



Columbia  
Values  
Diversity  
Celebration

**STUDENT  
WRITINGS  
PROGRAM  
2021**

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**Georgia**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Different

I am different. I am my own person. You are different. You are your own person. That is diversity. Each individual is different from every single other person in the whole world. We need diversity. It is what makes us different, yet makes us whole.

...Diversity is life. We are all different, and let's keep it that way.

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**Sofia**

**5th**

**Fairview Elementary**

Where We Stand There is Diversity

Diversity is very important. Without it all the people would be the exact same. We need some difference in our world. Where we stand there should be diversity. That's what makes each and every one of us unique. Where we stand people should be different, because that's what makes us who we are. Diversity helps us learn new and different things, because there are a lot more new and diverse things to learn about. You could learn about different cultures or religions. It's interesting to learn about people who are different from us. If everyone was the same, you wouldn't have a sense about different cultures. Diversity is good for everyone to expand their thoughts and their friends. This is why diversity is so important.

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**Sophia**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity is people who don't look the same

Diversity is people who speak different languages

Diversity is people who support one another even when they are different

Diversity is understanding different cultures

Diversity is eating food from different countries

Diversity is being kind

Diversity is wanting to understand people from different places on the earth

Diversity is caring for everyone

Diversity is accepting all people.

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**Ahmed**

**5<sup>th</sup>**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

Yesterday there was a soccer game between Saint-Germain and Istanbul Basaksehir F.K. in the European Champions League. In the 13<sup>th</sup> minute, there was an incident involving one of the match officials. The fourth official of the game made an inappropriate, racist comment towards the assistant coach of the Turkish Team.

What was really interesting is how everyone reacted to this incident. The players of both teams decided to walk off the pitch in protest against this racist comment. The game was suspended. I believe this reaction was a strong statement that there should not be a place for racism in sports and in our life in general.

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**Aubrey**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

You are different.  
We could accept you  
We would accept you  
We should accept you  
But we don't accept you  
You're different  
But you are you  
You are strong  
You are free  
But we don't accept you  
When we accept you  
We are diverse  
We are united  
We are stronger  
We are better  
But we don't accept you  
We will accept you  
Be patient  
We will

We need you  
You're not forgotten  
You are amazing  
Don't let anyone  
anyone  
Anyone  
Anyone  
Tell you different.

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**Allen**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

What is it that divides you from I?

Our beliefs?

Our appearance?

No.

We decide that we are different.

But it will always be us.

We have convinced ourselves that a barrier, a divide, exists, and that it separates us.

But that divide is an illusion.

We have convinced ourselves that this barrier exists.

Yet it doesn't.

We divide you from I.

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**Sophia**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Coming Out

Renee walked out of her apartment, her mom blowing a kiss and waving bye. Renee quickly hopped down the stairs, heading to school. She knew her mom wouldn't appreciate her after tomorrow. She sighed, then stopped and thought for a moment. She inhaled, then exhaled, continuing her walk to school. As soon as she got to the urban part of town, there was shouting, no, protesting. BLM signs, LGBTQ signs swarmed the roads. Ever since June 25th, the U.S has changed. Of course it's been like this for quite awhile but, still.

Renee got to school, finally and walked in. Students stared as her girlfriend, Marisia ran up to kiss her. "I've missed you!!", Marisia said, hugging her tightly. "It's only been a day-" Renee said, mumbling at the end of her sentence. "I don't care! I've still missed you, silly." Marisia said, the students in the hall began to whisper to others, since Marisia and Renee were the only...Lesbian ones in the whole school. The two of the walked to their lockers to grab their algebra binder, then walked to class.

AT HOME

She opened the door, and walked in. "Hi mom!" Renee said, throwing her bag down. "How was your day?" Renee's mom then asked. "Good! Can uh- Marisia come over for dinner?" Renee asked. "Sure thing!" Her mom said. Renee thought of what would happen after she came out.

Renee heard knocking, then stood up and ran to the door. She opened it to see Marisia standing there. "Mom..!" Renee called. Her mom came to the door and asked, "What is it?"

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Renee knew she had to gain confidence, so she did "I uhm- have to tell you something.."  
Renee breathed in, then breathed out. "Hm?" Her mom said.

"Marisia....she's..my girlfriend.." Renee then finally said. "What?!" Her mom shouted.  
"It's true...I am" Marisia said. "Out, both of you." Her mom said, angrily. "But I-" Before Renee could finish her sentence, her mom pushed her out. "No buts." Her mom said. "You're a disgrace to my family!" She yelled, "I will not tolerate this." Renee sighed, and walked out with Marisia, having nowhere to go. "Can I stay with you?" Renee asked. "Yes!" Marisia answered. "Thank you!!" Renee said, hugging her. The two of them walked to Marisia's house together, holding hands.

Why be homophobic? Let your kids be them. If they don't wanna live like ken and barbie, they shouldn't have to say sorry.

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**Eleanor**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Sunflower

Love spreads.  
Like a sunflower,  
We are tall,  
strong,  
Simple but beautiful,  
And we always face the sun,  
But when there is no sign of light,  
Only darkness,  
and sadness,  
We face each other  
Until the sun rises again.

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**Ellie**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Why?  
What do you get?  
Who does it impact?  
We are all people.  
Confusion, hate, love They all surround me.

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Why do I stay quiet and hide when I may be the only one who can help. Why do people even think this? It's because of the fear of being wrong. Given the same circumstance some are scared of being wrong and outcast, while others think, "I might die."  
Our differences are the beauty in every day, the uniqueness that shapes this world. We don't have to be any different than we already are. Why though, when some lay in bed at night they wish they weren't their true selves. They feel like they have no meaning, like they are powerless. I know this feeling and I am just a kid and may be damaged forever.  
Power is blinding everywhere you go. Are we not all just people?  
We are all people all different, all confused, all blinded by what others say.  
I look deep into everyone and think what's going on in that head. What's their point of view on life? What would happen if we all thought this, if we all stood up? It just takes one and others will follow.  
You might just be that one. Be the one who thinks and cares who might have just made someone appreciate who they are who everyone is.  
Be That One - You Have The Power.

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**Amarie**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

"Ghetto. Hood. Animals. Slaves. You people. Your kind."

**black.**

words used to hurt and discriminate members of the African American community.  
treated like we're less than,  
because of the pigment of our skin.  
excluded from society because they think of us as a threat they're,

**"Scared"**

Thus why they revert to violence and murder  
a crime

but the white man receives justice unlike any black man.

death

white police officers will murder a African American citizen for looking,  
suspicious.

but they receive a slap on the wrist for their crime,

one night in jail, community service for 2 months, maybe even probation.

but a black man, let a black man do that,

death row. or life in prison, if they're lucky.

why?

Why is everyone so split?

Why can't everyone see past the color of another's skin to see what's truly within?

Why does the color of your skin instantly slap a label on you?

can we not get along?

can we not see past the differences of one another and just love each other?

your race or ethnicity does not matter. It does not define you.

you define you.

why not erase the labels and see everyone for who they are?

equal.

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equal rights, equal to one another.  
we are not a color, we are people  
I am not black, I am not white.  
I am human  
**I am me.**

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**Aaliyah**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary**

Diversity is something that makes up a world, it is what makes us different. It makes up Earth and that's important. Don't forget that people's diversity is like each little flower throughout the world. No flower has the exact same looking petals. People are just like the flowers because all of us have our own tweaks that make us different. Just like flowers, we are the flowers of the land. No one looks the same, not even the closest looking twins. No one will ever be the exact as someone else. Yes, we may have common interests, but even if we have similar interests, it is made in a different way. It is the way we think, our thoughts are never the exact same. Even though people say I thought the same thing, they or you could have seen it differently than you could have. That is ok because all that is diversity.

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**Austyn**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

Why do we celebrate Diversity: We celebrate Diversity because it is a way of learning about each other and learning about people from the past and to learn about different cultures. Diversity is also like seeing how people and some cultures do stuff differently than other cultures or people. You might see someone as a bully or just annoying but they might think of you the same or as a nice person. It is ok to learn more about different cultures or people because you can also see someone differently than how others see them. You might think someone from a different culture looks weird or does something differently than other people. You can try to talk to people from different cultures and learn more about what they do or what they do for fun and maybe try it out and learn something new.

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**Nikhil**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

2020

2020 has been a difficult year for all of us.

Racism, COVID-19, canceled plans - so many reasons why 2020 is a difficult year. Whether you are 10 years old, or 90, it is a bad year. But the most disturbing thing this year is racism because I think that it is a problem in our community. Whether you're white does not make you better than others, whether you're black you are not worth less than others, whether you are Hispanic does not mean you should have a bad education, whether your Indian does not mean you are a nerd. Don't you see? Whether you're Asian, Black, White, English, Indian, or Mexican we are equal. Diversity is a good thing, not a bad thing, if we were, all the same, wouldn't it be really boring?

It does not matter if someone else is short or tall, wide or thin, black or white, or even a different religion. Because we are all the same on the inside, we eat, sleep, care, get angry, be sad, exercise, have fun and so much more stuff. So what I'm trying to say is that it does not matter what is on the outside, all that matters is what is on the inside. Have you ever heard of the phrase " Don't judge a book by its cover" it means that there is no point in judging someone without actually getting to know them, because you might actually make a friend!

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**Eleanor**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

You Are

Dazzling stars light the sky  
Lavender blossoms dot the fields  
Towering autumn oaks wait to drop acorns  
Snow blankets make winter branches droop  
Warm beaches stretch across the coast.  
Great floods swallow homes.  
Daisies wilt and shrivel.  
Volcanoes and tornadoes rage  
...and You:  
You are lonely like a wolf separated from its pack  
Sad like the last leaf on a tree  
You can make music like a songbird  
You are unique like a rose in a wheat field.  
If you just release yourself,  
Be who you are,  
You can be a bright star in the dark dawn,

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A shining sheet of snow on the dirty ground,  
You can be you,  
And you must...

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**Alison**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

"Where We Stand"

Where do we stand? Right now, we're not standing; we're sitting, and we're sitting on uncertain, unforgiving, and chaotic ground. We're sitting with a pandemic in our lap, crowding for a seat beside a new president of the USA, Black Lives Matter sparking change, immigration, climate change, and the shaky world economy. All these problems are in our laps, and we're not doing anything but letting them keep us down in our chairs while the problems continue to destroy us. It's hard to know when to get up, and where to place our feet. But really, we get to choose when to get up. We get to choose where to put our feet, and we get to choose where we stand. How? How do we know when to stand, or where to stand? The only solid place to stand is on the bedrock of faith. Faith is believing in what we can't see, and that what we can see... WILL get better. Look at our history: we are in fact growing, getting smarter, making progress, even if it is slow progress. Faith can fix the mess in our laps and give us the will to stand. What we need to believe, with all our faith, is that deep down, we, as humans, aren't inherently violent or destructive. Yes, we're imperfect, but we are actually--every one of us--capable of great good. Let our faith in human goodness steady us until we can stand tall and hold hands with these problems, holding hands with each other as we fix them.

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**Addy**

**Middle School**

**Gentry Middle School**

As i stood there on the roof top i felt the wind flow through my hair and my heart drop as i start to cry watching everyone live there life with happiness the happiness i could never have, the sun stated to set as i got back into the perfect church girl mode i walked back inside the church and put on the smile that makes me look like the "perfect church girl". When i got home i went straight to my room and scrolled through tiktok and saw all these girls showing who they really are i feel lost and scared.

The next day at school they're was a new girl Emily and I showed her around the school she was nice and sweet and Made me laugh i felt like I could be myself around her to be honest school, home, anywhere i feel like i cant be myself but when I'm around her i feel ok and just comfortable. We became really good friends i told her i may like girls and she smiled and said she knew it and i convinced myself at the dinner table to tell my parents and surprisingly they said it was ok if i liked girls, but the people at school and church all judged me and i felt sick and i just wanted to well die...

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Random girl: did you here she likes girls  
Random guy: ew what the hell is that

Some people think I'm sick or I'm a sin but to be honest i think-

Me: I think you people need to except the fact that I'm not normal you can call me sick all you want I am not a normal girl I don't like to dress nor do I like makeup There is so much that you don't know and that I'm still finding out about myself dont tell me I'm a sin dont dare me to kiss a girl or a boy cause I don't want to I am not a toy that you'll can use.....the truth is for the longest time I have been hiding my feelings just to fit in but I dont care anymore I wanna be me and if you dont like it then you well you dont have to come near or even look at me.

This story has took a long time for me to figure out and I'm still trying to figure out and I is Addy my name is Addy.

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**Mika**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Where We/the Players Stand

In a way, you can think of life as a game, and us, its players. We stand on the playing field, new players and ideas entering and leaving at all times. An idea that entered this field is, "Where We Stand." Let us think of our beliefs, ideals, and goals as tangible pieces on the field-- maybe a rock, or cave, or shelter. There are those who stand firmly next to their rocks, there are those who travel between, and there are those that stand by none at all. When the sun is out and the weather kind, it is easy to stand by our rocks, our beliefs, or to wander the field. But what happens when a storm comes? What happens when standing by our beliefs becomes dangerous, keeping us out in the open of the storm? There are those who will run, away from their beliefs and to others, ones who will provide them with shelter from the storm. Others will stand by their beliefs no matter the size of the storm. For Martin Luther King, this was his ultimate measure of a person, what they did in the face of that storm. His storm was racism, and he stood beside his rock of faith until he drew his last breath. Many people still stand beside that same rock of belief to this day, and others will stand beside that rock for many more, until a solution is reached, or there is no longer anyone to fight for that solution.

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**Averlyn**

**5<sup>th</sup>**

**Columbia Independent School**

Columbia is a place that values diversity. The University of Missouri brings in people from all over the world to learn and teach. Columbia has a yearly celebration of diversity. Every year, two awards are awarded. There is a talk about diversity and performances to celebrate. Our community stands up for diversity and inclusion by the willingness of our leadership to listen to everyone's voices. When a lot of people were upset that voices in the black community were not being heard, a big church worked with smaller churches to have large events celebrating diversity and talking about the problems facing our community. This summer, when there were lots of protests, our local government and police worked with the people who protested. We didn't have problems that other places had where protesters and police fought.

I think that our community still has to work on including people. We have to make sure everyone has an equal chance to get a good education so they can all have the chance to get a good job. I think we need to learn more in school about the struggles people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people have had. All of us should be willing to listen when people feel they aren't being treated fairly. We should talk about ways we can all learn to be more accepting and helpful. When we all work together to help everyone around us, our community becomes even better.

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**Amariya**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

A colleague told me about her experience interviewing for a new role internally and mentioned that the interviewer started the conversation by saying that the focus of their interview would be determining "culture fit." That alarmed my colleague because she is Latina and the interviewer is White, so she immediately felt that she was not going to receive an offer because she is not of the same ethnic background. She felt that she performed poorly in the interview and, ultimately, did not receive the offer. The interviewer may not have explicitly meant that "culture fit" meant White, but her approach brought bias into the interview when it shouldn't have."

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**Cameron****5th****Columbia Independent School**

Once there was a ten year old boy named James that moved to Missouri. He started at a school called CIS and moved to a new suburban neighborhood which was predominantly white. He and his family were the only Black family in the new neighborhood. It was hard for James to fit into the new community because he was the only Black child. One day he was walking down the sidewalk and there was a white woman walking her dog behind James. She gave him a mean look and crossed the street to go to the parallel side walk just to avoid him. Another time, he passed a white man in the neighborhood and James complimented him and said "hi." In response, the man completely ignored James and acted like he didn't hear him at all.

These events are examples of some people having terrible stereotypes based on their fear that Black people are bad people or that they will hurt you, but this is a terrible stereotype that is simply not true. In reality, no one is the same, our personalities are not the same, our skin isn't the same, not one part of us is the same as someone else. And that is what diversity is all about. Unfortunately, some people's parents teach their kids to be racist and their kids grow up to be biased and avoid Black people or treat them poorly based upon their feelings of superiority. It is not ok to hate people because of their skin, we are all born differently and can't control our physical traits.

James wanted to help create a more diverse and inclusive neighborhood so he decided to throw a block party and he wanted everyone to come. It didn't matter what your race, religion, ethnicity, education... you would be welcome. He hoped to get the community to come together to try to make new friendships and really take the time to learn about who each person is individually... no matter if they were Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Mexican, or any other race. He thought a great way to get the neighbors to open was to have everyone bring food from their cultural or ethnic background to share with one another – like a potluck. If the neighbors could learn about each other's backgrounds through enjoying a good meal, then maybe some of the barriers would come down. Everyone began to see that their differences were fun and that it made living in the same neighborhood more interesting. The block party helped the neighbors to make new friends and it was a yearly party that everyone could look forward to.

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**Shep****Middle School****Columbia Independent School**

A Day in the Life of a Wounded World

One day is sweet; one day is a nightmare,  
I'll tell you how to survive it.  
It feels impossible, but then an act of goodness shows you the way.  
One day is sweet, and one is a nightmare.

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**Cedric**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

Chains

I know how you feel. They say we're enigmatic to them, so they make you feel like you're nothing but a puppet to them. Your heart, that once was pure and full of hope and compassion, now shriveled and chained from the words they used for us. I was like you, but there is a way to be free, believe. Believe that you are unique, persevere that you can do things that they say we can't . It's you, you to choose your life. Join me, destroy the chains of despair holding your heart and break free, free to do what we think we can do. Rise above the rest and we will show them who we are. Like I said, "I was able to be freed, and now you can be too. FREE.

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**Sophia**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Acceptance

Acceptance is like giving kindness. But there are some who don't give it. It makes people feel small, alone, lost, and empty and in someplace dark with no way to get out. People judge others by their looks and even skin, and people that are judging never think about the inside of the person. What really matters is how they are on the inside. In the 16th century people started to literally take people from their homes and force them to work for little food and little to no shelter.

Racism should have never started. We had a chance to end it when the union won the war in 1865 but racism is going on at this moment. I don't get how people can judge someone by the color of their skin. It makes absolutely no sense at all. They somehow think that they're better than someone else BY THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN.

We need to stop racism and learn how to accept everyone, because we're all human and we need to act kind to everyone. Just because someone might not come from the same place as you that gives you no right to judge them or make fun of them in any way. Nobody looks exactly the same, if everyone was the same then the world would be a really boring place.

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**Dua'a****5th****Islamic School of Central Missouri**

Martin Luther King Jr. Speech To Change The World

Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the first people to stand up for (DIVERSITY) and make a change to the world. Many people have different languages and religions so everyone gets mad at each other if they don't agree with their way of doing things. But one day Martin Luther King Jr. made a speech that changed the world. He said in his I Have A Dream speech, "I have a dream that one day right there in Alabama little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers." He would be proud of us today. Without his speech people wouldn't have been as inspired to come together like they have today. We've come a long way.

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**Gabe****Middle School****Lange Middle School**

At Columbia, we believe that diversity strengthens any community and brings it greater success. That's why we're committed to promoting diversity in all its forms by making sure that those from different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and professional backgrounds are represented, welcomed, and engaged in our community.

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**Charles****Middle School****Lange Middle School**

Standing up for diversity

The day had just begun, the sun was going up and the birds were chirping their sweet tone. It was Milo's first day of 7th grade, his family had just moved from Saudi Arabia to America. This was Milo's first time in America he was scared and afraid no one would like him or where he came from. He was dreading the time the bus would come, he didn't want to get on the bus but he did. On his way to school he heard a few kids whispering behind him but thought nothing of it. When the bus arrived at the school Milo got off the bus and went to the gym and sat down to wait for the school day to start. On his way to the gym, the few people he walked passed all turned and stared, it made him uncomfortable but he just kept walking. When he got to the gym he sat down at the back of the bleaches where nobody else was, there weren't many people in the gym anyways. Seconds after Milo sat down a great handful of kids walked in and sat down.

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One of the kids from that group came over and sat next to Milo. He said "Hey my name is Carson, are you new here?" Milo responded "yeah, my family just moved here" Carson replied "oh cool, where did you move from?" Milo said " Saudi Arabia" Carson said "I've always wanted to go there!" Milo said "yeah, my family wanted to see what America was like so we moved to Iowa." Carson asked " what's your name?" Milo replied "Milo" Carson said " I like that name." After that conversation they went to their first classes which happened to be the same class, English. They sat next to each other and did the lesson of the day after introducing themselves to the rest of the class, which Milo was not a fan of. After English Milo had math which happened to be what Carson had also. They sat next to each other again and introduced themselves to the class which Milo was still not a fan of. Next class was study hall, you get to do all of your missing work or homework or you can read a book, so Milo just read a book since it was the first day of school. Lunch happened after study hall, during lunch Milo and Carson sat at the same table with two other students neither of them knew, so they ate lunch quietly and when they finished and the bell rang they headed to their next class, but they were stopped by this mean looking 8th grader Carson said " what do you want Jackson" Jackson said " looks like you got a funny little Indian here don't you!" Carson said " knock it off Jackson" "we didn't do anything to you" Jackson said "why is this little Indian here instead of China" Carson said "enough! There isn't a problem with Milo going to this school, in fact anyone can come to this school, there isn't a certain country different people belong in, they can come here if they want!" Jackson said " whatever little boy."

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## **Calvin**

### **5th**

#### **Columbia Independent School**

Black or white  
Fight the fight  
Stand up and yell for what's right

Tall or small  
Will not fall  
Hold up that sign and call

Swing that bat  
Hit that ball  
Make everyone shout and call

Make it worth it all  
Make it include all

It's not right then start a charter  
They say no then wor-rk harder  
Chose a place and make it better  
Chose someone and make them stronger

Make it worth it all  
Make it include all

It won't change

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Not at all  
If you don't stand up tall

Go downtown  
Shout out loud  
Make your voice be found

Something happens  
Stay right there  
Say nope and make it fair

Make it worth it all  
Make it include all

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## **Eddie**

**5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Columbia Independent School**

Every fall and winter we go to my grandpa's house to go deer hunting. I like to see my boy cousins, my uncle, and my grandpa. Every time I've gone it's been just the boys.

We were all waiting for my girl cousin to be old enough to safely go hunting. This year she was old enough so my grandpa said she should be invited this time.

Then this youth season she shot at a doe, thought she hit it, but we couldn't find it. The next day she shot a spike buck. We looked for two hours and finally found it. We helped her haul it back with an ATV.

That night we had good deer steak. In the future she will come more often. Deer camp will still be as fun with her there.

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## **Holden**

**5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Locust Street Expressive Arts**

Colors

You can't have a rainbow that's just one color,  
Rainbows wouldn't be special if they were all the same,  
Everyone is different, and that's okay.  
Paintings wouldn't be beautiful if you just used yellow,  
And nature is made of many different things,  
From the green plants to the blue oceans.  
Even outside of our planet, there are different colors,  
Orange stars, red planets.  
Appreciate all of our differences because they won't go away.

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**Jonas**

**5<sup>th</sup>**

**Columbia Independent School**

My name is Jack. I am totally normal, with totally normal family. Until that happened.

It was 3 months ago when Mr. Will came with idea. It was the Stand Up competition. It was a competition that in 1 month we have to stand up for everyone that needs help or has a problem with family or friends.

So that's how it started, and I worked really hard. At last, October 10, 12:30pm we voted for a winner. Also there was a prize\* for the winner, and 20 minutes later... the winner was... ME! Yeah!!

But there was some kids that were about to cry. Especially James, my BFF. Then out of nowhere in my mind, I said, "Mr. Will, can just everybody be winner?"

And that's how I got very popular and did more STAND UP!

\*the great prize was candy.

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**Sarah**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

Columbia stands up for diversity in many ways, Columbia does a great job at organizing many collaborative activities and projects to show pride in diversity, from pride festivals to organization BLM peaceful protests Columbia is able to show their pride in a great way. During pride fest CoMo is able to welcome drag queens and have shows and music throughout the day, engaging in activities and making everyone feel comfortable is something they're great at. During the peaceful protests CoMo did a nice job at allowing people to show pride in their race, blocking off streets and bringing in protection help everyone feel safer while protesting.

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**Fatime**

**5th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

George Floyd

The death of George Floyd led to chaos around the world. Everyone was protesting.  
Everybody got scared people made small, loud speeches But that didn't change anything.  
Police used to be our friend  
Now they're our enemies  
They only take the side of the white  
They should take both  
We're upset  
Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X Would be disappoint  
This world was peaceful  
And I hope  
It will be peaceful again  
Bring back peaceful diversity

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**Anna**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity

Diversity is very important among all of the people. If there were no diversity, America wouldn't be what it is today! Some important reasons why diversity is important are first, perspectives. It's important to have different perspectives so we can see what other people's views are. We can also learn from different perspectives. For example, pretend there's a person from Africa. He can teach you different things about what's fun and what to do in Africa from his perspective. Second, socializing. I think becoming friends who have a different background can help you learn about their cultures more. Third, to have a more richer experience. Being friends with someone from another culture or a different place can be super interesting.

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**Kadin**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

Lebron James impact on Diversity

Lebron James is not only a basketball player but a leader off the court. He helped with a foundation that allows people to vote that have been in prison and he pays the fine so they can vote. He helped the NBA by showing and stating stuff about black lives. He wrote justice 4 Breonna Taylor on his sneakers. Anthony Davis says "when he speaks a lot of people listen." So to me Lebron really helped and people in the NBA were allowed to start wearing statements on the back of their jersey such as black lives matter, vote, equality, and more. Every time he would get interviewed, he talked about Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and other black people that got killed by police. He wore a hat that said make America arrest the cops that killed Breonna Taylor. In my opinion he is a leader for diversity

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**Evelyn**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity  
Some may be tall  
And some may be small  
Some are white  
And some are brown  
But this should not make you frown  
For all people are different  
And it is magnificent

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**Kerynna**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

"Hey, wake up! It's time for school." My little sister yells at me from across the room. "She could at least have been a little quieter." I thought to myself. Today is my first day of public high school. All my life I have been homeschooled. This year I had finally convinced my parents to let me go to a normal school at least once in my life. After, they had said "yes," well more like, "I guess, but if you don't like it's your fault," we packed our bags and moved across the state to a special high school that helps with blind kids. As my mom put it, there are no actual blind kids there, like myself, but the school has the money and the materials to help me learn. In fact, this was the only school that was willing to buy all the expensive materials to help me be able to process what was being taught. I thought it was a little weird at first, why would she call it a "special high

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school" when all it is, is a normal high school with money. I bet they had never taught a blind kid before.

"Breakfast is ready, Jackson, get up." She called, in a very annoyed tone.

"Ugh, I am up!" I called back. I get out of bed and feel my way around the room. I haven't gotten used to the set up since we moved like a month ago. I find my dresser after stubbing my littlest toe on the corner. Pull out one of the drawers and feel around. Ever since I was a little boy, my mom embroidered little Braille letters to let me know what color a shirt or pants are.

I picked out some jeans and a red shirt, hoping that nothing bad was written on the front. Grab my glasses, in reality they are just sunglasses, but when a kid wears them everywhere and even inside, it's like the universal sign that they are blind. I grabbed my walking stick and walked out my bedroom door where an aroma of eggs and bacon filled my nose.

"Oh, there you are Jackson, the principal said there will be a kid to help you navigate the school. His name is Monty." My mother said to me as I walked over to the table.

"Monty. Ok, I'll remember that." I responded. I sat down to eat my eggs and bacon and just as I finish my dad comments that he is going to the car. My sister jumps up and follows him out the door. I gather my things and head out that way. My mom stops me.

"Jackson, I know you have always wanted to go to public school, but the kids there are..." She hesitated, "Well, they aren't the nicest people towards different kids."

"Mom," I comforted her, "I have been blind all my life, I know how to deal with people like that."

"I know, I want you to be prepared." She said sadly.

I hugged her and headed out the door. I get my way to the car and my dad starts to drive away from the house. After a couple minutes of driving, we reached the high school. I step out of the car, and my dad tells me that he has to go drop off my little sister before she becomes late. I understood and walked towards the opposite direction of the car.

"Jackson!" Someone yells my name. They didn't sound like anyone I knew.

"Hey, there you are Jackson. My name is Monty. The principal said that I would be the one to show you around." Monty introduced himself as he grabbed my arm so he could help direct me.

"Oh, right. Hey, Monty it is quite nice to meet you."

"I have some questions." He said quietly. "I hope you don't find me rude. I just don't want to sound invading."

"That is quite alright," I said. "Fire away."

"How long have you been blind?" He asked. Almost whispering.

"All my life," I responded.

"Oh, I'm sorry I didn't know." He said. He sounded a little nervous.

"No, no your fine," I reassured him. He guided me through the front doors of the school. As soon as we entered, I could tell that my mom was right. I could feel all the judging eyes on me. She was right about everyone, except Monty. Monty was the only kid that didn't treat me any differently than he would a seeing kid. The principal made sure that we had all of our classes together. Monty made sure I understood everything and I even helped him with math while he helped me with science. Over the next couple months of school we had become some of the best of friends.

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Though, the eyes of the other kids never stopped staring. Monty just told me to ignore them. In which I did. The school year so far has been great. I had all A's and so did Monty. Even though Monty wasn't the kind of person to fight another kid if they were being judgmental, he would just respond with a clever comeback, leaving the kid speechless.

One day, the eyes stopped staring. They seemed to be judging another kid. A new kid. They were a lot more rude towards him than they were me. "These kids don't know when to quit." I thought disappointedly to myself.

"Hey Monty, who is the new kid?" I asked after a week he came here. It was only in the middle of the year when he moved and I felt bad that he didn't have a friend as great as Monty to help with the staring eyes.

"Oh, his name is Ethan. He moved here from across the country." He responded as he helped me pack up for my next class. As luck would have it, Ethan had almost the same classes as Monty and I. We only had 2 classes where we weren't together.

"Let's go introduce ourselves," I said.

"Sounds good to me," he said as he guided me over to an empty table. "I'll go get him." He walked away from me and thanks to my keen hearing, I was able to hear Monty talking to Ethan. Ethan was a little mad that Monty had walked over to him because he had thought that Monty was gonna mess with him more like the other kids. Monty just explained that I wanted to meet Ethan. He agreed hesitantly and walked over to me.

"You better not be messing with me," he said as he sat down. "I know how to deal with rude kids like yourself."

"Oh no, you don't understand. We aren't like that I promise." Monty said nervously. He was always bad at keeping composure when something even remotely goes wrong.

"I just wanted to talk with you Ethan," I said confidently. "Just to get to know you, and if I know these kids, I know that they would bother anyone who is slightly different from themselves. I guess that is something we have in common." Confident that I explained my motive, I smiled.

"What are you talking about? You're what the kids call 'normal.' I'm a person of color." He said. I chuckled nervously and I could tell Monty was trying to think of something he could say or do that wouldn't be too harsh to tell him that I was blind and doesn't understand what that means. That I don't understand color at all. Also, out of all the things that I had been called in my time here "normal" was not one of them. I could feel Monty pick up my cane from the floor and show Ethan.

"Oh, I didn't know I'm sorry." He said as soon as he caught a glimpse of it. "So you do understand what it is like to be bullied by something you can't control."

"Exactly," I responded. "I have been blind all my life, so I can sense when the eyes are on me. Though forgive if I sound rude or invading, what does a 'person of color' mean."

He paused for a moment. Almost as if no one had asked this kind of question before. "People only see people of color by their skin. We are so much more. We have traditions that people wished they had. We have food and styles that other people take. If they want to know more and be with us, they should just ask us about it and learn from us. Not steal our traditions as their own. They hate us because of our history. We are more than our skin, we are humans just like they are." He explained as best as he could.

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"I never doubted for a second that you aren't human. I may be blind, but others are blind to the fact that just because you look or are physically different, we are the same deep down." I responded.

After that interaction, Monty, Ethan, and I became inseparable. We stood up for each other when we needed it and were even able to prove a point to a couple of the kids that would bother us. Although the eyes never stopped staring, the populars never stopped talking and whispering, we stayed friends. To this day Monty, Ethan, and I, change the world's perspective one opinion at a time.

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**Emma**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity Counts

Sometimes it can be hard to accept people who are different, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. Everyone in the world is equally valuable, no matter their skin color, religion, language or place of origin. No matter if they have one leg or two.

The world is full of different people, and so is your tiny town. Different people make the world a beautiful place to live in! If the world were full of the same people that looked identical, talked the same, and liked the same things, it would be so dull. We need to celebrate having different people around the world. We need the differences they bring, and they need to know that they count.

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**Khadijah**

**4th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

Where We Stand

There were different things Haleema was learning about with her grandmother. One of those things was diversity. One day she went to a Hajj night. She was overwhelmed that so many different people came together. Haleema said, "I love the different cultures, history, and countries that these people are from."

The next day Haleema and her friend Julie went to the library to do homework. Haleema told Julie, "let's go get some books on religion." She went to the diversity aisle and got 3 books.

The first book Haleema read was on her religion, Islam. She told Julie which book she was reading. Julie said that she will read about Christianity because her mom and dad are Christian.

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After they read their books, they both read about Jewish people. Together they wrote all about these unique religions in an essay:

- Islam is the religion of Muslims and their last prophet was Muhammad (SAL) and they celebrate Eid.
- Jewish people follow Prophet Moosa's teaching and celebrate Hanukkah.
- Christians go to church and celebrate Easter and Christmas.

On Monday at school, they saw Zury was bullying Hanna because of how she looked, her background, and her religion. So they told Zury, "She is our friend and you cannot bully her." Halima decided to make a club of different people from different places, colors, religions, and more. And from that day she had many friends from different countries and that made her life more fun.

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## **Sydney**

**5th**

### **Columbia Independent School**

Diversity doesn't just mean black or white  
it means way more than that.

Diversity is a wonderful thing and everyone  
should see that.

There are different religions and beliefs too,  
so we think differently WOOO-HOO.

There are different cultures and different food.  
And different ways to talking, so  
don't be rude.

We process information differently,  
that's called neurodiversity.

We have different colors of skin, different colors of hair  
and different abilities.

Next time that you are feeling weird or strange, just sing  
this song with me.

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**Layla**

**5th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

Classroom Diversity

Columbia is so diverse that in just my class we have people from all over the world. My teacher, Mrs. Brittany, is from America, my friend, Dua'a, is from Pakistan, my friend, Fatime, is from Africa, and I'm from Iraq. We have people of color and people that speak different languages. I speak Arabic and English, Dua'a speaks Pakistani, and Fatime speaks French. We learn together every day but that's not all, we also learn from each other. That's all I really have to say about that, Au Revior, alafis, and goodbye! عليكم السلام

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**Rory**

**4th**

**Russell Boulevard Elementary**

Diversity is about appreciating people's differences. Appreciating people's differences means liking that other people are different than you and celebrating how they're different. If everyone on Earth was the same, the world would be boring and we wouldn't be different. We would have the same genes. If we were the same, we would not be unique. I think Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s statement could be improved to include the differences kids and girls add to the diversity of our community and show we're all in it together: "The ultimate measure of a BOY OR GIRL is not where WE stand in moments of comfort and convenience but where WE stand at times of challenge and controversy."

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**Logan**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Where We Stand Speech

Where we stand, I see people. Lots of people doing their everyday lives, but maybe there's something not right about that. Because, I see people disrespecting others because they're different, and I know, that we're all different. But it's not okay to judge people by things with stuff like their looks, their disadvantages, their beliefs, their wealth, their family, and even because you don't think they're better than you. But I say, that's not true. We, despite our differences, need to stand not apart, but together. I don't want to see people blaming each other for what they clearly did, or bullies abusing their classmates, or any of those kinds of things. Because in my

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opinion, it's okay to be different, so how about we stick together. Because if I know one thing, it's that you can accomplish anything if we are to stick together.

So how about we try it, because I don't want to see people disrespecting others of their own kind for some dumb reason. I say we do the opposite and build others up. How about it? Let's go and be good people. I don't like to see my own kind fighting, so let's stick up and help each other. We can do this, together.

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**Robert**

**5th**

**Locust St Elementary**

Diversity is good, some people think it is bad. Some people think it is sad. I think that people are like the star, we are not all the same. We are like pieces to a board game, we are like a river how it flows. We are like air. how it goes. We are all different, yet still should be treated right. Just like stars in the night, some people are different. Some people are a different color, some people have different hair, so we are all unique in all different ways. Everyone has a different story, some are not glory but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be treated right. Some people live to save, some people live to give, but we all have a purpose to be on Earth. Some people live to thrive, some aren't but that doesn't mean they shouldn't be here. No people are the same but that doesn't matter we are all different in our unique way no ones perfect but we are all perfect in our own way. No one should be dislike anyone else because they are different maybe get to know them they will be someone else some people look grumpy but we are all nice just like the sweet smell of jasmine rice.

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**Madison**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diverse

I am different  
I am unique  
Yet I'm scared  
I won't go out at night,  
I might get snatched  
I won't walk  
Carefree  
Because I might get shot  
We might be diverse  
But we are all equal  
I shouldn't be scared when I walk  
Or feel insecure when I don't look  
Like a Victoria's Secret model

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If we are all equal  
People wouldn't be starving  
Or crying over their trauma  
In today's society  
The beauty standard doesn't let  
Us be diverse  
They make us feel  
Like we all need to have blue eyes  
And blonde hair  
Light skin  
Curvy bodies  
But we are diverse,  
So we don't need clones  
Trying to look like each other  
We need to look  
How we want to look,  
Because we are diverse.

---

**Devlin**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity is something that should not be treated badly  
It is how we look different from each other  
Valuing diversity is what we have to do  
Everyone has value  
Racism is not a good thing  
Sexism is not right  
I think we can all stand up for diversity  
The right thing is to stand up for abuse of diversity  
You and I all matter even if we are different

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**Maris**

**Middle School**

**Gentry Middle School**

Where we stand, we could stand in a mansion or maybe a small apartment. We could stand in a dorm room or at a park. We could be standing in a neighborhood or in the countryside. No matter where we physically stand it doesn't determine where we stand mentally.

In Columbia we are allowed and given the right to stand where we want. We can stand for equality in race in gender in looks. We can stand for love for rights for us. We can stand for health and charity. We can stand for family or friends. For the rights of them for the love of art or for the hate of it. We can stand.

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We can stand strong. Or weak. We can stand in a low income area, or a high income area. We can also stand somewhere in between. We can stand in school with our friends no matter what race or gender, with sister and brothers with equality. The equality of all and the inclusion of all. No matter the gender, the race, the shape, the size, no matter if you're disabled or are blessed to not be, it doesn't matter in Columbia. Because in Columbia we stand for us.

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## **Socie**

### **5th**

#### **Locust Street Expressive Arts**

Fly High

Whether you're big or small,  
Short or tall

Different or unique,  
Always let the kindness leak

Even if your not Martin Luther King  
You can still be inspiring

Anyone can stand up to the bully, you or me  
Dream for our community, as far as you can see

to be your special self  
brings plenty of good things  
So fly, and spread out your wings

When a pigeon's feathers are worn,  
And its talons are scratched and torn

Be there if the hawk is picking on the little bird  
Stand tall to the bully, and let your voice be heard

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**Maggie**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity

What I see when I look around our world is diversity, and I like diversity. There's all kinds of it like race, religions, gender differences, and others.

One thing I like about diversity is our differences. They make us unique and who we are. I also like our similarities, that's how we get along and make friends sometimes.

We are all people, we all should be treated equally and no one is better than the other, no matter our differences.

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**Joseph**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

It is easy to accept people who are different because no matter how they differ from you, you will always have more in common with them than not. If someone is black, white, Latino, Asian, it doesn't matter, for all of us are just floating through life trying to find its meaning, trying to figure out why we are here. There is no point in creating superficial divides between two like people just for the sake of a sense of superiority. All the divide will end up doing is slow down the advancements of humanity, making the whole situation worse for all parties, but all the oppressors care about is being ahead of the oppressed. As long as they are in power, they are "winning" the game of life in their mind, but all they are doing is denying someone who could change the world the ability to reach their full potential.

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**Melissa**

**4th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

The Day Hermione Felt Special!!!

One day Hermione went to the library. In the entrance a boy asked "Why are you wearing that thing on your head? It's ugly!!" Hermoine was about to say something when a lady from behind said, "That's called hijab, it's what Muslims wear. Come here, I'll show you something." Hermoine and the boy followed her.

The woman takes them to the Religious section. She picked a book and asked Hermoine to read.

Hermoine asked, "What type of book is this?"

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"It's the Bible, the holy book that Christians follow."

She handed the boy another book. He opened the book but couldn't read. "What language is this?"

The woman answered, "It's Torah written in Hebrew language. See there are a lot of different religions and each has their own traditions. Hermoine added quickly, "Ok well I learned this in school it's called diversity right?"

"Yes," the lady replied.

"Is there any diversity here?" the boy asked.

"Are you new here?" She inquired. "Yes, Mam."

The lady smiled and said, "We have people from all over the world with different cultures and religions. There are mosques, churches, synagogues, and more. You know, diversity means variety, but in real sense it's accepting everyone no matter what religion they practice or what traditions they share. Like the Christians celebrate Christmas, the Jewish celebrate Hanukkah, and Muslims celebrate Eid and Ramadan."

The boy looked embarrassed, he apologized quietly. Hermoine felt grateful!! The library was closing soon so they all left with a friendly smile.

---

**Ella**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Jack's mom was driving him to his first day of school. Jack didn't know anyone at his new school, but he was still excited to go. When they circled around the drop off at school, Jack grabbed all of his stuff and went inside.

"Bye, mom!" He yelled back at his mom before she drove off. Jack had a big smile on his face while entering the school, as he stepped on a gray tile that made up a long hallway. On the wall next to the hallway was a sign that said Lower School Hallway. He looked up at it then down the hallway and immediately realized that he was the only Asian person here. He started to walk slower while entering the hallway then said hi to a tall slim boy with blonde hair. The boy said nothing back and instead ignored him and walked past. Jack was a bit confused but kept walking and found his classroom. Everyone that was already seated started to stare at him. He put his backpack down by an empty desk then sat down.

When the teacher walked in she introduced herself and said her name which was Mrs. Baer. It was pronounced Bear, like the animal! I wondered if that's why she had bears all over her room. She then called me up to the front of the classroom to introduce myself. I stood up and looked around the classroom while walking to the front of the classroom.

"Hi," I said. " My name is Jack and I'm from China."

Everyone kept staring except three girls who were whispering to each other and in between their whispers were little chuckles. I looked at them then back at everyone else and proceeded to talk.

At recess, I bumped into a tall pale girl with brown hair, blue eyes, and small freckles on her face.

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"Hi!" She said in a high pitched voice and shook my hand.

"My name is Lexi, what's yours?" I looked up at her and said.

"Jack" I was usually pretty shy, but she seemed nice so I was a bit more talkative than usual.

For the rest of the recess, we walked around with each other and talked, and talked, and talked. I got to learn so much more about her like, how she had a dog named Peaches and how he would always steal her food. I thought that was funny. But we didn't get to talk much longer because the three girls that were whispering to each other walked up to us.

"Oh, so that's where you've been Lexi." One of the girls said.

"You said you went to go get some water." The other girl said, " But no! Instead you decided to hang out with this Asian boy!"

"Hey leave him alone! He's my friend." Lexi yelled back.

After the mean girl walked off Lexi said to me. "I'm so sorry about those girls, they're so mean! I nodded my head then we started to walk inside to get some water. For real this time though.

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## **Jaren**

**5th**

### **Locust Street Expressive Arts**

Jaren's rap song 🎤 of MLK

Yeah today we Honor a legend MLK. Martin king Luther Junior's life began like yours or mine. Born in Atlanta Georgia in 1929. Martin Luther and Alberta Williams were his parents' names. With siblings Alfred and Willie Christine Martin would play games. Add Ebenezer Baptist church in Atlanta they were raised. Their father was Minister King where the congregation praised. Martin graduated from high school early at age of 15. And went to Morehouse College grew and knowledge through just a teen. He learned Thoreau protested slavery in 1849. Then at the cemetery he sought gods great design. He weighed the peaceful tactics.

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## **Merrick**

**5th**

### **Columbia Independent School**

This is a quote from Martin Luther King: If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But by all means keep moving. I believe this quote means that Martin Luther King wanted us as Americans to keep moving on from slavery, injustice, carelessness, violence, hate and racism. People say humans can't fly on their own but we have flown farther than anything in the world. We have abolished slavery, de-segregated schools, given the option of different religions, stood for women's rights, because we are all human. We are not perfect

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and we are not the same, but we need to stand together no matter our differences. Over a 244 year period this city, this state, this country have fought through many hard times, but we still remember Martin Luther King's words of wisdom and carry them with pride.

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**Cecelia**

**5th**

**Shepard Elementary**

Just Like Snowflakes  
We are like snowflakes  
Not one of us is the same  
Like snowflakes we want to be the best  
We want to take the spotlight  
But just like snowflakes we can change the way we treat people  
We can except everyone  
We can treat them as the beautiful snowflake they are  
And we can treat everyone as our better  
Just like snowflakes  
We can fall together  
Just like snowflakes  
We can rise on the wind together  
Just like snowflakes  
And we can live and love together  
Just Like Snowflakes

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**Delaney**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

You

You are brilliant  
You aren't better than or worse  
You matter  
You aren't nothing  
You are something  
You are extraordinary  
You are unique  
You are kind  
Regardless of where you are from, where you are, who you are,  
you are an important piece in the universe.

---

**Brynna**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts**

Like snowflakes we are all different,  
We are all unique in our own way,  
All of our visions can be similar and different,  
We can all visualize a future where our differences are celebrated,  
We don't have to be the same to get along,  
We love each other for who we are.

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**Noah**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Diversity

It's good to have diversity or every conversation would be as boring as watching paint dry. If we didn't have diversity, conversations could not happen because we would all be thinking the same thing. If people were too much the same, no one could dress, act, be different, without being downgraded. But that leaves me to wonder, who was the first person to be different? How did they get treated? If we didn't have diversity we would not be able to tell jokes because we would already know the answer.

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**Pasha**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts**

Little Blue House

All of us have a unique color  
Orange, purple, green or blue

I will stand up tall and be like no one other  
If you need guidance, walk in my room

My little blue house, which stands up so tall  
Stores all our feelings  
Helps us up when we fall

Up doors and down hallways  
You can look and see

---

But you will never find anything  
That stands tall as me

We can all stand together  
Or we can hold our individual roofs

Our neighborhood looks beautiful  
No matter which one you choose

---

**Noor**

**4th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

We all are one!

"What are you doing Adam?" asked Khadija.

Adam replied, "I'm finishing the writing assignment about diversity."

Khadija looked confused and said, "I have never heard of that city before?" Adam laughed with tears in his eyes. "It's not a city," said Adam, still laughing. "It's not?" Khadija was more confused now.

"No, diversity means different or not the same. It can be how people look or think." "Oh" said Khadija in a surprised tone. "I have to write about that too." But she was stuck. Adam told her the theme was Where We Stand but Khadija had no idea what to write. She decided to go outside for a walk to get some inspiration. Then she heard playful sounds. It sounded like there were people on the playground. She was curious and asked herself what was going on? Khadija found all her friends jumping rope and having a nice time. As she watched them move up and down and in and out of the rope, she thought about diversity. Her friends were all different in their own ways. "We all don't dress the same or look the same. We all don't think the same or like the same things all the time," Khadija thought. "But we are all friends and enjoy spending time together. Being different makes each one of us special." Khadija skipped back to her classroom and sat down to start her new assignment. She couldn't wait to write all about diversity!

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**Jacob**

**5th**

**Shepard Elementary**

Only Love, No War

In times of tough and times of rough we can find the soft and tender. In times of cold and bitter we will find the warm and sweet. In times of wars we will find a stopping point where we all can get together zoom or in person. Get together and share stories. Watch movies of all ages by the fire. Roast a marshmallow or two. Pop some popcorn, eat candy, do whatever... just stop the negative and the hate. Stop the wars, drama, and controversy.

---

**Charlotte**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts**

Our World, Our People

Throughout COVID we stand, throughout COVID we fall, but when we come together (6 feet apart), we are one, one world, one people. No matter what race we are, what religion we are, or what gender we are, together. We are so many different trees, but together, we make a beautiful forest. So many different fish, but together, we make an amazing ocean. We are so many different people, but together, we make a perfect world.

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**Sam**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

One day a white (Daniel) and a black friend (Jamal) went to go to the store for snacks, and two cops were there, and when the cops saw Jamal, they pinned him to the ground and Jamal asked "What's going on, why are you doing this to me?" the cops said "Shut up, you have the right to remain silent!" Daniel asked "What did he do wrong officers?" They said "He looks like a possible threat." Daniel said "Because he's black? Okay, what threat do you think he is?" The cops said "You know what, he's off the hook, for now." Then Daniel said "I hope this teaches you not to be racists, learn that we are on, not separate"

---

**Hendrix**

**5th**

**Locust Street**

Our World.

Our world is DIFFERENT.

Our world is SPECIAL.

Our world is like no OTHER.

Our world is KIND.

Our world is one in a MILLION.

Our world is BEAUTIFUL.

Our world is the BEST WE CAN GET.

Our world is HAPPY.

Our world is SAD.

Our world is EVERYTHING.

Our world is WEIRD.

Our world is.....DECENT.

---

**Sheza**

**4th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

Let's Play Together!!

One day Ari went to the online library to search for some books. She found a Martin Luther King book. When she flipped the first page, she saw the word DIVERSITY. Ari didn't know the meaning, so she asked her father, "Dad, what's diversity?" Her dad replied, "Diversity means different or not the same. It includes different things, like food, traditions, cultures, religions. But that's not all!! It means including everyone. It does not matter if a person has a different skin color, what matters is that all people on earth are together."

Ari said, "So diversity means variety?" Her dad replied, "Yes, now I need to work." Ari said, "Ok!"

Ari went on her phone to text her friend Bella. She asked, "Can we play outside?"

"Yes, but Just you and me!! ". Bella replied.

"Why alone?" Ari was surprised.

" Because I do not want to play with Sherry?"

Ari texted back, " But why?"

Bella said, "Because she's different!"

Ari said, "Oh you mean the color? It doesn't matter if people have different skin colors, what matters is that we all are friends and family." Bella asked, " What do you mean?"

Ari texted back, "I mean to include everyone and not leaving any person out just because of their skin color."

Bella texted, "Oh, so I should be nice to other people with different skin colors?"

Ari said, "Yes, we all should, Bella."

Her friend said, "Thank you for correcting me. You are really a good friend." Ari replied, "Thanks!"

---

**Eliza**

**5th**

**Locust Street**

Puzzle Pieces

In life some people don't like diversity but some do. I think diversity is like a puzzle and I believe that means that everyone is different but have the same picture in their head like a puzzle. Even though we are different, like a puzzle, that does not mean we can't make Columbia a better picture.

---

**Janaya**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Silence, Please!

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: you've all heard the voice in your head, the one that says you are a terrible person. The voice that says you are not pretty or skinny enough. The voice that says you're not smart enough; you don't learn fast enough, and you'll never get a good job; you'll never have enough money, and you'll never succeed.

You know that voice in your head, the one that says everyone judges and hates you, that you are not lovable. That voice says your own family doesn't even actually love you; they're just doing their job. They'll never be proud of you. You know all too well that voice that says there's no going back; you messed up too much; you can't fix it; it's too late for you to be happy, and you don't deserve to be.

We listen to this voice in our head because when we hear things over and over again, we start to believe it, and the lies tear us apart. We don't want to be rejected, yet in trying to avoid rejection, we reject ourselves. We all have our own truths, our own stories to be told that are worth more than we imagine. The voice tells us to keep those stories boxed up inside as if they're nothing.

Let's give that old negative voice the death penalty. Kill it with a lethal injection of truth, positivity, self-acceptance, and love. It's time to silence the negative voice, to find our truth, to find out what our REAL truth is: we are worthy and amazing and important as we are.

---

**Sofia**

**5th**

**Fairview Elementary School**

Where We Stand There is Diversity

Diversity is very important. Without it all the people would be the exact same. We need some difference in our world. Where we stand there should be diversity. That's what makes each and every one of us unique. Where we stand people should be different, because that's what makes us who we are. Diversity helps us learn new and different things, because there are a lot more new and diverse things to learn about. You could learn about different cultures or religions. It's interesting to learn about people who are different from us. If everyone was the same, you wouldn't have a sense about different cultures. Diversity is good for everyone to expand their thoughts and their friends. This is why diversity is so important.

---

**Lexi**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Sitting and waiting  
For nothing to happen  
Sitting and waiting for  
The world to change  
Nothing will happen if  
You just sit there  
Nothing will happen  
If you don't care  
Rules are for breaking  
Opinions to share  
If you could do anything  
The worst thing to do  
Is to just sit there

---

**Gillian**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary**

Snowflakes

We are all like snowflakes, we are all different. Whether it's your culture, skin color, or the way you learn. We should not judge people based on those things. The way to find out if someone is a good person should be based on if they are a kind person. There is SO much to be learned! If you are different from someone else you should embrace it not hate it, because you're amazing just the way you are!

---

**Avery**

**5th**

**Shepard Elementary**

Sunflower

Like a sunflower I stand taller than any other flower.

Like a sunflower I sway in the wind closer to the sky.

Like a sunflower I shine brighter than the rest.

Like a sunflower I plant my roots deep into the soil.

Like a sunflower I am happy as can be.

---

**Boone**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

The Black Lives Matter website describes its mission as a movement that won't end until everybody is equal. The Black Lives Matter movement became especially important after the unlawful deaths of many African Americans, most recently George Floyd.

This summer we started to look for a Black Lives Matter sign to express our support of the movement. We tried to find one but no luck. And then one day, in late summer, a volunteer showed up to our house unexpectedly with a Black Lives Matter sign. We thought my grandma sent it to us, but it turns out that she didn't. We put it up proudly. We never figured out who did it, and we most likely never will, but we will never forget that random act of kindness.

I was excited to have the sign, but I was worried about other people's perception. These are a few examples of the things I was anxious about: I was worried about the possibility of people trashing the sign, my peers having different political views than me and my family, and my friends with black neighbors thinking we're pandering. None of those scenarios ended up playing out, and we even realized that more people in our neighborhood had similar political beliefs based on their yard signs. What I learned was that you can't ever let anybody silence your opinion.

---

**Tessa**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Where I Stand

I believe that

Love is love.

That someone being judged off the color of their skin is the same thing as someone being judged off their eye color.

Both are something they can't control.

I believe that no shirt or pant has gender, and that the word gender is simply a line that separates the blues from the pinks, and that line could and should be bent.

I stand in a world that has a lot of hate.

A lot of disagreement.

And I have a lot of hope.

Hope that the world won't have so much hate,

So much disagreement,

And a lot more change.

---

**Georgie**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

The Descendent

Corner musician,

Frightened and dirty,

Worthy of more than just music

Golden beautiful notes fill the air

But he wants to do more

His regrets hold him back

A saddened heart

Full of love for his old home

A saddened heart

Longing for his old life back

"Whatever you wish for, you shall have,"

They promised.

Punished for being happy he was

He feels chained to the ground

A corner musician playing music

Dirty and frightened

More than worthy of what he wants to do

But a frightened heart folds him small.

---

**Victor**

**Middle School**

**Lange Middle School**

The Fighter

There once lived a white boy and a black boy but one day there was fire in their village and got both separated and had to live their life's by their self and after 10 years they come across each other again and one had a wealthy family and one had a poor one and the black boy had a family that was white and poor and the white boy had Mexican parents that were rich and they all lived in New Mexico which was nice over there for them but not for the black boy he fought his way to the top to be the best but the white boy had an easy life and mostly did nothing because other people do the stuff for him but the black boy was still a fighter and raised a family had 2 kids but still fought his way through the troubles since he was younger they both lost their original parents because their village burnt down so they had to live with strangers that they didn't even know but had to adapt just like when you're born you have to adapt to the people that you see every day even with your cousins so everyone is a fighter if they wanna be and no one deserves to have a label of what you are and what you're supposed to do be yourself and live your life like it's yours because it is yours love your life and make no one NO BODY tell you who you are just be yourself for the rest of your time and adapt with different stuff, explore, family, etc. everyone is special and doesn't matter about race so be yourself.

---

**Maryam**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

The first day of sixth grade was the first time I ever wore my hijab to school. Hijab is the scarf that Muslim women use to cover their hair to show modesty. My name is Maryam (the Arabic name of Saint Mary). Have you seen the statues of Saint Mary? Did you see her hair covering? I wear a headscarf just like her. I was named after her, and she is my role model. I was the first person in my school to wear a hijab, so I was a bit nervous.

When I first came in, I tried not to look at anyone because I was afraid they might recognize me. My fifth grade teacher welcomed me with a beautiful smile. I got my schedule, and my best friend came over and hugged me as if nothing had changed. Another friend came over and said that my scarf looked beautiful. The teachers acted as if nothing were different, and some complimented my hijab, as well.

Now, I am one of many who wear hijab in the school, and we are treated with respect. In Columbia, everyone is kind and respectful to me, and this makes me feel that, different as I am, this is the place where I belong.

---

**Ari**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts**

The Forces of Life  
Humans are like magnets,  
we push and pull and are all shapes and sizes,  
and some are different colors.  
But even with our differences,  
we're all the same in the exact same  
but different in our own little ways.

---

**Zainab**

**4th**

**Islamic School of Central Missouri**

Diversity Rocks!!

I learned that diversity could be any tradition that you celebrate in your own country and feel proud of like Ramadan, Hanukkah, and plenty more. But diversity is not just traditions. It's what you do in everyday life and how you get through it in difficult times.

Let me tell you a story. One sunny day my parents and I moved to Florida so they could finally get a job and I could go to a good school. The next day my parents drove me to school. After they dropped me off, I went inside to explore my new school. While I was walking down the corridor, I heard somebody crying. I went to go check. I saw a boy standing near a girl with a beautiful braid crying. I ran to her and asked if she was okay? But all I could hear was her mumbling so I told her to speak a little louder. Once she calmed down, she told me that her name was Layla and the boy was pulling her hair. I went to the boy and told him to stop. It's not good to bully because someone looks different. Although we all come from different places and have different traditions. We all are the same.

From that day Layla and I became good friends and stood up for the people who got bullied. And about John, well he finally became our friends too. Diversity rocks!!

---

**Sophie**

**5th**

**Locust Street Expressive Arts**

We Stand  
We stand and although we might fall we know how to crawl. And when this all started we might have been downhearted but we all stand together, forever.

---

**Lilia**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Alone or Together

Reading a book, Alone

Sitting down at lunch, Alone

Taking a difficult quiz, Alone

Going to the dentist, Alone

Riding a bus ride home, Alone

People don't glance your way, Alone

Reading a wonderful book, Alone

Laughing aloud, Alone

Crying in your room, Alone

Playing a game, Alone

Feeling depressed, Alone

Flipping it over is hard, but you can change the world, Together

Believing, Together

Sitting, Together

Saying, "Great job," Together

Feeling good, Together

Being heard, Together

Taking a picture, Together

Concentrating, Together

Quizzing each other, Together

Falling down, Together

Walking in the hallway, Together

Taking care of each other, Together

Being happy, Together

Being kids, Together

Life is hard, and it is not as smooth as you hope for,

Being happy is hard when you're alone, but being happy together is a whole new world

Life is confusing

You have to be cooperative and brave enough to speak

If you don't make a statement, then your voice won't be heard

Because there is no limit to the friendship you contain:

Release it.

---

**Oaklyn**  
**5th**  
**Locust Street**

We stand

We stand together  
We stand apart  
All though we are different  
Not just from the heart  
We stand together  
We stand apart  
Like pieces of a puzzle  
We are different but come together

---

**Eric**  
**Middle School**  
**Columbia Independent School**

What is America, and what does it stand for? Are any of us truly "from" this country? Not really, because this country has always been a country of immigrants, people who came here seeking a better life. Our ancestors were running from prejudice, religious persecution, poverty, and injustice. This country was created as a safe place where citizens would be guaranteed liberty, fairness, respect, and opportunities to achieve and find happiness. Our constitution states that all people are created equal. This means all humans are equally important or valuable and therefore worthy of the right to life, liberty, and happiness.

The problem is that we have forgotten our values, and we have forgotten that we are all valuable, even if we are different. When we see people, we often assume the worst or the best about them. When we meet somebody new, or even when we watch a television show, we judge the people, real or fictional, and usually end up being wrong with our judgments. When we judge others, we feel more powerful. We feel as though we are the better person.

Even judging a homeless man, which is something many people do every day, is wrong. This man could have been through what we have been through every day of our lives except much worse. We may not get enough sleep, but he doesn't even have a bed. The homeless man has more experiences with situations we wouldn't dream of living through, but he lives through them every single day. He may have more perseverance, adaptability, and thankfulness than people who are born with more privileges and opportunities. He is valuable because he is human, and his story (like everybody's) is unique.

If we judge him, we miss out on who he really is and what he has achieved and lost. If we judge him, he might judge us back. If we judge him, he might miss out on our love and possible assistance and we might miss out on his beautiful human mind and experiences. Nobody wins.

---

Judging is bad for everyone. Whether we think it or not, we need other people in our lives, and if we judge each individual for their differences, even before we get to know them, we are denying their potential to be a blessing in our lives, and our potential to be a blessing in theirs.

---

**Carson**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

When I saw George Floyd murdered as a result of police brutality it made me feel sad the police murdered someone for no reason. I was scared because I didn't want someone in my family to be killed by the police or something else bad happens.

I think police brutality happens to black people because some police are racist and they are scared that black people are going to hurt them. Racist police officers are going to kill more black people for no reason unless they become anti-racist.

I think we can eliminate police brutality against black people by protesting in non-harmful ways. If anti-racist people protest and fight to end police brutality of black people there will be no more deaths of black people by racist police and black people can feel safe when they go outside.

---

**Jackson**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Where I Stand

I believe that racism is just plain wrong.  
I believe we need to make changes.  
I believe we are getting better, but I also believe we're getting worse.  
I believe that people see the outside of who we are.  
I think we need to look on the inside, because that is what really matters.  
For centuries we have been separated by skin tone.  
It's always been black and white.  
We may be black and white on the outside.  
But on the inside, we are people.  
On the inside we're the same.  
So why can't we be together.  
Because we will always have people that will be racist.  
And that is what I'm trying to stop.

---

**Max**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Are You Listening?

The voice is that of a dying soul  
One trying to make oneself whole  
The soul will die without a word  
The voice will die if not heard

---

**Isaac**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

WHERE WE STAND

Diversity. What is diversity? Why is it such a buzzword in the world right now? Is it important to know about? Why is it a topic to cause so much discussion?

Diversity. Diversity means different things to different people. It could be race, gender, religion, language, profession or talent. The Cambridge dictionary defines diversity as "the fact of many different types of things or people being included in something and the fact that there are many different ideas or opinions about something."

I am surrounded by diversity every day. My school has teachers and students from many different backgrounds and ethnicities, and also from different family backgrounds. They share many stories and experiences from growing up and living in their unique home state or country. This leads to greater awareness, understanding, and acceptance of differing beliefs and customs. The positive effects of diversity enable our school community to work with people from other races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds.

Why is diversity important in schools? When working and learning with teachers and students from a variety of backgrounds and cultures present in the classroom, students gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. It also teaches students how to use their own strengths and points of view to contribute outside of the classroom and in a diverse world environment.

Martin Luther King Jr. said "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

---

**Joaquin**

**Middle School**

**Columbia Independent School**

Where We Stand

By Joaquin Soria

We are not well, not now, not then.

We need more respect for one another.

We see lots of wrong, and we know to stand up.

It has long been time to say, "That's Enough!"

We stand on the stage of history.

We cannot let this be a mystery.

We all deserve a fair chance.

We must preserve our differences.

And cherish each other's relevance.

---

**Jayliah**

**5th**

**Columbia Independent School**

Where we stand.

We all stand in the same classroom

and we all stand in the same line together.

We are all different,

we aren't the same people,

we have different skin tones,

different eyes,

different voices

and many more differences going on in our world right now.

But we are the same,

we both get equal rights to choose where we go to school.

Now when I was saying we all get equal rights right now

there is a little bit of racism going on in the world

which is not ok at all.

We are all beautiful in our own way.

We all have different personality traits.

So when I walk around my classroom

I see beautiful people in my class,

smart people,

kind people,

funny people

---

and people that make me smile!

Where we stand is something important.  
It's important because we should feel loved  
and appreciated by our friends,  
family and more others!