

This Is Us:
Post-Pandemic
Personal Narratives

Young Authors
2020-2021

Written by:
The Students of
Our Lady of the Hamptons School
160 N. Main Street
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Dear Readers,

Over more than twenty years, the students of OLH have always "published" a volume of creative writing to be presented at a special September assembly. Amid the volumes on the bookshelf in my office are those with dates stretching from 1996-2019. The obviously *missing edition* is from **2020**...the year of the pandemic.

Knowing that our children, like those all over the world, were thrust into unknown territory for a quarter of the last school year, a decision was made to invite the suddenly masked students to let us know *who they are, what they have been thinking* and *who they have become* during this time.

As you read these pieces, remember that six year olds write of what they know.....nine year olds stretch their creative imaginations....and thirteen year olds seek to impart their advice, experience and **wisdom**. Despite their newly-acquired advanced technology skills, facility with zoom meetings and GoogleClassroom, the young authors actually put the pen to the paper and wrote these stories.

During a class zoom session one second grader new to our school, was heard to comment: "I love zoom....now I know what these kids look like" (without their masks). Read these stories that truly unmask who these children are!

We are grateful to the teachers who mentored this project, the parents who provided opportunities for these new ideas...and the students themselves who have taken us into Volume 27...2021.....*THIS IS US*...post-pandemic narratives.

-*Sister Kathy*



What I Love

My family is the best. My dad is really great. He takes us for ice cream. My brothers and I love to go together. I also love when I get to go ride the carousel in Park Slope, Brooklyn. I love that I live here and in the city.

-Skye Imbo

The Secret

I know a secret. It is two blocks away from my house. It is called The Secret Garden. I go there to take pictures with my camera. I always have a lot of fun. Sometimes when you go in there are flowers and butterflies. Sometimes, we just stay outside the door.

-Paul Gerardi

Things I Do with Mom

It is special having a mom like mine. I love to go to the hair salon with her. It is my most favorite thing to do. We also do a lot of baking and playing with my dog Dune. Dune gives the best hugs and kisses, just like Mommy. I love them.

-Kennedy McGhee

Traveling

My family and I travel to Maine all the time. I go ATV riding with my dad. We also go boating and skiing. We go in every season. I love to explore places. I will go to Maine again soon.

-Leonardo Caruso

School Time or Sister Time?

Hello, my name is Myla. I am in Kindergarten at OLH, and I have two teachers named Ms. A! I really love school. Getting to do math is the best. Sometimes while I am there, I miss my little sister Nora. When we are home together, we like to play outside or with the I-Pad. We are best friends.

-**Myla Turnbull**

Silly Facts to Know

Today I want you to know two facts about me. One of them is really silly. I love to mow the lawn. The funny part is my lawnmower's name is Frank. Mowing the lawn is a good responsibility to have, and Frank helps me to do it. The other fact is I love swimming. My favorite swimming spot is Antigua. My favorite swimming person is my sister, EJ.

-**Greyson Fennell**

Family Is Special

I love my family. I have three cousins and a little brother named Jameson. My brother is the most special to me. I love him the most because he is so silly. He makes me laugh every day. I love cuddling with him and my cousins on the couch.

-**Charlotte DeLalio**

My Favorite Place

The coolest thing about me is that I have my own house in Barbados. When I am there, I love to go into the pool. There are some cool, really tiny spaces by my pool that only I can fit into. It is silly. My brother gets jealous. My whole family goes even my grandparents sometimes. I love Barbados.

- **William Marchese**

I Am Always Dancing

At my house, it is always time to dance. I dance everywhere, all the time. I can even dance outside in the summer by my pool. I dance in the pool. After the dancing, I eat my favorite ice cream. -**Gabriella McCue**

Puppy Love

At home, I have two dogs. I really like to play outside with them. Sometimes, we sit outside on a chair together. I play with my tablet, and they sit on my lap. Animals are nice to have as playmates.

- **Kelvin Matute**

Silly Snowman

My favorite place is Rocking Horse Ranch. When I am not there with my family, we like to be at the beach. My favorite memory at the beach with my family was building a snowman. Instead of a sandcastle, we built a sand snowman. That was funny. -**Elias Macias**

Friendship

In school, Ms. Araneo says friends are so special, and we should always treat them nicely. I love when she says that because it makes me think of my friend Izzy. We like to go sledding together when it snows. I have a cute dog named Sonny. He plays in the snow with us. He likes to eat it, and we laugh. -**Annabelle Alessandrini**

Sandy Footprints

I love the beach. The best part about the beach is going with my family and friends. I like when Aubrey comes to the beach with me. We play together all the time. I like when we bury each other in the sand. We like to wash the sand off in the water afterwards. -**Madeline D'Italia**

Delightful Dylan

I have a special friend named Dylan. We met at a BIG pool party. On that day, it started to rain so hard, so we went inside. We had candy and games. We even had a race. Dylan is a great friend, and now we go to school together too. I am happy. -**Harper Callahan**

My Little Sister

I like to play with my little sister. We play dolls and 'Moms and Sisters.' My sister makes me laugh. We play outside. We like to go to the beach. At the beach, we make sandcastles and go in the water

-**Beatrice Connelly**

Edible Art

I love to do art projects. At home, at school, art is my favorite. I like to draw and color, but that is not my favorite art. Last year, at school we made a sandwich. Then, we got to eat them. I got to eat my art. It was cool.

-**Camila Jara**

Silly Dylie

My mommy and sister Amanda always tell me I am the best at being silly. They always take pictures and videos of me doing funny stuff. Amanda giggles at me the most. I make faces in the mirror, and they just laugh. Sometimes I even dress up to surprise them. -**Dylan Cheewing**

Playful Playground

My best day ever was at the playground. My mom and dad were both there. I like when we all play together. We played tag and hide-and-seek. I won, and they chased me. Then, they pushed me on the swings. I love my family.

-**Kimberly Leon-Sanchez**

I Am the Best at Lots of Things

I am good at doing lots of things. I am good at going to the beach and drawing. I am good at dressing up on dress-up days. I am best at helping my mom. In the garden, we have the most fun. She has the prettiest flowers.

-**Isabelle Lucenti**

Soccer Star

I am going to be a soccer player when I am big. I am a great soccer player. I always play soccer with my dad. He takes me to play every day. One time I kicked his foot and then I scored a goal. We run and run and run.

-

Markus Dominguez

My Dog Oreo

I love my dog. He plays with me, runs with me, and he does everything nice with me. He is the best dog. My dog's name is Oreo. Oreo is very playful; he loves to run with me and play with other people. He scratches the door to let someone know when someone is here. He is excited to people he hasn't met. He is the only family dog. If I have to choose between another dog and Oreo, I would always choose Oreo. Oreo makes me feel good.

-William Altamirano

Drums

I like to play the drums after breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I play the drums with my dad, and sometimes mom. My dad teaches me Lebanon songs on the drums. I have played the drums for three years. I like playing with my family.

-Sophia Assouad

Volcano Project

I made a volcano as a project. I watched a video and made it. I made it outside, and my dad came and put vinegar and baking soda in it! It exploded! I made the volcano out of paper and paint. We used black and white paint which makes gray. I used a box and strong tape. I put a bottom on the box for the vinegar and the baking soda. I put it outside on the wood.

-Lyam Deleg

My Favorite Things

My favorite season is summer. I like to go to the beach club. It is my favorite place. I love the beach club because we can dig up the jetty that is 102 years old. There is very yummy ice cream. My favorite is chocolate with M&Ms. I like to go to the beach club with all four of my cousins.

One of my favorite activities is riding my ATV. It is so fun to ride around the property. In the winter, I enjoy sledding at Shinnecock Golf Course. My dog is Lucy. She is very tiring because she always wants you to play with her. If you don't play with her, she will bite you! Her teeth are very sharp!

-Patrick Edwards

Bike Riding Fun

I like to ride on my bike with my family. It is fun! I like to ride to Shinnecock every once in a while. I like having a little sister. It is fun riding my bike with her. I like practicing riding my bike. I also like going to bike rides with new friends, and I like going with my family for car rides and meeting new friends. I like some holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and November 11th, which is when we celebrate soldiers. I like having fun with my classmates and going to school.

-Laura Belle Galbiati

Unicorn Island

I went to a beach that is a special beach. It is called Unicorn Island. It is special because there are unicorns there. They only come out in the summertime because they like the warm weather. The unicorns love to swim. I love the ocean there. I love Unicorn Island.

-Frankie Hoffman

My Trip to the Farm

One of my favorite days was when we went to the farm. I went with my mom, dad, and my sister. I went there for eleven years. I am in kindergarten. I got to ride a pink pig and pick pumpkins! It wasn't a real pig; it was plastic. But it was still fun. I picked a pumpkin, and then it fell down, but I kept it anyway. It was a great day!

-Brianna Lema

My Dog and I

My favorite thing to do is to play with my dog. My dog is a girl named Luna. We got her from the farm when she was one year old. She is a German Shepherd. Sometimes I play with her, and sometimes I feed her my sister's yogurt! Luna licked the yogurt, but she bites the spoon and I can't get it back! We lie on the couch and watch videos. She also likes the beach because she likes to bite the rocks. Luna runs really fast! I love my dog, Luna.

-Sophia Lopez

Bike Riding

I am Monserrat but my family calls me Montse. I am six years old. One thing I like to do is ride my bike. My bike is pink and pretty. I am learning to ride with my training wheels. I go a little slow because I am still learning how to ride. My dad goes bike riding with me. We go in our neighborhood. It is really fun!

-Monserrat Maldonado

My Family and I

My name is Dylan Martinez. I have a mom, a dad, and a brother, Nathan. I am bigger than Nathan. I am six years old, and I am in kindergarten. Sometimes I help my mom cook and clean up. I like to go to work with my dad. We have a dog named Casper. I love being with my family.

-Dylan Martinez

Playing Outside

I love to play with my dad outside. We were playing hide-and-seek. My dad was counting, and he found me. Then my dad was hiding, and I was counting. I found him in a tree! Then we went inside, and my mom made us egg, cheese, juice, and apple. It was my favorite time with Dad.

-Ashley Morocho

My Awesome Day

My name is Indigo Nasatka. One of my favorite things to do is to go to Long Beach and swim in the water. I also love to bring my frisbee and throw it at the beach. I throw it to my sister, and she is a good catcher. I am good at jumping high and catching the frisbee! I love to make sand castles, too. A day at the beach is awesome, but my toes get really sandy and wet. I get ice cream from the ice cream man, and then I go home. I have fun at the beach!

-Indigo Nasatka

Horses

I love riding horses They are my favorite animals in the whole wide world. I like to ride horses in the spring. My favorite horse's name is Palomito which means popcorn in English! To take care of horses, you clean their poop and change their hay. You also have to bring them new water. I want to be a veterinarian when I grow up. **-Tracy Pacheco**

I Like...

I like to play on the beach and go under the water with goggles. I like to stay at home and go to my friend's house. I like to go with my mom and dad to work. I like to go to the playground. I like to make projects. I like to play at school. I like to make Easter eggs, and then I catch the Easter eggs. I like to make eggs for the Easter bunny that look like he broke his eggs. I like Easter! **-Michelle Rojas**

My Birthday Memory

One of my favorite days was when I turned six. On my birthday, I got Power Ranger toys! I played with my friend JohnPaul. I also got two Spider Man phones to call people. I also got Avenger cupcakes, my favorite! It was the best day ever! **-Daniel Torres**

My Favorite Things

I like making things with my sister in my house, I like playing in the house, and outside. We play baseball, we play tag, we play hide-and-seek. We go with my mom somewhere. My favorite thing to do is go on the trampoline, and then make a fort. **-Jayden Yanza**



FIRST GRADE AUTHORS

The Life of Seamus

Part 1: My Past I was born on January 15, 2014. I was born in Islip, New York. I then grew up in Flanders, New York. I live with my parents and my sisters. Having two sisters is a lot to grow up with. I am sure some of you can relate.

Part 2: My Life Now I am now seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is Religion. In my free time, I love to color. One word to describe myself is caring. I am very caring for my pet dog Guinness. I love him so much, and it is my job to take care of him.

Part 3: My Future When I grow up, I want to become a teacher. I think teachers are the coolest people ever! I want to teach all subjects. I want to teach math, reading, science, social studies, religion, and physical education. I will go to college to learn how to be a teacher. I want to teach all different ages from kindergarten to college students.

-Seamus Cameron

Football Fanatic

I was born on September 29, 2014 and raised in New York, New York. I grew up in an apartment with my mom, dad, and sister Addie.

I am now six years old and in the first grade. This is my first year at OLH. A big change of scenery from New York. My favorite subject in school is physical education. I love the gym at OLH. We have a track, and I love to run on it. Miss Valle and Miss Seabury let my classmates and me race on the track if we have indoor recess. In my free time, I love to play football. My favorite team is the New Orleans Saints. What can I say? I have the need for speed! One word to describe myself is nice. When I am nice, people are nice back to me. I have made new friends at my new school because of being a nice kid.

When I grow up, I want to become a football player.. It is my dream to play for the SaintS. I would like to play the position of receiver or running back. I would have my family in the stadium cheering me on. My mom would definitely make me a giant sign to hold up so everyone could see. **-Luke Cinelli**

Dance Break

I was born on September 12, 2014 at Southampton Hospital. I grew up in Hampton Bays with my mom, dad, brother, and dog.

I am now six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is math. I love to count to 100, add, and subtract. I could solve math problems all day and all night! In my free time, I love to watch tv. I have so many favorite shows. My older brother does not like the same shows as me, but he is a great brother and still lets me watch them. One word to describe myself is funny. I am always making my teachers laugh!

When I grow up, I want to become a dance teacher. I love to dance! I am always dancing around the classroom, which doesn't always make my teachers too happy. Sometimes my teacher will let us have a break and do a Just Dance! This is the best day ever when it happens! I love to dance, dance, dance! **-Luciana Fandino**

Zero Gravity Man

I was born on January 29, 2014 in Southampton Hospital. I grew up in Sag Harbor with my mom and dad. Sag Harbor is an awesome town because it is right on the water.

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is science. I love learning about science! There are so many interesting facts. I learn so many new vocabulary words too. In my free time, I love to draw. I love to draw basically anything. One word that I would use to describe myself is fun. I love to have fun at school and at home. I love to have fun especially at recess. I even love to have fun when learning new things!

___When I grow up, I would like to become an astronaut. I want to feel the zero-gravity feeling! I want to invent a machine that transforms objects into... I am actually going to keep the rest a secret! I don't want any of you kids to steal my invention!

-Victor Froes

Disco's Friend

I was born on January 21, 2014 at Stony Brook Hospital and grew up in Bridgehampton. I have two older brothers named Ignatius and Teddy.

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is physical education. I love to play every sport. I am trying to be just as great as my brothers in every sport. It can be tough having two older brothers, but I love to play with them. My favorite thing to do is to play outside. My teachers always say it is important to get some fresh air, and I have to agree with that. One word to describe myself is nice.

When I grow up, I want to become a veterinarian because I love animals. Last year, I got a dog named Disco. He is a black lab. I love Disco so much. He is so much fun to play with, and he definitely makes my entire family laugh. When I grow up, I want to take care of dogs just like Disco.

Oliver Fulweiler

En Pointe

I was born on February 21, 2014. I was born and raised in Southampton, New York! I grew up just with me, my mom, and my dad

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is math. My favorite thing to do in my free time is to play. I love to play at recess with my friends. I love when it is a sunny day, and we get to play. I do not like when it rains, and the playground is wet. Our playground is awesome at OLH. One word to describe myself is happy.

__When I grow up, I want to be a ballerina. I love that we get to take dance class at school! It is so cool how we get to learn so many fancy moves. I want to have pretty ballet slippers and dance on a stage in front of many people. I will have my parents sitting in the front row.

Sofia Garcia

No More Sick Pets

I was born on June 7, 2014 in Southampton, and I grew up with my family in Southampton. I was raised by my mom, dad, and siblings.

I am now six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is math. I love doing math iReady problems on iPads. It is so cool that we can learn and have fun at the same time. It is so cool that we can use iPads to help us learn! In my free time, I love to dance! One word to describe myself is happy.

When I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian. I love animals! I want to learn how to cure them from bad diseases.

Emely Lucero

To the Moon

I was born on May 21, 2014. I was born in Southampton, and I grew up in Sagaponack. I live with my mom and my dad.

I am six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is math. We get to learn twelve different chapters. Each chapter gets its own book. So cool! In my free time, I love to play tennis. It is so much fun to go play on the courts. I also love to play my Nintendo Switch in my free time. One word to describe myself is kind.

I want to be an astronaut because I want to see the moon. I think it would be so cool to see the moon! We read different stories about the moon all the time in first grade. We also learned about the moon phases. The moon is awesome, and I can't wait to travel there when I am an adult.

Lucas Orduno

Look Out for Officer Pallaroso

I was born on October 25, 2014 in Riverhead. I was raised in Hampton Bays by my mom and dad.

I am now six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject is math! I love to raise my hand and answer questions. Well, sometimes I am just so excited that I forget to raise my hand. In my free time, I love to go to the park with my parents. I love to play soccer with my parents. I usually play with my mom because my dad is really really good. I hope to be a great player like him someday! One word to describe myself is happy.

When I grow up, I want to become a police officer. I want to stop cars from going too fast. Cars sometimes go too fast in front of my house and in front of OLH. I want to be a police officer to protect kids from getting hurt by fast cars.

Santino Pallaroso

I'm My Own Boss

I was born on August 15, 2014. I was born in Chicago, Illinois. Also, known as the Windy City!

I am now six years old and in the first grade. I now live in Ridge, New York, with my mom, my dad, and Vader. My favorite subject in school is math! I love adding and subtracting. In my free time, I love to play board games. There are so many fun board games. Board games were really popular during quarantine. One word to describe myself is grateful. I am so grateful for my mom and dad. I love them so much, and they love me so much. They wake up extra early to bring me to school.

_____When I grow up, I want to be a business owner. I want to be my own boss. I want to be able to do whatever I want to do. I will be kind to all my employees.

Olivia Palumbo

Vivacious Veterinarian

I was born on February 19, 2014. I was born in Southampton. I grew up with my mom, dad, my brother John, my sister Ruby, and many many pets.

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject is math. I love solving word problems. In my free time, I love to color. One word to describe myself is happy. I love being an older sister, and I love being a younger sister. I have the best siblings!

When I grow up, I want to become a veterinarian because I love animals. I grew up with so many pets. You name it, we had it! I have experience with all kinds of animals.

Emerald Stella

Future Ms. Frizzle

I was born on September 1, 2014. I was born and raised in New York. I grew up in the city with my mom, dad, my sister Ryan, and my brother Teddy.

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. This year, my sister and I started a new school. My family moved to Southampton. A fun fact about me is that my family now lives down the street from Sister Kathy. We are basically neighbors. Pretty cool! In my free time, I love to read. I love reading new books. One word to describe myself is funny.

When I grow up, I want to become a teacher. I want to teach reading or math. I would love to wear a pretty dress or skirt to work every day. Also, pretty shoes. Maybe even a pair of high heels! I would love to teach kids how to read, add, and subtract.

Lucy Sullivan

Kipling Kid

I was born on May 10, 2013. I was born in Brooklyn, New York. I grew up with my mom, dad, and my sister Brynne.

I am now six years old and in the first grade. I moved to Long Island because of the pandemic. This is my first year as an OLH student. I am familiar with Catholic school because my former school in Brooklyn was also a Catholic school. My favorite subjects in school are math and reading. Actually, I love everything about school! All subjects are my favorite. In my free time, I love to play outside or use my tablet. One word to describe myself is energetic.

I want to be a worker for Kipling. This is the company that my mom works for. It is an awesome company! She now works from home because of the pandemic. I hope I can work in a big office in New York City.

Evey Bova

Style

I was born on October 16, 2014. I was born at Stony Brook Hospital in New York. Then, I went to go live in a house in Southampton with my mom and dad.

I am now six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is math. In my free time, I like to draw. I love when my teacher Miss Valle puts on How to Draw videos. We learn how to draw all

different animals like a baby bird in a nest. One word to describe myself is kind.

When I grow up, I want to be a professional stylist. I love to play with hair and give my dolls different hairstyles. **__Mia Campoverde**

Passionate Performer

I was born on February 3, 2014. I was born at Southampton Hospital. I grew up on Shelter Island and still live there today. I am the youngest of the family. I have one older sister named Ayla, and I live with my mom and dad.

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is science. I love learning about so many interesting topics. I think scientists are amazing. In my free time, I love to read books. I can read chapter books! One word to describe myself is kind. I love to be kind to my family, my teachers, and my friends. My parents and sister have also taught me to be kind. It is the golden rule.

When I grow up, I want to be so many things! I want to be a ballerina because I love ballet class with Miss Marcia. I want to be a singer because I love listening to music. I want to be an actress because I love watching movies. I also want to be an author because I love reading so much. I hope to write the best story ever someday. **Quinn Cass**

Officer Castano

I was born on February 6, 2014. I was born at Southampton hospital. I am the youngest of my family. I have two sisters, Natalie and Abby. I have a mom and a dad. I grew up in Hampton Bays

I am seven years old and in the first grade. I love the first grade so much. I have learned how to read, and it makes me so happy. My teachers are very proud of me. My favorite subject is iReady when we get to use the new iPad. Miss Valle is strict with them, but they are still so much fun. My favorite game to play in my free time is freeze tag. One word to describe myself is smart. I love learning new things.

When I grow up, I want to become a police officer because I want to catch bad guys. I want to drive a police car with the cool flashing lights. I want to make sure people stop at stop signs. I want to make sure kids are safe from bad guys.

Chris Castano

Seeing Space

I was born on August 17, 2014. I was born at Southampton Hospital. I grew up in Hampton Bays. I have a mom, dad, and two brothers. My brothers are named Joel and Joseph. We all have names that start with J.

__I am now six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subjects in school are physical education and science. I love physical education because I love to run around. I love getting to play in the gym with my friends. We learn so many different sports. In my free time, I love to spend time with my mom. It is very special. One word to describe myself is happy.

__When I grow up, I want to be an astronaut. I want to see space! I want to take a spaceship up to the sky. I want to see the stars. I want to walk on the moon! I want to travel to all the planets and meet some alien friends. Miss Seabury taught us about space this year. Astronauts are amazing! I can't wait to have my own space suit someday. **Jacob Cruz**

Expert at Experiments

I was born on December 19, 2013 at Southampton Hospital. I spent my early years in Hampton Bays with my mom and dad which is where I still live today.

__I am seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subjects are reading and math. I honestly don't know which one I like more. I love adding and subtracting. Right now, we are learning about a big alligator who teaches us about numbers that are greater than, less than, or equal to. In my free time, I love playing on my tablet. Give me some credit here for being honest. I like some time to play some awesome games before I hop into my pajamas.

One word to describe myself is kind. This year was my first year at OLH. I was very nervous to start a new school. My parents told me to always be kind. Well, it is good advice because it helped me make new friends! I love my new school.

__When I grow up, I want to be a scientist. I want to do an experiment. I think experiments are so cool. I am not sure what I want to experiment on.

Johann Garcia

Helpful Hands

I was born on January 11, 2014 in New York, New York. I am the oldest sister. I have one brother named Paul and one sister named Carina. My sister and I are named after our dad Carl.

_____ I am now seven years old and in the first grade. Last year, I went to school in the city, and now I go to school out here in Southampton. My life has really changed this year because of the pandemic, but I am really happy at my new school! I love the city, but I also love it here. My favorite subject in school is math. When I have free time, I love to draw. I always put in a special request to Miss Valle for my favorite How to Draw videos. She only lets us do them if we finish all of our work. One word I can use to describe myself is loyal. I love being an older sister. I also love being a really good friend.

__When I grow up someday, I want to be a doctor. I want to be a doctor because I want to help people. I want to help people who are sick. I hope that Covid-19 goes away, but if there is something bad like that in the future, I will definitely save people from it. I will travel around the world to help find the best medicine for people, especially kids. I do not like when kids are sick.

Catherine Gerardi

Bright Broadway Dreams

I was born on February 25, 2014. I was born in New York City. I used to live in Battery Park. Battery Park was a super fun place to live.

I am now seven years old and in the first grade. Last year, I went to school in New Jersey. I started OLH in October. Just in time for the First

Grade Halloween Play. It was so much fun. My new friends and new teachers were all so nice. My favorite subject in first grade is math. Every lesson I learn something new. In my free time, I love to play with my friends. I wish I could talk to my friends all day long. One word I would use to describe myself is playful. I love to have playdates, except Covid really hit the pause button on all my playdates.

When I grow up someday, I want to be a singer. I love to sing! That was another reason I was so happy to be in the first-grade play. I got to sing so many Halloween songs. I now take drama with Sister Kathy. She says I have some talent. She is very nice. She may say that to everyone, but that's okay! I am still taking it as a compliment. I hope to have my name in lights someday! Broadway will be better than ever when I am old enough to hit the stage. Light, camera, action!

Marcella Rose Ghany

Real Life Superhero

I was born on September 24, 2013 at Southampton Hospital. It started off with just me, my mom, and my dad. Then, a few years later, we had a new member, my brother JoJo!

I am seven years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject in school is science. I can be a shy guy, but I love to participate in science. In my free time, my mom lets us have some play time on our iPad. One word to describe myself is smart. Sometimes my parents don't even know the answers to my first-grade homework!

_____When I grow up, I want to be a scientist. I want to discover something new. It could be anything! Maybe a new plant, a new animal, a lost city, or even a super awesome cleaning machine. I also want to be like my parents someday. They are both firefighters. It is so cool how they are real life superheroes. They put out fires and save lives. They climb ladders and spray giant hoses.

Michael Kampf

Declan Kenny Signing Off

I was born on July 12, 2014. I grew up in New York City with my mom, dad, brother, and sister.

I am seven years old and in the first grade. Science is my favorite subject! I love science so much. Right now, we are learning about different types of animals. They are all so interesting. I can't even decide on a favorite type. I wish we were allowed to go on field trips this year. I would love to go to a zoo! In my free time, I really like to play video games. Right now, I am a pretty great tennis player if I do say so myself. I love swinging my racket and hitting the ball over the net

___When I grow up, I want to be a YouTuber. My mom and dad aren't too crazy about this idea, but my other first grade friends support me. I am really interested in adventures, so I was thinking I would go film awesome challenges. I think I can get a lot of followers and earn money.

Declan Kenny

Vibrant Veterinarian

I was born on May 2, 2014 at Southampton Hospital. I have an older brother Hudson, mom, dad, and pet cat.

___I am six years old and in first grade. My favorite subject in school is art. In my free time, I like to watch TV. One word that describes myself is cute. Even though I may make my mom and dad angry sometimes, I know they still think I am cute. I know they love me, and they know I love them.

___When I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian. I want to take care of cute animals. I have so many stuffed animals that I take care of. I can't wait to take care of real animals someday. I want to take care of animals at an aquarium or even a zoo. Both are cool options. **Lana Lucas**

Interesting Inventions

I was born on August 27, 2014 in Port Jefferson, New York. It is very cool, down on the water!

I am six years old and in the first grade. I now live in Wading River. This is my first year at OLH! My favorite subject in class is technology. We get to learn how to use a computer. We learn how to turn it on and turn it off. We even get to play really cool games. In my free time, I love to play with Legos. Legos are just about the coolest thing on earth. I don't know any kids that don't like Legos. One word I would use to describe myself is happy. Even when I started a new school this year, I was very happy! I was happy to just be in school and meet other nice first graders. School and my family make me happy.

When I grow up, I want to be an inventor. I want to invent interesting stuff for kids to play with. Some toys break so easily these days or sometimes kids get bored of them quickly. I want to invent something that keeps kids having so much fun and lasts a long time.

Easton Mills

Fashion Sense

I was born on January 20, 2014 at Southampton Hospital. I grew up in Hampton Bays with my brother Danny, my mom, and my dad.

I am seven years old and in the first grade. I still live in Hampton Bays with my family and our dog. My favorite subject in school is religion. I love learning about Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Jesus did so many good things to help people. I love learning about Jesus during Christmas time. Those are my favorite Jesus stories. I try to be kind like him. One word I would use to describe myself is sweet. In my free time, I do love to watch tv.

When I grow up, I want to become a fashion designer. I do love my uniform, but I really love getting to pick out my clothes on the weekend. My mom does help me a lot, but someday I will be the one helping her. I love to design my own dresses when I draw. I love to be creative.

Salome Ospina

School Rules

I was born on November 14, 2014 at Stonybrook Hospital. I am the youngest in my family. I have a sister, brother, mom, and dad. We live in Riverhead together.

___ I am six years old and in the first grade. My favorite subject is math. In my free time, my favorite thing to do is to ride my quad. The only word to describe it is AWESOME. I love to ride it around. My mom always worries and tells me to be careful. I love to play outside. One word that I would use to describe myself is silly. My family would probably agree with me on that. They say I always laugh. My mom does tell me not to be too silly in school or when I am doing my homework.

___ When I grow up, I want to work in a school. I am not sure exactly what job I would like to have. I think I would like to teach kids math, since that is my favorite subject. I also think that I would like to teach physical education or be a coach because I love sports. Honestly, it would also be very cool to be a principal. I could make all the rules and be the silliest principal that there ever was. **Alejandro Rodriguez**

Artistic Flow

_____ I was born on October 7, 2014. I was born at Southampton Hospital, and then I lived with my family in East Quogue.

___ I am six years old and in the first grade. My mom, my dad, my brother and I are moving to a new town soon. Thankfully, I get to keep going to OLH. It makes me so happy that I can stay here because I love it. I love my friends and my teachers. My favorite subject in school is science. We learn about so many cool topics. In my free time, I love to play at the park. I love to go there with my friends and family. One word to describe myself is fun. I just love to have a fun time.

When I grow up, I want to be an artist. I love to paint pictures! I want to paint pretty pictures of so many different things and show people my work. In class we have gallery walks to show each other our work. I want to have a gallery of my own. I know what you're thinking. Gallery is a big word for a first grader!

Jacob Tenesaca

Shop Until You Drop

I was born on March 4, 2016. I was born in Atoka, Tennessee. I am not sure how many others can say they were born in Tennessee.

I am seven years old and in the first grade. Now I live in Hampton Bays. I live with my mom, Liam, Gabby, and my pets.

When I grow up, I want to work at a grocery store because I think that it is the coolest place to work. I think it would be so cool to work with so much food. I would mainly want to focus on the dessert aisle. Imagine- an ENDLESS number of sweets and no parents to stop you from indulging. A first grader's dream come true!

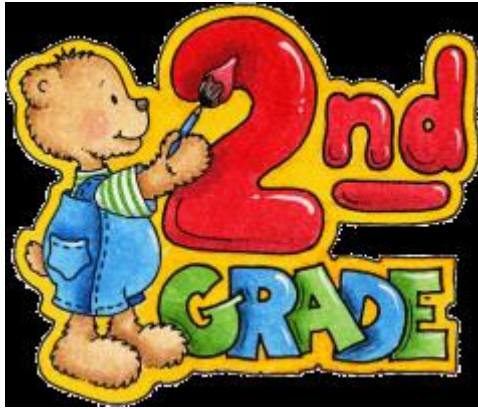
Aiden Thomas

Animal Activist

I was born on September 8, 2014 in Riverhead. I am six years old and in the first grade. I live with my mom, dad, and brother Casey. My favorite subject in school is reading. We have so many books in our classroom library. We get to have a new book every week. I love fairytales the most. In my free time, I like to dance to music. One word to describe myself is happy. It's hard to see this year because of my mask, but I can promise you I always have a smile on my face.

When I grow up, I want to work with animals. I love dogs and cats so much. I love them both equally. I want to keep cats and dogs healthy. I want to keep them safe. I will make them feel better if they are hurt. I will have the best office for cats and dogs to come to. They will all get a toy when they come for their checkups.

Abigail Williams



FROM THE PENS OF SECOND GRADERS

Who Am I?

Hi there! Guess what! You are reading my autobiography. Who am I? I am seven years old. I am in the second grade, and my teacher's name is Mrs. Gross. I have light brown hair and hazel eyes. I am tall for my age too. I have a little sister named Louise, a mom, and a dad. I live in Jan Spart, France. My house is big and gray and white. I also lived in New York City for a while, and now I live in Southampton. I am new to OLH. I am very close with my sister. I talk about her all of the time at school.

What makes me special you ask? Well, I'm good at drawing and coloring. I make really good princesses. Also, I am good at running and skipping and jumping! I am really good at projects, and I am very creative! I make marshmallow people out of clay! I am not Catholic, but I enjoy learning about God! I really like my new school, and I can't wait until my sister goes to OLH Kindergarten, then I can show her all the fun things we do!

Are you getting to know all about me? I hope so! Do you know who I am yet? I am

Valentina Boisse

Who Do You SAY I Am?

I know that you probably read many autobiographies, but you've never read about me! I am not famous. I am just me! Who am I? Well, read on to find out! This is my autobiography.

I am seven years old. I have brown eyes and light brown hair. I am kind of small for my age. I do not have any brothers or sisters. I am an only child which I kind of like. I don't have to share with anyone, and I do get a lot of attention. I do have a lot of cousins though. They come over often, and we play games. Would you like to learn more about my family? In my family, I have my dad, grandpa, and grandma. We live in Southampton. I live in a small house, but I like it. I have many friends. On the weekends, I go to my friend Gabriel's house in Shelter Island with my dad. It's lots of fun! I go to Our Lady of the Hamptons School, and I am in the second grade. My friends are Lachlan, Caleb, Chase, Brandon and Hudson. In school, I love Gym class!

What makes me special you ask? Well, I'm good at soccer, gymnastics, and running. That's about it! I know I will have more talents some day when I get older, but for now, this is what I am good at. Are you wondering who I am?

I am **James Molignano**.

Who Am I?

Hi! Do you want to know who I am? Then read my autobiography to find out!

My story begins when I was born. I was born on March 4, 2013. I am the oldest in my family. I am eight years old. I have brown hair and brown eyes. I wear glasses sometimes such as when I have to read or see the board. My hair hits my shoulders, and I like when it covers my face. I am very bubbly, and I love to dance around!

Would you like to learn about my family? In my family, I have my mom, my dad, my sister named Gracie, and my brother. Oh, and I also have a pet dog, a pet cat, and a goldfish! I love animals! We live in Southampton in a big house. I go to Our Lady of the Hamptons School, and I am in grade 2. Do you want to know some fun facts about me? Well, I love playing basketball and soccer. My favorite color is blue. I just got new bunk beds in my room and new stickers on my walls. I

helped to decorate it! Oh, yeah, I am also very creative. I am good at drawing and making crafts. I will be receiving my Communion this year, I can't wait! Are you still wondering about me and who I am? You guessed it! I am.

Georgia Doyle

This Is Me!

Who am I? I am still growing and trying to find out! This is my story so far! Read it, and you will find out who I am. I am eight years old. I have hazel eyes and blonde hair. I am small, but very quick! I also have really good hearing, but I have big feet. I was born on February 20th. I am in the second grade at OLH.

Would you like to learn about my family? I have five people in my family and one dog who is half Golden Retriever and half Shepherd mix. I have one baby brother named Jack, an older sister named Maeve, and an older brother named Henry. I live on Shelter Island with my mom and dad.

Why am I writing about myself? Am I famous? The answer is No! But I am special in my own way. I am really, really fast when I run. I am also a really good climber, and I am also good at drawing. I am good at aerodynamics. I am also really good at reading and writing. One fun fact about me is that my best friend Hudson looks like me! Who am I?

I am

Caleb Flinn Springer

Read About Me

Who am I? I can't tell you my name, but if you read my story, I will tell you at the end. For now, I will tell you about me. I have gray-blue eyes, dirty-brown hair, and tan skin. I am nine years old. I am a good size for my age. My birthday is August 8th. I am in second grade at OLH school. I am the oldest in the class, and I am a new student this year. I really love OLH, and I love learning about God!

Now that you know a little more about me, I will tell you about my family, so you can learn more! I have a brother named Ryder, a sister named Taylor, a mom, and a dad. I have three grandpas, two grandmas, and three dogs. I live in Hampton Bays in a small house with my family. I go on Barbara's bus to school with my friend Ella.

Now that you know about my family, let me tell you about my hobbies and the sports I like to play. I used to do a bunch of sports like soccer and basketball. One of my hobbies is walking my dog down to the end of the street. I am also very creative! I help my mom decorate the house for the holidays. I also love to draw and color. My favorite color is blue! Wait, I feel like I'm missing something.... Oh, wait! I have to tell you, my name! Well, I am Sydney! Thank you for reading about me! This is the end of my story though, for real!

Sydney Blom

Just Me

Hello! I am glad you stopped by to learn about me. This is my autobiography! Who am I? Please read on to find out who I am. Guess what? I was born on March 25. I am eight years old, and I am in grade 2. I have green eyes, blonde hair, and light skin. I am kind of small, which is good because I am very flexible! I go to Our Lady of the Hamptons School.

Do you want to know about my family? You may know them. My family is large. I have three brothers. What are their names? My brother's names are Colton, Wesley, and Jackson. I am the only girl in my family and I was the third one born! So, I am almost the youngest, but Colton is the youngest. He is in Pre-K. I live in Hampton Bays in a big house with my mom and dad.

What makes me special, you ask? Well, I'm good at Tik Tok dances, ballet, and tap. I also love doing drama and acting. I am good at it. I love to be on stage! I am also good at doing splits. I also love to draw. Who am I, you ask? I am **Molly Grace Wassle!**

Guess Who?

Who am I, you wonder? I dare you to read my story to find out! My name is..... Aha! Gotcha! I can't tell you my name until the end! That's why you need to read this first! I am in second grade, and I am eight years old. I have brown eyes and black and brown hair. I have very long and straight hair. I wear it in a pony tail a lot because it is so long! I am beautiful. I always have a smile on my face! My birthday is May 31, 2013. I have my ears pierced.

Do you want to know about my family? I have a sister. She is four years old. I have a brother too. He is sixteen years old. I have a dog. I just got him a couple of months ago. He is crazy. He is white and soft. Oh, and I have my mom and my dad. I live in Hampton Bays. I have a big house.

What makes me special you ask? Well, I am good at handstands, cartwheels, and backbends. I am very flexible. I am also good at kicking the ball in Soccer. I go to soccer every Thursday! I love soccer! I am also good at drawing, and I have a lot of friends. I love to help people too. Guess who I am? Do you give up? I am **Nicole Cardona!**

Extra! Extra! Read About Me!

Hi! This is an autobiography. What is an autobiography? Well, it is when a person writes about themselves. This is my story, but there is a twist. You won't know who I am until the end of this story! So read on to find out! I was born on December 19, 2012. I am eight years old. I have long, brown hair. I have sky blue eyes. I am average height, and I don't have pierced ears. I go to OLH school, and I'm in second grade. My teacher's name is Mrs. Gross. This is my first year at OLH. My best friend Ellie came to this school too! We are having fun at OLH.

Would you like to learn about my family? In my family, I have a sister named Lucy and a brother named Teddy. I also live with my mom and my dad. My grandparents are Grandma and Pops and my Nana and Papa. I live in a brown house with a blue door. I live in Southampton now, but I also have a place in New York City which is where I went to school before I came to OLH.

What makes me special you ask? Well, I'm good at tap. I'm also good at soccer. I am very good at piano. I am also good at violin too! I am good at lacrosse and tennis. I am very smart, and I love to read! Who am I, you ask? I am **Ryan Elizabeth Sullivan!** It's nice to meet you!

Me

Hello! This is a story about me. Some of you may know me, and some of you may not, but either way, you will get to know some things about me by reading my story. Who am I? Keep reading to find out! I am

eight years old. I just had a birthday on April 2nd. I have brown eyes and dark brown hair. I never have a smile on my face, and I am kind of tall for my age. I am quiet at times, but I am smart. I am in second grade at Our Lady of the Hamptons. It is a Catholic school. I am a new student this year at this school.

Do you want to know about my family? My dad's name is Evan, and my mom's name is Lori. I have a brother named Bode and a cat named Moon Pie. I live in a big house in Southampton.

Here are some fun facts about me. I'm good at running, and I am also good at basketball and soccer. I love to go fishing, and I know a lot about all kinds of fish. I love going out on a boat to catch them.

Can you guess who I am? I am **Finn Tiska!**

Hello, It's Me!

Do you like to play games? How about a guessing game? Well, I am going to tell you about myself, and you could try to guess which second grader from OLH I am. Here is my autobiography. Read my story to find out who I am. The game begins!

I was born on November 16, 2013. I am seven years old, and I have black hair and brown eyes. I am short. I have been at OLH school since Pre-K. I live with my mom and my dad. I also have a brother who is in seventh grade. His name is Danny. I also have a dog. I live in Hampton Bays, and I have a medium-sized house. Now guess what makes me special? Well, I am good at doing splits and running. I am also really good at the monkey bars. I like to draw and do crafts.

Can you guess who I am? The game is over! I am **Sofia Quesada**

Me, Myself and I

Who am I? I know that's a strange question, but I have to write about myself. This is also known as an autobiography. I would love for you to read my story so you can learn about me especially since I am a new student at OLH this year. Here is my story. I'm eight years old. My

birthday is August 18. I have dirty blond, wavy hair, and hazel eyes. I am very smart.

Would you like to learn about my family? In my family, I have a mom named Liza, a dad named Shaw, and a sister named Louise. My family and I love each other SOOO much! We love to do puzzles together! We do hard puzzles all the time! We live in Southampton, and we also live in New York City. I love both places!

What makes me special you ask? Well, I'm good at spelling, soccer, science, gymnastics, and making traps. I also love the color purple! I love to read, and I love a good challenge. And like I mentioned before, I love to do puzzles with my family! Who am I? Well, I am new at OLH, and my name is **Elizabeth Joseph!**

Who Is This?

Hello there! Who is this? Are you asking yourself? Well, this is an autobiography about me. Who else would an autobiography be about except yourself? I would like you to read my story to find out who this is that you are reading about! Here it goes! I am seven years old. I have light brown eyes and very dark, brown hair with a little bit of red in it. I love scrunchies. I wear them in my hair a lot. I also love to wear my hair in braids too! I am seven years old, and I am in the second grade. My teacher is Miss Gross. My birthday is October 17th which is one of my favorite months! I am one of the youngest in the class, and I am small.

Would you like to learn about my family? In my family, there is my mom, my dad, my baby sister, my grandpa, and my grandma. I live in a big house in East Hampton. I love to help mom and dad with my baby sister. She looks like me too! I also have three cousins and an aunt and uncle.

What makes me special do you think? Well, I am good at cheerleading, gymnastics, lacrosse even though I do not play that much. Guess who I am? I am **Aubree Gutierrez.**

My Autobiography

Hello there! I'm so glad you stopped on this page to read about me! Thank you! I bet you figured out that this is an autobiography. This one is about me! Who am I? Well, you need to keep reading to get to the end to find out. I was born on February 7, 2013. Today, I am eight years old, and I am in the second grade. I have blue eyes, orange hair, and light skin. I have freckles on my face, and I am tall for my age. I'll tell you about my family too. In my family, I have an older brother, a mom, a dad, and a dog.

I live in Southampton with my mom and sometimes in Sag Harbor with my dad. I have a big house and a very large backyard. My family likes to go skiing, and we also like to go on trips for vacation. I have many hobbies too! I'm good at skiing, surfing, and playing the game Fortnite. I am very smart, and I am very good at math! I love to do word searches, and I'm good at them too!

Guess what? You made it to the end of my story! So, do you know what that means? You get to find out whose autobiography you are reading. I am **Lachlan R. McLean!**

Guess?

Hi this is my autobiography! Can you take a guess who I am? Read my story to find out! I am seven years old. I have blonde hair that is curly, and I have light brown eyes and light skin. My birthday is July 2nd. That's when I'll be eight years old. I am small and very quiet. I like to wear things in my hair, and I don't have pierced ears.

Would you like to learn about my family? I have a sister Shannon and a brother Dillion. I have a big house in Hampton Bays with my mom and dad. I don't have any pets though. I love my home! I do lots of fun things at home. I love to ride my bike and play outside.

What makes me special you ask? Well, I am good at ballet. I am also good at tennis. My favorite food is chocolate. My favorite color is purple. Can you guess who I am yet? I am **Ella Reese!**

Who?

Hi...and welcome to my story! Who am I? You need to read my story to find out. I'll tell you at the end. My story began when I was born on November 30, 2013. Right now, I am seven years old, and in the second grade at OLH. What do I look like? I have dark, curly hair. I have brown eyes and dark skin. I am Spanish, and I am average height.

Would you like to learn about my family? In my family, I have one older brother named Michael and an older sister named Jessica. I am the youngest. I have five dogs too. I live with my mom and dad in Hampton Bays. I have a big house.

These are some fun facts about me. I am good at soccer. I also play basketball. I am a really fast runner! I can ride a two-wheel bike too! I like to draw and color. My friends are Caleb, Chase, James, and Finn. I love to play Minecraft too! Who am I, you ask?

I am **Brandon Gutierrez**

Knock Knock Who's There?

Knock, Knock! Hi! It's nice to meet you! Do you want to know who I am? Take a guess? I can give you some hints! You just have to read my autobiography to find out. I am seven years old. I have light brown short, curly hair, and light brown eyes. I am small for my age, and I am in second grade. My birthday is December 2nd. I will be eight years old in December. I wear glasses sometimes for reading, and I love to wear my hair in pigtails.

Would you like some hints about my family? I have two brothers and one sister whose name is Natalie. My brothers' names are Chris and Jack. I live with Mom and Dad. I have thirteen pets. I have kittens, chickens, dogs and a fish named Goldilocks. I live in Hampton Bays in a medium-sized house.

Here are more hints about what I am good at. I am good at soccer. I am also good at tap. I love to make projects. My favorite color is pink, and I love chickens! I am always happy, and my friends are Molly and Georgia. Time to take a guess who I am. Do you give up? I am **Abigail Castano**

Hola!

Hola! It's nice to meet you! This is my autobiography! Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story. I am seven and a half years old. My birthday is June 12th, so I am almost eight. I have dark brown curly hair and dark brown eyes. I am middle height, and I have light skin. I am in second grade in Mrs. Pedersen's class. I am Spanish, and I can speak both Spanish and English.

This is about my family. I have six people in my family. I have three siblings. My parents' names are Alexandra and Franklin. I live in Hampton Bays. I like to play with my brother at home, and I like to play with my toys.

Here are some fun facts about me. My favorite ice-cream flavor is cotton candy. My favorite thing to do is color and draw. My favorite things are my toys. I love to play soccer for fun! Are you ready to see who I am? Hola! I am **Sofia Sisalima**

R.C.

Hello! I bet you are wondering what R.C. stands for. Well, it is who I am! Who am I? Well, read on to find out, and I will tell you at the end of my story. I'm eight years old, and I was born December 7, 2012. I have blond hair and blue eyes. I'm four feet tall, and I am thin. I am a twin!

I know many science facts about animals. I can be quiet and shy sometimes, but I am very nice! In my family, I have my mom, my dad, and I have five siblings. My twin is my sister Charlotte. I also have two other sisters. I have two bearded dragons, one tree frog, one axolotl, and one leopard gecko. Their names are Puff, Champ, Pretzel, Gumball, Shadow, Mini, and Mazy. I live in Aquebogue. My favorite animals are space whales, tree frogs, Cosmo dragon lizards, cows, and peacocks. I love to play Roblox. I'm great at hide-and-go-seek. I love to read books about animals, and take care of my pets. Do you know what R.C. stands for yet? Well, it stands for **Robert Connelly**

Who Am I?

Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story! I am seven years old. I have brown hair and brown eyes. I am small, and I have light skin. My birthday is November 26. I go to Our Lady of the Hamptons School, and I am in grade 2. I have five people in my family. I have two sisters. Their names are Maria and Ecatrina. My parents are Ciprian and Alex. I have several pets: two parakeets, one canary, and one betta fish. I live with my family in Southampton in a big house.

Guess what? I like school, I like to go outside, and I like to play sports. My favorite sport is soccer. My friends are John, Robert, and Bruno-Mars. Who am I? I am **Nicholas Muresan!**

Get to Know Me!

Hi! This is my autobiography! Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story. I am eight-and-a-half years old. I have long brown hair, and my eyes are brown. I'm 4 foot 8 inches. I have light skin. I have five family members: Mom, Dad, Emmi, Ruby and ... ME! I have two sisters. I have ten pets: Spike, Lila, Skank, Strips, Elvis, Jedi, Sparkle, Stink, Lucy, and Freddy. I live in Southampton. Caleb Springer is one of my good friends and I'm in Grade 2. I go to OLH school.

I love Harry Potter. I was Harry Potter for Halloween. I play baseball. My hobbies are video games. My favorite game is Roblox. I have an Xbox One. My talents are running and fishing. I know a lot of facts about different animals, especially reptiles! Did you get to know about me yet? Well, I am **John Stella!**

It's All About Me!

Hi! This is my story, and it's all about me! Guess what? It is all about me! Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story. My birthday is December 23rd. I am eight years old. I have long brown curly hair, and I have brown color eyes. I am of middle height in my class. I have light color skin. I am very quiet, but I am very nice. I am in second grade at OLH school. In my family, I have four members. I live with my mom and my dad. I have one baby brother. His name is Leo. I live in Hampton Bays. I like to play with my cousin Kacie. I like playing catch with Leo

and playing outside. My favorite sports are soccer and basketball. I also like to sing. I am in Joyful Noise at school. So, this is Me! Who am I? I am **Ivanna Maradiaga**

Wonder

Do you like to wonder about things? Me too! Are you wondering who I am? Well, this is my autobiography. But you will have to wonder who I am until the end! So, read about me to find out! I was born on 1/14/13. I am eight years old. My hair is light brown, and my eye color is hazel. I'm 4 feet, 3 inches tall. I have light skin. I am in grade 2 in Mrs. Pedersen's pod. My other teacher is Mrs. Gross. I have four people in my family. There is my mom, my dad, and my sister Isabel. I have five pets. I live in Southampton in a big house. My family and I like to go skiing. My talents are drawing and being funny. I like playing Fortnite and Minecraft with my friend Lachlan. My favorite things are sports. I play: football and basketball. I like to eat. One thing I like to do is practice sports. I am also really good at Math. You can stop wondering now! I am **Harrison Lucenti!**

My Autobiography

Hi! This is my quick autobiography! Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story! I am seven years old. I have curly brown hair. My eyes are dark brown. I am 48 inches tall. My skin color is light peach. In my family, I have my mom, and dad. I have two siblings. I have a brother and a sister. I live in Hampton Bays in a big house. I like to play with my brother. There are many things that I like to do. I like running, jumping, and hopping. My favorite sport is tennis. My talents are drawing and coloring. Who am I? I am **Gabriella Gonzalez!**

I Am Me!

Hello! This is my autobiography. It is about me! Can you guess who I am? I am new at school this year, so you will get to know me and then I'll tell you who I am at the end of my story! I am seven years old. I have brown hair and brown eyes. I am not the tallest or the shortest in my class. I am in second grade. I go to OLH school. This is my first year here. I have light skin. My birthday is October 15th. I have five people in my family. I have one brother. His name is Teddy, and he is in the fourth grade. I have one dog, ten geckos, some fish, and some frogs. I live in Southampton. I like to go walking. I like to play baseball with my friends. I like to play video games. I like to go to the beach every summer. Do you want to know who I am now? I am **Evan Duke!**

About Me!

Hi! This is my autobiography. An autobiography is when you write about yourself, so I am writing one about me. Who am I? Well, I will tell you at the end of my story. I am eight years old. I have black hair. I also have black eyes. I am small. I think I have light skin. My birthday is February 10th. I go to OLH school. I am in the second grade. I have five people in my family. I have one step brother named Joey. I have one dog named Kiki. I live in Hampton Bays with my mom and dad. I like to do many things! I like to run and jump. I love to draw. I enjoy playing Minecraft. It is my hobby. My dad plays with me sometimes. My favorite animals are dogs and cats. I like to play soccer and run around. Can you tell who I am? I am **Ethan Rodrigues!**

Who Am I?

Hi! This is my autobiography. Who am I? You will find out at the end of the story. I am eight years old. I have dirty blonde hair and blue eyes. I'm one of the smallest kids in my class.

In my family, I'm the third youngest in my family and the middle child. I have four siblings, my mom, and dad. My siblings' names are Adelaide, Robert, Beatrice, and Penelope. Robert and I are twins. He is older than me. I have seven pets. I like playing sports, sleeping, gymnastics, shopping, drawing, and reading. My talents are gymnastics, fashion designing, house designing, and decorating. My favorite TV shows are Hannah Montana and Raven's Home. My favorite food is mozzarella sticks. My favorite color is purple, and that's all about me! Who am I? I am **Charlotte Connelly!**

I Am Me!

Hi! This is me and my autobiography. Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story. I am seven years old. I have straight blond hair. I have brown and hazel eyes. I am one of the tallest in my class. I have light skin. I have five people in my family. My mom's name is Paula. My dad's name is Edward. I have two sisters. One is named Bridgette, and my other sister is Marilyn. I have a pet dog. His name is Watchi. I live in Southampton.

Some fun facts about me. I like celery, and I like to sing! I'm good at singing. I like playing with my Nintendo. I also like playing tennis. My favorite thing to do is homework. Believe it or not! This is me! I am **Bruno-Mars Valencia!**

Surprise! Guess Who?

Surprise! Guess who? It's me! Do you know who I am? You will find out at the end of my story! I am seven years old. I was born on November 7, 2013. I have wavy blonde hair, and it is always up in a ponytail. My eye color is blue. I am the tallest girl in my class. I have light skin. I am in the second grade at OLH. I am a new student this year. I am also very smart. I have four people in my family. I have one sister. Her name is Annie. My mom's name is Catherine. My name is Andrew. I have two pets. Their names are Rainbow and Sonny. Sonny is

my dog, and Rainbow is my fish. I live in Southampton. I like to play with my dog. My favorite food is pizza. My favorite animals are dogs and horses. I like the song *Holy* by Justin Bieber. My favorite sport is gymnastics. My hobbies are swimming and running.

Do you want me to spoil the surprise now? Well, here it goes! I am **Ava Alessandrini!**

It's Just Me!

Hello! It's just me! Who am I? You will find out at the end of my story! I am eight years old. I have dark brown hair. I also have curls at the end of my hair. My eye color is light brown. I am small, and my skin is dark. I am Spanish. In my family, there are four people. I have two siblings and three pets. My pets' names are Pepito, Audrey, and Sugar. I live in Southampton, N.Y. My favorite things are animals. My favorite things to do are art, math, and gym. My talent is math. My favorite hobby is art. Some sports that I like to do are: soccer, tennis, and football. I like to walk too! I enjoy playing with my friends. I like to play with my dog. Do you want to know who I am now? I am **Anahi Velecela Lucero.**

Meet Me!

Hi! Meet me in my autobiography! You will find out who I am after I tell you about myself first. I am eight years old. I have brown wavy hair. I have hazel eyes. I am white. I am a girl. I do not have pierced ears. My hair is long. My birthday is March 13, 2013.

Would you like to learn about my family? In my family, I have a mom, a dad, two dogs named Blondie and Oak, and a cat named Shadow. I also have six chickens. I have four grandparents. I call them Gramie and Gaje, and my other grandparents are called Mimi and Wooboo. I live in Hampton Bays.

What makes me special you ask? Well, I'm good at ballet. My favorite color is pink. My favorite animal is a unicorn. I also like elephants. Who am I, you ask? I am **Elsie Barbour!**

Read About Me

Read about me! This is my autobiography. But there is a catch! You have to read first before you learn who I am. Get ready! Here it goes. I was born on 12/10/13. I am seven years old. I am in second grade. I have blue eyes, blonde hair, and blonde skin. I am average height for my age. I can also tell you about my family. I have a big house, and I have one dog, and his name is Gabriel.

I live with my mom in Quogue. I visit my dad in Florida on vacations. What makes me special, you ask? Well, I'm good at running and drawing. I just started playing the violin. My friends are Lachlan, Caleb, Hudson, and James. We all go to OLH. I am a new student there. Who am I? I am **Chase Kaplan**.

Who Am I?

Who am I? Read my story to find out! I am eight years old. I am in second grade. I have green eyes and blonde hair. I am very tall, and I am very fast! I am also very smart and very cool. My family has four people: me, my mom, my dad and my sister Lana. I have pets too: a fish, a cat, and a dog. My mom's name is Amity, and my dad's name is Matt. I live in Southampton on Little Fresh Pond Road.

Do you want to know what makes me special? Well, I'm good at lacrosse, and I am also good at track. I am good at reading, and I am good at doing back flips on the trampoline. I can do front flips too! I am good at Math, and I am good at playing tag. My best friend is Caleb. Who am I? I am **Hudson Lucas**.



My First Speech Contest

When I was in first grade, I was picked to be in the primary speech contest at my school, Our Lady of the Hamptons in Southampton. It was my first time being in the speech contest and getting picked made me nervous because I do not like getting up and speaking in front of big crowds. The reason I was picked to be in the speech contest was because the teachers liked my speech. Luckily, I had one month to practice. This event is important to me because it showed me that I can overcome the fear of speaking in front of large crowds. Even though I felt very nervous because I had to speak in front of so many people, I was able to be successful.

In the end, it turned out that I won first place, and I got my name on a plaque in the auditorium. Now, I can look at it every time I go into the auditorium and remember my first speech. Now that I have done it once, I am not as nervous as I was the first time because I know there is nothing to be afraid of. Even if I don't win first, second or third place, it will still be fun for me. I would definitely like to win again. I was very proud of myself for getting into the contest and winning it, and I think my family was too! It turned out that it was really fun, and I hope I will do it again!

Ayla Cass

The Day I Broke My Arm

I was playing on the playground at my school with my friends when I tripped over the balance beam. My arm hit the balance beam, and I broke my right arm. The nurse called my parents who took me to the hospital.

Three days later, I had surgery on my arm and two pins were placed in the bone. I had a cast on for four more weeks. I was nine years old when this happened at school. This event is important to me because this was the first time I broke any bone in my body. It was a scary learning event. I felt sad and scared all at the same time. Finally, they cut off my cast and removed the pins. I had to do exercises to use my arm again. It took several weeks before I could straighten my arm fully again.

From this experience, I learned to be more careful on the playground. I have also learned that hospitals are not such a scary place. This experience has taught me how to be patient while my arm healed. I hope that I never break another bone again!

Jaden Hoffert

Drama of Bullying

I am so different in so many ways. In kindergarten through second grade, I experienced a disaster which was getting bullied. This was a challenge in my life I had to overcome. In my old school, Aquebogue Elementary, riding the bus and going to class became the worst experiences of my life because I always got bullied.

I only had one true friend. Her name was Fiona, and she stood up for me when I was sad on the bus. One time some people said if I went to the ugly contest, I could not get in because I was too ugly. So, Fiona told them that I am not ugly, I am just a little different the way I am. I decided not to tell my parents because I became used to the bullying and thought I could fix the problem myself. It didn't work, and the bullying got worse. Bad words were said, and there was hitting and kicking. This

is important to me because I have learned what it feels like to be bullied. I felt mad, super-duper sad, angry, and tired. I felt like crying because I had only one friend. I know what it feels like, and I know what happens. Okay, I gotta calm down!

This challenge turned out to become good because I started to attend Our Lady of The Hamptons School. Now, I have lots of new friends and nice teachers. I have learned that if you get bullied you should never listen to what the bully says. Just believe in yourself.

Foteini Theodora Prokopidou, Jr.

The Day I Overcame My Fear of Math

For the last seven years of my life, I lived in Brooklyn with my mom, dad, and sister Evey where I attended St. Savior Catholic Academy. When I was about eight years old, I moved to Long Island, and I overcame a challenge in my life which was struggling in math. This event is really important to me because it was when I overcame a fear and challenge that I was really struggling with. Sometimes I thought one of the reasons math was so hard for me was because of the virtual school year we had last year during the pandemic. Or, maybe because my old school taught differently than OLH. Or, maybe I just wasn't good at math. This made me really sad and stressed. I doubted myself a lot. When my parents saw my tests and saw I was struggling, they decided to get me a math tutor, Ms. Price. She helped me so much, and she was one of the reasons why I got better at math.

After all the struggling, I got my math test back. I got a 4! I got all the questions correct. My tutor and my family were all so proud of me. I have grown a lot as a person and student from this challenge in my life. Even though I still have a tutor and I still get confused sometimes, I am proud of myself. Now I am doing division! I know that I will keep succeeding in life because of all of the support from my friends and family.

Brynn Bova

How Online Learning Changed the School Year

Being in school I never thought twice about hanging out with my friends and being able to see their faces. Last spring, Covid-19 changed my school year and the way I learned. Online learning was a challenge because I no longer had my normal routine and could no longer see my friends in person! Covid struck right before my eighth birthday which was in March 2020. This was important because what I was going through the whole WORLD was going through too! I felt confused and worried because there was NO cure and everybody was struggling. Covid-19 changed all that we knew.

The final outcome is not known yet, but what gives me hope is seeing all those hard-working brave people who help others and work to find a cure. I have grown from this challenge because I am adapting to these hard obstacles in my life. For example, I am now going to school every day with a mask on, and I get to see my friends. I hope that in the future we will not have to wear masks and stay six feet apart.

Theodore Fulweiler

My Life Before My Sister!!!

Before my sister was born, I was alone. All I had was my dad to play with because my mom was too busy. When my dad went to work, I had to wait hours until he was home. From the time I was born until I was five years old, I didn't have a sister. I had no one to play with, no one to eat with, and I didn't even have anyone to make giggle. All I had to play with were my toys and plushies, until my dream came true. I yelled: "I HAVE A SISTER! YAY!!!" After wishing for years of having a sister, I finally have one. Now, I have someone to play with, to eat with, and to make giggle! After waiting months, my sister was a newborn, and I was the happiest person ever. After that, my life changed.

My sister was born on January 23, 2018. Her name is Valentina. Now we do so much stuff together. I am so thankful to have a sister. I am eight years old now, and my sister is three. It used to be three but now it's four: my dad, mom, my sister, and me. I love having a family of four, but I am even more excited to have a family of five in June. I can't wait to meet my baby brother! **Victoria Gomez**

Jeff the Pug

Growing up, I used to like cats, but now I like dogs better. One weekend when I was in first grade, I got to be a babysitter. I had to take care of a pug, and the pug's name was Jeff. I never had a pet before which is why I was so excited to babysit Jeff. "My dream came true!" I said. I knew Jeff since I was five years old. Jeff is a boy.

One day I went outside with Jeff. I quickly put on my boots, shorts, and shirt to go outside with Jeff. Pugs are so fast just like Jeff. When we went outside, Jeff was running in the grass. Of course, we had to put him on a leash, so he didn't go to the road. Then another day I had ballet. I got home, did my homework, and then went to see Jeff. I put my pants on, and then I played with Jeff. I held on to his front legs and danced. Jeff was biting me but it didn't hurt because I got used to it.

After that, I let go of Jeff's front legs. The next day, I watched *Hotel for Dogs* with Jeff. Jeff and I were lying down on Jeff's toys. Then on the last day, I hugged Jeff goodbye. I wanted to play more with Jeff, but after school my mom said that Jeff was with his owner. The owner's name is Mary. She took Jeff to her home. I missed Jeff already. When I am ten years old, I will get a dog of my own, and I will name him Jeff. I can't wait!

Ariana Guazhambo

My First Trophy

I have been playing golf for two years. In the summer, I go to golf camp. You need to be at least six years old to go to this camp. When I was seven years old, I won my first putting trophy. This was an important thing for me and my mom and dad. They were proud of me, and I was too. I even practiced before we started the competition.

When the competition started, I got a teammate that was twelve years old. We got two lives and started at Hole 5. I started and got a Hole in 2. At the last putt, we tied so we had to do a putt off, and we only got one putt each. It was hard but my teammate helped me. I chose the speed of the ball with the putter and got it in. I was excited because it was about a 15-foot putt, and I was new to golf.

The next day, I won a trophy and gave it to my friend. The next year, I won another trophy and now I have two trophies. I tried to get a medal too, but I lost. I was still happy. I tried the next year and lost, but I still got to play. It was still fun. Now, I have earned three trophies total. I want to continue to play golf and get better.

Lochlan Kenny

The First Time I Got Baptized

I grew up going to church on Saturdays or Sundays with my mother, father and sister. I go to church in Southampton where I live. When I was eight years old, I was baptized. This is really important to me because it was the first time I got baptized, and I was forgiven by God for all of my sins. I was scared at first but also happy. All of my family came to see me get baptized. I wore a pretty white dress. After, we had a celebration at my house with some family and friends. We had a vanilla cake, and I got two gifts. It was a happy time, and I have grown closer to God from this experience. Now, I still go to church with my family. I like going to church because I am able to listen and hear from God. When I get older, I will go to church every Saturday and Sunday.

Aylin Lema-Alvarez

Trophy Winner

Hi, my name is Colleen Lynch, and I am going to be telling you about how I won my first tennis trophy. Growing up, I took tennis lessons at SYS in Southampton. I would also play with my family when we had time on the weekends and in the summer. My mom is a great tennis player, and she wanted me to play too. So, I started playing in kindergarten and have been getting better ever since. It was the summer of 2020 when I was eight years old that I won my first trophy.

At the end of the summer, there was a ceremony where all the kids who won a ribbon were recognized. When they said first place, I got nervous because I knew there would only be one winner. They said: "Colleen Lynch" and I was super excited. I was surprised because there were older girls than me who did not win. My sister was ten, and she did not win. I could not speak. I did not know I was going to win a ribbon and a trophy! I thought about how I have been taking tennis lessons for four years and how my hard work is showing. In the future, I want to keep playing tennis and getting better. I would also like to play on a tennis league. If I work hard at things in life, I can succeed!

Colleen Lynch

When My Dog Got Adopted

When I was two years old, my mom and dad got a chocolate lab. For six years, my mom and I had so much fun with our dog George. George was a crazy dog because he would always jump on me. But, when I was eight years old, I had to give my dog away. I was very sad. My mom was working and I was always at school so we couldn't pay too

much attention to him and play with him. My mom gave our dog to a new family.

I miss him because he was a part of my family. We found a few new families and they gave him back. Then, we gave him to Southampton Animal Shelter. I was happy that he got a new family. They don't work so they can pay more attention to him and play with him. I am still a little sad though because I still miss him. I know where the family who owns George now lives, and I saw a picture of him on Facebook with the new owners. He looks darker than he was before. He used to be brown, but now he looks black. I hope that one day I can get another chocolate lab just like George.

Maggie McCarthy

Skiing into Confidence

I started learning to ski when I was five years old at Camelback in Pennsylvania. I was in a ski camp about once a year until I turned seven years old. When I was at Butternut Mountain in Massachusetts, I was brave and took my first lift to the top of the mountain - I only ever used the magic carpet before this, which is like a treadmill going up the very small bunny hill. I skied well but when we got to the open trail and big slope at the end, I got very scared and started to cry. We had to climb back up the big mountain and have the rescue snowmobile drive us down the mountain. My mom was a first-time skier and could not help or encourage me to go down the mountain.

Then when I turned seven, we went skiing often. During my last ski lesson of the year, the weekend before everything shutdown from COVID-19, I was skiing blue trails, going through the trick park, and even skiing backwards! This year I spent many weekends at Stratton in Vermont and skied my first ever black diamond! My Aunty Jamie did not tell me I skied a black diamond until we got back to our rental condo\house. I only fell twice! At first, I did not believe her. When I saw pictures of the signs on the trail that tell you if the mountain trail is a green, blue, or black, I saw that the mountain we went on said 'Black!'

I was so proud of myself and still am. I have grown from this achievement because I learned I can do anything. I also learned that sometimes things are hard, and they may take work to accomplish, but if it is something I enjoy and I keep working for, eventually I will reach my goals. So, I have advice for readers: never give up! **Mikayla Modini**

Horse on the Loose

Last summer, when I was seven years old, I asked my mom to go horseback riding and she said, "Yes, I will try to find a barn for you to go riding." I went on my first lesson that summer, and it was very fun. After about four lessons of riding at the barn, I rode a horse named Gabby. Gabby was not listening so I needed a spur but that didn't work either. Soon Gabby took OFF galloping which I hadn't even learned how to do yet! She galloped all around the ring about four times which left me hanging onto the reins at the side of the horse. So, I did a trick that professionals would do to get off safely. I was very scared because I didn't want to get stepped on by the horse. The thing is we do not know why the horse took off, but we think she got stung by a bee.

You might wonder why I wanted to do horseback riding lessons, and why it was important to me. I want to become a great horseback rider. I am still taking horseback riding lessons today. After the horseback riding accident, I think having this in my life was a good lesson because I've grown to be braver and to have more fortitude in myself. **Lila Notley**

A Boy Who Was Shy at the Playground

In a house in Southampton, there were four children and three adults. I am the youngest in this story. One day when I was five years old, we decided to go to a park. When we arrived, my brother and sisters

made friends quickly. I was shy, and my parents had to encourage me to introduce myself to people I didn't know. I was learning how to make friends. In the past when my friend from school was at the playground, we would play tag, freeze tag, infection and other games. Then we would challenge each other to climb a wall or stay on the spinning thing and climb the monkey bars. After a couple years I overcame my fear and every time we went to the park, I was making friends easily. In the future, I hope I'm not shy anymore even when I'm an adult. For now, I'm not too shy, except when I meet my grandpa's friend at the pizza place. I want to be more courageous when making new friends. **Jayce Sulph**

Longest Drive Contest

I started to play golf when I was four years old. Back then, I played golf at a country club called Gardners Bay. I took lessons to teach me how to play. When I was eight, I was able to join the contest they had every summer. They tested us in everything with putting, chipping, and driving. After practicing for many years, I won the longest drive contest in 2020. Last year there were forty-nine kids, and out of all of them, I won. I was eight years old. Since I competed against so many people and earned my victory through hard work, I felt super happy. It was the first time I had ever won the longest drive. This experience inspired me to keep practicing all year. Since then, I have gotten better at golf. I hope when I am older, I will be able to join a special golf team where I can get even better at golf!

Read Wilutis

My First Polish Chapter Book

All of my life my mom and dad have spoken Polish to me. When I was younger, I didn't understand a lot of what they were saying because I was a baby. But when I started to get a little older, I knew more words in Polish. So, when I was in kindergarten, I started to go to Polish School. At Polish School, I learn how to read, write, and speak more fluently in Polish. An important achievement I have had in my life was

reading my first Polish chapter book. This experience was not easy; it was challenging. I read each line slowly, and then at one point, I finished. When I finished my first Polish chapter book, I was eight years old and very proud of myself. My mom and dad were proud of me too. Being able to read Polish chapter books made my Polish reading skills better. Because of this achievement, I have grown smarter, stronger, and happier. I will continue to go to Polish School and, in the future, maybe I will move to Poland!

Amelia Witkowski

The Freckle in My Eye

When I was a baby, I had good vision and great eyes. But when I got older and was five years old, something started to grow in my eye. When I was six years old, I found out I had a freckle in my left eye. It was growing so my mom took me to a special eye doctor called an ophthalmologist.

An ophthalmologist is a doctor who works specifically with eyes. The doctor said it would be safer to take it out of my eye. I was six years old when I met Dr. Liebert. The surgery was on January 11, 2019. It was a very big deal to have surgery on my eye, but I did not know that at the time. I wasn't scared because my mom never told me how hard it would be after the surgery. The stitches felt like sand in my eye that I couldn't get out.

There were lots of doctor appointments and long car rides to the hospital. My family helped take care of me after my surgery. The freckle in my eye is gone now, and I am very happy that it is out. Now I know what a big deal surgery is!

Tucker Ward

How I Learned to Water Ski

All my life I have enjoyed trying new things, however sometimes trying new things can be scary. When I was eight years old, I learned how to water ski. One sunny day at a camp named Robin Hood, I

saw some people water skiing. It looked like a lot of fun, but once they fell in the water, I changed my mind. The next day, I saw my sister water skiing, and she did not fall in the water. When the boat flew to the dock, my sister told me it was really fun and that I should try it. I told her that I would try but if I fell, I would not do it again. When I woke up the next day, I felt really nervous. At 8:45 a.m., I headed to the dock. There my sister was waiting for me. After five minutes, we saw the boat in the distance. As the boat pulled to the side, we grabbed our life jackets. Then we hopped on the boat with a few other kids. The kids took a quick look at us and we smiled back. Once we got far enough away from the dock, it was time to water ski. My sister offered to go first, then it was the other kids' turns. Those kids were really good which made me feel better. At last, it was my turn. I put the water skis on and jumped off the boat. The water felt cool on my legs. The water-skiing instructors threw the rope to my side. They started the boat, and I stood up and started skiing. Once I started water skiing, I didn't know what I was so afraid of. Now I know that water skiing is really fun, and whenever I can water ski again, I will definitely try!

Zinnia Edwards

Soccer Club

Something I have always wanted to achieve is being the best soccer player I can be. I started playing when I was five years old. I have overcome this goal but it was hard to do. The first step I took was practicing hard almost every day! Second, I joined a soccer team and learned a lot. Third, I tried to become captain and I continued to get better. Finally, I got better than my friends. Practicing day and night made me happy but tired. Just a couple months ago, I won a game in a tournament. My team was declared the champions. My team got pizza because we won. I put myself to work and pushed myself harder to be a better person in soccer. On March 17, 2021, I became team captain because I am the oldest and best player on the team. This was hard for me, but I learned a lot and became stronger. In the future, I want to be on a professional soccer team. I will continue to work hard and create my own new skills!

Alexis Maldonado

Fishing with Drew

I love to fish and have all the gear to do it! Once when I went on a fishing trip, I casted out my line and got a bite. I reeled it in quickly and saw that it was a four-inch Largemouth Bass. I decided to let it go. It wasn't that good of a fishing spot so we moved farther out. Then I got my cast net and threw it out. I caught ten bait fish. I kept on throwing my fishing line out to get more. I threw it out one more time and caught a six-inch fish. I didn't know what it was though. My friend Drew was on the boat with me. I gave him bait, he cast his line, and then he got a bite. He started reeling nonstop, and he caught a blue fish of some kind. It had a white stripe in the middle, the top was all blue. I still didn't know what it was but it was ten inches so we kept it. Then I caught a seven-inch Striped Bass, and we went back to the shore. It was a great day that I will always remember. Fishing is something I will always do!

Hudson McDermott

I Got Stitches

Here I am five years old in the hospital getting stitches while I'm watching my mom's phone. Before this, I had never been to the hospital besides when I was born. You may be asking how, so let me tell you.

It all started on my cousin's birthday. My mom, dad and I got ready to go. It took like thirty minutes. We went in the car and it took another thirty minutes. We forgot our present so we went to Toys R Us. Keep in mind Toys R Us was there at that time. I was super-duper excited but it took a long time. Finally, when I got there, I was so excited that I rushed out of the car and there it was... I slammed the car door on my finger.

My aunt and I rushed to the hospital. It took ten minutes for my mom and dad to arrive. When I was called to get stitches, my mom let me watch something on her phone. It took a few weeks to recover and looked like a worm on my finger. Now I am traumatized by car doors and am extra careful around them. I hope this never happens again!

Nathan Alvarado

Moving is Fun!

When I was seven years old, and a few months before my eighth birthday, in March 2020 coronavirus hit New York City and life as I knew it, changed. I left my apartment in NYC and moved to East Hampton.

That September, I started a new school where none of my friends from my old school were. I had to meet new friends and start all over. This made me feel nervous and scared. I think that living out in the Hamptons is better than the city because there is more space.

I think OLH is a better school because in my old school the classrooms were small and we had no Chromebooks. If I were in NYC, I would have to be on Zoom and everything would be closed. From this experience, I learned that change is good and making new friends is fun and exciting and that you can also keep the old ones. Something else that I learned is that it is not good to be scared of making new friends. I hope in the future, I can either move back to NYC or visit when Covid is over. I know now that it is okay to start over, and I will take on new adventures with courage.

Addison Cinelli

Being A Good Friend

Being a good friend is something that has always been important to me. This took time and I had to learn what it really meant to be a good friend. It is a skill that I feel is necessary for your whole life. I always treat my friends how I would like them to treat me. It started when I was in Preschool when I was four years old, and I began to learn how to be a good friend. It is important because being kind to others, knowing how to treat friends, and treating people with respect is an important part of life. I feel good about learning to do this every day because it's a skill I use every day. Saying "Hi, what's your name?" and playing together and never leaving anyone out is the kind thing to do. Now I have friends because I know how to treat people. It has made me a kinder and more compassionate human being. I will continue to be a good friend and treat others with respect.

Isabelle Helmdag

AMAZING DOG

From the time before I was born, my parents had a dog named Luna. Luna was an English Bulldog who was lazy but we loved her so much. When I was six years old, my beloved dog Luna passed away unexpectedly. I was very sad because that was the dog I had since I was a baby. She developed cancer in her stomach. My family and I decided to take her to the vet, and we decided to put her to sleep because we didn't want her to go through that pain. My family and I were so sad. I cried for about a week. We put her grave in our backyard so we can visit her whenever we want. Now, I have a perfect Mini Goldendoodle named Chloe that we got for Christmas a few years ago. In the future, I would like to get a dog of my own someday, but I will always miss my first dog Luna.

Gabriella Jimenez

I Traveled During Covid-19

My mom and dad are from Ecuador, but we live in Hampton Bays. My first time I visiting Ecuador was also my first time flying. I was eight years old and traveled with my older brother. I went so that I could visit my family. When we went, we had to follow the Covid-19 rules. If I didn't, then I wouldn't be able to go. I was able to see my grandma and my family. Covid-19 has kept my family apart. I felt happy to travel for the first time. I also felt nervous when the plane took off. It was very sad when I had to leave my parents and friends. Covid restrictions didn't let me travel on the right date, and I had to wait to take a Covid test. When I arrived in Ecuador, there was not a lot I could do because I had to follow the Covid-19 guidelines. I was able to travel and experience my life in another county. I have overcome one of my fears of traveling. Now I won't be afraid to go to other places in the world.

Massiel Mejia

The Day I Learned How to Ride My Bike

My family loves to go on long bike rides in my neighborhood in Southampton. This made me want to be able to join in on a two-wheeler

ride with no training wheels. One of the biggest challenges that I had to overcome in my life so far was to learn how to ride a bicycle.

One day when I was seven years old, my dad and I went into the backyard and he took off the training wheels on my bike. The first time I got on the bicycle it was very wobbly and unsteady. I was very afraid that I would fall and get hurt. At that point, I was almost ready to give up but I thought about all of the fun times and adventures that I would miss out on with my family if I did give up. This made me even more determined to learn how to ride on my own. It took several tries and a few scraped knees but I finally learned how to ride. I am so glad that I never gave up. Since that day I have become an expert bike rider. I have been able to join my family on long rides to the beach, the park, and all around the neighborhood.

I hope to continue to ride and exercise for the rest of my life. Riding a bike is one of my favorite things to do. I love the feeling of freedom that it gives me and the feeling of the wind through my hair as I ride. Who knows? Maybe if I keep riding, I could be in the Olympics one day and take home a gold medal.

Ecaterina Muresan

Help with My First Bike Ride

When I was younger, I rode my bike with training wheels. This is how I first learned to ride a bike. Then, when I was four years old, I was at my house, and my brothers and I were playing in the back of the house. My dad decided to let us go play in the front of the house. We got to ride our bikes, and my dad took off my training wheels. I put on my helmet and kneepads straight away. I was afraid to crash into a tree and fall. When I first started riding, I fell a couple of times but I never gave up. I tried and tried until I finally did it.

Soon, I was able to go on my bike to get ice cream at Dunkin Donuts. It tasted really good. After that I went on my bike to go home. Sadly, it was the end of the day. Now riding my bike is my favorite hobby and something I will always do. You have to learn that when you are afraid of something you need to keep on practicing because practice makes perfect.

Ashley Rodriguez

My Yellow Belt

I love karate and wanted to start because my siblings and parents have all done it. On the day of my sixth birthday, November 14th, I started karate. One day I was playing Fortnite, and then my mom called me and said, "It's time to go." I forgot I had my karate test! As I rushed to my room, I slipped. Then I got up and put on my gi (karate uniform) and got into the car. We were halfway through the ride. I was happy, but a little nervous too.

I got to the dojo (karate school) and my sensei (karate teacher) said I was just in time. One hour had passed, and it was finally my turn. I was nervous. I thought I was going to get all the moves wrong, but I got all of them right. I passed the test and earned my yellow belt. I went home with tears of happiness. When I got home, I had a surprise party. We had cake and other stuff but what matters the most is the yellow belt. My next goal is to get an orange belt, and then to keep earning belts until I get the black belt!

Paul Ryan

How I Grew Up Skiing

I have been skiing since I was two years old. I would go skiing with my mom, dad, sister, and brother and sometimes with friends. We always go to Vermont. My mom first taught me with a harness that she would hold me with when I would go down the mountain. I also took lessons until I got so good that this year, I WENT ON A BLACK DIAMOND FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!!!!!!!!!!

I was eight when I went on the black diamond. This memory is so special to me because my hard work paid off, and I have become a good skier so I am proud of myself. I was so happy because my friends Tessa and Laz came skiing with me. I felt scared and excited. Before, I would always ski on greens, but now my mom's friend Francis made us go on a black diamond. I can now ski down an advanced trail which is called "most difficult" on ski mountains. As I grow, I go on higher levels, and as they get higher, I feel more and more confident!

Avery Sansone

My Best Soccer Game

Soccer has always been a passion of mine since I was two years old. When I was eight years old, I played my best soccer games ever. It was a regular Saturday. I went to the Southampton Recreation Center where they had a lot of things to try like archery, basketball, squash, gymnastics, soccer, Zumba, and more! I signed up for gymnastics and soccer. My achievement was in soccer. We did little fun games. One was ‘Sharks and Minnows’. In the game, you have your soccer ball, and you have to get to the other side of the field with your soccer ball. If a coach takes your ball, you turn into a shark and steal other people’s soccer balls. At the end, we have the big game.

The score was 0-0. The opponent stole my soccer ball. He passed it to his friend. My friend stole the ball! He passed it to me. The goalie is a tough person. I zig-zagged with the soccer ball and made the goal! Now, the score is 1-0. We high-five each other, and fist bump. It's the final game. The coach passed the ball to the other team. The same thing happened again. The opponent passed the ball to his friend, and his friend tried to pass it to his other friend, but instead, the ball went to my friend, and he passed it to me. This time I went down to the floor, got my left leg behind me, my right leg in a kick position, and kicked the ball... I made the goal! I won two games in a row! I was so excited, and I went back home to celebrate. That was one of my best achievements.

Gabriel Torrealba

My Life Goes from Sad to Happy

One day my mom said we have to go to the doctor, and I asked her why. She told me something is in my head, and it needs to be looked at. My mom explained to me that I had to go to a few different hospitals. I said to my mom, “But I don’t like hospitals.” I did not feel like going because I was very nervous and uncomfortable. She told me not to worry. Then, we traveled to the hospital, and they put many things on my head. I was starting to cry so the doctor tried to calm me down. It worked, and I fell asleep.

After seeing the doctor, we went to eat some delicious food at Charley’s. It was a reward for being brave. After many travels to the

hospital, finally the doctor said that I'm ok and have nothing in my head. I promised to God to be a good girl, be a better daughter, a better sister, and a better friend. That was my journey from sad to happy, and now I enjoy my life with a big smile on my face. Thank you, God.

Isabella Trelles-Amaya

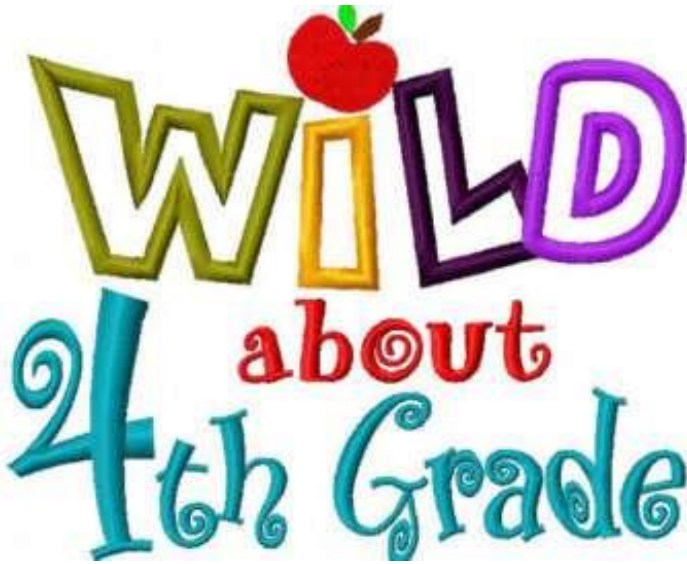
How I Learned to Swim

When I was a kid, I stayed in the shallow end of the pool because I hadn't learned how to swim yet. My mom, dad, and brother could go on the deep end because they were good swimmers. I wanted to learn how to swim in the deep end so my mom said she would sign me up for swimming lessons in Queens which is where I lived.

At first, I was frightened. I was five when I started lessons. But at the end, I learned how to swim. It made me so happy. Now I can play with my family in our pool. It is so much fun! I felt so excited to finally learn how to swim. I really wanted to play with my family because I was the only one that did not know how to swim. So, I tried and tried and tried, and then I finally learned.

By the summer, I was playing with my family in the pool in the deep end. Going in the pool is one of my favorite things to do in the summer. I love swimming with my family! I was so happy to tell my family when I learned and how. When they heard about it, they were so happy, and so was I.

Kevin Yaniro



My Autobiography in the Year 2041

Hi, I live in Paris, France, because when I was little, I always wanted to travel the world. So here I am in Paris. There are lots of croissants here. The macarons are so good too. I live in a mansion with my pets. My job is working as a photographer for pets and humans. I'm getting lots of money so I can afford a whole dressing room for my pets. My business is called Amazing Animal Snaps. I love the job because when I was little, I took photos of my sister, Corin. The second job that I have is a vet. I have my very own vet clinic. It is called Pet Life Care. My third job is being a DJ, and my DJ name is DJ Guinea pig. I always wanted to be a DJ because I love the way they do their music, and I have always wanted to be a vet because I am obsessed with animals.

I have no kids, and I am not married yet. I have huskies, guinea pigs, and more but I will only name some. Here are the huskies' names: Zeus, Luna, Koda, and Scout. Here are the dalmatians' names: (I will not name the puppies just the parents) Patch and Cloud. I also own two dachshunds: a girl and a boy whose names are Max and Daisy. Now I will name only a couple guinea pigs. Their names are Blossom, Vanilla Jr, Cleo, Cookie, Blueberry, Bruno, and Caramel. I will also own two foxes named Swiper (boy) and Pepper (a girl).

I am proud of saving and adopting some of the animals I own. And I am proud of owning my own business. Lastly, I'm very proud that I got to Paris because of my mom cheered me on. **Sofia Altamirano**

Sofia Alvarado Morales in 2041

Hi, my name is Sofia, and I am thirty years old. I am married and I have two kids, Jake and Everly. I have two dogs too: a pug named Biscuit and a husky named Junior. I live in Florida in a two-floor house that has six bedrooms. My house also has a big backyard. I also have a house in California so I can stay there when I go on trips with my family. I have two cars: one Tesla and one Lamborghini. My husband Kevin has one truck, a Chevrolet Silverado 1500.

I work as a veterinarian and a famous artist. I love to paint. Kevin works as a chief executive officer. I sell my paintings on the weekends. On the weekdays, I work as a veterinarian. Luckily, I always have time to spend with my family.

My major accomplishment is that I became an artist when I was little. I always liked to paint, but in my head, I always said it was not good. Others said it was really good. Even if I did not like it, I still painted it because I did not give up my dream. I really wanted it, and when you want something, you work hard for it so your dream can come true.

Sofia Alvarado-Morales

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

I live on 17 Shrubland Road. My house has super-advanced technology. It has a Roomba, because, yes, our computers display a digital screen, and our house is covered in cameras. Don't try to break in, or you will have a bad time.

I like to ride my electric scooter around the parks. My family will sometimes join in and play around with me, and we will all go electric scooter-ing together. It's really fun! We have such good memories in the past. My family plays Jack Box 41; it has lots of games.

I don't get much sleep because of my occupation as a doctor. Being a doctor is hard, especially seeing some of the things I have seen. It's not as fun as I thought it would be. In the future, I want to learn how to code. I will open a shop soon so I can get a little more money.

The money now is still dollar bills. Boring, right? Anyway, I am very proud of my work as a doctor. In the future, I hope the money changes from dollar bills to something cooler **Vincent Bellucci**

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

March 21, 2041

Welcome to my life in 2041. It's pretty nice; as a child I thought they would be flying cars and 20,000 camera phones, but no such luck. In 2041 it's the same as it was in 2021. It doesn't seem very different; cars and buildings are the same, but the president is different. I read a book about 2021. I know a book; it took me a while to find one made on paper. All books now are "audiobooks".

May 10, 2041

It's been a while since I wrote in this journal, but it is my birthday! I saved money for the new iPhone 16. If you didn't know, I'm a fruit seller in Costa Rica. Living in Costa Rica isn't that bad. There are friendly people, and prices are pretty good. Like 45 dollars for a pack of Pokémon cards, because they are pretty old but stocks right! I have a lot of family and friends here which is great.

September 23, 2041

Hi, it's been a while but good news! I got a new career as an artist. Art puts my feelings on a piece of paper. My life is great. Thank you for reading this. If you are reading this, I wish you the best in the future
Jean Pierre Betancourt

Zoey Bonilla in 2041

Hello, I'm Zoey Bonilla and I am 30 years old. I am the most famous astronaut and painter in Paris. I have a house there. I normally stay there; I own my own beach which is so big it's right next to my house. I have 10 kids and they're all African American that I adopted.

I also have nine galleries in New York. I have the biggest farmland on Long Island. All of my family lives on my farm; and so, do the parents of my kids as I call them my family. I forgot to mention that I am not married. I have six dogs, twelve chickens, and four horses. I have cabins all over the farm for my family and my kids' birth parents to live in.

I am so proud of myself. I know my mom would be so proud of me too. I love making art that was inspired by my mom. I also love using big, big canvases to paint a big painting. My house also has a really big pool with a slide. I also own a dog park and painting company!

Zoey Bonilla

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

I live in Europe which became a country in itself so not to divide people. The reason I live here is because there was a third world war. It had the same format as the first two and nobody wanted a fourth one. I believe I live in what used to be Hungary somewhere near the Austrian border. I know because when they were tearing down the toll stations, they had old flags on them. They sold me one banner for 20 fortnights; which if you don't know is the currency of Hungary. But fortnights have now been replaced by the European National Currency. There are some churches though, and 5 different religions: Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, Episcopalian and the new one, Automobilians (who worship cars).

I work at the local shopping mall. Business has been good. We sold 508 of those household robots last month. Too bad I can't afford one. They would clean my 2039 Honda Civic. So anyway, I am a stock employee who makes sure the shelves are filled. Never did I say my job was fun. We also sell a bunch of those assistant droids that can take care of elderly folks.

I haven't been with my family a lot lately mainly because Europe is an ocean away from the U.S.A. Last time I saw them, my father, mother and sister had their own robot repair shop. I wish them luck. I thought about adopting a child but I think I should wait until I am older.

I finally have my own apartment! I don't have to stay with that weird roommate. He always said the weirdest things such as, "McDonalds is the National Chicken Hate Union," "Finland is in the Middle East," and "Shrek is a Greek God." That one was the last straw.

Thomas Bouker

Sofia Brady's Autobiography

Hi my name is Sofia Brady and I have a house in Lake George. It's A beautiful place. I ski almost every day (when I'm not busy). But I move a lot. Sometimes I live in Utah for a few months. I mostly go during the fall. At my house in Utah, we have a pool because sometimes my family and I go in the summer. At Utah we actually have a Yorkie named Coco. When we are not there my friend Sally takes care of her.

I've been a fashion designer for 10 years. I started when I was 19 years old. My clothing brand is named 50/50. We get 300 orders a day! I get around \$200,000 a year. My team is very nice and supporting. I am married and I adopted two kids last year. My kids are Jamie, he's 5 and Bailey who is 12, they are both super nice. We have a pug named Biscuit and a French bulldog named Lucky representing my mother that was born on Saint Patrick's Day. My parents visit to see their grandchildren, and of course my sister Isabel comes as well. She brings her kids Katy and Loren. Katy always plays with Jamie. They are around the same age she is. Loren is two years older than Bailey. They are both kind of teenagers because Bailey is turning 13 in a few days so they just hang out on their phones.

My biggest accomplishment was when my clothing company was named the best brand in New York State. My family was so happy for me. I felt on top of the world! That's my life. Thank you for reading my autobiography.

Sofia Brady

My 2041 Autobiography

The year 2041 as a police officer.

For breakfast today, I ate something called Future Twinkies! They are a really nice snack to eat when you are running late. I was patrolling the city when suddenly, two people ran out of a Taco Bell and left in a red Lamborghini! I managed to arrest them, and after that I felt so good!

June 2041

It's me again, nothing big has happened since the robbery of Taco Bell. But today I feel very tired because I worked the night shift

last night. I had wished that I was not on night duty, because when I work at night, I am not hungry the next day. I still don't know why, thankfully I had the day off so I checked in with my doctor, he said everything was fine. After that I went home to watch TV and I watched the news. There was nothing interesting on the news. For dinner I had spaghetti with meatballs.

October 2041

I'm writing this during my day shift, after getting off the night shift last night. I had to guard the bank all night long. It is a boring assignment because there is no internet connection! I dislike guarding the bank at night, I'd rather do it during the day when there are people there. So, I was just sitting there last night, when suddenly the window to the bank broke! A criminal was breaking into the vault! I immediately called for backup, and then I got my taser and hit him! He went down and I arrested him, backup had just arrived and took him to jail. Because of what I did I immediately got a promotion! I am now a Lieutenant!!!

Edward Brooks

Sarah Correa's Life in 2041

Hi, I'm Sarah Correa, and I am 30 years old. I live in a mansion in Los Angeles. My house has six floors and on each, there are five bedrooms and six bathrooms. And I have a pool outside where my kids play. I am a single mom with eight kids and three dogs. I live with my best friend Analissa, and her eight kids and one dog.

My job is a veterinarian and a singer. I have a band with my family, where my sister plays guitar, my brother plays the drums, and my cousin plays the piano. As a vet I take care of animals like, dogs, cats, spiders and hamsters. Every day before work I bring the kids to school or daycare, and I pick them up after work too. Then I feed them and let them go to the park with their friends and their friends' parents.

I am proud of my life and my career. **Sarah Correa**

My 2041 Autobiography

July 16, 2011

I, Adelaide Connelly, was born. But it wasn't just **my** birthday, it was also my Aunt Heather's birthday!

12 Years Later

"Happy Birthday to you..." My whole family sang. I was smiling for joy thinking, "Just yesterday it felt like my 11th birthday." In a flash my mom was cutting the cake and handing out cupcakes, brownies, and cookies. Just then a couple of knocks on the door... "I think I know who-" I said excitedly. I slowly opened the door. It was my best friends! It was my first ever sleepover. We were going to watch movies and play games. Five days later I got a visit from one of my other friends. She was going to make a YouTube channel and she needed music. I said I could do the music! Next thing I know I'm famous at 12 years old. All of a sudden, I can't walk down the street with everybody recognizing me.

17 Years Later

_____ You might think I have the best life; and you would be half right. People pretend to be my friend just to get dollar bucks, and to get invited to special events. (Kind of funny, I used to call money "dollar bucks" when I was a little kid, and now that is the national currency!).

I also have a daughter and her name is Ocean. I have two dogs; one of the dogs is named Minnie. I have had Minnie since I was nine. The other dog is named Albert Jr. He was born a couple of months ago. I live in New York City and The Hamptons. I've won many awards for all of my work. I'm NOT the best person even though people always tell me that I am. But... I'm pretty good.

Adelaide Connelly

My 2041 Autobiography

In the year 2041 and I'm 30 years old.

I work at a ten-floor hotel and when I serve the guests, they give me five stars! My boss always tells me that I am great at cooking. I work every single day so I can get a raise and start to upgrade my house even more! I always wanted to have seven floors so this is what I will try to complete. I always have to drop my kids at the babysitter because my

husband works everyday as well. But the babysitter is an hour away so it gets me five minutes late to work every day, but because I work every day my boss doesn't mind and I am so happy about that!!

I am married and I have eight kids who I always treat right! I always tell my kids to be nice to each other, and be nice to other people and also to protect their siblings and the people who get bullied. My husband's name is Rodrick. He always takes care of the children and I love that about him! He's so overprotective, if one of the kids gets hurt by someone he will go to the principal's office, and I understand that. I always tell my kids or my husband to help me so the house is clean and they always listen! This is why I love my family! **Analissa Espinosa**

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

It's the year 2041 and I'm 30 years old. I live in France and Mexico. In France, my house is two stories, in Mexico the house has three stories, and they both have a pool and a playground. I also have a private jet. I get out on the jet with my grandchildren a lot. I have two dogs that are both small (so they can easily come on the plane with us). My poodle's name is Peanut and my pug's name is Cookie. I like to give my pets food names.

I own a business which is called Jenny Loves Business. I'm a gamer, and I make so much money to help people in need. I also help my mom sell some traditional Mexican food like tacos, tamales and churros. They are so yummy. I hope I didn't make you hungry. I hope my grandchildren learn some Spanish like me and my daughter.

I am not married, but I did have a husband. We didn't get along, so I said goodbye. My daughter is married to a guy she loves, and he loves her. My grandchildren are so good, but sometimes they drive me crazy. Their names are Carmelo, 7 and Liam, 9. They help me with my gaming videos.

I'm proud of myself for passing all of my grades in school; I always said to myself never give up, everything might be hard. And I accomplished college. I wish I can speak with my young self to give her advice and tell her that everything is going to be okay.

Jennifer Espinoza

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

I am 30 years old, and I live in London in a one-story house with kind neighbors. Sometimes I get invited to dinner at their house, or I invite them to dinner at my house. I live a few blocks away from the grocery store and the library. I work at a restaurant as a waiter. It's annoying though, I have to wait a long time to leave at the end of my shift depending on how big the family is that's eating. I also have to move very fast from one table to another and to tell the cook to tell what they want.

I have two kids named Jackson and Noah. Noah is eight years old, and Jackson is sixteen years old. Noah likes to play soccer, read aloud, and swim. Jackson likes to play basketball, do art, play piano, and cook.

Yesterday I got a promotion! I am no longer a waiter, now I am a cook! I don't really know how to cook, but they have the recipes in the cooking area so it's all good. Unless the recipes are thrown away... But I am good for now!

Alan Fajardo

In the Life of 2041

Hi! I am Madison Giraldo. Here's a little bit about me. I still live in Long Island, New York. I inherited my home apartment in the 1770 inn. Which is where I used to live as a little kid, until I finally got enough money to live in a new home after I graduated from college.

I have always wanted to open a restaurant ever since I was eight. My restaurant isn't the best in Long Island, but I do have good ratings!

Yes, I know what you're thinking, do I have any children yet? I do; the oldest, Isaac Carlos Giraldo, and the youngest, Marina Jennifer Giraldo. (Yes, I am married. If I wasn't how could I have had my kids?!)

The biggest accomplishment I have ever had is when last week I got a call saying that I got FIVE STARS on my restaurant!!! I guess dreams really CAN come true.

Madison Giraldo

Me in 2041

Hi my name is Daniel Geoghan, and its March in the year 2041.To the person reading this, you know what 2041 is like. But for the ones who don't, that's okay too. We're improving the ecosystem.

I own a large company called "Save the Planet." For only \$1, we will clean 1 pound of trash from the ocean and plant a tree.

On another note, me and my family live great lives. My son is in college and my daughter is in 4th grade. With the money I make, I live in a castle with my wife. She is awesome. I just bought my son a Ferrari, he loves it. He brought it to school and now he has a girlfriend. He is going to have a good life. My daughter is so cute that I gave her a hover board. I gave my wife her own castle too.

Remember to be nice and donate to charity!

Daniel Geoghan

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE YEAR 2041

In the year 2041, I live in LA with my dog Bob. I just gave my sister a house in Beverly Hills, and next month, I will buy my mom and dad a home in LA like me, but their house will be even bigger than mine. I will also have a house in Ecuador so my mom, dad and I can see our family who lives there.

Next year, I'm going to move to Columbia. I'm going to live in Columbia up to the year 2050. I also want to win a Grammy for being the best actor in 2051. So far, I have made all of my money because I am Tik Tok famous. But I also want to be a movie star. When I become a movie star, I am going to buy a Lamborghini for my parents and for Ms. Casella and Ms. Price.

Sebastian Gomez

Shayla Guerrero's 2041 Autobiography

Hello, my name is Shayla Guerrero and this is my autobiography. As you can see on the top, it is 2041 and I am 29 years old almost going to be 30. I live in the Hamptons or in New York City with my best friend. I live in a beautiful white home with marble counters and tables. I also have a huge living room. There are about eight bedrooms and three bathrooms so my house is really big. There is a pool and a playground. I am not too sure why I have a pool in my backyard because I own a beach home in Los Angeles, but we have a pool anyway.

I own a small business with my best friend that I have been best friends with for a long time. Which is one of the many reasons we are neighbors as well as business partners. Most small businesses are online, but ours is not online. A few things we sell are clay earrings, rings that have beads on them, and slime. There is a lot more that we sell too. We only own one store, but that store has made us a lot of money. I do have a child named Isabella and my child is 4 years old. Isabella has helped me by helping to design some products because we want to be able to make things for people of all ages.

Last year I made my most amazing accomplishment ever, I made \$800,000. I had to split it to make it be fair with my best friend, but it was still really rewarding. The most exciting thing is that I bought my dream car which is a Rolls Royce. It has been my dream car ever since I was a child and I finally have one.

Shayla Guerrero

My Autobiography in Year 2041

Hi my name is Makayle Haring and I am a veterinarian. I have a husband and a daughter. My daughter's name is Lizzy, and she is the sweetest little three years old. I live in Idaho and I have a big house. It's a two-story house. It has a big attic that Lizzy can play in. I visit Long Island often because that's where all my friends still live there.

My first time helping an animal as a vet was with my dog, and then my horse too in the same night! It was really challenging but she's fine now. I have a corgi and a golden retriever they're the best. They are not really allowed on the bed, but sometimes I let them jump up on the bed.

I have houses in Long Island and California! I like to stay there sometimes as well. It's fun having houses in different places, but they

won't pay for themselves; so, my husband and I work a lot. But I come home early to get Lizzy from the babysitter every day. Then we go to the park and have ice cream and when we get home, we have dinner; when my husband gets back of course (don't tell him I give Lizzy ice-cream before dinner!). Also, I have a pool and a hot tub at my house and our pool is cool. It has lights inside and the hot tub does too!

I like being a vet. I get to see all different kinds of animals. But dogs are the most common animal. Some people bring in the most random animals! It's kind of funny sometimes. And yes, I own the vet clinic. Owning my own vet clinic is something I am very proud of.

Makayle Haring

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

Hello! My name is Andrew and I am 30 years old! I have worked as a teacher for three years. I also am a Youtuber and Twitch streamer! I live in London, England in a big house. I have a wife and three children.

I walked downstairs at 5:00 this afternoon to get a coffee. My wife went to get groceries with the kids. I decided to stream on Twitch, so I started recording. Three hours later the stream was over, the kids were back and we ate dinner a bit late. I went to our room and was on my laptop for two more hours until going to bed!

Yesterday was a crazy day. It started with me getting some breakfast and going to the park at 1:00 with my family. At the park there was a little boy wandering around. I asked him, "What are you doing here, kid?" He screamed and said, "I don't know!" Then I said to him, "We will take you to the police to help you." Twenty-five minutes later, we were there and he got out of the car and ran to a man at the door at the police station. "Who is that?" I asked him, "My dad!" the kid got home, and it was good we got him back to his dad. "I hope I see that kid again," I said.

Anyways, that was my time I met a nice kid at the park! After that we went back to the park and played with a frisbee. Stuff is pretty fun when you have a change of plans. Things are cooler and more fun.

Andrew Holguin

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

Hi I'm Joseph Martin, and I want to tell you about my life. First I want to tell you about my house. My house is huge and it has five bedrooms and three bathrooms. It also has a huge pool on the roof, and it even has a water slide for the kids.

I have a great job. I'd make designs for iPhones. I can even make the iPhone 50! I love my job so much. I am married and have two great kids. Their names are Mike and Kyle, and they always help out with chores around the house. Sometimes they help me make new iPhone designs.

My greatest accomplishment so far in 2041, is that I got an award for the best iPhone designs. That is what made me rich. We also have a pet dog and her name is Cupcake. We all like to watch TV and just relax in our free time together.

Joseph Martin

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

My name is Euan McLean. I just turned 30 years old. I was born on Saint Patrick's Day and I have a wife and two children, one girl and one boy. My wife and I have been married for three years. Both of my children are in preschool, but they are in different years. Their names are Autumn and Nicholas. Nicholas is the oldest. He is three years old and his sister is two years old. I live in a 6.5 million-dollar, four story house. The house is awesome. My children love it and so does my wife. I have a sixteen-foot palm tree in the foyer. My house is on my island that I bought a few years ago. I live in the best bedroom in the whole house.

I used to be a commercial fisherman, but now I work with my longtime friend Gerard. I am going to visit and to study with him for a month on Planet Orb. I discovered a new species on a fishing trip, it was from Orb. This is the best thing that has ever happened to me so far in my career.

Euan Nicholas McLean

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE YEAR 2041

In the year 2041, me and my best friend live together. We live near my mom and dad, and my friend's mom and dad. We also have a baby corgi. We also have a lot of reptiles. Like snakes and lizards. My friend loves reptiles. We want to install a pool too. My mom wants me to have a baby so she can have a granddaughter, but I really don't want one because of the reptiles. It would be a lot of work to take care of the dog, the reptiles, and the baby! So that's why we don't want to have a baby. I kind of want to get a fish though, instead of having a baby.

I love my house and my life. I have a great job, awesome friends, and even better pets.

Benjamin Micari

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

I'm Gerard Murphy and I'm 30 years old. I have a wife and two kids. My wife's name is Linda, and my kids' names are Gerard 2.0 and Jimmy. We live on planet Orb.

My wife and I are biologists. We discover new animals and monsters all the time. On weekends I play rocket ball with my friends. Here on planet orb, the land is amazing and there is plenty of oxygen. The trees are made of crystals, the ground is made of pink, red, and blue sand. There are mountains the size of Mt. Everest. The lakes are filled with all types of fish. I hear there's been sightings of giant mutant animals from earth recently. I'm trying to find out how they got here and why they are so big. I've seen an overgrown sewer rat before. Its stomps are as loud as a dinosaur, but if you scare it, it will run away like a little baby. Even though it can squash you if it stepped on you. I also heard that they are growing crops here. They opened local grocery stores too.

Gerard Murphy

Charlotte O'Brien in 2041

Hello, my name is Charlotte O'Brien and I'm 29 years old. I am going to be writing about the past when I was nine years old. Right now, I live in France but when I was nine, I lived in Westhampton. I had a couple of friends, but my best friend's names were Adelaide, Ava and Annalisa. They were kind, funny and always there for me. I also had different friends but they were not my best friends. Let's talk about how we moved. Me and my friends were really bored so we talked about literally nothing that existed. Like a pony riding, and a human with ice cream on its nose. I know, so weird, right?!

When I went home one day (after being so bored with my friends), and checked my piggy bank, I found enough money to go to France. I was so excited but while I was on the plane, all I could think about was that I missed my besties; they were gone! I asked my dad if we are ever going to Westhampton again, he said no in a sad voice. I was so sad, but then we were at the hotel and my dad had tickets on the table. I thought we were going to a concert. But nope, we were going home to Westhampton! Woo Hoo! I really loved Paris even though I missed my friends. That is why I moved back here two years ago.

Charlotte O'Brien

My Autobiography in Year 2041

Hi, my name is Alessandra Paccasassi, and I am known as the greatest singer worldwide! I live in a huge mansion with a wine field, and I share it with my husband and my two gorgeous twin girls!

I should probably tell you more about my job, well I sing all kinds of music! I had a huge performance last night, August 21, 2041. I even got a vacation pass from one of my biggest fans to go anywhere in the state with my family! Just because they loved my new song. I sang a song about my twin daughters and my husband! I would also love to share more about my family, like my twin daughters! The reason I haven't named my twins yet is because they were just born on August 19, 2041. Just a couple of days ago! I know for sure I would love to give my daughters Italian names, but I can't decide on anything yet!

In the year 2021 (20 years ago) I dreamed of being a ballet dancer and a singer, and I never gave up ballet. I am actually still pretty good at it. I practice a lot! I am really trying hard to become a famous dancer, so I could teach my daughters how to do ballet! I think that I wanted to be a singer because of my mother, Emily Paccasassi. I love my family and I am so happy I made the choice to become a famous singer and soon a ballet dancer! Oh, and by the way I have two cute dogs Zozo and Zia they are both one year-old!

Alessandra Paccasassi

Leilany Perez 2041

My house is a mansion. It has ten bedrooms, four bathrooms, two pools, three Jacuzzis, two guest rooms, two balconies, three office rooms, four fancy cars, a tennis court, a basketball court. a makeup room, two dressing rooms, a makeup lady, and a dressing and hairstyle lady. I would love to have a library and a butterfly cage with forty butterflies and flowers inside, but I am working on installing all of that. My house also has a gaming room with cool LED lights and puppy house for my five dogs and five cats.

I work as an architect; this is how I earn my money. I make \$60.34 per hour, which comes out to \$125,520 per year. My dad also works as an architect, and he earns a lot of money too. I would like to add a vanity in my room and mask room, because I'm allergic to dogs and cats. That's why I have a whole dog and cat room. I would teach them to care for and be helpful to each other. I would like a kid's room just in case I have kids one day. I would like a kids' guest room for their friends to sleepover too. I am so happy with the way my life has turned out.

Leilany Perez

My Autobiography

I live in Florida and my home is on a farm. It is near Disneyland and near Universal Studios, to go there for my kids. Oh, that's right, I got a job at Disneyland. I am a horse rescuer/vet. I started doing that when I was twenty-one, and I started work at Disney when I was twenty-five.

Oh, I also got into Harvard at seventeen. I have two kids, a husband, two dogs named Lizzy and Bolt, and a horse named Dasher. Oh yea, I also have a pig named Bacon, and a cat named Stella. I won the lottery and won \$100,000,000. I got so happy and jumped around my house. I got on my horse and went to the store to get my money, so I got a new car and another horse. I even got a horse saddle. I could not be any happier.

Ava Policastro

My 2041 Autobiography

I live in East Hampton in a medium-sized home, next to a beach on Long Island. I have fun in the summer playing on the beach. I have a big pool too. I have a big yard, and always play so many games with my dog in the soccer field that is in my yard. I also have a big gate around my house. The pool even has a water slide.

I'm a dog trainer. When I have enough money, I will own a pet store too. I will help people learn how to train their dogs. In my pet store I will have cats, bunnies, fish, and stuff for pets like food, treats, toys, beds, and little clothes.

I'm proud that I have my own business and my home. I also take care of my family, and my dog. I love to play with him in the pool. We play games like chase and fetch. I will teach him how to swim when we open the pool soon too.

Sofia Saldana

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

Yesterday was a sunny day at the beach. I was on a jet ski and we saw a dolphin in the water and then we went swimming. After that, we went home to eat lunch and I went over to my family's house. I slept there for the night, and I woke up to my family cooking my pancakes and waffles for breakfast.

Then, this morning, I got a new job! I am now the head manager of the grocery store. I also just remembered that tomorrow is my 30th birthday! I am finally meeting new people at my job. I wanted to watch a movie with my friends for my birthday, but they had other plans. So, I will go to my mom and dad's house to watch a movie with my sisters and brother: Zoey, Hailey and Jayce. We will all love the movie. After the movie we all will play Roblox. Then, I will go home for dinner to my house. All of my friends will come over and we all will watch a tv show together. I can't wait to see what they get me as birthday presents!

Jadyn Sulph

Francesca Tinghino's Autobiography

Hello my name is Francesca Tinghino. It is the year 2041, and I am 28 years old. I study animals for a living. Sometimes I choose to look for new species. I spend a lot of time on these assignments. I always write books about my discoveries. I am my own boss. I host meetings sometimes too. When I host meetings, I call my group the Animal Care Group. Sometimes I foster the animals that I find.

I live in Kentucky. I go to see the Kentucky Derby every year. My house is near a forest and there is a river that runs through the forest. My house has a small horse ranch for my dog and two horses to one side. On the other side, I have my kitchen upstairs in my room, a bathroom and the living room. I have one big paddock and an indoor pool behind the kitchen. I don't have kids and am not married. My family is made of animals. I have one female corgi named Queenie and is ranch colored. I have two horses one is a female black Shetland pony named Beauty, and the other is a male chestnut American Thoroughbred called Frolic. I also have a snowbell fish.

One major accomplishment I am proud of, was that I found a new fish species. I wrote a whole two-hundred-page book about it! The fish is white, two feet long on average and lives in rivers. I called the fish a Snowbell fish because of its size and color. I was able to keep one snowbell fish for myself. The fish is male and I named it Snowball. He lives in a fish tank in my room.

Francesca Tinghino

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

It's the year 2041, and I am 30 years old. I live in El Salvador because it's where my family is from. My house is white and close to the beach; it is always hot here. It is large and beautiful, and it has three stories. My house has two bathrooms, four bedrooms, a big kitchen. Oh yea, I almost forgot, my house has a huge living room! The outside has a beautiful backyard with a big table to eat at. This is the house my grandpa built for his family when my mom was little. This is why this house is special to me.

Now I am going to tell you about my job. When I was little, I wanted to do so many things like art, dance, violin, music, tap and bake. I first didn't know what I wanted to choose but I thought about it and I finally knew what I wanted to do. I decided to open a bakery. Three of the biggest inspirations were my mom, dad, and my grandma. They always cook for my family with love.

Now the question you've been waiting for, am I married? No, I am not but maybe I will be one day. Who knows? Yeah, and one more thing, I've always wanted to thank everyone who helped me accomplish my dreams like when I was in the Catholic school in Southampton. I was always thankful for the teachers that taught me something new and special every day. Like never give up on our dreams and to always try your best and be brave.

Mikayla Torres

My Autobiography in the Year 2041

Hi my name is Wesley Wassle, and it is the year 2041. I am going to tell you about my life. So, let's talk about my house... I mean my

apartment. It's small and sometimes makes me feel claustrophobic, but it's all I can afford here in Canada. Also, I'm in credit card debt.

My life is not so eventful right now, but my job is alright. Okay, maybe it's not. I work at a gas station and I just pump gas into people's cars. My boss's name is Mr. P. He has a temper problem sometimes. I get paid minimum wage. So, my job is boring and the pay is outrageous. But at least I have a family!

Just kidding, I have no family and I am very lonely. Did I mention I am in debt? I have no family, and my job is boring and pays minimum wage. But I have accomplishments! Wait... did you really think that I had accomplishments? Well anyway that's my life. Do not time travel to 2041. Maybe the year 2042 will be better!

Wesley Wassle

My Autobiography in the Year 2021

Hi, I am Ryan Yaniro and I am 30 years old. I don't have any children yet, but I have a wife named Lorry. Me and Lorry are having trouble deciding if we should have our own children, adopt children, or not have any children at all. My parents, Lorry's parents and my brother think we should have two children, but I don't know. We already have a dog named Fredrick, and he is a lot of work. The proper description for Frederick here is a nut, a big fat nut! He is so hyper and crazy but he is cute and we love him anyway. My brother, Kevin is also married and doesn't have any kids either.

I live in a big, big black and brown house in Canada. I chose to live here because I love ice skating and it is always cold here. We also got a good deal for a house near Niagara Falls. We live only ten minutes away from it! I installed an ice rink in my backyard. That took four months to build, but it was so worth it.

I am a lawyer and work for myself. I love my job because I am good at defending things I believe in and because I get a lot of money.

I won a lottery! What I did with the money is get my two favorite teachers to this day (Ms. Casella and Ms. Price) blue Lamborghinis. And with the rest of the money, I still have left over, I am planning to donate to charity (to feed the hungry)! **Ryan Yaniro**



A New Change

People go through a lot of changes in their lives. People move away, get new jobs, or move into new homes. This year, I had a big change in my life, too. I left my old school and came to OLH. Since coming to OLH, my life has changed in a good way. I have already learned so much and have met more friends! The number one thing that puts a smile on my face every day is that I get to see my friends, Sister Kathy, and Meggie. At my old school I didn't get the chance to walk a

dog, but here I get to walk Meggie and get some fresh air. At recess I can play outside with my friends. I have made so many friends that I know I will have for a long time.

Coming to OLH has made me so much happier that I was at my old school. Besides having great friends, at OLH I have a lot of nice teachers, especially Ms. Zaneski and Ms. Cain. They have taught me so much about things like Spanish explorers, grammar, and fractions. I feel like I have already learned so much, especially because I get a bigger desk and have a lot more space to learn! I can also do a lot of fun activities like tech crew, bringing down the mail, and fun games in gym. My other school did not have any of these activities. Coming to OLH has really made me a happier person and I can't wait for all the new classes I will get to take in the future.

Emil Zaleski

My Life in Quarantine

Like everyone else's, my life changed a lot during quarantine. It definitely had its ups and downs but I think being quarantined was mostly a positive thing in my life. I know that quarantine was hard for everyone, but the thing that changed in my life for the better during quarantine was moving to the Hamptons. The first day of quarantine was interesting. It was a little sad but my mom, my brother, and I came out to the Hamptons. My dad had to stay in the city for work, but the Hamptons were fun and cool. Every day out here was like an amazing dream. I liked the peace and quiet.

After the first week, I was doing Google Meet for school. That was not a dream. My class didn't know what was going on and we spent about two hours every day just talking. To be honest, the only thing keeping my sanity was exercising, my YouTube channel, and video games.

This is when the downs came in. The lack of human interaction was insane. The only people I talked to in real life were my mom and my little brother. I would wake up at 8:00 AM, go eat breakfast, do a small amount of school work. It was the same thing all the time. At least in the summer I was able to go to the beach and catch pufferfish. My dad would come out on the weekend when he didn't have to work and I was much happier.

There is not as much negativity. So even though my life was lonely during quarantine, quarantine changed my life for the better because I was able to move out to the beautiful Hamptons and move to a school that I really love. Quarantine was a weird time but it did have an influence on my life and make it better! **Teddy Duke**

The Buck Stops Here

Have you ever gone hunting? Well, I have. It is a great experience. I personally LOVE it. I go with my sister and dad. I have been hunting for five years now. I go in a blind with a heater. I get cold, not going to lie. My dad's brother and cousin come, too. I hunt in the woods right behind my house and in upstate New York in Moravia. The first buck (an adult male deer) I ever saw was in the woods behind my house. It was a six pointer. That means it has six antlers. So that means an 8 pointer has eight antlers. Well, the one we saw like I said was a six pointer. We have camo seats. We don't have a blind because it doesn't get really cold here. The blind we use is up state because it gets really cold up there during hunting season.

Anyways back to the story, we sat for about an hour and then we heard the leaves crackling. There was a real deer. I was so surprised. It was big. We had to be really quiet because we didn't want to scare the buck away. After a couple minutes he noticed us. He started to make this

weird sound with his nose and was scruffing the floor with his feet. He did that for like 2 minutes and then just walked away. We were so close but unfortunately, we didn't get him but that's okay because I still had the best time with my family. Hunting mostly influences my life by spending time with my dad and sister. Making new memories with them. It also means so much to me that my dad passed it on to me.

Ava Lynch

Turks and Caicos

Last Year I went to Turks and Caicos. I had so much fun there and got to learn a lot! When I got there, there was a beautiful water fountain in the middle of a turquoise pool!! At the resort there was a gym and a little camp for little kids. The people there were so nice! Around the pool there was a walkway into the beautiful relaxing beach. We were hungry so we asked people if there was a restaurant nearby, and if we could have a ride there. The restaurant had amazing food and a band. I went snorkeling and got to see a turtle, fish, and a shark! When we got back to the resort, we got treated with some towels and some books about the area. I read the book and learned how life is different there than it is here.

I learned that Turks and Caicos is a small island, much smaller than Long Island. Fun Fact: they drive on the opposite side of the road! It is always warm and it has way more resorts than Long Island. One thing I noticed while I was there was that Turks and Caicos does not have a lot of schools. It made me feel bad because the kids there don't get to go to school and learn. It made me feel grateful and protected that there are so many schools on Long Island and I get to go to one. My trip to Turks and Caicos was great because it was fun, but I also got to learn so many things about the island that made me feel grateful that I get to call East Hampton my home.

Olivia Robertson

The Hotdog

I am a hotdog and my name is Bun! This may sound weird, but I am here to tell you about what happened to me today. I was so excited to spend another day wrapped up in the same package as my other hotdog friends. All of a sudden, I got picked off the shelf and put into some lady's cart. She took me to the checkout and put me in her car. I was excited because I've never been to someone's house before. When I got to the house I was confused because the lady that bought us looks like she loves pizza, so I don't know why she bought me.

I was just getting used to my new home when all of a sudden, she ripped open the package and put me and my friend hotdog #2 into some warm water. To be honest, it kind of made us smell bad. It took me a minute but then I realized I am getting cooked in her kitchen! She took me out of the smelly water and put me on a grill where I started to look like I had a tan. Now I knew what was happening. When she put me on the plate, I knew it was game time. All of a sudden, she picked me up and I got chewed and swallowed. Now I am in a million little pieces and I have to tell you it is disgusting inside here! All I see is pizza, honey, chicken, and water. Yuck!!! All I'm going to say to other hotdogs out there is try your best not to get eaten. It is not fun!

Hailey Sulph

My Life as a Refrigerator

My name is Miranda and I am a refrigerator. My life has been pretty boring up to this point. I have spent my life in a box for as long as I can remember. Today, though, I finally got to go home with a family. I knew this because every single time that a refrigerator gets to go home, they move them into a truck. And guess what... I was put on a truck! When I got to my new home, the family took me out of the box and set me up. I was so tired that I fell asleep. When I woke up, I felt weird because the family had put all of this food inside of me. It is like I was

stuffed like a turkey on Thanksgiving dinner!! I did make friends with a hotdog named Bun. But every other food I wasn't really a fan of.

Bun and I got to talk for a few hours but all of a sudden, the mom took Bun out. I thought she would put Bun back but the mom ate her!! I was so sad because Bun was my new friend and they just put her on a grill until she got very tan. I felt so bad and I was mad so I decided I wasn't going to do what my people wanted me to anymore. I turned off and I wouldn't turn back on. The mom and dad were angry because all of their good food was warm so they put me back in my box and now I am back at the store. I'd rather stay in this box than watch my friends get eaten, even if it is a boring life!

Danna Castaneda Vega

Skippy from Zooba

Hi! My name is Skippy from Zooba. I'm a rabbit from the video game Zooba. I wasn't always in the video game and today I am here to tell you my story about my life. The first thing I remember is that I was in a zoo. I liked being there, but some animals were not too nice to me. I hopped over to tell the guards and they went and talked to the other animals. The guards were nice and made sure I was okay. The other animals at the zoo told me they were sorry and said that they would always be nice to me from now on. After my time at the zoo, I joined a circus. I wore a clown costume and a swimming suit for when I had to do performances in the water. I didn't know how to swim so the guards had to save me. I decided I didn't want to be in the circus anymore and now I compete in races. So far, I have won races against a penguin and a tiger. I was the fastest one, I won. I am so proud of myself. I am happy and my life is normal as a rabbit.

Jeremy Trelles Amaya

Travels of A Size Nine Shoe

Hi, my name is Jerick and I am a size nine shoe. I had been in a shoe store my whole life hoping to be bought. I had been feeling very lonely. One day, I thought a man was going to buy me. He had a coupon but it did not work. Later, I saw another man and this time he had actual cash with him so he bought me. I felt joy! For the first month, I spent most of my time in my box. Later, my owner brought me to Florida. I was excited because I had never been out of the state. First, we went to the hotel. The floors and the rugs there were so clean! Then we went to the hotel pool but I had to stay next to a bench because my owner didn't want me to get all wet and gross.

Later, we all went back to the hotel to plan out what we were going to do. My owner decided he wanted to go shopping. I was scared I was going to be replaced but it turns out we were just food shopping. The next day we went to Disney. That place was really nice but the ground was kind of gross. My owner had kept me clean for so long but now I was stepping on so many pieces of food and in puddles. I was starting to get sad that I was so dirty. But my owner had a bracelet that let him go on all the rides so I had to go everywhere he wanted to. Disney World ended up being fun because we went on so many rides but now, I am dirty and tired. Hopefully tomorrow my owner will wear different shoes because I need some rest!

Jerick Maldonado

PUMPKIN

I am a mouse and I am blasted from my home by a tornado coming from a big black tube. A two-legged being picks me up and drops me at the same time. This clumsy someone is in big trouble! The two-legger locks me in a clear box. I am so mad I could squeak. I think I am going to die. I

am shaken around and then another two-legger jumps down from a tree and screams at me. Like seriously why?

They don't understand that my ears are really sensitive. They finally let me escape. I am so happy but also very cold. I run and bump into the paw of a big black and white furry thing that I think is called a cat. The cat shoves me around a little bit. I run for my life up one of the legs of the two-legger. She screamed and pushed me off. I am getting sick of being pushed around. This time they put me in a big brown box with a soft rag for me to hide. The box is soft and I can easily bite through it. I think I am finally in a warm place and no one is pushing me at the moment. But it gets worse again. Two more screaming two-leggers come in. For like the one hundredth time I get pushed out of my warm home. I am so scared and hide in the fluffy rag. They put a red squishy blob thing in my new home. It is super warm. They also throw green seeds at me. It smells really good and it actually tastes delicious. I can finally relax and live happily ever after in my warm box where I get food and water. And please no more pushing!

Eva Vijfvinkel

CATS

I need food right now! Hi, I am Lukey, I'm 6 months old and this is MY house! My twin sister is called Lacey. She believes she is the boss because her hair, EVERY SINGLE HAIR, is always in its place. I call her Lacey-hair-never-out-of-placey. It isn't so boring here. There are plenty of windows and a lot of couches to jump and sleep on. There's a kitchen, bedrooms and the creepy jail that the humans always throw me in when I jump on the kitchen counter. Don't ask me why they are always so annoyed by the smallest things I do and why they call jail "the bathroom". I am an Abyssinian kitten with gigantic ears and a very beautiful long tail. Lacey is an Abyssinian too. She is partially gray while I am a beautiful orange and brown color.

The first three months of my life we lived in a tiny apartment. My real mama is the best. She gave us delicious milk. Then the humans made us home cooked chicken. Then one day a gigantic human and two smaller humans took us on a long car ride. In my new house we got

gooey and icky mud from a can. We don't eat mud. The humans finally got the message and made home cooked chicken for us as well. Great! But then I fell and broke my leg. So painful! The doctor said that NOT eating the goo turned my bones to glass. Back home the human made us try 40 different cans of mud. This was no joke. After like hours we found one we disliked the least. The funny thing is that we now think mud is the most delicious thing in the world. I go out of my way to jump as high as possible, without ending up in jail too often. **Mia Vijfvinkel**

Foxes

I'm tired...Hi I'm Niki and I'm a fox and right now I live in a cage. It's pretty boring in here. The reason why I'm here is because I got shot in the leg and have to heal with my siblings. My mornings are all the same. The owner of the healing place gives me food and leaves but I don't do anything because of my leg. I can still be the leader of my siblings because they are not even five years old and I'm the oldest here. My siblings and I are red foxes, the best kind of foxes. In the afternoon we slept because we just wanted to. I will soon get better but for now I have to rest in the cage.

The cage isn't that bad. It has beds for my siblings and I and the people bring us food and water. One day my siblings and I were let out of the cage for a while. I loved it but I really didn't do anything. I just really wanted to walk around and find a place in the sun. It was so nice! We had some company when we were in the cage because there were other animals next to the cage. Some days are boring, though. The best part is that I get to be with my siblings and we get good food. I heard the women talking about letting us go, though. I was so happy I could finally go and when I told my siblings they were so happy, too! We all really want to go back into the woods. I think they will soon, I love it out there!
Jolie David

My Life as Ulysses

I am Ulysses the dog. I just got a new brother and his name is Guinness. We both have Irish names, whatever that means, but that means now I have four siblings! But, three of them are not the normal siblings you think they are, THEY'RE HUMANS! They are really nice and always let me eat their leftovers from dinner. There is one good thing about that. My sister Quinn lets me lick the spoon at dinner. I love it! I love my family so much and I think about when I first met them all the time.

When I first met my family, I was a little nervous, scared, and excited at the same time. Their backyard was huge. It was the size of my doggy shelter! They were really nice, though. They started to pet my back and I wagged my tail SO MUCH. They also have a massive trampoline. It was really bouncy. It was weird. My owners are really nice. They feed me good dinner and I always want more. I always try to steal my siblings' food. Sometimes they let me but sometimes they growl. Besides that, my favorite thing to do is to go to the beach. It is soooo fun. You get to splash around in the water, get sandy, and meet many other dogs there. I get to smell all the fresh air and the amazing ocean water. I love my new home and I love all of my siblings. I am so happy!

Quinn Cameron

A Dog Named Bruno

I am a ten-month-old puppy named Bruno. I am soooo cute if I do say so myself. I'm really big and really fluffy. My weight is seventy pounds or something like that. My favorite snack is peanut butter in a bone. I love it but I don't get it all the time. I only get it when I am a good boy because sometimes, I can be a rebel, but not all the time. Once my family took me for a walk. We went to the bay. There was so much water there and I wanted to drink the water. My family didn't let me

because it was too salty but they did let me swim in the water. It was so cool; I think it is my favorite memory so far.

Another time I was in the kitchen. My owner was there with me and he was seasoning a steak. All of a sudden, he left the kitchen to do something and I was alone with the steak. I couldn't take IT anymore and I jumped on the counter and ate the steak. When my owner came back and he saw that the steak was in my mouth he got mad and I got a time out!

Phoebe Sosa

I Am Bella

I am a Poodle and Shitzu mix named Bella. I wake up every day in my dog bed. I get fed by my small human. I bark when my small human leaves because I get sad. A big yellow ship with wheels steals him every day. I walk around in the house waiting until more small humans arrive. I hear noise downstairs so I go explore. I see small humans everywhere and they all jump on me and play with me. So now I am tired and I want to go to sleep. When I wake up, I play with my twin. Her name is Princess. I play with her until my small human comes back from that yellow ship with wheels. My tiny human comes into the house but he doesn't spend that much time with me when he comes back from the yellow skip with wheels. He goes in his room and sits at his desk and ignores me while he waves a yellow stick over pieces of paper. Then he clicks buttons on his light screen. Finally, my tiny human plays with me with the squeaky toy. That makes me happy!

Alex Rodriguez

The Short Life of a Tomato

I'm Tom the Tomato and I love my life. My life started on a vine. That vine was so nice. All of a sudden one day I fell off of the vine! Ahhh! I was rolling down a hill. I stopped rolling so that was good but

then OH NO! A human! The human was a farmer and he was trying to sell me! All of a sudden, a guy with a mustache put me in his car! Ahhh he was driving 158 miles per hour. So fast! He took me right home and now I am in his kitchen! Oh no! I see cheese and bread. I am going to become a pizza! Oh no! Now I see an oven! No! The man is putting me in the oven. Ahh! Now I am baking and becoming part of the pizza. It is really dark in here! Where am I!? Oh no! The human is now about to eat me! I am in tiny pieces. Ahh the stomach acid!

Damian Schmidt

How Soccer Changed My Life

I love soccer. I started playing soccer when I was five years old. I only started playing because I was inspired by Lionel Messi. He is one of the best players in the world. He inspired me to play soccer and now soccer has changed my life. Soccer has made me stronger, faster, and smarter. I have also had great coaches that have taught me so many skills that I can use on the field and off the field. I know where to pass or when to shoot. But when I first started playing soccer, I was so bad. Throughout the years I started getting better.

When I was eight, we won the cup for soccer on my team. During that game, my soccer career almost ended. I was running with the ball when someone came and tackled me. I broke my leg and I was out for one year. In another game, I landed on my wrist and my wrist broke. Soccer has also changed my life because of my coaches. One of my coaches Zach has taught me so much. He taught me so many skills that my other coaches did not. Zach taught us challenging things but it made me even stronger on the field. Zach took our team to a tournament. We faced one of the hardest teams but we still won the game. I think it is because Zach taught me so much and the skills, I learned made me a smarter player. Soccer has also changed my life because I have made so many new friends and I've gotten to have so many cool experiences like going to hotels, winning trophies, and even meeting Lionel Messi, the man who inspired me to try soccer in the first place. I love soccer!

Jaysen Jimenez

Fred the Fishing Rod

My name is Fred the Fishing Rod. I started off at a fishing shop in Bridgehampton waiting for someone to pick me up from the rack and take me to their home. One day a man came in and took me off the rack! After he paid and put me into the car, I couldn't stop thinking of all the adventures I would be going on. When I got home, I was hidden behind some boxes.... I was so confused. Why was I bought if I was just going to sit here? I was put into some sort of paper. I think.... wait... it's a birthday party! Why am I at a birthday party when I should be fishing?! Suddenly I was picked up and put in front of the boy. The paper was ripped off and the boy was so excited. He smiled at me and said that he couldn't wait to go fishing with me.

Finally, the weather got warmer. I was picked up and the boy began to clean me. He brought me to the car with a tackle box. Later, the car stopped and the boy took me out. I looked around and realized that we were at a marina. We walked past the dock then went onto a boat where the fishing trip began. When we got to the spot, I went flying in the air until I landed in the water. It was what I had dreamed about! Suddenly a big striped bass caught on to my rig! The boy felt the tug and started reeling fast, trying to get it on the boat. After a few minutes the boy got the fish and I on the boat and everyone yelled with excitement! Since then, I have been on the boat many times. I always look back on the memories of when that boy took me out for the first time. I can't wait for another journey in my life as a fishing rod. **Ignatius Fulweiler**

If I Were A Piece of Gum

I am a piece of gum. I'm so lonely and I've been in this packet for years. I'd been waiting for someone to pick me up and buy me until I saw a man come into my aisle. I was hoping he'd choose me. I couldn't wait to be bought. Finally, I was bought! Yay! I wanted to be eaten for so

long. My friends had all been eaten and after they'd been spit out, they got to have great lives. Finally, though, this new man ate me! I was eaten and chewed and once I was spit onto the sidewalk, I was FREE! I was so happy. I saw kids playing and I was curious about what they were doing. It is exciting that I was free but what I didn't realize was that I couldn't move! I was angry and I felt hopeless. Suddenly I saw a big black show and it walked on me! It was then that I started my trip around New York City! It was crazy. I have never seen so much light. It was fun until all of a sudden, I was flying off the shoe and into the ocean. I sank down to the bottom. I saw some creatures but one that really scared me was a big one with needle sharp teeth. It came right towards me. But luckily, he just passed me by. Now I am just here at the bottom of the ocean, so maybe being on the shelf in that store wasn't so bad after all. **Jacob Herrera**

Softball

Softball is the best sport! I love softball because my friends play with me and all of my family cheer me on. One time in my life I wanted to be part of the Home Run Derby. I hit the ball really far into the outfield. I was so proud of myself and my coach told me I made it into the competition. On the day of the Home Run Derby, I got in the car with all of my equipment and we started driving there. When I got there, I got out all of my equipment. The speaker came on and they called the players who were in the Home Run Derby. We all went on the field. I was up third. I hit the ball all the way to the outfield again. At the end of the competition, I came in second place. That was exciting for me because the girl who came in first place was thirteen and I was only nine but I still came in second. Softball has had a big effect on my life because it makes me proud when I hit or catch the ball and I have made new friends! I love softball!

Arianna Lynch

3...2...1...Shoot

My name is Bow. I am a horse. My owner is named Jasper. Today we are going out to a meadow along the side of our barn. She mounts my back without a saddle. We prefer bareback. Her quiver of arrows is full. She asks me to take off. Now we are at a full gallop, racing through the woods. She gets her bow ready to shoot and then, whack! Her arrow goes flying and hits the target right in the bullseye. She gets warmed up and shoots at a couple trees. We are ready to go! Targets are set out all around us. Jasper sets a timer. We are off!

Jasper sends me zigzagging through obstacles and right over fallen trees. She shoots perfectly every time! Now we are both starting to get tired. We keep going until we reach our lake. I finally get to take a nice long drink from the lake. AHH, refreshing. Right before the sunset is a perfect time to go out for a practice round. We enter the cold, refreshing lake. I love the feeling of the cool water calming my tense muscles and relaxing my fast heartbeat. We watch the sunset together. She speaks calm words to me and pats my coat. This is my happy place. Oh, how I love my Jasper.

We finally make our way back to our barn. Jasper grabs the grooming box. She gets all the extra dust off. Finally, she gives me my favorite treats. I let out a long whinny. Jasper puts on my favorite blanket. Finally, she turns the lights off and says goodnight to me with a big hug. I am now left with my horse buddies. I can tell they are jealous. Well at least we all get to go out in the field tomorrow.

Ruby Boeding

Caitlin Lynch's Painful Stories

Hi, my name is Caitlin. I am eleven years old. So, let's start when I was born. I was born 6:51AM on March 17th, 2010 at Southampton Hospital. I am the middle child. I have a half sister who is eleven years older than me and a younger sister who is two years younger than me.

Since I am the middle child, I sometimes get into mischief. Like when I was 18 months old, for example. I was in my room climbing my dresser. I fell and the dresser fell right on top of me! My mom panicked and came upstairs to save me. I went to Southampton Hospital to get stitches. I was so young that I did not know what was going on!

When I was two, I was given a new toy (well, I mean my little sister Colleen.) Before she was born, I had so much attention at the time. When she was born, I got jealous of her so I lapped her across the face. I know that sounds crazy but it's true. A few years later when I was in first grade, I got into another terrible problem. I had to get stitches, again!! It was a snow day. I ran into a door and hit my head. There was blood everywhere so my aunt came and we went to the hospital. It was snowing and all of my cousins were going sleigh riding. Sadly, I was not able to go because I was in the hospital getting some annoying stitches as my cousins were having the best time of their lives!!!! Again, in second grade I had to get stitches again when I collided into my friend Eva. And then in fourth grade I broke my wrist during quarantine. These are all of my painful stories!

Caitlin Lynch

MY LIFE AS A CLASSROOM DESK

I like the summer just like most people do. I don't have to deal with anything. But when school starts things get extremely stressful. This means I have to deal with heavy books on top of me. I also have to deal with nametags. I don't like it because there is glue that likely nobody will clean. I would also have to deal with books and sometimes scrap papers shoved into my mouth. They taste bad and I almost choke on them. Every school year I deal with this for ten months! Sometimes bad

students throw me at the wall and it hurts very bad. I feel slightly more comfortable when people take books out of my mouth but sometimes people don't wash their hands before putting their hands in my mouth. Either way I don't feel comfortable with people putting hands in my mouth and since I am just a non-controlled object and I can't defend myself.

The chair is also part of me and I don't like being sat on. It hurts. When it's time to switch seats and desks, the good thing is that books and objects can be out of my mouth for a few minutes. Also, my outside can be wiped and cleaned. But why do people clean my mouth with chemical sprays and wipes? Can't I just have toothpaste instead, right that would be a good tradition for people to do. I hope summer comes soon so I can enjoy peace and being left alone. My best life is at a furniture store so I can be just made with nothing on me.

Giovanni Tumino

My Life in Portugal

Before I lived in Southampton I lived in Portugal. I was born in Portugal where I lived with my mom, dad, sister, grandma, and grandpa. We had chickens, dogs, and cats. In Portugal I had to help feed the animals and my grandma and I would take care of our garden. In our garden we had watermelons, apples, oranges, and many other fruits. It was so much fun. I would get to play soccer with my friends. We would play with the cats and dogs in the street and we would have sleepovers. My parents and my friends' parents were friends which was so nice! In Portugal I was on a soccer team with my friends. We had a great team and we won a lot. I remember scoring the winning goal in one of my games. My friends and I would always celebrate with ice cream after our games. When I moved to Southampton, I missed Portugal but I still go back sometimes and visit. I was sad to leave Portugal but I was happy that I got to live in a whole new place. My life in Portugal is similar to my life in Southampton but living in Portugal made me have so many

experiences that I might not have been able to have if I had lived in Southampton my whole life.

Abel Fernandes

What Cheerleading Means to Me

Have you ever tried cheerleading? I love cheerleading and it has helped me become the person that I am today. Today I am going to talk about one of my favorite competitions. It was recently so it had to be virtual because everyone needed to be socially distant. I still had a lot of fun performing my routine. There are about fourteen girls on my team right now. I also have two brilliant coaches. In my last virtual competition, the first thing I had to do was say my team's name. Then I had to do two poses, a cartwheel, and a backwards roll. It was interesting because usually in competitions you are in front of a large crowd on a mat. For all of my partner stunts I am the base. My first partner stunt went really well. In my second partner stunt I did a lot of tumbling and some cartwheels and walkovers. We also did some back walkovers and made a pyramid.

At the end of the competition, I did a dance and hit a pose. We were lucky because my team won first place. After the competition I was really tired but I felt very good. After every competition I always congratulate my teammates and thank my coaches for putting pressure on us and helping us to get through the competition. Cheerleading has had an effect on my life because it has made me more confident and I have made so many new friends. I am so happy that I do cheerleading and that I can become even more confident as I get better at my routines!

Laila Brown

My Tennis Ball Life

I was made in a factory. I remember the first time that I got thrown up in the air. A man bounced me a few times then put me in a big container with a bunch of other balls. That's right, I'm a ball, a tennis

ball. The man poured me into a big black tube. He put the cap on and I was moved to a store. After a few weeks somebody picked me up, took me out of my tube and bounced me up and down. I was finally in use!

I hopped up to the top of the basket and saw a stadium filled with people. Everyone was cheering. All of a sudden two women came up to a big net and shake racquets. “Uh oh,” I thought. I was slowly moved over to the side of the court. I saw almost every ball being hit and smacked back and forth. I got scared. All of a sudden, a big hand grabbed me by the head and put me inside her pocket. I heard the ball that I met in the box smash right into the net. Then it was my turn. The woman grabbed me, threw me up in the air and smashed me. I went over the net. I got hit again and again until I soared really high and then hit the net.

Then I heard cheering. The other woman grabbed me and threw me up in the air. She held me in her hand. She looked so happy. She won the match!!! I looked closer and realized it was Naomi Osaka!! She is a very famous tennis player! Then a man handed her a big golden trophy and I was placed right on top of it. Now I live in Naomi Osaka’s house on her trophy every day. It really is the perfect life.

Olivia Caruso

My Day as A Cat

I am Whiskers the cat. I was adopted by a girl named Luna. I love living my life with Luna. She is an amazing owner. I always have so much fun with her. On a normal day with her she feeds me right in the morning. This usually happens around 7:30, right before she goes to school. I stay home by myself with Luna’s mom all day while she is at school. I am a trained cat so I can use the litter box by myself. Usually around noon I beg for more food because I am a hungry cat all the time. When I am not eating, I walk around the house being nosy like always. Luna comes home around 3:00 so I have a long time to wait for her. When she gets home I have so much fun with her and I am so excited! She feeds me treats and special food. I love her. After she eats dinner, Luna goes to bed. I follow her and fall asleep right next to her. It is so

peaceful. Well, this is my daily routine as a cat. I am so happy to have this amazing home!

Luna Delins

Need for Speed

I am a Lamborghini Urus. I was made in Italy in a big factory with other Lamborghinis. I have a matte blue finish for my color. My heart is an engine so if I break down, I die until they can fix me. I have a v12 twin turbo and I can go 300 mph. When I was a young car, I left Italy and was shipped to Hollywood. I had over 249 test drives and on my 250th test drive someone bought me. I was so happy! The person that bought me has four children and a wife. He has a big mansion and is rich. My owner works in finance and he is an entrepreneur. His wife is a jewelry designer. They have an \$80,000,000 car collection including Lamborghinis, Bugattis, Ferraris, and Bentleys (but I know I am the nicest).

Each summer we go on vacation we often go very far. This year we are going to New York but we can't drive this time so they will put me on an airplane. When we get there, we will go to a race track. I will drive over 250 mph which is my favorite thing to do. When we leave the race track, we will go to Southampton. My owner says they will take me to the beach and we will go to a store where I can get a new paint job. I hope it will be metallic gold. I live a good life with my family. They like me the best and they always pick me to go on road trips or even to just go to the store. I am happy being a Lamborghini because I always get to see so many cool places and people love to take pictures of me.

Matiss Delins

One Smart Cookie

Hi. My name is Janice and I am a smart cookie...Literally. I was born and raised in the Chips Ahoy Factory. My dad was named Chips and my mom was named Chips, too. Yeah, my grandparents were not very

creative. Well, I haven't seen my parents or my family in a while because the factory decided to make me an extra-large cookie so I am in a package all by myself. Since I haven't had any cookie interaction, I have become super smart. I can do human stuff. I know that $2+2=4$, $3+3=6$, and $4+4=8$. Oh, my goodness! Who would ever think that a cookie could do math!?

Anyway, I think I should bust out of this silly wrapper and show the world my talent except a baby will probably pick me up and eat me. So maybe I'll stay in my wrapper. While I am here, I think I'll learn rocket science, build a jetpack, and fly around the city doing math. Maybe I'll become more famous than the Statue of Liberty. That would be so cool but I think for now making a jetpack sounds like a better idea. Oh wait... I feel like I am moving. What is that? Oh no! I feel really cold air flowing through the wrapper. Someone has opened me. Oh no... I think I am about to be eaten! No more smart cookie, I guess!

Aliah Donohoe

The Life of a Potato

I am a potato. My name is Bob. I was named by this kid that lived on a farm. That is where I am from. When I left the farm, I was put on a delivery truck, a plane, and a boat. During that time, I had two months of peace and quiet. When we got to our destination, half of us were shipped to a restaurant and the other half, including me, was shipped to a supermarket. So now I live in a supermarket but it is the best because when all the people leave, we jump out of our crate and have the best time. We go to the candy section, the chips aisle, the snack aisle, and the water aisle. In the morning we have to go back to our boxes so people don't know that we come alive at night. Sometimes some potatoes don't come back which just means more leg room for me.

10 Days Later: Hi again. I'm in a bag right now. I was taking a nap and suddenly I woke up on the checkout counter. That's when I was

put into this dark bag with a pineapple (I think). It is just us in this dark place. I'll keep you updated.

Later On: I was just minding my business when all of a sudden someone picked me up and sliced me into these square, long slices. They called me French fries. What are those? They put me in a fryer and took me out about five minutes later. It was so hot in there. All of a sudden little flakes of snow started to fall on me. I think they called it salt. Now I am just sitting on this plate. Wait a second... Why is that girl trying to eat me!?

Kai Gomolka

Bodi's Point of View

Woof! Hello! I'm Bodi and this is my acquaintance Benny Winston, woof! He is only two months old. I am four and I will be five soon. Anyway, I am here to tell you about my life. My favorite thing about my life is my owners. I always get so happy when I get to see my owners. When I see them, I wag my tail like a beaver, whatever that means! One of my owners is named Camilla. She is really nice, honest, and sweet. She takes good care of me with my other owner John. John is also really nice. He gives me walks on the beach a lot. Another favorite thing in my life is dinner time!! Yummy! I get so excited I feel like I could explode. My owners give me the best dog food and sometimes the lady at the store gives my owner free stuff for me. How lucky am I!?

Speaking of lucky, since one of my owners is a dog caretaker, some of my other dog friends get to come over and hang out. One of them is my friend Louie. He is a dachshund like my acquaintance Benny Wintson here. My last favorite thing about my life is that I get to spend so much time sitting in a big window in my living room. I have a great view of the birds. They are so funny to watch but I'm glad I'm a dog in this nice, big house. Well, this is my life as a dog. I hope you enjoyed this beautiful story about my beautiful life. Bye for now friends!

Grace Gonzalez

Shoes Get Scared Too

I am a shoe. No one gave me a name so I just call myself Bob. You would think the life of a shoe is boring but it is full of excitement and sometimes gross. Today when my friend Jake put me on his feet and started walking around town, I had a very bad time! Jake stepped in dog poop! Then he just put me in the washing machine and it is very scary in there. Sometimes Jake annoys me but without him my life would be boring. I would just sit in the closet all day. I love going on walks with Jake. It is our favorite thing to do. Once we were walking home from the pharmacy and Jake fell in a big puddle. When he fell, I got soaking wet. I still had a fun time though.

This morning when Jake put me on, he went to the mall. When we arrived, he went into the shoe store... I realized... oh no, Jake is going to buy a new pair of shoes! I was scared, I didn't want to be thrown into the closet of doom! Jake was looking around the store for the perfect pair. Five minutes later he got a pair of shoes and went to the check out. That was the scariest ride home ever! When he took me off and put me in the closet with the new shoes, I looked at them. I noticed they were fancy loafers. Then I looked back and saw Jake's old loafers. His old loafers were all beat up and gross. I realized he was still going to keep me! WooHoo! Wow I feel so much better knowing I will not be thrown out. I had a pretty good day today. Scary but good. **Sofia Halhoul**

Charlie The Branch

I am a branch. My name is Charlie and I've had a crazy life. I was born in 2007. It took me a long time to grow because I am on a tree and started out as a little leaf. But fourteen years later here I am, fully grown. Now I get to live on this tree with my other branch best friend, Thomas. We like to chat about the people and animals that we see. Thomas is a leaf so he just sits on my branch and we have a great time.

We are always so amazed at the beautiful view that we have from so high up in the sky.

Anyway, I met Thomas the Leaf one day when he started to grow on the tree that I am part of. We started talking and we became good friends. Thomas liked me so much that he didn't fall off of my branch in the winter or the fall. He just stayed with me and we kept talking. Weird but funny right!? Maybe he stayed because we live in Texas and it is usually very warm here. I am lucky because I get a nice view of cars. I like to pick out which one I would drive if I was a person. Thomas liked to help me. Sadly, one day a big gust of wind came and Thomas the Leaf blew away. I was so sad. Other leaves grew but none were as cool as my friend Thomas. I love being a tree otherwise, though. There are always new animals and leaves and even some branches that I get to chat with. My life as a tree is cool. Weirdly enough, my favorite part is that I get to drink cranberry juice. It is my favorite drink. Don't ask me why, I just love it!

Charlie Kellis

If I Were Molly

When I woke up, I could hear...screaming? I got up and walked to my food bowl so my owners knew I was hungry. A girl came to me and gave me food and water. Now the mystery was, WHO WAS SCREAMING!?! I investigated around the living room and found nothing but a book on the floor, which was no help. I looked around my bed and saw a little boy squirming around the floor! I started barking but the boy covered my mouth. He said, "Please don't bark. I'm hiding from my sister.... Oh no.... HERE SHE COMES!!!"

The same girl who gave me food had an evil grin on her face. She said with a whisper, "Come out, come out wherever you are!" The boy had a terrified face. He curled into a ball and hugged a book. The girl walked slowly around the corner to pretend that she was leaving but then.... BOO!!! I jumped in fear. The girl laughed and patted my head. The boy on the other hand was so scared that he ran right out of the room as fast as lightning!! Then a woman called out, "Kids! It's time to go to

school!” The girl sighed. She walked out of the room and went outside. I drank some water and sat on the couch. “I wish they could stay on the weekdays so I don't have to be alone,” I thought. I went to sleep for a while but then they came back!! I checked the time and it was 3:30! My dream came true! It's Friday! They can finally stay home for the weekend. They ate dinner and I snuggled in the boy's bed. Tomorrow I will see if the boy is screaming again! Good Night! **Scarlett Macias**

Not All It's Clicked Up to Be

I was sitting there waiting. Then I was scooped up out of my box. My back hurt so bad. I saw the thing that had picked me out of my box. It was a little girl. Then my hatred of her began. She touched my back! Then she pushed on my arms. “Wow! It's such a pretty mouse! I can't wait to use it! Oh, what's the chip look like?” The little girl screamed with delight. I wanted to escape this little girl's clutch so bad. She touched my head and I whipped it around. “Owwwww!” She immediately dropped me on the floor. I fell on the ground with a loud thud. Her sister came over and picked me up. “Hey Eva! I have your new mouse!”, she said, swinging me back and forth in her hand. “MIA! Give it back!” I wobbled in the girl's hand. I felt sick! Then she dropped me into a backpack. I stayed there for hours.

Around the morning time I was awoken by books being piled on top of me. I was squished under the books when I heard, “I found it! I found my mouse!” It was that girl again. She picked me up and opened my battery latch. She put a battery inside me. I felt like I had never lived before that. It was amazing! I felt so alive! She put me in the front pocket of the backpack. After a little while she took me out. We were on the school bus. She played with my back for a little while. It was filled with gel so I didn't blame her. She put me back in her backpack and after an hour she took me back out. She took out my chip and plugged me in. She started to click and click. I could already tell this was the start of a long painful journey.

Grace McCormack

If I Were A Toddler...

If I were a toddler, I could take ONE look at you and you would smile. If I was a toddler, I could stay home all day and play. I could sleep in, and not wake up with an alarm to catch a bus or a train. Doesn't that sound like SO much fun? I would eat breakfast at my own pace and not be in a rush to get to school or work. I could play then pray or pray then play, it does NOT matter when you are little! I would go to the grocery store with my mom and get to pick out my favorite snacks. I would pick apples and yummy goldfish! Then we would go to the park for some more play time! My favorite thing would be the swing. I would also love going to see the train go by. CHOO-CHOO! One of my favorite things to do would be to play with my sisters. Family time & playtime are the best no matter how old you are, right!? But, if I were a toddler, one of my LEAST favorite things to do would be naptime. Who would want to take naps every day? I know I wouldn't. But I keep hearing older people say they wish they could take a nap! It seems when you are small you wish you were big and when you are big you wish you were small!

Estee Phair

My Happiness with Billie Eilish

I am Billie Eilish's best friend. My name is Winter. We do everything together. We live in Beverly Hills like any other famous person would. But we have a story which is really very cool. It all started on April Fool's Day as I was preparing a super funny prank for Billie. I didn't know that she was doing the same for me. I wanted to go to her house so she would think I was a criminal. To make it more realistic, I kidnapped her family. I tied them up and brought them to a scary art exhibit that Billie was kind of afraid of.

Around 5:00AM, I went back to her house. I woke her up and she pounced up. I told her I was going to the scary exhibit. She asked me if I was crazy. I said I was and she fainted. I decided to change the plans up a little bit by bringing her to the exhibit. And when she woke up, she

would see it. That didn't turn out so well all because of the fact that Billie hadn't actually fainted. She had really put a dummy with a walkie talkie in her bed. She made me think it was her! I never thought she would be able to trick me so I returned to the exhibit to untie her family.

When I got to the exhibit all I saw was the dummy. I got scared and I tried to run away but something started to rip open the dummy from the inside. It was Billie's entire family! They all jumped out and scared me. They were covered in stuffing. The lights went on and they all laughed at me. I guess Billie was the one who tricked me after all!

Catherine Porter

Thomas the Leaf

I'm Thomas the Leaf. My parents were a brown leaf and a green leaf. When I was born, they blew away so it was just me on a branch. I was so tiny but then I grew into a big leaf. Luckily, I had my friend Charlie the Branch. He was on the same tree as me and we did everything together. We loved to chat about all the animals and people that we saw. We would talk about the people walking by. Because we lived in Texas together it was so hot so I would always be so happy when it rained. Charlie didn't like this as much. On a windy day, I would get scared. I would have to hold on to my branch so tight because otherwise I was worried, I would blow away and be gone forever.

Anyway, that was in the past. I am actually a ghost now. What happened was that one day I was just on my branch talking to my other leaf friends. All of a sudden there was a human. He has a big ax and he cut down the tree. We all fell down. He grabbed all of the other leaves and I and he took us to a paper factory. I thought about it and I realized that paper is made of leaves! I started to panic when he put me on the table. He started to rip me into the shape of paper and he painted me white. It kind of hurt, to be honest. I felt fine being paper but then a small child drew all over me and ripped me up. When that happened, I ended up becoming a ghost. I miss my friend Charlie the Branch but life as a ghost isn't too bad. Now I get to scare Charlie whenever I want!

Thomas Sandoval

Life as An Arctic Candy Fox

My name is Icy. I live in the Candy Arctic Land. That is why our names are named after candy. I eat other small animals. I love snow because I never get cold and I blend in because I am white. In the spring my fur turns reddish brown. My sister's name is Skittles and my brother's name is Chocolate. My mom's name is Cakey and my dad's name is Brawny. I love candy so much that I am so happy to be living in the Candy Arctic Land. Do you like candy?

Anyway, back to my life. We have the fanciest house in the neighborhood. In our house the floor is made out of candy waffles. Our pillows are made out of gummy bears and our blankets are made out of strawberry licorice. Once I was trying to walk home from school when I got lost in all the candy. Luckily, I have a best friend named Gummy. I have known her since I was born and she is really nice. I couldn't find my way home and I was so scared. An hour later gummy found me. I was so happy to be found. She is the best friend ever. As you can see, my life as an Arctic Fox is really exciting and I wouldn't want it any other way!

Addison Sansone

Sylvia Earle

Hello, my name is Sylvia Earle and I am a famous oceanographer. You may be asking what an oceanographer is, so let me tell you. An oceanographer is a person who studies the sea. Oceanographers also go diving and study fish and sea animals such as coral and dolphins. Today I am known as the former chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a leading American oceanographer. In 2009 I was awarded the T.E.D prize. The money from that prize gave me a chance to save the ocean. When I think about how I won that award I think back to when I was young and many people thought a woman scientist was absolutely absurd. At that time people

thought that women should be at home cooking and taking care of the kids. I am so happy now that I was able to prove them wrong.

One of my favorite things to do as an oceanographer is to go diving. One time in particular I went diving at the Comoro islands off the southeast coast of Africa. On that trip I saw many sea species such as sea turtles, parrot fish, and different types of coral. While I was diving, I encountered a new species of bright pink coral. Since I was the one who encountered the species, I was allowed to name it. How exciting is that!?

Something else I love about being an oceanographer is that I was able to make a documentary on the ocean called “Mission Blue”. My goal for this documentary was to show people how important it is to protect our ocean and take care of it. Today I still dive regularly to protect and save our oceans because if there is no ocean the Earth would turn gray. Always remember to take care of our oceans and our planet and always remember, “No ocean no life!”

Maeve Springer

Tonsils and Adenoids, Oh My!

Do you know what your tonsils and adenoids are? When I was five years old, I had surgery on my tonsils and adenoids and I am going to tell you all about it. The reason I had to get my tonsils and adenoids out was that I couldn't breathe well, I snored like an elephant, and I couldn't pronounce words well. One morning my mom and dad decided that they wanted my tonsils and adenoids taken out. After that day, my life wasn't the same again, but in a good way. I went to a hospital and they put me to sleep. My tonsils and adenoids weren't out yet but they wanted me to go to sleep because they needed to put the heart monitor and other tools in me. When I woke up, they let me have so many popsicles that I threw up. After that, the doctor said it was time for my surgery. They gave me medicine that made me sleepy and they did my surgery.

When I woke up, I saw my parents but I didn't recognize them at first. I asked them who they were and they told me they were my mommy and daddy. I was only five so they understood why I was confused. When we drove home, I was asleep the whole way and my

mom and dad brought me inside and put me in bed. They really helped me and made me feel better. I remember when I started to feel better, I saw my cousin Caroline playing with my brother Tucker. Even though my throat hurt for a few days after that, getting my tonsils and adenoids out changed my life because it made me able to breathe and speak better. I am happy about that!

Christopher Ward

Life as A Panda

Hi! I'm Olive and I live high in the high bamboo forest. I eat bamboo. I also eat leaves and stems. In case you couldn't guess, I am a Panda! I love the forest and I love to climb and swim and I also love to walk around on the forest floor. I love to hang out with my friends. My friends and I sometimes swing on tree branches. It is very fun! We also go to the mountains and climb up very high. It is very adventurous.

Whenever we climb to the top of the mountain we search for water and explore what else is around. I love when we find bamboo, our favorite food! We Pandas love bamboo and we eat twenty-six to eighty-four pounds per day! I also love when we finally do find water. When it is really cold, we even have to crack the ice to drink! It is actually really fun to do! Usually when we are done drinking water, we climb down the mountain back to the bottom of the forest floor. This is what a typical day is like for me as a Panda and I must say, it never gets boring!

Maria Muresan

Eraser

Chapter 1: Hello! I am a donut shaped eraser named Eraser. I live in a desk in a classroom and every afternoon when the kids leave school, I

meet my pencil friend, Chewed, near the bookcase. One day Chewed and I were at the bookcase talking. We were talking about a new pencil who we thought was a fraud. All he did was walk around the classroom weirdly. Chewed thought he came from the jar where all the tall sharpened pencils that haven't been used before come from. Sometimes some of those pencils escape and roam the classroom and halls. When they do that, they look for new erasers. They are like kidnappers! Anyway, as I went back to the desk, Chewed disappeared! Oh no! He was being taken by the fraud pencil. He was taking Chewed into the hallway, one of the most dangerous places for a pencil. I mean you could get stepped on or you could get taken by a giant from any grade! Chewed had just been taken hostage by a jar pencil and then went into the hallway! I had a plan. I would save Chewed!

Chapter 2: It was time to save him. I had to jump and lift my sprinkles into the air but I got the classroom door open. I was in the hallway now... It looked scarier than I thought. It was a long and dark room that was very quiet. "Anything for Chewed," I mumbled to myself. I found the fraud pencil and Chewed at a locker. Chewed was about to be sharpened when I saved the day. I told the jar pencil that he was still alive and he let me take Chewed back to the desk. After that jar pencils never took alive pencils to that weird jail, locker thing or the sharpener again.

Augustine Schuster



First Taste of Independence

My heart skipped a beat. They were leaving. Leaving me. My hand touched his and then he let go. They walked away and gave me kisses goodbye. They disappeared behind the double doors and tears started to stream down my cheeks. They were gone. Gone. My comfort, my happiness, my life had disappeared. I looked at my twin sister, Emma, talking with her best friend, Chaarvi. She seemed happy. How could she be happy when our own parents have left us to be on our own for two whole nights?! I have to be strong. Time to learn to be independent. Time to learn to be me.

The rumble of the school bus was giving me a headache that felt like an elephant, pounding against my skull. My good friend, Zviko, was chatting away about the William Wallace Tower that we would be visiting. My stomach was doing flips. I looked out the window. The sunny meadows and tall pine trees brought comfort. I knew that it would be hard, without my family, but it does not mean I cannot have any fun. This trip is meant for fun, so just deal with it. Deal with it!

The day went by quickly. We visited historical sites, castles, and beautiful trails winding through the mysterious wonders of this strange

place. This place, far away from home. The place where I have serious friendship issues. The place where I am learning to be independent. I miss my old home. Across the sea, in a big neighborhood right by the sparkling ocean with amazing sea creatures. Instead, my family decided to move to Scotland for a year, next to jolly old England. It rains here every day, all day. I have grown to love this place, but I am disliking this experience more and more.

We then arrived at this big building full of food and beds. We had dorm rooms, and I was with my sister and all of my good friends. But what would happen when night arrived? What should I do if I cannot go to sleep? What if I break a bone? What if-

"Lucy!" Zviko shouted, patting my shaking shoulder.

"What?" I said quickly and suddenly, my shoulder bumping hers.

"It is time to go to dinner now." said Zviko, brushing her long braids. Emma had already dibsed top bunk, so I was on the bottom, lying on my back thinking about the fear that would come. Everyone gathered in this big hall that had been turned into a dining room. I ended up having the best dinner of my life. Then we had two desserts! I completely forgot about what was going to happen when the night came.

The girls and I finished taking showers and doing our teeth. We were getting into bed, when we heard a sudden, yet soft knock on our small door. I ran to the door, thinking it was one of our teachers saying it was lights out, and opened it. A streak of fear ran up my spine. No one was there. I looked left then right down the hallway, looking for someone. That was my first encounter with ding dong ditching. It went on for about an hour, until someone told a teacher about it.

I went under the covers, and closed my eyes taking deep breaths. Five minutes passed. Then ten., twenty. I then looked at my clock and it reads eleven P.M. I climbed in bed with Emma and I slept with her for the rest of the night. I woke up at six A.M., and climbed back into my bed. The night was a success, and I had learned to be independent! The day went by quickly. We had many activities, from biking to learning to make fires. That night, I slept soundly, and woke up excited to see my parents. I was happy to be home, yet I had a pang of sadness. It was such a fun experience; one I will never forget.

Learning to be independent is a part of growing up. I am now able to have overnight sleepovers with my friends without fear. This experience helped me mature and know that I can do anything.

Lucy Tillotson

Breaking the Walls/ The Food

There is an enormous wall in front of me, standing in my way. It looms over me and blocks my path. The enticing aroma of fish permeating around me made my stomach growl and clench tightly, it almost hurt.

Almost.

As I stared at the obstacle, I knew what I had to do. I had to go beyond. Beyond the kitchen. To my final destination. Before I know it, I feel my legs moving, I feel myself screaming at the top of my lungs, the straining of my voice almost sickening. I could feel the adrenaline pumping through my body, making me go that much faster. The only thing making me act was my desire to eat, to devour, to-

Thump!

My thoughts came to a screeching halt as my forehead seared. I fell back on something hard and white. Royal Blue eyes stung with tears, blurring my vision. But the pain didn't matter to me, a flame was lit under my heart and it wasn't going out any time soon.

"Julia, what are you doing?" a male voice called from behind me.

I pried my teary, but raging eyes away from the yellow blood a white-haired woman was ingesting on the other side of the hallway. Blue eyes met blue eyes and I immediately softened. I recognized the giant man talking to me as...

"Dwadwee."

He stared at me in absolute silence for a moment (a somewhat awkward one, if I'm being honest), until he keeled over in a fit of laughter. I frowned irritably, my anger kindling again, but that seemed to make him stumble around laughing even louder than before. I noticed he

almost tripped in the couple of minutes I was staring at him and I had the sudden instinct to cover my ears from the ruckus.

Luckily enough, the pain in my forehead began to fade.

“C-Chris...” Dwadwee heaved when his laughter subsided for a couple of moments, “Get over... here now!”

My frown of disapproval turned into one of rage as I heard the all too familiar rhythm of feet trampling down the stairs.

Let’s see if you can guess why I was so wrathful. It’s not that I didn’t like that sound of the staircase, no, not that. I just despised that person who was coming from it. Someone so annoying, so absurd, that I wish he would just stay in his domain forever.

Christopher.

Not wanting to be around when the knave came down from the staircase, I decided that I must get to my dinner before he comes down. Once again, I bellowed and scrambled up from my spot on the floor. Once again, I charged.

Thump!

“WAAAAAAAAAH!!!” I cried as I tripped backward. A throbbing pain appeared on my head in the same place it once was, but much worse. I felt the cold of tears trail down my cheeks, as I heard a disdainful scoff and another laugh from some 3 feet away from me.

‘Okay, Julia.’ I thought to myself, kickstarting the internal monologue that I see in the pictures of the tyrant watch, ‘Don’t cry. Don’t despair. Now is not the time for that. You know you’re devastated. You know it’s painful. You know you want to scream. But there’s no way to turn back time. Feel the rage, the powerful pure rage of not being able to forgive will become your unswerving drive to take action.’

With that, I stood my ground again. Glaring at the white wall as fiercely as I would stare at Christopher. I had to play this smart, I had to come up with a plan. Cogs turned and turned in my head until something clicked. Like a lightbulb. If I can’t get through...

Go around!

I charged for the third time, confidently flailing my arms. I smirked as they came closer inch by inch until I skillfully swerved when I was about an inch from crashing. I ran, faster than I had ever run

before. Turned a corner, and was blinded by the light. The aroma of fish became so strong that I could almost taste it. I knew I had made it.

My Final Destination. My Final Salvation. The Promised Land.

The dinner table.

My vision was cleared as I heard clapping and giggling from behind me, but I ignored it.

I have some food to eat.

Julia Dell'aquila

The First One

It was the beginning of June in the year 2020. The coronavirus was spreading like a wildfire, and I had just turned eleven. Another summer day was unfolding in Southampton, New York while I was going down to my pool. That was until my dad stopped me in the corridor.

“Hey Jan? Could you help me with some work this evening please?” my dad asked.

“Sure, just tell me when you need me,” I said, thinking that it was yard work or something to do outside.

Without knowing what was awaiting me later in the day, I continued down towards the pool.

The evening rolled around, and my dad came to my room.

“Jan, I could use your help now,” he said, “We need to load the fishing rods onto the boat. We’re going tuna fishing tomorrow.”

My heart was beating a thousand times a minute. I was so excited that we were finally going to go tuna fishing! It was the best surprise ever! Without any hesitation, I headed to the garage and started helping my dad with the rods. When we finished, I went to bed and I couldn’t fall asleep because I was so excited.

The next day at three in the morning, my dad and I got up, got dressed, grabbed the bait, and headed to the boat. We were going to meet my uncle and our family friend there. After the short drive to the marina, we went out thirty - five miles from Shinnecock Inlet. The spot that we were going to be fishing today was called the Coimbra, which was the wreck of a tanking ship. The warm morning air blew softly in my face as we headed out, and the boat rocked gently in the calm waves. As soon as we got to the spot, we put our bait in the water and within three minutes, we had a bluefin tuna online. Since I was the youngest on the boat and I

had never caught a tuna, I was allowed to reel in the first fish. I sat down on the gunnel of the boat (the side) and started reeling the fish. After a solid ten-minute fight, we got the fish in the boat. I was exploding with excitement as the fish was pulled over the side of the boat. Sitting down by the sea creature, my dad lifted it up. The thing was at least forty pounds! We put him in the ice box and got back to fishing.

After catching my first ever tuna, we saw loads of dolphins, whales, and bluefin tuna jumping in and out of the water. Birds flew overhead, like they were trying to show us where all the tuna were. The crew and I caught twelve more tunas, taking turns reeling them in. After more than eight hours of fishing, we headed back to the marina because it was getting late, and all the fishermen were really excited with the catch. We did not think the day could get any better. Boy, were we wrong?

At the dock, our neighboring boat and their captain had a surprise. They had gone out a little bit earlier than us and caught a 200-pound bluefin tuna! It was sixty inches in length, and we were amazed to find out that they had gone out to the same spot as us. That summer day was great. The day ended with my mom cooking the fresh tuna that we had caught just a few hours earlier. What an adventure!

Jan Gredysa

The Ultimate Zipline

Have you ever been on a sixty miles per hour zipline? The Superman Zipline in Costa Rica is one of the fastest ziplines in the world. The reason it is called the Superman Zipline is because you zip across a forest far above it and you lay flat on your stomach with your arms and legs sticking out, just like Superman flying.

After a long drive, my family and I got to the zipline park. There are multiple ziplines, the Superman is the second zipline. First, we paid to go on the ziplines and then we all got weighed to get the right zipline gear for us, and finally we were ready to go. It was my first time going on a zipline by myself. After my brother and mom went, it was finally my turn to go. I got strapped on and then “woosh” I was going down the zipline really fast! It was thrilling and then, in an instant, I was at the end of the ride.

After the first zipline, we got on a bus that would take us up to the Superman zipline. It was really high up. As the ride progressed, I was getting nervous and I felt like I had butterflies in my stomach. We were there with friends and their backing out didn't help. When I got strapped in, they told me that someone on the other side would signal for me to spread my arms out to slow it down. Then they pushed me off. I was soaring sixty miles per hour and my eyes were wide open. It was such an amazing view. I could see the lush, vibrant, and tropical forest under me, I could also see the ocean and beach with the waves crashing down on the pristine sand. The worker gave me the signal and I let my arms spread out. I felt like I was flying.

Going on the Superman Zipline was a great experience. There were other ziplines that were less challenging, but they were still thrilling to go on. After a long day, my family and I went back to the hotel. I thought back on the day and realized the memory will last forever. **John Duggal**

Little Fishy

Ahhhh, the smell of flowers and saltwater. Today was the day I learned how to swim! I went to the bathroom to change into my bathing suit. I was nervous and scared. *Valentina what if you drown? What if you fall in and die?* But I was excited, as well. So once my dad was ready, we walked on the stone path barefoot. It felt like I was walking on sand. The pool was big and I was small.

As we approached the pool, I started feeling excited. I walked into the pool, slowly and steadily, my dad by my side. I walked away from the stairs almost too short to touch the bottom. "Papa, maybe this isn't such a good idea..." But I continued. *Everyone knows how to swim but me and I will look like a baby if I can't swim.*

As I was on the border of the deep end, I slipped on the ledge/slope and fell into the deep end. As I was panicking, I heard my dad, "Stay calm and float on your back!" I did as he had said and laid on my back. Soon enough, I was in my dad's arms safe. After that, I always stayed away from the edge. I held onto the buoy border and started jumping up and down. I swam from the shallow end to the edge and every time I did that, I got one scoop of ice cream.

Months later I was still scared of the deep end. I had my cousin come and jump in with me. I was frozen with fear. 1,2,3, GO everything flashed before my eyes! I had been pulled into freezing, 9-foot deep water! I wasn't good at swimming, so it made things even harder. I tried again, this time with a life jacket. I did it over and over and over until it was night.

I overcame my fear and from that day forward, water was my best friend!

Valentina Perrone

My First Fish

My uncle rented an apartment at a lakehouse in Rhode Island. We were invited to visit for our vacation. I was really excited.

My uncle's friends lived in the apartment below him. On our first day there, I met his friends. Andy, one of the friends, told me he owned a small fishing boat. Later, my parents, my grandmother, my uncle, and the friends chatted, while my sister and I played hide and seek. It had been dark for a while and Andy said, "Hey, Max, if it is okay with your parents, I would like to take you out on the lake to go fishing tomorrow." I asked my parents for permission and was thrilled when they said, "Yes!" I jumped up and down, thanking them repeatedly. I went to bed, images of the next day fishing in my head.

I woke up early, got ready, and waited. It was 7:00 and everyone was still asleep. On vacation, my parents slept as late as they could, so I knew I was going to do some waiting. I grabbed my iPad and started playing some games. My uncle was the next to wake up, so we watched basketball. My uncle is a big fan of basketball. He likes the Celtics. The waiting continued.

I was anxious to get fishing. After breakfast, I asked my mom when I would be able to go fishing and she said it was up to Andy. My mom told me we were going on a walk soon, so I figured fishing would have to wait until the afternoon. We went to a walking trail. Along the way, I saw blue jays, deer, chipmunks, squirrels, and even a woodpecker. It was awesome, but I could not stop thinking about the fishing trip.

When we returned, Andy said we were leaving in fifteen minutes. Finally! I went outside to the boat with my uncle and met Andy on the pier. My uncle, Andy, and I went into the boat and Andy drove us to the middle of the lake. We picked up the rods and then we cast our lines.

Andy caught the first fish. I, however, was not having much luck. Then Andy moved the boat to a spot where he knew a fish lived, because he had caught one there many times. I, again, cast the rod in the direction that Andy suggested. After about five minutes, I felt a pull. It was heavy. I asked me for help and I reeled it in. It was a bass!

The fish was about two feet in length and Andy took the hook out of the fish's mouth. I held the slimy, gooey fish. I was so proud; it was a beauty! Unfortunately, we did not get a photo, but the image is etched in my memory. I will always remember the time I caught my first fish.

Maxwell Notley

The “Fire”

I woke up to loud sirens. My house was filled with black smoke. My mom was dragging me downstairs. Next thing I knew, I was outside the apartment with all the other residents of the building. There were many fire trucks as we watched my apartment burn down to the ground.

The day began like any other day. I was in my apartment eating breakfast, and my mom told me that we were going shopping. I was getting ready, when a huge headache came on. I felt very sick and began to throw up. My mom came into my room and asked me what was wrong, but I couldn't answer, it hurt too much. I finally responded that my head hurt. My mom got some Tylenol and told me to drink it and lie down to sleep. Obviously, I did as she said. As I fell asleep, I remember my mom telling me she was going to watch some television.

I slept for five hours and woke up to my mom shaking me awake. I was confused, but then I saw it.

There was a huge black cloud of smoke over me. I heard loud sirens as I was running down the stairs with my mom. We went outside. We watched with my neighbors as our home burned to the ground. A group of firemen rushed out of their firetrucks and into the apartment building. I heard more fire trucks come down from the corner. The sirens rang loudly in my ears. I saw the firemen through the windows climbing up the stairs. Five minutes passed. Nothing. Ten minutes passed. Nothing. Finally, after half an hour, the firemen came out.

The fireman proceeded to tell us about how there was a terrible smell, so they followed the smell. The smell led them to the kitchen. They walked over to the stove. And found eggs. Eggs were the source of the smoke! We later found out that one of my mom's friends, who was living with us, was cooking eggs, when she received an emergency call. Distracted, she forgot to turn the stove off.

Although it is never easy to watch your home go up in flames, we are very fortunate that everyone was safe and there were no injuries.

Angelo Londono Navarro

MY NEW LIFE

I thought that flying on a plane and leaving to see my dad was going to be what I had always dreamed it would be, a thrill-ride, an adventure, a fantasy, like something out of "Doc McStuffins". Turns out, it wasn't all that I imagined.

I was living in Colombia. My dad had moved to New York when I was 3 years old and my mom and I were going to see him. At first, I didn't think twice about leaving the rest of my family behind in Columbia, but now, as the day got closer, I was having second thoughts. I was starting to feel anxious and scared. I wasn't ready to leave. My mom was feeling anxious, as well. We were leaving everything we knew behind. We went downstairs, shaking, trying to hold back the tears. We did not want to upset the family. We ate breakfast and then my mom and I lamented about how we were going to miss the food, my grandmother's food. ´

When I got in the car, I had mixed emotions. I was excited but I was also crying because my grandma was not coming with us. I was terrified as I had never been in an airplane before. I just cuddled with my mom and decided not to worry about it. We arrived at the airport and were about to leave Columbia for New York, the big city! I was already missing my grandma, but as we started the descent, I saw the buildings and lights of the big city and I was excited! I knew that my life was about to change.

As we explored the city, I became nervous because there were a lot of people and very tall buildings. We went to this restaurant, The Olive

Garden, and I loved it. Then we headed out east to where my father lived. My mom started talking about a school in Easthampton. I was worried about going to a new school where I did not know anyone. More fear. It was a long car ride, but when we arrived, I instantly felt like I was home.

I definitely missed my grandma's warm hugs and delicious food, but I liked it here. I have learned that family is always the most important thing, and no matter how far away you are, it is never too far for them to love you. **Sara Calderon**

My Brother's Arrival

My life was about to change forever! It was July 6, 2019, the day before my baby brother would be born. I have a younger sister, but I was too young to remember when she was born. It was hard to believe that tomorrow, at any time, my brother would be here, forever!

I went to bed that night, struggling to fall asleep. All I could think about was my brother and what he would look like. The excitement was unbearable. The next morning, I woke up really early to a facetime call from my mom. My baby brother was born and we were allowed to go visit her and my brother at the hospital! I jumped out of bed and got dressed quickly.

The hospital was about an hour away. I was anxious the whole car ride there. I was super excited to meet my brother, but at the same time I was scared. I started to wonder if my parents would love him more than they loved me. I worried that he would get all the attention. What if my parents did not have any more time for me? These feelings surprised me.

It seemed like forever, but we finally arrived at the hospital. The hospital was pretty cool. There was a Starbucks by the entrance and shops and restaurants throughout the hospital. Suddenly, I felt relieved, like all of the negative thoughts about my brother had gone away and only the positive thoughts were left. Before I knew it, I was standing right outside of my mom's hospital room. I took a deep breath and

opened the door. Inside, waiting for me, was my little brother, Massimo. I loved him immediately.

I was so relieved to see my brother and my mom. My mom asked me if I wanted to hold the baby. This was the moment I have been secretly waiting for. Without hesitation, I said “yes!” I held him real tight, making sure not to drop him. Suddenly, he wrapped his tiny hand around my finger and I thought to myself, “maybe having a brother is not so bad after all.”

A couple of weeks later, my brother had come home and I knew I was really lucky to have a little brother! **Abigail Jimenez**

The Perfect Day

It was a day like every other day. I had just come home from school and my dad and mom called my sister Ava and I to the living room. They had a big smile on their face as they said, “ Surprise! we are going to Costa Rica! ”

Ava and I were very confused but really excited. We wasted no time and ran to pack our suitcases. After a five-hour plane ride, and a 45-minute drive from the airport, we finally made it to Hotel Guachipelin. The rooms in the hotel were very nice with many rooms, a nice bathroom and a beautiful view of the sunset. My family decided to rest to prepare for the next day's adventures.

The next day, my family and I wasted no time. First thing in the morning we scheduled a zip lining tour. Because of COVID-19, we were all by ourselves. We started the zip lining tour at 9:00. I was so excited! The tour guides led us to the first zipline. I insisted on going first. The guides gave us instructions and said to never touch the wire with your hand, never sit straight up, and always lean back because your head could hit the wire. The last direction he gave us was to ALWAYS HAVE FUN!

The guide clipped my harness to the wire and then said I was ready to go. I immediately jumped and I was off! I felt amazing as I was gliding so swiftly through the air. I felt like I was flying. I was having so much fun.! When I got to the other end of the wire there was another guide there to help me unclip my harness. After I was unclipped, I turned around to watch my family go. Next up was my sister, Ava. She had a

huge smile on her face just like I did. When she got unclipped, she turned around with me and we watched my dad who was next. Finally, my mom went and we moved onto the next zipline.

After four ziplines, we reached the vertical zipline. Which looked like so much fun! The guides told us that for this one we would be lowered down to another platform and then we would have to climb back up. This time, my dad wanted to go first. The guide clipped him in and lowered him down to the lower platform. It went faster than I thought it would. When my dad reached the ground, he got unclipped and started climbing back up. I was next. The guide clipped me in and I started lowering down. It was such a thrill!

After the drop we reached something called the Tarzan swing. The Tarzan swing was a rope that you clipped onto and swung to the platform on the other side, just like Tarzan. Ava went first, then my dad, and finally, me. I clipped in and jumped off the platform. I was flying through the air on a rope! When I reached the other side, I was disappointed that it was over, but like my dad always says, all good things must come to an end.

After that the tour was over, my family and I went back to the hotel to get dinner. The food was amazing and a perfect end to the perfect day. **Wyatt Zeledon**

Exploring my Roots

People say your first vacation is your best vacation, that certainly was the case from me. It was going to be a long trip, but I was going back to where my family came from, back to my roots. It was a trip I will never forget.

It was five in the morning and I had just woken up to a piercing sound. I jumped out of my bed, excited because it was **THE DAY, I GO ON MY FIRST INTERNATIONAL VACATION!** I was pumped up! I went to my front yard to see what the noise was. I saw my parents outside, getting the car packed. It is a long drive from my house to the airport. We drove for hours, only stopping for food. Finally, we made it to the airport. I could hear the bursting noises of the airplanes taking off. The airport was as huge as a whale. My parents were not travelling with me. A friend of my mom's offered to fly with me, as she was also

travelling to Guatemala. After what seemed like an eternity, we boarded the plane.

I was scared, so I didn't sit next to the window. The plane started moving, it was picking up speed. My heart started to beat fast. "We're taking off!" I shouted. Suddenly, we were in the air. I reached over to see out the window. I saw how high we were and it was terrifying. I sat back in my seat.

After a few hours, we landed in Florida. I was confused. Why were we in Miami? Jessica explained that we had to take two planes. We needed to change planes to the flight that would take us to our final destination, Guatemala. We found our new seats and settled in for part two.

This part of the journey was very long. My emotions started to get to me. Now, I was sitting next to the window and suddenly, I realized how far I was from home. I began to cry, tears sliding down my face like Niagara Falls. Jessica asked me what was wrong. I responded that I miss my home, my house and my family. Jessica showed me a picture of my mom's parents and our family. I felt better and began to get excited again.

Finally, after hours of flying, I had made it to Guatemala! My parent's home country. I met my mom's family for the first time. They welcomed me and made me feel at home. This is the family I would spend the next two months with. I had such mixed emotions. I was excited, but I missed my parents. But I somehow felt that I would know my parent's better after getting to know their families.

We stopped at a small house for the night and the next day, we went to the farm house that would be home for the next few months. I am so proud of myself for making this trip without my parents. I loved getting to know my extended family and their country. Afterall, these are my roots. **Anthony Alvarado Morales**

Greece

Greece is one of the most beautiful places in the world. It is where my family comes from, so I am lucky I get to visit almost every summer. This one year was a particularly memorable trip. We were going to Pomegranate Resort. I had never stayed anywhere like this resort before. It was the most beautiful resort I have ever seen.

As soon as we got to our room, I jumped on the bed and then, excitedly got ready for the pool. The pool was HUGE!! The biggest pool I have ever seen. It would probably fit our whole school in it. I ran and jumped in immediately. When I came to the surface, it felt like someone was pouring ice water on me. It was colder than Antarctica, but it was the most refreshing thing I have ever felt. After a while, my mom suggested that we go to the beach.

The beach is not my favorite place, as I am terrified of the deep water. I started to get this uneasy feeling. I tried to calm myself down and told myself I was being silly. The sky was a beautiful blue and the water was so clear. It really was so beautiful, I started to calm down. I headed to the water with my donut float. The water was cold, but it felt great. I was on the float for about seven minutes. when I suddenly felt something cold, leathery and hard rub against my leg. I quickly looked, but there was nothing there. I had chills running through my body. A few minutes later, I felt it again, this time I screamed loudly. I looked under the water. ...AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH SHARK! SHARK!!! GET OUT OF THE WATER. I let my fear get the best of me. I realized it was just my imagination.

For the rest of the time, I learned to relax and enjoy the ocean. Greece is my favorite place, and the Pomegranate Resort is the best place to enjoy all Greece has to offer. **Alexandra Beladidze**

Hurricane Sandy

The wind was howling like a wolf during a full moon. My family and I were stuck inside my house because of Hurricane Sandy. We prepared the house as much as we could, then we braced ourselves for what might come. We sat in anxious anticipation.

“Boom!” the first rumble of thunder came rolling in. My mom looked a little rattled. Things began to get worse. The wind was whipping. My parents said that the wind wasn't the fastest ever, but found that hard to believe. I was sure a tree was going to get blown over and land right on top of my house. I heard tree branches break and thuds on the ground. I was scared, that was for sure. It was so nerve- racking! I moved to the basement to escape from the sound of thunder, breaking

tree branches, and pounding rain but that did not work. The sounds were heard from the basement and I was alone downstairs, so I went back upstairs. There is safety in numbers.

Finally, it was getting late and I went to bed. Although the bed was comforting, the thoughts of the storm swirled in my head. Was this how my life would end...from a storm? I hoped not. I could not fall asleep. Eventually I did and, much to my delight, I woke up in the morning with no injuries, and best of all, no storm!

That morning, the cleanup began. My dad was using the leaf blower to clear the backyard and deck from the leaves, which were everywhere. When we were finished cleaning everything, my mom and dad told me that we were having guests. "Guests?" I thought. "The day after a hurricane?"

Later that day, all my New Jersey cousins arrived. The hurricane hit them harder than it had hit us. They lost power and had no water. They could not get supplies or food because the stores where they lived were destroyed. Even though it was a terrible situation, we ended up having fun. All my cousins were playing together and the grownups were talking to each other. We all knew that we were really lucky that no one got seriously injured. We made the best of a bad situation and were grateful for our family.

Michael Campbell

Art Camp Souvenir

I went to art camp with the intention of coming home with a drawing and some crafts. I came home with much more than that, I came home with a permanent scar!

"Splash, splash!", another water balloon hit my face. I ran away from my campmates trying to get me with yet another balloon. The last day of art camp is always the worst because of having to say goodbye to friends. Hard to believe that these friends were strangers just a few weeks earlier.

After the balloon fight, I went to the church building, where the camp was located. The camp counselor was helping another camper hot glue something. I was intrigued. It smelled like popcorn. The camper was creating a tower which kind of looked like the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I

had never used a hot glue gun before, so I was excited to try. I found the glue gun and I cut paper and glued it together. It was fun even though I had glue on my fingertips.

I was still wearing my bathing suit, while I was gluing more paper together, I realized that I was out of glue, so I walked across the room to find another glue stick. I put the glue stick into the hot glue gun.

The next thing I knew, I felt a burning on my leg. I screamed. I looked down to see what happened, and I screamed again. I started to panic. I was wearing a bathing suit and there was hot glue all over my knee. The counselor rushed me to the kitchen and took a paper towel to try to wipe it off, but it would not come off. We then tried water but that did not work either. Eventually, I got cleaned off and they called my parents.

When I got home, we looked at the wound. My mom told me it would not be a permanent scar. I was hoping that was true. After a week, it turned black and I thought it would fade. However, it is now four years later, and I still have the scar on my leg. It's not so bad, though. It reminds me of my time in camp and the good times I had there. It also reminds me to be very careful when using something HOT!

Lara Fortelni

The Time I Got My Dog!

This was the day I had been waiting for! I had been asking for a dog for six years. Even though I had to go to school today, I was happy. I was so excited about my puppy; I could not stop telling everyone that we were picking her up today. I told anyone who would listen. Unfortunately, it was also the day of our fourth-grade project presentation afterschool, another delay. Finally, we were heading home and the excitement was building. The car ride felt like an eternity.

We picked up the new puppy at the beach, next to my house. When she got in the car, she was very frightened. The puppy's toys were ready and waiting for her when we got home. Our best friends came over to meet her. The puppy loved people, especially kids, which was great. That night, she slept on my bed with me. She was named Tabitha

and we decided we liked the name and that she looked like a Tabitha, so we kept the name.

At first, Tabitha was the best dog, she was quiet and cute. However, all that changed. She started getting into lots of trouble. She ate half of the couch! She kept escaping and running away. We would chase her to bring her home and it would often take us more than an hour to get her back. She ate our shoes, bunnies, and other small animals. We hoped this was just a puppy stage that she would grow out of.

She is much older now, and although she still eats bunnies and runs away, she is the best dog ever. She is not the calm, quiet dog we first met, but she makes us smile all the time. She is great for snuggles and makes us feel safe. I could not ask for a better dog than Tabitha.

Samantha McDonald

The "Flying" Incident

Have you ever felt like you were flying? Well, I have, but let's just say that feeling that I felt was unintentional and ended in a catastrophe. It was only my first day of first grade and when I finally got home after a long day, there was a surprise waiting for me.

There was a light blue colored trampoline. For some strange reason, I imagined it was a spaceship that came down from another planet to take me to another universe. I ran around the house yelling and screaming in excitement and trying to ride the "spaceship." The trampoline was in my basement and I was not quite sure of what I was supposed to do with it. Eventually, I decided to get on it and jump. Surprisingly, it bounced and I absolutely loved it.

Every day I would come home from school, immediately go downstairs, and jump on the trampoline until I got too tired to bounce anymore. I did this for weeks until that fateful day. I went to go jump on the trampoline like I always did. I was jumping for hours. I was tired from just bouncing up and down over and over again, but I decided to do a few more jumps. Suddenly, ... "WHOOSH" and then "BANG!"

My parents rushed down the stairs so hastily they almost fell. After getting down to the basement, my parents saw me laying flat on the

ground. I was dazed and confused. My parents and sister were very worried.

I was taken to a hospital to get checked. Luckily, nothing was broken. After telling the people at the hospital what I remembered, they realized that I went soaring through the air off the trampoline over the handlebar and landed on my back which made the loud crashing noise that my parents and sister heard from upstairs. After completely recovering from that incident, I got right back on the trampoline. But from now on, I will be more careful and stop when I get tired. **James Paccasassi**

Puppy Day!

Today was the day I have been waiting for my whole entire life! The second I woke up, I leaped out of bed, screaming, “it is puppy day!” I can't wait. I felt like I was dreaming. My mom celebrated by making waffles, my favorite. My dad told me to start getting everything ready for the puppy's homecoming. I had paper towels, food, water, poop bags, and treats. Thirty minutes later, although for me it felt like an eternity, we arrived.

We arrived at the luggage area of the airport, the agreed upon meeting point. The breeder texted us that he was there waiting for us. We looked all over before realizing we were at the wrong carousel. We rushed to the correct location and saw a puppy carrier. I ran to the puppy and scooped him up. I loved him already!

My family already decided on a name. It was very important for his name to be the same in Spanish and English because my family speaks Spanish, and we wanted it to be easy to say in both languages. We decided on Bruno. To me, Bruno was the cutest dog on earth! However, my family thought otherwise. They said he looked like a rat. They kept bullying poor Bruno. They said his face looked like a football and kept teasing the poor puppy. I did not think they were funny. Finally, they stopped the jokes and started hugging and petting him. They loved him too!

We got into the car and Bruno fell asleep on my lap. It was the cutest thing ever. During the drive, my dad stopped at a burger place. We were all hungry. My dad returned with burgers and drinks. Bruno leapt up like a lion to try and get the burger my dad was passing to me. After we finished our dinner, Bruno stole the water bottle and started playing with it. Bruno held onto the water bottle all the way home! It was difficult to retrieve the water bottle from his mouth. Keeping water bottles away from Bruno was the first of many puppy behaviors and lessons learned.

Bruno has learned a lot since that first day and he has been the best companion ever!

Olivia Gonzalez

Hershey Park

I am an eleven-year-old American with dual citizenship. My parents are from Colombia. I have family living all over the world including, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, and the United States. I like having an international family because I have the opportunity to travel and share their culture, food, and music, as well as the opportunity to share my culture with them. One of my favorite American vacations to show my family are theme parks, especially in my favorite city, Philadelphia.

Philadelphia is one of the most exciting cities in the United States and it was where I took my family on our first American vacation. It was on my fifth birthday and I still have great memories of the trip. The most exciting part of the trip was my visit to Hershey Park. Hershey Park has a great zoo with many animals like bears, birds and deer. It is even home to the biggest squirrels in the world! There is a chocolate lab which is yummy. There is a restaurant that has all types of food, but it is most famous for their unique desserts. After the zoo, we visited the museum. We learned the story of Milton S. Hershey and how he overcame his failures to become successful. I learned that if you fail at first, you should keep trying. Never give up!

Another attraction at Hershey Park is the garden with beautiful fountains and great views of the small mountains. The gardens are a

perfect location for taking pictures. The park honors Hershey's wife, Catherine and has a sculpture of Milton Hershey. In addition to the beautiful gardens, there are large grass fields for soccer. It was so much fun to play soccer there with my whole family!

Finally, my family visited the boardwalk with a huge waterpark. I went down a huge water slide, went in the bucket drop, a suspenseful, thrilling ride with a tremendous drop at the end, Finally, I went on the Lazy River, a slow-moving raft ride and the perfect way to end a busy day.

I had so much fun going to Hershey Park. It is a great place to share with my international family and to show them a good old American good time!

David Giraldo

Semi Finals

My family and I were watching Center Moriches, the opposing team, while practicing. It was the quarter finals and there was a lot at stake. We felt confident, but the other team looked good. This was not going to be easy, but the excitement was building. We were confident and ready.

During the pre-game, both of our team captains were told of the gym rules by the referee. We began the first quarter strong. My team, the Bridgehampton Killer Bees, won the tip off. Our point guard got the ball and went up for a layup. "Swoosh!" He scored. Now, we were on defense and I intercepted the pass and got a fast break. It was a close game. The score at halftime was sixty- six to sixty- four, in our favor.

Going into the second half, our coach talked about not chucking up shots when we are tired and to keep playing Bridgehampton defense. It was a good reminder and for two minutes, we kept them scoreless. However, we were not on our "A" game, so the first time out was called. We were down by ten with one minute to go and an injured center! It was crunch time. We focused and persevered. We cut their lead down to six points.

The fourth quarter was fierce and both of our teams were competitive. With ten minutes to go, the game was tied. This game would determine the semifinals. We were up by three points, then one of the opposing players surprised us! He had scored ten points before our first timeout. Now, they were up by two with thirteen seconds left. Pressure was building. We put in a player that did not have previous playing time. The clock was ticking. We passed him the ball. He was at the three-point line, he took the shot and the ball went soaring. The clock was winding down to zero, the ball bounced on the rim. It went in! The whole team went wild when he made the shot. The coach poured a cooler of Gatorade over his head in celebration.

That was an awesome victory, and we made it to the semifinals! Unfortunately, due to Covid, our finals were cancelled. We would have been playing Easthampton for the trophy. We may never know who would have won the championship, but we will forever remember that game.

Xavier Johnson

The Lock Down

On a beautiful spring day, my class went to the church to practice for our First Holy Communion at Our Lady Queen of Apostles. When we were all set to go, we were walking outside suddenly, one of my classmates said “That van looks very suspicious.” Mrs. Dalsays told the class to calm down, and that the van was probably just doing work at the church. We made it back to class and all of a sudden, the fire alarm went off!

We thought it was just a fire drill. Little did we know, it was a lock down. My class had never practiced for a lock down. When there was an announcement directing everyone to go to the rectory. We learned that there was a bomb threat at our school. It was a madhouse! Everyone was running through the hallways. People were yelling and screaming. When our class was walking in the hallway, we looked out the window and saw

police and firemen surrounding the church. Police came to our school to see if everyone was alright and sent us to a safe place. No one was allowed to leave.

When we arrived at the rectory, the whole school was all squished together so everyone could fit in. I was so scared and frightened. All of a sudden, my mom walked in. I was surprised and said "what are you doing here?" She reminded me that she was picking me up early for a doctor's appointment.

I was so glad to see my mom. A few minutes later, the school receptionist let my mom and I go home. When we got home, I was just grateful that I was safe. Soon all my classmates would go home as well. I will never forget that day.

Chloe Mazzocca

The Sledding Incident

Listen! This lady had it coming. She should have seen the sled coming and if you are looking at this thinking, oh, that looks fun, you're wrong. It started out like any other snow day, but it did not end that way.

During a typical snow day in New York City, I was with my siblings and my babysitter Erin. We decided to go sledding at the biggest hill we could find which was next to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We hiked up the hill. The city reeked like any other day, and all you heard was honking from the cars. On the other hand, the park was quiet but cold. My sister was joined by her two best friends, Michael and Madeline. We got to the top of the hill. My brother and I went down three times, racing my sister and her friend Madeline. We lost every time. Then the adults came up with an idea.

"Let's put all the kids on one of your sleds" said one of them to Erin.

"Ok, let's do it! Someone should video." said Erin.

I was overjoyed to be included with the older kids. I hopped in the front of the sled, behind my brother. We were in age order from youngest to oldest. One of the parents took out a phone, while another one pushed us off. I was going down the hill, when suddenly, I noticed a lady

sending a small child down in the middle of the hill. We all yelled, “ get out of the way! ”She did not hear us. Three seconds later, a tall lady landed on heads. We were all screaming. Our parents were chasing after us and yelling, “bale, bale, bale!”

We did not know what the heck just happened. We were still skidding down the hill. When we got to the bottom, the lady fell off and we all thought we were going to stop, but boy were we wrong! We had so much weight and speed, that there was no way of slowing down in time. We skidded across the path and slid onto a bunch of hay bales, which shot us up like bullets out of a gun. We ended up jumping the metal fence. We all learned to always look down the hill and bale before crashing!

Katherine Geoghan

Beluga & I

“C’mon! C’mon, ” I said, “ I wanna see the white whales, ”,

“Alright, alright, let's go” Mom agreed tiredly. ”

“LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! THEY'RE SO, so umm... whatcha' call it, grateful? Oh, wait, no. ah! Graceful!” ”

The belugas (or white whales, as I called it) swam to and from the glass to the trainers, then from the trainers to the glass. I watched in amazement as they did tricks with props and when they did a good job, they got a yummy, fishy treat... well, yummy to them anyway.

My mom and I then went to the reptile room, and I got to meet a baby crocodile! I hugged the little crocodile so tight, my mom had to pry me away from him. Next, we went to the penguin enclosure and it was feeding time. The trainers had a little toy ball on a stick and every time the penguin's flipper-fived it, they got a fish! Now, between the belugas and penguins, I was getting hungry, so my mom and I went to the cafeteria and got some lunch.

My mom got a hot dog and I got chicken fingers... “Moma (my mom) why are these called chicken fingers? I'm pretty sure chickens don't have fingers,”

“Well Ema, put it next to your finger... What does it look like? ”

“Wait... CHICKEN FINGERS AREN'T FROM CHICKENS?! THEY'RE HUMAN FINGERS?!?!” I screeched hiding my hands, “
“No, no, they are made from chicken, they call them chicken *fingers* because they look like fingers” Moma explained
“ Oh well, can we go back to the belugas?” I asked,
“ Sure Ema. ”

My mom and I got to the beluga’s enclosure but we didn't see them. I walked closer to the tank and, finally, saw one swimming towards the glass. I walked along the glass with my hand extended and the beluga rolled over like a dog! He was so cute!
After swimming back and forth for a while. another beluga came really fast towards the glass and opened his great big mouth, and I screamed, “HELP! HELP! DON'T EAT ME, PLEASE, OH, PLEASE!” I opened one of my eyes and saw my mom laughing really hard and two really confused belugas, “ Oh, sorry Mr. and Mrs. Whale I thought you were going to eat me... but then I realized you are behind glass... so I guess I'm good now. ”

EmaJune M. Fennell

Moving

Moving can be extremely difficult, especially when you're moving overseas, to a whole new continent. Birds were chirping and trees were swaying in the light breeze. The sun was shining through my window, warming me. I turned over in my bed, trying to grasp that moment and remember it. It was time to get up. Time to get dressed. Time to travel.

“Emma! Lucy! Breakfast is ready!” My mom said, interrupting my train of thought.

“Coming.” I replied. I got dressed and headed downstairs. I saw six huge duffel bags waiting in the hallway. Lucy came down and we all had breakfast. My sister and I played together with our unpacked toys and talked about what was to come. About moving.

“I don't wanna leave.” I told Lucy.

“Me neither.” she replied.

After a few hours, we were all packed and ready to go. We gave lots of hugs to my grandma. We got in the car and when we were pulling out of the driveway, we saw my grandma crying. We arrived at the airport, and I soaked in my last taste of New York.

We put our bags under the plane and went through security. We had some time, so we poked around a bit. My dad got a nice bottle of scotch (which is a type of alcoholic drink), and my sister and I got a few pieces of candy from Dylan's Candy Store. My mom also poked around, mostly in perfume stores, looking for her perfect perfume. Then, we got some healthy snacks and water for the plane. Soon enough, we were ready to board.

When we got to our seats, my sister demanded to have the aisle seat. Since, my mom easily got motion sickness, I let her have the window seat. I was stuck in the middle. The worst seat. I placed my carry-on under my seat and noticed the plane didn't have TVs! How could they not have TVs?! This was a six-hour flight. My mom and sister slumped in their seats. They were thinking about the TVs too. Thankfully, we had downloaded movies on our iPads.

The plane ride was pretty bumpy. Not a great thing when the flight is an overnight one. I watched the movies that I downloaded and ate the candy and chips I bought at the airport. I didn't sleep. I couldn't. There was so much going on in my head. After six boring hours of movies, snacks and bathroom breaks, the captain finally announced, “Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to inform you that we will be landing shortly. Please fasten your seat belts. Have a good day.” He shut off the speaker.

We landed and the flight attendant said “Hello everyone, and welcome to Edinburgh, Scotland. If you have come to visit, have a great time, and for people who live here, welcome home. Please remain seated ‘till the seatbelt sign is turned off and have a good day.”

We got off the plane and got our duffle bags. We headed out and took the tram to our stop. Everyone was looking at our bags. When we got off the tram, I was blown away. The neighborhood we were going to live in was beautiful! We got to our apartment. In Scotland, they call it

a flat. The flat had towering ceilings, almost fifteen feet tall! I was flabbergasted. The windows were huge and overlooked the terrace. The room I shared with my sister was big too! The beds were beautiful and there were presents on them from the person who arranged the flat for us.

So, while I missed the United States I realized, wherever family is, that's where home is, so I was really happy to be home. **Emma Tillotson**

The Birth of my Sister

Have you ever thought that your life was going to end? Well, the world almost ended for me on October 5 2011. I asked my mom why she had a bump in her stomach. Nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to hear.

I am going to have a baby sister! What the heck? Was I a part of this decision? Will I still be the favorite child? I have heard stories, and apparently, they take over the house with their own toys and disgusting white butt things. I had to put a stop to this! I am marching to my parents' room and I am going to fix this mess.

"Honey," My mom said. "The baby is coming whether you like it or not, but I can make a deal with you. You can tell her what to do and teach her how to be amazing, and your father and I can do all the disgusting stuff like changing the baby's diaper and feeding her."

"We have a deal." I said.

One month later, my mom went to the hospital. I didn't think the baby was this serious; it needed a doctor? I can't sleep thinking about all the baby's stuff and her new room, she was real, no doubt about it. There was no turning back now.

"Yawn." My dad just woke me up. It is time to see the baby! We were off to the hospital. It felt like a million years before a taxi came, but it was really only ten minutes. As I entered the hospital, I smelled a mix of hand sanitizer and baby powder.

We arrive at the second floor and walk into my mom's room. I see the baby, it is bald! I am shocked! It doesn't look anything like how I

pictured it. It looked so tiny, and its eyes were closed. It can't even see me, but it is cute and grabs onto my finger.

Eventually, she starts to grow hair and walking her to the park is really fun. I can grow to like this kid, she's alright. **Veronica Edwards**

My Vacation to the Bahamas

It was 6:00 AM. All the suitcases were packed and ready to be loaded. We were all rushing. We hop in the car and arrive at JFK at 7:45. Once we passed security, we found seats and waited for our plane to arrive. It was a four-hour flight. As we landed, we heard a band playing an old Bob Marley song.

I was travelling with my sister and my mom. My dad brought our boat down from Florida and was waiting for us. We were staying at Atlantis, a resort in Nassau. Once we were settled, my sister and I headed to the slide I had seen in commercials. It was a sixty-foot-high slide that had a view of the whole resort. It was steep and at the bottom, there was a long glass tunnel. On the other side of the glass were sharks. It looked awesome and intimidating at the same time. We started to walk back to our boat, where we were spending the night.

When we returned to ride the slide, my sister, Lara, refused to go near it as she was terrified of the sharks. I was excited and stepped in line. It looked much steeper than it had from the ground! I got ready, the life guard said "make an X with your hands on your chest and cross your legs. I went down feeling like I was going 100 MPH! It was over in a flash. I was happy I did it.

Dolphin Cove are huge pools filled with dolphins doing tricks. We watched the awesome dolphin. We spent the whole day relaxing and playing with the dolphins. Next, my sister and I went behind the scenes and were able to see the sea lions in their habitat.

The last thing we did was my favorite. We went to a restaurant that had a door leading to these steep steps. Once we hit the last step, we were amazed to see a huge underground called their "work facility". We were led to a second door. I was skeptical about what we were doing all the way down here. When the door opened, there were two big tanks of

water and two tables filled with water, and in it, were about twenty tiny sea turtles, all black. We got to feed them.

That was the end of our first busy day in the Bahamas.

However, I still have two things on my "Bahamas bucket list: jet skiing and swimming with pigs. The next day, we rented two jet skis, one for me and one for my dad. As I was riding around, my jet ski just died. I had no idea what happened, it just stopped. We tried to get it to start again and again. and the last finally, we got it started and drove back thinking it was low on gas. Even though it was cut short, we still had fun. Although I didn't get to swim with pigs, it was one of my favorite trips I've ever been on.

We all went back to the boat and went for a ride. We saw this humongous ship port filled with cruise ships. We anchored right in front of a tiny island with a small beach. It only had two palm trees. My sister and I decided to swim to it. We relaxed on the island, swimming and playing. It was the perfect end to the perfect vacation. **Tristan Fortelni**

Tubing at the Beach

I was skidding across the water at high speeds on my tube when, suddenly, I felt the front go down and I was underwater.

A few hours earlier... My family and I were going down to Shell Beach for a family reunion. When we got there Pop Pop, my grandfather, told me that we were going tubing. I went with Pop Pop to get the tube from the dock. I was very excited to go tubing for the first time, but I was also really nervous. When we got on the boat, Pop Pop told me to drive the boat to the dock. I was really excited. We got to the dock and my Uncle Saun got on the boat, got the tub and drove to get my cousins.

When we got to the beach my cousins climbed on and we headed for the center of the lake. My cousins, Maddie and Colin, got in the tub to show me how it works. We started to move. After they had finished

demonstrating, my uncle asked me,” Henry, do you want to go with someone or do you want to go by yourself?”

I responded, “I think I’ll go alone.”

“Ok hop on the tub Henry.” he responded.

I jumped into the warm waters of Shell Beach. When I got in the tub, Pop Pop told me to use hand signals to tell him to go faster, go slower ,or to stop. I had butterflies in my stomach. We started moving and I held onto the handles like my life depended on it. I could see my cousin; Maddie was filming the whole thing. As soon as I hit the first wave, I jumped in the air and felt like I was flying with the birds. After that wave, the waters were calm. I started to do a swimming motion with my feet to look like I was paddling and they were not pulling the tube. Suddenly, something terrifying happened, I had gone outside of the wake!! They pulled me back in and my heart was beating like a machine was pounding in my chest. Colin took control and made the tube lean forward and go underwater. When I came back up, I was dangling on the tube with one arm still grasping for the tub. I slipped and fell under the water!

After Colin, Maddie, Pop Pop and I had gotten back to the beach, I staggered over to my towel and screamed,” Never again!!”

My father came up to me and asked,” How was the tubing?”

All I said was,” It really hurt.”

After I had time to reflect on the experience, I realized that I really did have fun. I thanked Pop Pop for taking me and he responded, “Any time Henry, any time.”

Henry Springer

First Time Riding A Bicycle

Riding a bicycle for the first time is one of the most important days in any kid`s life. It was that way for me. On October 12, 2014 at 12:00 pm, I rode my bike for the first time ever.

It all began when me, my parents and my godparents went to Walmart. Once we got there, we bought food for the barbecue. When we

finished, I asked my parents if they could buy a bike and my dad said “yes.”

It was a Hot Wheels bike. We set up the table to eat and when we finished eating, my parents and I went back to our house. When we got there, my dad and I took the bicycle out of his trunk. We took the price tag off and we put the wheels on the bike. Once that was done, I went inside my house to get a water bottle. My mom came out also. She told me that when you keep on falling off of the bike, get back up and try again. So, I took my mom's advice, and I kept getting back up. Eventually, I was able to ride my bike. I was really happy! My mom and my dad were watching me from the window, so they saw me as I was riding. When my mom finished watering the garden, she got her phone out and started recording my first bike ride ever!

My sister was chasing me while I was riding the two-wheeler. My sister said, “I hope you don't fall off the bike,”

My mom yelled “I am really proud of you.”

I grinned at my mom and I said, “Thank you so much, mom, for supporting me!”

My dad said, “You learned really fast to ride your bike.”

” I exclaimed, “I know, thank you, for the bike dad!!”

“You are welcome,” my dad replied.

I went from the top of the road, down to the bottom of the road. When I got really used to riding my bike, I would go to the Hampton Bays Good Ground Park, where I would meet up with my family and friends. I love my bike!

James Velez

The Time I Adopted a Dog

It was a normal day in second grade. I rode the bus home, pulled up to my house and met my mom at the front door. My Mom told me there was a surprise waiting for me inside. Suddenly, a big dog came running to greet me. His name was Banjo.

I was in awe watching my two dogs play with each other. When I was born, we had two dogs, a big one and a little one. They played together all day, but then one of my dogs passed away. Bailey was lonely without his buddy. That year was a very sad year for me, my mom, and Bailey. It felt empty without him. That is why my mom decided to get another dog. Once I finished my homework, I ran downstairs and played with the dogs. We were playing fetch in the backyard and watching them sprint to me from the other side of the backyard. Then, we were called inside because dinner was almost ready.

After we ate dinner, I went back to playing with Banjo and Bailey. I was calling them and watching as they sprinted down the kitchen. Banjo was a speedy dog. He could easily outrun me, Soon, it was bedtime. We introduced Banjo to his new bed and Bailey slept right beside him. All through the night, he was howling and barking. I got no sleep. I walked downstairs to the kitchen and ate breakfast and played with my dogs. It was wonderful welcoming Banjo into our family!

Conner McVeigh

Ratatouille in Real Life

Have you ever heard of *Ratatouille*? Not the fancy French dish, but the classic Pixar movie with Remy the Rat? This famous movie features Remy secretly cooking under cover at the fanciest restaurant in Paris, Gusteau's. Believe it or not, I lived my very own version of *Ratatouille* one night in New York City.

Remy dreams of becoming a master chef, and one day he ends up in Paris after his family of rats was removed from their home. After a series of events, Remy ends up at Gusteau's, where he meets Linguine. They become fast friends and Remy secretly cooks all of the dishes for the fancy restaurant.

My very own *Ratatouille* takes place in New York City. In New York there are many restaurants. This one was a diner, nearby my old house on 79th Street and 2nd Avenue. This new diner was far from the movies, but it was fine. So, a week after opening, my friend, Luca, and I decided to go there. I ordered a cheeseburger and he ordered grilled cheese. The meat was okay, but the cheese was so good. I finished all of the quarter pounder in the short hour that we were there. To make things even better, the price was fair for dinner in New York City. Luca and I were so excited. We thought we had won the jackpot, we had found a

restaurant we could afford, that had the best grilled cheese and cheeseburger that we had ever tasted.

Luca and I decided that we would go back the following Thursday. We already knew what we were going to order: Two cheese burgers with extra cheese. But to our dismay, the restaurant was closed. There was a cop and animal control nearby, as well as a small crowd. The cop told us that someone had been hearing animal sounds near the kitchen doors. So, the cops came for an inspection and found a family of around twenty-five rats in the pantry eating pounds of cheese. I immediately thought of Remy and wondered if there was a chef rat who had been preparing the delicious meals. No such luck. The rats were secretly infecting the cheese with sewage bits. I was shocked and couldn't believe it, but there were photos. The rats were coming in and out of a sewer pipe where the cheese was kept. The food inspector tested the food, and found out that it wasn't contaminated, but recommended if you had bad allergies to see your doctor ASAP! Luckily for me, I don't have any allergies.

In the end, it was a unique experience that I am sure never to forget. However, real life isn't like the movies, and unlike Gusteau's, the diner closed down and today, in its place, are trees and vines. Fortunately for me, I left New York City, and there are no rat chefs in Westhampton Beach.

John Tingham

Dealing With my Siblings

Wow! I can't believe how much me and my siblings have talked these past few years and how far we have come. I am so glad that they have been there to see me through all my troubles and heartaches.

We had just returned from church. My siblings and I were fooling around during the service, so when we got in the car my mom started to yell at us. She told us that it was not our first time at church and we should know how to behave. You see, my siblings and I didn't get along well. I began to wonder why didn't we all get along so well, and why do we disagree so much? I wanted them to love me, but they treated me like a baby.

In the car, I made small conversations with my siblings. They ignored me. When we got home, everyone went their separate ways and did their own thing. One day, my mom said that she needed my sister to pick me up from school. I don't think she wanted to pick me up, but she did and then she took me to the library. While we waited for my mom to pick us up, we went to the computer. My sister wanted to play games and we started talking about what games we wanted to play. When my mom picked us up, I was sad because we could not play anymore, but I was happy because I had some quality time with my sister. At least she was beginning to hang out with me.

However, they still treated me like a baby at times. My mom worked by a park, so my siblings and I would go and play at the park. There were two separate parks, one was for ages one to five, and the other playground was for ages six and up. I was young, so we went to the park for younger children. I don't think they liked the younger park. Whenever we were there, my brother and sister would put me on this spinny ride even though I would get sick. My siblings did not seem to care that I was sick from the rides. I was upset. They just talked on their phones. I desperately wanted them to pay attention to me, but they still thought I was a baby.

As I got older, my relationship with my siblings changed. We now talk and play together more often. I know they love me and I love them even when we disagree about things. They don't treat me like a baby anymore, and they actually invite me to do things with them now! I am so glad our relationship has grown. I love my siblings, and now I know they love me too!

Daniela Lopez Zelayandia

When I Got Rusty

Why does everyone want a dog? Maybe because they're cuddly. Maybe because they want a small companion. Maybe they just want to care for something. Well, I was no different when I was younger. Dogs are the best pets to have because they are cute, cuddly, and adorable.

I was at my house with my mom and my brothers. We were getting ready to leave for Sportsman's Kennels because that was the day, I was going to get a tiny puppy of my own. I more excited than I had ever been.

For a long time, I had wanted a dog or puppy. My parents always said no because my mom was allergic, but I never really understood that. However, I eventually got used to it and stopped asking. A few years later, I got a bunny named Patches. She was black, fuzzy, and adorable, but as much as I loved her, I still wanted a dog.

One year later, I was eating dinner with my mom, brothers, and Joe. After asking each other about our day and jobs, my mom suddenly pulled out her phone. It had a picture of a cute, fluffy, little puppy on it.

"Do you like it?" my mom asked, smiling.

Yes! " everyone replied excitedly.

"It is our puppy." my mom told us.

I was in total shock. I could barely breathe, but that soon faded away as something occurred to me.

"But Mom, aren't you allergic?" I asked, confused.

She replied "He is a hypoallergenic dog, which means he does not shed."

What type is he?" Joseph asked.

"He is a cavapool!" mom answered.

I never thought that this day would come and as soon as dinner was over, I called Olivia. I was so excited! Olivia wasn't surprised by the news. Her sister had told her only moments before I called, but she was still very happy for me and my family. We talked for a while longer about homework, until she said she had to go. Feeling a little tired, we said our goodbyes.

As soon as I got off the phone with Olivia, I asked my mom what his name was going to be. She told me that we get to name him. We spent all night coming up with a name for him. Eventually, we decided on Rusty. It was a cute name that fit him perfectly because of his rust like color.

A few days later we got a call from Sportsman's Kennels saying that we could pick him up on February 18th.

'But it's still December,' I thought sadly, 'I have to wait that long?'

Finally, February 17th came and I was ecstatic. It felt like I waited years to meet Rusty, but then we got another call from Sportsman's Kennels. They told us that we couldn't pick him up because it was too cold. The new date was February 28th

After eleven long days, we were going to get him. It was a cold winter Wednesday and I missed my after-school activity so I could go and pick up my Rusty.

After a forty-five-minute drive, we arrived at Sportsman's Kennels and had to wait a while. Thirty anxious minutes passed until a worker came out with some paperwork. Soon after, the worker came out with a sickeningly white box. At that moment, I knew it was Rusty. I opened my car door and opened the box and there was the cutest, little, tiny puppy I had ever seen. He had a bright orange bow on.

On the way home I was petting him lovingly because if I didn't he would cry. He really was the most adorable thing I had ever seen. I loved him more and more with every passing moment. When we got back home, we lowered him into his tiny pen. He seemed scared at first, so we left him alone with some food and water. That was his first night in his new home. He has settled into our home and our lives and I love him so much!

Kaitlyn Surozenski

My Big Flight

Flying was fascinating to me. I always wanted to get on a plane. Finally, my opportunity had come. My older sister, mom, dad, and I were on the way to the airport. I was looking out the window. I was nervous, but really excited. I did not know what to expect when we got to the airport.

I imagined the airport would be a lot bigger. I thought that there would be police everywhere, searching everyone, but it wasn't really like that. We did have to go through security, but it was no big deal. The scanner was intimidating to pass through because if the scanner beeps, they pull you over and have to check to make sure you don't have anything dangerous or illegal with you. After we were all checked and were good

to go, we had to wait before boarding the plane. While waiting, I watched planes land and takeoff. I started wondering how they worked, and was getting anxious. The longer we waited, the more nervous I became.

My mom told me we had to wait an hour before we could board the plane. Trying to pass the time, I asked my sister if she had anything I could play with. She suggested we go for a walk and look for snacks. The airport was full of small stores selling all kinds of things. My sister and I went exploring, and before we knew it, we were lost. We could not find our mom and dad. We must have been gone for a long time because my mom called us and told us to come back. My mom directed us back to the gate and we were on our way. However, we still could not find them and I started to panic.

We must have looked worried and lost because a security guard came up to us and asked if we were ok. My sister said that we were lost and the security guard asked where we were going and then helped us find our parents. We got back just in time to hear the announcement that our flight was beginning to board. We were very grateful for that security guard because if it were not for his help, we would have missed our flight.

I was so happy once we got to our seats and the plane took off. All my fears had disappeared and I was enjoying the ride. I hope I get to fly a lot more!

Nicholas Sisalima

Caught in a Treadmill

Most people think exercise equipment is a good thing for your health. Not only did I not get healthier, I landed in the hospital! I learned that gyms are only effective when the equipment is used as intended.

I was four years old. My sister, Juliette, and I were in my home gym. We have several pieces of equipment, but the treadmill is the most used. It is a family favorite. Juliette was on the treadmill, and I was playing with a fuzzy ball I had found. I was tossing it in the air when I dropped it. It rolled under the treadmill. Juliette yelled at me to get the ball. Being the obedient younger brother, I reached under the treadmill to retrieve the ball.

“Ouch!” I screamed. Juliette jumped off the treadmill. It stopped running and I pulled my hand out. I was holding my hand, screaming. It really hurt! My hand was throbbing and I noticed it was bleeding. Hearing my cries, my mom came running upstairs and looked at my hand. The decision was made immediately. I was heading to the emergency room to have my hand examined for broken bones.

Luckily, I had no broken bones. The hand has since healed, but the lesson learned will last forever. I will keep my hands away from a running treadmill!

James Gleason

Scared for Fun

Six Flags, New Jersey, where thrills outweigh entertainment by a kilogram. There are plenty of rides to go on, and much to my enjoyment, there are a decent amount of DC Comics rides. One of Six Flags’ most popular rides is KingDa Ka. KingDa Ka is the tallest roller coaster in the world and sits at a height of 456 feet tall. I could not wait to ride it.

I was in line and I was nervous. This was my first ride at Six Flags. The waiting area where the line was added to the excitement. It is Ace Chemicals, where the Joker became the Joker. There was an old timey bat suit on display in glass casing. Shortly, the line for the ride began moving. I slowly crawled onto a seat and looked ahead at an attempt to see what was to come, but nothing could’ve prepared me for the thrill I experienced. I kept my eyes closed for some of the ride, but it was one of those rides where your legs hang down and you were held from the track.

I avoided the scariest rides, but I did go on another Batman ride, and a Justice League ride. Overall, Six Flags has scarier rides than Legoland, Disney World, and Universal. The rides are very entertaining and so much fun! During Halloween, it’s extra scary, there are clowns and zombies jumping out at you all through the park. So, if you ever want to have a great time with your friends, or just get scared for the fun of it, you should go to Six Flags, where thrills outweigh entertainment by a kilogram.

Isaiah Warden

NEW JERSEY

I always had the impression that New Jersey was dangerous. I had watched some videos my uncle had sent to my dad showing rioting there. After viewing all the chaos in the videos, I concluded that New Jersey was unsafe. One day, I was sitting on the couch playing games as usual, when my dad blurted that we are going to New Jersey. I was scared. After seeing those videos, I did not want to be anywhere near there.

My dad reassured me that we were going to be safe, but there was something in the way he said it, that made me feel he did not believe it himself. My dad knew I was scared, and told me New Jersey is just like New York! I began to feel better. My home state was like my cousin's state! A few days later, we headed out. My dad, his girlfriend, her daughter and I got in the car. I asked my dad how long the trip was. He said, "It's two hours, so let's get going!!"

"Two hours away!" I thought., I began feeling uneasy again. One hour into the trip, I wanted to go home. We had one hour left to go. I was super bored and we had no internet. An hour later, we arrived. This place looked nothing like New York. Some of the buildings looked abandoned and it was very rundown. It looked as if someone left their home years ago. I also saw dirty and rusty cranes and trains. New York was nothing like this! However, I felt a little better when I saw my uncle's home.

Their apartment was nice, and it made me relax. We got our bags and went up three flights of stairs to their apartment. My bag was so heavy I felt like my bones were going to shatter. When I finally got to the top of the three flights, I was pretty tired. My uncle greeted us and then sent us to go find my cousins. I was happy to see them, it had been a long time since our last visit.

My cousin, Damien, asked me to play. Since I haven't seen them in months, I was excited! I enjoyed watching videos the most! My cousins thought I was a funny person. I never thought of myself as particularly funny, but I liked that they thought so.

Our room was great! I was actually going to sleep in a room! I finally got one! We had dinner and after we finished, I went to sleep. It was already eleven- thirty and I was tired. The next day, my cousins and I watched movies and at night some other children came and we had a barbeque. I was very excited because my uncle was making ribs and ribs are my absolute favorite! My cousins, the other kids, and I played tag until the food was ready. It was delicious! It was our last night in New

Jersey. My cousins and I played a little more and then it was time to leave.

When we finally got home, I missed New Jersey. I was bored being alone again. I went on my bed looking up at the ceiling and remembered our visit. I asked my dad if we will ever go back to New Jersey. He said, "Yes, someday we will go back." I was happy, after all, this was one of the best trips ever.

Alexander Ramirez

Tragedy on Wheels

As I was rolling down the narrow, bumpy sidewalk, I had no idea of the impending doom.

The birds were chirping, the sun was shining, and the trees swayed in the cool breeze; it was a perfect summer afternoon. My dad and I were at home together and my mom was at the store. I was playing outside after lunch, when my dad strolled over to me and suggested that we go for a walk. My four-year-old self asked him, "Why do I have to walk?" He suggested that maybe I should take my scooter with me. So, I went to the driveway and hopped on my bright blue scooter. After a few minutes, we started on our journey. About 20 feet away from my house, the sidewalk was starting to get a little bumpy, but I didn't notice it at the time, so I just kept moving along.

After a while, I finally started to notice the bumps in the road, but I still didn't say anything to my dad. I also didn't notice that there was a storm drain in the sidewalk that didn't fit correctly into the pavement of the sidewalk, and made a little dip.

As I was rolling on my scooter, my scooter hit a bigger pebble than any of the other ones on the sidewalk, immediately, I lost control and nose-dived into the storm drain which was right in front of me at that moment. I launched a few inches and plummeted face-first onto the ground.

After a few seconds, my dad realized that I wasn't behind him anymore, so he looked back and saw me crying on the ground. He rushed

over to me, picked me up, grabbed my scooter, and started to go home as fast as he could.

Once my dad and I were home, I saw that my mom's car was back in the driveway; she was home. My dad laid my scooter on the driveway and he ran into the house and put me on the kitchen table. My dad grabbed my mom, and they rushed in the kitchen to see how banged up I was. My dad was telling my mom what had happened while we were walking. When my dad was done explaining, my mom rushed upstairs to get Band-aids and Neosporin. My dad stayed with me in the kitchen, comforting me.

At the time I didn't notice how much of a close call this was, I could have broken something, like my nose, or I could have chipped a tooth (luckily, they all would have been baby teeth at the time). To this day, I still remember that incident because I have a little scar right under my nose. I learned to always look where I am going, but the biggest lesson of all, was that my parents are always going to be there for me.

Jack Perez

Delay on The Runway

Have you ever been on a plane for 11 hours? Let me just say, it's not as fun as it sounds. I've been on many trips, but this was the longest I've ever been on. My family and I were traveling to Kauai, Hawaii. I was really excited to get there, so it seemed like forever before we got off the flight. This wasn't your normal, "get on the plane, eat a snack, watch a movie, then get off" flight. This was the nicest plane I had ever flown on.

Our trip began with a one-hour delay. I was annoyed, and I started to wonder if we were ever going to take off.

"When is the plane going to take off?" I exclaimed with my arms crossed.

"Stop complaining, Oliver," my brother snapped.

"Just because you're mad doesn't mean you can take it out on me." I remarked.

After what seemed like forever, the captain finally announced, "We are ready for takeoff!"

Finally, no more waiting! In just 10 hours, we will reach our destination, at least that is what I thought. I was so busy thinking about the delay that I almost forgot we had to go through the whole, “Safety Procedures.” The flight attendant came to the front of the plane, and the video began, “Please keep your seatbelt fastened while the seatbelt light is on, if turned off you may unbuckle and get up.”

“Ok, now can we take off?” I thought to myself.

The plane began speeding up, we were literally bouncing in our seats. It was going so fast.

I could hear the plane’s wheels rolling on the runway. And we’re off! The plane was in the air. It was an overnight flight, so we would be sleeping on the plane, which is never easy.

“I’m already hungry.” I spoke.

“We just took off; they’ll be coming around with snacks soon.” my mom reminded me.

“Oh, yeah, I forgot. And I brought some snacks in my backpack as well.” I said informing my mom.

A couple of hours in and I was already bored without any internet, so I thought I might as well watch a movie on the little touch screen on the back of the seat in front of me. I saw my brother watching a nature documentary. It looked interesting, but too long for my attention span, so I decided to watch, “The Sword of the Rightful King.”

“This movie looks good!” I thought to myself.

“It’s 2.1 hours long, that’ll take some time up.” I thought hopefully to myself. The movie was fantasy, my favorite genre.

After the movie, I was really hungry, and the flight attendant was coming around with the food cart. Dinner time! Plane meals are usually not very tasty nor nutritious, but this was delicious! The best part was the dessert, a macadamia nut cookie. A taste of what was to come.

“That was so yummy!” I exclaimed to my brother.

“I know, it really was!” my brother replied.

Now we were ready to sleep. Sleeping on a plane is not an easy thing. If you lay on the arm rest all you can hear is the plane engines underneath, but, luckily, these seats reclined. I actually was able to get a good nap. My brother and I usually try to stay up, but this plane ride was already so long. I tried to stay awake but I looked over from my seat. I had the window seat, my brother was behind me, with the next window seat and my parents were across the aisle from my brother. As I looked

around, I realized I was the only one awake. “Goodnight!” I whispered to my parents and brother.

When we woke up, we were really close. Forty minutes and we would be in Hawaii! As I wait, I play a game on my phone.

Finally, we touched down on the runway. We were there! Our dream vacation was about to begin and the flight did not seem so long after all.

Oliver Nielsen

My Eye Surgery

I woke up feeling drained and weary. It was 7:00 in the morning. Blankets were wrapped around my body and I was feeling hot from the blankets. I saw my phone on the floor, then I remembered I was listening to peaceful music to escape from my stress. When I saw flashing lights, I knew that was my dad trying to wake me up. I woke up swiftly, rubbing my eyes. “Today I was having eye surgery.

We dropped my sister at school, then we headed to Stony Brook Hospital. There was a lot of traffic, which added to my anxiety. When my dad and I finally arrived at the hospital, my nerves really kicked in. This was my first-time having surgery. We were greeted by these helpful nurses. The hospital had strict rules due to Covid, so I needed to change my mask.

One of the nurses explained the surgery and I felt even more frightened. I had so many questions. “What if I become blind” or “Will I be able to wake up again ?!” I was wheeled into the cold room on a hospital bed. It was time to begin! After four hours from the surgery, I felt dizzy. When I opened my eyes, I felt tension in my eyes. There was blurriness coming out of nowhere. I remember I was saying weird things out of the blue, like I was from another planet. I didn’t remember the car ride home because of the anesthesia. Yes, one of my fears came true. I couldn’t see for four days straight and my eyes were completely closed. I heard noises and people talking. When I woke up, I felt nauseous.

Four days later, I opened my eyes. I believe there was a 0.01 percent chance of going blind. I had to wear patches on my eyes. Finally, the day came for me to open my eyes. All of my worrying was gone. When I looked in the mirror my eyes were all red. The next day I woke up, and I felt like a new person! I was so relieved I was able to see again! There were side effects, such as, I was nauseous. I get car sick all the time.

A few weeks later, I was laying in bed, daydreaming about having a straight eye. I imagined strangers looking at me! It felt like the whole world was watching me. I wondered if my friends from school were missing me. When I returned to school I was greeted with thoughtful words. Now, I'm doing better and I'm all good!

Grace O'Brien

The Spinach Catastrophe

It's currently 10 o'clock in the morning. Oh, wait, I cannot tell time. oops, anyway, I'm starving... moms supposed to feed me right about now (puts spinach on my plate). Ugg, mom what is this gross green smelly mush? Am I supposed to eat this?! Umm, I don't think so. Please take this away. The smell is filling the air with a disgusting aroma. Ash the smell is going to kill me. I'm only a baby. I have to live. I'm too perfect to die this early. Take it away!

How do I get rid of this? (Gasps) I can play catch with this green stuff. Ok 3. 2..1 mom catch.

(that's when it gets bad) Umm, mom I don't think you catch stuff with your face but who knows I am the only one.

Should I give mom a second chance to catch the green stuff? I decide I will.

Well, that one hit the cabinet so I don't think she knows how to play. I can keep trying. (5 throws later) I think she gave up. The kitchen is green now! I made a masterpiece! Are you proud of me mom? Oh my gosh she never answers me, why can't she read my mind?

I think mom is mad at me for playing catch with the green stuff, but at least I don't have any greener stuff... (mom puts more green stuff in front of me) Didn't you hear me? I don't want this.

Well, I will play more catch. Bullseye right in mom's hands well she technically caught it. (throws again). That one hit the dog. Oh my gosh the dog is eating it! That's gross! (pukes)

Oh no, I think mom is upset. Wahh get this puke off me, wahhhhhh. (10 cries later) Good now I'm nice and clean. Oh no, there's more mushy stuff on my plate but this time it's not green and doesn't smell bad. I'll try it... Hmm, it's good. I like it. Moms cleaning my masterpiece, maybe she wants me to make another...

I have mushy stuff and I can make a new masterpiece! (throws mushy stuff) (5 min later)

I'm an artist! Uh oh, moms coming. (picks me up).

"Mom where are we going?" We are in my room. Oh, no, my room! That means crib!!! NOOOOOO! I can't go to the **CRIB. It's** scary.

No, Boom! I am in. "Don't leave. UGHH she's gone." (5 minutes later)

ZZZZZZZZ ZZZZZZ ZZZZZZ

Goodnight

Juliana Medina

Aquatic Journey

A sleepover with friends is always a good time. I woke up at my friend Xavier's house with two other friends. We were going to the aquarium. I was not really happy because I thought it would be boring. I was surprised by what I saw when we arrived. There was so much to do and see. I realized just how wrong I was.

Our aquatic journey began with the turtles and stingrays. I was struck by the size of the building. As we stepped in, the stingrays were in a tank to the left. We ran over and saw that it was a touch tank. We bought some fish and were able to feed them and touch them. They felt much softer than I imagined. As we went further into the building, we saw waterfalls and other fish under the bridge that we were crossing. My

absolute favorite part was coming next. We entered a dark tunnel. There were sharks swimming all around us in an underwater city. The sharks swam really close to our faces. I was fascinated!

There were three parts of the aquarium: the inside exhibits, the outside exhibits, and the butterfly section. We decided to go outside next. When we got outside, I realized how big this aquarium was. The first thing we saw was the waddling penguins. They were funny. We went in the glass domes and were really up close to them. Then we headed over to the seals. Next, we saw monkeys, snakes, and an octopus. I had no idea that the aquarium had such variety! My favorite outdoor exhibits were the otters. They did backflips and played with a ball. This was cool to me because I did not know otters could do tricks.

The final stop of our visit was the butterfly exhibit and the gift shop. We came back inside and went to the big butterfly area. At first, it seemed harmless, but as we proceeded, it was super scary. All the eyes on the creatures stared into my soul and were flapping all around. There were millions of these creatures and I felt like they were going to attack me. Luckily, we got to the end very quickly. Finally, we went to the gift store where I bought a stuffed octopus and a mood ring to remember this fun adventure.

At first, I did not want to go, but I went and ended up loving it and having lots of fun. I learned to always try new things, even if you think it will be boring.

Oliver McDonald

My Sister Fell Down the Stairs

When I was five years old, my sister, Molly fell down the stairs. Although it did not happen to me, it was traumatic to witness and experience. It is hard watching someone you love in pain.

Molly was playing at the top of the stairs. She loves to climb and run up the steps. She would hold on to the railings and swing her feet out all over the place like a gymnast. This day was no different. She was swinging and doing flips on the handrail. Suddenly, I heard *thud thud thud thud*, and then *crash*. I thought my mom dropped something while

she was coming down the stairs. It turns out it was was my sister tumbling all the way down the stairs head first. She was around two years old at the time. Suddenly, I saw blood dripping from her head. I started screaming. My mom came flying out of the kitchen, screaming louder than I ever heard her before. We immediately got Molly to the car, carrying her while she was screaming. We grabbed my brother, Wesley and headed straight to the hospital. My mom was still in her pajamas.

When we got to the hospital, a nurse took Molly and my mom in right away. I was not allowed to go in the hospital room. because I was too young. So, Wesley and I waited in the waiting room, worrying. There were many people in the waiting room and it seemed endless. Time passed slowly. It took two hours and finally, the nurse came out. The nurse told us that Molly was okay and would make a full recovery. She just had to rest for a couple days. When my sister finally came out, her forehead was covered in stitches. Finally, we got back to my house and we were all exhausted!

Jackson A Wassle

Black Eye

A little thing like a black eye could not ruin my great day. I had been looking forward to this party all month. It was going to be awesome!

It was Grace's seventh birthday. The party was at a bowling alley with pizza and candy. The pizza was yummy, and I ate lots of candy. There was also an arcade. I love playing arcade games and collecting all the tickets. It was the best party ever. Luckily, for Grace and I, the party did not end here.

When everyone left the party, Grace and I wanted to go to the park. My mom and my step dad agreed to take us. We were so excited as it was a beautiful day! The first thing we did was go down the slide! Next, we headed to the swings. We were swinging to high, I felt like I could touch the sky. Finally, we headed to the monkey bar, my favorite! Until today. I climbed up and went to hang upside down, and suddenly, splat! I was on the ground, laying on my face. Everyone rushed over and crowded around me, checking to see if I was ok. My mom got really scared and kept saying my name. I finally sat up. I had dirt all over my face. I also had a black eye.

My mom called Grace's dad and explained what happened. We all hopped in the car and went back to Grace's house. Grace's dad checked my injuries, and said I would be fine. Mom cleaned me up and gave me an ice pack for my eye. When I was all cleaned up, we had a snack and played some more. It was a busy day, but I had so much fun, even with a black eye! Grace and I still laugh about this day. I am happy we are still friends and can share our memories.

Kyleigh Whitney

A Day in Spain

Spain! What is not to love? It was a beautiful sunny, hot day in Spain. A place where parrots freely fly in the light blue sky. I was visiting my grandparents, aunts and cousins. It was a perfect setting, what could go wrong?

We were heading to a park. On the way to the park, I saw beautiful lush green grass with colorful flowers surrounding big statues. It was hot in the car and I was sitting in the backseat with my cousin and my aunt. I hated being squished in the backseat. We finally made it/ We got out of the car to breathe fresh, cold air. Suddenly, I heard peacocks. I was shocked! I did not expect to see that. There was a peacock sanctuary in the park. Around the corner there was a cat, which led to a whole group of cats! The cats were little sassy strays. We walked along a rocky path which led us to some people riding bikes.

We thought it would be a great idea to go on a family bike ride. We rented two bikes and would take turns. Although my cousin was not an experienced rider, she thought she was an expert. She took the bike up some hills. The bike paths were not smooth and you had to be extra careful. I was at the top of a little hill with my grandfather. I was trying to get on the tall bike. Suddenly I heard, "BOOOOOM!" It was the sound of a bike slamming into a metal bar. Next, we heard someone screaming for help. My grandfather grabbed the bike I was on, and pedaled as fast as possible. In a matter of seconds, he was next to my cousin. My grandmother asked me what happened.

" I told him, in desperation, " No time to talk! "

I ran down the little hill, tripping, but continuing to run to get to my cousin. She was laying on the hot cement with her knees all scratched and bleeding. I looked at her and saw a lump on the side of her eye. It was red at first, and then it turned purple! My cousin was too weak to stand. An ambulance was called. They came and put her on a stretcher

and took her away. We followed behind them, not walking, but running. She recovered and we were able to enjoy many more beautiful days in Spain. We created many memories and I cannot wait to visit again.

Samantha Deleg Illecas Caroline

Lost in the Aquarium

When I was six years old, I went to the Aquarium with my grandma, my great grandma, and my sister, Hailey. We were walking around looking and petting the sea animals. Even though I was always too scared to pet the animals, I loved to look at them. Because I was six years old, I would never go near the stingrays. I was afraid they would sting me or worse, bite my hand off. The animals were amazing and I especially loved the seals and the penguins. They were my favorites! We ate lunch at the Aquarium and we got to feed the fish! We had so much fun until...

While in the gift shop, I picked out some toys and stuffed animals. My great grandma asked Hailey what stuffed animals she wanted, but when she turned, Hailey was nowhere to be seen. We started looking everywhere in the gift shop for Hailey, but she wasn't there. So, we moved out to search the whole Aquarium. We couldn't find her anywhere! My grandparents were getting nervous and so was I. Finally, we found her on the bridge to the penguins and the seals, she was just standing there calmly, looking at the penguins.

I stayed away from aquariums for a long time. Recently, we started visiting Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut. My favorite animals are now the Beluga Whales! Whenever we go to the aquarium, we know to keep a close eye on Hailey because she wanders around and we don't want to lose her again!

Zoey Sulph



This I Believe.... Never Stop Learning

We all know that education is important. What many people may not realize is that there are opportunities all around us and schools aren't the only places where people can find teachers. Take me, for example. I have had many 'teachers' in my lifetime. My friends give me advice about many things such as the correct decisions to make. My idols show me how to act around people, and even the events in my life have taught me what to do and when. As a result of my lifetime experiences with learning, I believe that education can come in many forms.

Like many children, my mom was my first teacher. Even today, my mom is an inspiration to me. She teaches me many things that help me in life. She gives me advice every day. For example, once she told me that no matter what happens in life, I will never be lonely. I really didn't believe that but one day something happened. I was not feeling right, and I didn't know what to do. I remembered that thing my mom told me: "Whatever happens in life, you will never be lonely." This helped me go up and talk with my friends, and soon we started to play. Using this message from my mom as a guide, I felt better and learned a new thing about life.

Another place where I learn is school. I learn new things at school every day. The skills my teachers teach me are used for everyday activities like writing or homework. This type of education is very important. This way of learning is different from when my mom teaches me something because when I learn something from my mom, it's usually life lessons. But when I learn something at school, I am learning skills that will help me in college and at work. At school, I also learn how to be humble.

When I was three years old, something happened that changed my life. It was the day my dad left me and my mom. It was painful when my dad left us, but that experience also taught me important life lessons. That was the day I learned how life really is. That was the day I learned that: "Nothing stays forever." This might seem like a hard lesson, but what I went through changed me. The sadness and sorrow I felt during all those years was painful because I missed the love of my dad. There was a big hole in my heart that could never be filled, but that didn't stop me from moving on. My mom helped herself, and she pushed me forward in life. Together we made it through that time no matter how hard it was.

Opportunities to learn are all around us. My life experiences have shaped that belief for me. I believe that the things you learn should be used for the great things you do in life, school, and beyond. Just like I used the lessons I learned from my mom, life, and school to help me out through difficult times, I believe everyone needs to share what they learned with others. The more we use these lessons, the more we can understand ourselves. And the more we understand ourselves, the more we can help others. And isn't that why we are here? To help others? I believe so, and therefore, I will keep searching for new teachers and new places to learn. I hope you do too.

Erick Orellana

This I Believe...

Family is Everything

This I believe: Family is everything. I came to this realization by thinking back on 2012 when it was a simpler time. There was no Covid-19, no violence, and no lockdowns. Back in 2012, I remember my family and I were eating turkey on Thanksgiving. We had great food such as mashed potatoes, green beans, turkey, and of course, stuffing. The turkey was great, and the company was even better. In fact, all my memories

before 2020 are great, and they all are centered around time with my family.

Another great memory with my family happened when I was four years old. I was having fun running around with my uncle's dog Chachey. He was a small poodle who possessed the speed of a cheetah. I always loved to run around the house with him...right up until I ran smack into a wall. I remember waking up and everything was blurry, then it hit me. The immense pain was so bad; I was not even crying. I was in shock. Then I regained my senses and started whining and historically crying for my mom. My family propped me up on the couch and wrapped my arm in a sling. Eventually, we went to see my neighbor who was a doctor. He told me that unfortunately I had broken my collarbone. I had to wear a sling for five weeks in preschool. I can guarantee you that the teacher had her work cut out for her as a result of injury. I learned a lot from this story. I learned that family is always there when you need them. I also learned to look where you are going.

Another reason to trust in family I learned when I fell off a swing. I was only seven years old, and my swing was on a hill that overlooked the bay. One day I was on my swing, goofing around with my dad when the line snapped on the branch mid-flight. Without warning, I flew down my hill onto the grass. I remember waking up again in a daze, and then the immense pain hit me again. But this time it really, really hurt. I remember my dad asking where it hurt and I told him my back. I got really lucky when I fell because if I landed directly on my head, I could have broken my neck or suffered a concussion. Unlike the other accident, this one was not my fault. The rope from the swing to the tree completely snapped. But once again my family was here to help me.

The most recent event that shaped my life was the Covid 19 lockdown. I experienced my family's love and faith that things will get better, and they did. During the lockdown, we needed faith in one another. We needed love for one another, and we needed each other. I feel like the lockdown was obviously a bad moment in time, but it was good for us because we came together as a family. And it wasn't only good for us. People around the world supported each other, loved each other, and united for good. As a community, we stood strong and fought off the hardships and sickness among us. Of the many events that have shaped my life, this is the most life-changing experience I have gone through. Lucky for me, my family has been there with me every step of the journey.

Gabriel Kaczmarek

This I Believe...

Losing Is as Important as Winning

“Sometimes you need to lose in order to win.” — Adele Rose, possession. In sports or any competition, I believe that losing can be as enjoyable as winning. I play a very complex sport known as gymnastics. Gymnastics is a very hard and competitive sport, and just like in other sports, you have good days and bad days. While losing never feels good, I am here to tell you why losing is good for you

Don't get me wrong. Losing is very disappointing. You feel confident at the start, then you make a mistake or even a few, and soon you know that your chances of winning are slim. When you lose, after the competition, you feel like a loser, a failure, and frankly embarrassed that you failed and lost in front of all those spectators. What too few people remember is that it's normal to lose, fail, or just have a bad day. We are humans, not robots, and sometimes we make mistakes. Every time you fail, you have an opportunity to learn. Failure highlights your weaknesses and gives you a good look at what you need to practice and make better.

Do you know the difference between champions and everyone? Well, the answer is champions are never afraid of losing while everyone else is afraid of winning. You see, when you play a sport or do anything competitive, winning is not everything. What matters the most is that you have fun and try your best! I wish someone told me that a little sooner because before when I used to perform, I was terrified and totally forgot to have fun.

This happened to me at a competition a while ago. I was in a competition which was nothing new. But what was new was that I was so nervous. Maybe too nervous. Anyway, I was performing on the beam and doing pretty well. Then, I took two steps out of my front tuck which made my score an 8.8. That score was really good, but I was disappointed. Then, I realized I was competing in the oldest and hardest group of the competition and my teammates were in the same group as me. They were amazing, too, so I knew that I probably would not place above them on the beam.

Then, I did the floor routine. The floor was weirdly placed, so while I was performing, it messed me up. I still did fine with an 8.7, but I was incredibly disappointed. At my last meet, I scored a 9.4! Next, we went to the vault. My nerves were a little better, but they weren't fully

calmed. I did my vault as usual but totally messed up on my second one. Thank goodness, the judge was only judging one of my vaults. I ended up with an 8.5 which was a fair score for my vaults, but I knew I could do better.

Finally, we did our final event which was bars. The judge for the event was supposed to be the hardest judge on bars on Long Island. I was especially nervous for that event because I thought I was going to miss a skill that was really hard for me. I ended slaying that bar routine, but since that judge was really hard, I only scored a 7.7. It was actually a pretty good score to get with that judge. I wasn't upset with that score because I finally got over the fear of doing the skill that I kept failing on. That day, I ended up winning sixth place all around which really bummed me out because I was one of the only ones who earned only one medal. However, I did well overall and qualified for Worlds in Florida!

In that competition, I learned a very important lesson. If I was less scared and nervous, maybe I would have done a tiny bit better. In conclusion, I believe that you shouldn't think of losing as the worst thing in the world. Instead, think of it of a way to learn from your mistakes and grow as a person and/or athlete. Always remember that if you never lose, you can never appreciate the victories you do have, and if you want to do anything in life well, the secret is learning how to lose.

Bianca Alvarado

THIS I BELIEVE... THIS WORLD LACKS EMPATHY

A majority of the world's population lacks empathy. Most people today are selfish. Look around. You never really see people giving out food, water, or shelter to the poor. Only the people with very kind hearts are giving away what they have to help others. This results in so many people not having enough to live. When selfish people wander the planet, they let out bad energy and make others feel worse about themselves. I believe that people need to change their hearts.

Selfish people lack empathy which causes the world to seem harsh. Those who have good hearts and empathy are what makes the world vibrant. People with hearts give the world color and make it less

grey and depressing. I think that people with empathy need to open their hearts and share their joy with others.

This world is a very grey place with very grey people. Only those with passion, strength, and confidence can make this world a better place to live. If you were to go to a city, you would see more of a white/grey-toned sky than a completely blue sky. Those with cold and harsh perspectives on life are growing in number when it should be the complete opposite. The people with good hearts should be multiplying, but this world doesn't know how to make this happen.

I believe the reason I came up with such a topic is that I have experienced this too. I've been put in situations where I had to choose over a loved one or a close friend of mine or some other thing with no importance or impact on my life. I am one of those selfish people, but I plan to better myself, and I hope others will as well.

People need to brighten their perspectives on life and change the way they see the world. People need to see the world as a colorful place. This world will never be perfect. There will always be people who are either too optimistic or too pessimistic. Society will always need fixing, but I hope it will become a more kind and gentler place in the future.

Antonio Vargas

THIS I BELIEVE...

NOTHING BEATS A BIKE RIDE

I believe that nothing beats a bike ride. Biking has been around since 1817. Since then, biking has been used to get places quickly, for exercise, and for a fun. Biking cures boredom. Biking can also boost your mood and give you energy for the day. My love of biking developed from several of my experiences growing up.

You can go biking whenever you desire. But again, the best time to bike is early in the morning or in the afternoon. Biking in the morning gives you an advantage of no one really up and driving at that time. So, you are alone on the road with no dangers. Afternoon gives you the advantage of the sun. In the afternoon, it is easier to see and you will already be awake by that time so you don't have to push yourself out of bed. Another good time for a short bike ride would be at sunset. You can relax in the damp air and enjoy the sunset as you bike. Though if you go at sunset, you don't want to bike for too long because nighttime will

come along and that could be dangerous especially if you don't have a bike light.

I have many great memories of biking. Some bad, some good. The number one memory was one day in the summer. My friends Ivo, James, Ozzy, my brother Oliver, and I were just heading home after getting ice cream. We were biking on this beat-up road with holes and cracks. I was behind Ozzy when he fell on one of the side cracks on the road. He fell literally not even one foot onto soft grass and started crying. This random guy passed by seeing Ozzy crying and called the cops. The cops came and asked Ozzy some questions.

One of them was: "Do you need to go to the hospital?"

Ozzy was like, "No, I don't think so."

When he said that, my friends and I were laughing so hard that we almost fainted. After the cop left and we started biking again, we teased Ozzy all night because of that incident... and we still due to this day.

Another biking memory was when my friends and me woke up at 6:30 in the morning to take an early bike ride. We met up at my driveway and headed off to the other side of our neighborhood. We flew down the roads and drifted sharp turns around the streets. We flew down a hill and took a right to the road that leads to the far side of the beach. Once we got there, we were huffing and puffing like we had just ran a marathon. We got there just in time to see the sun rising on the horizon. Man, that was a great morning!

So, I believe, nothing beats a good bike ride. Biking can make memories and stories like those I just shared with you. So, the next time you are bored, grab your bike and go for a ride.

George McDonald

This I Believe...

Every Problem Has a Solution

I believe that there is a solution to every problem. The day this belief formed was when my sister went into surgery for her brain tumor, yet my sister's problem had started years before that.

Two years ago, my sister's head was hurting. Really hurting. All the time. The first day we realized that my sister had a tumor, it felt like a

punch in my stomach. My older sister cried her eyes out. My parents and brother were sad. Jolie was scared. In fact, she was so scared that she yelled at my parents that she did not want to go to the hospital. The second day she was in the hospital we were all worried for my sister because we did not know the effects of a tumor. A few days passed between when they found the tumor and when they were able to operate. Those days felt like an eternity. We went to school like everything was normal, but it wasn't normal. Nothing was normal during this time.

The surgeon opened my sister's skull and removed the tumor from her head. Then, the surgeons put mesh titanium in her head. My sister's head had to heal. The skull and her skin needed weeks to heal. At first, she was on bed rest. When she did go back to school, she had to bring a fan so she did not get hot. She had to be very careful with her head. For example, she could not play in the gym or at recess. My family had to be careful not to bump into her. It was a month or two before my sister was herself again. My relationship with my sister has mostly gone back to normal. We still argue and play fight, but I need to be careful of her head. The doctors were able to heal my sister. The doctors were the solution to my sister's problem.

I believe that the doctors' saving my sister had a big impact on my family. I believe that the decisions they made helped my family get through a rough time. I believe that you can choose to look at the rough times from different perspectives, positive or negative. I choose to look at the positive; I believe that this difficult experience brought my family together.

Luke David

This I Believe... Losses Never Leave You

When you watch a volleyball game, you are on the sidelines spectating while the players on the court work hard to fight back for each point. The players spend their time putting as much effort into the game as possible and taking each set as a new opportunity to win. The final set is one that will decide the fate of the game. Now, imagine if the team you were voting for loses their game when they were just seconds away from winning. You can visualize how hard it must be, and that loss will probably stick with them for the rest of their lives.

The same could be said outside of volleyball. When you lose something, you love or care about so much, the pain clings to you. So, the belief that I have is that the scars people have from painful experiences never go away; many times, they come back to haunt you. Here is my personal story.

My father was a brilliant man who excelled in every subject in school. He was also the biggest geek fan for the Yankees and Star Trek. My siblings, Jason, Chris, and Julia enjoy the same things because of him. He was extremely playful with us, but I seemed to be the one who got the least amount of rough housing. This was probably because I gave him less of a hard time than the others. However, I know that he loved all of us equally. He was also the fun parent of the two. Mom was the more responsible one and strict one; Dad was the playful and bright one. My brothers did say that he could be strict when he needed to be, however.

Six years ago, on March 1, 2015- everything changed. My family went swimming on that day. Dad checked on all of us, and we walked along into the changing room. My grandmother was there to keep an eye on me and Julia in the girls' changing room, and Dad was there to keep an eye on Chris in the boys' changing room. I remember my swimsuit being the perfect fit; Julia's too. We met up at the swimming pool area and dove in. Well, most of us. Julia, I remember, was terrified. Then again so was I, but I didn't chicken out. I tried it, and wow; the water was freezing cold! It was like a blizzard in the middle of December. My head dug up from beneath the water and out came a chuckle from my mouth.

Later, that day, after all of us were done swimming, my grandmother told Dad that she was going to take me and Jules's home early. Dad understood, and he said that he and Chris were going to stay for a little while longer so that the two of them could get in some extra exercise. The three of us left after that and stopped for some food shopping on the way home. There was a ton of stuff that needed to be carried into the house once we got home. Everything became heavier when the phone rang.

My grandmother ran to the phone and heard from our next-door neighbor that Dad was in the hospital. Apparently while Chris was in the changing room, Dad's heart stopped pounding and he drowned. He always had a problem with his heart but this was serious. By the time the lifeguard arrived to save him, he had already passed away. I didn't know though; all I knew was that Dad was in trouble. I thought he would be

okay and that he would live. But when Chris came home, my hopes faded.

I asked if Dad was okay, and he stood there nodding. With that, both Julia and I ran to Chris bawling our eyes out. We had never felt anything like this before, and it was a hard hurtle to get over.

Every year on March 1st, I think of him, and it still makes me cry to this day.

From this painful experience, it is my belief that the scars people have from painful experiences never go away. Instead, they come back to haunt you. Just like in the volleyball game, the players and I were both hurt and suffered a great deal of emotional pain when we lost, but we overcame it. I still feel weak when the mention of that day in March is brought up. Someday I may come over that obstacle, but I haven't yet. So, let's keep moving on with our lives and remember that it is okay to think about the pain in your life every once in a while.

Angelina Dell'Aquila

This I Believe...

Trust Your Gut Instinct

I am always hearing stories about how people will be out somewhere, and suddenly, they have a feeling that something bad is going to happen. That's called intuition or your gut instinct. I think everyone has probably experienced this type of feeling at some point. Usually, I don't trust my gut but I probably should since it's usually right. It's proven that ninety percent of the time, our gut instinct is right. I think that trusting your gut instinct is the right thing to do.

I have had some experiences where I've trusted my gut and ended up being right. I remember a few years ago I was out shopping with my mom. I went into an aisle and saw a person. I know it doesn't sound so bad, but at the time, it felt weird. My parents were in a different aisle from me, so I moved near them. Once I moved, I realized the person made a circle around the store. My gut had a feeling something was off. I saw the man come back to where we were all looking. I remember feeling that something was weird and thought that we should check out. Thankfully, my parents were almost done looking. We went to pay, and left. If my gut instinct wasn't telling me something was off, I'm not sure what could have happened. Because of this experience, I believe in trusting my gut.

Another time that my gut was telling me something was when it was my dad's retirement party. When my uncle still hadn't shown up to the party, I asked my mom to invite him again since he might have forgotten. She said that he remembered and didn't say anything. I kept telling her, so she finally did. It's a good thing that she did though because he wouldn't have shown up. He had had forgotten the party because he had so many other things to do that day. My gut instinct was telling me that my mom should remind him, and it's a good thing that it did. For this reason, I believe that trusting my gut instinct is the most important thing to do when you're stuck in a situation where you don't know what to do.

Although these two examples that I described are very different situations they both involve trusting your instincts. Intuition has helped me make the right decisions, so I try to go with my gut instinct more often. Trusting your gut is the best thing to do in any situation. I'm sure that you have probably been in a situation where your choices were influenced by a gut instinct, and you've probably been in a situation where you didn't go with your intuition. In conclusion, always trust your gut instinct because ninety percent of the time your gut is right.

Jenna DiDomenico

This I Believe...

There Is an Afterlife

This I believe: An afterlife exists. Many people believe that same thing. I do as well, but in a different way than most people. Have you ever gotten that feeling that a deceased loved one is trying to talk to you? Maybe when you hear their favorite songs playing on the radio? My family and I have experienced all of this especially since my Uncle Rich passed away ten years ago. You might be asking yourself, "Well, how can you say that there is in fact, an afterlife?". To that question, I have one simple story for you to unpack.

For starters, there is a certain cardinal that would come by my grandma's place. You might say to that, "Well, what was so special about it?". The answer to that is that this specific cardinal always bumps into the window at Nana's place and our place, and sometimes even the

windshields of our cars. We like to believe that the cardinal is a messenger from Uncle Rich from the afterlife.

Another factor that contributes to my belief that an afterlife is also apparent when Uncle Rich's favorite songs play on the radio in my mom's car. Some of these songs that Uncle Rich used to love back in the day include old, corny songs from the 70s like "The Boys are Back in Town," "The Ocean," and any song by Led Zeppelin, specifically "Ten Years Gone" in the album *Physical Graffiti*. You know what the best example of this was? It was right after Uncle Rich's funeral, in which all of my family members, specifically Mom and Nana, got in their cars to go home. This is when Mom heard one of his favorite songs on the radio.

It was almost as if he was saying to her right then and there, "Even though I'm gone, it's going to be okay." Moments like these can't just be coincidences. It's like Uncle Rich himself is doing this from the afterlife to preserve his memory. I may have only been a few years old when he passed, but I have always heard he was such a great person. The fact that he communicating with us in different ways confirms this belief.

I have a feeling some of you have experienced the same things that I have mentioned and that my family has gone through. Do you have a deceased loved one that you think is in the afterlife? If so, you think like me. I believe that there is, indeed, an afterlife that exists somewhere in the universe. A place that is good and happy.

William Hantz

This I Believe...

Get Outside and Refresh Your Soul

What is nature? Nature is the physical world that includes plants, animals, landscapes of life, and other products of the earth. Have you ever thought about how nature is a powerful life-changing aspect of life? I believe that being outside can refresh your soul. If you are ever sad and need a new way of seeing things, go outside, take a walk, or go on a hike. Being at the beach, taking a hike, or even sitting outside in the sun are some ways you can refresh your soul and get happy.

This outlook on life and nature came to me during the past year. As we all know, the summer of 2020 was a sad and boring time. It was a time that the world basically shut down. People were staying inside because they were afraid of becoming ill. This was not fun; in fact, it was plain scary. Being almost a teenager and being stuck inside not being

able to socialize with friends and family is the worst thing that could happen in life.

In the beginning of quarantine, everyone was excited about being at home and doing remote school. I, for one, thought it was going to be exciting until three months later when I felt bored and anxious about only being inside. Fast forward to the summer of 2020 when the world was still on lockdown, but life was getting better.

At that time, my family and I started taking hikes. We would be outside all the time. When the beaches opened up, people flocked there. Living down the road from a beach was awesome because all I had to do was walk down in order to relax at the beach. Spending time outside and at the beach was a way that I could distract myself from what was going on in the world.

Last October 2020, my Nona was very sick. To get my mind off how my Nona was feeling, I hung out with my friends, took strolls at parks, and went on hikes in the woods. Soon after she became ill, my Nona passed away. It was extremely hard because she lived with me, and she was always there for me and my family.

As a result of her stay in the hospital, she was gone for almost two months before she died. Regularly my mom would go and visit her, and she would be gone for a couple hours. However, I wasn't allowed to see her, so I went on walks and would sit outside and pray for her. This helped me cope with the absence of my Nona. It also solidified my belief that you can just go outside and Mother Nature will refresh your soul.

This is what I believe. Spending time outside will help with any absence or anything anyone is going through because time outside refreshes your soul. So, take a deep breath and visit the outdoors. Go on a hike, go swimming at the beach, and have fun. In life have fun and live your life to the fullest. So, in summary go outside, refresh your soul and live life.

Ava Micari

This I Believe...

Don't Let Others Tear You Down

We are all warned about bullying in school, but I never imagined it would happen to me at OLH. However, when I opened a message on Snapchat a couple of months ago, I was suddenly faced with a situation that I never expected.

A girl from school sent me a video teasing me, shouting curse words, and threatening me. I was shocked when I opened the video, so shocked that I had to stop eating the food that I had been eating. I started shaking. It was at this moment that I realized a new belief of mine: Other people are always going to try to tear us down, but we all must be strong and rise above it. I reported the behavior to my principal and the situation was gradually resolved, but I will still never forget the feeling I had when I opened those videos. I felt ill. I was sad and confused about why anybody would say such things to me.

My family and friends both helped me through this tough time. They were on my side. I'm so happy to have people who care about me and will stick up for me no matter what. Now, if I ever see someone being bullied, I know that I will stand up for them because I have also learned from this experience that it is important to stand up for what is right.

Everybody should treat each other with kindness and respect no matter what. This experience made me realize that I would never want to treat anyone the way I was treated, and it reminded me to always try my very best to not tear others down for anything they have done. In the end, I learned how a difficult experience can change your life.

Sarah Hoffman

This I Believe...

Music Makes Difficult Tasks Easier and More Fun

One day I was supposed to clean the house, but I didn't clean it. My mom texted me and said she would be home in twenty minutes. I was worried I would get in trouble. I realized I needed to clean the house quickly. I put on my favorite song playlist, and fortunately, it made cleaning the house easier and more tolerable because I had something to focus on. Lucky for me, I was able to finish the cleaning before she got

home. Mom was very happy, and so was I. This experience made me realize something. Music makes difficult tasks easier and more fun.

Like many people, sometimes I have trouble falling asleep. My solution to the problem is to turn to music. Music helps me to sleep. It relaxes me and calms me. On Christmas Eve, I was trying to fall asleep, but I was having a hard time because I knew my present was a PlayStation. I really wanted the PlayStation, and so I was too excited to sleep. After some time, I turned some music on my phone and rested it next to my head. The music helped me to relax and fall asleep. The next morning, I was rested and able to enjoy my new gaming system.

Up until a several months ago, we were allowed to listen to our own music when working. Once I was writing a paper while listening to my favorite music, and I was able to finish the paper quickly. I believe this happened because music helps me to focus. When I don't listen to music and need to write, it takes me longer. The beat helps me to stay on task and keeps me from getting distracted by things around me.

Like most of my friends, I like to play video games. Most of the games I play have amazing soundtracks. One time, I had to play with no sound so I wouldn't wake up my sister. The game was boring without the music. I realized then that music makes things less enjoyable.

I believe music makes difficult tasks easier and more fun. When I close my eyes and think about my favorite songs, I feel happy. I see colorful images, taste my favorite food, and hear the beat. Honestly, if I did not have music in my life, life would probably be more boring and less interesting.

Christopher Rojas

This I Believe... Anything Is Possible

We all know stories of people overcoming serious difficulties in life. Stories like the first woman to land on the moon to family disagreements over who won Monopoly. The point is all those situations involved conflicts that were overcome. Having survived and won a few close Monopoly games, I have come to realize this: I believe that anything is possible no matter the challenge or the risk. As Timothy Weah said, "With hard work and dedication, anything is possible." This is my motto.

My belief that success is always possible was fostered by role models from the past and present that surround me. Fortunately, I have many people who show me what I can do in the future if I choose not to accept defeat. My parents, Nelson Mandela, and Harriet Tubman, are a few role models that I admire. People like the ones I mentioned show me how to be successful even if I don't aspire to be exactly like them. For example, if someone wanted to become a world-renowned scientist and looked up to Albert Einstein or Sir Isaac Newton, they wouldn't want to copy their accomplishments. Instead, they would learn from their accomplishments and create something better.

Most people doubt that they have the capability and don't think they could ever be as good or better than their role models. Role models like Harriet Tubman, Nelson Mandela, and My Parents are the way I will be better because their discoveries and accomplishments aren't so impossible for me to do.

I used to think I wasn't able or good enough to do better than them. I know for a fact and from experience that if you try hard enough you can be what you dream.

Thinking about what you want to be is never easy, especially when you have limits just like everyone else. At times, you can't just think or do what is best and expect, "Oh! I can finally do this, or I have this because I did a bit of work."

You have to have the mindset to do something and you have to be able to put in the work in order to achieve great things. Something that plays an important role in the right mindset is positivity. With a positive outlook, you might make better decisions than you would without one. Some things might not come as easily to you as other things, and like I always like to say: "It's not about winning first in a race; it's about the journey that gets you there."

I know that I am a generally fast learner. Once I see something new, I always want to try it and usually I am good, but that doesn't mean everything is a walk in the park. For example, public speaking. When I ask people if I am good at public speaking, they usually say yes or absolutely, but that doesn't mean I can learn to speak in public like a pro. The only way I can succeed at that goal is if I do what I need to do and stay focused. The key to most things is staying confident and knowing you have a voice and a say in what is happening around you.

I believe that the possibilities are endless, and there is no limit to my potential. Remember it's not a race where you are trying to get first place, but it's the journey that gets you to the finish. **Trey Gundy**

This I Believe...

Live Your Life with No Regrets

Last year was the worst summer ever. I spent every day staying up until five in the morning on my phone. When I would finally go to bed, I would wake up at three in the afternoon. I regret this more than anything. This was a complete waste of my summer. The one thing in life that we will never know is how much time we have. This is why I believe that life should be lived to its fullest with no regrets.

When I think about living life to its fullest, the first person that comes to mind is my uncle. My uncle's life was cut short a few years ago due to an unexpected and sudden illness, but whenever I think about my uncle, I don't feel upset. This is because I know that if you asked anybody who knew my uncle, "What was so special about him?" everyone's answer would be somewhere along the lines of "He made the most of the time he had." My uncle spent every day doing what he loved with the people he loved. I clearly remember the last day I spent with him. My family and I were staying with him at his house in South Carolina for a week-long trip. On the second day of our trip, my mom got a call from our neighbor. Our neighbor told my mom that our dog was sick, and we needed to come home. I was devastated. My uncle made the best out of our situation and spent our last day together making memories that would last a lifetime.

Thinking back on the times spent with my uncle, I could write volumes about all the things he taught me in the short amount of time we spent together. He taught me to not stress about that one bad test grade or that one bad decision. Those small things aren't going to matter in a few weeks. Instead, he taught me to laugh at my mistakes and move on. I learned to take chances and not to hold back. Many unforgettable memories were made by learning from my uncle. Every day, I try to be more like my uncle, making the most of life and making other people happy while doing so.

This is what I believe. I believe that you should leave this world with no regrets after living a life like no other. I want to be able to grow up knowing that I owned every second that this world could give. From now on, I will live every day as if it is my last.

-Ryan Saville

THIS I BELIEVE... BE CONFIDENT

Confidence is the key to success. I believe in having confidence because having confidence can lead to better self-esteem, which helps improve your overall mental health. I have never had a problem with confidence, but I know a lot of people in my life who do. Confidence is something we need in life. Whether it be for a job interview or presenting something in front of the class, confidence is necessary for success and happiness.

In my previous schools, I recall that many people lacked confidence. Often, people would tell each other how ugly they looked and other mean things. No matter what I tried to tell them, nothing could ever change that mindset. They would especially say insulting comments about stuff about themselves and their bodies. Many people I knew would ask me if they were fat. Being fat was absolutely not a bad thing in my book. It was simply just a way of life. Yet, people treated it as bad. I was disappointed to see that people lacked confidence in themselves.

So, my message for everyone is to be confident. In life, focus on believing in yourself, and life will be good. **Hannah Pak**

This I Believe... Death is a Good Thing

I believe death is a good thing. Yes, you read that right. Death is a good thing. Why? Because Heaven is the best place to be.

I agree that when someone dies it is hard because they are not in our life anymore. Whether the person made a great or small impact on our life, the loss of anyone we know is hard. However, knowing they are somewhere better like heaven and not suffering or sad makes the loss easier to handle. In Heaven, people can rest and be stress-free. They may be there with their mother, father, or grandparents which is a good thing. Death is something you should celebrate, and when someone dies you should honor the life that person had. You should celebrate how that person chose to live their life.

Recently, I had a family friend pass away. She was like a mother to me. I didn't say anything, and I didn't cry. I was just speechless. I didn't know how to respond to news like that. That night I really put some thought into it, and I realized I was devastated. I cried. I've never really cried because I wasn't close with anyone who died before. I thought about her death for a while, and I stopped crying. I realized she lived an amazing life, and I came to the conclusion that you should celebrate those people who you had in your life when they pass away.

You should have these celebrations to honor the person who dies and show others that you will always remember them in your hearts.

Death is beautiful. Death is beautiful because it represents change. I believe that everything needs to have an end because if it didn't, it wouldn't have a beginning. My perspective on death helps me, and I hope others find comfort in it as well. **Zach Jahnke-Becwar**

This I Believe...

Save Our Planet Before It's Too Late

I believe that we need to save our planet before it's too late. The Earth is getting polluted by poisonous gases and fumes made by cars and factories every day. We can stop the Earth from getting polluted by choosing eco-friendly goods. It's really simple, and it is really that important. We only have one planet so now is the time to take care of it.

One way to save our planet is to make better choices. For example, instead of using plastic bags from the supermarket which takes over one thousand years to decompose into waste, buy reusable bags. They are often cheaper, more durable, and roomier! Some other eco-friendly choices you can make is to use sustainable forest paper, solar power, and plant trees. Despite all of the damage we have caused the environment, most of it is reversible. We can restore habitats and return species to them. We can clean rivers, renovate buildings, replenish the topsoil, and replant forests. The Earth offers everything that we need to survive. It provides water to drink and function, air to breathe, and soil to grow vegetation. If we don't find a solution to fixing pollution, it might be hard to

survive in the future. Humans depend on the gifts the planet has provided for them. Therefore, when the resources are in danger, humans won't be able to survive without them. It is one of the main reasons why we should start trying to save the Earth. If the planet ceases to exist, so will all the life on the Earth. We won't survive if the Earth doesn't start healing.

Changing our habits can help save our planet. We can pay attention when we use water. For example, when brushing our teeth, we should turn off the water to conserve water. In addition, people can use tap water rather than bottled water to cut down on packaging and cold water to wash clothes to cut down on heating expenses and fuel.

Today, you can't depend solely on the government to save the planet. Each person should take a small step because every little step counts in saving the world. We should start putting effort in trying to save the planet because it needs our help right now. It's high time we start taking care of the Earth because it has given us unlimited gifts that we have utilized to our advantage. Hopefully, after reading this, you feel the way I do: The time to save our planet is now before it's too late.

Ava Burriesci

This I Believe... Witches Are Real

Most people have heard about the Salem Witch trials. Some people believe these stories, and some people don't. I believe in witches because I saw one. One night my cousins were telling me the story of one witch who would fly in the sky. They said the witch would have like an orange light with them, and that is exactly what I saw one night.

When I was looking out the window one night in Mexico, I saw an orange light in the sky; it came out of nowhere. It wasn't a hot air balloon because it was at night. I was freaking out. Suddenly, I remembered my cousin saying to me that if you see a witch flying in the sky you have to take your shirt off and flip the inside of the shirt outside. Once you do this, the witch would fall out of the sky. I quickly did just that. I guess it worked because when it went behind a pole, it did not

reappear on the other side. The incident left my heart racing. To this day, I still remember that night in Mexico.

My mom also had a close encounter with a witch once. My mom, my grandma, and my grandpa lived in a little house. They were not the richest people back then. They were sleeping when they heard something on the metal roof. My grandma thought it was a cat since they love to climb on the roof tops. When she spotted something long hanging down like a string, she knew that it was a witch. She grabbed a pair of scissors and cut the string which was the witch's tongue. Next, they heard whatever was on the roof rustling around before it flew away. The next day, they went on the roof and saw some blood. It was then that they knew that it had been a witch.

My experience and my mom's story are why I believe there are witches in Mexico. I have heard there are a lot more stories but I only know two. Hopefully, I will never see a witch again. **Jake Morales**

This I Believe...

Stay True to Yourself

Being yourself, something society doesn't like, is like having a superpower. One of my mottos in life is that I won't change myself just so I can be friends with someone. I believe that the more I change to make people like me, the more life will beat me down with insecurity and hardship. If I act differently than I feel inside, I know life will take a turn for the worst. I believe that people shouldn't change who they are to be accepted. Instead, people need to accept themselves for who they are.

If someone tries to change you, just be yourself. If they didn't like who you were in the first place, you don't need to like them. If you are bothered about who you are or what you like just push those feelings off. Take the weight off your shoulders and disperse it to the people who said those things. It is easier to stay true to yourself than it is to change.

When I am not myself, I feel like an empty soul. I believe in myself, and I also believe that anyone can do anything they want and no one should be able to tell them otherwise.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: “To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.” This quote perfectly sums up my point that it is more of an accomplishment to stay true to yourself than it is to change who you are for someone else. So, remember, be yourself...and you’ll be a happy person like I am. **Kiera Cameron**

This I Believe...

Storytelling Makes Life More Fun

Some people call me a storyteller. Anyone who knows me has heard some of the great tales I have told. When I was little, I told many fictional stories. Once, I told my classmates that my house was burnt down by cotton candy. Another time, I told a teacher that I had back surgery after I suffered a bee sting. I like telling stories. I believe storytelling makes life more fun.

Imagine this. You are one of my classmates. We are sitting in class one afternoon. It has been a long day. I tell you about the time that Zach came to my house, and we decided to have tacos for dinner. Little did we know, we were in for it. We toasted the taco wraps, and the toaster caught on fire. We didn't know what to do since it was piping hot. My mom came to the rescue and threw the flaming toaster in my backyard. Some grass caught on fire, but lucky for us, it was raining. And that's why my backyard barely has any grass.

Another story that I have told my friends is about the time I had a whale in my bathtub. Its name was Stewie. I fed him my goldfish because he was hungry. Obviously, that story was not true but as my grandpa says don't let the truth get in the way of a good story.

Some of my other stories were not as memorable, but worth mentioning nonetheless. For example, once I said that I went on a safari and I rode elephants all the way home.

Another time I told a story so crazy that some of the parents and kids in my class contacted my parents. In that instance, the story was that I had a big guitar at my house and my dog had puppies inside of it. The kids in my class all wanted to know how much I wanted for the puppies. I'll give you 1 billion. I said, "No, they are for me. I love my puppies." One day at a birthday party, some kids asked me for the puppies. My mom made me tell all of them that I was lying.

I didn't feel bad about telling people I had puppies because we were just kids. All kids tell stories. My stories just tend to be more elaborate than other people's. Because stories make life more interesting, I encourage everyone to spend some time making up fun stories because like as a storyteller is definitely more fun.

Brian Spellman

This Is What I Believe...

Chickens Can Teach People Many Important Lessons

Sometimes I introduce myself as a chicken farmer. I am not really a chicken farmer; I am really a student, a brother, a son, and many other things. But it sounds more fun to tell people I am a chicken farmer. I believe that chickens can teach people many important lessons, and so I enjoy telling them about these fine feathered creatures and what they've taught me.

Here is a list of the lessons I believe people should learn from chickens:

Number one: Try to be with a flock. Chickens are always together. If one gets in trouble, the others try to help. Chickens are rarely alone. People should be like chickens. People should always try to have friends around them because friends can be very helpful. Friends can support you in times of need, and they can also help you have fun. Without friends, life can be quite lonely.

Another reason to try to have friends is that they can help you through difficult times.

Number two: Try to leave your coop once in a while. When you see chickens, they don't huddle around each other. When given the chance, they just roam around freely. I think people should be like chicken. People should try not to rely on other people for everything. I try to be independent by doing my own work instead of asking for help from someone else.

Number three: Some things look scary... like chickens...but they really aren't. I know a lot of people who are scared of chickens like my sister, some of my friends, and my teacher Mrs. Hanley. Sure, their feet look strange, but once you get to know the chickens you will see their true personalities. Chickens aren't scary. In fact, they are more scared of us than we are of them. If you aren't convinced, try to walk up to a chicken. Chickens will always just run away from you. So, try to be friends with a chicken, and it might be enjoyable for you.

Number four: Always try new things just like chickens try new foods. This ties in with number three but instead of trying something scary, try something new to you. Some examples might include trying new places, foods, clothes, or maybe even new hats. If we never try something new, we won't have that much fun in life.

Number five: Be a leader. I don't have a rooster, but you can see in videos that they act like big, strong leaders and the protector of the flock. What I'm going with here is that we should be like roosters. Act like a leader instead of a follower. We should never follow because this could lead to something bad or something really boring.

As you can see, people can learn a great deal from chickens. I know I have.

Brendan Domaleski

I Believe...Family Members Are People You Can Count On

I believe that family is everything. I have had many experiences in my life that prove this belief.

One experience was when I was about seven years old. I hurt my leg by running into my porch. Quickly, my family came to my rescue to make sure that I was safe.

Another example was when I fell off a zipline while my parents were at a party in New York City. They raced back and came straight to the hospital in Bridgehampton where I was staying.

Another time when my parents were there for my parents were there for me was when I first went to school in Pre-K. I started crying because I was nervous and worried about what was to come. My mom hugged me and said everything is going to be okay. Her comforting words gave me the motivation to go in the class and finish the day.

Family members aren't just there for you in emergencies. They are there for you every day. My family members stick with me all the time. We play together, have fun, a

nd do activities that make me feel better. Even though sometimes they don't want to do what I want to do, they still go out of the way just to help me. My parents always want me to have fun so whenever the weekend comes, they always bring me somewhere to have a fun time. For my parents, happiness means making me and my brothers happy.

Family members are there for you in the good times and the bad times, and I know that without my family I wouldn't be as happy or as successful as I am today.

Allan Rivera



PARTING WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE CLASS OF 2021

This I Believe...

Friends Can Be Like Family

I believe that we all have friends that we see as family. We all have that sister who isn't our sister but is like one. Coming from a family where I have many sisters, I know what having one is like. These people who aren't our family but feel like it: act like us, talk like us, dress like us, and affect us in significant ways. I know I act like some of my closest friends because of the way they act. I even like some of my friends more than my family, so that 100% says something about how friends can be like family.

Emily is one of my closest friends, and I trust her with everything. I feel like I have known her my whole life. She is kind, funny, and an overall great person. She's saved me at times without even knowing it. My mom even treats her like she's her other daughter. I see many things about her in myself, and we share hundreds of inside jokes, matching clothing and accessories, and favorite songs. When

Emily and I go to the mall, we even match our outfits. Talk about best friends. Often, when she comes over to my home, I feel even more at home than I already am. Sometimes, we'll make brownies on a random Thursday and have the time of our lives just hanging out and doing whatever we please. Anyone who knows Emily and me knows that when we are together, we are always having a good time. When I move across the state, I know I'll be at a loss without Emily nearby.

Another friend of mine has had even more of an impact on me than he thinks. A simple conversation with him about our days makes me realize more and more about myself. He's very complex-minded and always knows what to say. He's got a terrific mind but horrible handwriting. He loves to joke around and act sarcastic sometimes, but I know it's in good spirits. We've been through a lot together, and as a result, he's like a brother to me.

When I talk to my friends and look back on how I used to be, I realized that both have changed me so much. When I first came to OLH, I was a completely different person, and these two people have shaped me into the great person I am today. These people make me feel so happy, and I am so glad I have met them.

So, hopefully now you see why I believe that friends can be like family. They open our eyes to things we never noticed. Friends change our lives and bring us so much happiness.

After hearing about my two friends and the impact they had on me, ask yourself: Do you have a friend who you see as a family member? Maybe even multiple friends? I hope you do, because having these types of relationships with people makes life absolutely amazing.

Gianna Mielnicki

THIS I BELIEVE...

BRING BACK PIZZA DAYS

For many years at OLH, pizza was served on Thursdays. My older sister Laura even said that once upon a time, they even served pizza AND soda. Can you believe it? It must have been amazing. This September,

my mom told me that there would be no pizza at OLH this year. I was so distraught. How could the school not offer us those slices of heaven that we'd come to know and love? It is now mid-March as of making this essay. The world is slowly getting back to normal which is why I believe: It's time to serve pizza again.

Back before COVID-19, more than a year ago, my friends and I would sit at the lunch table on Thursdays and eat pizza. The school would buy pizza from different places like Paul's, La Parmigiana, and Francesca's; our favorite pizza was from Francesca's. I remember one time my friends and I were served banana pudding and cookies along with the pizza. My friends didn't like the pudding so they didn't eat it. I ate theirs instead, and I discovered that banana pudding was terrific. That day, I learned that people shouldn't be afraid to try something new.

Other times when we would be done eating in the cafeteria our grade would have to clean up the cafeteria since there would be crumbs all over the place. I remember this one time when I had to take out the trash, and I was shocked at what I saw. Dozens of slices of pizza discarded in the trash. Most were not even touched. I imagined that it was mostly the younger kids who wasted these cheesy slices of deliciousness. I get it. They couldn't eat that much, but I was disappointed to see such waste. I learned another pizza-inspired lesson that day: Don't let great food go to waste.

Another time in the cafeteria was on the final day of sixth grade when we were served ice cream as a side snack along with our pizza. The ice cream tasted great, but there were lots of bugs since it was almost summer time. I spotted a bee outside the window or maybe even a wasp. One thing I remember clearly was that there was a mosquito at our table and there were some people who were scared of it. Eventually, someone swatted the fly, and we were safe. A lesson I learned that day was that you can't enjoy pizza when annoying creatures lurking around.

In conclusion, I know now that we, the Prep 8 class at OLH, had good times at school on pizza days. I also know that, eventually, all good things must come to an end. Despite understanding that, I can't help but think about what might have been. For example, perhaps this year on St. Patrick's Day, we would have been served Shamrock Shakes with pizza.

For the last week of school, we might even have celebrated with a pizza party. And even though I think that we will never enjoy pizza at OLH again as a class, I can savor my memories of all the great times eating pizza in the cafeteria with my friends. And lucky for me, my future high school serves pizza every week.

Daniel Naranjo

This I Believe...

Everyone is a Star

My father has often said, “Kenzie, see the brightest star up there? It’s Grandpa. He’s always watching over you, even when you can’t see him.” He says those words, and it makes me happy thinking Grandpa is there to watch over me. But at the same time, I also think that many people turn to stars. Why? We may never know, but this is what I believe: People become stars to watch over us. They want to protect us. They want to watch us grow if they didn’t have the chance to when they were alive. Yes, we may miss them from time-to-time, but they will always be there...up in the heavens.

When I was younger, my parents would take me on walks to the beach at night, and I would always look up at the stars trying to find the brightest one that I was told was my grandpa’s. While I was looking up, I would think: ‘What if Grandpa isn’t the only one who has a star? What if other people have stars too!?’ I asked my dad, but he didn’t know the answer so I just needed to believe in what I thought. I chose to believe that the stars were people’s lost loved ones, and I thought it would be pretty cool if people chose to be stars so they could stay watching over us.

Believing that people become stars can help people who are struggling. For example, many people may not have someone to watch over them. But if they feel like they have someone if they think or believe that their loved ones are watching over them from above, it may

make them feel better. If it helps people feel happier about themselves and their lives, then it is a good thing to believe in.

Life is short, and people should try to live happy lives. I believe that seeing our loved ones in the stars can help us. After all, we all need someone to watch over us from time to time. So, the next time you are feeling sad or lonely, look up to the stars...and know that you aren't alone.

MacKenzie David

This I Believe...

Mother Nature Has It Out for Me

A few years ago, I went to South Carolina for New Year's to escape the cold winter weather of New York. At first, it was nice and warm. T-shirt and shorts weather, in fact. That was until it started getting colder and colder and colder. Finally, one day, it lightly snowed. In South Carolina, snow is very rare. We thought nothing of it until we turned on the news and discovered that a snow storm was coming in and the entire town would be shut down. The next morning there was record-breaking snow, and the entire state was crippled because Southern states are not prepared for weather like this. It was then that I came to my current belief: Mother Nature has it out for me.

The snowstorm in South Carolina wasn't the only record-breaking storm I've been through. As bad luck would have it, I experienced another one soon after. A couple of months after my trip to South Carolina, I visited Ireland for about a week and a half. There was nothing out of the ordinary during my visit until the last full day I had there. We were in Waterford, a city in the south of Ireland. We had heard on the news and from family that there was going to be a snow storm from Siberia. We proceeded with caution to Dublin, the city where our hotel was located. Our plan was to spend the night there, and then leave for the airport in the morning. Mother Nature had other plans. As we started to head over to Dublin, it began to snow heavily. By the time we arrived at the hotel, there was at least two inches of snow. Not much, but enough to cause problems. Nonetheless, we decided to continue with our

plan, and we spent the night in our Dublin hotel. The next day the mixture of snow and ice delayed our flight for four hours. When we finally boarded the plane, the pilot said he would try his best to get out of here. ‘Try his best’ didn’t sound that convincing. At this point, I knew that Mother Nature hated me.

Eventually, we made it back home, and once there, we received word that we were on the last flight out of Ireland. In fact, no other planes departed from there for over a week!

These experiences and several others have made me realize that Mother Nature despises me. My weather-related worries are so great that I have had nightmares about my future and how Mother Nature may ruin it. Some nights, I dream that a tornado will tear through church on the evening of my graduation. Other times, I envision a blizzard blowing through town on the day of my wedding day. My worst nightmare is that a tsunami will sweep me away while on a vacation. One thing I am certain of is this: I believe that Mother Nature will never be my friend.

Jack Cantwell

This I Believe...

Summer Is Never Long Enough

Summer is never long enough. Every single summer races by like a rocket ship. There is never enough time for fun or to hang out with friends. Summer is the season when people feel their best, look their best, and live their best lives. I know I do, and I bet you do too. I believe that summer is never long enough to accomplish all the things you have in mind.

Now if you’re like me, you begin the summer with a bucket list of sorts. First, I like to go to the beach and play football with my friends. Second, I go bike riding around my neighborhood. Third, I go watch the sunset on the roof with my friends. Fourth, I love to take my dogs for walks on the sand by the cool water. Fifth, I like to go to the carnival with my cousins and friends.

Those are just some of the activities I like to do during the summer. Like everyone, I always want to do as many fun things as possible over the summer. Unfortunately, I never get to do all the things I like to do because summer is so short. If summer was longer, I would take a trip to see my cousins in Ohio or travel to the Bahamas. I'd go fishing every morning and tubing every afternoon with my friends in the ocean. And so much more. But, like many people, I can't do all of those fun activities because summer is too short.

Summer always passes by quickly. I think it is because we are enjoying our lives and hanging out with family and friends. Good times always seem to fly by. Other seasons like fall, winter, and spring go by so slowly because we are in school. During the school year, we always have work to do when we get home from school. Homework means no time to do all those fun things we want to do on our own or with friends. Since much of the year is so busy that leaves only summer as a time when I can enjoy myself and the weather.

In conclusion, I believe that summer should never end. I think that many people would agree with me. Summer is the time to enjoy life and take a break from school. It is also a time to give our minds a break and just enjoy what we love to do. With any luck, this summer will surprise me by passing slowly. I sure hope so! **Cooper Sanders**

This I Believe...

Everyone Has a Purpose

I believe that everyone has a purpose whether it is to become an important figure in society or to help someone else become an important person. Everything around us helps to shape our personality and knowledge. Each year we meet new people, learn new things, and start new hobbies that help us grow as people, and all the interactions and experiences we have throughout our lives changes us in some way.

One person who taught me important things was my grandma. My grandma taught me to be kind to everyone. She taught me to help

others and go after my dreams. She would bring me to preschool and take me out for ice cream. She helped convince my mom to let me start riding horses when I was younger because it was something that she always wanted to do. Without her influence in my life, I wouldn't be the brave and accomplished rider that I am today.

My teachers and friends at school also help me to be the person I am today. My teachers help me learn new things, and my friends are there to help me make memories. I know that without the teachers and my classmates at OLH that my life wouldn't be as fun or as interesting.

There is a plan for all of us. Though it might not be visible to us yet, it might be clearer to us in the future. Sometimes things change for the worse in our lives, but we might look back and realize how lucky we were. Sometimes good things come out of hard times and sadness. Sometimes we might have to go through pain and suffering in order to put us on the right path. The best thing we can do is to look ahead in tough times, and remember that everyone...and everything...has a purpose.

Evelyn Hanley

This I Believe: Spend Your Days Making Memories

I am a lucky guy. Want to know why? I'm lucky because I have a great dad. A dad who spends time with me doing things we both enjoy. The times I spend with my dad fishing are times when we've made great memories. I believe that there is nothing better than making memories with your parents because those memories will last a lifetime. Here's one of our memories.

One day my dad wanted to go fishing so he asked me to go with him. He liked going out for big fish, so he decided we would go about fifty miles out in the ocean. Heading out, our boat was thrown around by the waves as if we were a tiny kayak instead of a sturdy boat. All around

us, fish were jumping out of the water. We kept going until we finally got to a good fishing spot. Like Jesus' disciples did many times, we put our nets in the water and started dragging the hooks waiting for a fish to take the bait. We waited ten minutes, and BOOM! Something got hooked to the line. Unfortunately, it quickly cut the line which is something only a fish with really sharp teeth could do so easily. We didn't think anything of it, and we kept trying to catch a fish. Soon, we felt another pull, and this time, the fish didn't cut the line. It took a while to pull the fish to the boat, but we finally got it up. It was too big for the boat so we had to tie it from the tail and pull slowly so the fish didn't come off. After several hours, we finally arrived at the dock where some friends helped us put the fish on their boat.

We left this massive fish in a big freezer overnight so we could come back the next day and clean it. After that, my dad wanted to go check out the ocean again so we went. When we first got there, the ocean was really calm but moments later it became really choppy. My dad saw a huge fin come out of the water. It was a fin like nothing he had ever seen before. This creature was so big you could see it from miles away. It looked like it was eating tons of fish. My dad wanted to go in for a better look so he moved slowly towards the fish while I recorded. It didn't come out again as if it was camera shy. My dad and I thought it was a really big whale. I don't think anyone has seen a whale that big before. We told the town about it, but they didn't believe us so I showed them the video. They said, "How do we know the video wasn't edited?" I told them they can just trust us on this one.

As you can see, I'm a lucky guy. I have a great dad. A dad who spends time with me doing something we both enjoy. If you don't spend time with your dad or mom, go spend as much time as you can with them before you're too old because you'll never forget the memories you make together.

Michael Gutierrez

This I Believe...

The Supernatural Is Real

I believe in the supernatural. This may be a shocking and uncommon belief, but that's what I believe and I am positive that no one can change my mind. Some people are scared of the supernatural but not me! I embrace it. Once you begin reading about conspiracy theories, you're hooked. Ever since I can remember I always believed that someone or something out in the universe was observing us from a distance.

A few years ago, an old show from the 1990s called the X-files caught my attention. I watched a few episodes, and my life was changed. Let me just say that for an old show, it was entertaining. It got me wondering if the types of things in the show did exist, and I started hoping that I would be the one to discover them. I mean why not. The fact is we just never know what we will see or figure out, and that's why I love the suspense of the supernatural.

For example, when I was younger, I watched a scary movie one Friday night. Afterwards, like any normal kid, I'd be scared of what was lurking in the dark. Now when I watch a scary movie, I recognize what the characters did wrong. I make a mental note not to make their mistakes if I was ever in a situation like theirs. To overcome your fears of the supernatural, you have to learn that you can't always be afraid. Instead, you need to take your fears and fight them head-on.

The supernatural can be anything you create in your mind. Once, there was a catfish found near a nuclear plant with three eyes in Argentina. Somewhere else there was a snake with three heads! What's stopping aliens from popping out of nowhere. In parts of the world, there have been crop circles and strange sightings that have been proved authentic. You may be thinking- 'No Way! All those things were man-made!' Even if they were, are we going to disclaim them when something happens?

Aliens are another reason why I am intrigued by the supernatural. Some people say that aliens are nothing more than a hoax

that was made for a prophet, and others say alien stories are manufactured by someone hoping to gain from the claim. I don't care what other people say. Every day you waste worrying about what others think or say about you, you are missing a once in a lifetime chance to enjoy your life.

I believe you will find the supernatural in your life if you look close enough. Out-of-this-world beings are out there looking and watching us. I am sure of it. Don't live your life by the way others feel or want you to live. It's your life so live it! And if you take away anything from this essay, hopefully, you now see that the supernatural teaches us to believe that anything is possible as long as you BELIEVE.

Seraphia May

This I Believe...

There is No Greater Sport Than Soccer

Twenty million people can't be wrong. That figure represents the number of people who believe as I do- that soccer is the greatest sport of all. In my opinion, soccer is the sport most fun to play, watch, and learn. Personally, I know my life wouldn't be the same without all the great memories I have from my times playing soccer.

I think soccer is fun because there are so many positions you can play like defender, goalkeeper, striker, and many more. Soccer can be both competitive and fun. If your team is very good, you can compete in the World Cup where all the international teams compete against each other in different categories. People also play soccer in the sand. I really like soccer because I get to play with my friends on a soccer team. We can challenge other people to a scrimmage game. Every year, my team and I participate in a tournament with many different teams, and we also go to Hershey Park in Pennsylvania every year to participate in another tournament.

When I play soccer, I feel this rush of energy when I am playing, and I really don't think about anything besides helping my team and winning. There are many different soccer skills that you can learn to

improve your game. For example, there is something that you can do called juggling. It is basically when you keep the ball in the air with just your feet. You have to keep kicking the ball up in the air for as long as you can. I know how to juggle the ball with my feet; in fact, it is one of many tricks I know.

I play for a local soccer team. I always have two practices a week, and it is really fun because we can do different activities and we play scrimmages. When I play against another team, I am happy because at times like that my team feels like one big family. My teammates and I help each other out and cheer each other on. When I play against another team, I play competitively, but I don't try to hurt anyone.

Overall, I really enjoy playing and watching soccer, and I believe that soccer is a sport that many people would enjoy. How about you give it a try?

Sammy Salazar

THIS I BELIEVE... DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

I get down on myself sometimes. Sometimes it's because I received a bad test grade, and other times it happens when I didn't understand something in class. During moments like those, I start to assume that I will never have a good job or be successful in life. I imagine a lot of people think this way because it's human nature to be disappointed when you don't do as well as you'd hoped you would. But what I've come to realize this year is that you can't let challenges or disappointments define who you are. I have come to believe that a positive outlook will definitely take you further in life than letting life's disappointments drag you down. My new motto is: Don't worry, be happy. This new outlook comes from one of the most important people in my life: my grandma.

My grandma, also known as Meema, is the best example of someone who has a positive outlook on life. I have never seen a happier woman. She is never without a smile on her face, and her laugh is

contagious. Although she might not be young anymore, she sure does act like it. Just a couple of years ago, she took my brother and me to Universal Theme park, one of the best places in the world. My brother wanted to go on the ride *The Hulk*, but the thought of riding that rollercoaster petrified me. Instead of just moving onto the next ride, my grandmother offered to go on the ride with him even though it's not meant for people her age. You see, age will never stop my Meema; my grandmother wants to live her life to the fullest. She doesn't look at the negative consequences that could come from riding a roller coaster; she only looks at the positive effects. Age is just a number for her; it doesn't define her. She has a positive outlook towards life, and she does not plan to waste one minute worrying about every little thing.

I admire my grandmother. I wish I could have her positive attitude and worry less. If I were more positive, I would be more open to try new things. I always jump to looking at the negative side of things instead of the positive side. When I am asked to read something in front of a crowd, I get overwhelmed very easily. This is because I am too focused on what could go wrong instead of how well I could do. I think about how I could mess up, or how people might laugh at me. If I were more positive like my grandmother, I would be able to read in front of a crowd without even thinking about it. If I looked at the positive sides of things, trying new things would not be so bad. This year, I have decided that it's time to stop letting life's hurdles and my own insecurities stop me from being who I am.

Everyone needs goals in life in order to move forward with a purpose. One of my goals moving forward is to be more positive and carefree. Being positive towards life may not be easy sometimes, but it is the key to a happy life. My Meema is living proof of that.

Sean Collier

This I Believe...

Some Things Are Just Meant to Be

Life just happens, and I need to accept that. What I do in this life will affect another. And what happens in this life will affect another. That is the cold hard truth; I need to accept that. I need to accept that not everything goes as planned, and I need to accept a change in plans when I am thrown a massive curveball in life. How I respond to those things that change can alter my course for better or for worse. These curve balls can be catastrophic or minor, but whatever they are, they can help shape me into the kind of person I want to be.

That leads me to more interesting questions. Who do I want to be? Do I want to be good or bad? Most people including me would say they want to be good and do their best. When I think about it though, I need to realize that sometimes it is our failures that push us more than our successes. At school and at home, I am challenged each and every day to show the best in myself, but sometimes I stumble. In the end when I stumble, I need to get back up and push myself forward so that I can forge a new path. I also need to recognize that sometimes the path forward isn't always forward. Many times, our path can veer off in different directions as we are tested. This is life.

I feel that everything happens for a reason. Some examples would be natural disasters. Terrible disasters like hurricanes or tornadoes can bring people together. People also united during times of war. Looking back on wars of the past, you can see a sense of unity that brings a country together. Unity is a very important part of healing. Think about this. After surgery, you have a wound sewed up; you wouldn't leave it open. In the same way, you want to unify a group like you want to unify the two sides of the wound.

As I go back and think about the past, I reflect on all the moments that got me here. Analyzing the decisions, I made in the past can help me pick the best possible outcome in similar situations in the future. That is the best reason why things are meant to be. When I can

accept the simple fact that some things are meant to be, that opens up a whole new world for me. It opens up a world of new possibilities, and for all I know- YOLO. With a better understanding of my past and history, I realize that I should not worry about what might be. I should just let life happen and work around any challenges to help myself achieve my best possible outcome. It is a wonderful thing to think about the future like that. And so, for now, I will envision my future like a sea of mystery waiting to flood the present.

Patrick Kamm

This I Believe...

Spending Time with Family Is Fun

I believe doing activities with your family is fun. Skateboarding is an activity that my sister and I enjoy. My sister knows how to do a lot of tricks on her skateboard, but I only know how to do a couple. It is my belief that skateboarding can be a fun activity to do with your friends or family. It is a great way to have fun, get exercise, and meet new people. My sister was taught by Jake, her boyfriend. He has been skating for years, and he is currently teaching me. Learning new tricks is really fun especially when you finally learn how to do them correctly.

Most weekends my sister and I go to a store in Smith Haven Mall to buy new wheels, skateboards, and sometimes stickers to put on the bottom of the deck. After we buy them, we go to Jake's house, and then, we go to either a skatepark or we just skate around town. My sister usually has a lot of school work so I barely spend time with her. The weekend and Wednesdays are basically the only times I get to spend time with her, and skating is a fun way for us to spend it. When she doesn't want to skate, I cook with my dad.

Sometimes on weekdays around 7:00 p.m., I start to make dinner with my dad. I'm not sure why I like to cook but I just find it fun to make food. Sometimes when I make food for my family, I try to add new things to make the meal taste better and more flavorful. When I go to a

supermarket with my dad, he asks me what I think we should make for that day and then he buys the ingredients for the meal. If I have to choose our favorite dinner to make, it would be quesadillas, which we make every Thursday. It's my sister's favorite food as well.

My sister and I also share a love of basketball. We play basketball with our friends and my sister's friends at my house every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. Basketball is my favorite sport to play because it's so easy to learn. It's also a fun way to stay active. Most of our friends are taller than us so playing basketball with them is a challenge. We usually play for about thirty minutes, and then we go to Walgreens to buy some snacks and drinks before returning to play more basketball. After we stop playing basketball, we drop our friends off while listening to music in the car.

Music is another favorite hobby of mine. My mom has put me in guitar, piano, ukulele, and drum lessons for many years because she thinks it's good to know how to play and use multiple instruments. My mom and I spend time together listening to and playing music together. She knows how to play the guitar, so I usually play the piano or drums with her. My favorite instrument would definitely have to be the drums. The drums aren't easy to play because you need to be able to have tempo, and you have to be able to hit the drums at the correct time. You also need to know how to read sheet music.

Even though my mom and I love music, my brother loves it even more. When he hears a song that he likes, he starts dancing and singing to it like he's performing at a concert. He will replay his favorite songs over and over again. When he's not singing and dancing, he likes to ride his bike and play board games with my dad, mom, and me. His favorite games to play with us are *The Game of Life* and *Monopoly*.

Another one of my brother's favorite things to do is go to a waterpark called Kalahari. We go to Kalahari with my dad at least once a year. He has been on every ride there except for two because they are really steep. My brother says that is one of his favorite places to go out in the world. In fact, he asks to go back almost every month and so he has a lot of memories there. As you can see from the stories I shared here, I

believe you should spend time with your family even if you don't want to because that's how you make memories that will last a lifetime.

Bridgette Bernal

This I Believe... Everyone Makes His Own Purpose

Why are we here? Why are we on Earth? What is my purpose? These are the questions that people commonly ask themselves, but does anyone really have the answer? Through my own experiences in life, I believe that I have found the answer. I believe that everyone makes their own purpose.

Now I came across this conclusion fairly recently. It all started when I felt like I didn't really have a reason to be here. I had been pondering this question for weeks on end, and I often spent hours thinking: 'What am I doing with my life that will make me important?' This question plagued me as I sat doing my homework; wasting time playing video games; or even when I was just lying in bed. As much as I tried to distract myself, I couldn't help but think about what my purpose was in life.

So, I did as many other people would do: I asked other people what was their answer to my question. "What is your purpose?" I asked them. But I could never get a straight answer. Then finally, I realized something as I was on my way to an extracurricular activity. That moment is still crystal clear to me. Suddenly, I understood that in the end, you create your own purpose...and with any luck, you meet your goal and become fulfilled. Some people may want to be famous, important, or remembered. Others may chase after money and fame, but you yourself do not need those things to become happy with yourself. What you do need is a purpose. I believe that people should have a greater understanding of this concept.

Too many people spend their lives searching for money, fame, riches, and power. In fact, many of us, from a very young age, are told to strive to become wealthy and famous. This message is implanted in our

brains by our parents and the people around us. I remember even when I was little, people would ask me, “Kai, what do you want to be when you grow up?” And I would usually say, “Whatever makes me a lot of money.” But I no longer think that way. I’ve been thinking about how I want to enjoy my life, I’ve asked friends and family for their opinions, and I’ve come up with my answer. Don't get me wrong, I still want to have money, it just isn't my number 1 priority. I just want to live a life that I can look back on and think about how good it was and how much I enjoyed it.

As a result of this decision, I’ve definitely changed the way that I want to live the rest of my life. When I was more focused on the material aspects of life, I wanted to be an investment banker, and just spend a good twenty to thirty years working at a company before retiring. Though I haven't dropped my wish of being an investment banker, I have decided that I want to do other things besides just throwing myself into my work. I want to become a programmer as well as an investment banker. These two things combined will make me feel fulfilled because they will allow me to merge two dream jobs.

Now, I can imagine my ideal life. I'll be living in Los Angeles with my new friends that I would make there. I'll probably have a few roommates, and we would get along for the most part. I'll spend time coding video games when I get home from my job as an investment banker, and I'll live in a community where I can say that I am truly happy.

I hope to achieve my dream sometime during my lifetime, and it may change as time passes. But I know that as long as I have a purpose, I will be happy and motivated, and I will truly be able to say that I lived my best life.

Kai Ryan

This I Believe...

Use Your Time Wisely

Time. The importance of time can't be underestimated. Time is used for everything. We use it to move around and to know when to do something. Time is very important in our lives because it helps us be organized, and it helps us stay on-track with different kinds of things. I believe that time is everything.

To illustrate my point, I'd like to talk about a movie called *In Time*. It is a very good movie, and everything in it is controlled by time. The whole country is broken up into sections of people with the most amount of time and to people with the least amount of time. Life is dangerous in the film because when you are born you start with one year and the timer doesn't start counting down until you get to twenty-five years old. Once you are twenty-five, you stop growing so what you look like when you turn twenty-five is what you are going to stay looking like for the rest of your life till your time runs out. The only way you can get more time is if you work. The challenge people face in the movie is that you have to pay for anything you need with the time you have, and if the clock reaches zero seconds, you will die.

There are several different sections in the country: the rich neighborhoods where people have the most time and the poor neighborhoods where people have around a week left on their clocks. It is interesting to see how the movie divides society up in that way.

This movie says a lot about life because just like in real life people don't know when their last second in life is going to be. The people have to try to enjoy every moment and not waste time. This film helped shape my beliefs about time. Now I try to use my time differently. My advice to you is this: Enjoy the time you have. Spend it with your family and friends. Don't do anything bad that could make you waste your time. Use your time for everything wisely because every second counts.

Kevin Saa Pacheco

This I Believe ...

Having Good Friends is Everything

Some parents might say, “Friends are temporary; they aren't everything!” My parents say this so often you'd think they were getting paid to say it. They've been by my side for a few years now, and they're the best friends a person could ask for... well, at least two of them! A wise person said to me once, “Quality over quantity” and “Having one good friend is better than having a bunch of unmeaningful friends.” My friends have made my life better, and I am so grateful for them. I have many friends but most of them aren't very close to me, but luckily, I have three good friends who I care about the most.

Gianna and I met around three years ago. Gianna came to OLH in seventh grade, and I'm very glad she did! Gianna and I share many similar things, and we hang out frequently and sit next to each other in class. We've traveled together often, and her parents love me! Every time we hang out, we eat something yummy that we either buy something, make, or bake! Gianna and I are polar opposites on most topics, but what we have in common is what keeps us together. We both love music, and we share many favorite songs. We have matching stuffed animals and matching jewelry. I am indecisive, timid, and scared of many things. On the contrary, Gianna is decisive, bold, and brave. She is also very competitive. She always makes my day better, and wherever we need to talk, we have conversations about many things. Gianna is a special friend because we share many similar interests and opinions.

Another great friend is Estefania. I met Estefania when I was a baby so we've been best friends for many years. We're living proof of the expression 'opposites attract.' We're both so indecisive, and we never agree on things. I'm not sure how she puts up with me, but one thing I know for sure, we both love *Just Dance*. Every time we hang out, we end up sweating because we do so many *Just Dances* in a row! I love her

with all my heart. Even though he's in a different high school than me, we still call, text, and meet up all the time! We've even made plans for the future. We intend to be neighbors and have kids at the same time. I can't wait.

Lastly, there is Jacob. Jacob showed up in first grade. He was the new kid in Tuckahoe, and I was determined to be his friend. He was Colombian, so we could talk about many topics together. He was only there for about two years, until one day, he left without warning. About two years later, I was shadowing at OLH, and I recognized that face. It was him! I was so glad I was reunited with him and up to this day I'm very happy we're friends. He always makes me laugh, and we can discuss many current events. We do argue sometimes especially when we talk about the economy, politics, religion and racial problems in the world. We both have strong opinions and love to argue. I'm sad we're going to different high schools next year.

These friends and many more are so important to me. They're my everything. I trust my friends and love them with all my heart. They've made my life ten times better, and I hope I've made their life better too.

Emily Tobar-Fonseca

This I Believe...

Time is Everything

Time is a mischievous thing. Seconds turn to minutes, which turn to hours, which turn to days, and so on. Although I am still young, it feels like yesterday that I sat down for my first day of kindergarten. Time passes so swiftly that you don't realize it. A common phrase is: "Live while you're still young." I like to interpret this as to make use of your life while you can. However, at any given moment, you are the youngest you can be. So why wait for the mystical notion of time to pass you by?

This I believe: We shouldn't wait until the last minute to take advantage of the time we have because before you know it, it could be gone. I believe that we should make use of the time we are given.

Before death, people will often get a burst of energy. They will be at peace and have good spirits. The burst of energy is not them getting better; it is their last effort to live. I realized this when my close neighbor was suffering from cancer. She was composing a text to me about how she was feeling better and how she was soon going to be returning from the hospital. Later that day, we received a call from her sister announcing that she had passed. Prior to her passing, my sister and I spent more time with her learning that our time would be ephemeral. I took for granted the fact that she would always be there and stopped visiting before I found out she was diagnosed. I regret this. During my visits in her final months, I learned so much about her life and tried to lift her spirits. Looking back through all of the years I had known her, I realized we had the best experiences when she was almost gone.

Soon, my time at Our Lady of the Hamptons will come to an end. As I recollect on some of my best OLH memories, I think about what I could've done differently. I used to think of school as a chore. However, recently, I came to the realization that my school is a community and place to nurture growth in its students. My education is very important to me, and I had never fully realized how fortunate I am to have amazing teachers and opportunities. As my days here come to an end, I plan to utilize the opportunities given and the friendships I have made in the community. You never know what you are missing until it is gone, and I don't want to miss out on this.

The time we have on Earth is evanescent. We often think about what could've been, instead of what could be. Taking advantage of the time you have and savoring special moments will create memories that stay with you for the rest of your life. As my neighbor did, as I will, and as everyone should: *Carpe diem.* **Abigail Curran**

This I Believe...

Live in the Present

I am constantly trying to change the past and plan for the future. Call me a modern-day Sisyphus. I've been like this for as long as I can remember but this year everything became more difficult for the part of me that wants to control every aspect of my life. Many times, I don't even stop to think about or enjoy what is going on at that exact moment in time. Because of different things that I experienced this year, I came to realize that time is passing me by. This revelation led to a new way of thinking. I now believe that the purpose of life is to live in the present.

As I mentioned earlier, this year presented me with many challenges. Going to middle school during a pandemic, applying to high schools I couldn't visit, and prepping for entrance exams. Everything was new, and nothing was easy. I spent months studying for my SSAT for multiple hours a day. I was so busy planning for this test that was coming up in the future, so nervous about something I could not control no matter how hard I tried. When it came time to take the test, I was prepared. I had studied for the SSAT more than anything prior in my lifetime; my determination was inordinate.

The three-hour test begins with a writing sample where you must craft an essay in twenty-five minutes on one of the topics given. One of my choices was: "Do you think that it is more important to use the past or plan for the future?" I began viciously typing away about planning for the future, anxious for the rest of the test. However, when it came time for me to explain my reasoning, I had nothing; no reason that made lingering in the past or preparing for the future seem like an adequate use of time.

This experience made me question my day-to-day life: *'What percent of my day is spent ruminating and not living in the here and*

now?' I knew the answer was the majority of time. However, my past experiences had also led me to realize that I do not enjoy the occasion until it is a memory. For example, my years at OLH have been nothing less than extraordinary. Still, the past nine years have passed me at a blink of an eye. I remember kindergarten like it was yesterday, but for my entire OLH experience, I have been ruminating or living in the past.

It just hit me a month or so ago that I will be leaving this year, and for some un-apparent reason, it was absolutely shocking. How was it possible that this young girl who Sister Kathy once carried into school because she couldn't bear to leave her mother was now graduating from eighth grade? Regrettably, I realized the time had passed so quickly because rather than enjoying my time in school, I was always looking at the future or the past.

Although I would never give up the experiences I've had, I wish I had lived in the present more. At least, now I know that the purpose of life is to live it, and I plan to do just that from now on. **Maxine Boeding**

THIS I BELIEVE... STRIKE A BALANCE

We have all heard the story: "The Tortoise and the Hare." A tale of patience and consistency versus aggression and arrogance. In the familiar fable, the hare was very quick. He boasted about his speed, while the tortoise was slow and humble. The two went on to compete in a race. The hare started out ahead and took a big lead. The tortoise kept on going slowly but surely. The hare was so arrogant that he decided to take a break. Soon, he fell asleep. While the hare was asleep, the tortoise kept on moving forward step-by-step. Over time, he passed the hare and won the race. His victory, in my opinion, highlights the importance of possessing patience and determination. The moral of this story has become one of my personal mantras. I believe all people need to live a balanced life like the tortoise; a life that comes from being patient and focused.

Most of my time, I am running around like the hare. In my life, there is never any free time spent doing nothing. I am not saying this is a good thing. In fact, sometimes I wish I could just have some time to sit back and relax. Being involved in so many activities can be overwhelming. However, as a result of my involvement in many extracurricular activities, I have become a well-rounded person. I have also found a good balance between spending time doing the things I have to do and time doing the things I enjoy. Learning to balance everything and still be successful has helped me in everything I do.

As illustrated in the fable, the hare is focused on only one thing—his speed. In some situations, his speed helped him be successful, but as he learned, it wasn't the key to winning everything. His great speed wasn't enough to win the race. On the other hand, the tortoise's balance and consistency led to him reaching the pinnacle. I believe that no matter what anybody is trying to do, whether they want to play professional sports or become a doctor, they will only reach the top if they have a strong base and balance.

When you're as busy as I am, eventually, all your activities work together to help you improve and excel. Doing extra things at school and trying your hardest will not only help your future-self earn jobs and acceptance into good colleges, but it will also help with things you are doing now in your everyday life. In sports, for example, when you have a good education, you have a huge advantage against ninety percent of the people also vying for an open spot. This is solely because you have a better understanding of how things work, how to play the game, and even how to determine the best angle for a pass.

I am lucky. I have found a way to do all the things that I enjoy because I believe that finding a balance is key. I know doing all of these activities has greatly helped me, and I am very thankful that I have the resources to do them. Just like the tortoise in the story, I know I need to find a balance that works for me because it will most definitely help me reap rewards in the end.

Christian Duggal

This I Believe...

There Has to Be a Cure for Cancer

Cancer has had a devastating effect on people all around the world. Currently, scientists and health care workers cannot seem to find a cure for those who are afflicted with this terrible disease. However, I think there is hope on the horizon. The speed with which the new Covid vaccines have rolled out makes me believe that a cure for cancer is within reach. I believe with my whole heart that a cure for cancer will be the shining light at the end of this pandemic.

I have lost family members due to cancer, and many friends have lost loved ones too. Cancer has made lives more difficult. When a loved one has cancer, it feels like having a boulder resting on your ankle. I have had a few family members pass away from cancer. It has been tough for my family just as it has for so many other families.

Cancer has been around for ages and scientists and healthcare workers have been trying to wrap their heads around how to find a cure for cancer. Tremendous amounts of money have been spent trying to cure this dreadful disease. I believe in the future there will be a cure. The new mRNA technology and vaccines that have been developed in response to the Covid 19 virus are remarkable. The scientists who developed these vaccines surely can do the same for cancer if they work hard. Hard work makes everything possible.

For example, Elon Musk created SpaceX because he was determined to get to the moon. He wanted to make great discoveries with his team. As a result of great effort, time, and money, he was able to make it to the moon. Musk used research and learning from his failed experiments to find a greater and stronger way to travel to the moon. His success is a sign of what people can do if they work hard.

Just as Elon Musk worked and strove for a better way to solve problems, scientists can do the same to find a cure for cancer. Once they find a cure for cancer this world will be a better place everyone. People won't have to worry about their family and friends getting sick and

passing away. Until then, I will keep on believing that the pandemic will pave the way for a cure and a beautiful future for all. **Hunter Halsey**

This I Believe...

Pictures > Words

An age-old saying goes “A picture is worth a thousand words.” This expression is one of my personal favorites. I’m not saying this because I plan to do all my work in pictures rather than write anything ever again. Instead, I believe each photo tells a story that simple words may never be able to convey as beautifully. For me, I feel the true feelings and expressions that someone is trying to convey can only be shared through images.

Take history, for example. The best way to learn from history is to see it. Yes, words can tell you what is happening, but images make you feel what is happening. The whole picture is revealed, not just what is being created in your mind. When you look at historical photos, you see all sides of the story and understand the true situation at hand in all of its complexity. For example, when I see the expression on a person’s face, I can understand the severity of the situation. The information I receive from one look at their face is more than a book can describe. When I see an image, I am no longer limited to what I am told, and suddenly, I am able to put everything together like a puzzle. For me, seeing really is believing.

The same goes for my family members. In my immediate family, we have a simple, yet important tradition. When one of my siblings graduates from college, we make a video of them using pictures of them from day one until that very year they are graduating. Since I am the youngest by a very long shot, with almost twenty years between my oldest brother and me, I never really got to see my siblings growing up.

However, those simple videos give me something even greater than any story my parents...or my siblings... could tell me. These videos

give me an idea of who they were growing up and the types of people they were on the inside and outside. I can see who they were friends with; what they enjoyed; and what some of them look like without a beard. (Ahem...not to name names, but Kevin.) I may have been told similar stories of the same event, but they were never the same to me as the picture. The photos let me see the expressions they had and the emotions they were feeling. Looking at all those videos, I was able to truly understand how they felt. I felt a connection to them and understood who they really were and their emotions at the time, even if I despise them completely and with every ounce of my being sometimes.

“Seeing is believing” and “believing is seeing.” I believe that without pictures or visual representations, we would be lost in confusion and delusion. We would not be able to understand the truth of the moments we are remembering or learning about in school. Our ability to see and understand other people’s emotions makes us who we are today and helps us connect with others, and videos like those my family makes are the perfect illustration of this fact. **Jack Leonard**

This I Believe:

Get Yourself a Good Plant...Or Two

There are many types of plants in the world. In fact, there are currently about 391,000 plant species known to man. They survive in different environments, and some require more care and attention than others. Plants have different needs, and good plant owners can meet those needs. But it isn’t only plants that benefit from having human companionship and care. People benefit from plants as well. From my own experience with plants, I have come to believe that everyone needs a plant in their lives.

In the plant world, there are some beginner plants that are easier to care for than others. Here’s a few: pothos, spider plant, and snake plant are good choices. Many people own several plants, and they are good at keeping the plants happy and healthy. I have tried owning succulents; I

failed. I always forgot to check on them or water them when needed, and I didn't give them enough sunlight.

Scientists say that plants can increase mental and emotional health. I think that's really cool. Plants can also make people feel different just by looking at them. Personally, plants make me feel very happy, relaxed, and overall, very positive. Having an indoor plant garden is a great way to improve your emotions in a positive way, and it is something everyone can try at home.

There are many things you can do with plants, specifically flowers. You can make flower crowns, bouquets, flower gardens, or grow and sell them. I enjoy going around town with my friends during the summer. We see a lot of flower boxes, and they all look very pretty. All seasons of the year, flowers can bloom in milder climates. Pansies are one of those flowers. Personally, my favorite flower is the lily of the valley.

In conclusion, there are a ton of great reasons why plants are not only important to the environment but also to humans. So, I believe that you should get yourself a good plant...or two...and see how much happier you can be.

Fiona Merola Stisi

This I Believe...

Honesty is the Best Policy

We all know the story of Pinocchio. Pinocchio was a wooden puppet who dreamed of becoming a real boy. He is well-known for his tendency to prevaricate which causes his nose to grow. His ever-elongating nose is his great tell.

Reflecting on my experiences with people in my own life and thinking about some well-known historical figures, I have come to believe this: Life would be easier if everyone was as transparent as Pinocchio. If everyone's true intentions were as clear as Pinocchio's, I know my life would be much easier especially at home.

My brother is a great kid, but sometimes I just don't trust him. He is the king of fibs and tall tales. Sometimes these fibs and tall tales start to form into lies. Sometimes he will say I heard this was happening or you are going here; half of the time, it is a bunch of baloney. As a result of these fibs, I have started to ask him to prove his honesty. "Do you swear?" is a question I find myself asking him all the time. This is because I just can't trust him. What he says one day could be something completely different the next. Unfortunately, unlike Pinocchio, sometimes there is really no way to tell if he is lying. Sometimes he will not make direct eye contact, but other times, he stares me down. On some occasions, he is fidgety; other times, he is as still as a rock. My inability to determine whether he is being truthful has dragged me into countless interrogations; some of which involved compelled pledges of loyalty. Most of the time, he denies everything, and because he isn't Pinocchio, there is no way to prove he is guilty.

This brings me to another example. I call it: "The Story of Patrick." My friend Patrick has Pinocchio-tendencies. When he lies, you can see it on his face. He tries to hide it, but it is too obvious. When he's lying, he does things like roll his lips, avoids eye contact, and starts to giggle. These characteristics make it easy to know when he is lying. Patrick doesn't lie all the time. Sometimes he can be very honest which is what I like about him. But sadly, his honest nature is fleeting. When Patrick is honest and sincere, he looks me in the eyes, wears a straight face, and keeps a strong composure. Everything about him in these moments embodies respect and trust. Lately, he is getting better at telling the truth more, because I bring it to his attention when he is lying. I believe that if you don't bring people's faults to their attention, they won't change. Thanks to me, Patrick is on the road to becoming an honest and genuine person. With any luck, he will thank me one day...and he'll mean it.

In conclusion, no one is honest all the time. Some people are easier to figure out that they are not telling the truth; others not so easy. Genuine people are hard to come by, that's why being one is even harder...and why I believe people should strive to be more honest with everyone they meet.

William O'Leary

This I Believe...Family Is Important

Family is the most important thing in life. Your family will always be there for you, no matter what. When I say family, I am not just talking about the people who are blood-related. A family can be so many things, and your family is not just your mom, dad, brother, and sister. A family is that group of people who make you laugh when you're sad. The people who are always there to celebrate your little victories. It's the people right by your side every step of the way.

I have been lucky enough to have many people surrounding me my whole life. Always supporting my dreams and trying to lead me on the right path. The comfort I received from each person is what raised me into the person I am today. From when I scraped my knee on the playground to when I watched them get called into Heaven, my family has always been there to wipe my tears for me. I try my best for them; I want them to be proud of me. I may not know much, but this much I do, that even if I mess up, they will still love me the same just as Jesus would.

Your friend circle changes throughout your lifetime but family will still be there, the whole way or so we hope. We don't exactly know how long someone will be a part of our life. We hope it's forever, but that's not always the case. But sometimes, someone you love isn't meant to be there your whole life. God takes people from us...sometimes too soon. These losses are meant to teach us a lesson.

We coexist with millions of people though we may only see the same few people each day. The more time we spend with certain people, the more we become like them or they become more like us. I spend lots of my free time with my friends because they are a very big part of my life. My friends are the people that I will take pictures with now and look back at them when we are older. The memories that I make with them will be remembered for years to come. These friendships that I treasure most feel like the relationships I have with family members.

God gave us family so that we never have to be alone, and he brings people into our lives who feel like family to us. Such simple things in the world make us happy. Every once in a while, we could all use a warm hug or a good laugh, and luckily because of God, we have families and friends to be there along our side.

KathrynGrace Blangiardo

This I Believe...The Milk Goes in Last

I believe that cereal should go in the bowl first, and then the milk. I think this because when you put milk in first, the cereal will float on top, and soon it will start to spill out. When you put the cereal in first, the milk will pour over it, and the cereal will get wet and be ready to eat. To me, there is no other way to enjoy cereal and milk. However, as I get older, I realize that there are many controversial topics that people discuss, debate, and ultimately don't agree on. I have learned that when you don't agree with someone it is important to agree to disagree. By agreeing to disagree, you avoid unnecessary arguments and losing friends.

My opening example comes from a real argument that I had with my friend Nick. One weekend, Nick slept over at my house. During breakfast, Nick asked me a question. He said, "What do you put in first: the milk or the cereal?"

I said, "The cereal obviously." A massive argument ensued over which one goes in first, we kept going back and forth on who is right and wrong. After debating this for a while, we realized it really didn't matter because we understood that people believe in different things and that's okay.

This second example comes from an argument I once had with my cousin. Out of nowhere, she asked me, "Are you pro-life or pro-choice?"

I said, "Pro-life."

She gave me a nasty look and said, "Of course, you are."

We started arguing and debating over what was better pro-life or pro-choice. Eventually, we decided that there wasn't really a "better." Everyone has their own beliefs, and they can believe whatever they want. It's a right we have in this country.

All my examples have related to the same overall philosophy. They are all debates over beliefs that end in arguments. But in the end, the right way to handle these situations is clear. We should respect other people's beliefs and agree to disagree. After all, isn't life more interesting living in a world filled with different opinions and beliefs? I believe it is.

Daniel Ospina

This I Believe...Share What Makes You Interesting

I am an individual who is undeniably captivated by quite trivial things. Dare I say having an enthralling perception of this world is one of my most extraordinary qualities. A person's idiosyncrasies form the core of their nature, the very thing that sets us apart from each other. I choose to welcome those unorthodox aspects of myself because it's who I am. I believe that people should share the things that fascinate them whether it be an element of yourself or the world around you. Embracing and expressing the things you find genuinely brilliant will define you as a person, and elucidate you as one of a deeper cognitive consciousness.

Personally, I think everyone has their own complexities and distinctions that contribute to their personality. I, for one, have a deep appreciation for the arts that many people may not share. I'm one who'd rather pour over a book instead of watch a TV show, or sit on a windowsill and study the New York City buzz which I have done before. The most prominent memory I have of being truly intrigued by others was one day during the summer when I was with my best friend. We were swimming in the bay at sunset, and I realized, as I watched my

friend splash and swim around, what a euphoric moment it was and how truly unforgettable that feeling was.

There are endless things that people love in this world. Some may feel something normal like loving your mom, and others, the small things in nature like how dew drips off leaves in the morning. Still others like me may hold dear that one fond memory of swimming in the pool during a rainstorm with your sister. Whatever moments you cherish in life, just be sure to share them with others. **Brynn Thayer**

This I Believe...Take Care of Your Friends

Maybe you have watched it, maybe you haven't, but Naruto is a famous anime that is one of my favorites. The story of Naruto is based on the friendship of two individuals, Naruto and Sasuke. Sasuke, grieving at the loss of his family and clan who his older brother had murdered, is completely filled with bloodlust and leaves the village in search of revenge. Sasuke, who had once been friends with Naruto, now hates him for trying to bring him back to the village and so he walks down a dark path of death. Naruto desperately tries to bring Sasuke back from a life of revenge. Through many battles, Naruto saves Sasuke from his grief and revenge and brings him back to the village. In this story, Naruto goes out of his way to save and help his friend, even if the one he is saving his friend from wasn't necessarily a person, instead rather an emotion. I believe that friends are very important and you should always help your friends no matter what the cost.

In this video game I play called *Shindo Life*, friendship is very important. In the specific game mode I play, the only way to survive is to have teamwork. In this game mode, there are different teams and different teams can knock you out and take you and your friends as war prisoners or hostages. When this happens, you have to make it your sole

purpose to rescue the friend and bring down the enemy; however, this can't be done alone. You have to work as a team with other players to save your friend, and then work as a team to kill the enemy. I have played games where teamwork was non-existent because the other players weren't friends. As a result, we ended up getting picked off one-by-one and getting caught by the other team.

I have made great friends playing this game. My friends and I trust each other, and we always look out for each other as teams. Even when I get taken as a hostage, my friends always come to back me up and I do the same for them when they are taken. We even look out for our HP bars, or the amount of health we have, to make sure we aren't losing any because if we are, it means trouble. Low health bars mean we need backup, and we don't even need to communicate with each other to know that.

I have made a ton of friends in this game. I often play a lot, so many times the different groups of friends I made join my game. Since there is a limited amount of people that can be in a team, another friend group joined the game as a different team. We formed an alliance, which is great; however, one of my friends attacked my team and started a fight. I couldn't take one of their sides because I am friends with both of them, so I decided to stay neutral in the fight and try to stop it at the same time. My friend on the other team did not approve of this, and not only started trash talking my team, but started trash-talking me. This was not okay, and this friend quickly became an ex-friend. Even the friends on my team saw how toxic my ex-friend was being. If people can't handle me staying natural because I'm trying to watch out for everyone, then that's fine with me. Clearly, I couldn't do anything because both of them were my friends. Before the fight, I expressed that we were on different teams and that we would be in an alliance. Everyone agreed to these terms; however, they did not respect that in the game, so we annihilated them.

Just as the story of Naruto and Sasuke, I believe that in life, friends are important to have. To keep a friend, you must have their back and they must have yours. Trust is an important aspect of life; however, it is not easily gained. Trust is given to friends who are worthy of trust.

Loyalty is the base of friendship. When you and your friend have each other's backs, everything becomes so much easier. If you always help your friend when they need it, you will have help when you need it. In life, I believe that strong friendships built on trust and having each other's backs are the most important kind of friendship.

Willow Dubrovin

This I Believe...

Sunsets Solve Everything

Life would be pointless without witnessing a gorgeous sunset every night. I consider a day without seeing a sunset a day wasted. Until the day I die, I will always smile when the sky turns pretty colors. I believe a sunset a day can keep all problems away.

Whenever I am stressed, sad, or upset, I go to watch a sunset. Whether the colors are pink and purple or blue and yellow, it will always fill my heart with happiness. If I could think of the most beautiful sunset, I've ever seen has to have been my first night in Rincon. The waves were crashing, and you could see the sun slowly setting behind a small island pretty far out. It almost looked like a volcano. The pretty clouds changing colors filled the sky. It was magical.

It's amazing to me how beautiful the sky can look sometimes. When the sunset is kind of cloudy, the colors become blue and yellow. You can see the sun peeking through the clouds, almost like a shining light.

After my grandpa passed on, my family and I went on a trip. As my mom and I watched my brother surf, the sun began to set. It looked like a spotlight on my brother. The sun was glaring through the clouds and beaming right on to him. I believe that was my grandfather. It is moments like this that make me love sunsets so much.

I think we can all agree watching something beautiful and peaceful calms us down. To me, the most beautiful and peaceful thing

you can do is sit to enjoy a sunset. Whether you are watching it from your roof or from the middle of the ocean, you will never regret watching the sun set on the day. Most of all, watching sunsets reminds us of how appreciative we should be for all God's gifts. So, take my advice...and take in a sunset today.

Elena Sullivan

This I Believe...Everyone Can Live Peacefully

Everyone knows the infamous terrorist attack 9/11 that occurred on September 11, 2001. On that day, nineteen militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda hijacked four passenger planes operated by two major U.S. air carriers and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the World Trade Center in New York. This attack happened because al-Qaeda held naive beliefs about the U.S. in the run-up to the attacks. What they did was wrong and criminally sinful too. But this I believe: There would have never been this catastrophic event or many others if people learned how to co-exist peacefully. Even if people have different beliefs about things, they should try to get along. People need to learn to live peacefully.

One time, when I was in sixth grade, there was a fight between two kids in the cafeteria. (I don't remember their names.) They fought over the stupidest thing ever; some debate about whether one person was better than the other at a game, and then I guess they said that "you're not good" to one person and that's what sparked a fight. But the point is that they could have both said they were both good at the game, instead of competing about it and getting into a fight. At the end of the day, both sides lose when it comes to a fight.

Another time when I saw people fight was when I was twelve years old, and I was having a laser tag birthday party. In the middle of the laser tag game, my friend on my team said to my other friend on the

second team, “Well, at least I have a dad.” That statement made my friend mad, and soon the two started cussing at each other. This was the outcome of two people fighting with each other, when they could have had a healthy game full of thrill and fun, instead of toxicity and hate. After that happened, my friend (from my team) got in trouble with his parents and started crying. He said he would never do that again, which I hope is true. Then my other friend also apologized for making more of a scene, but I forgave him because I probably would be the same way too if someone said something about the loss of a loved one.

This is the story of what I believe. I believe there shouldn't be conflict among or between people because like I said before all it does is bring pain, anger, and sadness to both sides. People naturally want to be happy and live in peace. It's time we start showing it. **Paul Parash**
Prep 8

This I Believe...Setting Goals Is Important

Mark Cuban is one of the richest immigrant Americans today with a current estimated net worth of 4.4 billion dollars. Mark Cuban lived out the American dream by setting an “unconvincing” goal that with time and hard work, he achieved. His grandfather emigrated from Russia, and his family found themselves in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mark would go door-to-door and sell garbage bags to earn the money to buy new shoes. He continued to work toward his goal, even when in Mark's younger life, it may have seemed to be a small goal. However, in Mark's case and many other people's, once he accomplished that one small goal, he continued to make even more challenging ones to aspire to achieve.

I believe that everyone should set goals to inevitably achieve through timely work. I personally believe that I have experienced many influential moments in my life, whether on a smaller level or a larger one, because of the goals I set and met in my life. Some goals I set for myself, and some were goals others had in mind for me. For example, the

decision to move schools was a decision out of my jurisdiction, but I believe it was for the better of my education.

I also think that people should find ways to make their life situations better for themselves as well as those around them. Often this means making tough decisions, but people should never be comfortable something that could be made better through more effort.

One significant life change that I experienced was my move from Ukraine to the United States when I was younger. It wasn't my decision to do so, but I do believe that it was the best decision for my family at the time. Moving to America meant more opportunities for our family. It meant reaching for the "American dream." The move included making hard decisions and working harder than accustomed to for my parents, all for the pleasure of generations to come. I am glad they made that decision for me and my family.

Another example of how setting goals can change your life for the better is how doing "little things" for other people can change your life and other people's lives. I personally have put more effort into doing small acts of kindness for random people I encounter in my life in the hope of making their lives better in even the slightest way. Recently, I have held the door for people and helped people with small tasks they have to do. Helping others makes everyone happier, but in order to do so, you have to set goals to make time for others.

Mark Cuban is one example of how setting a goal for can lead to future success. With his hard work, he has made a name for himself and his family. Diligence can turn nice shoes to 4.4 billion dollars in net worth. My family made a life-altering decision to move to the United States to help our family. People should always be willing to take astounding risks to help others. So, the next time you are faced with the chance to improve your life or the lives of others, take it.

Jacob Warden

This I Believe...Surround Yourself with Friends

True friends are hard to find. A new friend could be the kid sitting next to you in class, or someone you haven't even met yet. Once you find a true friend, you know you have found someone you can always count on and lean on when you need someone. You may lose friends, and then find new ones. You may have everything in common with one friend but not with another, but you can always find a friend in life. I believe that you can always find friends no matter where you are in life.

In the summer of 2016, I moved from Cranford, New Jersey to Sagaponack, New York. When I moved to New York, I had to leave all my friends behind. I could only keep in touch with my best friend. My best friend and I were very young, and neither of us had phones which made it hard to communicate. We had a plan to FaceTime on Friday nights; I would go on my iPad and she on her mom's phone. We found it difficult to find a time when we could both talk. After about a year, we lost touch altogether. We had many of the same interests, and I wondered if I would ever find a friendship just like it. As quickly as I had lost old friends, I made new ones just as fast. Luckily, I found new true friends that I know I could count on.

Some days I missed my old friends, and at first, I didn't know if I would ever find new friends. Eventually, in time I found new friends, and I knew that I would be able to count on them. I found similar interests with my new friends, and even new ones. One of my friends loved Harry Potter, just like me, and we would always talk about it. The next summer after I moved, we went to Harry Potter camp together, we carpooled and we even went to lunch after. Harry Potter camp was only half a day and a week long, but we still liked it. We even saw another classmate of ours.

Another new interest I found with my friends was reading. In sixth grade, I found a friend who loved to read, and we became very good friends. My friend had read all of the Divergent books that year. As

much as I personally didn't like the Divergent series, I finished the whole Percy Jackson series that year. Just so you know, that's five different books in a year.

Soon, I met another friend that provided me with more new interests, and one of them was horseback riding. I met a new friend in seventh grade, and we became very good friends throughout the year. My friend has won many awards and ribbons for horseback riding, and some weeks she even rides every day. I tried horseback riding in Montauk one year with my brother. I thought that it was fun but didn't completely enjoy it, and I don't think I could ever do it competitively, but maybe I would do it again with my friend.

I believe that it is always possible to find a friend and you can never have too many. You may not have all of the same interests as your friend, but you try new ones. With a friend, you can do new things you never would have without your friend. No matter where you go, no matter who you may find, no matter who you are, you can always find a friend whether it's now or later, forever or a day, there is always a friend for you.

Sofia Patrone

This I Believe...

Centipedes are Terrifying

Everyone is afraid of something. Whether spiders make your skin crawl or snakes cause your heart to race, you are not alone. No one is fearless. Almost five percent of the population fears bugs, including me. For me, the one thing I firmly believe is that centipedes are terrifying.

A few years ago, I was camping with my family in Montauk, New York. Throughout my week at the beach, I had seen snakes, spiders, and all other types of scary things, but nothing had really terrified me yet. Everything changed on my final night. I can recall perfectly how everything was so dark. The only light I had was a dim lamp that

illuminated just a tiny area around the door of the small bathroom. The previous six nights before had been uneventful. The quiet chirping of crickets and the distant sound of crashing waves had lulled me gently to sleep each night. On the seventh night, as I finished brushing my teeth and drying my face, I walked out the creaky door. As I walked out of the compact building, I expected nothing to happen. I waited for the rest of my family to finish what they had to do so we could walk back from the bathrooms just like we had on the way there.

As I waited, I stared off into the distance. Then I glanced back on the wall adjacent to the dimly lit door and saw something scurry across the narrow spotlight. I was startled by the realization that I wasn't alone, and I waited for this mystery creature to come back into the miniscule field of view. Suddenly, one leg after the other came into view. After I counted eight legs and saw that there were still more, I knew something was wrong. I was immediately aware that I was in the presence of something horrible. Seeing this vile creature terrified me more than any horror movie ever could. I ran back to my campsite away from what I now know to be a "House Centipede." These alien-like arthropods have thirty legs, two of which are venomous. House Centipedes aren't something to joke about.

Years later, I discovered that my fear of centipedes was scientifically known as Scolopendrophobia. Since my incident at Montauk, I have had many other experiences with this terror. One frightening moment in particular was the moment when I discovered that my run-in with centipedes wouldn't involve just one isolated incident. Another frightful encounter took place on a hot August day. When it started, it was another summer day. I was sweeping the floor in another dark compact building except this time, my experience was in a shed. In the corner of the room, there was a pile of dried leaves. As soon as I touched it with my broom, about twenty tiny centipedes slithered out of the pile and scurried away. I screamed louder than I ever have, and since then, I have not even thought about going back into that shed. To be honest, I don't think I ever will.

While some people may share more life-changing beliefs, this is mine. I believe that nothing is more terrifying than those miniature

snakes with exoskeletons and legs. Some of the most terrifying experiences I've had in my life were with centipedes, and I hope that my future doesn't not include any other scary encounters with these insects because if it does, I know just how I'll react. **Chase Rodriguez**

This I Believe...The Best Memories Are Made with Family

Family members are important to me in so many ways. When my family is together, the best things happen. Whether it is a birthday party or a family reunion, my most special memories have been with my family. I believe that the best memories in life are made with family.

One of my favorite family memories comes from the summer of 2015. My whole family was going to Mexico. It would be the first time we were going to be together in a place that wasn't Colombia. It was all a surprise for me because I thought it was only going to be my mom, sister, dad, and myself, but when we got to Mexico, I discovered that I was wrong. My aunt, cousin, uncle, and other cousin were waiting for us at the hotel in Mexico. It was fun to meet them all but the biggest surprise was that my grandma was not there. It turns out that there was a mistake in her documents so the airport had to do a full background check to make sure everything was in order. Later on, she finally made it to Mexico, and I was so excited to see her when she arrived at the hotel.

Another amazing family memory happened on my eleventh birthday. For my eleventh birthday, my mom had planned something special. I was expecting her to say that she was inviting some friends over to the house to play and eat cake. Instead, she told me we were going on a cruise. It was my first time on a cruise. I have to say it was one of the best experiences of my life. My mom, dad, sister, and I were going together, but then my dad's appendix burst so he couldn't go. So instead, we went with my cousin and his mom. It was still an exciting

cruise, but I would have preferred to go with my dad. It was sad that he missed my birthday, but I didn't let it ruin my time on the ship.

On the ship, there were two giant slides, three salt water pools, and one of the best restaurants I have ever been to. We stayed for three days and there was a restaurant where we had our own waiter for all three days. At the end of an exhausting day, we went to sleep. About an hour into sleeping, we heard an announcement that the waves were a bit rough so the boat might start shaking. We were on one of the bottom decks so we felt it the most. It was scary and funny because my cousin fell off his bed. The last day on the cruise was the best of all. It turned out the cruise was going to the Bahamas. The sand was as soft as powdered sugar, and the water was crystal clear. I swam in the ocean, and I saw a giant white land crab. The experience of being with my family on such a wonderful trip was amazing.

This is what I believe. I believe the best memories are made with family. Moms, cousins, grandmas, and aunts are all important to me in their own way, and when we are all together, that's when the best things happen.

Jacob Rodriguez

This I Believe...Always Be Kind

At a young age, I was taught that the kindness that you put out into the world will always find its way back to you. When I was very little, I didn't understand this adage, but I would try to always be nice to everyone and never make fun of people. As I grew older, I realized that I wasn't being as kind as I once had or as kind as I needed to be. My life was not filled with as much happiness and joy as it once had been. It was at that point that I came to realize that I'd abandoned my earlier belief that being kind was key, and I changed my ways. Making that decision to be kind to others has made all the difference in my life.

A year or so ago, I started to realize that I was starting to make people feel bad. I don't recall why, but one day I started to reflect on the ways I had made people feel about themselves that week. I realized that I had not been kind to others. I figured out that because people made fun

of me sometimes that I had decided to make them feel as bad as I did. As a result, I tried to make others feel the pain I felt when my feelings were hurt.

One day I had a change of heart. I recognized that being unkind to others wasn't helping anyone- not me and not my classmates. I told myself then and there: "I am going to be a kind person today no matter how people treat me." I started slowly. First, I decided to stop hurting other people. For example, in my school community, I would help others put away their Chromebooks, or help my classmates with a question they had about their homework. Sometime, I would also just listen to my classmates, and if they were having a bad day, I just let them express their feelings.

Before my transformation, I used to ignore of all the blessings I had in my life. Afterwards, I realized that there are so many people out there that are wishing they had half of the things that I have. When I finally realized this, I felt really bad for those people I had hurt, and I decided to help.

My mom knew of a community that helps the poor in Africa, and my mom and I decided that it was a good idea for me to donate food for those families in need.

When I made that change, it went as I imagined. People treated me differently; they treated me with kindness in return. When I was nice to people, they would treat me like their little brother. Other times, they might give me a snack or trust me enough to tell me about things that happened in their life. Suddenly, my life was improving in positive ways.

After some time, I made the decision that I would always treat people with kindness. I discovered that it feels really good to be kind to others. When I'm kind to other people, I have this feeling inside me, which says: "That felt really good. I should do that more often. "

Now, I remember those times that I would make fun of someone with sadness because most of the time, I didn't even know the person that I was hurting well. When I had my change of heart, I realized that I should never judge someone before I actually get to know them.

In conclusion, my experience has helped me to become more mature and empathize with those I hurt in the past. This path has shown me to respect others, to never judge other people, and to always look for ways to help people. My advice to everyone is to always be kind and helpful to others because you never know, if one day, you will need help. Most of all, be kind because being kind makes the world a better place.

-Eddie Tacuri

This is I Believe...YOLO

I believe that you only live once. (YOLO) Since you only have one life to live, I believe that it means simply doing you, being you, and doing what you truly want in life is the way to go. I believe that life has such potential, yet many people decide to fill it with stress, sadness, money and craziness. Life is so easy, yet people overlook it. My advice is do what you want and achieve things that you want. Life is truly about living by what you desire.

As we get older and older every day, our heads can fill with regrets. Life is complicated if you make it that way. It is crazy how we have so many things in this world that we can try and experience, yet we hold back and later we regret the things we have not done or achieved. It makes me so upset to see people not living this beautiful life they were given. People should experience many beautiful things in life because we are only given one chance to do things.

I believe that we should not live an uptight life, but rather be free and follow our passions. Life is a never-ending event that go by quickly. It is crazy how time flies. Just yesterday felt like I was in fifth grade again. Our memories should be cherished and held in our hearts forever. My motto has always and will always be: If you want something, do it. Following your dreams and doing what you love has always been important to me. We should live with no regrets.

You only live once so do the things you most desire. Follow your dreams, and seek your dream job. Life is an illusion that needs to be lived out so live it. And remember: You only live once. -**Nicole Elasiik**

This I Believe...

Don't Be Afraid to Try Something New

Have you ever wished you could do something that you saw someone else do? Perhaps you imagined yourself with a skill you don't have, or you pictured yourself as a taller and more muscular version of yourself. Maybe you dreamed of being an actor or an Olympic swimmer. Maybe you thought of yourself as an amazing star sports player. I think of things like this all the time because I wholeheartedly believe that people shouldn't be afraid to try something new. Why? You ask. Because trying new things makes life much more interesting.

For example, few people know that I trick. Tricking is the combination of kicking from martial arts and flipping. It is super cool to watch and to do, but the risk is great. You can suffer a serious injury or snap your neck and die. (Warning: Do not try this at home with no practice or instruction.) Tricking takes a lot of practice but it is super satisfying when you land one. Yeah, it's kind of stupid and dangerous, but it is still incredibly entertaining to watch. Most people would say it isn't practical. If you wonder why started doing this, I started because one day I asked myself: "Why wasn't I doing it?"

Many times, people tell themselves: "I wish I could do that!" or "Wow, that is so cool! I want to do that!" But then they think: "I am not good enough to do that" or "That seems too difficult." Sure, those thoughts have crossed my mind many times, but not as often as the thought of actually doing what I imagined myself doing.

When I was younger, three years old to be exact, my parents made me take karate classes, and I still do it to this day. Though I am short, I pushed myself to do what I could. There are some things that I

can't do, and I just accept it. I will most likely not become a professional basketball player, due to my height even though I have not hit my growth spurt yet, but I honestly don't care.

I don't care about never being in the NBA or not doing other things; however, I know that I am nowhere close to my limit of skill. In fact, I don't think anyone on this Earth has hit all they can achieve. Pushing yourself to your limit is the way to reach your potential.

A very good example of something that basically everyone wants to do is play an instrument. My parents made me take piano lessons when I was three years old. I was reluctant to go to lessons, and I thought practicing was a drag. But ever since then, I have only gotten better. Ten years later, I can play pieces that only really good players play. I am no professional, but I am good. Most people say, "I want to play piano!" Some people don't have the money to take lessons, and others can't afford a piano. But those excuses are no good. If you do not have the money for a piano, you can save up money. Though it is easier said than done, you can teach yourself piano. Like learning piano, there is nothing you can't do if you try.

I believe that you should push to your limits to accomplish all your goals. With practice, you can accomplish things quickly. If you are interested in something and want to try it, do it! You can do almost anything you see someone else do. If you practice enough, you can do it. So, take some time to set some goals for yourself, and then go out there and try new things. You will be glad you did. -**Luke Tumino**

This I Believe...Change is Difficult

When you think of change, what do you think? Now be honest with yourself. Do you think of change positively or negatively? Have you ever been pressured to change something about yourself? Something that you didn't want to change? Well, I have, and it isn't easy. In fact, it is my belief and experience that change is difficult.

If you're like me, you don't like the idea of being pressured to change. When a change is thrust upon me, all I feel is that nagging

feeling of not being able to do the thing I've been doing for so long. It is not a feeling I enjoy. I detest change.

Right now, I am at a time in my life when I don't have a choice in a matter that is important to me. This summer I am being forced to move away from my dad and my brothers to live in another state across the country. Just the thought of moving is a painful thing to imagine especially when you are like me and you don't want to go. Even worse is knowing nothing can change this outcome. This summer I will be moving with my mother, half-sister, and stepfather to Idaho. I am not looking forward to it, and I know the move will change me and everything about my life.

My early years were filled with changes too; changes that transformed almost everything for me. Some things for the better, and some for the worse. I won't assign blame, but these changes have left me feeling adrift. Like most people, changes in my family have affected the person I am today. For example, I used to be more open and trusting with my family, but now, it's hard to open up with other people.

I have learned to deal with the changes made in my life. It may be hard to overcome some things, but that's how life goes. Your fate cannot be chosen, and even if you dislike it, there's not much that can change so accepting things is the best way to go. Life may change you in various ways, but as long as you do good, you can be happy with these changes and their outcomes.

-Donna Alvarez

This I Believe...Spreading Kindness is Key

A little while back, my mom and I were grabbing ice cream from Carvel. As we were about to pay, a lady came to us and offered to pay for our ice cream if we would return the favor someday to someone else. She said she was once in the same situation as us, and this was her way of returning the favor she had received. The lady then proceeded to pay for the ice cream, and we promised to do the same for someone else one day.

One day months later, my mom and I did just that, and we told the person we helped the same thing we were once told. Looking back, it wasn't the fact that the strange woman paid for our ice cream that was special. What was special was how she spread kindness that day. Since that day, that one small act of kindness changed my perspective on life. Today, I firmly believe that spreading kindness is the key to changing the world into becoming a better place.

An example of someone who used kindness to help others was Saint Teresa of Calcutta, also known as Mother Teresa. Saint Teresa believed spreading kindness was the most important thing anyone could do. She once said: "Three things in human life are important; The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind." Mother Teresa devoted her entire life to helping the poor, the sick, the needy, and the helpless. She didn't aid others because she had to, instead she helped others because she felt the need to make the world become a better place. Mother Teresa was a hero and someone who many people today idolize and aspire to become.

No matter the size of the act, whether it's small or large, one gesture of kindness could change someone's day immensely. An example of kindness could be helping your neighbor carry the groceries from their car to the kitchen or greeting someone in a nice way. Even a smile could have a strong impact on someone. Kindness is one of the most important qualities that a person can share with others. As stated in the Bible, Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Do this, and your life will be great...and so will the lives of those you help.-

Victoria Alvarez

This I Believe...

School Brings Out the Best in People

I believe that school brings out the best in people. When I'm with my friends in school, I feel so happy. Happiness in your life is a sensation like no other, and it is a feeling that people should experience more often. Luckily for kids, being in school can give them the opportunity to be happy all the time.

I have many fun stories of me hanging out with my friends at home or in town, but most of my memories with my friends come from times spent in school. School is the place where most of my friendships started. School has given me some of the best memories and best friends a person could have such as Sammy, Daniel, Michael, and more.

School is a place where you can have fun. Playing around in the gym after lunch or before lunch is amazing because this one of the periods that you just get to be yourself and have fun fool around with your friends. Last year every day, my friends and I would play soccer. Every match was like the World Cup. My friends and I would try our best to go to the pretend finals. After that was done, we would have to go back to class and learn. We would do this every day, five days a week. Recess at school has always been a great time to be with friends.

School also gives the teachers great joy. For example, Mr. Scapellati jokes around even though he is also strict. He is also always trying to encourage you to be energetic and focused at the same time. He is one of the many teachers who inspire me to work hard but have fun while doing it. Another one of the teachers that helps bring out the best in me is Mrs. Hanley. She is always laughing and being happy, but she also tries to encourage us to finish our work and always helps us go above and beyond. Seeing my teachers at work having fun shows me what a special place school is for everyone.

If I were to impart some advice to those students who still have years left at OLH, it would be to cherish your time with your friends, classmates, and teachers because one day those moments will just be memories in the past.

-Omar Gonzalez

