

Children's Connection 2013



2013 FCFT President's Award

*for Outstanding Advocacy
for the Employees of FCPS*



Megan McLaughlin (Braddock District)

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Patty Reed (Providence District)

Sandy Evans (Mason District)

Dan Storck (Mount Vernon District)

Tammy Derenak Kaufax (Lee District)

Ryan McElveen (At-Large)

Janie Strauss (Dranesville District)

Pat Herrity (Supervisor: Springfield District)

Kaye Kory (Delegate: 38th District)

Other Award Winners:

Phyllis Pajardo (FCPS)

Louise Epstein (FEC)

Michael Hairston (FEA)

Erica Hendry (media)

The Fairfax County Federation of Teachers would like to thank all of the 2013 award winners listed above for their consistent advocacy, proactive communications, and support of our workforce over the past year. We publicly acknowledge their efforts to make a difference in the lives of FCPS employees. Thank you for caring about us; it matters and is appreciated.



CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2013



By Daniella Contreras, 5th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



By Madelena Johnson, 7th grade, Lanier Middle School.

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Fairfax Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students.

We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2014 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection. Please keep us in mind as your children

continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to south@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC



Noodles by Brianna Camp, 12th grade, Robinson Secondary School.



Frozen in Time by Jordan Lucas, 4th grade, Wakefield Forest Elementary.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



By Valerie Lam, kindergarten, Fairview Elementary.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

EAGLE VIEW ART GALLERY



By Jay Jeon, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



By John Reyes Bueno, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



By Joshua Nguyen, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



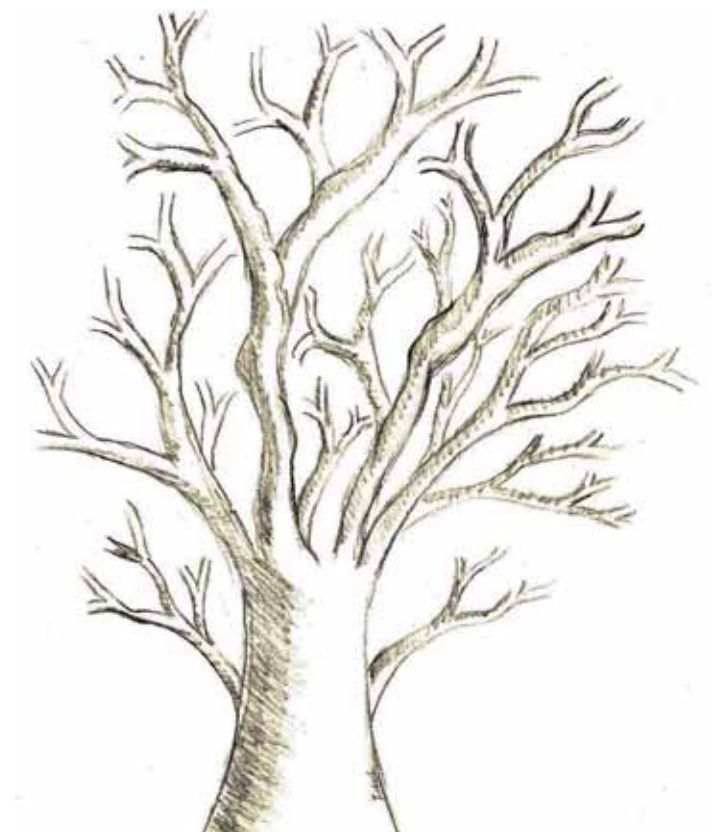
By Jin Wen Xie, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



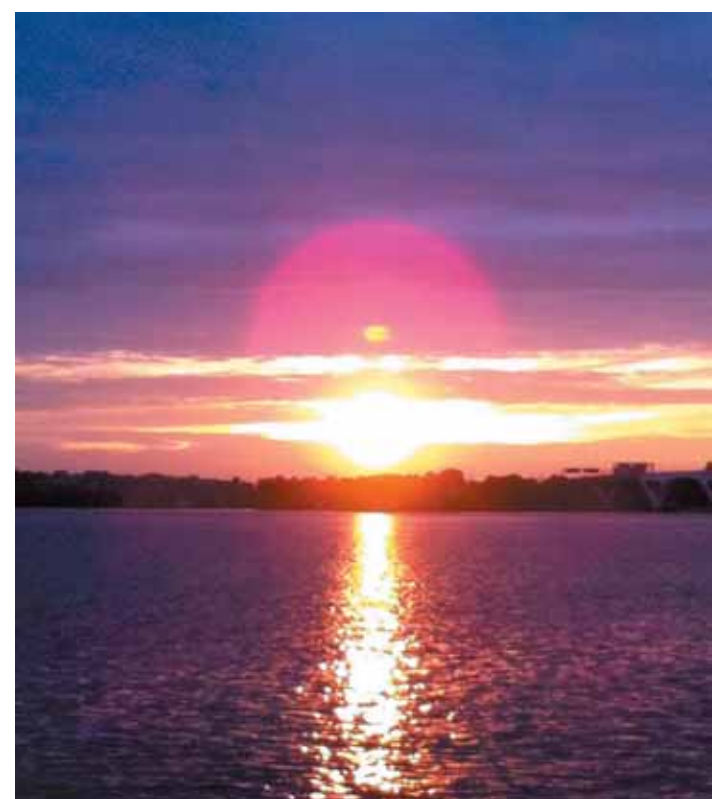
By Patrick Ngyuyen, 3rd grade, Eagle View Elementary.



By Michelle Ha, Lanier Middle School.



By Lokesh Sequeira, 7th grade, Lanier Middle School.



By Hafsa Bukhari, 7th grade, Lanier Middle School.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Our Soldiers

— KATIE BALLOU,
9TH GRADE,
WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

It is a winter morning in Texas, and the air is cool. My mouth is dry and my anxious fingers fumble with the zipper on my sweater. Music plays behind the chatter of the patient families. We stand on a huge field in front of the First Calvary's Headquarters at Fort Hood Texas. The American flag waves as if America can feel the excitement of the families. The smell of pine drifts on the cool air and into my nose. The familiar smell comforts me and calms my nerves.

A voice comes over the speaker and announces the arrival of the soldiers we have been waiting for. A bus pulls up and my stomach fills with anxious butterflies. We see booted feet file off the bus and march into formation behind it. All the families are cheering and clapping. I can hear the low rumble of the bus as it pulls away, revealing the soldiers. They march onto the field and I cannot see their faces well, but I know they are searching for their families. The National Anthem plays and two mounted First Calvary Horsemen ride across the field atop their horses. We say the Pledge of Allegiance and have a moment of silence for the soldiers who will never be able to return home. During all of this, I am staring at one man who is in the front row of the lined up soldiers. The man on the speaker then announces that we can finally be reunited with our loved ones.

I run past my family and the other families. I look around. I was only a four-foot-eleven fifth grader, so it is hard to look over the top of the towering soldiers and their families. I then catch a glimpse of a man. I see only the back of him, but I know who he is. He is looking for something. I look at his hat and it has a very familiar name on it: "BALLOU." I run to the soldier and tap on his shoulder. He turns around. His face lights up and he picks me up. I take in everything about Dad: his Old Spice cologne, the familiar roughness of his uniform, and his hugging arms.

"Katie," his voice shakes and I smile because I know that dad will never leave again.

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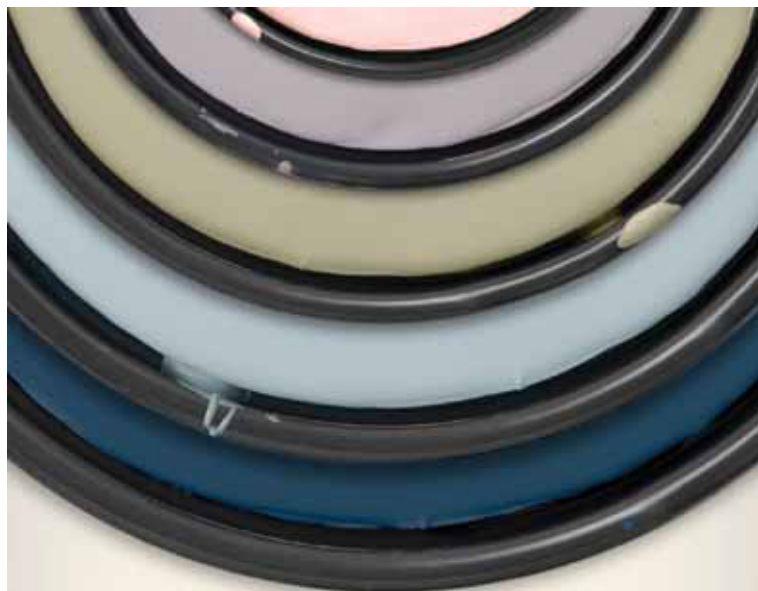


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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

UNION MILL
ELEMENTARY
ART GALLERY

By Dylan F.,
2nd grade,
Union Mill
Elementary.



By Gauri, 1st grade,
Union Mill Elementary.



By Isabella S., 4th grade,
Union Mill Elementary.



By Juliana, 5th grade, Union Mill Elementary.



By Margaret (Mia) E., 6th grade, Union Mill Elementary.



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'Best of NoVa' - Northern Virginia Magazine

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



A Hedgehog Christmas by Rebecca Elliff, 3rd grade, White Oaks Elementary.


LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY REFLECTIONS

When I Grow Up...

The question, "what you'd you like to be when you grow up?" seems like an impossible one to answer. As for me, it never has been. The reason? I've always been intimi-


dated by this question, and so, I've chosen to manipulate it. With all other jobs, we're are defined as one person; doctor, teacher, lawyer. But with my dream job, I can be whomever I wish to be. I can create which-ever circumstances I wish, whatever people I can conjure, and within whatever time period I want. I answer to no one, except

SEE REFLECTIONS, PAGE 12




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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

POEMS FROM ROBINSON SECONDARY

Stories

By JANA CONSIDINE,
8TH GRADE

There are stories in my head
Thousands of stories
True and Fiction
Characters of my own creation
And characters that are not mine
They are all there with me
All the time
It's my happy place
I can disappear inside my stories
anytime
I can get my stories onto paper
But many are just mine
Just for me
Sometimes the stories are too
much
Too many worlds in my head
and I need a break
An escape to reality
Before I dive back in again
To the stories in my head
To my own mini world

Legacy

By JANA CONSIDINE,
8TH GRADE

I stand tall, proud and resilient
As around me chaos falls
Destruction is constant, creation
is too
If I kill the killers who started this
Does this make me as bad as
them?
Or will I be seen as a hero
Worshipped as the salvation to a
nation?
Either way the ending is still the
same
I will die
No matter if it is by old age or
enemy hands
A sickness taking away my life
or an accident
I will die eventually
But my legacy- "How I am re-
membered is what will keep me liv-
ing on
I refuse to be forgotten, just a
sacrifice to this war
I want to be remembered as I
walk to face the flames
The threat of disaster is nothing
and I fear nothing
Either way I will die
It's my legacy that will live on

My History of Being a Troublemaker

By LARS WATHNE

My worst day of school is proba-
bly my first day of kindergarten
I got off to an immediate bad
start with my teachers,
One that would continue on and
on
Our good relationship didn't
even last five minutes

When the morning announce-
ments came on the TV,
They put a Barbie doll on the
screen,
So I, being the little impulsive
child that I was,
Ran up to the TV and punched it
The punch really hurt,
But it was worth it
Everybody in the class started
laughing
Apparently, the teacher didn't
think it was very funny
Because she marched me to the
principal's office,
Not five minutes into my school
career
The principal and I became very
close
Over my first few years of school
During kindergarten alone,
I might have gone to him about
once every week
It eventually came to the point
where he would just shake his
head,
And send me outside for thirty
minutes,
To think about what I had done
this time
One time, it was fighting with
scissors,
Another, it was biting a kid's fin-
ger,
And so on
To this day, I am still very impul-
sive
And still like to talk a lot
But, I am not nearly as bad of a
troublemaker
As I was when I was a little kid
I think I was born to give teach-
ers headaches

Daddy's
Little Girl

By COURTNEY WILLIAMS,
8TH GRADE

Fortunately, we sit on the couch
and cannot be serious for an hour
or two
Unfortunately, that doesn't hap-
pen too much
Fortunately, he tells me I can get
straight A's
Unfortunately, I've never gotten
straight A's
Fortunately, I can tell him about
my favorite boy band and their
handsomeness
Unfortunately, he doesn't care
Fortunately, he wants me to have
friends
Unfortunately, they can't be boys
Fortunately, he lets me walk to
the bus without him to school the
next morning
Unfortunately, he makes me
bring my brother
Fortunately, he loves me
Unfortunately, he's overprotec-
tive



By Bethany Camp, 12th grade, Robinson Second-
ary School.

When people ask all I can say is
I'm Daddy's little girl

Joy and Happiness

By COURTNEY WILLIAMS,
8TH GRADE

Winter-soft and powdery it falls.
I imagine being a toddler again;
Jumping and frolicking
Through its white kingdom
that has showered the earth
with a big white blanket.
Missing school and helping my
dad shovel the driveway,
never truly appreciating its time.
Snow turns to flowers. Winter
turns into spring.
Spring-warm and inviting it
comes.
I imagine being a kid again;
seeing the bright petals of flow-
ers, blooming out of dormancy,
smelling that sweet smell of life,
never truly appreciating its time.
The year goes on from warm to
hot.
Spring turns to summer.
Summer-it comes rolling in with
the excitement that it brings.
I like to remember my teenage
years;
swimming in the lake,
drinking too much soda;
playing football in the fields,

wanting school to end but never
wanting to start,
talking to friends and pulling all-
nighters,
never truly appreciating its time.
The leaves begin to change.
Summer turns to fall.
Fall-it comes showering the earth
with leaves.
I imagine being a younger adult;
admiring life and its changes,
watching my baby girl discover
the art of jumping in piles of leaves,
and the difference between red,
yellow, brown, and orange,
appreciating the time that I've
been given to share natural joy.

Painting

By CAMERON EARLS

Grabbing a vast white sheet
I stick it on the easel
In a land of colors
I touch the brush to the paint and
take a swish
On the canvass
Suddenly I am I a different world
Full of color and brightness
I let my imagination take me
wherever it wants
Now there are knights surround-
ing me
I use my hot air balloon to es-
cape
Landing in sinking sand
I grab a rope connected to a blue

airplane
Excited and feeling magical
I drop from the plane
Caught with a huge trampoline
As if I were a gymnast
I spread my new wings and take
off like a bird
Soaring through a gumball can-
yon
I spot a giant green creature
I think it's called a T-Rex?
I finally touch down to the
ground
I open my eyes
And my masterpiece is done

Outer Banks

By RACHEL MCGIRL,
8TH GRADE

I always like summer best
Sighing as
The salty air
Caresses my cheeks
Running barefoot
Along the sparkling waves
Listening as they whisper
And softly lap against
The crystal white sands
Skimming the seaside for
A perfect seashell
It had to be smooth
And rough
In all the right
Places
Waking up
And running to
The window for
Just a glance at
The sun-kissed shore
And the glistening sea
Rushing to see
Who can get their
Bathing suit
On first
Watching the horses
Trot calmly as
The surf crashes
And foams
Along their ankles
Their coats smooth
And gleaming in
The sunlight
Skipping down
The boardwalk
Hand in hand
Looking up into
The dark night sky
At the twinkling stars
Feeling safe
At peace
At home

Autumn Day

By RACHEL MCGIRL,
8TH GRADE

The leaves swirl
Carelessly along the driveway
I watch as they rise
And fall
The sky begins to fade
It looks as if
An artist
Had painted streaks
Across the sky
But it is astounding

I hear the wind
Whistle through
The branches
And I sigh at
The beauty of it all
Squirrels scamper
And chase each other
Through the brush
Happy and innocent
And careless
I feel young again
The sun begins to sink
Into the horizon
And the stars emerge
The leaves cease to swirl
And the squirrels disappear
But the wind continues
To whistle.

Last Frontier

By EMERSON KUZEMKA,
7TH GRADE

Standing like living statues,
Vast miles of crystal clear blue
skies,
Trickle of melting snow,
Lonely Blue lakes shine,
Large boulders cast eerie shadows,
Wind whistles wisely,
Where land meets the sky,
Many call it the last frontier,
The land of promise,
Valleys gleam with life,
Storms shape the gold sand
beaches,
Winds filled with sweet salt,
It is untouched land,
Only touched by few humans,
It is made of gold

Untitled

By MASON GHODSI,
8TH GRADE

A darkening night
An old town
Worn from years of litter, careless
people and graffiti
The wind whip's across the empty
parking lot
Old newspapers flutter around in the
air
Used cups and grocery bags skid
across the asphalt
One light flickers, letting out a quiet
steady buzz
Hands shoved deep into his pockets
Head down
He slowly walks through the barren
town
His coat isn't much against the bit-
ter cold air
Cutting through like a frozen blade
The last of the sun disappears behind
the horizon line
The voices start up now
Quiet whispers
Every word is held long
Before they had come
This had been a normal town
Then everybody fled
Except for him
He stayed forever
He didn't have a choice
He couldn't leave.

EAGLE VIEW ART GALLERY



By Emma
Scher, 1st
grade,
Eagle View
Elementary.



By Chloe Pak, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



By Ethan Morin, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.



By Nina Lam, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.

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FAIRFAX CONNECTION ♦ CHILDREN'S CONNECTION ♦ 2013 - 2014 ♦ 9

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Chicken and Broccoli Dinner by Marek Raynal Kosecky, 1st grade, Wakefield Forest Elementary.

WAKEFIELD FOREST ART GALLERY

Dreaming of a Superhero by Juliet Lee, 6th grade, Wakefield Forest Elementary.



Frozen in Time by Erin Hopewell, 4th grade, Wakefield Forest Elementary.



Self-Portrait by Isabella DeCarlo, 5th grade, Wakefield Forest Elementary.



Criss Cross Applesauce by Mitchell Cook, kindergarten, Wakefield Forest Elementary.



Dance, Dance by Dag Guessford, kindergarten, Wakefield Forest Elementary.

The Fairfax Children's Connection

is published by
Local Media Connection, LLC.

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Mason Neck State Park

BY HANNAH PRICE,
4TH GRADE, OAK VIEW
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

One of the best things about Virginia is its nature parks. Recently, I was hiking at Mason Neck State Park, which is one of the only places you can see bald eagles. It was beautiful autumn day. The sky was a deep ocean blue, and the sun was shining brightly, though it was not hot at all. There was a pleasant breeze coming from the river, whistling lightly. The Bay View Trail had a lovely view of the river. The Eagle Spur trail led us through the woods to the Eagle Viewpoint. The Eagle Viewpoint was a covered shelter with a wooden bench that you could sit down and observe everything around. There, I actually spotted one bald eagle flying

around. Also, I saw the most gorgeous colors of the leaves: fiery red, orange, and pure gold. Mason Neck State Park is an amaz-



By Nina Lam, 6th grade, Eagle View Elementary.

ingly beautiful place, and I hope that all people that live in Virginia and visitors from out of state will visit there sometime too.

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THE CONNECTION
 NEWSPAPERS

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Reflections

FROM PAGE 7

my pen and my characters. The world is at my fingertips. By being this job, I can escape the inevitable labels of a job waiting for me, and I can create my own. This is why, when I grow up, I want to be a writer.

—LAURA KIRK, 7TH GRADE, LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY

What you do when you grow up depends on your personality, interests, and strengths. When I grow up I would like to work in a job that involves politics, so I will start as a lawyer and work my way up to higher positions. Any job with politics involves interacting with people. I like talking to people and learning their opinions on different matters. I want to become a politician to help our country be the best country it can be.

— NANDHANA NAIR, 7TH GRADE, LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY



Midnight Tiger by Yusuf Ahamed, seventh grade, Lake Braddock Secondary School.

LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY REFLECTIONS

would give them less stress. My parents are always there for my sister and me whenever we need help. Every day I wake up at 6:00a.m., go downstairs, and my mom is waiting for me with breakfast on the table. Whenever I need help with math, my dad is there to help me. These are just a few of the many things that my parents do for me. Thanksgiving was just

three days ago, and I definitely had something to be thankful for.

— ALEX AHN, 7TH GRADE, LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY SCHOOL

Duke

The best gift I ever received was when I got my dog. When I was 3-years-old, my mom and dad surprised my brother and me by taking us to the shelter to adopt a dog. There were two dogs that we liked; one was a yellow Labrador retriever and the other was a shepherd mix. My parents left it up to my brother and me to choose. We both shouted at the same time, "We want the yellow one." Now ten years later, we still love "Duke" as much as the day we picked him out.

— NICHOLAS MARGRAF, 7TH GRADE, LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY

The Best Christmas Gift

The absolute best gift that I could give to my parents would be helping them when renovating our new house this holiday season. Examples such as, helping take down wallpaper, painting, or just keeping my siblings under control so they're not bothering my parents while they're working. I would do this by asking if I could help, trying my best and making sure I know what to do for them. That is the best Christmas gift I could give them this year.

—NEVAN CARTER, 7TH GRADE, LAKE BRADDOCK SECONDARY

A Gift for My Parents

If I could give my parents a gift that didn't cost money, then I

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Jessica Olmedo, 8th grade, Key Middle School.

Everyday

Everyday I wake up knowing that today is different
 Everyday I recall my dreams wishing they were real
 Everyday I walk down stairs with a smile on my face
 Everyday I mess up
 Everyday I want someone to talk to
 Everyday I hang out with my friends
 Everyday my friends help me forget what I did wrong
 Everyday my friends inspire me to do my best, never give up, and put my best foot forward
 Everyday my friends have my back and I have theirs
 Everyday I find a new dream to work towards
 Everyday I believe I can do anything which I can
 Everyday you might try to tear me down but I will always smile
 Everyday you fake your way to the top
 But everyday I know that if I believe in my dreams then one day I might inspire you to do the same
 — RACHEL SCOUT STROHECKER,
 6TH GRADE, SANGSTER ELEMENTARY

The Last Swing

The dead grass and gravel crunch under my sneakers. A cool, crisp, breeze cuts through the still, dry, air like a knife. A chickadee chirps in the branches of a tall pine. Walking alone on the familiar, worn path, I arrive at a small playground and sit down on my favorite swing. It creaks and groans, being un-oiled and well used. As I swing, a rhythm starts. Back, forth, creak, back, forth, creak. My breathing matches the steady beat of the swing. I look into the horizon and see the tops of the Cascade Mountains, blending into a pale pink sunset that looks as if it were painted. While I gaze, I inhale the cool evening air and sigh. This is my last time at this park, my last time looking at this sunset, my last time on this very swing. I hop off and walk home as a tear, silent as the night, rolls down my cheek.

— GRACIE MOORE,
 6TH GRADE, SANGSTER ELEMENTARY



By Milton Ramirez Flores, 8th grade, Key Middle School.

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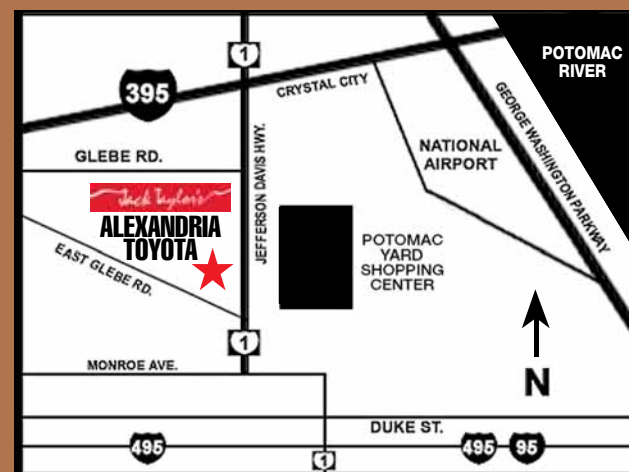
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