

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

Pressure For Our Environment

(Original)

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Hello Gina,

There is such a large difference between the ages of 16 and 26. I would have never believed at age 16 that I could ever drive down the streets of my hometown and see the mountains nearby without clouds of pollution blocking my view at any age, let alone one as young as 26. Environmental progress to that extent would not have been believable to me because of how prevalent pollution was.

I remember being in middle school and learning that children living just a few miles away from me were unable to access clean drinking water due to the pollution of our groundwater sources. I was absolutely bewildered. How could children the same age as me not be able to access drinking water when they lived in the same United States of America that I did?

After researching that issue, I learned that this wasn't that uncommon, especially in Latino and Black communities. I discovered that environmental issues did not affect everyone equally. It disproportionately affected minority communities. Low-income, Black, and Brown communities in America were unable to access clean air and water at the same rate as other communities. That was when my eyes were opened up to a larger intersectionality between environmentalism, racism, and classism that was mirrored by almost all other nations in the world. In every nation, environmental issues always affected the most impoverished communities the most. More pollution always meant more sicknesses and that always affected the poorest communities.

A few months into 2021, the fight against climate change became widespread globally as more people began to realize the disproportionate effects of climate change. We rallied for change.

I am proud to say that after constant pressure from regular citizens throughout the world, we civilly tackled the intersectional environmental problems through government

change. By valuing the lives of those in impoverished, neglected communities that were the most likely to fall victim to environmental issues, we made great strides towards global justice.

I believe that in an ideal society, there is always continuous progress towards something greater, and that is exactly what we are doing. We have learned to prioritize the kindness that is so prevalent in our world instead of ignoring it. You can see all the media sources make large strides to outline the greatness of the work that is done by regular citizens.

When I look at the news as I take the electric train to and from work, I no longer see stories concerning communities without access to drinking water. Instead, I see stories about people, young and old, creating positive changes throughout their communities. By working to end the connections between environmentalism, racism, and classism, our world now proactively works to prioritize the health and wellbeing of the impoverished.

Every time I visit my hometown, I can feel a strong tug at my heart as I am reminded of the problems that were once ignored by so many. One of Martin Luther King Jr.'s quotes conjure up this exact tug within me. "A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right." This powerful quote expresses that once we stop talking about the injustices of our world, our morality will wear away, which is why we should never stop talking about them.

Today, the water near my hometown is clean for all children to safely drink. They can always view nature's most beautiful scenes without the mask of pollution getting in the way. This was only possible because we collectively took a stand for environmental justice for our most vulnerable communities.

Globally, we have never been stronger because our nations have collectively aided each other in the battle against climate injustice. I still cannot believe that all of this worldly good has come about from regular citizens advocating for their neighbors.

I wish to reiterate that you must always stand up for what you believe in out of kindness for the world. You must always work for justice and peace while empathetically prioritizing the problems of your neighbors. You must always actively vouch for those who are suffering silently.

I wish you the best from the future.