

By Emma Jones,  
eighth grade,  
Irving Middle School.

# Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ❖ Kingstowne ❖ Newington

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## Children's Connection 2013

DECEMBER 26, 2013 - JANUARY 1, 2014

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# 2013 FCFT President's Award



*for Outstanding Advocacy  
for the Employees of FCPS*

Megan McLaughlin (Braddock District)

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Sandy Evans (Mason District)

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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 Aimi Nguyen, 7th grade, Key Middle School.



By Alexa Lee, Mark Twain Middle School.

## Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Springfield/Franconia/Kingstowne/Newington 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](mailto: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.

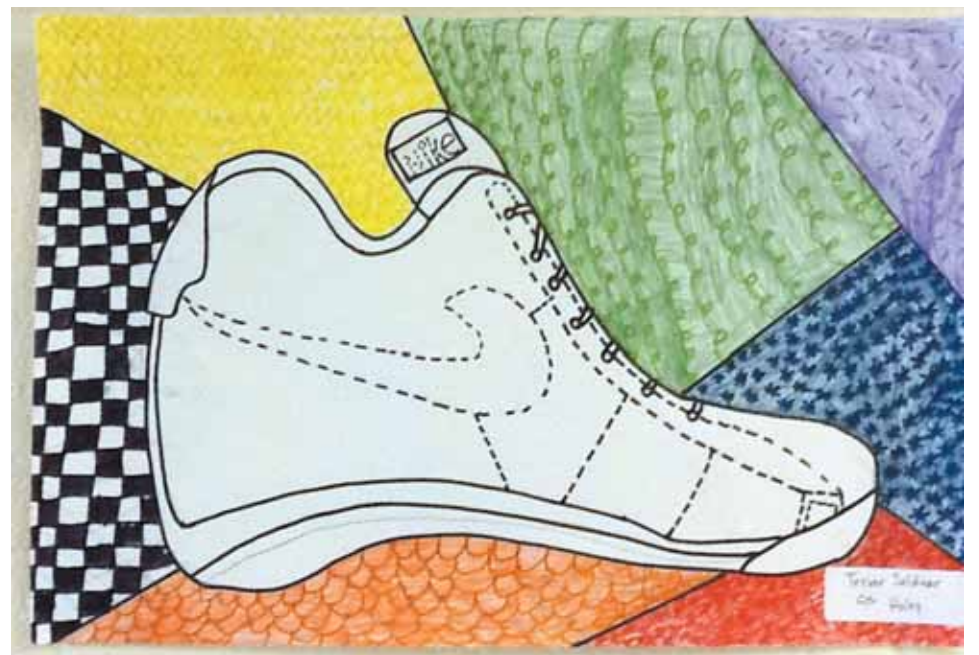
EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC



By Naomi Hill, 8th grade, Irving Middle School.



By Arman Alim, Springfield Estates Elementary.



By Trevor Saldivar, 5th grade, Lynbrook Elementary.

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Jillian Gross, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, West Springfield High School.



WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL GALLERY

By Amanda Thai, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, West Springfield High School.



An ebony pencil self-portrait by Suyeon Kim, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, West Springfield High School.

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# 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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By Erik Cabling, Mark Twain Middle School.

## MARK TWAIN MIDDLE ART GALLERY



By Naom Tibebe, Mark Twain Middle School.



By Jackeline Benitez, Mark Twain Middle School.



By Ying Lu, Mark Twain Middle School.



By Olivia Regehr, Mark Twain Middle School.



By Jhonas Perez-Leuchert, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Franconia Elementary.



By Henry Mason, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Franconia Elementary.



By Taylor Robinson, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Franconia Elementary.

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## REFLECTIONS

### My Favorite Toy

My favorite toys are Legos. One reason is that you can build with them and take them apart. Secondly, you can collect pieces called mini-figures which are in Lego sets. Mini-figures are fun to collect because you can make videos with mini-figures. Finally, what makes Legos cool is that every year the makers of Legos come out with new sets so you won't run out of sets to build. That is why Legos are my favorite toy.

—JACKSON DAUGHTERS,  
4TH GRADE,  
KINGS GLEN ELEMENTARY

### What Makes a Good Friend

What makes a good friend? A good friend is always nice to her friends. A good friend also really doesn't care what game you play. A good friend is outgoing. A good friend helps people. Also, a good friend is always looking for more friends if someone is lonely. Do you think this is what a good friend is? I do.

— LAUREN TIPPET,  
4TH GRADE,  
KINGS GLEN ELEMENTARY

### Field Trip to Jamestown

Fourth Graders should all go on a field trip to Jamestown. If you don't go, then you will never learn more facts about Jamestown. You will visit the river where the water made the colonists sick. You'll also have so much fun at Jamestown. You can explore the ships. You'll see all the things you learned about like the fort. Most importantly, every Fourth Grader should go because you will have an awesome time.

—AMANDA MORCELO,  
4TH GRADE,  
KINGS GLEN ELEMENTARY

### Go to Work with Your Dad

I think every kid should go to work with their dad. You should go to work with your dad because it is amazing seeing where your dad goes every morning. It does not matter where your dad works because at least your dad has a job. If you go to work with your dad, you get to spend more time with your dad. So, every kid should go to work with their dad.

— SAVANNAH CLARK.

4TH GRADE, KINGS GLEN  
ELEMENTARY

### A.J. Green

A.J.Green of the Cincinnati Bengals is a very good football player. He is very fast and tall. He can make plays over the players that are on the other team. A.J. can also run for 81 to 100 yards on the field. He can jump very high to catch the ball in the air. He is probably the tallest player in the NFL. He should be in the Hall of Fame.

A.J. Green is a great football player.

— DAVID SOLOMON,  
4TH GRADE,  
KINGS GLEN ELEMENTARY

### Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is the best city of all cities. First, it has an awesome museum. The museum teaches you about animals, how time began, and it shows you arti-

facts found in a digging site. It has great traffic. You can get to places faster. You can do the kite festival in the spring. So go to Washington, D.C. You'll be glad you did.

— GUS POLNOW,  
4TH GRADE,  
KINGS GLEN ELEMENTARY

### The Best Gift Ever

My family has always been there for me and always cared about me.

I realize that my best gift isn't a video game or a bicycle; it's my family who I am thankful for. They are the ones who buy me clothes and feed me food. My mom, dad, and brother are better than a present. Instead of getting presents for Christmas, I should give my presents away. I already have all I need.

— JOSHUA BONAR,  
6TH GRADE,  
FRANCONIA ELEMENTARY

SEE REFLECTIONS, PAGE 11

## A NEW YEAR'S STATE OF MIND

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**Pink Flamingo**, by Bhaavya Jilludumudi, kindergarten, Orange Hunt Elementary.



**Super Helper**, by Katie Newnum, 1st grade, Orange Hunt Elementary.



**Self Portrait** by Emma Klassa, 3rd grade, Orange Hunt Elementary.



**Contour Drawing of Shoes** by Rebecca Payton, 5th grade, Orange Hunt Elementary.

## CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Aaron Schaum, 8th grade.



By Taylor Hiep, 8th grade.



## Transformation

How to transform your doodle drawings into a work of art!

By STUDENTS AT KEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Mariel Miranda Marquez, 7th grade.



By Antonio Barr, 8th grade.



By Korryn Pudleiner, 7th grade.



By Christine Nguyen, 7th grade.



By Sierra Sterns, 7th grade.

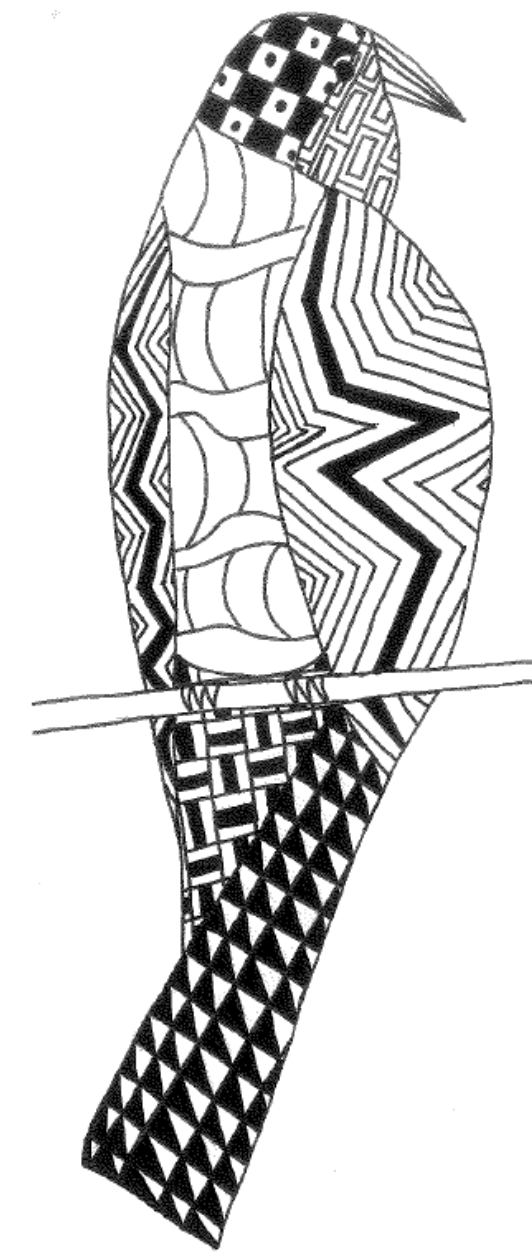


By Anna Goetz, 6th grade, Keene Mill Elementary

## A Riddle

Its home is nowhere.  
It is nothing. It is something.  
It's known as cold and cruel.  
It's known as warm and welcoming.  
It is the guardian of the sky.  
Answer: the wind

—ADDIE MERLO,  
6TH GRADE, KEENE MILL ELEMENTARY



By Charlie Wheaton, 6th grade, Keene Mill Elementary

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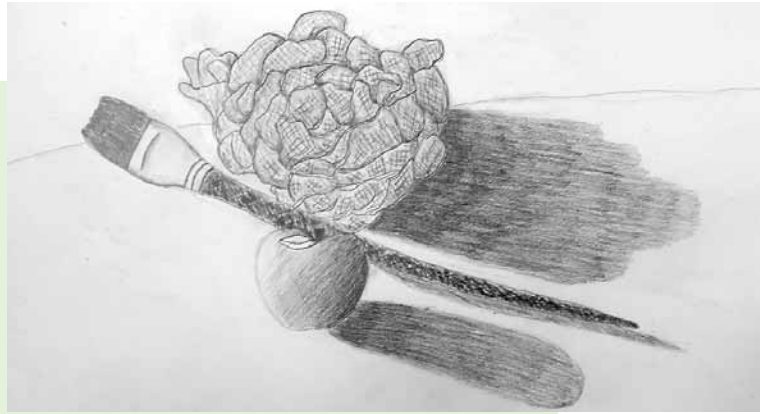


By Emma Jones, 8th grade, Irving Middle School.



By Maddie Aub, 8th grade, Irving Middle School.

By Soha Mohammed, 7th grade, Irving Middle School.



By Spencer, Irving Middle School.



Najma Ali Abokor, 8th grade, Irving Middle School.



By Pandora Zhang, 6th grade, Lynbrook Elementary.



By Katherine Sejas, 6th grade, Lynbrook Elementary.



By Carolina Viera-Castro, 2nd grade, Lynbrook Elementary.

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## REFLECTIONS

FROM PAGE 7

### A Gift I Always Want

My best gift ever was not my Xbox 360. My best gift ever was not getting a Wii. I got a gift that was even better than hockey! My best gift ever was waking up and seeing snow out the window, then seeing my mom with hot chocolate. My brother and I watched as the snow was falling down and we sipped our hot, sweet goodness. Now that is the best gift ever!

— NOUR CHIRCHI, 6TH GRADE, FRANCONIA ELEMENTARY

### The Real Spirit of Giving

The spirit of giving to me is all about giving to people who need, not want. It's all about smiling and thanks. Giving is one of the best words. I learned that it is better to give than to receive. I have even felt the happiness that runs through your body when you give.

— EVA PERRY, 6TH GRADE, FRANCONIA ELEMENTARY

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—Sir Philip Gibbs

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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



By Briana Barr, 2nd grade, West Springfield Elementary.



By Calla Coleman, 2nd grade, West Springfield Elementary School.



By Arianna Jackson, 2nd grade, West Springfield Elementary.



By Aiden Grant, 3rd grade, West Springfield Elementary School.

## Bright Light Pillow

Bright light pillow shine your light, be my flashlight for tonight.

Help me see and shine your light across the sky, be my buddy and by my side.

Shine your bright light across the moon, I really hope to see it soon.

Oh please shine your light, oh please be my flashlight for tonight.

Shine your light all around, help me see in the air and on the ground.

Shine your spotlights in a row, make the world, glow, glow, glow.

— AVA HAMILTON,  
2ND GRADE, ROLLING VALLEY ELEMENTARY

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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



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

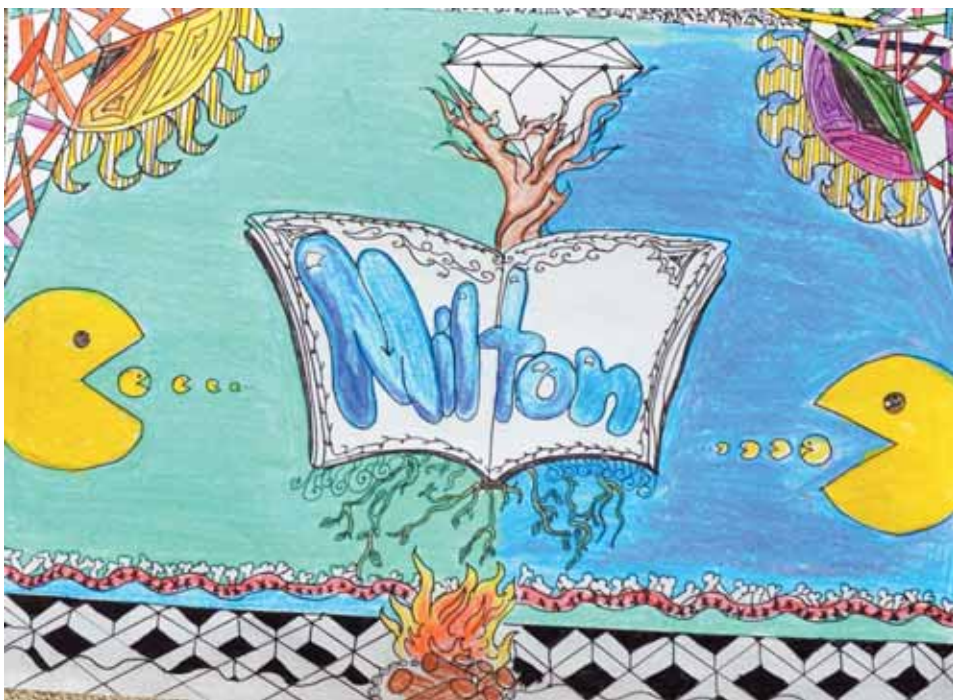
## Everyday

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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