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Children's Connection 2013

Winter, by
Ayesha Javaid,
McLean.

DECEMBER 25-31, 2013

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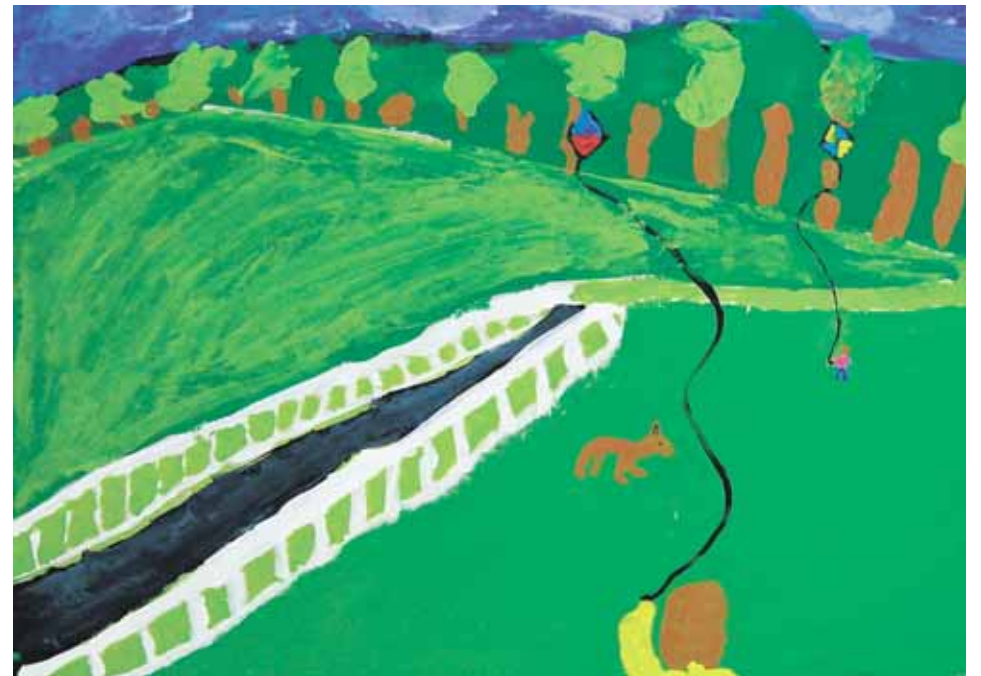


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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION 2013



Homage to Thomas Kinkade by Victoria Cho, 8th grade, Cooper Middle School.



By Ava Thompson, 6th grade, Spring Hill Elementary.

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the McLean 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 mclean@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 KURSPAHIC



By Hunter Powers, 1st grade, Churchill Road Elementary.

Beautiful for the Night, by Carter Johnson, 8th grade, Cooper Middle School. "The beauty of the sunset is what life should represent: marvelous yet humble, elegant yet underrated," Johnson wrote.



By Ariana Elahi, 4th grade, Kent Gardens Elementary.

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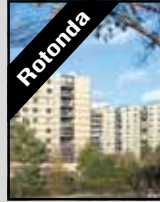
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



KENT GARDENS GALLERY

By Michaela Anne Pearce,
2nd grade,
Kent Gardens Elementary.



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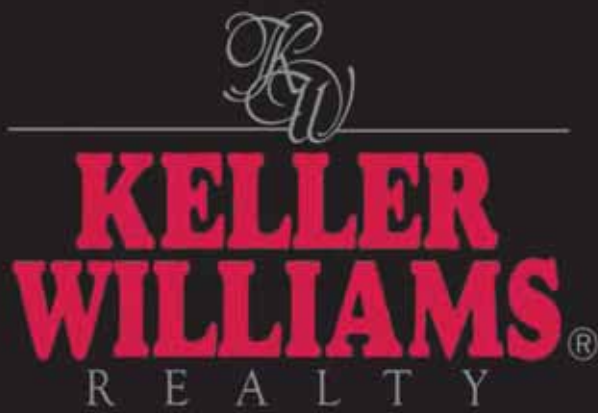
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By Isabella Powell,
6th grade,
Kent Gardens
Elementary.



By Jiasen (Joy) He,
1st grade,
Kent Gardens Elementary.



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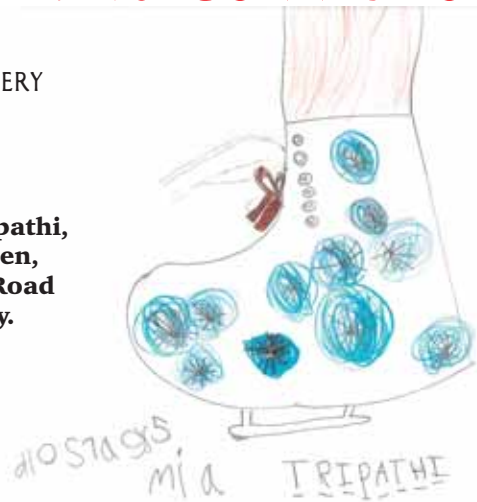
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

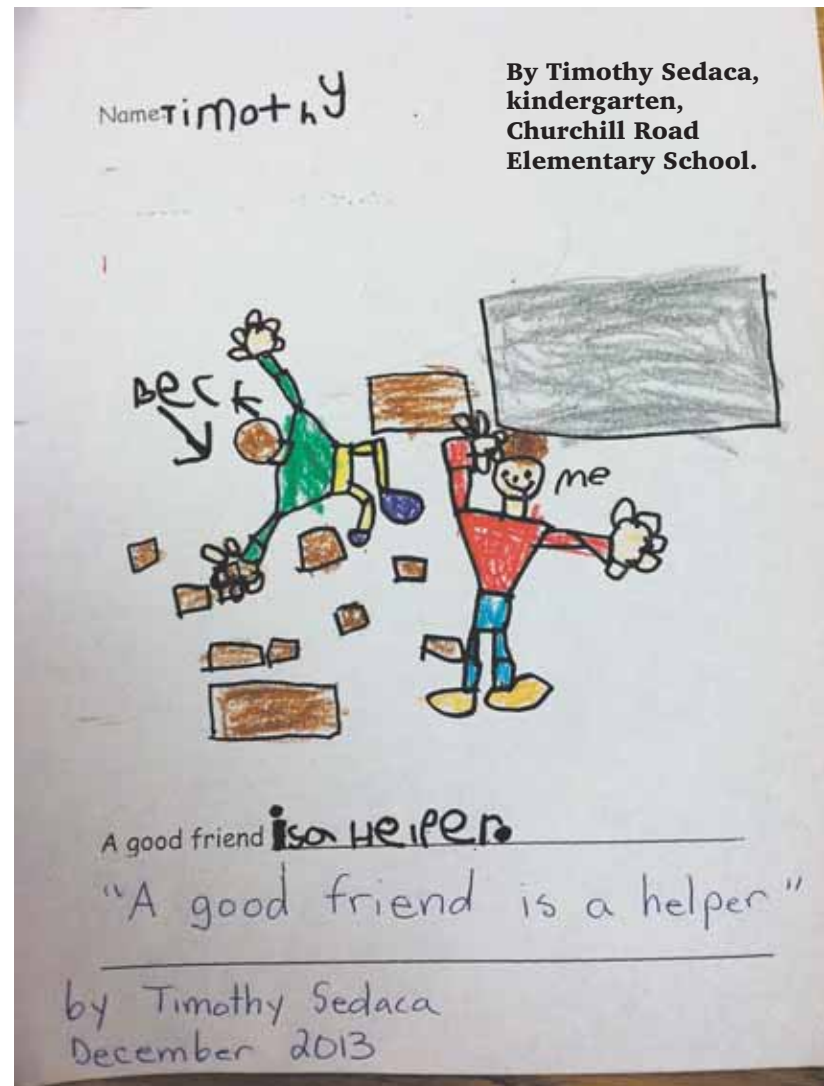
CHURCHILL ROAD ART GALLERY

By Mia Tripathi,
kindergarten,
Churchill Road
Elementary.



Cozy and Warm
Together by Lina Al-
Atrash, 5th grade,
Churchill Road
Elementary.

By Clara Stevens,
2nd grade, Churchill
Road Elementary.



By Timothy Sedaca,
kindergarten,
Churchill Road
Elementary School.

Poem about mittens By
Shreya Sil



Oh mitten you keep me warm when I'm cold. Mitten you're soft and cozy. Mitten you keep me warm when it snows, you heat me up. I never want to lose you in the snow. Sometimes it is so cold I need another pair of mittens, but you are the best mittens in the whole world. I don't want another pair of mittens for a gazillion years. I'm going to wear you everywhere, even in the summer. I'm never going to let you out of my heart. I will stay with you for a thousand years. I hope I don't die. I am never going to sell you.

By: Shreya Sil – Churchill Road Elementary School 2nd Grade

By Shreya Sil, 2nd grade, Churchill Road Elementary.



By Elizabeth Meyer, 1st grade,
Churchill Road Elementary.



By Justin Lee, 1st grade, Churchill
Road Elementary.



2013 FCFT President's Award

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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.

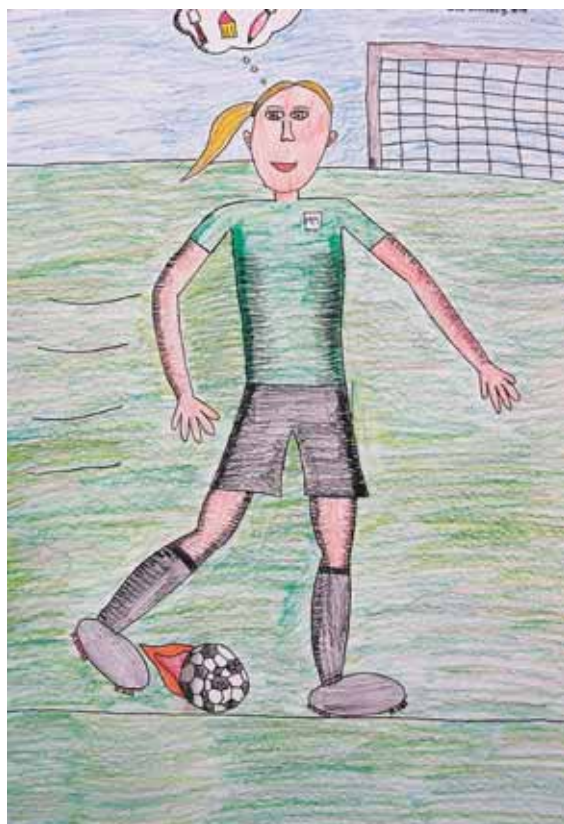


CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

SPRING HILL ART GALLERY



By Andy Ricketts, 6th grade, Spring Hill Elementary.



By Erin Connery, 6th grade, Spring Hill Elementary.



By Samira Shirazi, kindergarten, Spring Hill Elementary.



By Kristina Naydonova, 1st grade, Spring Hill Elementary.



By Eric Yong, 2nd grade, Spring Hill Elementary.

POETRY CORNER

Memory

Memory lives in your heart and eyes,
Seeing everything you see,
Loving everything you love,
Wearing a coat of your thoughts.
When you are holding her hand you remember
All you cherish and all of your dreams.
When you experience something,
Splendid or sorrowful,
She catches the image,
And glues the image in your mind forever.
When she crosses her arch nemesis, Forgetfulness,
You cannot think of your thoughts,
And she cries in pain as Forgetfulness harasses her.
When Memory is by your side, you remember
All of your happiness, all of your losses.
Memory is made of many things.
Laughter, sorrow, bliss and loss
Are all her spirit.
Children are starting to obtain her,
But adults are full and bursting with her.
Children listen intently with eyes full of wonder
As adults tell them about their experiences with Memory.
She remembers every moment you spend with her,
All you hear, all you see,
Everyone you love and all of your rivals.
She caresses every minute of your life,
But she only presents the best and worst events to your heart.
Memory is someone
You remember eternally.

— MALLIKA CHARAGUNDLA,
5TH GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

Dream

Dream lives in the sky
She floats on a cloud waiting until the sun is devoured by the stars
Then she goes to work to write stories
She doesn't need a publisher
for she sings them to all children
She loves telling the children her stories to soothe them while they are sleeping
Dream argues and fights with her brother Nightmare
It's always about her stories
but most of the time Nightmare just runs away
She loves every child like a mother
and she visits them every night
she only speaks when she tells her stories
Dream dresses in clothes made of clouds
so she can float wherever she needs too
she's like a ninja
a silent and is only found when she wants to be
Dream is a friend
That will soothe you till the end

— YUVI SING,
5TH GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

Music

Music lives on the go
she travels the world
but you can hear her everywhere
her heart thumps in a tune
she wears headphones around her neck
and her long black hair billows around her shoulders,
like a waterfall
a glimmering white top and a skirt with music notes
plus little black tap shoes show her style
she is very popular, and rocks the house wherever she goes,
even in the country
Music is the life of the party

SEE POETRY, PAGE 19

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Thanks to everyone who
experienced the

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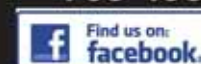


Gina Jones
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

CHESTERBROOK ELEMENTARY ART GALLERY



By Ava Randall, kindergarten, Chesterbrook Elementary.



By Charlotte Haubold, 1st grade, Chesterbrook Elementary.

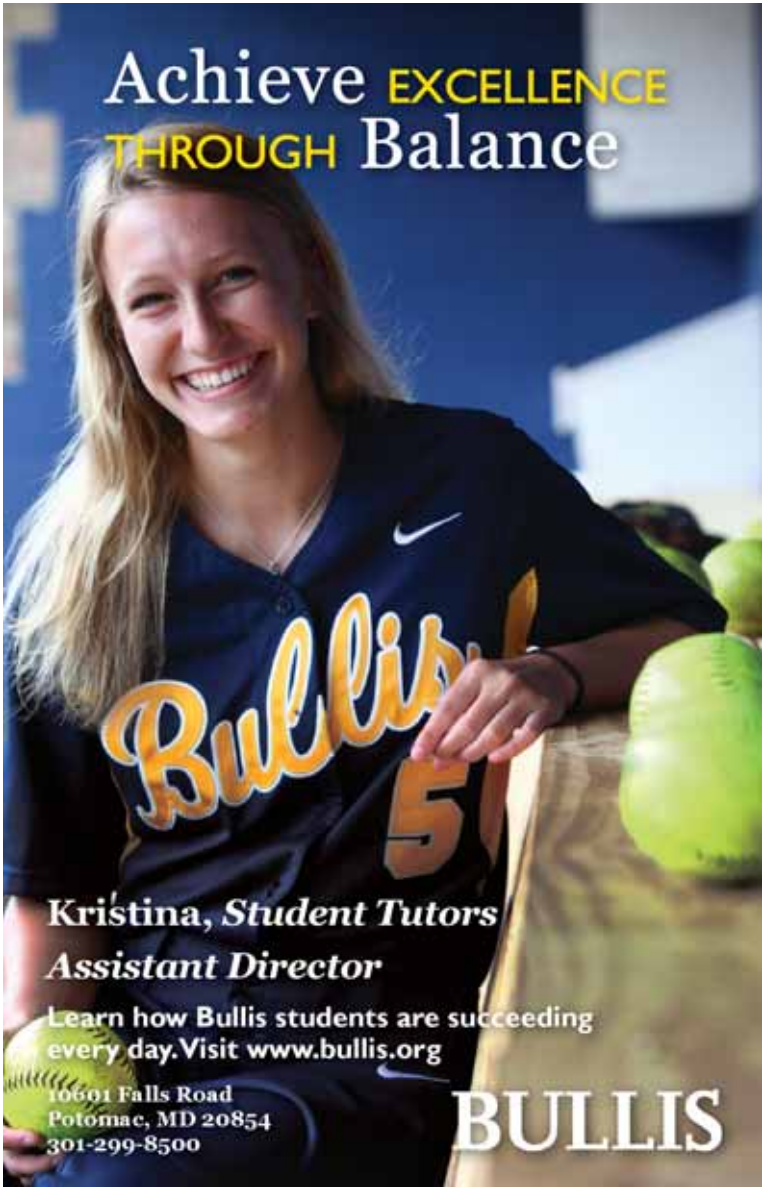


By Mia Valencic, 6th grade, Chesterbrook Elementary.



By Nate Salkoff, 5th grade, Chesterbrook Elementary.

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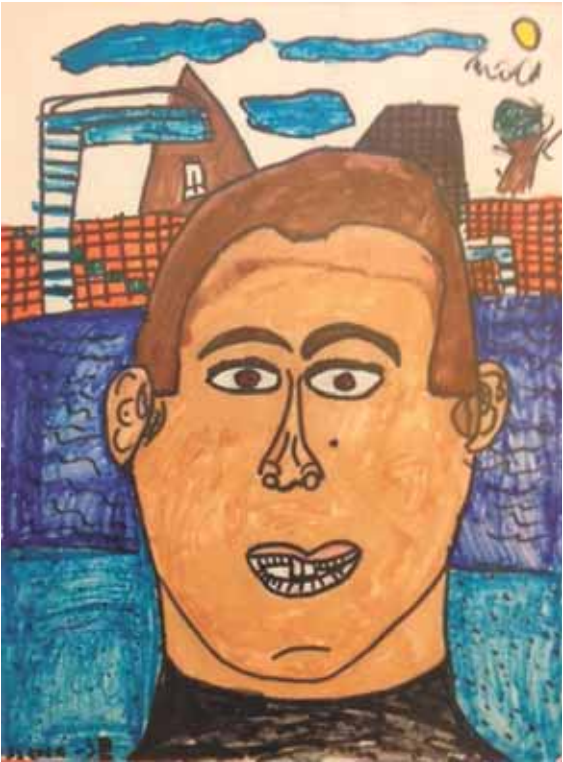


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By Steven Allen, 3rd grade, Chesterbrook Elementary.



By Emerson La Tourette, 2nd grade, Chesterbrook Elementary.

SPRING HILL REFLECTIONS

I Am Thankful For Books

I am thankful for books. Books bring me on an adventure. They bring me to a deserted island filled with wild animals as I meet the Robinsons, and to a sparkling palace filled with beautiful ladies as I see Cinderella waltzing by, holding Prince Charming's hand. Books have taught me lessons that I couldn't have learned from teachers. Lessons that have changed the way I speak, stand, and think; lessons that have taught me that not everybody in the world has as much as I have and that not everybody will be with me forever. Books pick me up when I feel down and can swallow me whole, just like Moby Dick. Books can control my feelings. I have found myself crying as I read Marley and Me and laughing as I read about James when he gets stuck in a giant peach. I have grown up with Ramona and Beezus at my side guiding me through hard times and Harry Potter casting magic spells in my dreams. Books have helped me grow up and that is why I am thankful for them.

—SOPHIA ZIMMER,
5TH GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

My Family

My name is Mia and I am going to tell you a little about my family. My mom is 46, her real name is Nancy. Her birthday is one day earlier than mine. I also love to cook with my mom, it is my favorite thing to do with her.

My dad is 40, his birthday is on February 3. He really likes me, he takes me swimming and to tennis. He also spins me around. But he also screams a lot, his favorite color is chocolate brown.


My brother is 8. I hate him, but my mom wants me to change that phrase that I just wrote. His favorite color is cerulean. He is a pain in the neck. His birthday is on March 21. His name is Myles.

My sister's name is Mindy. She is 4 and is very cute. I always chit-chat with her at night. She loves to color, she also loves spaghetti. Her favorite color is hot pink.

I am 7 years old. My favorite colors are hot pink and blue. I

SEE REFLECTIONS, PAGE 15

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Toes in the Water by Grace Hardardt, 8th grade. "Little Compton, R.I., has been a part of me since I was born. I can't remember any summer where I wasn't in LC. In this picture you see my older brother, James, and dog Luna at the Sakonnet River. I enjoy walking there with my siblings because my older brother is in college, and I usually only see him in LC. Also, my sister will be leaving next year, so I want to spend as much time with her before she goes. Little Compton is a very small town but the beauty it holds is immense," Hardardt wrote.



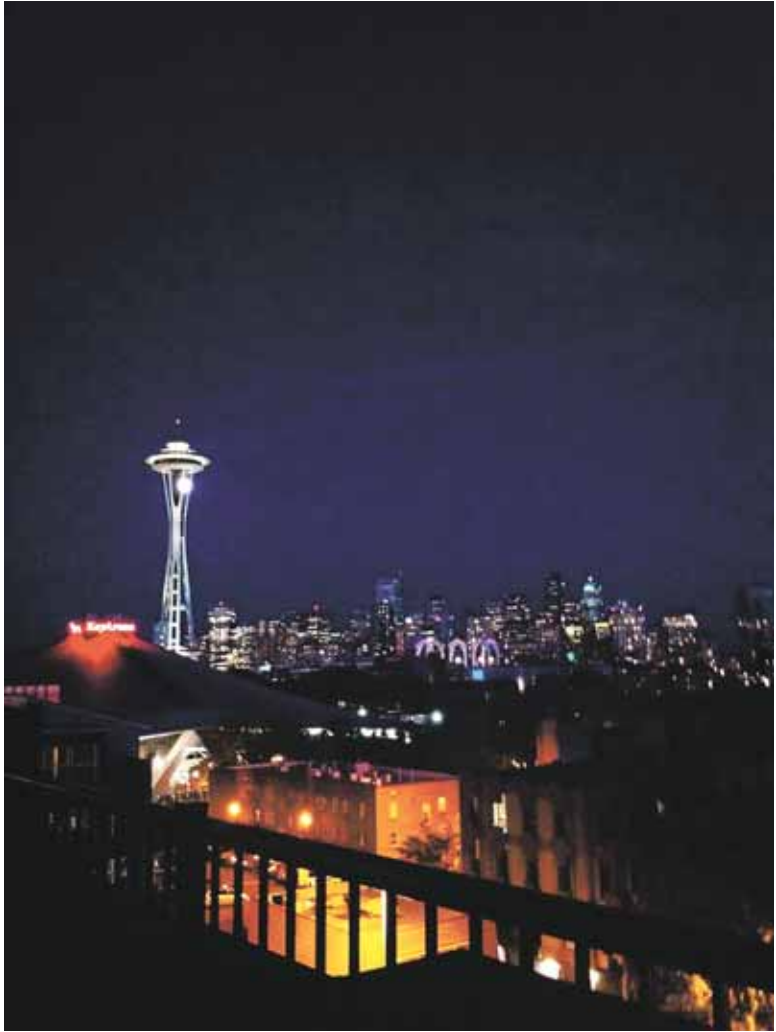
The Eye in the Sky by Isabel Barney, 8th grade. "I took this picture of the London Eye on vacation last summer, and I think it represents life in several ways. First, it shows that sometimes instead of focusing on what's directly in front of you (the wheel), you should also look through or beyond that (the sky and clouds). Also, the London Eye mixes technology and nature. The Eye itself is a piece of technology, but its purpose is to view the surrounding area, including nature. Life should be a mix of technology and nature and should be spent not only moving forward, but looking around you," Barney wrote.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

COOPER MIDDLE PHOTO GALLERY



Purple Pop by Maggie Bellaschi, 8th grade. "The picture of this flower represents that I am thankful for Mother Nature. I am thankful for the beautiful world that I live in, and I am thankful for the nature all around me. I am also thankful for my sight and that I can see all of the gorgeous things around me," Bellaschi wrote.



Reach for the Moon by Maggie Bellaschi, 8th grade. "This picture of the Seattle skyline and the Space Needle shows something I am thankful for. I am thankful for having the opportunity to travel to amazing places and see amazing sites. I am also very thankful for all the opportunities I have," Bellaschi wrote.



Being Strong, by Patrick Welch, 8th grade. "Life is all about being strong and resisting anything that comes at you. I put this flag in the ground a year ago in the middle of the winter, during heavy snowfall. When I walked outside yesterday, I saw the flag still standing there. Although it was dirty and torn, it withstood the elements, and survived to see another year; and that is what I think life is all about," Welch wrote.



Just Cheer Up! by Ashley Baradari, 8th grade. "Life is all about cheering people on when they need it most. If you're losing in a game or just simply need cheering up," Baradari wrote.



Beautiful for the Night by Carter Johnson, 8th grade. "The beauty of the sunset is what life should represent: marvelous yet humble, elegant yet underrated," Johnson wrote.

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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The Best Thing Mom Ever Taught Me

BY OLIVIA PERNA
7TH GRADE, COOPER MIDDLE

I don't know about you but writing an essay on some book I never read at 1 a.m. isn't the most appealing thing in the world. Over the years I found good ways to procrastinate by conjuring up things to Instagram or maybe something fun to do with my cat.

Afterwards I was so fed up with lying to myself I just stared into the white void of unfinished homework and walked away to complain to my mom on how I was so bored. She'd then reply, "Well, have you finished your homework?" I would state the automatic, unenthusiastic lie every adolescent repeats to their elders, "Yes." Followed by a rolling of the eyes and a terse grown.

It's about 5 p.m., and with no homework done I would be playing with my cat, Dexter. He lived the best life. No problems. No worries. No pain. No work. But then again, look where that put him. He's a big fluffy cat. Half of his day, he eats and the other stares at his food bowl, probably with a blank thought. Just as blank as my homework...

My mom told me she worked like a dog when starting out in her career. She once even worked through Christmas Eve into Christmas morning. I couldn't imagine doing such a task, the thought of it gives me a headache! I mean, how would working until you drop help someone? Living in what I guess is a cheap apartment, eating ramen daily; did all of that pay off?

Maybe it didn't pay off at the time, but she later became what I perceived as a great person. She seems to be always happy, and that's what counts, right? I don't believe you must become the utmost famous and wealthy person to become successful. Perhaps I may idolize my mother too much, but she's one of the most successful people I know. She's earned herself through hard work.

I might not say it much, just to preserve my teenage pride, but I love and idolize my mom for all of her hard work, if it be raising me or her struggles on becoming a businesswoman. She's no rich Bill Gates, or famous Michelle Obama, but she's my beloved mom.

My mom has influenced me to work harder in whatever it is I'm doing. Maybe with this newfound confidence will help me finish my homework! But then again, it's late and tomorrow is a school day. I should go to bed and worry about homework another time...

An Act of Kindness

BY MOMIN KALEEM
7TH GRADE, COOPER MIDDLE

When I was in first grade I moved into a new house. Nothing changed too much. I was still going to the same school and things like that but this neighborhood was a lot different than my old one. The old one wasn't big at all and had lots of kids around to play with. This new one was really big with huge houses and all the kids were a lot older than me.

After four more years of living in that neighborhood more kids came but either they were way older than me or traveled a lot. Across the street from us lived a nice couple that we had always been friends with. In fact when we first moved in they threw a house warming party for us. I don't know if that happens often or not. Either way they

were really nice neighbors.

They sometimes told my brother and I cool stories about what their childhood was like since they were born around the 60s. During a yard sale they gave my brother and I their old superhero comic books that use to sell for 15 cents at the stands. I still have them.

But one winter it snowed a ton and they flew out to Mexico to escape the cold. I realized that by the time they came back the snow in their yard would still be there. There was too much of it to melt that fast. I put on my coat and snow boots and walked across the street with my Dad's shovel in my hands.

I was still only nine so shoveling up that much snow was rather difficult. So I only shoveled enough to make room for their two cars to drive. I didn't really want those cars to get messed up in the snow because they were restored cars from the 50s and 60s. One was pink and the other a really dark green. I really liked them.

I came back about an hour later because they had a huge driveway. I took off my coat and boots and set my Dad's shovel in the garage. My mom had started a fire in the fireplace, so I sat down and felt the heat against my red cheeks.

A week later the snow hadn't melted and our neighbors had returned from Mexico. They showed up at our door. They asked if we knew who shoveled their driveway even though I could tell they knew it was me.

I felt weird about responding so my Mom told them it was me. They smiled and thanked me. Now I felt even weirder.

Our neighbors said goodbye and we closed the door and returned to the fire. Despite how weird it felt when they thanked me for shoveling the now, it still felt good. I couldn't stop smiling to myself.

The Most Important Thing I've Learned

BY ANNIE KRAEMER
7TH GRADE, COOPER MIDDLE

"Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get." -Forest Gump

What I've learned is not something you takes notes on in class, and not really something you learn in a school at all. It's the kind of thing you learn when you have to do go through it yourself. What I've learned is to always stay positive. Yeah, people always tell you that, sometimes you can help yourself. We all have negative thoughts sometimes and we can't stop thinking about those silly little imperfections, and mistakes.

I've had negative thoughts and sometimes it's so hard to push them away, but we all just have to stay positive. Look on the bright side of things even in the darkest light. I know there has to be at least one thing you love or there is something to smile about, even if it's one thing it does counts. Life can be so brutal and annoying but staying positive is about all you can do when you're in a hard spot.

I used to worry about everything I did. If my hair looked weird, the way I ate, the way I looked, how did I look when I did this or that, and all kinds of stupid stuff, and I would dwell on it but I have to realize it doesn't matter. By now everyone knows that saying, "Yolo" it's very annoying now,

SEE ESSAYS, PAGE 16

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Diversity, by Rehan Javaid, 10, McLean.



Winter, by Ayesha Javaid, McLean.



Friends by Rowan Clancy, 9, McLean.

SPRING HILL REFLECTIONS

FROM PAGE 11

I am a girl, I share my room with my brother and sister. I sometimes like my brother and sister, but not always. I love my family. I also like video games. I love all raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, and blueberries and I like carrots and apples.

One night my dad brought out a few presents for Myles, me and my mom. They were all ski stuff. My mom got ski pants, Myles got ski gloves and I did too. Mindy got mad because she didn't get a present so she started to cry, so my dad spun her around as a present for her and she laughed. I wish it was actually Christmas because Christmas is my favorite holiday, and me, Myles and Mindy all made a special surprise for my mom and dad. But I can't tell you what it is because my mom is going to read this. Merry Christmas.

—MIA BAO,
2ND GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

ESSAYS FROM COOPER MIDDLE

FROM PAGE 14

but it's true. You only live once so why worry about the stupid things when you can be happy.

Being positive is so much more refreshing and fun. Always try to stay positive, and not let the negative get to you. There are times when you can be sad, but never let it consume you.

If you don't have positive people around you it's hard to stay positive, sometimes you're going to have to make a choice, to be happy and positive, or people that keep bringing you don't? Even if it means you'll be alone for a little bit, it doesn't mean you'll be a lone forever.

Positivity is a big part of life choices.

Mom's Jokes

BY LORIN COSTLEY
7TH GRADE, COOPER MIDDLE

I will never know anyone like my mom. She is always there for me and understands me more than anyone. She is a really good basketball player and is always having fun. But one of my favorite things about our relationship is we feel very comfortable around each

other, the thing that I favor most about her are her April Fools jokes. This is just one of the jokes she has done on April Fools over the years.

I was 8 and in third grade, it was April Fools but I had forgotten. When I woke up for school my mom told me that today at school it was Sherlock Holmes day and that we were supposed to wear a mustache, and that she had gotten an e-mail from my teacher about it. It took a little while to convince me but eventually I bought it.

After I was all dressed my mom drew a mustache on me with a black marker. I went to school and everybody asked me why I was wearing a mustache, I said "Well it's Sherlock Holmes day, didn't you get the e-mail?"

It just so happens that that morning I was supposed to be on the morning news for the school to wish my teacher a happy birthday, and at the end of each program you each say your name.

After that I went into my classroom to empty out my back pack, and in it I found a note that said April Fools! Right then I said "Mom!" and apparently my teacher got an e-mail from my mom about it and so she told me that. Afterwards I went to class

and used the water from my water bottle to get it off.

Later in the hallway a fifth grader passed me and said, "Hey your Lorin, the girl that had the mustache on right?" but I said "Nope I'm Sarah that was my twin sister." And he bought it and kept walking. For the rest of the school day people kept saying "Your mom is awesome" and "I wish my mom would do something like that".

When I got home from school I gave my mom a big hug and told her that I loved her and her jokes. My mom is my best friend and I love everything about her but my favorite thing about her are her practical jokes.

My Plan to Help the World

BY ABBY
7TH GRADE, COOPER MIDDLE

When I grow up I want to change the world and make a difference in people's lives. Many people find it odd but I love the feeling I get when I help someone, it's always so rewarding! It all started on my sixth birthday when my mom and I were planning my



By Nathan Alexander Pearce, 4, McLean, Chesterbrook Preschool.

party.

My mom asked me "What do you want for your birthday?" and I said canned food. She looked at me in a weird way like I was crazy, but then I said not for me, for a local homeless shelter. My mom smiled. On my birthday I was so happy, I had collected so much food! That was a feeling I will never forget.

It is now a tradition to collect canned food on my birthday, but I

didn't just wanted to stop there. I soon started raising money for charities; I raised over \$3,000 for Jill's House, \$1,000 for JDRE, Diabetes research foundation, over \$6,500 for the Langley Basketball Coach's baby girl who was diagnosed with cancer, and a couple thousand dollars for my friend Tiana who was diagnosed with Bone cancer.

SEE ESSAYS, PAGE 17

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

ESSAYS FROM
COOPER MIDDLE

FROM PAGE 16

In July, 2013 I went on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic. It was sad to see the way they had to live; I went to many places there and I decided to help them to. I am now raising money and collecting clothes and toys for Pesitos de Jesus, a girls orphanage, and I am trying to raise \$10,000 because that would be enough for each girl there to get \$365 which would guarantee them food and water every day for a year.

During the mission trip when we were about to leave all the girls stood in front of us and told us to sit because they want to put on a show. Once we sat down they started to sing; then one by one, still singing, they walked up to us and kept giving us hugs and hugs and more hugs, it was amazing.

When they were done and it was almost time to say goodbye, a little girl came up to me, her name was Jessica and she was only 4-years-old, she gave me the biggest hug every, kissed me on the cheek, and said thank you; at that same moment another girl grabbed my hand gently and put two bracelets on it. These girls had close to nothing, yet they still wanted to give. This was a life-changing experience and I will never forget any of them.

To this day I still have those two bracelets that were given to me and I will cherish them forever. I have been through and seen so much pain people go through every day. All these kids and adults who go through this kind of thing every day, they are my inspiration, my reason to help others. Like I said earlier helping others is rewarding for many reasons but my favorite is I get to go to sleep every night and say I could of saved a life today, and to me that's all that matters!

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

ESSAYS FROM CHURCHILL ROAD

Freedom of the Press

BY ISABELLA HENDRICKS
6TH GRADE, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

As Thomas Jefferson once said in 1786, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost." Two hundred and twenty seven years later, this still holds true for Americans. If there were limitations to what we are able to say in the media, then we wouldn't be able to freely express ourselves. The freedom of press betters the quality of lives for many people because it allows people to make informed decisions about society while expressing beliefs and opinions in various ways.

Imagine a world without Internet, newspapers, magazines and radios. Losing one of the three forms of media is devastating, but could you imagine living without the freedom of all three? If you were a citizen of North Korea, you wouldn't be able to enjoy these simple necessities. Unlike Americans, they aren't allowed to have different views or written opinions on people in powerful positions. They're programmed to think and act the same, like robots, always walking on eggshells and living in their own personal, silent prison. Can a democracy function properly with a populous that is not informed of the issues effecting its government?

Every day, I'm thankful for the ability to look through magazines and scroll through the Internet to learn about the opinions of others. Even though I don't have a Facebook or Twitter, it is nice to know that I have the option of posting my opinions in writ-

ten form. So today or in the future, I will use this liberty to better society by expressing my strong beliefs and opinions in writing. As a lover of writing, I know I won't be prosecuted for speaking my mind, and this is a liberty Americans often take for granted but shouldn't.

Popsicle Making

BY MICHELLE DU
4TH GRADE, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

"It's too hot!" my big sister and I groaned. We just had come home from the marketplace. "What should we do? I know! Let's make popsicles!" We were in the land of Hawaii and we were really enjoying the trip. My sister told me her idea. From the freezer, we took out an ice-cube tray. Then we snatched apple juice out of the refrigerator. Slowly and carefully, we took turns pouring juice in each hole. While wiping up the juice we spilled, we discussed our experiment/creation. After that, we deliberately took the tray to the freezer. The juice wavered. Then, finally, we got it to the freezer. Next, my family went to the beach. When we got to our hotel room, we looked in the freezer for a snack. There it sat, the very special and unique snack. "Apple popsicles!" my sister cried. We admired the cool, smooth, golden cube. It sparkled and glistened while we took it out. Getting ready to taste it, I grinned.

SEE ESSAYS, PAGE 20



By Meaghan Greenway, 4th grade, Haycock Elementary School, Falls Church.



By Tyler Jensen, 4th grade, Haycock Elementary School, Falls Church.

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

POETRY CORNER

FROM PAGE 8

she fills the room with fun
like filling an empty cup with sweet warm
hot chocolate
Music is always invited
because there is no silence,
Never,
only
Music

— ADELAIDE LOVING,
5TH GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

Competition

I am thankful for competition
Without competition the world would be
dull and boring
Competition is what keeps us from giving in
Sports like swimming would not exist
without competition
Some people confuse competition with
rivalry, but they can be very different
Rivalry is fueled by resentment and jealousy
Competition comes from hard work and challenges
I have competition to thank for some of
what I have today
As it is the backbone of competition
Competition fuels the fire that burns inside us
Providing us with that extra boost from
inside; driving us to succeed

Achieving the ultimate goal through competition, that is the best feeling in the world
That is what I am thankful for.

— JOHN BRADSHAW,
5TH GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

Loneliness

Loneliness lives in the pit of your stomach,
while you're hiding in the corner of the playground
when all your friends are gone
she is always trying to fit in and be normal
but she is different
she wears a loose black shirt that has lost its shine
and faded jeans that look as gray as a stormy sky
she is thin and bony
her face is gaunt,
for she has been forgotten
she hides in the corner of her class
and tries to be helpful
but no one will listen to her
no one ever looks her in the eye
even if she tries so hard to get attention
no one notices
Because she is loneliness
that everyone hates

— SARAH MOCKNICK,
5TH GRADE, SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY

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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

ESSAYS FROM CHURCHILL ROAD

FROM PAGE 18

My First Friend

BY REBECCA ZHANG

4TH GRADE, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

I was so nervous; this is the first day of elementary school for me. I was jumping up and down, and up and down while holding my mom's hand. "Remember to be brave and make a friend," my mom whispered. "What if no one likes me?" I thought when I stepped in the room. Everyone seemed to know each other but, I didn't know anyone. The teacher greeted me and then my mom took a picture of both of us. I gave my mom a big hug and said bye. I found a girl that looked lonely, like me, she seemed not to know anyone. In the hallway, my mom said to be brave and you will make a friend. I took a deep breath and walked over to her. We talked to each other and played with some blocks. Before we knew it, we were BFF's. All day we played together, talked and laughed. Finally, it was the end of the day. My mom's advice worked well. Everything turned out better than I expected.

The Gift

BY JASMINE ANDRESOL

3RD GRADE, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

I did not realize it until now, but moving to Virginia was a gift. I was moving from Florida. I moved here when I was 4 -years-old. I really did not care that we were moving, nor did I know why we were, but I soon fell in love with my new home and kind of missed Florida at the same time. I knew what was best. There was better education in Virginia and really friendly people. Virginia is closer to my family because they live in Canada, New Jersey, and New York. I really did savor the time I was there in Florida. There was no such thing as snow, but I could walk to the beach every single day, I had a backyard all to myself and four or five more family members (it was about 1 acre square, super cheap stuff including houses, I went to Disney World all the time and no allergy season! There are cons about Florida: hurricanes, having to take a plane every time I visit family (I don't like planes), no exotic plant life (it was all palm trees), everything is so far away, day care was too easy (the purpose is to learn and I was not) and it's so hot. Virginia is a wonderful place and here are some pros: no hurricanes, all four seasons, different kinds of plants (it inspired me to be a

botanist), really nice people, different weather and not too many hurricanes. There are still cons about Virginia- allergy season, cold weather, expensive things and traffic, but I think Virginia is better. Even though there are cons for Virginia, Florida has more cons. It's a good thing I moved out to a place with less cons.

On the Podium

BY CAITLIN CUNNINGHAM

6TH GRADE, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY

"Good morning, Churchill Road! This is Kate reporting to you live from the Bobcat Broadcasting Center!" I took a deep, excited breath. When Kate was done speaking, it would be my turn.

It was the first day of the morning announcements news crew. The week before, my mom asked me if I wanted to do an activity, such as patrols or news crew. "I think I would like news best," I said.

So, earlier this morning, my family got to school early, while the sun was still rising. I hurried to the main entrance of the school. Inside, it was empty and quiet. I hurried upstairs and dropped off my backpack in my classroom. After I unstacked my chair, I rushed downstairs to the library, where the newsroom was located.

When I got to the library, it was silent. As I went inside, Ms. Simpson, the librarian, looked up. I held up my signed permission slip. "News crew?" she asked. I nodded. She stood up, took my slip, and led me to the room in the back of the library. It was filled with computers and cameras, and as I looked around, other news crew members filed in.

I smiled, remembering how I had been first to volunteer to be an anchor after Ms. Simpson showed me and the other news crew members around the news room.

"Thank you!" Kate said suddenly, then passed the mic to me. My heart sped up as I stepped up to the podium and began to read from my script.

"Hi, I am Caitlin Cunningham," I began. I led the Pledge of Allegiance slowly, and everyone in the room joined me. The Moment of Silence gave me a minute to catch my breath. I announced the cheer winners proudly, knowing the kids on the other end of the TV were waiting to hear their names. I was not on the air for very long, but I was smiling the whole time, as I loved having the school as my audience.

A few minutes later, the production was over, but just for the day.

I would come to the library again and again to do the news, but I would never forget my first time standing on the podium, in front of the camera.

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The Daze of My Life

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Every three weeks I have chemotherapy. Every three months I have a CT Scan. And every three months – after that scan, I have an appointment with my oncologist to discuss the results. And before any of the above, the Wednesday before my Friday infusion, I go for my pre-chemo lab work to determine if my levels are up to protocol standards in order to allow me to even get treatment two days hence on Friday. Accordingly, I live my life in three-week/three-month cycles. And after each infusion/appointment, the cycle begins all over again. Unlike a credit card expiration date that renews for three years, my expiration date, such as it is presumed to be, renews for only three months – or shorter if my scan results and lab work are discouraging. And I can live with that; I have been living with that. But short-timing like this can play mind games, as I alluded to in last week's column. Though I usually know whether I'm coming or going, I don't always know whether I'm standing pat or betting on a future.

And since I'm not a betting man – or much of a gambler, I usually stand pat and act as if life will go on as it sort of has: with fits (not literally) and starts, with some good results – and some not so good results. On balance though, my results have been above and beyond the expectation of my oncologist. And in a peculiar way, that's what I sort of live for: to surprise my doctor. There's no better feeling I have than to see my oncologist smiling back at me, almost inexplicably, as to why I've been able to live for as long as I have. Though I've always maintained a positive outlook and kept my sense of humor, I can't really speak to whether these two traits would have convinced my oncologist that my initial "13 month to two-year" prognosis was merely a starting point, not the end game that he had predicted. Moreover, given the severity of my original diagnosis: stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer; metastasized, inoperable, terminal; and supported by all the less-than-encouraging, life-expectancy-challenged statistics from your favorite cancer society, I am in fact living proof that what has gone around is not always what goes around. Patients are different. Lifestyles are different. Drug/medication interactions are different. Commitment levels to alternative methodologies are different. In general, there are many variables. As bad as the diagnosis/prognosis was, I never gave up hope, never gave in to my disease – emotionally.

Now whether there's a rhyme or reason to my exceedingly good fortune – or whether I'm just incredibly lucky, I can't say for sure. Certainly I don't have any definitive keys to the kingdom, so to speak, that have enabled me to live free and not die. I just try to take each day as it comes, and not expect too much and not overreact to what symptoms/feelings I may be experiencing. As my father used to say, every day that he would wake up is a good day. And since I've been waking up now going on five years, in spite of my many three-week/three-month intervals, I'm happy to say: keep those intervals coming; it may very well be what's been keeping me alive.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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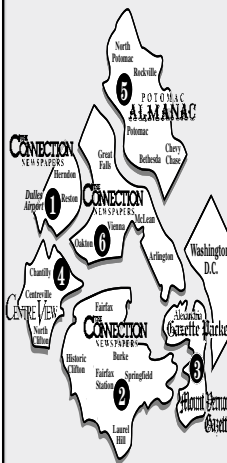
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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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By Juliana Sanchez Halpern, kindergarten, Kent Gardens Elementary.

Memories

BY NADIA EUGENE JO,
12, McLEAN

Dented door
Backpack straps hanging out
Faded numbers
I have lots of memories.
Kids overfeed me
making me throw up when they open
me again
A+ papers as well as ones with an F
Scattered bobby pins and hair ties
Sneakers and sweatpants

I am always full.
Kids' funny graffiti
Many pictures of celebrities
Cards from friends
I have lots of happiness.
But whether good or bad
I have lots of memories.
And I am not jealous of
shining new lockers
that know nothing.

The Search

BY KATHERINE ROHLOFF,
11TH GRADE, LANGLEY HIGH
SCHOOL

In again, out again, in again,
out again
Like a broken record, my life
has skipped and repeated,
skipped and repeated
One project after the other is
delved into with the enthusi-
asm of an enlightened artist
And the resolute vows for
completion are etched into
stone
Yet somehow, for whatever
reason, each project becomes
short lived

The sudden burst of inspira-
tion and good intentions is
completely evaporated
Leaving nothing but the
lonely outline of a masterpiece
in its place
And then it's on to the next
subject of interest
Over and over, in again and
out again
Constantly searching and
searching for the perfect
amalgamation of passion and
persistence.



Magical Birth by Victoria Cho,
8th grade, Great Falls.



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