



# Smyrna School District

## Essay Contest

2002-03

Adult and Student Winners

A decorative border of pencils surrounds the text. At the top, three pencils are arranged horizontally. On the left and right sides, pencils are arranged vertically. At the bottom, three pencils are arranged horizontally. In the bottom right corner, there is a pencil holder containing several pencils.

## I ♥ the Smyrna School District

The third essay contest to support the five Smyrna School District core values of *Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Integrity, and Compassion* was held during the month of January 2003. There were two categories of winners: adults (18 and over) and students (K through Grade 12). First, second, and third place winners received medals and certificates noting their accomplishments during "I Love the Smyrna School District" day, February 22, 2003.

The 2003 writing contest focused on the value of *Compassion*. Hundreds of touching and heartfelt essays were submitted. This booklet contains the essays of first, second, and third place winners at all levels.

I hope this booklet is a source of inspiration for both the readers and the writers.

I extend my sincere appreciate to all who contributed their time and effort to enter this contest and share their thoughts.

*Hebbie Weeks*

Superintendent

# Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Adult, First Place Winner, <i>Jim McGuigan</i> .....	9
Adult, First Place Winner, <i>Diane Merritt</i> .....	10

## Smyrna Kindergarten Center

AM Kindergarten, First Place Winner, <i>Raymond Hennen</i> .....	15
AM Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, <i>Gabrielle Trettel</i> .....	15
AM Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, <i>Autumn Birney</i> .....	15
PM Kindergarten, First Place Winner, <i>Julie Carpenter</i> .....	15
PM Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, <i>Ian Norman</i> .....	15
PM Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, <i>Alexis Fortney</i> .....	15
Full Day Kindergarten, First Place Winner, <i>Taylor Tucker</i> .....	15
Full Day Kindergarten, Second Place Winner, <i>Freddie Lawrence</i> .....	15
Full Day Kindergarten, Third Place Winner, <i>Dylan Huff</i> .....	15

## Smyrna Elementary School

Grade 1, First Place Winner, <i>Tyler Thorpe</i> .....	19
Grade 1, Second Place Winner, <i>Kerstin Vinyard</i> .....	19
Grade 1, Third Place Winner, <i>Jessica Granger</i> .....	19
Grade 2, First Place Winner, <i>Alex Lopez</i> .....	19
Grade 2, Second Place Winner, <i>Heather Hobson</i> .....	20
Grade 2, Third Place Winner, <i>Eddie VanLanten</i> .....	20
Grade 3, First Place Winner, <i>Taylor Pugh</i> .....	20
Grade 3, Second Place Winner, <i>Morgan Kay Seymour</i> .....	21
Grade 3, Third Place Winner, <i>A. J. Miles</i> .....	22
Grade 4, First Place Winner, <i>Kristen Norris</i> .....	22
Grade 4, Second Place Winner, <i>Eric Morris Huff</i> .....	23
Grade 4, Third Place Winner, <i>Chelsea Botsch</i> .....	24

## Clayton Elementary School

Grade 1, First Place, <i>Kaitlyn Garrison</i> .....	27
Grade 1, Second Place, <i>Caitlin Hamilton</i> .....	27
Grade 1, Third Place, <i>Katelyn Stidham</i> .....	27

Grade 2, First Place, <i>Matthew R. Cooke</i> .....	27
Grade 2, Second Place, <i>Ashley Lennon</i> .....	28
Grade 2, Third Place, <i>Alyssa Lattomus</i> .....	28
Grade 3, First Place, <i>Tyler Pritt</i> .....	29
Grade 3, Second Place, <i>Jasmin Carter</i> .....	30
Grade 3, Third Place, <i>Rahvey Vails</i> .....	31
Grade 4, First Place, <i>Nick Motyl</i> .....	31
Grade 4, Second Place, <i>Cassandra Rhodes</i> .....	32
Grade 4, Third Place, <i>Conor Brewer</i> .....	33

North Elementary School

Grade 5, First Place, <i>Kailey Brewer</i> .....	37
Grade 5, Second Place, <i>Katie Vinyard</i> .....	38
Grade 5, Third Place, <i>Mike Stewart</i> .....	39
Grade 6, First Place, <i>Jessica Dougherty</i> .....	39
Grade 6, Second Place, <i>Chaise Andrae</i> .....	40
Grade 6, Third Place, <i>Hank Robinson</i> .....	41

Smyrna Middle School

Grade 7, First Place, <i>Britney Whitby</i> .....	45
Grade 7, Second Place, <i>Anna White</i> .....	45
Grade 7, Third Place, <i>Leila Sammander</i> .....	46
Grade 8, First Place, <i>Alicia Williams</i> .....	46
Grade 8, Second Place, <i>Emily Drews</i> .....	47
Grade 8, Third Place, <i>Kurt Reed</i> .....	48

Smyrna High School

Grade 9, First Place, <i>Leann Baumann</i> .....	51
Grade 9, Second Place, <i>Heather Long</i> .....	51
Grade 9, Third Place, <i>Morgan Scuse</i> .....	52
Grade 10, First Place, <i>Julie Lamborn</i> .....	53
Grade 10, Second Place, <i>Chucky Ford</i> .....	54
Grade 10, Third Place, <i>Jordan Steller</i> .....	55
Grade 11, First Place, <i>Andrew Burns</i> .....	55
Grade 11, Second Place, <i>Mike Hartnett</i> .....	56
Grade 11, Third Place, <i>Kelvin Barthelmeh</i> .....	57

Page

Grade 12, First Place, *Scott Cahall*..... 57  
Grade 12, Second Place, *Dan Morris* ..... 58  
Grade 12, Third Place, *Mandy Meadows*..... 59

Honorable Mention ..... 61

For the third annual "I Love the Smyrna School District" essay contest, students and adults were asked to write about *Compassion*, a core district value. Contest rules and a writing prompt were disseminated to students (via their teachers) and the community in January 2003. As always, the writing prompt was created to mirror the type of prompt students might encounter on the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) writing tests given each spring.

Our judges this year were Ruth Williams, Smyrna School District English teacher retired and Ben Mace, editor, *Smyrna-Clayton Sun Times*. Karen Kennedy, Smyrna School District Central Office secretary, assisted with the layout and editing of the final publication. Janet Garrett, business teacher and department chairperson at Smyrna High School, provided typing and publications expertise. District teachers encouraged their students to write and helped select essays. Appreciation is extended to all for their time and effort in making this publication possible.

Note that in the case of the two adult entrants, the judges decided that the gold medal (first place) was appropriately shared this year. In addition, this is the first year that kindergarten students submitted writing in addition to pictures reflecting the value of *Compassion*. Finally, elementary students completed the *Compassion* prompt in the form of a letter to President Bush.

### ***ESSAY CONTEST***

Contestants were asked to write a maximum 500-word essay on the following topic:

*Compassion means a deep feeling for and understanding of others without regard to race, age, creed, or social standing. This includes kindness, generosity, forgiveness, caring, friendship, love, and sharing toward all people including the physically and mentally challenged.*

Think about a person who you believe is full of compassion. Tell in detail why you chose this particular person, what specific qualities this person possesses, and give specific examples of his/her compassion.

**ADULT WINNERS:** First (gold), second (silver) and third (bronze) place winners received medals and certificates noting their accomplishments. Their essays have been published in the *Smyrna-Clayton Sun Times*. Winners and runners-up were recognized during the "I Love the Smyrna School District" day (February 22, 2003).

**STUDENT WINNERS:** First (gold), second (silver) and third (bronze) place winners were selected at each grade level (K-12) in each building. Winners received medals and certificates noting their accomplishments. First place winners at each grade level had their work published in the *Smyrna-Clayton Sun Times*. All winners were recognized during the "I Love the Smyrna School District" day (February 22, 2003).



The American Heritage Dictionary defines the virtue “Compassion” as follows: *A deep awareness of the suffering of another.* I firmly believe that this virtue is innate, and nurtured by most perpetuating goodwill and fellowship. In all of my life, and considering all of the people I have had the privilege of knowing, no one person embodies, or displays the virtue of compassion more effortlessly than Sherril McGuigan...my mother.

Among the many selfless acts my mother has performed over the years, two shine just a bit brighter in my mind than all the rest. The first occurred many years ago when all my brothers and sisters and I were still living at home. After talking with the family to make sure that her decision would not inconvenience anyone, my mother set out to get her high school diploma. She, like many other of her “Baby-boomer” comrades, left high school in the early sixties to take on the awesome responsibilities of housewife and mother.

After a time, and much hard work she achieved her goal and graduated, earning her diploma. However, she did not attend the graduation ceremony that followed. I did not find out until many years later that she did not attend because the money that would have been used to buy a new dress and shoes for the occasion, (not to mention her cap and gown) was needed for us, her children. She would not take away from our needs just to satisfy hers, and her desire to attend the ceremony that celebrated all that she had worked for, was great. Like so many times before she did this with a smile, and no fanfare.

Thankfully, years later, I had the opportunity to make a speech at the Groves Adult High School during a graduation ceremony. The principal there remembered my mother, and I told him of what had happened so many years before. He devised a plan. With my father’s help, I secreted away my mother's diploma, Mr. DiSalvo (Groves principal) got her a cap and gown, and during the ceremony, and unbeknownst to my mother, her name was called to finally walk! An assistant helped her put on the cap and gown. She cried the whole way, right up to the stage to receive, with proper pomp, her diploma.

My siblings and I have not been the only recipients of my mother’s compassion. Recently, and at no surprise to me, she again put her needs and desires aside to help a good friend, and co-worker.

My mother has been a para-professional at Smyrna Elementary School for the past 17 years. She loves her job, and loves working with the students. Last year the district decided that one of the paras at Smyrna would have to transfer to Clayton Elementary. No one really wanted to transfer. Everyone, including mom, was content to stay where they were. The transfer was mandatory, so it was dictated that the para with the lowest seniority would have to go. This affected my mother’s good friend, and coworker at Smyrna. My mom’s dear friend was suffering greatly because, like my mother, she loved Smyrna Elementary.

My mother’s friend, through tears, got herself ready to make the move. My mother comforted her, and it pained her to see her dear friend so distressed. Without hesitation my mom, her heart and mind as one, made a decision to ease her friend's pain. She went to the principal and put in her transfer to Clayton Elementary. My mom’s heart was broken, because Smyrna was “Her” school...the place where she felt at home, and had touched many lives, but her will to quell the



suffering of another was greater. The move was effective this year 2002-2003. My mom will always miss Smyrna, but she has found a new home at Clayton and loves being there.

You may think me biased, because the great woman I have written about here is my mother. I can only tell you this...these are only two of the countless, selfless, compassionate acts my mother is known for. Every thought, every action has always been with others in mind. I am so very lucky to be her son, and those that know her know that they have a true friend who understands the workings of the heart, and how to comfort that heart when it is breaking, shedding light into the dark corners of the world.

*Jim McGuigan*

First Place, Adult

\*\*\*\*\*

I thought long and hard of whom I would consider writing an essay regarding compassion. I have met so many people who have touched lives through good deeds and yet I continue to come back to the same conclusion. It may not be popular opinion, but God showed the greatest compassion of all in coming to us through the person of Jesus Christ. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The founders of our country based our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence on their religious beliefs, in whom Jesus Christ was the forerunner. Why? Because throughout his life on this earth, He showed compassion to everyone. This is a quality that we all aspire to have, but we can't even begin to touch the surface.

We let our human nature judge who we believe is valuable and who we believe is not. Our compassion tends to overflow on those we know personally. And sometimes we show compassion for the sole reason of receiving the acknowledgement of how compassionate we are. Compassion through an anonymous channel is rare in our day. Cover to cover, the Bible tells of God's compassion as He heals the sick, feeds the hungry, and gives hope to those who have none. His word gives us examples of how to have compassion towards our enemy, which totally defies our human nature. How can we have love and compassion towards an enemy. Matthew 6: 27-31 seems hard to swallow, because Jesus says, "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him, who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you do to them likewise." It is summarized by verse 36, "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

Lamentations 3:22-24 states 'It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my

portion, saith my soul; therefore I hope in him.” I believe that many people in this world show compassion in one form or another, however, I cannot think of one person in my life who has shown compassion toward someone else that God had not showed compassion on first.

*Diane Merritt*

First Place, Adult



Smyrna Kindergarten Center

My mom takes care of me with I am sick and she gives me medicine.

*Raymond Hennen*  
First Place, AM Kindergarten

My daddy helps me pack my snack. My daddy is nice.

*Gabrielle Trettle*  
Second Place, AM Kindergarten

Melissa is nice. She makes me breakfast.

*Autumn Birney*  
Third Place, AM Kindergarten

\*\*\*\*\*

My sister plays with me. My sister is nice.

*Julie Carpenter*  
First Place, PM Kindergarten

My dad is a hero. He saved my action figure.

*Ian Norman*  
Second Place, PM Kindergarten

Grandma gave me a Teddy Bear.

*Alexis Fortney*  
Third Place, PM Kindergarten

\*\*\*\*\*

I will help my mom because she is sick.

*Taylor Tucker*  
First Place, Full Day Kindergarten

I can share my mittens with Cody.

*Freddie Lawrence*  
Second Place, Full Day Kindergarten

I will put a present under a tree. It will make somebody happy.

*Dylan Huff*  
Third Place, Full Day Kindergarten



Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4

Dear Mom,

I like Martin Luther King because he is special. He saved the U.S.A. of our country. He saved our lives. He saved the black people. He was a good man. He got shot one day. All the people liked Martin Luther King. All the people will not forget him.

*Tyler Thorpe*

First Place, Grade 1

Dear Miss Austin,

My sister Katie showed me compassion. My sister helped me up when I fell on the floor. She helps me with my homework. Katie felt bad for me when I had a loose tooth. I am glad she is my sister!

*Kerstin Vinyard*

Second Place, Grade 1

Dear Mr. Jones,

I have a friend named Beker. Beker helps me when I cry sometimes. She likes to play with me when I don't have anybody to play with. When I'm sad she calls me and then I get happy and she comes over. I'm glad she's my best friend.

*Jessica Granger*

Third Place, Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President Bush,

I am writing to you because I am nominating my mom Lisa Lopez for her compassion to others. She understands people's feelings and tries to make them feel much better. One way she shows her compassion is by making money to give to the people at the church. She brings the money to the poor so the poor can buy food, sodas, homes and clothes; and now the poor can live in homes just like us. The people at the church really appreciate it and they give her candy canes for her compassion.

So, Mr. President Bush, that is how my mom is a compassionate person. I will always cheer her on, and I hope that I can grow up to be just like her. Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you that she might take someone out and tell them the circle of life, and a rainbow might be there to spread the joy of everyone.

*Alex Lopez*

First Place, Grade 2

Dear President Bush,

I would like to nominate my mom-mom for the most compassionate person I know. I am nominating her because she loves animals, visits nursing homes, and she takes good care of me. She also helps her neighbors. She helps them by watching their house and cleaning it.

I saw her visit a nursing home to see my great-great-grandmother. We had lunch with her. My mom-mom takes care of me sometimes on weekends. She gives me healthy food and no soda, only at parties.

She helped a stray animal go to the vet and go back to its home. Now I am happy for it. I want to be just like her when I grow up.

*Heather Hobson*

Second Place, Grade 2

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

I have someone compassionate to tell you about. His name is Eddie. He is my grandpa. I nominated him because he helps people build. One time he went to build at my dad's job. He got sick from carrying too much heavy stuff.

He loves animals. I have a pet bird named Oscar. When I am at school he plays with Oscar. When we get home from school he plays with the dog while I am eating. After dinner he lets Oscar out of his cage. My grandpa saves animals. One time he saw a hurt squirrel, he took it home and took care of it until it got better. He once saw a hurt cat and put it in the car and took it to the vet. One time my grandpa saw a bird falling and he caught it and let it go. I learned to be nice to animals from him. I want to be like him.

*Eddie VanLanten*

Third Place, Grade 2

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President,

Is everything going good for you? I hope you are not sick. If you were sick how could I tell you that I nominate my sister, Dani, to be honored for her compassion? Just to make sure it happens, let me tell you at least three ways.

One day while Dani and I were at the Calvary Assembly of God (a church), we saw some people handing out papers. A man came up to us and said, "Either one of you in the fourth grade? We are having a pizza party for 4<sup>th</sup> graders."

"I'm in fourth grade," answered Dani.

"Here then," said the man handing the paper to Dani.

When we got in the truck Dani asked, "Mom, can I go to the pizza party for 4<sup>th</sup> graders on the 25<sup>th</sup>?"

"That's Taylor's soccer game day. But you can go," said my mom kindly.

"No, I want to go to Taylor's soccer game more than a pizza party," said Dani. I still can't believe she did that for me. She loves pizza and she has nothing to do at soccer games.

Even though Dani does this about every day, I want to tell you about one of the times this happened. One sunny day my mom, dad, and I woke up about 11:00. We were starving! We walked downstairs. When we came into the kitchen Dani had set out muffins on plates ready to eat. You should get her to make you muffins some time because they were delicious! She never wants to cook much either! But who cares, they were so delicious.

Mr. President, this one is the optimum of all. A girl in Dani's class never had any lunch. She would always ask Dani, "Could I have some of your lunch?" Dani would always say yes. One day Dani went into the hall with her teacher. She told him all about how the girl did not have any lunch. He made it so the girl did have lunch. The girl did not know why she was getting lunch from the cafeteria, but she was happy.

I know Dani will always be a compassionate person. Hopefully everyone will always be compassionate. God Bless America.

*Taylor Pugh*  
First Place, Grade 3

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

I know you are probably busy, but could you spare a minute? Would you like to hear this wonderful letter? That, may I add, took a lot of time to work on; and I am sending it to you. You probably already have it and you are reading it now, silly me. I think a wonderful male named Ronald should be honored for his compassion because he helps me with homework, he loves me, and he cares about me. Let me tell you more.

First, I will tell you about homework. Ron helps me with my math. He helps me with my reading. He helps me with spelling. I bet I know what you are thinking, "will this letter ever end." Or maybe I am wrong. I don't know.



Second, I will tell you about how my dad loves me. He kisses me at night. He hugs me during the daytime. He hugs me and smooches me all the time. Listen up a wee bit more.

Third, I will tell you about how my dad cares about me. He gives me the best food and the purest water. He gives me the most outstanding care. Let me tell you more about my letter.

Fourth, now I will tell you all of the things so you don't forget them. Now that you know why my daddy should be honored, please let my wish come true. Like you know he helps me with homework, he loves me, and he cares about me. If that is not compassion then I don't know what is. But all I want to say is if you don't honor my dad then I will because my dad is my hero!

*Morgan Kay Seymour*

Second Place, Grade 3

P.S. I hope your dad is a hero! I know mine is!

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. Bush,

I think I know who you should nominate for the most compassionate person award—Abraham Lincoln. I know he's not alive, but he's great.

He was like you. He was the sixteenth president, and that means that people knew he was a true leader. They called him Honest Abe for a reason. That reason is because he was compassionate. He was kind and couldn't tell a lie.

All those are good reasons, Mr. Bush, but the best reason is he ended slavery. He worked a lot to do that. He is a very compassionate man.

*A. J. Miles*

Third Place, Grade 3

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

My friend Courtney is a very compassionate person to all she has been compassionate to. My first reason Courtney should be nominated to be the most compassionate person is because she never says words that could hurt others. My second reason is because she cuts her hair and gives it to people with cancer. Finally, here comes the most important reason of all, Courtney tells people they are fine the way they are when they don't like themselves. Those are three reasons why Courtney Gaston should be nominated to be the most compassionate person ever.

Like I was saying, Courtney never says words that could hurt others. Courtney likes to meet new friends—not break up her friendships. I like that very much about Courtney. I like that because sometimes people call me names and it hurts. Courtney would never say something like that. She is a one of a kind kid.

Next she cuts her hair twelve inches shorter each year. I mean how many people do you know that cut their hair for people with cancer? Hey I have to admit, I don't know anyone that cuts their hair for people with cancer except Courtney. My friends and I think that's one of the kindest ways to be a compassionate person.

But the best reason of all is that Courtney tells people they are fine the way they are when they don't like their form. I mean some people think they are fat or too short. But Courtney tells people they are always beautiful or handsome just the way they are. And if that doesn't work she tries to make them laugh so they are happy again. People like others and myself like Courtney most of all for that one reason.

In addition, I just told you three reasons why I think Courtney should be nominated the most compassionate person. I told you Courtney never calls people names, that she cuts her hair for people with cancer, and that Courtney tells people they are fine the way they are. That's why Courtney Gaston should be nominated for the most compassionate person ever.

*Kristen Norris*

First Place, Grade 4

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

I heard you were giving an award for who is most compassionate. I wrote this letter to nominate my mother. Her name is Jeanne Morris. I am going to tell you why she deserves the award.

One reason is because she's always there for me. For example, when I'm sick she takes care of me. Also, when I'm lonely she plays board games and card games with me. She also takes care of my grandmother. Since my grandfather died, it's been hard for her (plus, she can't hear). My mom cares about everybody.

My mom also helps me with (almost) everything. One thing for sure, she helps me with homework. I can still remember I used to not know how to do fractions. Improper, proper, adding them, and subtracting them—I couldn't do it! One day she sat down with me and explained them. After that, everything was so easy. She also helps me with projects. For example, I have an electricity project due; I guarantee she'll help me with it.

She also lets me do sports—no matter how expensive. For example, I do karate that costs \$60 dollars a month. That is \$720 dollars a year! She also lets me do basketball that doesn't cost a lot but she does have to drive me to games and practices and then back home. Hey! Gas isn't free!

All these things make my mom special to me. She doesn't just let me do sports; she loves me. Isn't that compassion? Even if she doesn't win, she'll still have the best mom in the whole world award—maybe not from you but from me.

*Eric Morris Huff*

Second Place, Grade 4

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

There is a person I would like to be honored for her compassion to her parents (my great-grandparents). I call her Mom-Mom Witch. Everyone calls her that because we all love the Wizard of Oz. Mom-Mom Witch stands for Glinda, the Good Witch.

My Mom-Mom Witch is a very compassionate person. Her mother has had a stroke and her father has early stage Alzheimer's. Even though they sometimes have trouble doing things she would NEVER put them in a nursing home. She does their housework, makes sure they eat right, helps them bathe, makes sure they get their pills, and stays overnight if they are sick.

They are not capable of doing household chores. My great-grandparents cannot do everyday things we take for granted. Mom-mom Witch does it for them. Three times a day she comes and does their laundry, cleans the bathtub, and mops their floors. They both appreciate it greatly. While she does their chores, she cooks their dinner. She does this because she loves them.

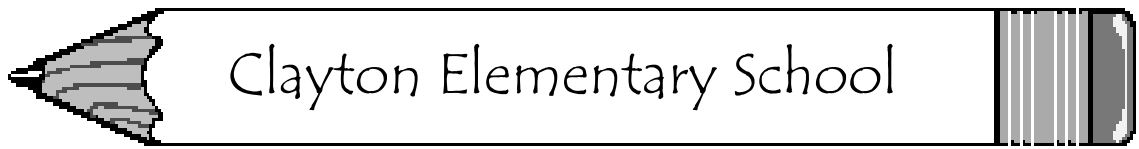
Although my Mom-Mom Bessie (Mom-Mom Witch's mother) can walk, she has to use a walker. You can imagine how much trouble it is to take a bath! Guess who's there to help her—Mom-Mom Witch! She helps her step into the bathtub and turns the water on for her. This helps Mom-Mom Bessie a lot and all she has to do until she gets out is sit in the chair that's inside the bathtub. Mom-Mom Witch helps her get out, of course. She also helps Pop-Pop Al (her father) shave!

Sometimes when her parents are sick, she spends the night at their house. That way if they get sick during the night she will be there. Every once in a while my Pop-Pop Al might walk around the house during the night and fall. One time he had a big cut on his head! But anyway, Mom-Mom Bessie calls Mom-Mom Witch and she comes right over to their house to help Pop-Pop Al! Sometimes it is 3:00 a.m. when they call her!

Look at all she does for her parents! Even though she runs two households, she still makes time to see me do sports and other things. Mom-Mom Witch is a very compassionate person and I am very proud of her!

*Chelsea Botsch*

Third Place, Grade 4



Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4

Dear Mrs. Price,

My mom is compassionate. My mom loves me so much that she gave me her room. She cares about me so, so, so much. She helps me when I get hurt and when I fall off my bike and when I fall down on the sidewalk. She's nice to me when I do something wrong. Sometimes she yells at me but I still love her and I always will.

*Kaitlyn Garrison*

First Place, Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mrs. H.,

My friend Erica is very nice. She shows compassion by sharing with me and being very nice. She helps people like me and her brother Tyler. She shares with her friends. She is my best friend and helps people when they need it.

*Caitlin Hamilton*

Second Place, Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mrs. Johnson,

The person that I think is full of compassion is a good friend at school, and her name is Robyn Corso. I think she is a very compassionate person. One day at recess, I jumped onto the fire truck while I was wearing gloves. I slipped and fell and scraped my back. She is a caring person, and she helped me get up. I hope we will always be good friends.

*Katelyn Stidham*

Third Place, Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

My mom-mom, Ethel Cooke, is the most compassionate person I know. She is such a good, caring person that I would like to nominate her to be honored by the United States. She is a wonderful, caring person.

First, mom-mom is the kindest, caring person in my family. She cares for other people every day. She is a really, really kind person and takes good care of people when they are really sick. Mom-mom does all kinds of things. She gives poor people clothes, food, and cares for them. Mom-mom has an older friend that she takes to the doctor.

Second, my mom-mom is generous. She gives clothes to families and lets people borrow things that are needed. She takes her grandchildren to the park. Mom-mom is a sharing person.

Last of all she forgives. She forgave my mom for breaking her dish and a Christmas ornament. She is a forgiving person every day and whatever she breaks she apologizes. My mom-mom has never gotten into an argument or been rude to anyone.

My mom-mom care, is kind, is generous, and forgiving. I feel proud of my mom-mom and love her forever. I want to be just like her one day. She is my role model growing up. If my mom-mom is honored by the United States, she will be so happy.

*Matthew R. Cooke*

First Place, Grade 2

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to tell you about my mom. This is how she's compassionate. One time when she was a teenager she was walking on the sidewalk and she saw a kitten just laying on the side of the sidewalk. She couldn't take her home because she already had a cat; so she decided to put it in a box for its home. Then when she had to move out of her mom's house she took the cat when she got an apartment and named her Patches.

The other time when I fell on a chair my mom called 911 and got an ambulance. Before the ambulance got there I asked if I was going to live. She said of course you are. Instead of saying I don't know, she tried to make me feel like nothing ever happened. Then when I got back she sat beside me. When I am sick she takes a nap with me and always makes sure I don't need anything. If I do, she gets right up right then and gets it for me. That makes me feel special. Sometimes she makes me chicken noodle soup. Yes, it is the canned kind.

The other time when my mom-mom was sick my mom helped her with her job at home. My mom was nice enough to stay all night to make sure she was better. That's how my mom is compassionate.

*Ashley Lennon*

Second Place, Grade 2

\*\*\*\*\*

I'm going to tell you who I think is compassionate. I think my great-grandmother is compassionate. I love her very much because when I fall she helps me up and I feel better with her. She loves me more than anybody. She cares about me so much. When I think about her I think she is perfect. She is 82 years old, but healthy. When I go over to her house I just play

with her and watch movies. She asks me if I would like something to eat. She gives me whatever I want. If I'm hungry, I ask her very politely if I could have something. She gives me hugs and kisses when I come in and says hello. Why do I show her compassion? I love her. I'll do something for her if she needs anything. I'll get it for her right away. I think so much about her I can't stand it! I love her more than anything! My family loves her too. That's why I think she's compassionate; but she's never mean to any of us. She's never grumpy or grouchy. She always loves us even if we do something bad. She's always there for us whenever we're hurt. Last year I broke my elbow. She was so sad because I was suffering. The next day I stayed with her and she held me and said nice things to make me feel better. My grandmother cares for other people whether they're happy, sad, rich or poor. Many times at church she shows a lot of compassion. I love her for who she is. That's why I think she's compassionate.

*Alyssa Lattomus*

Third Place, Grade 2

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

Do you know any compassionate people? I am writing to you about one. His name is Tom Pritt. He is my father. In this letter you will read three ways in which he shows compassion. I only chose three because there are so many (so many as in seven other things). He is so thoughtful and giving that sometimes I think he was born to be compassionate. So sit back, relax, read this, and then you can get back to your president stuff.

First, I will tell you how Tom Pritt is compassionate to his family. One time last fall mom had surgery on her stomach, and when she was really hurting dad made her feel better. He made dinner, he cleaned the basement, and took care of my brothers and me. He even took time off work to be with our family. Dad also gives up time to be with my brothers and me at school. For example, he travels on field trips, comes to parties, and all kinds of activities. He also makes sure I have plenty of books. These books cost a lot of money. Instead of spending money on himself, he uses the money on books because I love to read. He is a coach for two different teams that my brother and I participate in. Being a coach takes up a huge amount of his spare time. He never complains about being there for us. He cares so much for us. That's how he is compassionate to our family.

Now I'll tell you about dad being in the Air Force. That was compassionate because he served as a volunteer for our country. He gave about four years of his time to do something for his country. Some of his duties were to guard the base, fly planes, and to clean the barracks. He even got an award for serving on his base. Dad also achieved an award for going beyond his duties. Being in the Air Force and helping all Americans to be protected and safe was probably the most compassionate thing he's ever done.

Finally, I will tell you about dad helping people he doesn't even know. One time when the radio station, called WSDS, was in the mall, they were collecting money for the St. Jude's Hospital. Dad gave \$200 to the hospital fund!!! He gave them money because some patients there can't

pay their hospital bills. Another way he has shown compassion for total strangers is by being in a blood drive. He donated blood because there are many people that have damaged blood because of diseases, or people were having surgery and might need more blood. Giving blood isn't easy. Sometimes it makes you feel dizzy and a little sick to your stomach. My dad says it's okay because you get to help a lot of people. That is how my dad shows compassion for others.

In summary of the letter you just read, I told you how Tom Pritt is compassionate. He cares for his family, was in the Air Force, and helped people that are strangers. Those are the three greatest ways Tom Pritt is compassionate. His heart is as big as Jupiter when it comes to compassion. So please, Mr. President, choose my dad as the winner of your compassion contest. Believe me you won't be sorry!!! Thank you.

*Tyler Pritt*

First Place, Grade 3

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

I would nominate my mom because she does a lot of things for me and has compassion. When I was young this nice lady came and adopted me at the age of 4 ½ months. I have grown up now, and I'm eight years old. This lady's name is Sadie Mae Nance, but I refer to her as mom! Sadie provides me with everything. Let me take the time to name some of these things. She provides me with clothes, life, and love. Her love spreads through the air because she doesn't hate anyone. Just like they say, don't judge a book by its cover. If you were to meet her she would welcome you with open arms.

My mom also gives food to African immigrants. These people came from Africa with not very many things. It's really cool having a giving mom. She also buys the Africans food and takes them shopping. When she takes them, I usually think it's boring; but you have to remember you're doing something compassionate.

Another reason why I nominated my mom is because she takes people places out of the goodness of her heart. Sometimes she gets back at 3:00 in the morning but she doesn't mind. She is so patient and kind. She lets her friends who don't have food come to her house and eat. There is another thing that she does that's compassionate. She also lets her best friends stay at her house. My mom lets them sleep in her bed and she sleeps on the floor. She cooks, cleans, and does everything else that they need while they stay. I hope I convinced you that my mom is fabulous.

*Jasmin Carter*

Second Place, Grade 3

\*\*\*\*\*



Dear Mr. Bush,

Hello my name is Rahvey Vails, and I am writing to you because I know someone that needs to be honored for her work. Her name is Mrs. Lynn and she was my teacher when I lived in New York. She is also in a church group and she helps make the church look fantastic. I bet you're wondering how I know her so well, and that's because she was my next door neighbor. This is also why I loved going to school and coming back home. Also when I would forget a math sheet or something else, I would just go to her house and get one.

Do you want to know some more about Mrs. Lynn? Well I'm going to tell you more about her. She also belongs to another group and it's a singing group. She goes to little stores and sings. I know one time when she sang to a family that didn't have anywhere to go. They lived in a box and had to wear bags on their hands because it was snowing and freezing outside.

Now I am going to tell you how she shows compassion. Every weekend she goes to a homeless shelter and she gives the children toys. She also serves food there. Mrs. Lynn is also sponsoring a kid named Maria. Now that Mrs. Lynn is sponsoring her, she gets to go to school and learn. When Mrs. Lynn does these things for other people, it makes me want to be just like her. I think she is doing a very good thing, and I hope you think so too.

Last I want to tell you about when I was in New York. She took me to a homeless shelter and I got to give out food to the people who were there. I also got to bring my toys that I didn't want, and when I gave them to the kids I saw their faces light up with a smile. I have something else to tell you. When it was Christmas morning, I decided to wake up everyone and we went to the Toys-R-Us and to the mall. Mrs. Lynn, my family, and I picked out some clothes. Next, we went to the outside of the homeless shelter and gave everyone something special and even though it cost a lot, it was worth it.

*Rahvey Vails*  
Third Place, Grade 3

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to nominate Tyler O'Neil for being the most compassionate person I know. Tyler is so generous and kind to everyone he meets, and he is never mean to his parents or friends. Tyler is definitely the most compassionate person I know.

When I first moved to Delaware I had no friends. I felt really lonely and unhappy. When we first got to our house and got unpacked, our neighbors invited us over. I was lucky that a kid was over at the house playing. The kid's name was Tyler and he asked me as soon as I walked into the house if I wanted to play with him. I have been friends with him for four years, and every time I see him he lets me play with any of his toys. Tyler is very kind and compassionate to me.

Mr. President, when you were a kid did you ever have a friend that would always stick up for you even if you were wrong? Well my friend Tyler is always sticking up for me. For example, one time when Tyler, my brother and I were playing basketball, I got mad because I was losing. So I kicked the ball against the house and my brother got in trouble because Tyler stuck up for me by saying that my brother did it. A person who is always sticking up for you even if you are wrong is definitely a good friend.

Mr. President, Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that “the only way to have a friend is to be a good friend” and Tyler is always being a good friend. Like when we play basketball, usually when I play basketball most of my friends get mad when they lose; but Tyler never gets mad. Tyler just compliments me when I do well. He is also always telling people that I am the best at basketball. I respect Tyler for everything he does and if all my friends were like Tyler I would never argue or fight with any of my friends. Tyler is really kind and respectful to everybody.

Mr. President, John Marks Templeton said “It’s nice to be important, but it’s more important to be nice.” Tyler doesn’t care if he’s popular or good at sports; Tyler just wants to be a good friend. Tyler is one of my best friends and he’s the most compassionate person I know!

*Nick Motyl*  
First Place, Grade 4

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

I think you should nominate Audrey Green for all the compassion she shows in everything she does. Audrey Green is compassionate because she thinks of people, helps, and she is very active. I nominate Audrey Green because she is the most compassionate person I know. She is a very kind and gentle person. In this story I will describe all the ways she shows compassion.

Audrey Green thinks of people by giving flowers if someone’s feelings are hurt or just something to look pretty in their house. She visits your house to check up on you and calls to check or just say hi. She is always giving us little special treats. Sometimes she will make cookies for people. Audrey Green sends cards to all her elder friends and goes to visit because they can’t come out of their homes. She also sends cards to community members.

Audrey Green helps in many ways. She donates time to the Smyrna Alumni Association. She is always the one we turn to when we need things to be picked up. Every year we hold a party at my mom-mom’s house and she makes the food. One time I was sick and asked if she had time to watch me while my mom went to work. That is how she helps others.

The way Audrey Green is very active is that she will be the first one at your door if you’re sick. She is always out buying things for people. I have never seen her miss one of her nieces’ or nephews’ birthdays. My aunt is the most active person in church than anyone in my family. That is how my Aunt Audrey is active.

Now I think you get my point on how Audrey Green is very compassionate. I have told you how she thinks of people, how she helps, and how she's active. I hope you will take all these ways and nominate Audrey Green. That is how she is compassionate.

*Cassandra Rhodes*

Second Place, Grade 4

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

I would like you to nominate my sister, Kailey Brewer, because I think she is very compassionate. According to Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, "the only way to have a friend is to be a friend." That is why you should nominate my sister, because she is incredibly compassionate.

My sister should be nominated because she is kind. Every day when I have homework I say, "Kailey, can you help me with my homework?" "Sure," she yells back with joy. For instance, Thomas Carlyle says, "Without kindness there can be no joy." However, that means if there is no kindness, there will be no joy. That is one reason why my sister should be nominated, for being kind and showing kindness.

I've been telling you how incredibly compassionate she is and how she shows kindness. Well, she is more than that. She is a loving, kind, and compassionate person. For example, every time one of her family members, or even anybody she knows passes away or dies, she will mourn at least five days. When she gets home from school, she tells my mom she misses whoever it was that passed away like my uncle, grandparents, or any family members or people she knew. Then, she goes to her room, lays down, and watches TV. When it comes time for dinner, she comes out, eats, and goes back to bed. See, that is how Kailey loves people. If someone she knows dies, she will always remember how much she loved them.

My sister is very kind. She shows love and she shows caring. When Kailey was in first grade in Massachusetts she met a Down's syndrome girl named Rose Rorar. Nobody liked her, but Kailey was there for her. Kailey is one of the only people in her school who knows what she is saying. Kailey is still her friend today and is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. That is how compassionate she is.

See Mr. President, I really think you should nominate my sister, Kailey, for the most compassionate person award. She shows kindness, caring, and she is a loving person.

*Conor Brewer*

Third Place, Grade 4



Grades 5 and 6

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to talk to you about the most generous, compassionate person that I know on this earth. This person is my dad, Arthur W. Brewer. If there were ever an award for “The Most Compassionate Person In The Universe,” I think my dad would be deserving of this reward. I would like to tell you why I think my dad deserves this award, and I’m sure you will agree after hearing my stories. I think you will enjoy the stories you are about to read.

My dad’s job is to train racehorses. He is very gentle with his horses. My dad gives his horses lots of care, time and attention. My brother and I started school in Massachusetts, which was where my mom and dad were raised and all our family members lived there. Racing was scarce in Massachusetts, so my dad started racing his horses in Delaware and Pennsylvania. This meant not seeing my dad as often as I was use to. Though my dad wanted my brother and I to be happy and grow up around our family, we eventually realized that true happiness was the whole family living together. So we moved to Delaware.

My dad is also very kind to my grampy, my mom’s dad. My nana passed away three years ago. So my mom and her brothers and sisters decided to take care of my grampy as he was completely dependent on my nana. He is handicapped. My grampy came to Delaware for three weeks and my dad made sure my grampy got in the pool every day. This is not an easy task. My grampy cannot walk, so he had to be lifted down into the pool in a special chair. Even though my dad is busy caring for the horses, he made sure my grampy got into the pool every day, and also took him to the movies quite a few times. You might not think this is a big deal, but to a person like my grampy, who never leaves his bed or chair, this is one of the greatest things in life.

My dad is also very respectful, generous, and compassionate because he takes terrific care of his mom, my Nana Margorie Brewer. Even though my dad is very busy, he made sure my nana came to Delaware this past summer. While my nana was in Delaware, my dad made sure my nana went to the Carmike Cinemas movie theater. He also made sure we got to go out to a beautiful restaurant. My dad also made sure my nana got to go swimming every day.

My brother and my dad like to go outside and play together. They like to play football, basketball, and soccer. A lot of the time my brother trips, falls, and gets hurt. My dad carries my brother in the house, sets him on the recliner, and goes into the bathroom to get him a face cloth, a Band-Aid, or both. Then my dad comforts my brother by telling him he will be fine, telling him funny jokes, and cheering him up in other cool ways.

When I am sad or let down, my dad always finds a spectacular way to cheer me up. He makes me laugh with his funny and exciting jokes, and he tells me I have nothing to worry about. Sometimes when I am really sad or let down he brings me to see a movie or sometime brings me to the mall. A lot of times he lets me pick where we eat dinner. He plays whatever game I want to play. These things cheer me up faster than a jackrabbit running from its prey!

A lot of people are homeless, poor, sick, have a disease, or they don’t have enough money for food and water. Guess what my dad does for these people? My dad donates his money that he

has worked hard for to these people! I bet the people who receive this money greatly appreciate it. Admit it! That's pretty compassionate.

When my mom, my dad, my brother, my little cousins, their parents, and I go to the beach, my dad does something very compassionate for my little cousins. My dad holds my little cousins, and brings them into the ocean. He makes sure they don't get hurt. He makes sure everyone in my family has a spectacular time.

So now you see I did not just pick my dad because he is my dad. I picked him because he is so truly full of compassion. These stories you have just read and the ones I hope you enjoyed were some of many compassionate things my dad has done. So I hope you nominate my dad for "The Most Compassionate Person In The Universe Award." Thank you for listening to my stories. Thanks again.

*Kailey Brewer*

First Place Grade 5

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

When I think of the meaning of compassion, I think of words like: caring, generosity, and caring about people less fortunate than ourselves. The one person that comes to mind when I talk about compassion is my grandfather, Gene Jacques.

From the time I was a baby until I was two, my grandfather babysat me when my mom and dad went to work. My grandfather thought that since he was retired he could watch me instead of my mom having to pay for me to go to daycare. He did everything for me: fed me, changed my diapers, and even watched Barney with me. I feel that my grandpa showed deep compassion to take care of me.

My grandpa is a very generous person. He donates time to raise money for charities. He is a member of many different groups; one of them is the men's group of Saint Andrews. They organize fundraisers to benefit local charities. One of the events is that my grandfather works at the racetrack donating his time and earnings to the homeless shelter, The Shepherd Place.

My grandfather cares about people less fortunate. He spends time building homes for Habitat for Humanity. He has volunteered and helped to build about five homes. He used his own truck to pick up supplies for them many times. He also worked at their fundraisers selling hot dogs and sodas to raise money for the homes. My grandpa has given a lot of time and effort to their cause.

I feel that my grandfather shows deep compassion to those less fortunate. I look up to my grandfather for deeply caring for me and other people around me. He is a very good role model for someone who is compassionate.

*Katie Vinyard*

Second Place, Grade 5

Dear President Bush,

I was asked to write to you about someone that I feel is full of compassion. Well that would be my mom. I think that my mom is the most compassionate person I know. She will go out of her way to help almost anyone. She is a hard working single mom who thinks of others before herself.

Before we moved to our new house, there were a lot of kids in our neighborhood. It came to my mom's attention that when not in school these kids were not getting breakfast or lunch. So my mom would get up early and cook breakfast then would call the kids in to eat. It started with two or three kids coming and then grew to about ten kids every Saturday and Sunday. Even though the church helped with buying some of the food, my mom did all of the work. We didn't have a lot ourselves but that didn't matter to my mom. She would give the shirt off her back if she thought they needed it more than her.

My mom is so nice and loving that she even buys stuff for my half brother that lives with my dad. She buys him clothes and toys. My mom even spent her whole week's vacation in the hospital with a friend that was sick because her friend didn't have anyone else. Her friend was very scared so my mom stayed with her and held her hand and told her that everything would be fine.

In closing I would like to say that my mom hardly ever takes time for herself because she is always helping others. I think my mom is great. Not just because she is my mom, but also because she is the most compassionate, loving, kind and generous person I know.

*Mike Stewart*

Third Place, Grade 5

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to nominate my good friend, Tori Woerner, for the compassion award. Tori shows compassion everyday in everything she does. The compassionate qualities Tori has are kindness, generosity, forgiveness, caring, friendship, love, and sharing.

Whenever we go shopping, Tori shows generosity by buying her younger brother a gift before she gets herself something. Tori also is generous when she goes to church every Sunday and donates money. The money is to help the church get things they need.

Tori shows kindness toward everyone and everything. She is kind to everyone she meets. Even if a person is rude to Tori she will still treat that person with respect.

Tori is very forgiving. If she gets in an argument with someone she will apologize or accept an apology. Tori also forgives people who made mistakes concerning herself.

Tori can be such a caring person. When a loved one is sick or is going through rough times, Tori tries everything to help. She will talk with them or give them a gift.

Friendship is truly what Tori's about. Tori will help her friends any way she can. She will also work extra hard to have a perfect friendship with her friends. Tori treats her friends like family.

Sharing is another compassionate quality Tori has; and, believe me, Tori shares everything! Whenever she is in school, she always shares her school supplies with her fellow classmates. At home Tori shares games and toys with her friends and family.

Tori has more love within herself than the Atlantic Ocean has water. She loves her friends and family very much. Tori loves every unique thing about her life and the world she lives in.

So now you know what a wonderful person Tori Woerner is. I hope you'll nominate her. If she wins that's fantastic, but if she loses that's all right too. No matter what, she will always be a very compassionate person.

*Jessica Dougherty*

First Place, Grade 6

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear President Bush,

I would like to recognize Wiebke Scantic for her compassion. Wiebke is not only my mom, but my friend. She is devoted to her children, helps others, and puts others first.

Wiebke shows her compassion by being devoted to her children. My mom lets my sister and I do any one sport. She feeds and clothes us. Wiebke makes sure we are well educated. My mom went to college so she could get us what we need in order to be successful and happy.

Another way my mother shows her compassion is by helping others. She gives people loans when they need it. Wiebke will listen to their problems. My mom will watch friends' kids without pay.

My moutie (mother in German) also shows her compassion by putting others first. Wiebke buys for my sister and I before getting herself things. She takes us to practice instead of going to her friends' house. My mom donates money to charities before buying house supplies.

Wiebke is a very special person because she has helped me to be a better person. My mom has had some of her compassion rub off onto me. She told me to make sure everyone is happier when they leave you. That is why I would like to recognize Wiebke Scantic for her compassion.

*Chaise Andrae*

Second Place, Grade 6



Dear Mr. President,

I would like to nominate Mrs. Brown for the compassion award. She is very kind to everyone around her, and she's always helping everyone in need.

Mrs. Brown volunteers to help out at Hartly Elementary. When I was in second grade she was in my classroom almost every day! Everyone loved her. She helped us with our work, talked to us, and was always a kind woman! When it was Earth Day we all went out on the playground and cleaned up, and she helped my class plant a tree. When it was the last day of school, my whole class was in tears—we didn't want to leave her!

Mrs. Brown had organized a donation program. She was asking for old cell phones (which would be programmed to only dial 911, and would be given to people in danger), old glasses, food, and finally old clothing. All these would be given to the poor or other needy people. Now wasn't that a nice thing to do? I think so!

These are the main reasons why I nominated Mrs. Brown for the compassion award! I hope she wins because she is a VERY kind and caring person!

*Hank Robinson*

Third Place, Grade 6



Grades 7 and 8

Compassion means a deep feeling for and understanding of others without regard to any specific person. My mother, Lisa E. Simmons, meets these criteria. She is a hard-working woman who's so generous it can't be put into words. My mother has made so many changes concerning the world; even though her work may seem little it actually makes a loving change.

My mother is employed for the State of Delaware and takes care of a mentally challenged adult. Believe me, it's not an easy task. On top of that, it's also not easy taking care of six children; not to mention one is an infant, and my little sister, unfortunately, has diabetes. Between all of these tasks, my mother still has time to sit and listen to how our days went and give us advice that usually becomes useful in the future; though I always end up doing things backwards to her advice.

I chose to write about my mother because she's helped me to achieve and accomplish so many of my goals. I usually maintain fair grades and without my mother I couldn't succeed or meet my standard obligations. I am very thankful to have someone who cares so much about me and who is physically involved in all of my greatest needs and schoolwork. Without my mother I wouldn't be who I am today or have the decent respect for everyone. I'm glad to have my mother because there isn't anyone else who has my most love and upright respect.

*Britney Whitby*

First Place, Grade 7

\*\*\*\*\*

Compassion is a loving and caring feeling toward others, and it means to accept all people. Rachel was my counselor at a camp I went to two years ago. She was caring, kind, loving, and understanding to everyone.

Rachel was caring and loving toward everyone. We had a girl in our cabin named Elizabeth, and Rachel was always nice to her. Elizabeth has epilepsy, and people would always make fun of her because she stuttered and talked funny. But Rachel would always come to her rescue. When people would tease Elizabeth, Rachel would be like a big sister right there to help.

She was also very kind. No matter who you are, or how you treated her, she made it a point to greet you with a warm hello. Rachel was always willing to help. A boy in my section of camp was having trouble swimming, so Rachel helped him to learn. By the time swim time was finally over he could swim underwater, and do the backstroke and the doggie paddle quite well for a beginner. Another time she was kind was when my friend Heather was upset because people were making fun of her clothes. Rachel stood up for her.

Rachel was understanding of people also. Whether they were of different race, creed, or social standings, Rachel was always there to lend a helping hand or just have fun. There was a boy at camp who moved to Philadelphia from Afghanistan. No one liked him because he sounded different and did not know any of the games we played or the songs we sang. Because of that everyone treated him like an outcast with the exception of Rachel. She would talk to him, just hang out with him, and teach him the games and songs he did not know.

Rachel was full of compassion toward everyone. If you needed her she was there. These were only some of the ways that Rachel is the most compassionate person that I know.

*Anna White*

Second Place, Grade 7

\*\*\*\*\*

Compassion, to me, is when a person cares for another whether that person is black, white, mixed, American, Muslim, Jewish, big, small, tall, or short. Compassion is a feeling that a person shows to one who is happy, sad, lonely, or even depressed. Someone shows compassion because they know what that person is going through and wants to be there for them. Many people say they show compassion to others, but they don't! I know one person in my family that is compassionate, my brother Arash.

Arash is thirteen years older than me; me being thirteen. Despite the age difference, Arash and I are very close. We tell each other everything. He is the best brother a girl could ever have! He is kind and forgiving. He cares for everyone and is very, very funny. I love him a lot. But he isn't this way just to me; he cares for everyone.

Arash cares for everyone and everything. He doesn't care who or what is in need in any way. He helps everyone. For instance, whenever my cousins need help on their homework or just their daily problems (growing up), he talks to them and helps them by trying to see what the problem is. Also, whenever someone needs to be taken to the emergency room, Arash is the first one to come to help. I remember when my aunt had to be taken to the emergency room. Arash spent four hours waiting until she got her finger stitched back up. I also remember when he helped my mom and uncle get through the death of my grandmother. My mom wouldn't stop screaming and my uncle didn't talk to anyone, except for Arash of course. But Arash just doesn't care about people; he cares about animals too! My mom always told me that Arash would never spit his gum out the window because he was afraid an animal like a bird would think of it as food and chock on it.

Well, as you can see, Arash is a very compassionate person. He cares for any living thing such as humans or animals. He has helped not only me, but also everyone he knows. I just wish he knew how much everybody appreciates his help.

*Leila Sammander*

Third Place, Grade 7

\*\*\*\*\*

Compassion means a deep feeling for and understanding of others without a regard to race, age, creed or social standing. Taylor Swain is a person I know who is full of compassion. Some of her compassionate qualities are generosity, friendship, and caring towards all people no matter where they come from, their age, their social standing, or any other uninviting quality.

Taylor Swain is a very compassionate person. One of her biggest and probably most becoming, compassionate quality is generosity. Taylor shows generosity in many ways. She is always willing to help anyone in need, no matter what the situation may be. One example of this happens at least once every week. If someone forgets their lunch money, Taylor is more than happy to give them her extra money so they can eat lunch. When they say, "Thanks, I'll pay you back tomorrow," Taylor replies, "Don't worry about it!" Another example of Taylor being generous happened this year. Mrs. Bole's science class was making astronomy PowerPoints as a class project. When Taylor's group finished early, she was more than happy, even delighted, to help other groups by conducting Google searches online for them.

Another of Taylor's strongest compassionate qualities is friendship. Taylor can probably make friends with even the most stubborn person. Even if she dislikes someone, she would much rather attempt friendship than fight and make enemies. She is even friends with all her teachers. There is not a person I have met that has ever shown a sign or said something about disliking Taylor.

A third compassionate quality Taylor shows is care. She is caring about everything she does. She cares about her family and friends and would never let anything happen to them if she could help it. Taylor also cares about her future very much and therefore always pays attention in class, does all her homework, cooperates with all of her teachers, and does her best to do outstanding in school.

In my point of view, Taylor Swain is a very compassionate person. She shows compassion in ways that any other person I have met has not. Taylor Swain is perhaps the most compassionate person I know and will ever meet. I think Taylor Swain deserves a medal.

*Alicia Williams*

First Place, Grade 8

\*\*\*\*\*

Compassion means a deep feeling for and understanding of others without regard to race, age, creed, or social standing. My mother is a compassionate person because she is caring, she shows love, and is full of generosity.

My mother is very caring. She cares for me when I am ill and gives me the precise nourishment I need to become well again. My mother also cares for me by giving me discipline. Even though I'm getting into trouble, it can shape my future by changing my point of view. Disciplining me can teach me not to make the same decision I had made before.

My mom shows a strong feeling of love towards me. She shows she loves me by giving me the attention I need throughout the day. My mom also shows me she loves me by asking me about drugs, smoking, and alcohol. She knows I would never use any of them but she asks me because she loves me.

The last trait my mom shows is generosity. My mother is very generous towards me and other people. When my mom, my grandparents, and I went to meet friends in Philadelphia, my mom asked a homeless African American man if he was hungry. He replied yes. He had a bottle of alcohol beside him. My mother said she wouldn't give him the money but she would buy him the food. My mom and I went to the vender and bought the man two hotdogs, two hot drinks, and some fries. He was thankful.

These are the ways my mom is compassionate. I think I would like to be like my mom one day. To live like her would be an honor.

*Emily Drews*

Second Place, Grade 8

\*\*\*\*\*

When I tried to think of who I feel has the most compassion, it was really difficult. A lot of people are nice and some stand out more than others, but I had to choose only one. After I thought for a while, someone did seem especially compassionate to me. It was someone I have known all my life; someone I see every day. It was my mom, Brigitte McKinney. These are some reasons she came first in my mind.

My mom is very compassionate to other people. She always helps someone without them asking, and never wants anything in return. Once she helped an elderly lady carry groceries to her car. This woman was a stranger! Towards her friends my mom shows even more compassion, always helping them through hard times and doing whatever it takes to make them feel good.

I think the real reason I chose to write about my mom is because she shows compassion to me. I believe that one of the best ways to show compassion is through love and that's what she shows me. My mom is ready and willing to talk to me about anything at any time. When I'm hurt she cares for me, and when I'm upset she comforts me. I always know she'll forgive me no matter what I do and she'll always love me.

I'm sure that many people would say that there are better candidates for this honor, but to me there is no other. My mom deserves recognition for her compassion. Her love and kindness extends to everyone: family, friends, and strangers. If that is not more than what is expected, then our society does not know what compassion is. This is why to me, my mom, Brigitte McKinney, has more compassion than anyone else I know.

*Kurt Reed*

Third Place, Grade 8



Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

My freshman year was one of the worst years of my life. I was just becoming a teenager and I thought my social life was more important than my education. When the days of report cards would come, I would be so ashamed and embarrassed of myself that I didn't show them to my mother. I would do or say anything to make sure that my mom wouldn't ever see the report cards. Eventually, she did see the last report card and enrolled me into Sylvan Learning Center. Sylvan is where I met one of the best people on this planet, and I never knew how much she would affect my life.

Erin Wallace is such a wonderful person. She has dedicated herself in everything she does. An example is that she is very dedicated to teaching. Erin is currently a college student at the University of Delaware, tutors at Sylvan and at private homes, substitutes, and is a fantastic role model to her family and others. She is also dedicated to accomplishing her goals of graduating from college and becoming a first grade teacher.

I believe that Erin Wallace is full of compassion because she cares about other people and their success just as much as her own. There have been so many children that have come to Sylvan, and Erin always gives each student the individual attention they need and deserve. The smaller children can get overwhelmed at times, but Erin can always find a way to relax them and calm them down. When I started at Sylvan, Erin welcomed me with open arms. She always trusted me and believed in me. Erin and I instantly connected. Whenever we would see each other, we would tell each other how our days were going and acted like we had known each other forever. It has been such a great feeling to have a friend like Erin in my life who listens to what I have to say.

Erin is full of compassion by helping others in need. She helps kids learn how to spell, read, do math, and how to practice study skills. Erin has helped in my writing, my study habits, and building my confidence. When Erin was in high school, she had the same social problem that I had as well. This helped me realize that there was still a chance for me. Now I am making very good grades, I am more focused, I am getting on the honor roll, and I am a better and happier person.

In conclusion, Erin is compassionate for many reasons. She is very dedicated to her work and her obligations, she is a caring and considerate person, she has been a very helpful teacher in life, and she has helped me turn my life around. I will never forget Erin as long as I live. I will always love her and respect her as a sister I never had. I am so glad that I was able to come to Sylvan for many reasons, but mostly because I got to meet Erin.

*Leann Baumann*

First Place, Grade 9

\*\*\*\*\*

Compassion is defined as a deep feeling for and understanding of others without regard to race, age, creed, or social standings. There are many compassionate people in the world. It's not very easy to pick only one person that's compassionate, but if I had to choose someone I'd say my mom.



The reason I chose my mom is because when she comes home from work all she can talk about are the kids at work. My mother works at a Newark Charter School and is the secretary. As soon as she comes into the house, those kids, usually in specialized classes, are all she talks about.

My mom came home and started telling me about what a few of the kids did for her. For example, there is this little boy who didn't have any money, so he gave people things of his own. Then my mother goes on and on about how the world needs more people like them.

She is always doing stuff for them too. Like she throws parties and even gets them stuff for their birthdays. How does she afford it? I don't know. Another thing is that she is constantly doing stuff for less fortunate people.

So, compassion isn't really easy to find in everyone. Most people are shallow and only care about themselves. But then, you find a few people like my mother, and everything is okay.

*Heather Long*

Second Place, Grade 9

\*\*\*\*\*

What is compassion? Compassion is a deep feeling for and understanding others without regard to race, age, creed or social standing. Compassion is how you act towards others and the amount of respect that you give to them. I feel that my best friend, Amanda Urian, deserves this award.

Amanda has a way of going that cheers everyone up. When Amanda was younger she went to public school for kindergarten. Her mom then home schooled her for first grade. While her parents were in search for a private school, her education weakened. Amanda then was held back for first grade and put into a Christian academy in Chestertown, Maryland. While strengthening her education, she was taught to respect others very highly no matter who that person was. In sixth grade she moved to the Smyrna School District. I have known Amanda a long time, but was never close to her until eighth grade. I never realized how generous and great she is.

How is Amanda so special and full of compassion? She has those qualities that let you know she cares about you. If you are feeling down in the dumps, she is there to raise your spirits. If something happened in your personal life, she is always there to listen and talk without telling a single soul. Amanda is always there when you need her.

Where does Amanda express her compassion most? Well, she expresses her compassion twenty-four seven, although there are specific places. Amanda, other than everyday activities, is involved in 4-H, FFA, FEA, SGA and Y.E.L.L. She acts as a peer when around younger children. At summer camps for 4-H; she is always there to keep the kids up and going. She acts as a peer to others also. This is when she expresses it the most.

Amanda and I have been close for about a year, and she has been a huge impact on my life. She is one of those friends you don't want to lose. Amanda has influenced me since the day I met her. Amanda really is great. She loves to play with little kids. She will be a great mother when she gets older. If only Amanda knew how much she has influenced my life and me.

I feel that Amanda Urian is full of compassion and deserves this award. She has and will always be compassionate. If you need someone to listen to you or listen to your side of the story, you can always look up Amanda.

*Morgan Scuse*

Third Place, Grade 9

\*\*\*\*\*

Nervous, frustrated, scared, lonely, and of course homesick were just a few of the tormenting emotions that I felt on my first day of school. First grade was going to be so much different than anything I had ever experienced before. Luckily, my teacher was a very compassionate person. Mrs. Boyd's strong character and loving attitude helped me get through the most challenging year of my life.

Throughout childhood, my mom didn't work, so I was very used to her always being there. My dad, sisters and brothers were also never too far away. All-day school was a lot harder for me than other kids who were used to being away from their families in daycare. Mrs. Boyd realized my homesickness and gave me special attention to make first grade easier for me. I'm sure it must have been frustrating for her, since she had taught for many years and had about as much as she could take of "I want my mommy!" However, she still managed to help me overcome my anxiety. She truly showed compassionate characteristics.

I honestly believe that all teachers are compassionate. Anyone willing to use their intelligence to help others learn what they have learned, is very generous. Imagine what the world would be like without them. Being a teacher can be very nerve wrecking. It is a profession that requires kindness and patience in order to successfully educate students. Even the meanest teacher in the world must have some type of compassion in their blood to want to help others. This is another way that Mrs. Boyd proved herself to be a great person.

There is still yet one more reason why I set Mrs. Boyd as one of the most compassionate people I know. To this day, whenever I see her, she will go out of her way to say hi to me. Some people would just keep walking, but Mrs. Boyd still values our relationship. Now I consider her more like a good friend than a past teacher. It would be easy for her to not acknowledge that, but being the caring person that she is, she always seems so happy to see me.

When I think of what the word compassionate means, I end up creating a list of adjectives that perfectly describe Mrs. Boyd. I will never forget her desire to help others, her lasting relationship with me as a friend, not just a student, and the way she helped make school a good experience for me. I am always grateful for what she has done for me, and I hope that everyone has someone in their life like Mrs. Boyd.

*Julie Lamborn*

First Place, Grade 10

\*\*\*\*\*

When I think of compassion I immediately think of my deceased mother. If compassion means a deep feeling and understanding of others without regard to race, age, greed, or social standing, then my sweet mother fits the description perfectly. To me, my mom was a compassionate person during her life here on earth.

First of all she was compassionate because she treated everyone equally. She loved all and hated no one. Even if you made her mad, she could never stay mad at anyone. It was something about her that made you love her too. She would go out of her way to make sure everyone around her was happy. If she had a bad day she wouldn't show it. She would try her best to put her feelings aside and worry about yours. Everybody came first in her eyes. She even stopped on the side of the road to help a lady who had a flat tire.

Second of all, when I felt like there was nothing to live for, she kept me strong. She would be there to comfort me when I needed it the most. She told me to keep my head up, and to never let go of my dreams, and when I wasn't having a good day she would tell me she loves me just so that I wouldn't forget. She wouldn't ever let me walk with my head down. She also taught me that if life was a game, make sure I play by the rules; two wrongs don't make a right.

Finally, the last reason why I think my mom was a compassionate person was because, when she was sick she still managed to come to my brother and my PAL basketball games. We both told her to stay home but she refused. While she was at the game she smiled and told us she was proud of us no matter what happened. I mean one game I fouled out with only 2 points, and I got my shot blocked and she was still proud. No matter what happened on the court, she always had my back 110 percent all the way.

In conclusion, I think that my mom was a very compassionate person. She was truly an angel on earth. Everybody who knows her misses her even those who didn't like her for some odd reason. Now I can see why God wanted her with Him, because looking at the caring things she did during her life span, she showed that she really deserves to be there!

*Chucky Ford*

Second Place, Grade 10

Can you imagine the perfect world? It would probably have everyone living in harmony. No one would look at your skin color, your attractiveness, or your discrepancies. Everyone could see your inner body; you as a person. They could see your heart. In the perfect world, we'd have no wars or terrorism; we'd just have peace. Now look at our world. Hatred towards anyone or anything, different scares us. Change is bad. Different is worse. Our world is nowhere near perfect, but a few select people are trying to make it perfect, or at least for them. One of those people is my mother.

From as far back as I can remember, my mom has helped anyone in need. She would bend over backward for anybody. She truly shows compassion in every aspect of her life. So many weeks have gone by without any recognition and this is my tribute to her and her compassion.

Compassion can be described as understanding others, no matter what they look like. Just recently, she worked with a girl who has Down's syndrome. She goes to my school and loves my mom dearly. My mother substitute teaches for her all the time. She'll help her with her locker, with homework, or just talk to her. Some people might say that she gets paid for it, but the truth is, my mom would probably do it without the money. She just loves to help out.

Working in the Smyrna School District for eight years now my mom knows just about all the students here. You could ask anyone and they would tell how fair she is. She doesn't care if you are black, white, plaid, or striped, she'll help you whenever you need it. Don't get me wrong, she's not a push-over, but no one tramples over her like a herd of buffalo either.

When you think of compassion, you might think of someone in history. Abraham Lincoln, a white man who helped free the slaves. Me, personally, I think of my mother. I've never met another person who is so caring and compassionate in my life. She's not famous, but most people in Smyrna know her and we all have come to know how much compassion she does have. With more people like her, we'd have the perfect world.

*Jordan Steller*

Third Place, Grade 10

\*\*\*\*\*

I would like to recognize William J. Burns for being one of the most compassionate people I've ever known. William J. Burns is my grandfather, whom I call pop-pop. He is a loving, caring, honest, and friendly person. He has touched my life and showed me the meaning of life.

My pop-pop loves and cares deeply for his family. An example of his compassion would be on a family member's birthday or holiday he always calls and sends a card. When he and my Mom-mom come to visit us and we go out for dinner, he always insists on paying for everyone's dinner. If I visit at his home, he is always willing to treat me to something special or take me places. He doesn't spoil me; he just wants to make me happy. Last year when my Uncle Bob was sick and dying he took care of him and stayed by his side until the end.

My pop-pop showed great compassion during World War II. In eastern France he came into a town and he was the first American soldier to find a labor camp with the gates locked. Instead of waiting for Army Civil Affair personnel to arrive, he opened the gates and let the prisoners go free. He did not want them to suffer any longer than they had to. Also, during the winter of 1944, there was a soldier in his outfit who got sick with a high fever and frost bitten feet. His division's aid station would not let the soldier in the hospital because they felt his case wasn't that severe. So he took this soldier to another unit's First Aid Station where he was admitted for treatment.

My pop-pop not only cares for me, but he is my friend, my peer, and role model. He seems to have the answer to every question I have and will sit down with me and be a listener and take interest in my thoughts. He's always interested in how I'm doing in school and sports. Whenever we work on a project of some sort I can depend on him to teach me without fear of criticism. He always shows unbelievable amount of patience.

My pop-pop has helped me to become a better person. He has taught me respect, patience, goodwill toward others, and how to appreciate everything and everyone. I hope that I am able to pass these qualities on to my children and grandchildren.

*Andrew Burns*

First Place, Grade 11

\*\*\*\*\*

What do you look for in a compassionate person? In my mind a compassionate person is one who shows feeling and helps out another person when he or she is down. A compassionate person is the person that comes through when you need him most and goes out of his way to make sure you are okay when things are going bad. I guess you could consider me one of the lucky people because I have always had two compassionate people there for me when I needed them. Those two people are my Aunt Stephanie Johnson and my Uncle John Johnson.

Ever since I was a little kid my family had to move around a lot because my parents were very poor. It was never fun for me moving and changing houses every couple of months. When I was about eight or nine years old we moved all the way to South Carolina with my grandparents because we could not afford the place that we lived in. Once I had lived there about three months I realized that I was not that well-liked by the kids and people around me in that school because I was different; so I made a call that probably changed the course of my life. I called my Aunt Steff and asked her if I could come stay with her. Being a little kid, I didn't realize what I was asking. After my parents and I talked about it together they said it would be okay to finish out my time left in school with my aunt and uncle.

Yeah, I knew that I would miss living with my parents, by being able to be around the people I love and my friends was extremely important to me. I still live with my aunt and uncle today and if I can ever get motivated and get my English grade up I will, hopefully, be able to move out in the next couple of years and go to college. I am thankful to them that they could be there for me and I still have a promise to them that someday, when they are old and gray, I can help them out, just the same.

Compassion is one of the things that makes the world go around. If it weren't for compassionate people like my aunt and uncle, there would be thousands of people and animals without homes and families. So the next time you see someone in need or someone that you can help in some way, do it, because maybe, just maybe, that person will be there to help you someday.

*Mike Hartnett*

Second Place, Grade 11

\*\*\*\*\*

Compassion is having an open heart to anyone to help someone in need. One of the most compassionate people I know is my great grandmother, Isabell Barthelmeh. She has shown her compassion for people in many ways.

My grandmother is very old now, she just turned 94 recently. She's a kind-hearted woman, who is generous and nice to everyone. She is willing to help people out in any way she can. Throughout her life she has done some things that stand out in my mind. From the day she was born in the 1900's she has found ways to change and better people's lives.

She worked as a nurse for over 30 years and worked in the ER too. She has always tried to cheer up sick people in the hospital and make their stay the best it could be. She seems to have found ways to connect with the people, often helping them to get better and saving their lives. She has seen what sick people go through and tries to make their life as good as possible.

After she retired, she always went to church, paying her respects. One thing she loved to do was knit and sew. She knitted whenever she had free time. At her church they collect goods for needy people. My grandmother would knit hundreds of wool hats over the summer, then come wintertime she would donate all the hats to the church. The hats would go to homeless people to keep them warm in the wintertime.

From saving lives in the emergency room to helping people in need, my grandmother has shown her compassion in many ways. This makes her the most compassionate person I have ever known.

*Kelvin Barthelmeh*

Third Place, Grade 11

\*\*\*\*\*

My mother, Mrs. Diane Cahall is someone that I feel shows compassion towards myself and others. My mom has very good qualities in all aspects of life. She is a very loving, caring, and sympathetic person and the best mother anyone could ever ask for.

First of all, I think one of my mother's best qualities is how caring she is. No matter what the circumstances, if I ever need to talk about anything, she is always there. She listens and hears what I am saying and then gives her best advice to whatever the subject may be. Second, if you don't know, my mother is a nurse and in some cases that is good, but in others it's bad, but no matter what, she is always looking out for my health and always on top of things.

As a son, I am very lucky to have the parents that I do. My mom, even in the worse condition, is always there to support me in every sport that I've ever played, as she is supportive in all my sports and with my schoolwork. All of us kids know that a mother or parent can never be too supportive, and I know that I feel lucky that my parents are the way they are. I feel a great example of this is when my mom was in the hospital with leukemia, and two days after she got out, she was at my wrestling match. That alone should speak for itself.

My mom is a very well-known person and is loved by many. She is always polite and open to all kinds of people. She would never judge a person from the outside appearance. I don't think my mom has any enemies because she is such a great and wonderful person. Anyone who talks to her realizes how great of a person she really is. A few months ago my mother came down with a horrible disease, which put her in the hospital. After fighting it out she is back home and at it again.

Lately, I wonder why do bad things happen to great people, but no matter how bad her disease is, she will fight through it. These are just a few of the many wonderful qualities of my mom. She is a wonderful person who I love and cherish. I take honor in being her son.

*Scott Cahall*  
First Place, Grade 12

\*\*\*\*\*

My grandmother was an inspirational woman in my life. She was a very neat person and she was fun to be with. She also knows how to "draw the line" and when she says no. She influenced my life in so many ways imaginable.

She was really into the family. She always told us her house was our house. Her door was open to her family for anything. My grandmother was the backbone of our family. She has high family values. Her values meant a lot to her whole family including me. She could always make us laugh, whether it was making fun of my uncle Tim's girlfriends he brought home, or my uncle Bud's wife, who was complaining about something, whether it be the kinds or just her trying to make my uncle mad.

She accomplished a lot she wanted to do on her leisure time, which was not much besides her weekends. I always remember her with one of those big cups with a lid and plastic straw filled with soda. She always had one of them with her. She would go around and visit her sons and daughters when she had some time to spend. She would always go up to the family reunions, and she would know everyone when I would know maybe one or two. I love our family reunions. People she didn't even know would come up to her and talk to her like they knew her their whole

life. My grandmother loved Betty Boop. She had Betty Boop earrings, necklaces, globes, stuffed animals, and everything Betty Boop. We always had backyard barbecues. The whole family would come over and we would cook so much and have so much fun no one wanted to leave the night, and some people even stayed. We all had so much fun.

When my grandmother had to start working, it got the best of her. My grandfather died when she was 35 and she got very depressed and the money he left her was spent very quickly. She never had to work when he was alive. He did not want his queen to be working. So, when she ended up with no money and a boyfriend that did not want to work, she had to go out and get a job. She worked so much that she began to get weak. Her age caught up with her. She tried to hide the wrinkles and gray hair with her smiles and laughs. Everyone knew that she was getting weak and tired. Her weakness finally got the best of her and she died on December 4, 2002.

My grandmother taught me so many things in life. She taught me never to give up on anything I want to achieve. The thing that I love the most about what she taught me is don't give up on family; they are the ones I've got. No matter how much I fight, and what I am fighting about, they are there for me always. I miss her so much, but she will live on in my heart for as long as I live.

*Dan Morris*

Second Place, Grade 12

\*\*\*\*\*

My mother is definitely the most compassionate person I know. She has demonstrated nothing but kindness and caring to those around her. I consider this fact to be extraordinary. She has two handicapped siblings and has worked in a nursing home or prison most of her life. Only a person with compassion could relate to all of these different people.

Mom has a sister with special needs, and when she was four, my grandparents adopted a boy with muscular dystrophy. So she grew up around handicapped people. She says that she remembers helping take care of her sister and him. He died after living with my grandparents for twelve years. Mom still tears up when he is mentioned. My aunt visits us all the time. She does puzzles and latch-hook with Mom sometimes. Although puzzles get old very quickly, Mom just wants to make others happy.

Secondly, Mom worked at a nursing home for many years. She loved it. Mom says she felt good about helping and caring for the elderly people. She even became close friends with some and played games and visited them during her lunch break. She became especially attached to a mentally challenged elderly man, who has no surviving family. He comes over to our house on many weekends and holidays. He also has quite a sweet tooth, and Mom takes him to the candy store and gives him money to spend!

Mom also worked in a prison for a few years. She had to train and supervise inmates in the kitchen. Eventually, she became close with some of the inmates. They would go to Mom for advice, help, or just talk. Mom was always patient and caring with them. The inmates often



made things, like pillows or cards for Mom in their arts and crafts activities. Mom loved working there.

My mother is by far the most compassionate person I know. She always wants to help people, regardless of their age, race, social status, or mental or physical abilities. She has encouraged me to always lend a helping hand or a shoulder to cry on when someone needs it. Hopefully, I will have the patience and understanding that my mother has so often demonstrated as I go through life.

*Mandy Meadows*

Third Place, Grade 12

# HONORABLE MENTION

## Students

### SMYRNA KINDERGARTEN CENTER

*Cierra Adams*  
*Alexis Rea*  
*Ciara Taylor*

### SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<i>Maria Ayala</i>	<i>Farhad Baqi</i>	<i>Casey Barbour</i>	<i>Noelle Boyd</i>
<i>Amy Cadmus</i>	<i>Kelsey Dixon</i>	<i>Lauren Gaston</i>	<i>Rayshell Haggins</i>
<i>Joo Yong Kim</i>	<i>Brittany Klase</i>	<i>Justin Mastin</i>	<i>Noah Mebane</i>
<i>Brianna Navarro</i>	<i>Bianca Nelson</i>	<i>Taisha Nichols</i>	<i>Stephanie Phillips</i>
<i>Rachel Poore</i>	<i>Kara Rowlands</i>	<i>Kishai Sylvester</i>	<i>Timothy Watts</i>
<i>Brittany Wilson</i>			

### CLAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<i>Lauren Bowser</i>	<i>Joseph Budd</i>	<i>Nicholas Capetola</i>	<i>Allie Franklin</i>
<i>Michael Gardener</i>	<i>David Hershberger</i>	<i>Marshay Johnson</i>	<i>Courtney Lane</i>
<i>Tyler McGraw</i>	<i>Heather McTheny</i>	<i>Jacob Rife</i>	<i>Megan Swan</i>
<i>Larissa Tallhamer</i>	<i>Jayna Unsworth</i>	<i>Ronnie Vickers</i>	<i>Andrew Weaver</i>
<i>Dylan Wilson</i>			

### NORTH SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<i>Jillian Bartsch</i>	<i>Cody Carbine</i>	<i>Robert Carter</i>	<i>Kristin Connor</i>
<i>Jesse Cook</i>	<i>Kelsey Grace</i>	<i>Melissa Savin</i>	<i>Kasey Spadafino</i>
<i>Joshua Stidham</i>	<i>Carrie Zaloga</i>		

### SMYRNA MIDDLE SCHOOL

<i>Lauren Hinkle</i>	<i>Kate Irwin</i>	<i>Brooke Mazujian</i>	<i>Leslie Pleasanton</i>
<i>Kimberly Wall</i>	<i>Turquoise Wright</i>		

### SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL

<i>Marlin Diaz</i>	<i>James Dutton</i>	<i>Trisha Goodlin</i>	<i>Jenifer Green</i>
<i>Kiara Mayfield</i>	<i>Shawna Mesick</i>	<i>Monil Patel</i>	<i>Branden Slaughter</i>
<i>Jessica Smith</i>			