

CityKidzWorld

Volume 3 Issue 12

Summer-Fall 2011

BACK TO SCHOOL!

**LEARN HOW TO HELP
ROHAN RAISE MONEY
FOR CLEAN WATER**

**KID WRITER
SUGGESTS
LIMITS ON VIDEO
GAMES**

**READ: HOW THE
LION GOT ITS
MANE**

GAMES INSIDE!

*Contests
Inside!*



Welcome BACK to SCHOOL! It is time to hit the books again. City Kidz World magazine is honored to provide you with some fun reading material written by some local young writers. Students have been in the studio writing about various topics all summer. Please enjoy reading some writing by your peers!

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Find us online at www.citykidzworld.com

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Saahil is into piano and Indian vocal and his hobbies are playing in the pool and kickball. He is 11. Teja is 12 and she is a good tennis player, plays basketball and is also into Indian vocal. Indian vocal is a specific style of singing that both children are studying right now.



Myths and Fables

How Lion Got his Mane

By Laya Venkatesan

The trees and the grass shook in fear as the wind blew in the tropical rainforest. Under the mid-afternoon sun, two belligerent animals were in a heated argument.

"No!" Tiger complained. "How was it my fault?" His eyes squinted in anger.

"Well -- you put our lives at stake. We wouldn't have survived if I hadn't scared the hunters away," Cheetah replied.

The forest animals listened to the argument. Tiger's and Cheetah's loud voices had aroused them.

A few animals were frightened. Turtle was hiding under his hard, checkered, green shell, while others simply listened, as if it was a television program. Hippo just stood there casually watching.

As Parrot flew by, the wind whispered, "Have a competition that judges who will be King of the Jungle so someone can rule and make the right decisions." The wind's voice faded away.

Parrot flew back home and thought about the words he had just heard.

"No more time should be wasted," he decided.

"Attention, please! All animals, please report to the tree circle immediately," Parrot strictly announced.

The forest animals recalled when Parrot made his last announcement. It was really important and the animals who didn't attend paid a heavy price. Without a word, the animals ran quickly to form a large circle. It was like a stampede! They all gathered together and huddled so they could fit in the circle. The tall, light green trees surrounded them.

"Tomorrow afternoon," Parrot began, "One of you will be crowned King of the Jungle."

The animals whispered to each other in excitement. Tiger put an arrogant look on his face. Cheetah had a cunning smile.

"However, you'll have to earn it," Parrot warned.

"How?" Monkey eagerly questioned. His eyebrows were raised and he had a questioning look.

"Whoever appears the most beastly will win," Parrot explained.

"You may now get back to what you were doing," Parrot said as he flapped his giant, red and green wings and flew to his tree.

All the animals were bewildered, but went back to their habitat and started trying to make themselves beastly.

The animals in the forest were extremely boisterous.

There were birds chirping, owls hooting, monkeys screaming and elephants thumping their fat, large feet.

Lion just sat there thinking. He was surrounded by a

waterfall and he heard some leaves rustle in the warm wind. "How am I going to appear beastly?" Lion wondered.

He saw his orangish yellow body, his skinny legs and his long tail in the shaky water in the waterfall. His image was blurry.

Rabbit hopped next to Lion. Her tail was as puffy as cotton and swayed as she hopped.

"Is something the matter?" asked Rabbit as she saw Lion's frown.

Lion looked down at Rabbit's white, fluffy, small body.

"Well, it's just that I don't know how to win the competition," Lion rubbed his eyes, yawning.

"If it helps, the other animals are asking Monkey for his long, brown fur," Rabbit informed Lion.

"That's perfect!" said Lion and he thanked Rabbit.

He ran and joined the other animals.

"What are you doing here?" Leopard asked with a haughty look on his face.

"Asking Monkey for his fur," Lion replied. "Is he home?"

Leopard stared at Lion with his eyes widened.

"There is no way you could win against me. Look at me. I am a handsome animal and you are just a plain, old lion. Monkey refused me, so don't even bother trying to be King of the Jungle," said Leopard and he shooed Lion away.

Lion slowly started to walk away.

"What an avaricious animal," Lion thought about Leopard.

Lion sat next to the tropical, pink wild flowers. The sun reflected on the creek nearby. He observed animals making crowns out of leaves and sticks.

Lion glanced at Monkey and saw him brush his precious fur.

"Hey, that's it," a light bulb went on in Lion's head.

"I could sit under Monkey's tree and his fur will start piling up on my head," Lion planned out in his head.

Lion casually walked near Monkey's house and placed himself under his tree.

As Monkey combed his fur, it slowly started to fall down on Lion. The fur got larger and larger until it formed a mane.

Lion touched the soft fur on his head. He walked back to the pond and saw his mane blowing in the wind.

"Wow! I do look beastly," Lion grinned.

His mane was a crown to him.

On the day of the competition, all the animals were

con't on page 4



How Lion Got his Mane

Con't from page 3

very fancy things. Many animals wore crowns, some made out of leaves and sticks and some made out of bamboo. The tropical rain-forest looked and seemed very different. More butterflies were buzzing around to see such an interesting scene and so many animals couldn't be recognized because of their looks. Lion saw Hippo adorned in mushy mud and moist soil. Birds covered themselves in colorful leaves and chirped excitedly.

Parrot swooped down and perched himself on a tree.

"Today is the day of the competition and I see some very unique styles," Parrot remarked.

"How it'll work is that each animal will come up and tell how they made themselves beastly," Parrot told the animals.

"Now form a line," Parrot said, pointing near a tree.

At once the animals rushed to the line to present their changes.

Cheetah walked up to Parrot. "I decorated myself with vines," he said and turned around so everyone could see him. Then, he walked back.

Tiger leapt up to Parrot. "I am wearing bamboo sticks as a crown," Tiger said proudly and walked back.

Clumsily, Giraffe slowly came up to Parrot with her feet tottering. "I adhered leaves around my long neck," Giraffe said and walked to the end of the line.

A few more animals proudly presented their beastly looks.

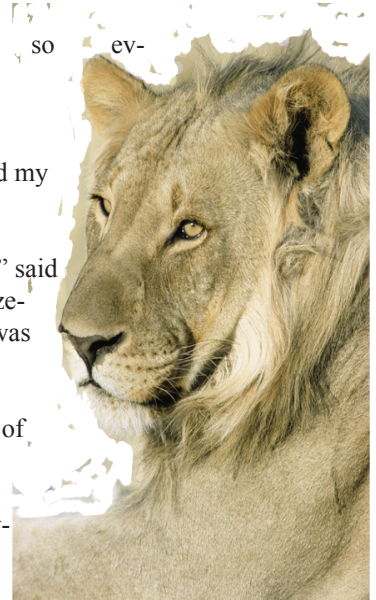
Lion was the last animal left to present himself. He slowly walked up to Parrot. "I acquired a mane," said Lion as he twirled around so everyone could get a glimpse of his mane. The animals gasped in amazement. Lion's dark brown mane seemed fluffy, soft and silky. His mane hypnotized the animals and was very attractive.

"I think we have a winner," said Parrot, looking at Lion to substantiate that he was the winner.

Even though some animals were disappointed, they realized that Lion deserved to be King of the Jungle and they bowed down to him.

"Lion is now King of the Jungle," Parrot declared victoriously.

Parrot sensed that the wind was pleased with this outcome, while Lion could still see his mane blowing ever so slightly in the gentle wind.



By Laya Venkatesan

Laya is a brilliant 6th grader with a great imagination. It took her just a few days to put this great story together!

DID YOU KNOW?

WHALE SHARKS

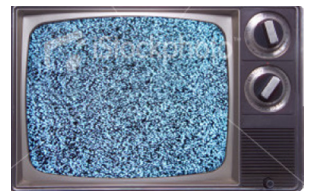
The whale shark is the second biggest creature in the world. Whale sharks have about 3,000 teeth. They're very big, but they eat little fish. If you see a whale shark, don't move and it will swim away.

A whale shark is a *type* of shark.

- *Animal fact provided by Everett Murray*



Everett is a curious 3rd grader.



See Everett and Laya online at <http://www.citykidzworld.com/citystories.php>

Myths and Fables

The Sea Monster's Doom

By Tridib Ray

Once upon a time, a slimy, blood-sucking, evil sea monster terrorized a small, tropical, dragon-shaped island. The monster made huge waves and ate people. The sad, angry, lonely townspeople locked their doors and hid from the sea monster. Fisherman never returned because the sea monster ate them. The townspeople tried to slay it using cannons, bows and arrows, and catapults, but failed. No matter what they did, they couldn't slay the monster.

When all seemed lost, a young boy stepped up and said that he would slay the sea monster. The boy had brown skin, black hair, and was eight years old. On his way to the shore, he thought he would fail. Then, he tripped on something. He picked it up and it was a sword. When he touched it, he felt power run through his body and he knew he could slay the sea monster.

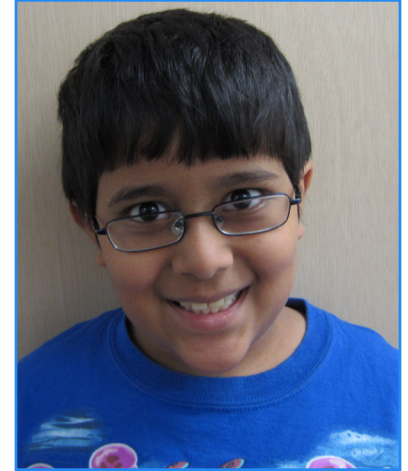
In a village near the shore, the boy borrowed a fisherman's boat. The boy searched for the monster all day and night until morning. Then, he spotted something and it was a cave. He entered the cave and found the monster asleep. He sneaked behind the sea monster and cut its neck with the sword that he had found on the shore. It was a magic sword and with one slice it would slay any creature. Then, there was a big flash of light and the boy was teleported home.

The townspeople were smiling and amazed to see the boy. Many townspeople thought he was lying about slaying the sea monster. Just then, the boy spotted something in the boat. It was one of the sea monster's teeth. He showed the townspeople the tooth. They were stunned and they cheered. They had a big feast of fish, chicken, squid and lobster.

Later, the boy made a hole in the tooth and put a string through it. He got more serpents' teeth from the cave and made a necklace out of them. The townspeople lived happily ever after.

THE END

The moral of this story is, "Never give up hope."



Tridib Ray is a 3rd grader who is great at creating stories.

Fairies

By Elise Ferguson

One early morning a 10-year old girl named Maya, who was half fairy and half girl, was walking to school and spotted a bright light. She was very curious and got closer until she was close enough to see it clearly. When she got close, she saw that the light was a girl. Maya recognized the girl and said "Amanda, I know you from ballet class, but what are you doing here?"

Amanda said "I am here to tell you the Queen is sick and if the Queen dies all of the fairies die. The Queen is our ballet teacher; if she dies there will be no ballet. You have to help us! You are the only one who can help now. Hurry! We must go into the fairy world!"

"What! I never been in the fairy world" said Maya.

"Well it is very different from here. Prepare yourself for new things." said Amanda.

When Maya arrived at fairy world she saw that there was a palace with 80 windows, there were many flowers, stores, flying purses and dogs. She thought it was amazing! Maya did not see the Queen at first and she was concerned. Then Maya saw the Queen at the top of the "Building of Magic". She shined in the sun with her gold dress and crown. Maya and Amanda flew to the Queen's Palace into the Queen's bedroom. The Queen was lying on her bed with the nurse. Amanda asked the nurse if she is going to be okay. The nurse said, "I'm afraid not unless you both find the magical rose. The rose keeps alive any and all fairies." "We will go!" Maya and Amanda shouted.

Maya and Angela searched the fairy world. They looked behind the rainbows and under the trees; the only place they did not search was the ocean. Some of the fairies were told a story that the magical rose was in a ship. They went into the ocean to search for the underwater ship named "Titanic". In the water, they saw the Titanic; it was black and very old. They had two minutes to find the rose. They found the rose in a gold chest! They swam quickly back to the surface. They flew to the Queen's bed and gave the flower to the Queen. The Queen woke up once she smelled the flower. All of the fairies danced ballet and were very happy!



Elise is a good writer who thinks about fairies and school work!

How Seaweed Became Green

By Lakshmi Madhav

I am a very old manatee. I was small when this story happened. I will tell the tale.

Once upon a time, long before there was seaweed, when the earth was forming, Zake, the head god, had to give jobs to others. Zake had a friend named Pontos. He had known him for a long time. Pontos was very responsible and Zake knew he was responsible enough to take the job he had for him. Zake called for him. Pontos came and he was very excited. He knew Zake wanted him to do something.

Zake said, "Pontos, I have a very special job for you. I want you to become a god."

In a flash, Pontos became more powerful. He had become a god. After that, Zake and Pontos went to earth. When they reached earth, Zake made a liquid substance. Zake explained all the responsibilities of being a god to Pontos. Then, Zake left and Pontos started working.

He first named the substance water. Then, he renamed himself the sea god. After that, he started making sea creatures. The first thing he thought of making was a creature that looked liked him. He made an animal that had a tail exactly like his tail. That was me - the manatee. He then made me examine the water.

I said, "We should have an ocean floor with sand, rocks and plants. We should also have more creatures."

This is when Pontos got the idea of making seaweed. He made a red plant with poison that could burn anything. After making seaweed, Pontos made other creatures. One thing about the red seaweed is that it gets mad very fast. We, the manatees, love to eat sea urchins. The sea urchins used to be in the field of red seaweed. Usually, we drool before we eat and the drool would go to the red seaweed and the seaweed would get irritated. After getting irritated, they would get mad. Then, the seaweed would make fire and burn the manatees to ashes.

The king of the manatees heard and saw this. He didn't want his group to be extinct, so all of the manatees rushed to the sea god and complained. Pontos was very upset when he heard this. He went to the seaweed. When the red seaweed saw the sea god, they were very scared. They knew why he was coming and



Lakshmi is a happy writer who wants to create excellent stories.

they begged for forgiveness.

"If you do this again, you shall lose all your power," said the sea god. After that day, the red seaweed tried to listen.

Sea urchins hate seaweed. They really liked to bother it. Sea urchins could bother it with one joke. The seaweed tried not to burn them, but it couldn't stop it. The red seaweed burned the sea urchins to ashes.

The sea urchin king didn't want his clan to be destroyed, so he went to the sea god to complain. When the sea god heard the news, he was disappointed because he thought he could trust the seaweed. With his magical powers, Pontos changed the red seaweed into green seaweed, but it still had the poison and it could still burn anything up.

Floor creatures were blue blobs, but now they're extinct. Floor creatures loved to eat seaweed. Nobody liked to eat floor creatures because they had poison in them from eating the seaweed. The seaweed burned the blobs to ashes and the floor creatures all rushed to the sea god to complain about the seaweed's behavior. The sea god was very mad. He took all the power from the seaweed. He then went back to the creation.

This is the tale of the seaweed. You can see on the beach that the seaweed is ashamed of this tale.

How the Turtle Got His Shell on His Back

By Kishore Madhav

One day, there were two turtles who wanted to have a shell. They searched and searched. Then, they went into a shed and found a witch who made them each a shell. They wore their shells on their noses. Then, the witch made shells on their feet. Then, she made shells on their tails. Then, on their eyes, and finally, decided that the best place for a shell was on their backs. Then, they went back home.



Kishore is a 1st grader who loves making up stories

A Simple Story of Fairyland

By Anshika Virani

Chapter One

The Fairies

Once upon a time, in a unique place called Fairyland, which was high up in the sky and had huge, fluffy, pink clouds that smelled like cotton candy and sounded like Christmas bells ringing, there lived many fairies, having fun.

Some of the fairies were Chloe, Rebecca, India and Tracy. Chloe, the lazy fairy, wore a green dress and had blue eyes. Rebecca, the nice moonlight fairy wore a pink dress and had black eyes. India, the moonlight fairy, had one Chihuahua fairy dog. She had a blue dress, black hair and blue eyes. Tracy, the moonlight fairy had hazel eyes and was a bully. Moonlight fairies like nature and save lives.



Anshika is a hardworking 2nd grader who really loves her fairyland.

Chapter Two

The Grand Birthday Party

It was India's and Rebecca's grand birthday. Everyone was wearing pink, but everything else was purple. The birthday girls were wearing blue and pink together. There were 35 people at the party. India was turning 10 and Rebecca was turning five. In fairy years, 10 years is the same as 35 people years and five years is 25 people years. There were 15 candles on the chocolate-flavored cake. India and Rebecca blew out the candles. There were beautiful purple balloons on the ceiling.

Chloe started waving the wand on Tracy and Tracy moved the wand to the ground. This caused a big fight. They were back in Fairyland. Tracy went to her world, which was underground. Everything was made of mud, but after a while, she turned back. Chloe was sent to the forest to apologize to Tracy. India followed and sneaked into a big tree.

Chapter Three

The Dense Forest

When Chloe arrived in the dark forest, she noticed that the flowers were 17 feet long and the trees were four feet tall for tiny fairies to pick apples, oranges, pineapples, mamballias, raloshes, palm palmages and balgones. Mamballias were used for lipstick. When they were roasted they became pink lipstick, otherwise, they turned into a red fruit.

Just then, India quietly arrived in the forest. She sat in a tree and ate an apple. Then, India saw Tracy and her seven sisters going towards a fairy. It was Chloe. India asked Chloe to hide, but Chloe did not hear India. Tracy warned Chloe that she would turn her into a starfish, and India was recording Tracy's mean voice. Then, Tracy did it.

India rushed back to fairyland. All the fairies in fairyland came to know what happened. Then, fairyland sent Rebecca's and Chloe's green jewel and black net. Rebecca trapped Tracy and sprinkled green fairy dust on Chloe. Chloe turned back into a fairy.

Chapter Four

Cheering for India and Rebecca

FairyLand was so proud of India and Rebecca. The main person who saved Chloe was India. India got to choose a game. She chose a game called, "The Warm Wind Blows."

She got in the middle of the chairs and said, "The warm wind blows for whoever helped in saving Chloe," so Rebecca got up and went walking. India quickly went and sat on the chair, Rebecca was sitting on.

Then Rebecca said, "The warm wind blows for whoever is a moonlight fairy," and out of 35 fairies, 17 got up and Rebecca found Tracy's seat. Tracy was in the middle.

Tracy said, "The warm wind blows for the fairy queen and king." The queen and king switched seats. Tracy was the loser and the loser goes to jail.

Chapter Five

India's Children

One morning, India had a severe stomach ache. She was in pain. Fairyland took her to the hospital of the fairies. India actually had baby twins and she was very happy. India named one fairy baby Fellisha, and the other one, Rosy. She loved her cute identical twins. They both were very adorable girls and they looked exactly alike. India started quickly giving milk to these cute fairy babies and all in Fairyland lived happily ever after.

Horrible, Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Birthday

By Tanvi

“Wake up,” Mom whispered. I started squirming into my flowery blanket and I heard Mom said even louder, “Wake up Sammy!” I picked up my fluffy pillow and covered my ears. “Sammy, wake up right now,” Mom hollered as she slammed the white door and stormed out of the room.

I was still under my covers enjoying the show. Today was my birthday and Mom was trying her best not to scream at me - at least I thought so. I woke up drooping like an unwatered plant and abruptly stopped at the mirror. I saw a girl with brown curly fluff hair, tired, blue eyes, snow man pajamas, colorful soft socks staring back at me. Opening the room door, I slowly stepped down each step to make my steps dramatic. I was hoping that I would get a puppy for my birthday, since I begged for one so much. Walking down, I saw my mom making breakfast. It was my favorite blueberry pancakes. I saw my dad reading the newspaper and my sister screaming and making a fuss about her hair; no one seemed to realize that I came down. “Hem,” I cleared my throat and then everyone looked up and noticed me.

“Sammy, oh umm... we only brought you a few presents,” Mom said as she rolled her eyes toward the table. I stared at the table where I saw a watch and a bandage pack.

“Really, that is it?” I whispered to myself harshly. I glanced at the pancakes, which I absolutely craved and it made me forget a little about the gift problem.

Mom must have realized I was looking at the pancakes so she said, “Sammy umm... these are for your sister. She is having a bad day.” She picked up my favorite blueberry delicious pancakes and she handed them to Vanessa, my sister. *WHAT? First, you don't even wish me happy birthday. Second, you only gave me a bandage pack and a Barbie watch. Do you think I like Barbie I am turning 11 today? Last, you give MY favorite pancakes to my sister since SHE is having a bad day.* I angrily thought as I clenched my teeth. I marched up the stairs with an empty stomach. My face was fuming red with anger and my eyes were popping out.

“Oh one more thing,” mom said.

I abruptly stopped. I calmed down and thought maybe this was my big surprise for the day and then turned around and glued a big smile on my face.

Mom said dully, “There is no party this year.” I started to swell with anger again and I was grinding my teeth as I stormed up to my room.

How could they do this to me?

Helllooooo....it is MY BIRTHDAY!!! It is like they are completely ignoring it. Don't they remember, I thought and hugged Mr. Cuddles as I rocked him back and forth, lovingly.

“Honey, we are leaving to go to the swim arena! Dad and I have to fill out some forms there. Stay home and be a good girl. Vanessa is the boss while I am gone,” I groaned and I threw the plastic watch, which was clenched in my hand.

Knock!

Knock! I heard the door creak open. With a mischievous smile on Vanessa's face she said, “Mom also said no cake and she said no brownies.”

Hearing that, I plopped clumsily on to my bed.

It felt like on days that I was sitting on my bed, so I decided to ride my bike to the arena to find out what was taking my parents so long. The arena was only around the corner so it wasn't a long trip there. I went to the sandpaper colored garage, but my sister barged in.

“You should wear your swim suit because there is a “we will miss you party” for Mrs. Cambia and we are going to swim. I did not argue because I knew that the end I would have to do what she said. I came back quicker than a wink and rushed to the swim arena. Vanessa came with me because she said I was too young to go by myself. I opened the door and

“Surprise,” I heard a million voices scream together. My mouth dropped open as tears rolled down my face with joy. I observed the BIG balloons and the double fudge extra chocolate cake and EVERY-ONE was there. My face glowed with excitement. There were so many presents stacked up. There was even a puppy! I rushed over to my mom and dad and hugged them so tight!

“I thought you forgot about my birthday, but you didn't. Thank you SO much!” I said joyfully.

I enjoyed the party and after that and I realized that I should not judge a birthday until the end of the day!



Tanvi is a bright 6th grader who believes in writing over the summer.



The World Needs Clean Water

By Rohan Lalapet

Rohan Raises Money to Provide Water World-wide

One cold, lazy winter afternoon I was looking through a book and came across a picture of a man collecting dirty water in a fuel container called a jerry can.

I asked my mother, "Why is this man collecting dirty water?"

She said, "That's the only water he gets."

She further explained that the man was collecting drinking water. I was shocked because the water I drank was no way close to what he was drinking. I asked more questions and every answer left me more puzzled. I came to the conclusion that the world I see around me is very different from the real world. The discussion about the man and his jerry can led my mother and me to read and learn more about people who do not have access to clean the world I see around me is very different from the real world water.



DONATE ONLINE @

http://www.mycharitywater.org/p/campaign?campaign_id=16155

That day I learned that close to 1 billion people in the world do not have access to clean water and 4,500 children die every day due to unsafe drinking water. I also saw some pictures of children infected with a disease that forms a tumor around their mouths. The tumor is the size of a small football and prevents them from eating or drinking normally. In some places, girls infected with this disease are considered witches and the villagers often throw stones at them. In some places, people never wash their dishes because they don't have water and even when they do have water, the water is infested with millions of germs.

I felt bad for those people.

I thought, "I am lucky. Why do those people have to be unlucky? Why can't the world be equal?"

I have access to the basic things in life, such as water, while these people do not. I wanted to help to change that. I wanted to help by selling my books and toys. Then I learned about Charity: Water. This is a charity that raises a lot of money. They told me that it will cost about \$5,000 to build one fresh water well for a community of 250 people. I decided to work through this organization to raise money to purchase a fresh water well for a community.

Spring was nearing and it was time for my birthday. As an eight year old, I was trying to find out ways to help these people. That's when I decided to give up my birthday gifts for donations to build a fresh water well.

I thought that instead of filling up my closet with more and more toys, why not help these people whose closets were empty? With the help of my parents and Charity: Water, who

provided a campaign page, we launched a clean water campaign on my birthday/fundraiser party.

My campaign goal is to raise \$5,000 to help build a fresh water well for 250 people, so that they can have access to clean water. With the support of my family



Rohan is a caring 3rd grader who wants to change the world!

and friends, we spread the message to many people. I gave speeches, volunteered at social events and gatherings, sent emails and launched it on Facebook with the help of my parents. My family friends also helped in organizing an all-kids fundraiser concert by a band called Axolotl. They were cool and inspiring because it was a band of school kids performing to raise funds for my clean water campaign. That day they helped raise \$350 in one hour. I still continue to look for opportunities to raise awareness and funds for the campaign. Up until now I have able to raise funds to help 168 people.

I request people to donate so that 250 people can have a chance for a better life. They will have a life without tumors, long walks for 4-5 hours to get water, and without unsafe water. I am asking people to help 4,500 children go to school by building access points to water that may be few minutes away.

This summer has been interesting and fun. I learned so many things about people, the world and myself. Before the campaign I never thought I would need to speak to groups of people. Speaking in front of groups of people is very scary and there were times when I was not up to it. By doing it more often, I am letting go of that fear. I am also learning to write my thoughts and express myself.

Most importantly, I learned that every person, whether small or big, can make a difference by standing up and doing what he or she thinks is right and making change.

Thankful Enough

By Neha

“Annabelle Wish!”

“Annabelle Wish?” Mrs. White called again, peering at me through her horn-rimmed spectacles with hawk-like eyes.

I got up from my chair, looking around the room and ever so slowly walked up to my teacher’s spotless white desk. She thrust an orange envelope into my hands. I slithered back to my seat holding the envelope as if it was glued to my leg. Everyone else had one, just like mine, except I had a large red stamp on mine. As soon as I got back to my desk, I took another glance at the envelope.

I knew what it was and what the red stamp meant. Most of the kids in my class were jabbering about their grades, but I just stuffed my envelope into my backpack. When the bell finally rang, I looked at the envelope again, not daring to open it. The bright red ink seemed to taunt me. I grabbed my backpack and tried to rush out of the classroom, but my classmates were blocking the door. They started shoving me and teasing me about my report card.

“Hey, Wish! Can’t we see that big red stamp of yours?” they snickered and shoved me.

The red stamp meant that I had gotten unacceptably low grades and I might have to do the fourth grade over again. And even worse, it meant that my teacher would need to have a “conference” with my parents. That’s just a code word for talking with your parents about how bad you are – behind your back. It is a terrifying thing!

Suddenly I felt a hand on me.

“Annabelle?”

I didn’t even have to turn around.

“Hello, Mrs. White,” I managed to squeak out.

I turned my head around and I tried in vain to shape my mouth into a smile.

“Don’t you dare look at me like that!” she screamed. She held out her hand and I hastily slapped my report card into it. Suddenly, I heard the familiar footsteps of my mom and dad echoing through the halls. Mrs. White hustled them into the room.

My mom, tall and elegant, took a seat and crossed her legs. Her knee-length, black dress draped over her stocking-covered legs and her diamond-studded purse dangled over her shoulder perfectly. She painted a fresh layer of lip gloss onto her shiny lips and added a bit more makeup to her smooth face. She wore her curly, slightly orange tinted, caramel-colored hair up, in a bun. Her nails were long – not stubby like mine – and they were painted dark red. Meanwhile, my dad was checking his silver watch. He had sleek, black hair and he wore a suit and tie, and dark brown, shiny leather shoes. I tried smoothing down my own dark brown hair. Mrs. White pulled out my report card and showed it to my parents.

“A ‘D’ in everything, except Art – a C minus!” my father screamed, shoving the red-stained report card into my face.

I felt like crying. This is not the life I hoped for. I looked up at my

parents who angrily stared down at me. Suddenly – “SLAP!” – I felt my mother’s hand hit my cheek. My large brown eyes filled with tears as I gently rubbed my cheek.

Later, I slammed the car door shut, tears streaming down my face, and the car started rumbling down the bumpy black highway. As soon as the car came to a stop, I bolted toward the house, unlocked the door and burst inside. I stormed up the stairs to my room and plopped onto my bed, sobbing and burying my face in my soft, comforting pillow. Weary from crying so much, I wiped off my blotchy face with my damp shirt and slowly drifted off into a calm, deep sleep.

By the time I woke up, it was already 7 p.m. I rushed downstairs to see if my parents were eating dinner, but instead, I found a single-word note saying “Bye”, written in my father’s fancy, curly handwriting. I started sobbing all over again. “Bye” – That is all they wrote? I was filled with rage, sorrow and everything in between. I was so confused I didn’t know what to feel. I collapsed in tears.

Suddenly, a gentle breeze chilled the room. I checked to see if the window was open. It was warm and humid outside and the leaves on the lush green trees were as still as statues. The wind in the room grew stronger by the minute. Soon my hair was whirling in the wind.

“Wha-?” I started to say but I was shoved back with a mouthful of air.

I was tossed and turned in every direction. The entire world seemed to go black. This is just a dream, I thought to myself. Squeezing my eyes tightly, as the mini-hurricane swirled faster and faster, I suddenly found myself in a big metal chamber that was more like an enormous jail cell. A bright, blinding red light began flashing and alarms began sounding. I shuddered and moved to a corner of the cell. Suddenly, someone came in, grabbed my arm and pulled me into an elevator. He looked about the age of my dad and had noticeably large muscles. He wore some kind of military uniform and a green helmet. There were guns and other weapons clipped onto his belt. I took a deep breath and got up the nerve to ask him a question.

“Wha-where are we?” I stammered.

He just shook his head, not moving his mouth at all. Finally, when the lift came to a stop, he pushed me out with a grunt and continued down into a dark tunnel.

“Wait!” I called out nervously.

I was afraid. I thought of my parents and did not want to be left alone again. I edged away from the elevator, and to my surprise, I saw some people, including some kids just like me. A woman, who looked like a teacher, saw me and beckoned me forward. I reluctantly walked up to her, trying not to draw too much attention to myself, but I noticed that almost every pair of eyes was glued onto me. I moved my face into a nervous smile and waved back at the many cheery faces and enthusiastic smiles. Biting my

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Con't from page 10 **Thankful Enough**

lip, I stood in front of the woman, looking up at her.

"Name?" she asked in a sweet voice.

My eyes widened in astonishment. I looked at her. Why would she want to know my name?

"Name?" she inquired again, looking at me with a queer look on her face.

"A-Annabelle Wish," I whispered.

She looked down at me with that same odd look and called out to an orange-haired man some strange words and numbers.

"N C C Intrude 1 DK info," she said. "Come," she motioned to me and we hustled out of the room. I kept looking at her. She straightened her rectangular glasses as she ran, her straight shoulder length hair flying behind her. We came to a halt in front of a wall.

Before I could even ask where we were and why we were just staring at a blank wall, the section of the floor beneath us plummeted down. I didn't dare scream, but the butterflies in my stomach were turning into large swooping bats. We started to slow down and the old rusted elevator floor started screeching like a train coming to a stop. I quickly clapped my hands over my ears, and looking up.

I was surprised to see the upper floor above us. I glanced at the woman; she wore a nametag with "Ms. Wine" written on it. With a billow of smoke, the front part of the elevator platform opened and we entered into a huge white palace. There were expensive chandeliers hanging everywhere and large pillars with glass sculptures in every corner. The bright red rug was like a huge splash of color in the sparkly room and flowers hung in baskets all over the ceiling.

My trance was lifted when I saw a plump, bald man in a gray suit and dazzling red tie. Before I had a chance do anything, the lady with me started pushing me into a small room. I sat hunched, trying to gather my thoughts and questions.

"Hem, hem," said the bald, fat man, clearing his throat. "You are in a place that is used in means of undoing..."

Ms. Wine stepped forward and interrupted the man with a small cough.

"Annabelle," she gestured to me, "You are in a new world. We call people with our minds to this place. This is your new world. It is a home for you and others like you. You belong here. There is a place for everyone here – except for those who don't deserve or want to be here. Those here are put off from the world, but can see more of the world."

She opened her mouth to continue, but then stopped. She smiled and left the room, followed by the plump man. As soon as they were out of the room I shook myself straight. I managed not to scream, but suddenly, I was sucked into blackness.

"Will she be ok?" Ms. Wine whispered.

"Oh, not to worry," a high pitched squeak replied.

Hearing faint voices, I lifted my eyelids slightly and saw Mrs. Wine and a woman in a white uniform with a big, red plus sign on her coat. I sat up straight, my eyes wide open.

"She's awake!" She felt the red spot on the side of my head and said, "You fainted and hit your head. But don't worry. It's normal for people to fall or go unconscious when they first arrive." I was beginning to feel safe. I wasn't afraid anymore and something seemed to be whispering into my ear, telling me that I belonged here.

After a few days, the nurse let me go with Ms. Wine. I felt more comfortable with Mrs. Wine and started talking with her a bit more. I felt that I could trust her. I trusted her enough and enough was all I needed. I stayed by her side as we walked to the common halls. Most of the other kids didn't even notice me and those who did would just glance at me and continue on with whatever they were doing. Ms. Wine pushed me forward and I scampered to an empty table and sat wedged in the corner. I took out my lunch box and carefully bit into the sandwich Ms. Wine had prepared for me. Suddenly, kids started filing in and filling up my table. I squished myself into the corner and silently gobbled up my delicious sandwich. I finished in less than five minutes and was already packing my bag when a girl with her black hair bundled up in a bun, followed by a redhead and a brunette who were chit-chatting with her, stopped at our table. They continued to laugh as they squeezed themselves right next to the one person gap I had left between me and the boy next to me.

I slowly started getting up, but the girl with the black hair pulled me down again and whispered to me as if we were old friends.

"You're scared right? Yeah, everyone's like that when they are new..." she stopped and tilted her head thoughtfully. "Well at least I think. We haven't had a newcomer in more than half a century!" she said, her eyes lighting up.

I pressed my back against the wall, nodding silently and managing to stifle a nervous laugh. I started to get up.

"Where are you going?" the redhead asked me, looking at me with one of her thick, bushy eyebrows raised up.

"I-I-I..." I began, but thankfully Mrs. Wine came to my side.

"Let's go Annabelle," she said.

"Annabelle," The girl with the bun repeated softly.

I just smiled weakly. My smile was pathetic compared to hers. She was beaming broadly.

"Hi, Annabelle. I'm Eva," she said.

"Hi," I squeaked and scampered off behind Mrs. Wine.

My heart was pounding, but when I clutched Mrs. Wine's hand, I immediately felt safe, and as we walked, it seemed like everywhere Mrs. Wine went, it brightened up. Everyone was now staring and pointing. Feeling shy, I hid myself. Suddenly, a fluffy white cloud blanketed the room. Now, everyone was gaping at us and I got angry.

Why is everyone pointing at me? Don't they know that's rude?

They know I'm new here. Well... at least Eva does.

Then, suddenly the lights in the room started flashing angrily and the white cloud turned dark gray and lighting flashed everywhere nearly hitting everyone except me and Mrs. Wine. It was as if Ms. Wine was somehow special, but then it dawned on me.

What if it wasn't Ms. Wine who was creating this? What if it was (gulp) ME?

I started to calm down and step in front of Mrs. Wine, pushing away my fright. Suddenly the lights glowed even brighter, as if they were proud. I realized that I was proud. The cloud burst open into light.

"Ms. Wine!" I whispered.

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Con't from page 11 Thankful Enough

"Shhh," she whispered.

Some guards pulled me away from Mrs. Wine. I tried to stay calm. The room became very hot and humid and all of a sudden it started spinning. I took a deep breath and the symptoms stopped. I allowed myself to be pulled away into my new fate. As soon as the guards stopped, I opened my eyes and saw myself in front of the same white palace that I had been in before.

The guards knocked on the door and someone inside answered harshly, "If it's about that Annabelle girl, don't bother coming in!" I gaped at the open door and slipped out of the guard's grasp. "Excuse me!" I screamed.

All of a sudden my anger and temper couldn't be stopped and dark storm clouds gathered and lightning started hitting everyone except me. I had engendered a storm again!

I quickly closed my eyes and though happy thoughts, like rainbows and butterflies, and when I opened my eyes I saw a big rainbow stretched across the sky with beautiful pink butterflies fluttering everywhere. I tried not to howl in frustration as the beautiful scenery disappeared from my head and reality.

The plump man emerged from the door just as my rainbow was disappearing. Now it was his turn to gape at me and point at the disappearing things. I beamed. This dude finally got it! He finally figured out that I was no phony. I looked at him smugly. I didn't even have to say, "I told you so!" because the wind howled and whistled and seemed to be saying, "She told you so!" He opened his mouth, trying to make some sense of what had just happened, but all that came out were little squeaks.

Finally, he said weakly, "Come in Annabelle."

As soon as I stepped inside, I said, "What is going on? Where exactly am I? And is it normal for someone like me to have this weird power sort of thing? Why isn't any one telling me any-"

The man stopped me short and looked at me sternly.

"We are trying to tell you everything we know, but it is difficult! You know what it going on and no, it is not normal for people like you to have this... Please refrain from power. You now need to learn how to control these powers. It is very dangerous to hold such a bond with nature. It can easily look into you and control you. Yes, yes," he sighed. "Not only can you control nature, but soon, it will learn to control you!"

I backed away. Did he mean that soon I may not be able to make my own choices?

I said, "Is it dangerous to other people?"

The man nodded, and for the first time, I saw fear in his beady little eyes. I have only been here for a week, but I already know a lot about him. He is proud and thinks he is the best. But is it possible that I have brought great danger to him, myself, this world? And, as if he could read my mind, he nodded and explained that I, along with others, am in danger. He introduced me to my new teacher, a kind of physicist, called a hypothermosical. Strangely, he looked familiar.

"Hello," he said, "I'm Mr. Wilson, or as you may recognize me, Eva's dad." I gasped! He was Eva's dad! No wonder he looked so familiar!

"How did you know I had already met Eva?" I boldly asked.

He tapped his finger to his head and said, "They don't let just any-

one become a hypothermosical!"

I nodded. He started to instruct me. Wow this isn't so hard! I thought to myself as I mimicked his deep breathing and stretches. He explained to me that all we had to do was clear my mind. I tried to focus on clearing my mind, but Mr. Wilson said I was stressing too much.

"How can I not focus and clear my mind at the same time?" I yelled.

Mr. Wilson just shook his head. "I never said not to focus, just stay loose and calm – nothing to it, really."

I took a deep breath and started the routine again. After a half hour, I ran up to my room and found Ms. Wine sitting there painting the view from my bedroom window. I dropped my bag to the floor with a loud thud on purpose so I wouldn't have to interrupt her painting less casually.

"Hello Annabelle," she said without looking up.

I plopped onto the bed, mumbled something like "Hi," and drifted off to sleep. Even though I barely moved a muscle with Eva's dad, I was so exhausted. He said it was very natural. He told me doing those exercises takes a lot of energy.

About 45 minutes later, I heard a knock at the door. Ms. Wine was gone, so I called through the key hole, "Who is it?"

"It's me, Eva! Is that you Annabelle?"

I swung the door open gratefully. I was shy, but she was really the only person who stepped out to talk to me besides Ms. Wine and Mr. Wilson. She and I plopped onto the bed as if we were old friends. We plunged into conversation immediately. I started telling her all about the class with her dad, and that's when her smile faded.

"You need a hypothermosical?" she asked, shocked.

"Y-yeah, I have to visit one. W-why..." I stammered.

She whispered something, but I could not hear what she was saying. I wanted to scream at her and say, "Tell me! Nobody is telling me anything! I am stuck! Just help me."

"Eva, I have no friends here, I need to talk to you, about something really important, that I just can't trust anybody with."

I had to trust her. And I did trust her enough, and enough is all I need. Her eyes brightened and her expression softened at the mention of my trust for her.

"I have a different kind of specialty or better said, curse. Sort of like a connection with nature," I began.

Eva cut me off. "I know," she said guiltily. "I-I, followed you and I know."

I was starting to learn more every day, and not just with Mr. Wilson, but about the entire world. I met many people here, but Eva was my best friend. The redhead I met when I met Eva for the first time name was Lydia and the brunette with them was Zia. I am fond of Ms. Wine, who teaches science, and I like my writing teacher, Mr. Orangutan. That's what we call him because of his bushy orange hair. He doesn't mind it. In fact, he calls himself that too! His real name is Mark Brook, but Mr. Orangutan sounds cooler.

Now that I've been here, I decided to write a journal to keep track of the time. I write in it more than once a day. Here is what I wrote yesterday:



Con't from page 12 Thankful Enough

Dear Journal,

I am getting so much better at my work at school and with Mr. Wilson! I understand things better than ever and I have really good relationships with people. It seems weird without parents, but I have Ms. Wine who serves as a wonderful aunt. In fact, at the family tree I saw drawn on the history room wall, I am related to her. I brought this up to the teacher and she said that she is probably my second cousin or something like that. I told this to Ms. Wine and she was delighted. And as for my training to control my powers, when I am really sad, only a few raindrops fall, but that is all! And I have no effect when I'm happy or angry. The only other effect I have is when I'm surprised, but that has declined to only a sharp sound that echoes through the halls. I am really proud of myself. But there is bad news as always. Mr. Wilson told me about some people called the Cakers. They are terrible people and want to rule the world. He said that the Cakers may want my power. I am a little afraid.

From,
Annabelle

One day, I was walking with Eva to math class when suddenly, the room went black. Eva looked at me.

"I didn't do it!" I whispered, shaking my head.

Then, Eva was gone and a bunch of hooded figures appeared and started dragging people off. A gloved hand covered my mouth and I was pulled away by a cloaked person. Before I knew it I was locked in a jail cell with five other people. I tried to feel my way around the darkness.

"Eva!" I whispered. "Eva!" I cried a bit louder. Suddenly a warm hand clutched mine.

"Is that you Annabelle?" a familiar voice called.

"Eva!" I gasped, throwing my arms around her.

It was great luck that I was put in the same cell with Eva. A guilty feeling exploded in me. Mr. Wilson said I was in danger. He had started explaining that the Cakers could sense my presence. I didn't understand what that meant, but I was very afraid and wondered if I had caused all this trouble.

Several hours later, our jail cell opened and we started rushing out, but we were stopped by some guards. Without thinking, I ran up and punched one of them in the stomach. He immediately fell on the ground, unconscious. The second guard was coming toward us. I closed my eyes and lifted my hand as if I was praying and dark clouds started swirling. I was doing it! I tried to make a lightning bolt, but all that happened was a small shock. The guard was already scared and he dropped his gun and ran. Eva stepped out and picked up his gun and clipped it onto her belt. We rushed out and quickly started opening the jail cells, so that the others could get out. Soon, we were a giant mob. Even the teachers joined us. I kept giant trees around us for some protection and we screamed and shouted, heading toward the invaders. I could see them clearly for the first time. They were mean and scary. A tall man was in the lead; he had on armor and was backed up by hundreds of men – the Cakers! But still, we weren't outnumbered. We stood there for a long time when finally, Mr. Wilson stepped out of the crowd. "What do you want?" Mr. Wilson asked.

"We want the girl," they whispered in their deep mellow voices. I

shuddered as my eyes filled with tears.

Then, Eva stepped in front of me.

"Whatever it takes, we will make sure nobody touches anybody in this school," she said.

I wanted to hug her, but I didn't risk it, so I just shot her a smile.

The lead man grabbed Eva and held her high in the air. Just before he was going to fling her across the yard, I kicked him hard on his shin and, with a yowl, he let go of her and she landed with a thud on the dusty grass. I helped her up.

"Just give us her life, her power, and no one will be hurt," said the leader. "It'll be over before you know it."

He drew a silver sword and suddenly, I didn't feel myself anymore. Someone had taken over my mind! Part of me was screaming inside, but most of my mind had been taken over.

"Take it," I whispered.

Mr. Wilson ran forward and cried out, "Annabelle, no!"

I felt a power balance between myself and the part that was taken over. I felt a surge of pain. Two parts of my mind were pulling in different directions. Then suddenly I was in haze. I felt wet, cold, and then gone.

Later I woke up in a hospital bed. I found to my relief, I was myself again. Eva ran forward and tried to explain.

"Hypnotized.... Water.... Thought you were dead....so happy!" she said breathlessly, breaking into a smile. But, somehow I understood what she was saying and mouthed a thank you. For some reason my voice had gone hoarse, but I rapidly got out of bed, waiting to follow the others.

As soon as I stepped outside, I saw a horror scene. Men with swords were threatening children no more than 5 years old, the yard was a mess and chunks of grass flew in every direction. Remembering the moves that I learned in Mr. Master's defense class, I stepped out and blew a big windstorm and "threw" it at the men. At last, they retreated and we were safe. Wailing people were sitting under the big willow tree. Everyone had survived but many were injured. The Cakers may come back soon, but we had time. Enough time.

Everyone was thankful. Thankful enough. I had learned that enough is all we need.



Neha is an intelligent 6th grader who loves to write.



Video games: Setting Boundaries to Stay in Control

6th Grader Suggests Balance

By Siva Kuppala

Are video games good or bad? Are video games good or bad? How do video games affect your knowledge and routine activities? Why do people rate movies and games? This essay will answer these questions and give the transparent reflections and true facts about video games, and it might alter your opinion on games forever. These are very important facts that are obligatory for your life. If you read on, your thoughts will change completely.

Your parents have probably told you that you could play video games for one or two hours, but you might want to say more hours. This wish gradually makes your good and positive habits fade away and perish easily. This is an outstanding example of how games could be wholesome or a disaster. Playing video games or watching TV for a limited time could actually be useful. After routine and exhaustive work, if you play or watch TV for a while, that relieves you from stress and refreshes your mind and energies. In this way, if video games are good, then how could they be pollutants and assailants to your mind?

Too much of a good thing can turn into a bad thing. Food is necessary for life. Without food, life would be impossible because food is fuel for any activity. Food can also harm your body. If you eat too much food or junk food, your normal and slim body will become hefty and overweight. That is why your mom always tells you to avoid excess food to maintain a healthy body. Your body structure gets damaged if you devour junk food. The same principle applies to video games.

Now the question is, what are the consequences if you play video games too much? First, your brain confronts the damage. Then your mind will be psychologically influenced. If you continue the journey of playing violent games, you might end up as an unscrupulous human being. Most kids are not mature enough to balance play time and study or useful time.

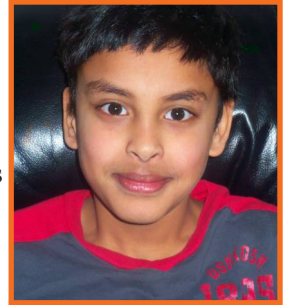
I have been telling you that although video games are a disaster in many ways, there is also actually a positive side to playing them. Depending on how much time and what type of games you explore, your mind reacts in different way. That is why ratings for the games are made. You probably thought that ratings are useless. That is not true at all. Ratings have a gigantic impact on the video games. Children should not play M-rated games because they have psychological impact on their minds

Your body needs to rest sometimes and needs a break from your stressful physical or mental routine jobs, and in that time, playing videogames is a great way to relax. Playing a limited time is fun, but when you play more than what you really need for relaxation, it turns into something called addiction which worries the parents.

Addiction is something that leads you to desperately play a long time which brings turmoil to your career.

These are your ups and downs about video games. Everyone should listen to the parents and elders and judge between duties and fun, how long to play, and what kind of games to play. The most important thing is to put this strategy into practice.

I hope that you understand this correctly because this vital information must be heard and followed. I have asked you the question whether video games are good or bad. The answer is both, and it depends on how you handle it.



Siva is a 6th grader who knows how to control his video game playing.



Concert or Party?

By Trishiet Ray

"Here you go Carson, you're invited to my party!" Dan, Carson's best friend, exhilaratingly asserted.

"Wow, thanks Dan!" Carson squealed. Dan's parties were always the best parties in town. No the Earth! Make it the universe! As Carson strolled down the noble steps of cement that led the way out of school, he fantasized what the explosion of party would be like this time: endless choices of video games, a new enormous movie theater with a colossal screen that had been the talk of the school. Also, in Dan's basement, there was loads of games and heaps of toys towering over the room.

"I am DEFINITELY going to this party!" Carson declared as he headed towards his house.

Rushing home, Carson sought shelter from the scorching sunlight that highlighted everything like a spotlight. *Ahh! home sweet home.* Finally, when he refreshed in the cool, shady indoors, he curled up on the couch deciding to do his favorite activity. Reaching for the current independent reading book he was reading, *Ginger Pye*, he got comfortable on the fluffy cushion where his head rested.

Riiiiiiiiing! Swiftly springing up, Carson clutched the screeching phone as if it was a poisonous snake.

"Hello, you have reached the Lotes residence," Carson addressed formally.

"Hey Carson, just calling to remind you of the concert this Saturday. People are going to marvel at us. Think about it Carson, it's going to be the best music Amercia's ever heard!" Mr. Aurer, Carson's music teacher dreamingly remarked.

Yup, this concert's going to be great Carson decided. He sure was going to enjoy rocking out on his guitar on Saturday. Wait a minute... Saturday? SATURDAY!

Carson's head throbbed from the pressure. Oh how did he get himself into this mess? Puzzled and confused were two words that described how Carson felt. Through a never ending maze he went, or at least that's what it felt like. One single question bubbled in his mind and clung to Carson: Concert or party? Same time, same day, but different places. Praying that he could just split himself in two and his troubles could just melt away, Carson thought about what he should do. Silently, a wise saying from his mother repeated in his head. Echoing in his mind was: Do what's more important to you. Think... think... Deeply sighing, Carson launched himself up, making his decision.

Suddenly, a question appeared out of nowhere. What was he going to up, say? Taking faster strides, Carson thought some more. Clip-clop! His silver Nike sneakers bounded against the steps of Dan's house like hooves. Time slowed down altogether. The universe was waiting... waiting...

Here goes nothing, Carson thought as his finger gradually crept towards the doorbell in unhurried motion. Ding dong!

"Hey Carson, what's up?" Dan inquired.

"Bad news." Carson replied gravely. Five minutes later, Dan was informed about the concert that would ruin everything.

"Sorry Dan, but I been practicing and... and... and I WANT TO GO TO THE CONCERT!" Carson blurted out.

"Aw Carson, it's okay." Dan comforted him sympathetically, even though his eyes seemed to droop to the ground. Fidget, fidget, from both of them. Awkward silence. Meaningful looks soothed them both through a silent conversation.

* * * * *

Saturday afternoon, the concert up on stage: the real deal.

Surges of sorriness for missing the party that meant so much to Carson, that meant even more to his best friend, wafted over to Carson. G flat, F sharp, B, G, D flat. Focus. Believing that

he wasn't mentally prepared, Carson was ready to give up, and he knew perfectly well that his guitar solo that was a vital part to the concert was coming up. He couldn't do it, he just couldn't.

Beep! Thankful that it currently wasn't his turn to play yet, Carson darted towards his pocket and seized his lime-green Nokia cell phone. He gawked at the short text message that the screen displayed. Waves of determination repelled the deleterious cogitation. You're ready! His heart apprised him. Ungluing his eyes from the text message that cleared his mind, he courageously stood up, strolled out from back stage, and hoisted his guitar to the sky. Melodious notes started magically pouring out of his guitar and floating in the air. No one word could describe the delicate, frolicking notes flowing out with each strum of Carson's fingers. Pitches perfect, rhythm intact, Carson continued. When the end came near, he gave it his best. With Carson's effort and new-found bravery, the miraculous ricocheted off the auditorium walls until the song was finally over.

Moment's later, everything was drowned out by the deafening applause and blaring screams of the clamorous audience. Through the blurs of people, he discerned his family, their bright, ear-to-ear grins lighting up the room. He knew their smiles could wrap around the world ten times easily.

Innocently backing away from the roaring mobs of people that inched forward, Carson snatched at his Nokia. Once again he gazed with wonder at the diminutive, but important letters that formed a short message. Don't worry, these weren't any old words. These words had given Carson the courage that made the concert a success. Burnt on the screen was this little message that made its way wriggling like a worm into Carson's heart and told him that Dan cared was:

Hi Carson,

Good luck on the concert and your solo, I know you'll do a phenomenal job! Rev it up and give it all you got!

-Dan

P.S. Rock on buddy :)



Trishiet writes a great short story.

The Sun

Emma Indelicato

I am one with the sun.
I rise and set with her.
I am the companion of her as she travels,
Steadily and constantly,
Around and round again.
As we go,
She adds such warmth and color to all about her;
This fades as she moves forward.
But in journey,
She never moves;
In the catastrophe of a deep spinning space,
She has grounded herself and has found her permanent center.
So here I am,
Always following, always observing,
Always learning how to find my own.



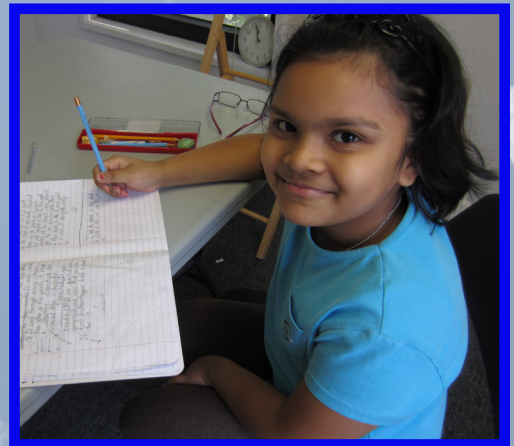
A Wish to Touch the Clouds

By Jayshri Ganguly

Awish I have is touching the clouds. I want this wish because my mom touched a cloud. She touched the clouds by going up a mountain. She said, "Well, it's just fog."

I said, "I still want to touch the clouds with my own hands and feel the clouds."

I keep on wishing and wishing and wishing to touch the clouds. I wonder if there might be some aliens or even one alien, but I think there are no aliens up there. I can take an extra, extra large bag and put some clouds in the extra, extra large bag. Then I will put the bag in a big van or even a truck. When I reach my house, I will open the bag and all the clouds will float around in my house. I think that will be really fun and all the people in my family will look at the clouds. I also wish to join all the clouds. We will fly from one country to another all around the world. I will learn about all the countries and see how all the people look. My wish is to touch the clouds.



Jayshri is a talented 3rd grader who spends a lot of time dreaming and writing.

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The Pencil's Story

By Rohan Lalapet

"Blah, blah, blah..."

"Quiet down now and I will read you the story."

One day, a long time ago, in a school lived a pencil and beside it was a paper. The pencil had an idea of drawing a planet. He named it Paper Planet.

For years, Paper Planet was invincible. But one day, Paper Planet was vulnerable.

"RRRRRRRIINNNNNNNNGGGGG! Oh No!" cried Pencil. "I've heard stories about that eraser! Here it comes! Maybe if I am nice to him, he'll be nice to me."

The boy, Sammy Isenberg, walked in.

Eraser said, "What do you have that my super eraser zapper can zap?"

"Huh? Oh nothing," said Pencil.

"Move over," Eraser said, annoyed.

"No! It's going to be something really spooky!" said Pencil.

"Just let me see it!" said Eraser.

As Pencil moved over -- "BOOM!" -- Eraser zapped Paper Planet.

From that day, their battles got complicated, stranger and more serious.

The next day, Sammy Isenberg came to school. He got homesick when he came to school the day before.

"La la la la," Sammy hummed. "What a great day at school!"

As soon as Sammy came to his desk, he touched the paper that the super eraser zapper exploded. The massive explosion erased everything in Paper Planet, but Pencil had enough time to survive the disaster.

Years later, after the explosion, Eraser put up a bet. "I will set the clock to one minute and you draw the whole paper planet with every detail."

Pencil agreed, and the next day, Eraser set the clock to one minute. When Pencil finished, it was two minutes.

"You will be erased forever," Eraser said. While pointing his new eraser zapper, he shot it at Pencil and the ball grew bigger and bigger until it was a centimeter away from Pencil. Pencil grabbed a silver paper coin and the ball reflected back to Eraser and



Rohan is a 3rd grader who enjoys writing a good tale.

hit his machine and exploded.

Epilogue

Pencil survived the explosion, but Paper Planet came back and the people named him Paper Pencil Spirit.

THE END

OK class – take out your textbooks and write a fairy tale!

THE REAL END



10 New Contests! Check

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Poems

By Nehal Thakkar

ADVENTURE

I lay on my bed thinking what adventure is next,
Climbing a mountain or sitting in the sea,
The adventure that lays in my head no one will see except me.

MY FRIENDS

Climbing a mountain or sitting in the sea, I know my friends will be there for me,
Having their friendship is worth more than anything for me,
After my family of course.

FRIENDSHIP

My friends are always there for me no matter what,
They have my back,
No matter what I feel,
They always know how,
To make me laugh and if I am feeling down,
They cheer me up,
Thank you to my Friends and I hope I do the same to you!



Why I Want to be a Veterinarian When I Grow Up

By Bridgett Alvarez

I remember it as if it were just yesterday that I decided I wanted to be a veterinarian. I was just a small child. I recall seeing the birds in the sky, the squirrels in the trees, the rabbits hopping around and all of the other animals around me. I remember telling myself how beautiful our earth is because of them and I wondered what life would be like without these amazing animals. It was then and there that I knew I wanted to care for animals when I got older. Not only that, but I knew that I wanted a pet of my own to care for and love.

I did not really ask my parents for a pet until I was a little bit older. I was still young, but I knew that I really wanted my own puppy. I begged my parents for months until one day, I finally got one. It was the summer of 2003. I was so surprised and excited when I got my new puppy. I immediately knew that her name would be Princess. She was perfect to me and I knew that I would love her forever. As soon as I got my new puppy, I just could not help but want another pet to care for. As Princess grew, I decided to get more. I've had many pets in my life that I will never forget and I have many pets that I still accommodate and love. I currently have two dogs, seven birds with babies on the way, a bunny and a fish. I love and care for each and every one of them no matter how small or big. I would have to say that my pets have had a huge impact on my decision to become a veterinarian. They showed me how important they are to us and how happy they make us. They showed me responsibility, joy and love. I do not look at them as just a bunch of animals, but a part of the family. No matter the size or physical appearance, I believe

that all animals are important and should be treated with kindness and respect. It is gruesome to think that anyone could hurt a living animal. Animal abuse happens everywhere, whether it is in your town, city, state, or country, it happens. I hate hearing about these incidents because it just breaks my heart. When I am older I hope I can help these poor defenseless animals. Hurting animals is inhumane and shameful, and more people should be aware of it and try to stop it. Animal abuse has really inspired me to become an animal doctor because I want to be able to help those animals who really need it.

I already know that I want to be a veterinarian and I also know that I am not the only one.

My advice for anyone who wishes to be a veterinarian is to keep working hard no matter how difficult it gets. To me, this is one of the best professions ever. Even though it is a difficult job, it teaches a lot and shows how dedicated someone can be. I want to be a veterinarian because something I feel I will succeed in, not because I will have a good job, but because I will be doing something good for our animals.



My advice
veterinarian
matter
probably

it is
succeed in,
a good
be

Save the Rainforest

By Krishna Madhav

Rainforests should not be cut down because rainforest destruction endangers plants and animals, produces deserts and harms humans.

The trees of the rainforest provide food, shelter and water for the animals and plants. Without the trees,

many animals and plants would become extinct. the food

would starve to death if the trees were gone. Many migratory birds, like the ruby-throated humming bird, go to the rainforest when it is winter in North America. These migratory birds depend on the trees of the rainforest to live during the North American winter. Without the trees, these birds might not be alive



The trees also start chain. The animals

today.

Humans cut down trees to make farmlands, but the soil is too wet and shifty for farming. When farmers come to buy the land, they ignore that fact and clear the forests, anyway. The soil, with nothing to block the heat, dries up and blows away, making a dry place called a desert.

All humans need medicine and most of the world's medicines come from rainforests. Without these medicines, many diseases that could be cured would kill people.

Carbon dioxide is a gas that causes global warming. Rainforests control global warming by absorbing carbon dioxide. The end of the rainforest means an increase in global warming. Oxygen is made by the rainforest. Without the rainforest, oxygen levels would be much lower.

To save the rainforest, call the senator that represents your state in Congress to make a bill about saving the rainforest. The bill might become a law.



Krishna is a hard-working 5th grader.



Learning Martial Arts

By Alejandro

When I first started martial arts I was one of the smallest students. The other kids were a lot bigger and they were intimidating. The first couple of times that my mom brought me to class, I was scared to stay there alone. I was only six years old. I went to every class and suddenly I got used to it; somehow I began to find it more appealing. After a couple of days I received my uniform, but in class we were supposed to call it a Dobok. The next class they pulled me off to one side and told me to pull my punch out. I half heartily stuck out my punch. My instructor took a picture and then hung it up in the lobby for everyone to see. It was under a label saying, "New students."

There were always new students and it was a very large class.

The class was fun and interesting to be in because there were always new faces and many chances to make new friends.

Many of the kids there were disrespectful, but I was always paying attention and trying my hardest to excel in class.

For the rank of white belt you have four stripes.

The black one is to show that you have learned the five tenants: Courtesy-to be nice to everyone you encounter, Integrity-to never lie about anything, Perseverance-to never give up, Self control-to control yourself, Indomitable spirit-to believe in yourself - a spirit that can never be broken. These were the five tenants that every student learned as a white belt. I also had to learn how to count to ten in Korean. If you ever go to my school and ask a 5-year old how to count to ten in Korean he or she would say it as if it were his or her name. Students had to learn all of this and much more to get their black stripe. For your red stripe you had to learn all of the new techniques that came with your current belt. Your white stripe was for learning your form. A form is a pattern or a series of movements. As you move up in the belt system the forms get a lot longer and more complex. Finally the blue stripe

was for learning your sparring sets. Sparring is basically fighting with gear. It is not dangerous and can be a lot of fun. You have sparring sets for every belt except for black belt. Once you have learned all of your stripes you can test for your next belt. Before you can test, however, you receive a paper where you, your parent or guardian, and your teacher have to sign. Your teacher has to mark whether you are well behaved in class or not and whether you are doing well in school and you turn in your homework. If you do not do well in school, then you were not permitted to test. The belt order is white, orange, yellow, camouflage, green, purple, blue, brown, red, and then there are a total of nine degrees of black belt. For belts white through brown you get stars for every

five classes that you come to. You get a red star for marching in the annual Memorial Day Parade, and you get a gold star for bringing in a friend for buddy day. Buddy day is a day where once a month you can bring a friend

“Martial Arts have definitely helped me a lot in my life.”

in who is not in martial arts to come and see the type of things that the students learn on a daily bases.

Once I tested for my orange belt I became more accustomed to coming to class on a daily bases. It became my second home after about a year. I was going through each belt on a regular schedule: two months per belt. I struggled on my green belt for about six months and I was having a tough time. I was at a standstill when I was on my greenbelt. It was not until after I had a private lesson one-on-one with the instructor that it became easier for me. When I got a little older, I realized that taking these classes was not coming easy to my parents. It was very expensive and they were sacrificing a lot of her time to take me to class.

When I finally tested for my black belt, I was about eleven years old. At about this time the company in which my mom worked had closed down and my mom was without a job. It then became very difficult for my parents to continue paying for my classes, but luckily, after a couple of months, my mom found a new job. Things were finally great and back to normal.

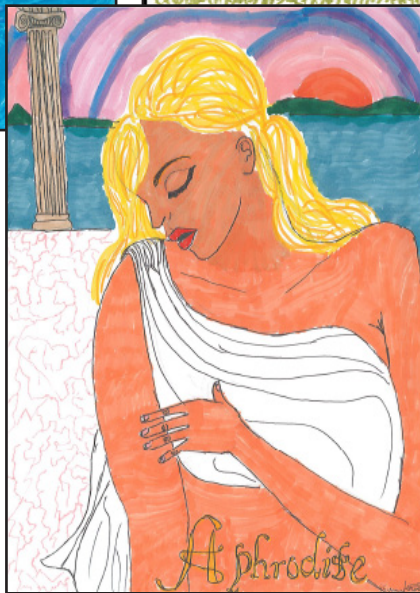
I kept on advancing through my belts throughout my years. I am now thirteen and am a second degree black belt. I am still taking classes and I am hopefully going to test very soon. Now that my sister is older and has her license, she can drive me to my classes when my mom cannot.

Martial Arts have definitely helped me a lot in my life. It has showed me discipline, respect, perseverance, to have confidence, courtesy and integrity. It has definitely shaped me into a better person. A lot of my little cousins and younger friends come and watch me in class. They get inspired to start taking classes themselves. I definitely recommend martial arts to young kids because it teaches them very important characteristics in life.



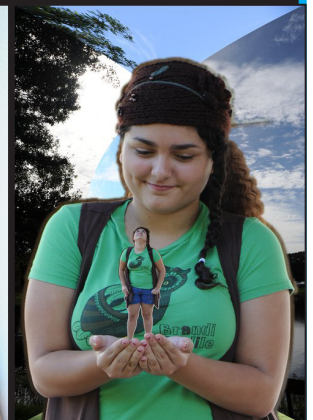
Alejandro in uniform.

MYTHICAL ARTWORK



Artist

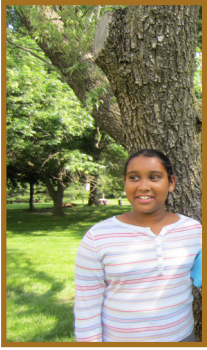
Emma Indelicato



Tree

By Divya Penthyala

Haiku



The tree has pollen.
The tree has pretty flowers.
The tree has bright leaves.

Divya studies hard!

A Journey

By Armaan Kazi



But first the golden ape
will give a ride.
He will ask for something he wants
from you.

Then you will eat one of the magic
cookies.
It will take you to the rocks of woe.

As you walk west, you walk to the
pearls.
Whatever you think of, it will take
you there.

Then you come to the house of give.
Give them something and they will
give you something, but it will rain.

Stand on the green after the trade and
it will send you home.

Mother, Oh Mother

By Cathy Cao

Mother, oh Mother, you shine like the sun,
From taking care of me you never will run.
You are busy and loving,
Funny and proud,
You can always find me in a big, big, big crowd.

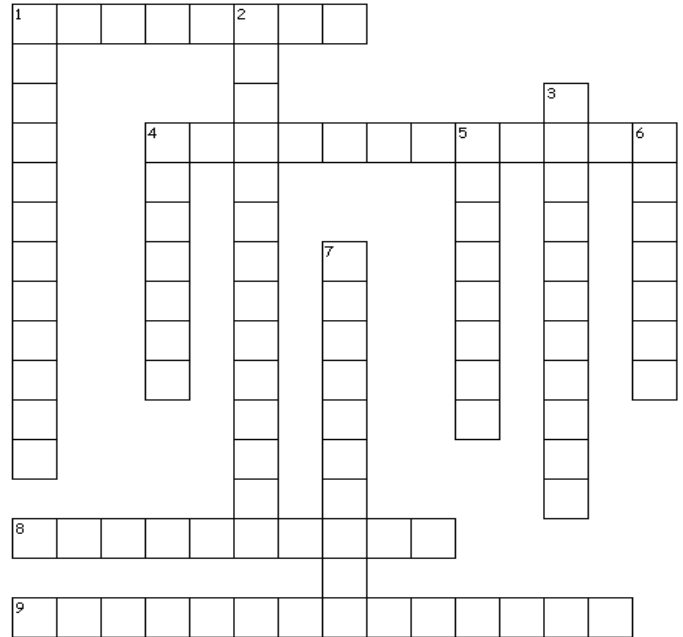
When you are tired and grumpy,
You never say, "Cathy, please go away,"
Instead, you simply say, "Come on, let's play!"

Mother, oh Mother, I will love you forever,
All of your lessons have made me quite clever.
I hope that you see,
That I know that you love me,
And I know that's true,
Because I certainly love you too!



Swimming

By Rohan Lalapet, Triqib Ray, and
Everett Murray



Across

1. you wear it when you are swimming
4. float freestyle
8. there is water inside this fun slide
9. boys swim with this swimsuit

Down

1. you swim in it
2. these toys are played with in the water
3. you jump off the board
4. a seal's foot
5. this gives you air
6. it protects your eyes
7. dive in the waves



My Trip to Boston

By Prithvi Gosala

My trip to Boston was a great adventure. Boston's oldest buildings come from colonial times. One of the buildings was where the colonist leaders had their conventional meeting. I also saw the trail of Sam Adams. I was in Boston for only a week.

While I was in Boston, I visited some of the best colleges in the world. To name a few, I visited Boston University and MIT. MIT is not really in Boston. It's in Cambridge, the city next to Boston. At MIT, I visited the science lab. The scientists are currently studying cancer.

I visited the Boston harbor every day I was in Boston. The Boston harbor stretches as far as my eyes could see. My mom brother and I used take long walks along the harbor almost every-day. I went on a boat ride called "The Codzilla". The workers on the boat said it's the fastest boat ride ever and it was amazing.

Even though I only stayed in Boston for a week, it was the best part of my summer. I will never forget the historical buildings and the colleges I visited. What I'll never forget most of all is that amazing boat ride.



Prithvi is a great writer who loves Boston.

Eating out with my Dad

By Jalen Ferguson

I enjoy going to restaurants with my family, but this time it was just my Dad and I. We went to the restaurant called Pizzeria Uno. It is incredible!

The food is always spicy and there are big portions. The waitress is nice because they serve you extra food if you ask. You also can get milk or juice when you want it. If you are still hungry, they will give food to take home.

I like eating out with my dad at Pizzeria Uno!



Jalen loves his dad and pizza.

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