Watching her husband being tied and whipped
Streams of blood and sweat dangled and dripped
She hasn't much to eat, and yes she's weary
She's on the verge of giving up; her eyes are teary
But she hangs on, praying one day her freedom will come
She still praises and thanks God, knowing that it's His will
that will be done
I wonder why her life has to be this way
And why her dark skin burns on a hot day

Now she has gained her freedom, but still not free
She's not used to life outside of captivity
She eventually dies, having already given birth
Her body is laid to rest and sent back to earth
Her child is free and is on her own
She has turned "of age" and considers herself grown
She met a man and they got married
She was unaware of the disease he carried
They became sharecroppers, not earning much
Her life became meaningless, it became rough
She gives birth to a baby girl
Another generation added to this world
One night she hears yelling and she winced
Upon hearing her husband had been lynched
I wonder why her life has to be this way
And why her dark skin burns on a hot day

Her daughter is older and is able to take care of her
She grips her girl's hand and says to her
"You have been born into a world that hates you
They stripped your identity and raped you
Now I need you to see your true beauty
You're of African descent, your dark skin is beauty"

Releasing her hand, she quickly dies
Now it's up to her to carry on her mama's history
She knew racism and discrimination was no mystery
She went on enduring so much pain
Even in the 1960's her freedom hadn't truly been gained
She finally found love and had a family
Adding on to this generational tragedy
She raised her kids in a white's only society
She thought to herself, "Don't we all share one God, one deity?"
I wonder why her life has to be this way
And why her dark skin burns on a hot day

"Mama, Mama" her young child cried
"They blew up the church; four girls were inside"
She sat her daughter down on her lap and told her: we are all equal,
You're no different from another, we are all people
Her daughter looked up, scared and distraught
She knew that a battle had to be fought
She vowed change will come
And we will be free for once
She attends marches and protests
She starts to see a change, progress
But as soon as she thought it was finished
Dr. King was assassinated, her hope diminished
She wonders why her life has to be this way
And why her dark skin burns on a hot day

Skiping 40 years into the present
Life for my people has seemingly been pleasant
We had a black president
But even with that, people were hesitant
Racism carried a mask, but now it's been exposed
Modern day slavery is what I call it, I suppose
Even though we were set free in 1865
They're still playing target practice with black lives
Black Lives, cuts from my wrist come from black knives
Let's all come together and call it black rise
We send our sons out, praying for their return
Living in a world where blacks' lives are of no concern
I wonder why my life has to be this way
And why my dark skin burns on a hot day

Thug Up

Christ Terri L., Central High School. Grade 9

As a man when you are born, the odds are against you
So, people always tell you to stop crying and man up.
I don't care what you say I might have to thug up
Even with All the weight that I carry, people still act stuck up.

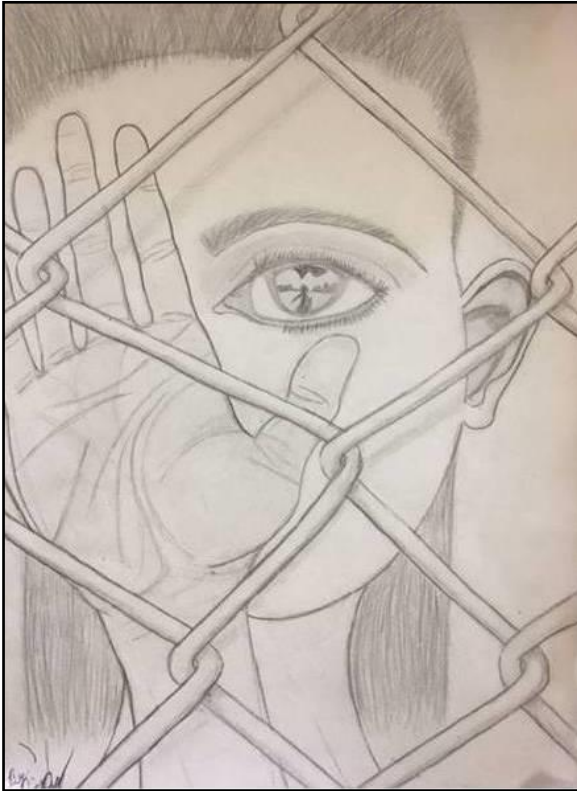
I try so hard every day thinking am I gonna make it out?
Am I gonna make my two moms proud?
With all this darkness I still try to fit in with these crowds.
So, I don't have time to let people get loud.

I hide the pain with fake expressions
I don't know how to ask for help ever since I was eleven.
Me and my brothers could never switch up especially Kevin
I try so hard even then I don't think I'ma make the cut to heaven
I wanna become something so when I'm older the little kids could copy
after me.
And dream about beating me, Cause there's nothing better than
competition.
I don't care what anyone says. I'm on a mission, got to get better so
everyone could sit down and listen.
My family comes first, cause they're going to love me at my worst,
when I could pay back my debt I'ma just burst
What drives my goals is the thirst for greatness so don't worry about
people's fakeness, and just make it.
When I think about greatness I think about juice. So, I got to grind
from out the pavement and I won't fake it.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2017

Transparency

Diamond R., West Side Leadership Academy, Grade 12



Scholar Voices, Spring 2013

What Breaks You Makes You

Nyota H., Weequahic High School, Grade 12

There is an individual that believes in the saying "what breaks you makes you." I am that individual and my name is Nyota. I was born in Jersey City, New Jersey and then moved around often. Since that day of my birth on July 4, 1995, growing up was a challenge for me. Experiencing life was just an understatement to the trials and challenges that molded me into a person I am today.

To me, "what breaks you make you" means the obstacles that are thrown at you will break you down in different ways but it will make you into a better person. The quote is the backbone to meeting life's obstacles that were placed in my path. Growing up I became the victim of verbal and physical abuse by somebody I loved and thought loved me back. I tried to hide the cuts and bruises, but my brother and father saw them. I felt sheltered and low to where I thought there would be no end to the hurt and pain. They took care of every bruise and cut I had on my body until my skin looked brand new. It happened for so long the abuse became the definition of who I was because I let it happen. A victim is who I was, but a victim is what I am not anymore.

Although I went through plenty of life experiences, my brother and my father have influenced me to achieve greatness no matter what I go through. They both stood by my side as they healed me until I was one hundred percent well and made me believe in myself. My father always told me, "Nyota, don't let your pain and suffering define you and keep you from achieving your goals." He was there to hold my hand when I needed him the most, but he always kept me focused on my future. My brother always said, "Little sister, I know you are hurting, but that is your motivation to becoming successful." My brother helped raise me since my father lived in another state and he pushed me so I know that the sky is the limit to my greatness. These two men's advice and kindness helped me heal from the physical pain and gave me the hope and motivation that I needed to pick myself up from my darkest hour and smile again. My brother and father were my guides, putting me on the right track and giving me the feeling of wanting better for myself. I want to be able to spread that same feeling to young people so they can finally see that even at their worst there is always a way to become successful.

My definition of greatness and success is the ability to help others heal from their physical pain and make them smile. The ability to do that for others is the prime reason why I would love to become a

pediatrician. I want to help heal children that are injured, ill, or have any other health problems. To me, a pediatrician is more than just a doctor; she is an individual that cares about her patients and makes them feel safe and secure when they don't. My choice of this career fits me because others gave me hope and I want to be the one to spread hope and faith to others.

There is truth in the saying "what breaks you makes you," and I am experienced in this. My obstacles could have broken me for good, instead I was pushed to not let that break me, but shape and mold me into the successful woman that I see in the future.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2013

In God's Eye

Ty'Nesha L., Dollarway High School, Grade 9

I don't understand why they treat us this way,
We are not that different, inside we are all the same,
We should not be judged by our religion or the
color of our face,
Because in the end, we're all running this same race.

I wake up each day and I want to run away,
Away from this world of cruelty and shame,
And I think of the joy that our world could have,
If we all stop the madness and never forget that in God's Eyes
WE ARE ALL THE SAME.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2011

Be the Change!

Dani R., Barringer High School, Grade 12

When people see that you want to be something, they want you to fail.
You want to be the person to make a difference to those around you.
You want to be a leader who stands by your words for change.
Be the change that shapes others' lives to become leaders in their own way.

Just believe in yourself and your abilities to make it happen!
In time, people will truly be understanding of what you're doing.
Self-determination will be your guide to becoming a true leader!
There is no limit to what you can do for yourself and those around you!
Be the change that brings hope for generations to come to remember you as a hero.

Two Blind Mice

Jermaine N., Central High School, Grade 11

One summer day my sister and I were in the house chilling and talking about our day until we heard this mysterious noise. So, I got up and looked around. I told my sister to stay put and don't move. I checked around the house but didn't see a thing.

The night came and the noise was even louder than usual. I looked down to see two mice running around, back and forth. I tried to trap them so the noise could stop but that didn't work. I started to think very hard on how to catch these mice, but I couldn't think of anything. The very next day, those same mice I saw were back, but the thing is that they weren't loud.

Eventually I came up with a solution to catching them, only after being exhausted all day and night. I set up a trap with peanut butter and cheese, two things mice can't resist. The night came and I was sound asleep. When I woke up the very next morning, the trap had the two mice on it. Come to find out the reason why they were making all the noise is because they were blind, so I called them the two blind mice.

I put them outside and my sister and I lived with no more noise.

Quarantine

Zahra W., Arts High School, Grade 10

I never thought my life would come to this, having to be taught virtually at home. I can no longer see my friends from school. I can no longer do all my extra-curricular activities. I can no longer volunteer at the community center on Saturdays. Even though this crisis has taken so much from me, it has given me so much more. During this pandemic, my perspective on family has changed. When no one else is there for you, they are the only ones who are. This time of distance learning has changed my perspective on education. There are more ways to get a good education than through traditional public school. Lastly, I have an entirely different perspective on time. Because we have been quarantined for more than a month, our bodies have naturally eased into that lazy sleep mode. However, because we are quarantined, that ultimately gives us more free time throughout the day to acquire new life skills that will mentally, physically and emotionally make us stronger.

When I went to school, I mean the actual building, I used to go to bed late and had to get up early. I am the second oldest of ten children, so I not only had to get myself ready, but I had to help my siblings also. I participated in after school activities like the baseball team, Pathways to College and Girls Who Code. When I was not doing any of those activities, I talked to my teachers to make sure my grades were where I wanted them to be. Baseball practice started right after school and did not end until five o'clock. I had to create a schedule to make sure I did not miss anything, but if I did miss something, I made it up. When I finally got home, I had chores to do and I also helped my siblings with their homework, which meant I was unable to start my homework until eight or nine o'clock at night. Even though there were major setbacks, I still managed to earn very good grades.

Now that we are quarantined, I have learned to pace myself so I can complete everything within a reasonable time, which will leave me more free time to do whatever I want to do. In addition to that, I do not physically have to do any extracurricular activities, but that does not mean that practice is cancelled. I continue to exercise at home. Just because we are not leaving the house does not mean that we

should stop performing basic hygiene. I still do everything I did when I was not quarantined, but I am able to adapt to this type of environment faster because there is less physical movement involved. The physical movement I was able to produce while not being quarantined is made up because I am able to spend more time with my family. Since I have younger siblings, they tend to be more curious and more energetic. I am able to create new, exciting and memorable memories with my siblings, and I get to know more about them. My siblings and I are able to watch TV together and play together. While we are quarantined, it is also easier to determine what they need to know more about. Whenever they miss their friends and teachers at school, I am able to explain to them why being quarantined is so important.

Fortunately, I was able to quickly adjust to my quarantined life. My new reality made it easier for me to expand my education rather than decrease it. What I mean by that is, when I am done with my virtual classes and homework, I look for other ways to amplify and maintain my knowledge. One of the things I do is talk to my teachers on a daily basis by using Google Voice. Whenever I see a grade on PowerSchool that I know can be improved, I talk to my teacher. When I get a grade and do not understand why I got that grade, I contact my teacher and in a respectful manner ask, "Why is this answer wrong and how do I get the correct answer?"

Finally, this has been a difficult time for everyone. However, I have been able to learn more about myself, my family, my strengths and weaknesses. My family and I have been able to strengthen our minds, bodies and spirit.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2013

Never Give Up

Dorsey W., East Side High School, Grade 12

For years I feel I have been chasing my dreams
But not once have I been on television, not the big screen
They say in order for you to live your dreams you have to risk it all
I thought that was what I was doing...to me that's what it seemed
To me risking it all means working hard and willing to fail
Even though you were not chosen, you take it upon yourself to pick up
the ball
For years I never stopped
The red light meant green
It was go time and there was no way I was stopping at all
The possibilities of my future success was all I saw
It was beautiful and there was no other way I imagined it to be
Working hard everyday to the point where my brain is bouncing off the
wall
If everyone gave up hope I still believed in me
All the negatives try to drag me down but a positive head I have for my
dreams I seek
And having so much faith in myself there is no way that my dreams
can't be reached
Fighting hard everyday from the tip of my head to the soles of my feet
Physically working hard to the point where my knees go weak
Still dragging my dead body to the powerful sound of my heartbeat
And still I have to run, I have to jump, I have to dive, I can't sit
To reach my dreams I can't stop, I can't give up, I won't quit

Photograph

Brandon L., Central High School, Grade 10



This image symbolizes how I miss my home, New York City. I was born in Harlem and lived in New York City for the majority of my life so far. Ever since I moved to New Jersey it's been so boring and it's not like New York. I have friends here but I have more in New York. I honestly don't like the fact that many citizens believe that Newark is better than New York City. When I hear people talk bad about New York I honestly get extremely irritated. Newark is somewhat of a good place but it could never be like New York City.

Untitled Memoir

Samantha S., East Side High School, Grade 12

I remember waking up every Sunday to the sweet smell of maple syrup and pancakes waiting for me at the kitchen table. The bittersweet smell of cocoa powder would fill my lungs as I prepared to take a sip of my creamy hot chocolate. This used to be one of my favorite moments because I would spend time with my grandparents and my great-grandma. But all of this changed.

It has been a year since my great-grandma and grandpa passed away. I still can't believe that God, the one person that has control of everything, would allow me to suffer all of this pain. Both my great-grandma and my grandpa were two major inspirations to me. When they left me, I felt a major shift in myself. Before their deaths, I was a happy and loving girl who was always optimistic, and then I became a lonely, hopeless girl with no dreams. My grades showed this decline because I went from being an Honor Roll student to nearly failing every single one of my classes. During this time, I put myself in complete isolation, and it felt as if no one was there for me. There was no one for me to confide in anymore, because the only people I could confide in were gone. Trying to talk to my grandma reminded me of all the times I would spend every single weekend with them relaxing or planting outside in the garden. Those were the times I would spend with my great-grandma because she would always be the garden keeper of the house. She would teach me how to be gentle with the plants or else they wouldn't grow strong and healthy like us. These were times I would spend with my grandpa when he would teach me how to cook, and how to become a strong, independent woman in the future.

My grandpa was the father figure I always wanted. He was always by my side and he was the closest person to a father I had growing up. He inspired me to be great, and he saw all of the potential I had in me, which is why his death had such a great impact on my life. Remembering all those times I would spend with my grandpa and great-grandma has made me a strong and independent woman. They have taught me so many valuable lessons

on how to respect myself and how to follow my dreams. I have learned that I should always do my best in everything that I do. After taking a long time to grieve over the two most important people I loved, their valuable lessons made me become a stronger woman by getting help from a social worker and getting help from my friends and family, which made me improve my grades and made me view life differently. One thing I learned from being their loving and caring little girl is that even though you have a million obstacles, you always have to be strong and believe that they happen for a reason and you have to live life even when it is hard and it feels no one is there to help you.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2011

The Scholar Way

Jamal B., Dollarway High School, Grade 11

Martin Luther King had a purpose. He wanted to fight for African American rights,

Benjamin Franklin's purpose was to observe the principles of light.

Michael Jordan's purpose was to be the most outstanding basketball player alive,

Rosa Parks' purpose was detected as a crime.

Everyone has a purpose that influences what they do and say.

My purpose influenced me to do it the Scholar Way.

This path is not any path, walked on by any ordinary man.

To carry on this way you have to start with "I CAN."

You believe in yourself, never allowing anyone to step in your way down the road.

You pass them on by, smile, and keep aiming for your goal.

When saying "I can," you follow that with a plan of success,

Knowing how you are going to define your destiny, and always doing what is best.

Despite all of the things that are thrown on your course,

The only way for you to be heard is if you use your Scholar Voice.

It may seem hard and you may want to give in,

But quitting is not the scholarly message that you want to send.

Enduring all the pressure of things being thrown in your face,

You are only a few inches away from finishing out your race.

Finish it off by earning your ticket to the doors of the Success lobby.

Stand there and proclaim to the whole world that YOU ARE
SOMEBODY.

Cross the finish line and notice now what the world has to say;

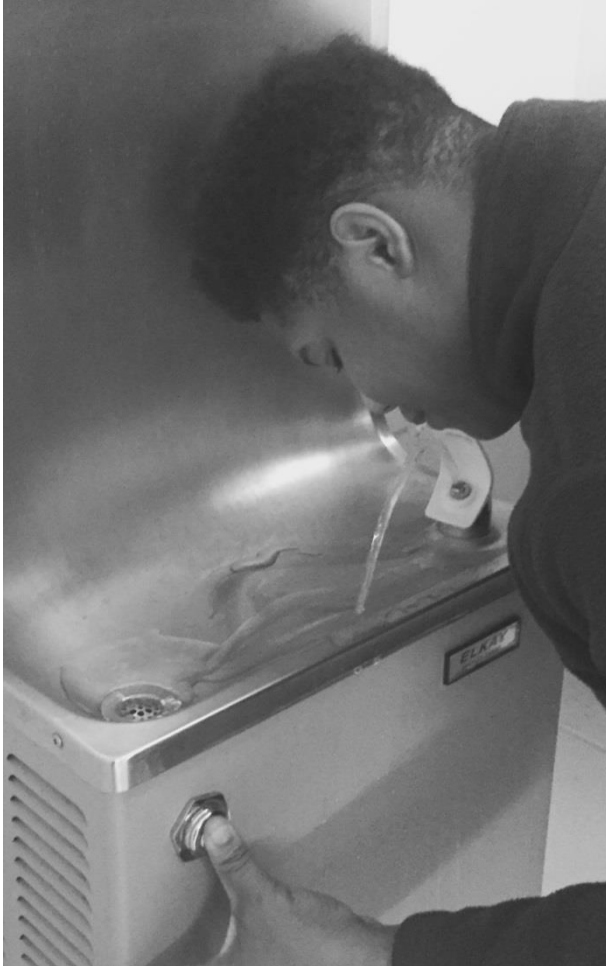
Let them know that my purpose was to become somebody,

and I did it The Scholar Way.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2017

No Longer Thirsting

Daquan N., New Tech Innovative Institute, Grade 11



Simple acts can mean so much.
Today, as I drink from a fountain that's free from labels,
the water somehow tastes a little sweeter.

Scholar Voices, Spring 2017

Ten Things I Want to Say to an African American

Yayah S., James Hillhouse High School, Grade 12

1. I used to think being black was the thing to be
But being black made us other people's enemies.
I wonder why?

2. When they see us while getting out of the car
they get scared. Beep! Beep! Beep! Dang! How
many times you going to lock the door?
I wonder why?

3. I wish I could read people's minds like X-Man
And find out why they don't like us
Because I really wonder, why?

4. If I ever see you in need I am going to smile
Because when I was in need you did nothing
And what goes around comes around.
And you will wonder why!

5. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired
I feel like an ant working hard all day
Then
Just getting stepped on.
I want to be free like a bird.
And fly as far as I can with no problems
But you won't let me.
I wonder why?

6. Wonder why you don't like me?
You've tortured Me from 1619 to Dec 6, 1865
but that's not enough?
You still torture me 'til this day.
I wonder why?

7. Every day I wonder why you hate me so much.
You say you don't but deep inside I know you do!
On TV you smile at me and shake my hand
As if you are delighted

But I know that's only for the naked eye.
I wonder why?

8. Your hating me made me love you
Because
You made me stronger than the Hulk!
Now I'm going to crush your heart
By pursuing my dream
Which is to be better than you.
Every time my name comes up
It will ring bells like Sunday at 12:00

9. I'm going to make it!
And you are going to keep thinking
Of ways to stop me.
But you will keep wondering, like The Monotones.

10. To African Americans
Never stop pushing; this world needs you now more than ever!

Scholar Voices, Spring 2011

Untitled

Alaska K., Orange High School, Grade 11

My name is Alaska King and I'm a junior at Orange High School. Throughout my entire life I have prevailed over trials and tribulations. Although to others my life may seem perfect, there is pain behind my smile. September 2010, I lost the most important person in my life. My grandmother died after battling cancer for over three years. Watching my grandmother suffer with physical changes and internal aches was more than my soul could bear. She was my strength and my shelter in a time of need; she was the one I could tell all of my secrets to. Suddenly, five months later, in February 2011, I also lost my father. His death was unexpected and I did not even have time to emotionally prepare myself.

Although it's not easy moving on with my life knowing that two of the closest people to me are never going to see my graduation, somehow, I still persevere because I know that I will not be walking across that stage alone. The only thing that keeps me going is realizing, deep inside, that they wouldn't want me to give up. My Dad and my grandmother would want me to keep striving and to recognize that life gives us obstacles but never too much to handle. As a result, I continue to make every effort to overcome my impediment because I have found that writing is my strength and my therapy and it helps me through the struggles.

How I Spent My 17th Birthday During the Crisis

Kayla N., Central High School, Grade 10

On this special day, April 29th, I spent my birthday with my family. We all enjoyed ourselves. My uncle ordered us Burger King through "Uber Eats." My brother baked my birthday cake. Everybody sang Happy Birthday to me. We played music and danced and had fun. My brother gave me my birthday hits. I was on my phone most of the day. My sister took pictures of me for my birthday and she also did my hair for me. I really didn't do a lot for my birthday. A whole lot of people texted me and said happy birthday. Some people posted me on Instagram and tagged me in the post and said happy birthday. I watched TV for a little bit. I went outside to Dollar General to get some snacks and some fresh air. I had my mask and gloves on when I went outside. Some people said happy birthday to me and I said thank you. My friend called me and said happy birthday. We stayed on the phone for a little while and were talking about how I don't look like I'm 17. I really enjoyed myself yesterday for my birthday. I didn't do much. I just spent time with my family. That's how I spent my 17th birthday.

By Samantha S.

East Side High School, Grade 12



A sunset brings the dusky night but also
a promise of a new tomorrow.



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