

I Matter

While I was writing this poem, I asked myself questions like “What am I doing to make people happy?” or “What are my talents/hobbies?”, but the most important question was “What made me unique and different from others?”. I enjoy nature so I based my poetry on that. My characteristics I wrote about (that stood out to me the most) was kind, empathetic, inspiring, helpful, and positive. I used metaphors and my concluding sentences to prove I am unique and different, and told my audience that they are too!

Angelina Vaughn, Kellogg



125

~ I Matter. ~

My talent is like the flowers in spring, blossoming everywhere for everyone to see.

My talent is like deers sprinting through the forest, and drinking from the babbling brook waiting to be discovered and ready to bring astonishment to anyone who finds them.

My talent is like a book with many pages, non-stopping, and inspiring.

My talent is like the mother bear who protects its young, ever patient and caring.

My talent is the wind in the sky, refreshing, and overflowing with happiness for others to enjoy.

I matter .

I have a voice.

I have ideas and thoughts and opinions that make the world go round.

I process things in my own way.

I am unique.

I am the future.

I make a difference in the world by the way I act.

And most of all, I have a gift that can make this world a brighter and better place to live in, and so do you!

The Next Generation

This is a piece of literature discussing race and the Next Generation, and about how we matter because we are the tomorrow of the world and that we should speak up and stand up for what is right.

Abel Semere, Kellogg

Middle School
Literature



128

The Next Generation

Hello. My name is Abel Semere (Uh-Bell-Suh-meer). Lots of people mispronounce my name because it is uncommon here in America. I am from Seattle, Washington, but my parents are first-generation immigrants from East Africa.

My mom came here as a young adult and spent time living on the East Coast until she came to Washington State. Although my mom was a first-generation immigrant, she was a very brilliant student, but she didn't have a record she could bring over from East Africa. So she worked as hard as she could here in America to get to the college she wanted to get to. The University of Washington. My mom got a bachelor's degree in microbiology at the University of Washington and got her master's degree in Public Health. She did all this while learning a new language, system, and new customs here in America.

My dad was born in East Africa as well. My dad spent his early life in East Africa, before moving to America. My dad, like my mom, did not speak much English because it wasn't their first language and didn't have a record he could bring over to get into school. He went to North Seattle Community College to pursue information technology but had to discontinue due to family responsibilities. He is now a successful, self-employed trucking company owner.

Aside from their careers, there is one thing in common that they had to figure out and learn here in America as immigrants coming from a country where everybody they knew spoke the same language and was the same skin color as them and had the same customs as them. Racism.

The reason I am telling you about my parents is that there are many stories similar to my parents. It's a hard reality that shouldn't even be a reality. My dad tells me that the first generation always goes through the most so the second generation and generations after can live happily. But I don't know if that's the case here in America. For 400 years, African Americans were slaves and not even thought of as humans. 400 years and Racism is still alive and well. They call America the land of the free though I don't think we have lived up to that expectation and by we I mean our nation. We have had so many innocent people killed by police officers and so many hate crimes against

African-Americans as well. Pres. Trump wants to build a wall so Mexicans can't enter and wants to ban Muslims. I feel bad that I lived longer than Tamir Rice, who got shot when he was 12, for playing with a toy gun. 12 years old. Isn't that crazy. When I go outside in public, I don't think, *Am I gonna get shot? Me*. My mom doesn't want me to wear my hood in public because she doesn't want me ending up like Trayvon Martin, who if you didn't know, got shot for wearing a hood.

It's weird because I am black, there are just some things that people think I am destined for. They think that I'm gonna be a gangbanger, end up in prison or get a girl pregnant and run away. But they wouldn't know my plans. That I want to become a Doctor of Nurse Practitioner or a Civil Rights Attorney. I want to grow up and travel and see the world with my family. But they wouldn't know and they don't need to. But they can't judge because I am black. We all have many different goals that we want to achieve, but the one goal of all colored people is to defeat and prove the stereotype wrong. That Mexicans and Muslims are gonna grow up to be the next drug dealers and terrorists.

What I think that adults need to know today is that we are tomorrow. That we are gonna grow up and take over from where you left off and do what we can to make this world a better place just like you all are doing today. But it starts now. A lot of us young people are intelligent and understand what goes on around us and how we can do better. There are many more Greta Thunberg's and Malala Yousafzai's out there, but we don't know about them because their voices are hushed by the ones around them who are afraid. That something tragic could happen to them if they voice what they feel strongly about and I can't blame them. MLK Jr. and Malcolm X, two of the most influential voices in American history, got killed for voicing their opinions. So did Gandhi, the one man on earth that would hurt no living thing, but just because he decided to voice his opinions and what he thought was right and is right. All around this world we have people being punished for expressing their rights and what shouldn't have been taken away from them. Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Malala Yousafzai. But we got to speak up. Especially us young ones. If you adults who play a role in society won't do it and celebrities with worldwide platforms won't do it. Then we will. We will go out there and chant in the streets "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" and "I Can't

Breathe". We will go out wherever we need to and protest what we feel strongly about. We might not all agree on the same things, but as long as the goal of what we are protesting and voicing is right, we will do it. I am not saying that adults aren't voicing what they are saying, but everyone feels strongly about something, and as long as it's not hurting anyone, they should say it. On June 6th, 2020, I went to a BLM Protest, in a small town in Washington called Shoreline. We have a school district, with 9 elementary schools, 1 K-8 school, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools. At that protest, I saw kids of all ages from all the schools. I saw classmates and old friends, and high schoolers giving speeches. Our whole community was there and protesting, walking through roads and chanting "Hands Up. Don't Shoot" and " I Can't Breathe". That was an experience I will never forget. When I grow up, I want to be looked up to for what I do. I want to be involved in my community, just like my parents, and do what I can to make my community a better place.

I am a supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement but I do have some thoughts on it.

I hear people telling me "I do not support Black Lives Matter", and I say " You don't think Black Lives Matter?". Of course, they backtrack and say "I support Black Lives Matter but I don't support the movement because of all the rioting and looting" and things like that and I tell them this. If you had a whole field of corn, but a handful or a group of corn goes bad, you wouldn't call the whole field bad, would you? And that analogy goes with ACAB (All Cops Are Bad). I get what they say and they are right and some of the stuff people do isn't right, but it's not like the movement can control the people. It's not like they go online and fill a registration sheet and become a part of the movement. You either in it or not. Those people call themselves part of the movement and damage its name by doing those things and I don't think that is right and the media is gonna paint them as bad of an organization that they can because that is what biased media does when they get an opportunity. There is also this other saying I hear. You may have heard it, "All Lives Matter?". This one is a bit confusing because when you try to rephrase it, it will always end up sounding wrong. But for those of you who think that, here is another scenario. Someone cuts their hand and you have a bandaid, and they need that bandaid, then someone else who doesn't have a cut on their hand, asks

you "Where is my band-aid?". What would you do? That situation is basically the whole "All Lives Matter" in a nutshell. No one is denying that all lives on this earth matter, it's just some have gone through more and need to bring it to attention because it isn't right, but by saying "All Lives Matter", you are trying to take the attention away from people who might need it more. Yes "All Lives Do Matter" and everyone knows that, but right now people have to realize "Black Lives Matter" and when I say black I speak for all colored people here in the United States

Sometimes, I wonder what it would have been like if our Civil Rights leaders from back then were here today. Would they have loved the progress we made in equal opportunity, or keep working as hard as they did back then, and I want you to think about that too. If Martin Luther King Jr. or Malcolm X, or even Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, going way, way back. What would they think about racism now? They would definitely consider it a big upgrade from their day, but they would have been disappointed. That we came this far and racism is still alive today. I would've felt disappointed. Which is why it is up to us, the next generation to solve these things. Right now, I want all young people like me to know that we are gonna grow up and we are going to become "society", so what we do now will affect us in the long-run.

I matter because I am a part of the next group of people who will do what I can and give my best to make this world a better place and you matter to because although we might be different people with different backgrounds, opportunities, and interests, I want to use this platform to tell you that you matter as much as I do and so does everyone else.

This paper is not a piece of art that people will admire. I just wanted to bring this to attention using this platform that God has given me and to be honest I do not care if I win. Of course, I would be the happiest person if I did, but as long as what you heard will stick with you, I have achieved my goal, and there is no greater feeling than that. In the end, I just want to say Thank You. To my family, friends, classmates, teachers, and God, and those of you for taking the time to hear what I had to say. Thank you.

Every Person Adds Something

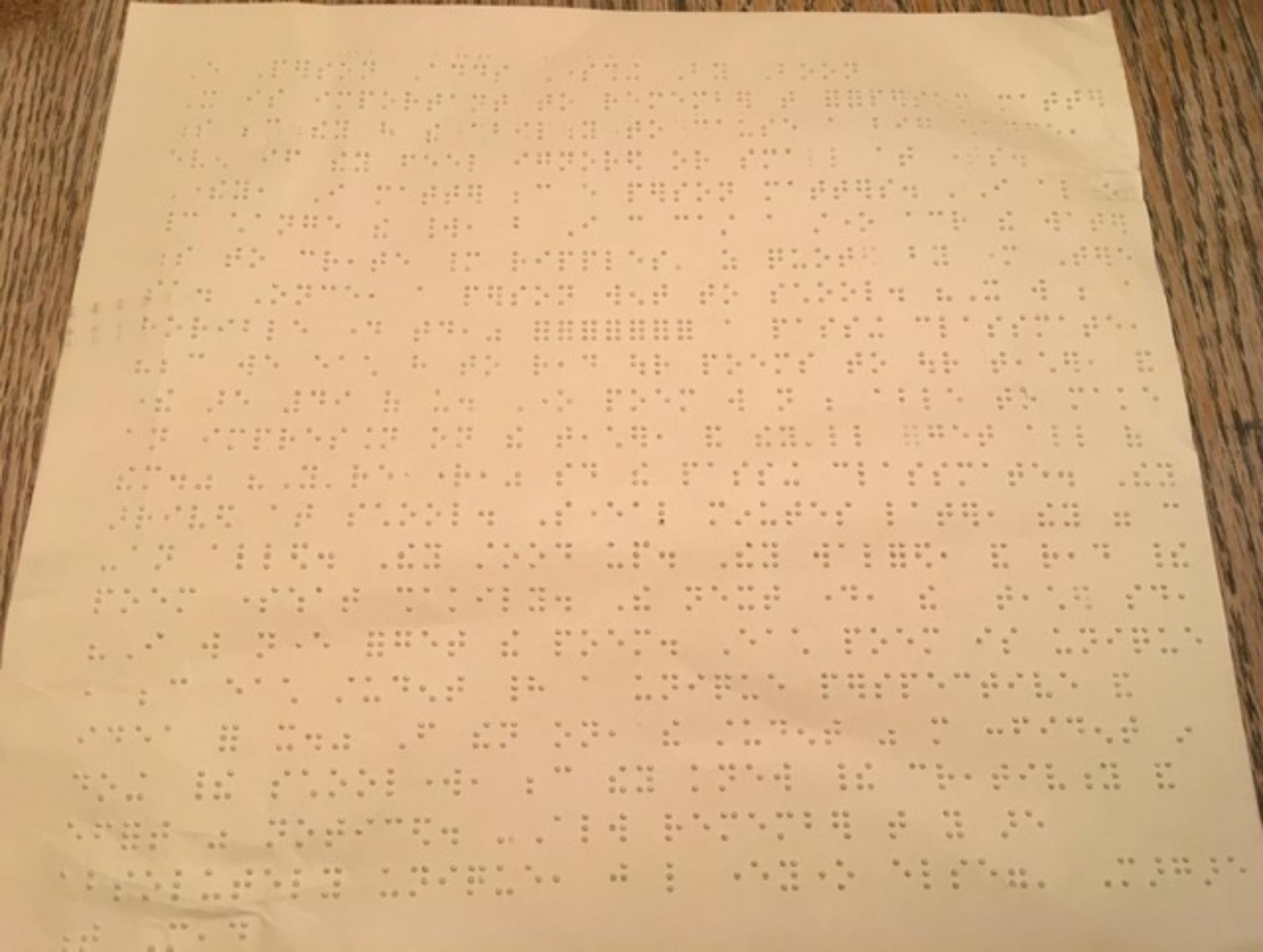
This story utilizes the theme "I matter because...". It says every person matters. Many people exist, and each person feels small sometimes. However, when people do something, it will be noticed by someone. Personally, I am blind, so it can be harder to do things. If I feel my work or ideas don't matter, these factors make me think my work isn't worth doing. Knowing their work matters motivates people. My story focuses on schoolwork, but personality and ideas also count. Therefore, I interpret the theme by stating it is important to know everyone's work, whatever the size, matters.

Boon Dumrong, Kellogg

Special Artist
Literature



140



It is important to remember that every person matters because they have the potential to cause a big change, even if they feel ignored or small at times. Therefore, I matter because every person matters. 'I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples,' as quoted by Mother Teresa.

Once, a person went to school. "It will be a horrible day today," they said to a passing classmate, "because we each have to read our poems to our teacher, and there are 49 of us. One poem will not be able to make an impression on the teacher, and they'll forget all of them."

"You're right," said the passing classmate.

They arrived at school. Several minutes later, they were called. They stood up. They walked up to the teacher, and read their poem somewhat shakily.

The next day, the teacher said, "I will never forget your poem. Each poem is unique, because each student had a different perspective and idea for it."

From then on, the student was more confident in doing their schoolwork, because they knew their creativity and effort was noticed.

'Always remember that you are absolutely unique, just like everyone else.' Margaret Mead

Future Generation

I wrote "Future Generation" because I thought if one person could do something, that could cause something else, and that thing could cause something even bigger. It could happen again and again, in a cycle. In my poem that thing is a person having a baby, and that baby grows up and has another baby, and then that baby grows up and has another baby! It goes on forever. But if the person in the beginning hadn't been there to make their baby, that baby wouldn't make their baby, and that would be taking away the whole line of humans.

Intermediate
Literature



182

Future Generation

By Leia Artemis Wirkala-Bryant

Thursday, October 29, 2020

I matter because
I may have children
And those children
May have children
But if I were to leave
Before any of that could happen
I would be erasing
That whole generation
And that would be so very bad
And if I were to leave
Before I could teach
Any younger children
To write or read
That would be bad indeed
So I should be there
Or those bad things might happen
I matter because of that

If I Wasn't There

I wrote my poem, "If I Wasn't There" thinking this: I want to show my art in words and rhyme. Also, I wanted to explain why I think I matter. I loved writing my poem because when you write poems you really express what you want to say in fun rhymes. Writing poems means being creative and most importantly having fun!

Intermediate
Literature



183

If I Wasn't There
Ada Simone Wirkala-Bryant
Friday, October 30, 2020

I matter because
My friends and my family
Depend on me
To give them happiness and glee
I matter because
If I wasn't there
Sadness would spread everywhere
I know my family
And I know for sure
That my parents want three kids
Not one two or four
I'm the girl in the family
Who has my own way
My choices are different
Each and every day
And that's why
If I wasn't there in my cozy home
Something would be missing
Where the Wirkala-Bryants roam
So that's why.....I matter!

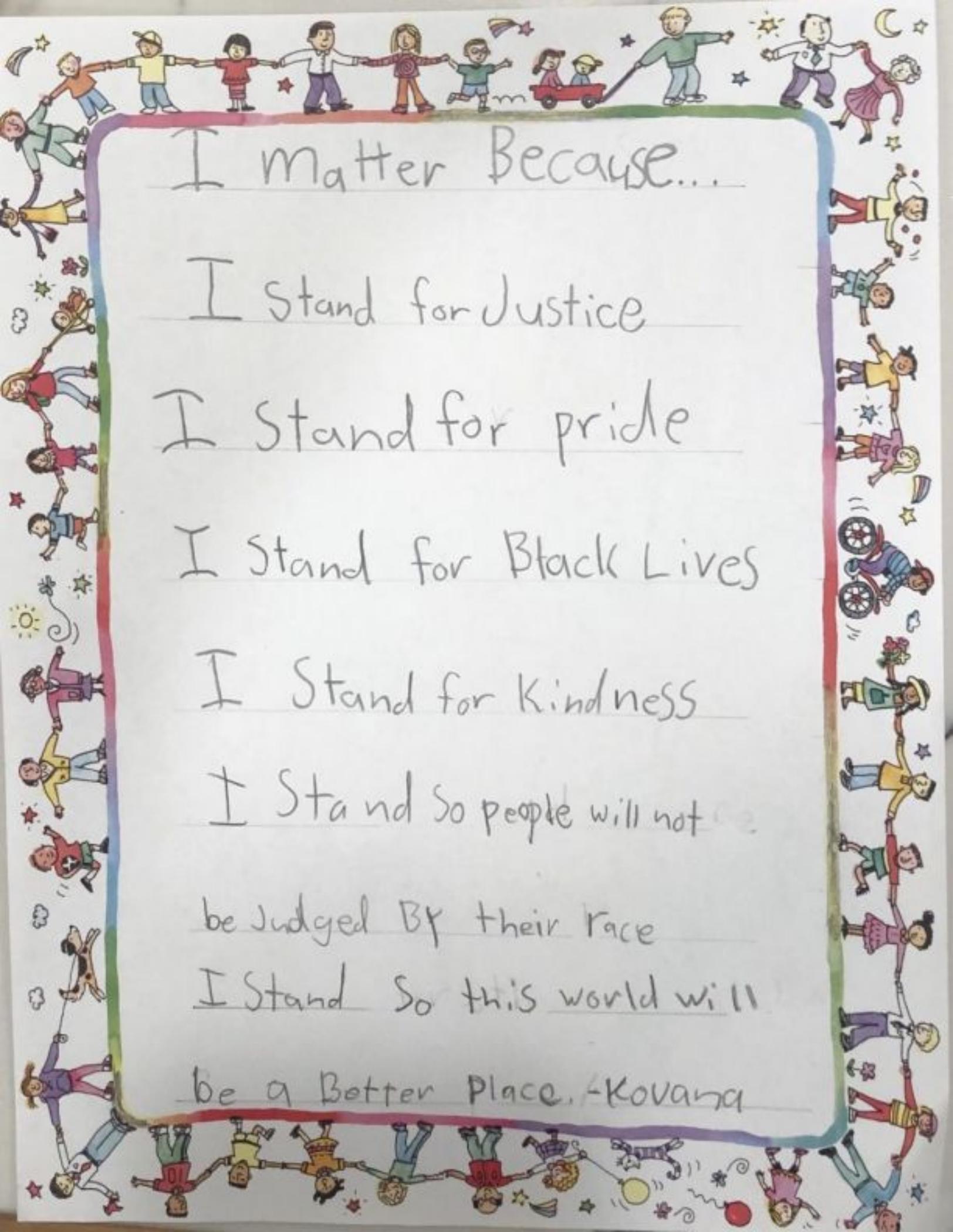
I Stand

This year of 2020 has been hard because of Covid, people being judged by their race and going through more struggles than white people. Also, celebrating people who are LGBTQ who also struggle. So I matter because I bring kindness and try to help this world to be a better place.

Intermediate
Literature



205

A vibrant, multi-colored border surrounds the page, featuring a continuous line of diverse children holding hands. The children are depicted in various poses and activities, such as jumping, running, and playing. The colors of the border transition through a rainbow spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The children are drawn in a simple, cartoonish style with bright clothing and accessories like hats and shoes. The overall theme is one of unity and community.

I matter Because...

I Stand for Justice

I Stand for pride

I Stand for Black Lives

I Stand for Kindness

I Stand so people will not

be Judged By their race

I Stand so this world will

be a Better Place. -Kovana