



# Smyrna School District

Essay Contest

2006

Adult and Student Winners

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## I ♥ The Smyrna School District

The sixth essay contest to support the five Smyrna School District core values of *Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Integrity, and Compassion* was held during the month of January 2006. There were two categories of winners: adults (18 and over) and students (K through Grade 12). First, second, and third place winners received medals and certificates noting the accomplishments during “I Love the Smyrna School District” day on February 25, 2006.

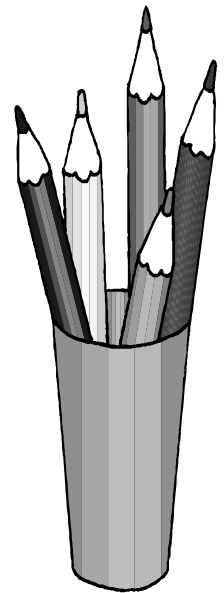
The 2006 writing contest focused on the value of *Respect*. Hundreds of touching and heartfelt essays were submitted. This booklet contains the essays of first, second, and third place winners at all levels.

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

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

*Debbie Wicks*

Superintendent



For the sixth annual “I Love the Smyrna School District” essay contest, students and adults were asked to write about *Respect*, a core district value. Contest rules and a writing prompt were disseminated to students (via their teachers) and the community in January 2006. The writing prompt was created to mirror the type of prompt students might encounter on the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) writing tests given each spring.

June Wicks, district reading coordinator, prepared the prompt and assisted with coordinating the essay contest. Janet Garrett, retired Smyrna High School business teacher, completed the typing and formatting of the publication. Karen Kennedy, Smyrna School District Curriculum Office secretary, assisted with the layout and editing of the publication. Alexander “Sandy” Shalk, Ed.D., conducted the contest and edited the final publication. District teachers encouraged their students to write and helped select essays. Appreciation is extended to all for their time and effort in making this publication possible.

### ESSAY CONTEST

Contestants are asked to write a maximum 500-word essay on the following topic (deadline is January 31, 2006):

*Respect means having a high regard for oneself and others. This would include self-worth, pride, physical well-being, contentment, peace, humor, appreciation for differences and individuality, fairness, respect, and tolerance. This may include faith in God.*

Choose a person who has your highest respect. Tell who it is and why you chose that person. Make sure you tell what qualities made you choose that person and describe these qualities in detail.

**ADULT WINNERS:** First (gold), second (silver), and third (bronze) place winners receive medals and certificates noting their accomplishments. Winners and runners-up are recognized during the “I Love the Smyrna School District” day (February 25, 2006).

**STUDENT WINNERS:** First (gold), second (silver), and third (bronze) place winners are selected at each grade level (K-12) in each building. Winners receive medals and certificates noting their accomplishments. All winners are recognized during the “I Love the Smyrna School District” day (February 25, 2006).

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The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *Respect* as: to consider deserving of high regard: Esteem. If this be the case, I would have to say that it would be a very difficult decision to say who I would consider the person I respect the most. After great thought it is a tie between my son Garret Garcia and my husband, his step-father, John Hayes. Both of these persons have gone through many experiences that have made them very unique, loving, and strong individuals; both are worthy of my devotion, loyalty, and respect.

My son Garret at 15 years of age has already walked through the devastation that a self-destructive relative can wreak upon a family. He has stood his ground and spoken his peace. Garret has the strength to cry and show it, because he knows that dealing with his feelings is more important than what others think of him. He has tried very hard under the pressures of academics, to show his intellect, even when he has failed in the past. Garret will take the time to assist our ten-year-old neighbor with his homework, without ever being asked or expected, all the while showing care and concern. Most of all, my beloved son Garret is the most devoted older brother that a small child could have, playing and watching his three-year-old sister with the utmost attentiveness. He tries to be true to his heart at all times with acts of kindness to friends and loved ones. He speaks his mind, while always trying to do it in a respectful manner. Garret is the greatest gift a mother could have within a child.

My husband John Hayes has worked very hard to be the loving, dedicated husband and father that most women only dream about. He is caring, considerate, hard working, and consistent to his family and principles. He has studied long and hard at the university level to learn about the fundamentals of ecology, so as to be able to leave a legacy for our children. While doing this he has held down two or more jobs, so as to enable that our needs are being taken care of. He will work hard with his hands and mind, so as to insure that there is a roof over our heads and food on our plate. John is a man, like his step-son, who will speak his heart, even if there are tears in his eyes. He has taken Garret into his heart and soul, teaching and treating him as if he were his own flesh and blood. As written before, my husband is the man of my dreams, even after eight years of marriage.

With these two men holding such an extremely high place in my heart, you could see why it would be hard for me to choose just one. So I have devoted this essay to both of them—not for rewards or accolades, but just so I may tell them in just one more special way how much I love and respect them.

*Elena F. Sirignano-Hayes*  
First Place, Adult

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In a time of corporate corruption and political scandal, it can be tough to sift through the mediocrity and moral relativism of our world to reveal someone truly worthy of humanity's respect. Even with a college education and three continents under my belt, I can only name a handful of people who deserve the world's utmost respect. Although in my mind, one person in particular rises above the rest—a person whose integrity, courage, and political acumen propelled him to free an oppressed people, change a misguided nation, and inspire the world. I speak of the world's last great freedom fighter, Nelson Mandela.

Mandela rose from bucolic obscurity to combat the brutal oppression of the black population of South Africa by a white minority and become the first democratically elected president of that country. Although his presidency was the symbolic peak of his fight against apartheid, the policy responsible for dividing the country along racial lines and placing the native population under savage subjugation, he served a quarter century prison term on Robin Island before being elected. This prison term was the unjust consequence of his actions during the 1950s when he attempted to rouse the hearts of an oppressed people and take back the inalienable rights denied to men and women of color.

The white-controlled South African government arrested Mandela fearing an uprising of the black population. During the farcical trial that ensued, he began to reveal the grievous wrongs in South Africa to an unaware world, but the trial resulted in a long imprisonment for Mandela and his fellow freedom fighters. Nelson Mandela continued to be a beacon of hope inside the walls of Robin Island, not only to his fellow countrymen, but to freedom fighters throughout the world. Mandela took a stand in a fight where he clearly was an underdog, a fight to which the world mostly turned a blind eye, where victory seemed impossible; but he did so with unassailable right on his side. Mandela fought a black and white war, perhaps the last good war, and he did so with great sacrifice.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of his life took place after Mandela was freed. He was elected president through the country's first democratic election, and instead of embarking down a road of continued strife by ostracizing the white population, he began a healing process that continues to this day. He realized that South Africans, regardless of skin or creed, can walk together in peace towards a brighter horizon.

Mandela is a rare hero. He is proof that integrity is still alive and well in a world whose media is bloated with headlines following the actions of Jack Abramoff, Kobe Bryant, Janet Jackson, and an assortment of other characters that the world seems to shower with attention. Mandela is proof that there are still people, despite what the modern media shouts at us, who will take an uncompromising stand for that which is right. These are the reasons I respect and admire Nelson Mandela.

*James Vennard, IV*  
First Place, Adult

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I respect my teacher because she respects me.

*Tejona Johnson-Moore*  
First Place, Kindergarten

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I respect my cousin. She helps me rollerskate.

*Kaelyn Press*  
Second Place, Kindergarten

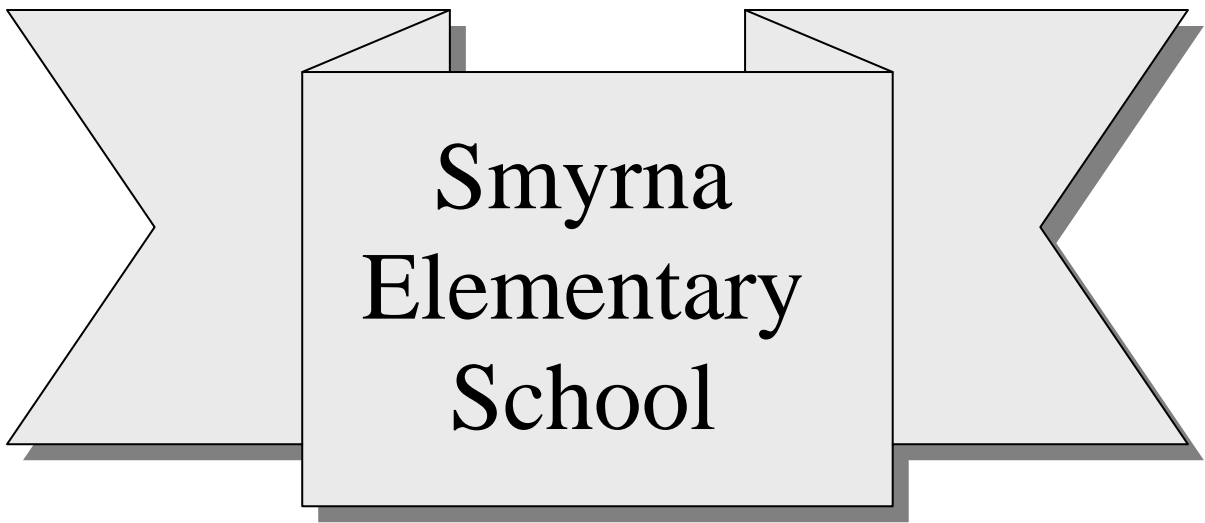
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I respect my brother. He helps me do my homework.

*Carson Yates*  
Third Place, Kindergarten

\*\*\*\*\*





*Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4*





I respect firefighters because they help people.

*Jarrett Hartsock*

First Place, Kindergarten

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I respect Madyson B. when I come and help her.

*Emily Riley*

Second Place, Kindergarten

\*\*\*\*\*

I use my manners.

*Ryan Dean*

Third Place, Kindergarten

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I think Mr. Van Veen is special. I respect him. He helps people and me. He makes people happy when they're sad. He plays with them. He helps them with their problems. Best of all he takes me places. I like going with him. But this is the most special - he makes people's hearts good. That's what's real special.

*Javon Garnett*

First Place, Grade 1

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My mom is a kind person. She makes the best lunch ever. She helps me write my homework and we do pretty well. Mom plays with me. We play games. They're pretty fun. My mom is caring. She is also considerate. She always has a hand for me. I respect her for that.

*Steven Russell*

Second Place, Grade 1

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My special person's name is Alex. She is my sister and she is very nice. My person is very special because she takes care of me and I love to take care of her very much. She is my special person because she plays with me a lot. She is my special person because she makes things for me and I make things for her. I respect this person because I love her very much.

*Kylie Womer*

Third Place, Grade 1

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My mom is a great person to respect in my opinion. Now I can tell you about my mom. One reason I respect my mom is she makes me warm and fuzzy inside. The other reason I respect my mom is she teaches me safety rules because she doesn't want to lose me. And the last reason is she teaches me how to be a mom just like her. But the important reason is she loves me. And she loves me because I love her. She's my mom and I love her just the way she is.

*Jordan Keller*

First Place, Grade 2

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I'm going to write about someone I respect. The person I respect is my mom Stacy M. I respect my mom because she loves me more than the stars above. I also respect her because she is kind to me all the time. She is kind to me because she is honest. She's also helpful and she does the right things. I respect her because she takes care of me. My mom shares almost everything with me, and she makes good choices. My mom is also very smart too. I love her as my mom. That is about who I respect. Who do you respect?

*Autumn Hoffman*

Second Place, Grade 2

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Would you like to know who I respect the most—my teacher, Mrs. Scullion. She is always very fair to us. When we play Bingo if we don't win candy she gives us candy anyway. She is also fair when we play sparkle, because she doesn't always spell the same exact words. She is the kindest teacher too, because she is always extremely polite to everyone. She is also nice. My teacher, Mrs. Scullion, has a nice sense of humor too. She makes us laugh out loud to the great stories she reads to us. Also she is funny all the time. She is a very respectful teacher to my classmates and me.

*Alison Sayers*

Third Place, Grade 2

I respect my pop-pop and if you got to meet him you would be amazed. You could be suspecting a totally different guy, but trust me my pop-pop is one of a kind. He is the funniest man in the world, so caring you can't stand it, and he's just the very best ever to live.

Now for the monkey business, my pop-pop made the funniest, most hilarious sound ever. I might not have been able to do it, but it made me laugh every single time. Also my pop-pop knew how to whistle but he whistled in, and I thought it was weird until he could teach me how to whistle in. After that I called myself the "double whistler." Here's something even better. Whenever he tried to draw like Grandma he always would mess up, ha ha. You should have been there when he tried to draw a rabbit, he he. Now since you know he's funny maybe we can agree that if there was ever a funny contest he would win it.

You haven't heard the last of pop-pop yet because you could miss the next part with all the caring. Here's what he did to care. He changed my diaper at least once or twice. If he did that then he probably did teach me some things too, like how to say pop-pop and stuff like that. Also pop-pop always had something for me on my super duper birthday. The thing is though whenever we just go down for a visit he gets us something outstanding. Is that awesome or what? My extremely excellent pop-pop would always help me with my problems. Even though he's gone that doesn't mean that he can't help me, because he can see everything I do and hear everything I say. So what do you say, because I say he's caring enough?

Even though he is gone I still remember him fairly well and I still give him all my respect. I respect him and I love him and I think he's funny. Well go ahead, tell me if you think my pop-pop is the funniest man in the world, so caring you can't stand it, and the very best who ever lived cause that's what he is to me.

*Liza Holford*

First Place, Grade 3

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Everyone has someone they respect. Mine is Mr. Davis. He is my third grade teacher. As you know he works at a school. He is very wonderful at being a teacher. I'm going to tell you about how Mr. Davis is respectful to me. He puts other people first, is caring, and is funny.

First I'm going to tell you how he puts other people first. One day before Christmas break, Mr. Davis brought in Krispy Kreme donuts and milk to our classroom, so we could eat them. Another thing he does is if someone needs some unforeseen surprise, Mr. Davis gives it to them. For example, if someone needs vinegar for science he gives it to them. He takes time to get what the other person needs. Mr. Davis makes sure everyone gets what they need. Mr. Davis always puts other people first.

Second, Mr. Davis is very caring. He helps me if I don't get something in class. For example, if I don't get something on my Accelerated Math, like  $12 \times 12$ , he explains it to me. Then I know the answer is 144. Mr. Davis makes sure we get it if he is teaching something. Mr. Davis is

caring because he lets people cut us in line. Like if someone wants to go first he lets them cut us. Mr. Davis is teaching me how to be a respectful and caring person.

Next, I'm going to tell you how he is funny. He makes me laugh when he sings songs. Like when he sings "R-E-S-P-E-C-T." He makes me feel good when he sings. To me he has a wonderful, nice voice. Mr. Davis also is nice and funny. He is a great teacher teaching me how to be a wonderful adult.

As you can see Mr. Davis is nice and is teaching me how to be a nice person. He knows what to do and when to do it. He is a respectful person to me. Mr. Davis puts other people first, is very caring, and is very very funny.

*Madison Spadafino*  
Second Place, Grade 3

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Respect? I know a person who I have highest respect for, my brother David. He says his manners, is great with choices and helps our parents.

My brother says his manners. For example when I'm being a bit slow, he doesn't move me. He says "excuse me." I always get out of the way, or if I don't that would be rude. Also when we are at dinner he says "Thank you for dinner." Now you can't say that's not respectful. When he is mad David never takes it out on anyone else. He says "please leave me alone." That would be mean if he did not do these things.

Also David is good with making decisions. When I'm going crazy he reminds me of the right thing to do. For example, I shouldn't jump on the couch. He tells mom and dad when he does badly in school instead of lying about it. I think what he does is the right thing to do. David always picks the fair thing to do. For example, if a person didn't get a turn he would pick the person who didn't. I'll tell you, wonderful choices mean wonderful respect.

He helps our parents. When dad asks him to help he doesn't say no or whine about it. He says "Okay." David helps my mom clean the house when she doesn't feel well. My mom respects that. When my mom and dad need something he gets it for them. How often do kids get what someone needs without asking? All these things are respect.

That's what my brother does for respect! He says his manners, he makes good choices, and David helps our parents. That's what I call respect.

*Nicole Simpson*  
Third Place, Grade 3

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I respect everyone. But, I highly respect my Grandmother. She has been taking care of me ever since I was eight months old. She also is highly respected by other people, not just me! Here are some ways I respect her.

My Grandmother's name is Carletta B. Moore. She is a giving person no matter what! She will give something no matter if you're rich or poor. She always quotes "It is Christmas all year long."

She is a caring person! She will also be there for you. She will help; that's how nice she is. Most people come to her to seek help. She will always tell you what's right not just what you want to hear.

My Grandmother is or was the only African-American born on New Years day, which I think makes her extra special to me. She also has the first birthday of the year, but she doesn't think she is all that because her birthday is on New Years day.

So, here are just three reasons why I highly respect her. But, these are not all the reasons why I respect my Grandmother. And her name once again is Carletta B. Moore.

*Alexis Batson*

First Place, Grade 4

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The person I respect is my grandpa! He is my respectful person because he listens to me, loves me, and is nice. One way I respect him is he listens to me! If I have a problem at school or at home when I come over he talks to me about it. He listens to what I want to do! For example, if I want to play cards he brings out the cards. Finally he listens to my feelings. For example, if I am sad he listens to me.

The next thing is that he loves me. I know my grandpa loves me because he cares for me. If I am hurt he makes sure I'm okay! Also, I know he loves me because he gives me hugs. He kisses me if I am upset. Let's move on, shall we.

The final thing is that my grandpa is nice to me! Grandpa takes me to the park so I can run around. He also takes me to the beach so I can cool down. Finally, he takes me to restaurants to eat their delicious food. Some of the places we go to are Applebees, McDonalds, Wendys, and Burger King.

I hope you now know my grandpa! I love him so much. You know now because he listens to me, loves me, and is nice.

*Lacey Steele*

Second Place, Grade 4

I am going to tell you who I have a lot of respect for. My mom is who. She never lies, always shows respect to others, and doesn't steer anyone wrong.

If I ask my mom if I have to improve in something she'll tell the truth. That's great. I don't want to run around thinking I'm great. When my dad was about to go to sleep my mom asked what he wanted from McDonalds. She forgot he wanted something and didn't get him something but she told the truth. My dad is Mr. Clean. When there are a lot of cups and cans he asks whose they are. If they're hers she admits to it.

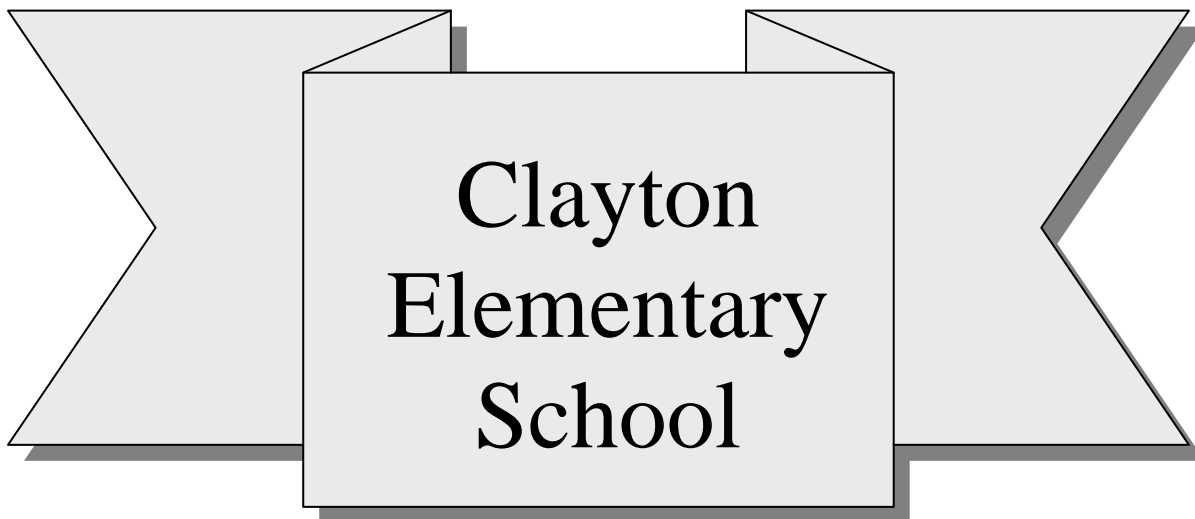
One time this girl and her mom didn't like our family for some reason. My mom didn't like that, so she went and made friends with them. My mother doesn't judge by what they look like but their personality. Also she just joined this group to help people who can't pay their taxes.

My mother never steers anyone wrong. She's a very trustworthy person. You can always believe what she says. She's always setting a good example all of the time.

This is why I have a lot of respect for my mom. She never lies and always shows respect to others. Never does she steer someone wrong either. These are all reasons why I have a lot of respect for my mother.

*Nick Macey*

Third Place, Grade 4



Clayton  
Elementary  
School

*Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4*





I respect Tyler because he helped a girl who fell down.

*Hunter Moyer*  
First Place, Kindergarten

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I respect the principal because he runs the school.

*Brittney Rosello*  
Second Place, Kindergarten

\*\*\*\*\*

I respect my dad because he fixes people's cars.

*Anthony Dirobbio*  
Third Place, Kindergarten

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My dad is special to me because he sometimes lets me go to his job. Dad is nice because he never yells at me. He always brings me to the store. I respect my dad because he is kind and he loves me. He always makes sure that I never get hurt.

*Alyssa Lipnicki*  
First Place, Grade 1

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My pop-pop is a special person. My pop-pop cares for the American flag. He shows a lot of respect. He took care of me when I was sick. He plays with me. He comes to my birthday party. He is special to me. He plays Play Station 2. He loves me.

*Connor Dulin*  
Second Place, Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

Miss Moor is very special to me. She helps me learn. Miss Moor helps me read. She helps us feel better. Miss Moor is respectful to me. She helps us learn words. Miss Moor gives us cool cat tickets. She wishes us good luck.

*Nathan Seward*

Third Place, Grade 1

\*\*\*\*\*

When I think about respect there is one name that comes to my mind, my friend Maddie. There are lots of reasons that I picked Maddie. First, I will tell you that I respect her because she is polite. I like her because she is compassionate to everyone, not just me. Maddie is always kind to me. She is my best friend because she sticks up for me. Also she is responsible because she always turns her homework in. I know she shows respect because she looks at me when I talk to her. Maddie shows perseverance and never gives up. Plus she shows a lot of effort in things like running, playing and cheerleading. She plays with me when I don't have anyone to play with. Maddie is the nicest girl I ever met. I know she has integrity because she never lies. She always says please and thank you. Those are reasons I picked Maddie, because she is my best friend and I respect her. She is as sweet as sugar with a cherry on top!

*Allison Wheatley*

First Place, Grade 2

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I think my dad, Jeffrey A. Stilwell, has my highest respect because he works hard. He makes dinner and breakfast. Sometimes he helps me and my sister with our homework. Also he cheers me up when I am sad. Plus he fixes stuff around the house if it's broken. He shows compassion by loving me. My dad takes care of me and he is nice to me. He goes to school and does well on his school work. He spends time with me. My dad doesn't talk on the phone all the time. When I am sick he gives me medicine. He takes me fishing. Plus he treats others the way he wants to be treated. Most of the time he lets me and my sister read to him. He shows all the core values. He is responsible, respectful, shows perseverance, and integrity. Most of the time, he buys me healthy food. Plus he is strong and smart. Also he makes sure I am safe. On Sundays he lets me watch cartoons all morning. He plays with me and he is fun to wrestle with. Those are most of the reasons why my dad has my highest respect.

*Annalise Elizabeth Stilwell*

Second Place, Grade 2

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There is nobody that gives me respect like my dad Mike. He is the boss of a business and he works every weekday so we can have money. Every time he makes me feel better. Plus he shows respect and compassion. He's also a hard worker. Plus he's a very nice man. If I have to go to the doctor he takes me there. When I hurt myself and it's not bleeding he kisses it. My dad has a big heart that shows respect. Also he shows respect to my sisters and his family and my mom's family too. Plus if he wants to borrow something I'm playing with he asks me first. Did you know that I show him respect and he shows me respect by listening to each other? He plays with me and has a catch with me and my family. Also he's respectful because if my mom is sick he gets her medicine and also gets her tissues. He says please and thank you. Also if he goes to a different state he brings me and my sisters back presents. He also keeps his workers going and going every weekday. Also when one of my friends comes over he is very nice to them and polite. When it's my birthday he tells me to do funny things like "Smash your head in the cake!" Sometimes I do it but sometimes I don't. He's the greatest dad I ever had in my whole entire world.

*Kaila Ann Hindt*

Third Place, Grade 2

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Respect means to me to always help others. A person I know shows that. That person is my mom. I respect her because she is compassionate, helpful and always generous.

Compassion means a lot of things. One of them is what my mom does for me. She helps me when I'm sick. She'll give me medicine or pills whenever I need them. My mom also does two more compassionate things. For instance, in my whole life my mom watched me because she does not want me to get injured or even killed. The last compassionate thing my mom does is that she is intensely sympathetic. She would help someone if they are lost, fell down or hurt. It's not always me she cares about, it's other people, too.

Helpful means a lot of things, also. When I am depressed, my mom shows me how to get over it. She makes me feel like I can do anything. Also, she gives me a lot of confidence. When I have trouble doing homework, she stops whatever she's doing and helps me. She may get a little angry, but she will help me anyway.

Generous means a lot of things, too. For one thing, she buys me really cool clothes. My favorite clothing is tee shirts. I have a lot of tee shirts at home that my mom bought me. She likes to buy me food. She buys me food because she always wants me to be healthy. My last generous thing my mom does is that she gives me necklaces and very, very old and beautiful jewelry that she loves, like my great-grandmother's necklaces and bracelets.

I respect my mom very much. As I said, she's compassionate, helpful and always generous. I wish I could be just like my mom.

*Shanyn Austin*

First Place, Grade 3

A respect prize should go to my Poppy. He is very brave. My friend is helpful at parties. He is very fair at home. I adore my friend because respect is his middle name. My Poppy is so respectful to my family and me.

First, he was a fire fighter and still is. He saved more than one hundred lives by doing his job. He risked his life too. When he saved a person's life I bet he felt brave, proud, and honored. He worked hard at his job.

Next, my friend is a super grandfather and a good father as he took care of two kids. He took very good care of the children. He was an excellent father. My Poppy and I went to the Hartley Market when an in-service day came up. And for the father part, he would help the kids with their homework. He was the best example for my mom and uncle. My best friend is married to a beautiful girl named Jennifer Fortney, otherwise known as my Mom-mom.

Then at parties in school and parties at home, he would always help. My friend would be funny. He would take a video of us together. My Poppy is a loyal friend to everyone!

My best friend is my Poppy. My Poppy is the most respectful person I know. I hope and know that my Poppy will always be like this. I hope I will be just like him.

*Alexis Williams*

Second Place, Grade 3

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Creeping and crawling in my house, upstairs in a fluffy room full of stuffed animals is my sister Sarah, who I respect very much. Sarah is always there for me when I need her. Also, she has been taking care of me since I was three years old.

If I was going to pick the one person that has been there for me all the time, I would pick Sarah. Who was the one who was there when I almost died when I was a baby? Sarah was. Sarah also was there when I was in my mom's belly. Also, she saved me, my cousin and dad when we got stuck in a jeep. That's why the person I pick to respect is Sarah.

If I had a broken leg and I had to pick who would take care of me, who do you think I would pick? I would pick Sarah. She would cheer me up when I was scared. Also, she saved me from two teenagers beating me up. Sarah was taking care of me when I felt like a hose with no water. That's why the one I would pick is my sister Sarah.

I respect Sarah because she takes care of me and is there when I need her. One time she saved me from these two scary teenagers. Would your sister save you like that?

*Dustin McHale*

Third Place, Grade 3

Respect is something very important. If you show respect to others you will have many friends. Showing respect to others will help you feel good about yourself. If you respect others they are sure to respect you.

Someone I think who shows respect toward herself and others is Selena Barnett. She shows respect in many ways. One way she shows respect is by asking others if she can use their things. When I was at the table making creative Valentine door decorations, she asked me if she could take my candy out to the hall before doing so. Also she does not skip people on the computer. She makes sure everyone gets a turn. Selena helps others too.

When Selena shows respect she never stops showing it. Selena always is respectful when she talks to teachers. She is also respectful when she talks with her friends. Selena is my good friend and she always shows me respect.

Selena shows respect no matter what mood she is in. If Selena is mad or upset she will still show others respect. If the class is taking a test she would never talk or disturb anyone. Selena always listens to what other people have to say, she does not interrupt.

I am glad that I have respectful friends like Selena. Having a respectful friend helps to remind me to always be respectful toward others. If you show respect you can do anything.

*Brooke Pollard*

First Place, Grade 4

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I know somebody who shows a lot of respect. That somebody is my big sister Alicia. To me respect means being thoughtful, caring, and always helpful. My sister is all of that, and I will tell you why.

Alicia is sixteen and she has a job and can drive. When Alicia goes to work she usually comes back with a piece of cake or something special for everybody. I think that is being thoughtful and caring. That is the first reason I chose Alicia.

I think Alicia shows respect in many ways. You know she does by bringing home cake, but she also picks me up from school! Once when my ride left, I went to the office to call her and she came right away. That shows she is caring.

Alicia is helpful because she helps clean things up. That isn't the only way she is helpful. Alicia also helps me figure out hard things and problems. For example, quite a few times I have gotten homework even my parents didn't understand. Alicia comes to the rescue! She explains and I understand instantly. That is another way Alicia shows respect.

I think Alicia shows more than respect. Alicia shows all five core values. Now you know why I chose Alicia. She is one of the most respectful people I know.

*Kendra Williams*  
Second Place, Grade 4

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Respect—do you know what it means? It means that you treat people the way you want to be treated. I know two people who do this twenty-four hours a day. Those two people happen to be my grandparents, Louie and Ida.

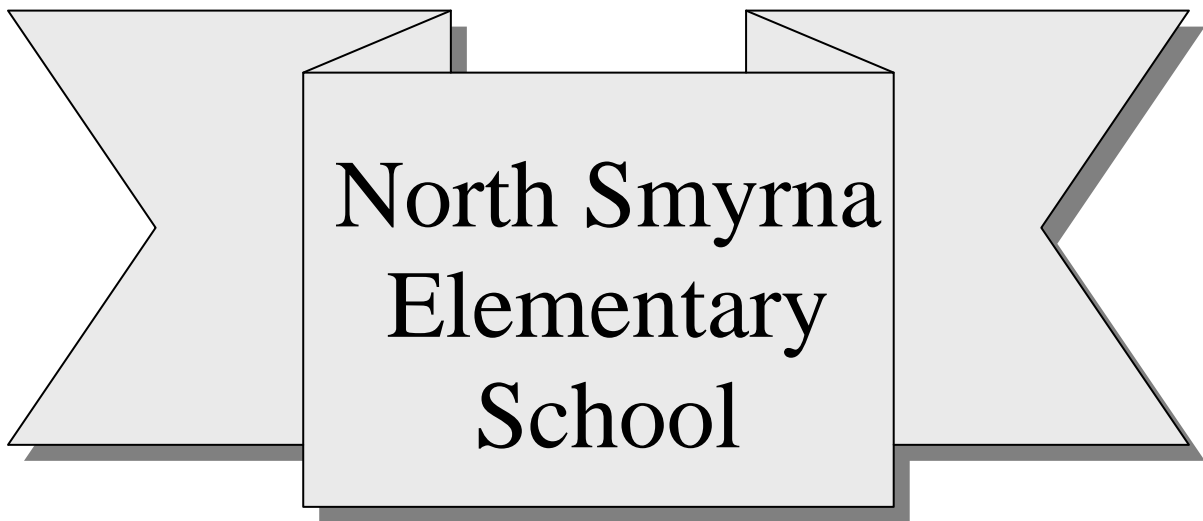
My grandparents do a lot of things with respect written all over it. First of all, when my parents go out to the movies or shopping for my birthday, my grandparents babysit me and give me fun things to do. Once, they came to a grandparent’s luncheon—and they live in New Castle! Also, they refused to let me buy our lunches. They also come to all my school plays.

I’ll tell you why they do these things—because they respect me. Even though I am not their daughter, they still treat me like their own. They care for me and call to talk to me when I’m sick.

Since my grandparents show me so much respect, I should do the same and return the favor. I can say “Thank You” whenever they do something nice for me, and do whatever I can to help them in return. You know what, if you know someone who also shows respect, you should do the same.

Well, that’s what respect means to me. I think you should pick a person who demonstrates a different kind of respect. Then write about it and read it to a crowd or even the person you choose—but whoever you read it to I’m sure they’ll love it!

*Katelyn Stidham*  
Third Place, Grade 4



*Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4*





I respect my Dad because he teaches me about God.

*Quanzaus Hawkins*

First Place, Kindergarten

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I respect my Dad because he helps me get on my pony.

*Paige Poore*

Second Place, Kindergarten

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I respect my doctor because he makes me better.

*Austin Ho*

Third Place, Kindergarten

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I think my Dad is a very special person. He thinks I'm the best. He helps me. I take care of him and I love him very much. He knows I do a great job at school. He's the best parent. He loves me too. He plays with me. We go places together. He gets the stuff I want first and I help him feel better. He helps me when I can't find stuff. He loves me so much. He helps me read my books. That is why my Dad is special.

*Alisha Bessix*

First Place, Grade 1

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Her name is Mrs. Marthaler. I picked her because she is special. She helps us learn. She let's us play outside. She reads to us. I respect this person because she is a teacher. I like school.

*John Colatriano*

Second Place, Grade 1

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I respect my mom-mom because she says my prayers with me at night. She fixes breakfast. I like it when I am done. I go and watch TV.

*Lillian Sweetman*

Third Place, Grade 1

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The person I am going to write about today is my Aunt Yvonne. The reason I am writing about this woman is because she is kind to me when I'm in a bad mood, and she's nice to me when I'm mean to her because she knows that I'm not trying to be mean. She is loving whenever she thinks that I feel unimportant, and if I'm sick with a cold she'll give me chicken noodle soup or tomato soup with crackers. I would ask for candy because I probably haven't had candy that day. She would say no because people with colds don't need candy. She has manners at the dinner table. She gives me respect if nobody else does. And I respect her because she's nice to me all the time, and she teaches me to be respectful by showing me manners. She teaches me to say please and thank you too. And that is why I wrote about my Aunt Yvonne.

*Mesha Mosley*

First Place, Grade 2

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The most respectful person I know is my teacher Mrs. Goodlin. She is respectful because she listens to kids who are talking and also helps kids who really need help. She is always there when we need her even if we get hurt. She asks us if we are okay and then she let's us go to the nurse's office and see if we are okay. Sometimes we get crazy. We respect our teacher because she respects us.

*Matthew Niles*

Second Place, Grade 2

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I know a person that has my respect. Do you want to know who he is? He is my dad and he is nice. He takes me to go fishing and carnivals. The reason why he is nice is because sometimes he takes me to Red Lobster and Applebees. That is why he is nice. He helps me learn how to ride a bike. He helps me with my homework. I know a person that has my respect. It is my dad.

*Elijah Scott*

Third Place, Grade 2

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Have you ever met Ms. Musto? She is one of my favorite teachers. She earns my highest respect. If you ever met her you would respect her too! Are you wondering what is so special about her? Read on to find out.

Ms. Musto is the best reader in the universe. She always picks the best stories to read to the class. Sometimes she makes voices for each character in the book. She is very funny. She always reads with enthusiasm. She makes me think I'm really there! I hope someday she gets a chance to read to you too!

Ms. Musto even makes it easier to learn than any other teacher I've met. She motivates students to do their work nicely. She tells us a lot of mnemonic devices so we remember things better. She goes over all the instructions on class work. And she even works with kids on A.M. exercises. I think she is the nicest teacher on the planet!

Ms. Musto is a lot of fun! In A.R. each time we get 5 one hundreds, we get a fake dollar. Then at the end of the marking period everyone counts up their dollars. We use them to get little toys. Ms. Musto calls it an auction. It's like a little store. Then, we start over the next marking period without any dollars. We have to earn them. Ms. Musto is so great!

Now that you've heard all about her do you want to meet her? I hope so. I think she is an awesome teacher. What do you think? She is always real nice and never harsh. She always comes to school and is never late. She likes to teach a lot. I hope someday you get to meet her, I really do.

*Megan Dillard*

First Place, Grade 3

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Do you want to know about the person I respect the most? His name is Donald Clark. He is my grandfather. There are three reasons why I respect him. I respect him because he is a good citizen. He has always been dedicated to what he was doing. He never gave up. But the most important reason I respect him is because he was in World War II. Read on to find out why he is a good citizen.

My grandfather is a splendid citizen. He respects all the laws. My grandfather cares a lot about people. He is always ready to lend a hand to anyone who may be in need of some help. He cares a lot about his family. When my grandmother had a knee replacement, he helped her cook and did the laundry for her. He tells my brother and me to be good citizens and obey the rules and laws. He wants us to be the best we can be. Now I'm going to tell you why he is dedicated to what he is doing.

My grandfather, Donald Clark, has always been dedicated to what he is doing. Whatever he starts, he finishes. He never gives up. He is very encouraging to others. When I ride ponies, sometimes it is difficult and I get discouraged. My grandfather encourages me to try and try

again. I know he will be there to say, "You can do it Katherine!" He makes me want to never give up! He is also dedicated to his family. We know he loves and cares for us deeply. Next I will talk about how he was in World War II.

My grandfather, Donald Clark, was in World War II. It was a very long, terrible war. He was in the Air Force. My grandfather fought for our country. He fought for your freedom and mine! He is very smart and trustworthy. He has always been helpful and hard working. He is also honorable for serving our country in the war. I am lucky to have Donald Clark as my very own grandfather. I respect him for his bravery.

My grandfather, Donald Clark, has gained a lot of respect from me. I respect him because he is a good citizen. He has always been dedicated. The most important reason I respect him is that he was in World War II. Do you have somebody you respect? I hope you do have a person you respect.

*Katherine Clark*  
Second Place, Grade 3

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My mom has my highest respect. She always takes care of me, she's well mannered like I am, and she's helpful.

The first reason I respect my mom is because she cares for me. She spends time helping me on my homework because she cares how I do in school. She helps me clean my room whenever I make a mess. Sometimes my mom cooks delicious meals for our family. These are some of the things my mom might do to take care of me.

The second reason I respect my mom is because she's well mannered. When she's in the grocery store she waits her turn in line. Sometimes when someone has only a few things in their cart she lets them go ahead of her. She always says words like please and thank you. These are some of the ways she shows that she is well mannered.

Another reason I respect my mom is because she is helpful. When my grandmom was moving, my mom helped move the things inside the new house.

The reasons I respect my mom and she has my highest respect are she cares for me, she's well mannered, and she's helpful. That is why I chose my mom.

*Latrelle Lee*  
Third Place, Grade 3

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Do you have a person that you give a whole bunch of admiration to? Well, I know I do! This admired person's name is Margret P. Kemp, and she is my awesome mom-mom. My mom-mom helps my mom out by taking care of me. She also gives me special and nice things. My mom-mom does anything, I said anything, to make my life better. Keep reading about my fearless mom-mom!

My grandmother is so helpful around the house. She cooks, she cleans, and she even helps my mom take care of me all in one day! She helps my mom by buying me clothes. Not only that, she picks out really cool clothes! Since my mom has to go to work really early in the morning, mom-mom gets me up, makes me a delicious breakfast and makes sure I'm on the bus in time. Boy, it is wonderful knowing I have a grandmother who loves me. If it wasn't for my mom-mom, my mom would have to hire a babysitter when she goes on night shift and stuff, and I hate the thought of that.

My mom-mom gives me such lovely and nice things. Like in the February of 2003 she gave me a beautiful Flea-Bitten Gray for Valentines Day. That same week she said no big presents, but I ended up getting the biggest present of all—a horse! And if that isn't enough, when a library had a book sale she brought home a whole bunch of books. Not only that, when she sees I need lessons she provides me with them so I can achieve my goal of going to the Olympics. My mom-mom will do anything to make my life better.

After all my mom-mom does, you would think she doesn't have time for me. Well then, you would be wrong. My mom-mom will do anything to make my life better. She takes me on trail rides to keep me and my horse healthy. But out of everything she does for me, the most important is she loves me.

Now you know why I give full admiration to my mom-mom. I wonder how she does it all. I mean, how can she help my mom with me, cook, clean, give me nice things, and still do anything to make my life better? My mom-mom is one of the most respected and admired people I know. Well, I've told you about someone I respect and admire; now it's your turn.

*Kaitlyn Garrison*

First Place, Grade 4

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Hi, my name is Katie. Today I want to tell you about my respect for Ashley. Does anyone know what respect means? It means that I look up to her and that I believe she's a nice, caring person. Ashley is considerate and caring, a good friend, and very trustworthy. Do you know anyone like that? Moms, dads, brothers and sisters are all like that. But is your family compassionate and caring?

Ashley is a very compassionate and caring person. She makes my life funnier. She gives my life the enrichment it needs. Like one time I was sick. I stayed inside for a very long time. Ashley

got me a card with a homemade poem in it. The poem said that she missed me and hoped that I would be better soon. She felt like all night she was going to cry to the moon. It made me want to get better so she wouldn't have to cry. Really, it was that touching!

A good friend—Ashley is a very good friend. We've been friends since second grade. Every outdoor recess is spend with her. Like one time I was thinking hard about a dream I had had the night before. Then Ashley's class came outside. Her familiar, "Whatcha doing Katie? Can I help?" woke me from my daze. I was also thinking maybe, just maybe, it would make a good play. So I recruited Ashley as my first actress. I knew who she resembled! I gave her the part of the lady who dies, only to come back to life to help solve the case of who killed her. But the point is she stuck with me through hard times. When we were done, she was my only actress out of fifteen.

Trustworthy—Ashley is very trustworthy. If I'm feeling down or sad, I can trust her to cheer me up. Like one time I lost my pencil on the recess playground. I was really feeling down. So Ashley engaged me in a game. You have to distract the bulldozers from the forest while the other person got the baby animals from the forest. Then we blew up the bulldozers. By the time recess was over, I felt much better.

So you see Ashley is very worthy of my respect. Sometimes I want to give her an award. Oh, I've got to meet her! Bye!

*Katie Withrow*  
Second Place, Grade 4

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Mr. Leach is a wonderful person! He does all kinds of things for me. One thing he does is listen. Listening is a very good gift to have. He has tons of qualities. Last but not least Mr. Leach is very special to me in lots of different ways. Keep reading to find out more about Mr. Leach and don't stop until you reach the end.

Listening, listening, listening—man, does Mr. Leach do that so much. He listens always to the things I say. Sometimes I sit on his porch swing and while we watch the different breeds of birds go by, he listens to me telling him about my day. I can tell him anything I want about my school, about what my favorite things are, or anything about anything or anyone. Mostly I enjoy talking to him about my problems. He gives me information on how to fix those problems, why they happen, and some reasons why you should solve them quick and not let them go. Now do you see why Mr. Leach listens a lot?

Boy, does Mr. Leach have a lot of qualities. Mr. Leach is always dependable. He's dependable when he says that he will take me to the mall tomorrow to exchange Christmas presents. Usually we take our family along with us. Another quality he has is being nice. If someone needs the door opened for them, Mr. Leach is always there to help them. That goes into the next quality Mr. Leach has, caring for everyone. Like if someone is not feeling well and he had to leave for

something, he will not go to where he wanted to go. He would have stayed at his house and watched over the person that was sick. Those are not all of Mr. Leach's qualities, but if I told you them all I would be going on forever and ever. As you see Mr. Leach has a lot of qualities.

Have you ever met someone very special to you? Well, that is how I feel about Mr. Leach. First of all he is special to me because he is my Grandpap. So of course he loves me. Every time I visit he hugs me and teaches me things—like how to play marbles or how to walk on his treadmill. Also my Grandpap respects me just like I respect him. He always has a good attitude when I am with him. Mr. Leach is always happy and cheerful. Another reason my Mr. Leach has earned my respect is because he gets me something to drink and eat every time I am over. He worked all his life. For 32 years he worked in the coal mines. That is plentiful reasons for you to see why my Grandpap is so special to me.

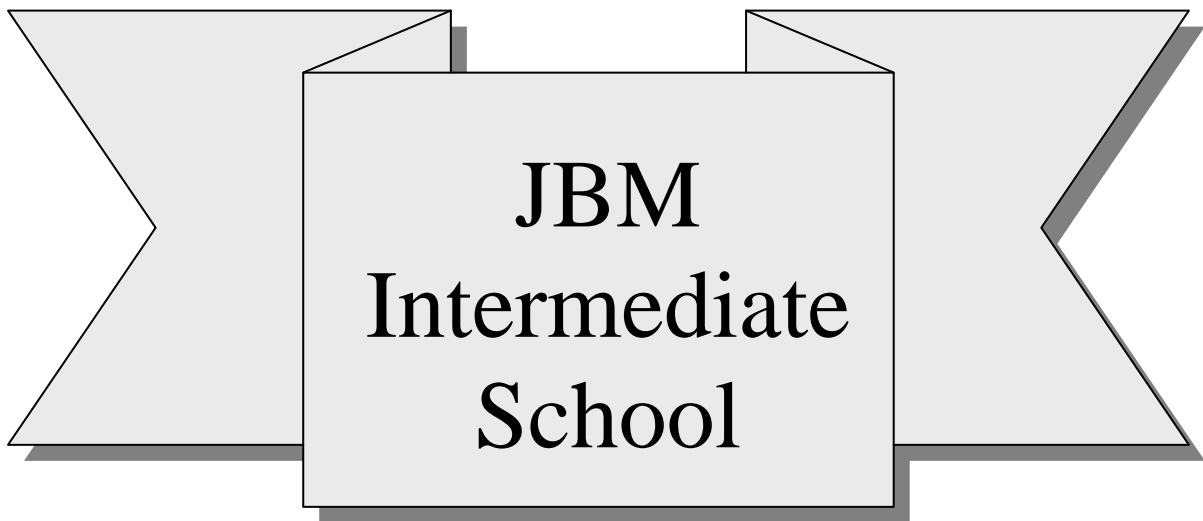
As I said, Mr. Leach listens so much. I think he gets headaches because he listens so much. He has so many qualities that they are hard to count. Last, my Grandpap is very special to me. Those are all the reasons why Mr. Leach has earned my respect.

*Lauren Gaston*

Third Place, Grade 4







*Grades 5 and 6*



The person I respect the most is my karate instructor, Ms. Carolyn Lane. I have been in her class since I was four years old. She has done a lot for me and my family. I have a lot of reasons for respecting her.

When I was mad Ms. Carolyn talked to me. She taught me that there are better ways to handle being mad. She showed me how to talk about it, instead of hitting people. I have been working on this still. I'm doing well and she is still there to help me.

Ms. Carolyn has also taught me discipline. She is teaching me to treat others with respect. If I do act up in class she corrects me in ways that make me understand why I've been punished and what I did wrong. She teaches her students to go by their gut feeling—if it feels bad then it is bad. She also teaches us to respect ourselves. She teaches us to fight, but she teaches discipline too. I need that in my life. All kids do, but I was a mad kid and she helped me get it straight (my behavior I mean). It has helped a lot.

Out of all the reasons I respect Ms. Carolyn I think I respect her most for the changes she helped make. She helped me find a side of me I did not know was there. Every time I start doubting myself or thinking I cannot do something in class, she helps me see I can do it. For example, doing forward rolls. I had a hard time doing them. I would get so frustrated and mad at myself; Ms. Carolyn helped me get it right and encouraged me to keep trying. That is just one of the many ways she helped me. I also watch her with the other kids. She is so patient. My cousins are in the class. Tony was very active. When he started class two year ago he couldn't stand still. Now he makes it through class without getting in trouble for moving around. My older sister would get upset and cry if she had to get up in front of the class or if she made a mistake, but with Ms. Carolyn's help she now teaches class and doesn't cry anymore.

Ms. Carolyn is the person I respect most because of the way she has made a difference in my life. She has also helped Mom. She became her friend and helped her when she needed it. She is my karate instructor and has been for eight years. She is also a mother, a grandmother, and works a full time job. With everything she has to do, she still finds time to spend four hours a week helping me and about twenty other kids stay on the right path and show us how to stay out of trouble.

*Alicia Hungerford*

First Place, Grade 5

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Do you know someone who shows respect with everything they do? Well if you don't you should read this story because maybe some of the respect my great grandfather has will rub off on you. My great grandfather's name is Ellis Brown and he is 86 years old.

Ellis Brown is very respectful to everybody he knows. He even helps people if they don't have a problem. My great grandfather treats people the way he wants to be treated and that's respect!

He always says nice things too. When he is talking, he talks with respect. Also he is always very positive. He's just an all-around respectful person.

When I am in school, my great grandfather is very supportive. He'll always ask how I'm doing. He also praises me whenever I do a good job. When I get my report card, he always cares about how I did. If I get a bad grade, he's just very calm—he never yells at me. When I come for a visit, he always has a smile on his face. He always has respect for me!

Ellis Brown is very respectful to himself and his country. He always recycles when he needs to. Also he takes care of himself by eating healthy. My great grandfather has trouble walking but he still tries to keep himself active. He is just the right person to have respect for.

Ellis Brown is such a respectful person. The reason why I love him so much is because of who he is. I hope that when I grow up I will be just as respectful as him.

*Alyssa Lattomus*  
Second Place, Grade 5

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In my opinion everyone needs to have someone they respect. It could be your mom, your dad, an uncle, or a next-door neighbor. I respect all of these people, but there is one person I respect the most and that is Martin Luther King, Jr.

In his lifetime, Martin Luther King, Jr., accomplished plenty. He was a very intelligent person. When he was 15 he entered Morehouse College as a gifted student. Also he earned many degrees. Another accomplishment of his was winning the Nobel Peace Prize. That was given to him because he took a stand to try to make peace between people.

Taking a stand is one of the biggest aspects I respect him for. It shows he was serious about what he believed in. When Mr. King said his speech he spoke like an orator. It changed the way people thought. He thought that all people should have the same rights. Martin organized boycotts from buses even though he got arrested for taking a stand and organizing so many freedom and rights events. Martin was a person who believed he could make a change in America.

I have said most of the qualities that make me respect Martin Luther King, Jr., but I haven't said the most important. He wasn't a selfish person who just thought of himself. Mr. King cared about other people in his life. He also never gave up. When one person didn't listen to his beliefs he didn't give up. Instead he went to another group of people and another. Martin was a person that fought for what he believed in. I admire that the most. In conclusion, Martin Luther King, Jr., has my highest respect.

*Janna Dominique Nziffa*  
Third Place, Grade 5

When you think of the word respect what pops in your head first? Do you think of the song, or maybe your mom or dad, an aunt, or maybe an uncle? For me, when I think about respect I think about my dad. Before I go on let me just get something straight. You are probably thinking “this is just some kid trying to get an easy A off their dad.” No, that kid is not me. Maybe another kid—but not me. I really respect my dad for all the things he does every day!

My dad is amazing; he is good at almost everything. For example, when I was little, my dad decided to build an addition to our house. You may say “So what,” but here’s the catch—he is not even a carpenter. He built the house by reading a book! The house was so cozy.

Many dads today serve their country, but my dad serves God. Instead of going to the battlefield of Iraq, he goes to foreign countries risking his life to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. He has built churches and preached the gospel in the Amazon Jungle of Peru and in a communist country that I can’t even mention. My dad’s passion is to fulfill The Great Commission according to Mark’s gospel. Not only does my dad teach others about God but he also teaches me and my younger siblings about Him also. Most important of all, he lives a life that God would want him to live.

I respect my dad because he is funny. My padre tells jokes two different ways. He first tells it the right way (the way it was told) and then his way. Still it does not matter how he tells it, it is always funny because of his secret touch he puts in it. Also, he comes up with the craziest things. He said to my sister once, “Stop crying or you will give me a cold.” On top of that he pulls pranks. I remember when there was a bat in my house and he caught it. He yelled from outside, “Brianna come outside; there is a dog out here!” When I saw that bat, I flew back inside. I remember one time when my dad hid in the bathroom for almost an hour; then he started shaking the door handle. I went to open the door and out popped my dad! It was so scary and funny at the same time. I respect him for all the humor and joy he puts in my life.

My dad has earned my respect for the things he does such as having a sense of humor when I am blue. He is so talented in so many different areas. Last, he has a heart for God. I know my dad is only human but he is a pretty great human to me. Remember, I am not that kid trying to get an easy A!

*Brianna Navarro*

First Place, Grade 6

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Respect is the thread that weaves through all human encounters. This is very true. Without respect, the world would be in disarray. So would relationships, friendships, and most importantly families. Truly, the world could use an extra dose of respect.

My dad has my innermost respect. What with how hard he works, he deserves it. Nothing could amount to the responsibility he shows. My dad works every day of the week, and when he gets

home he does a lot of chores and takes care of my four dogs (which are as hard as having ten more kids!).

Dad was also a paramedic in the army. Almost every weekend he was away for training. I remember one time the house down the street caught on fire. Mom was really scared, so she called him. About an hour later he came home. I think anyone who wanted to serve for his or her country should be highly respected. He still has his medic bags and equipment in case of emergency.

Dad is so awesome when it comes to being fun and cool. He teaches us board games, and tricks on the skateboard. He likes to ride bikes with us and always has time to show us how to beat a level on a video game. He listens to good music and loves to burn us copies of new CDs. Even after he works all day, he has time for us.

Dad is very supportive of us. Even if I don't get something perfect at first, he thinks of it as a start. He always has time to come to my school recitals. He always teaches me new things, and has very interesting stories.

Remember that quote I told you about in the beginning? Well, I guess it isn't entirely true! Respect doesn't only weave through human encounters. It threads through love too. I know that if everyone could give a little more respect to land, friends, and family, the world would be a better place.

*Amanda Jarman*  
Second Place, Grade 6

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“Respect does not come from possessing honors but in deserving them.” These are the words of Aristotle. Not only that; these words describe my Uncle Don. Out of the whole world, he is at the top of my list of who I have the most respect for. He died in 2005 partially from colon cancer. The other part of it was an infected liver. He was 29 years old with a wife, Anita, a stepson, Tommy, and another son on the way who was born shortly after he died.

My Uncle Don was a very religious person. He was in a band called “His Four Ministries” which was also known as “His Four” for short. During one of the band's concerts, he was asked to make a speech for the introduction of the concert. He talked for such a long time, reading out of the Holy Bible, that his band had to make him stop so that they could start the concert. Also, once when he, Anita, and Tommy were in a hurricane, he started singing praises to the Lord to help them through the storm. Right before he died, he not only read scriptures from the Bible but he wrote them down to better understand what they meant.

Uncle Don was also a very loving person. Whenever he could come up from Florida to see us he would. He would usually come around Christmas time. He did this for a few reasons—for my birthday, for the holiday and to be with the whole family. He always made sure that my whole

family, mainly me, my sister, my Dad, my Grammy, my Mom, my Uncle Craig, Anita, and Tommy knew that he loved us.

There was no person as humorous and as funny as Uncle Don. He always loved to do little cartoon voices from people on “Cartoon Network.” He would always try to get Anita to do Yoda’s voice from “Star Wars.” His main cartoon person that he mimicked was “Marvin the Martian.” One time when the doctors said that he didn’t have the cancer anymore, my sister, Grammy, Anita, and I went to pick him up from the airport. Even though he wasn’t feeling good from all the chemo, he still wanted to do the “Marvin the Martian” voice.

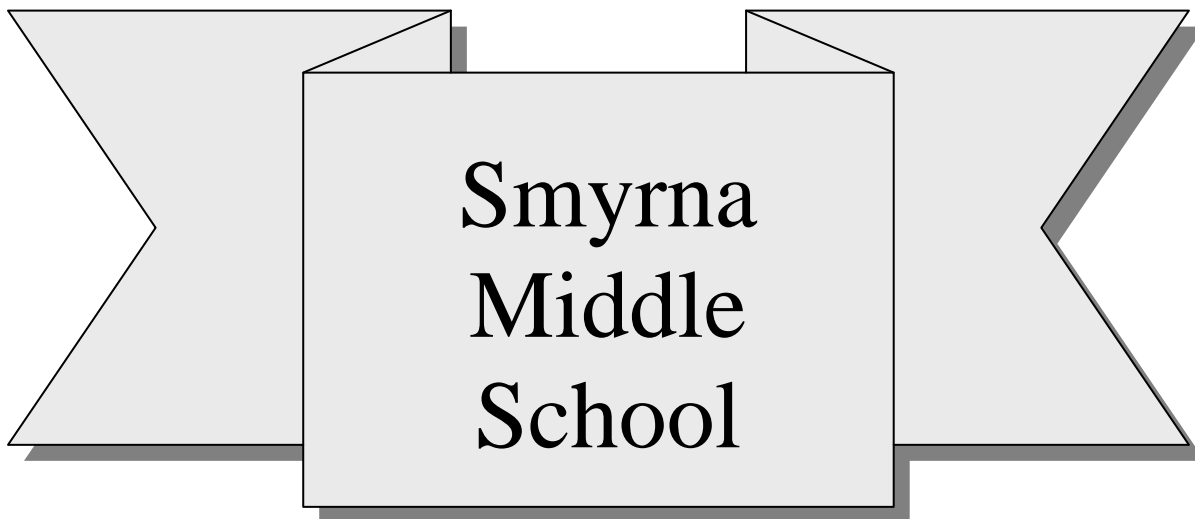
Uncle Don was always so humble and caring. He would always admit it if he made a mistake. Once, he said something not so nice to Anita. As soon as the words came out of his mouth he knelt down and asked her for forgiveness. He cared for her so much that he didn’t want to hurt her feelings. He wanted her to know that he didn’t mean it.

My Uncle Don was the most caring, humble, loving, humorous and religious person to ever live. He died letting everyone know two main things. Those things were that he was definitely going to heaven, and that he loved everyone. He is a role model for everyone, and I show the most respect for him than anyone else. He once said, “God doesn’t care if you’re a perfect person, but that you have a perfect heart.” I love and miss him so much. He truly is a man of respect.

*R. Taylor Pugh*  
Third Place, Grade 6







*Grades 7 and 8*



This is a hard paper to write. I actually have two people because without one, I wouldn't have the other. God is my number one, but without Him I wouldn't have my mother who is the person with my highest respect next to God.

God put a beautiful woman in my life. He knew how He wanted her to be and He formed her. And she turned out to be special. I respect God a lot. He has to deal with everyone in the world, but still found time to make me a great mom. That makes me feel so special. He has made each of us to be individually, specially and beautifully made. That's why I love Him so much.

With that out of the way, I can focus on the person who has my highest respect, which I'm sure you know is my mom. She's the most beautiful, independent, caring, giving, respectful, strong-willed, smart, clean, and most of all she loves the Lord with all of her heart and tries to stand by His word. I can go on and on with her personal traits, but I'm going to get down to the reason I respect her most. Even through her trials and afflictions, she still stands firm. She is always in control. She never gets ugly, out of character, or misrepresents herself. It takes someone strong to do that.

My mother is a recent divorcee. She has three daughters, one son, and one grandson. She had to go from a homemaker to a full-time worker—major adjustment. I watch my mom work crazy hours, come home late, but still find time for homework, reading her Bible, prayer, and taking care of us. She wakes up early just to see us off to school. She does this all by herself and with the strength of God. Through our recent trial, we had to move to a smaller house, a new environment, and a new school. Mom tried to keep our living standards the same and not once did she complain. If she ever did, it was just something we did! No big deal. All parents are like that, right? Even you!

Even when my mom is sick, she still takes out time to care for us. We go to church three or four times a week. I don't know anyone who can do what she does. My mom has never lost her cool. She believes that what she can change she changes, and what she can't she doesn't. She leaves it for God.

That is why I like my mother, and why she has my highest respect. She has been through so much, but has done so much. I don't know anybody who can do what she can. I love her and I thank God for making her.

*Tania Irwin*  
First Place, Grade 7

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Brave firefighters risk their lives to save a burning house and the people who reside there. Policemen try with all of their might to keep America's criminals off of the streets. Even doctors complete risky, life-threatening, and turn-your-stomach methods to save peoples' lives, even against all odds. But I believe that today's teachers are the citizens we should really respect. They do more than any one of those people.

For example, teachers educate us. Some people wouldn't even try to teach young people things they would use in everyday life. Encouraging students to do their best, reach their goals, chase after dreams, and even become presidents some day are also little jobs that our great teachers do. Every child and young adult has at least one issue, maybe even more to deal with; and teachers go out of their way to talk and help them through rough times. Even though teachers of today don't get paid very much, they are still dedicated and will try their very best to teach students and make them unbelievable citizens of the future. Believe me, those are outstanding reasons why we all respect teachers.

Teachers are respected in a variety of different ways, whether it's merely teaching students, encouraging them, or helping them get through bumpy times. Taking the time to work with children is another great thing that today's teachers do. Although there are many people in the world whom I respect, I know and truly believe that teachers are the ones we all respect the most. Teachers—the people of the past, present and future; the ones we love, cherish, and worship are the world's most respected citizens.

*Kristen Norris*

Second Place, Grade 7

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Respect is an important trait in American society. There are many traits that people can have, but to me respect is one of the highest ones. I, myself, have a large amount of respect for my sister Sydney Botsch.

Sydney Botsch is my younger and only sister. She is nine years old and in the third grade. She might be younger than me, but I still respect the way she presents herself. Sydney is kind, caring, respectful of her elders and peers, loyal, self-respecting, and has a great sense of humor!

Sydney shows herself as a kind and caring person all the time. She loves animals, and has quite a few that she takes care of, giving each one special and individual attention. Also, if someone's feelings are hurt in any way, she will try to comfort them, or be the first one to stick up for them. Sydney also shows respect for her elders and peers, such as her grandparents, teachers, parents, or classmates. She treats everyone how she would like to be treated.

Sydney is one of the hardest workers I know. As soon as she gets home from school, she gets all of her homework done, and she always has top grades on her schoolwork. Also, Sydney has a great sense of humor. We always have a good time together, and Sydney can always cheer me up when I'm feeling down by telling me a joke or doing something goofy or silly to make me laugh. But one of the best things about Sydney's sense of humor is her knowledge of when joking and silliness is appropriate. But, the thing I admire the most about Sydney is her self-respect. She doesn't give in to anyone's ways, and shares her own honest opinion. Sydney surrounds herself with good people, who make the right choices and do the right things.

All around, Sydney has my full respect. She treats everyone kindly and respectfully, has all of the traits that I think are important in a person, and has high standards for herself, making me have a very high regard for her!

*Chelsea Botsch*

Third Place, Grade 7

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Is there anybody in your life that you admire greatly? Maybe it's a friend, a family member or a famous person. Whoever it is you probably have great respect for them. When you treat someone with respect you are courteous to him or her and you get the same respect back. The person that I admire and have respect for is a very smart woman named Ms. M. Rosen. Ms. Rosen was my teacher in the fifth grade. I admire her for a lot of reasons. First because she is always encouraging us to do a good job, second for her love towards her students, and last because she was a new teacher and she wasn't familiar with the school so she did all she could to learn from us while we learned a great deal from her.

First of all, I admire Ms. Rosen for her constant encouragement towards her students. When we first came in during the year we were all afraid of what would come. Ms. Rosen made sure that our first day was fun and that we didn't worry. Throughout the year, she taught us a lot, and told us that we had it in ourselves to pass every subject we took. Every time we became discouraged she would assist us and she always let us know that we could do anything. We were always sure that Ms. Rosen would never give up on us even though we sometimes gave up on ourselves. I admire and respect her for this.

Second, I respect and admire Ms. Rosen because she loved all of us. Since she didn't have any kids of her own, her students were always her number one priority. Every time any one of us had a birthday she would spend money out of her own pocket to buy cupcakes, soda, and rent a movie so that we could have a birthday party in school. She would also go out of her way to make sure we all went home or to the after-school program and that none of us were in the street playing around. She was a serious and to-the-point teacher, and made sure we learned at least one thing new about a subject and at least one new thing about our undiscovered abilities.

Finally, I respect her because she was a new teacher and she didn't know a lot about the school. Our first day in school was her second day and she was just as scared as we were but she made sure our first day wasn't too frightening. All of the people in our class tried hard to make her feel welcome and to show her about the school, and about ourselves. We taught her a lot and she taught us just as much. We never gave her a hard time and we were attentive. She once told us that we made being a teacher worthwhile for her.

In conclusion, I respect my fifth grade teacher because of her encouragement, her love, and because she wasn't familiar with our school environment so we helped her out. I also respect her

because she always respected us and that's what respect is. I'll always remember her because of these things.

*Tresha Edmond*

First Place, Grade 8

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Going through all the people that I respect, the one that comes to my mind the most is my mom. I know everybody's mom is special to them, but my mom's amazing. Just last year she was diagnosed with a Schwannoma Acoustic Neuroma brain tumor. She has gone through radiation and exams. They told her they couldn't operate on her because it's behind three nerves so it's too risky. Then they did 26 radiations and told her to come back every six months. Well, she went back and the tumor did not shrink. Ever since then she's been going through a lot of changes. She forgets things a lot, she can't drive, and she gets dizzy spells. The brain tumor has changed her personality.

I respect her because through all the changes and problems she's still there for me. Every day when I get up and get ready for school there's not one day she doesn't say, "Bye honey, have a good day. I love you." After all she's been through and all that she's going through, she still finds the time to listen to my little teenage problems. She's always ready to give me advice and help me with my problems, even though she has her own bigger problems. I really admire her for this, because I don't think that I would have the same strength.

My mother is so caring and loving. She always puts people first before her needs. She always thinks of someone and goes out of her way to get a card or go and get him or her something. My mother is the kind of person that if someone needs or wants something or needs help she'll drop everything she's doing just to help them. I find her ability to do this through her pain amazing.

Through her pain, she still tries to keep as much of a normal life as possible. Even though she can't do some basic things, like driving, she tries to keep things regular. She still cooks when she can on her good days and does laundry. Little things like this still help around the house have helped her through the pain. If I were in her place, I don't think I could bring myself to move on as she has. I am very proud of her and I love her very much.

My mom was diagnosed with this tumor about a year ago. Since then, life has changed a lot for her and all of our family. She has had to deal with a lot of pain since then. A lot of parts of her body do not work as well as they used to or do not work at all anymore. Even though she has been going through a lot this past year, she still treats me with love and kindness, helps other however she can, and tries to keep things as normal as possible. Through all this, with the way she is, I am proud and I love her and would never change her.

*Heather Davis*

Second place, Grade 8

Have you ever thought about who you respect? Well, in this essay I will explain to you who I respect the most in my life. I can hope that I get some of his qualities when I get older.

The person that I have chosen is my father. My father is a very caring, responsible person. To me, I define respect as something that a particular person has; an aspect, feature or detail. Respect is what a lot of kids my age don't have.

My father is a very strict, stern man who cares for everyone around him. He has taught me how to wait on customers and respect people. His favorite saying is, "Do for others, as they do for you." My father currently owns two butcher shops. Throughout the nine years he has owned the business he has taught me a lot! He has taught me how to wait on customers of all different languages and how to act around them giving everyone the utmost respect that they deserve.

Even though my father is a supervisor and has employees, you would never know because he treats them like a friend with respect. He treats all of them with the same manner know matter what difficult situation he deals with everyday. I only hope some day when I work in the real world that I can also treat people the way that he does in the work environment. In every job, respect is successful in a workplace.

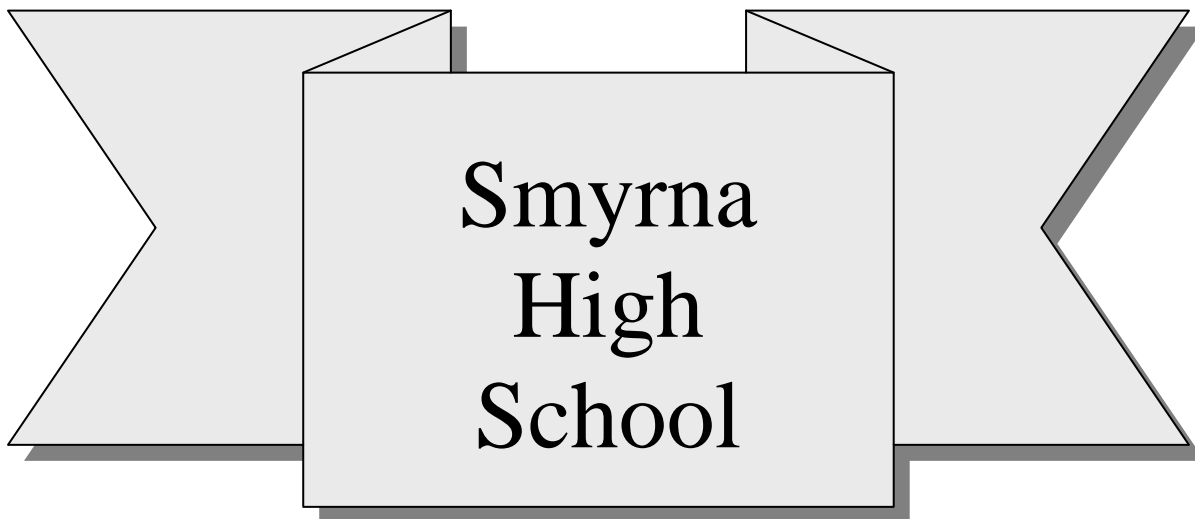
So, now you know who I respect the most. It's because of him teaching me his ways that I respect him as a father and a friend. He is a role model anyone could have, in my opinion. I wish more kids could respect their parents like me. My father makes it very easy to do.

*Lauren Nickerson*

Third Place, Grade 8







*Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12*



Would you put your own life at stake to protect the lives of people that you've never even met? Most people that I know wouldn't and the ones that would are the people that hold my highest respect. The people to which I am referring are the military of the United States. When I say military I am talking about all of the men and women that help to keep us safe, not only the ones on the front line. The military members of America are the people that I respect the most because they protect our country, risk their lives, and have a high devotion to their work

For the most part, when I think of the military, I think of men and women from the United States who are protecting our country. The people in our armed forces are not afraid to do whatever is necessary to keep all of us safe. They are the kind of people that stand up and take action instead of sitting around and watching the grass grow. Whatever they do, they do for a cause; they are fighting for what they believe is right. To me, it doesn't matter if they are on the front line being shot at, or back in a trailer in front of a computer. Each and every person in the military is fighting to keep us safe. One of the biggest ways that they help to keep us safe is by putting their own lives in danger. To risk one's life is a hard decision, but one that they are willing to make.

Now I'll expand a little bit on why them putting their lives on the line helps us so much. Being able to risk one's life for others is a huge part of why I respect them so much. Not many people in this world are willing to give up their life for their country, let alone a simple cause. In order to keep everybody else safe, they must put themselves in unsafe environments. Just going overseas into another country is a giant risk to take. Doing this, they are knowingly putting their own well being at stake. Imagine a situation where gunfire had just erupted, and things are exploding all around you. You can hardly see through the smoke that is enveloping you, but in the distance you can see bombs exploding. What would you do? Most people would run away and try as hard as they could to save their own life. On the other hand, a trained member of the armed forces would put their life on the line to search through the smoke for any casualties. These days, danger is all around us, especially if one goes off to war. There are suicide bombers that can appear from anywhere unexpectedly and take the lives of everyone around them.

The last reason that our troops hold my highest respect is their devotion to their job. One of the hardest things that these people have to do is to leave their families for months at a time. To say good-bye to your family and have the thought ticking in the back of your head that you may never return is by far the hardest thing they will ever do. The people in the military also go through excruciating physical as well as mental training to learn how to do their job and do it right. Once again, they are willing to risk their own lives. Each individual person is working for an overall purpose just like any job would. The difference between any other job and the military is that the military is willing to make that extra step toward their goal.

In essence, the military of the United States holds my highest respect because they protect our country, risk their lives, and have a high devotion to their work. They are not only the above things but a symbol of America as well. They are the backbone of this country and we would be nothing without them; they set an example for those below them. I respect them so much I'm planning on joining later in life.

*David Shoun*  
First Place, Grade 9

When I'm asked about the person I have the greatest respect for and admire with the most gratitude, there isn't even a doubt in my mind about who it would be. By far, it would have to be my pop-pop, Ray Thompson. He has had the strongest impact on all fifteen years of my life. Whenever I need something, I can count on him to be there for me. My pop-pop is like my father; we do everything together and that's why he has my greatest admiration.

Growing up without a father is kind of hard; especially when all a young boy wants to do is spend time with his dad. That's where my pop-pop first came into play. For about the first seven years of my life, my mom and I lived at my grandparent's house. I even think of him as my father some days. I guess that would be normal for me since he is the only male figure in my life. My pop-pop even tells me I was the son he never had. We did, and still do, everything together just as a father and son would.

When I was younger, I can remember waiting for him to get home from work just to watch television and eat dinner with him. As I got older, we started going hunting together and during the summer I even went to work with him. My pop-pop used to be a farmer and that is what I was brought up around. I always wish he were still a farmer because I would love to be out in the field working ground with him. I enjoy every moment that we share together because I know one day he won't be here. On the weekends I go out to his house just to hang out and work in his shop with him.

It was always hard for my mom to discipline me when I was younger. Not because I was bad but because I had differing views from what she wanted me to do. If I wanted to hang out with my friends that my mom didn't know, he would assure me that I should not and put a little bit of fright into me. My pop-pop always kept me straight. He knows what's right for me to do and what I shouldn't do. He definitely knows how to keep me in line. Since I have so much gratitude for him, I respect his decisions.

My respect for him is unexplainable because no one really knows how much of an impact he has had on my life. It's hard to write my feelings down because my finding the right words to describe him is hard. My pop-pop is a great man. He's like my father and for that I respect him.

*Tyler Torres*

Second Place, Grade 9

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What is respect? I think respect is regarding someone with honor or appreciating that person. The person who I regard with honor and appreciate the most is my grandfather.

One reason I treat him with so much respect is because he was in the army and, while he was in the army, he served in World War II. Since he served in World War II, it shows not just to me, but also to others, that he would have sacrificed his own life for the well-being of other people. After his service in the army, he spent more time working for the government at the Library of Congress. More importantly, he is a part of my family. Even if he weren't in my family, he

would still receive a great amount of respect from me because of what he has accomplished in life.

He deserves respect because he is very kind and intelligent. When I say he is very kind, I mean he donates to many charities. Also, if he would see someone that needed something, he would help that person without hesitation and would treat that person like he was one of his own family members. When I say he is intelligent, I truly mean it. He was raised in Iowa on a farm but that didn't stop him from learning to his fullest extent. He knows enough of eight languages to be able to speak, read and even write them.

Although this may not seem like a lot of honorable achievements to you, in my eyes it is more than enough. Some people may choose celebrities or writers to look up to, but I don't need one because my grandfather has done so much to influence me in so many ways. I can't think of anyone else who is as kind-hearted as he is. All of those qualities are reasons why my grandfather is my role model in life and why he deserves as much respect from me as anyone ever will. Right now he is eighty-nine, but nothing will ever change my mind about who to follow in life and how much I admire him for what he has accomplished in life.

*Kevin Blume*  
Third Place, Grade 9

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Respect is a quality that is very important, and one that is taught to people at a young age. When you are in school you have to respect your teachers, your classmates and yourself. When you are at home you have to respect members of your family, and later on in life when you are at the workplace you have to respect your employer, your co-workers and your clients. Showing respect can be as simple as not talking in class while your teacher is teaching a lesson, and is a polite gesture and a powerful way of showing someone that you acknowledge their presence, understand their viewpoints and beliefs, and support or at least accept their actions and authority. Respect is a quality that is especially important to display to those older than you. The people who are respected by others are most commonly the people who show respect to others. They are also the people who are willing to help others, and the ones who display the qualities of kindness, compassion, responsibility, and wisdom. The persons in my life who I have the highest respect for are both of my parents, my dad Brian Motyl and mom Rose Motyl.

Although I might not always show it, I truly and unconditionally respect my parents for everything they have ever done for me. Both of my parents are very hard working and they strive to provide the opportunities for my younger brother and me. My mom works in Middletown with children with autism and other mental and learning disabilities. This is a job that takes an abundance of compassion, patience, and determination, and is a job that my mom enjoys and does very well. My dad works in Dover for DNREC as a Financial Management Analyst, providing loans and grants to people and businesses daily. His job is one that requires knowledge, management, and people skills. My mom and my dad each work very hard, but the work does not stop for them once they leave their classroom or their office. Every day my

parents have to pick up my brother, me, and my exchange student Pierre from sports practices, physical therapy, friend's houses, and school directly after they leave work. When my mom comes home there is dinner to prepare and mountains of laundry to tackle. My dad will have various chores to do and errands to run along with assisting my mom in her numerous tasks.

Along with hard work, my parents are also very kind, compassionate, friendly and respectful to others; all qualities that have made me feel an enormous amount of respect towards each of them. This past fall my parents further displayed their qualities of compassion and responsibility when they allowed the French exchange student at my high school to come live with my family for the next nine months. Without even knowing who he was or what he was like they just knew he needed a good place to stay. My parents undertook this giant responsibility without hesitation and to this day have provided Pierre with a safe, friendly, and healthy environment. My parents have accepted the change and the sacrifices they have made without complaining or regretting their decision once.

Another reason I respect my parents is because they are very responsible in the way they are raising my brother and me. They have taught us the value of hard work, the importance of a good education, and the value and necessity of having good manners, and they have truly prepared us for lives as mature adults.

When asked to just pick one person who I have the highest respect for, I couldn't do it because I respect my mom and my dad both equally, and both of them do so much for our family and for others such as Pierre. Respect is a characteristic that works both ways; if you respect others then you will receive respect in return. I truly believe that is true because my parents respect many people and those people, including me, show them the same respect back.

*Chris Motyl*

First Place, Grade 10

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The one person who has my highest respect is my very own father. Though this is a common choice among the candidates for an essay of this type, I can truly say that he, among those I have an intimate knowledge of, is the one I respect the most. He is fair, modest, optimistic and patient. These qualities seem to be lacking in the majority of the people in America these days. The fact that he is better than the ordinary is most likely the main reason I respect him as much as I do.

My father is fair, patient, modest and optimistic. He is fair in everything he does. All his actions are guided by what he thinks would be fairest for everyone. This goes hand in hand with his patience; he hears not both but all sides of a story and makes his decision afterward. He also can be considered patient because he is not easily upset over trivial matters. He is modest. This is an uncommon word to be used to describe a father, or any person for that matter, but it is an important aspect of my father's character. He is neither arrogant nor does he boast about his accomplishments of which he has achieved many, but he is resigned to simply being

acknowledged as a father. The last quality I mentioned was optimism. My father always has an everlasting smile on his face. His smile doesn't change be it three o'clock in the morning or two o'clock in the afternoon. Be it raining or bright, my father is the light in my home. These qualities are the ones I admire most in my father.

Fully knowing that the qualities mentioned are all ideal, the question remains as to why they are important within my own home and the world into which my father enters into on a daily basis. Starting with fairness and patience, they are important in my home because they are necessary to maintain order in a household with four children. It is necessary that no child is favored over the others so that all can live in accord. It is essential in the world mostly because there is so little of it. A common phrase is "life isn't fair," though everyone's question seems to be as to why not. The answer being that too few people have the patience or the care to make it so. My father is one of those few people. In terms of modesty, the majority of people who are only least tolerated by others are arrogant. They are the ones who have a tendency to boast and brag. Likeability is important in both home and in the world. This amiability also pertains to optimism in the fact that people, both coworkers and children, tend to look at people with such a disposition with respect. I lack the ability to name one person who has had a disagreement with my father. The qualities he has are all very important both within the home and out in the world.

In conclusion, the person who has my highest respect is my father because he is optimistic, fair, modest, and patient. These qualities that he possesses are all important in maintaining a household of six in agreement and in making the world a better place.

*Lindsay Rennie*  
Second Place, Grade 10

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The rays scorched my sun-burnt skin. Sweat rolled off of my cheeks as my legs went numb with the pain. It was summer, and I remember the adrenaline that rushed through my veins as I cantered my horse around the ring. A lady in the middle yells. She gives commands that I can't fully comprehend with my longing for water, for air, for a break. The lady's name is June. To me and my fellow riders, it's Miss June. Miss June is your average horseback riding teacher; she'll teach you the ins and outs of working on a farm, how to scrub a water bucket, and clean a stall in the quickest amount of time. She'll take you to shows and remind you to smile as you enter the ring with a terrified look on your face. But there's one difference between Miss June and other riding teachers. No matter how many times you've been thrown to the ground, stepped on, and walked all over—she won't let you give up.

When I first started riding horses half my life ago, I was scared to death. I never wanted to learn anything new. It was as if I wanted to learn how to fly with no intention of every flying. Miss June would not allow this. We spent endless days in that little ring by the horse paddock, through all types of weather, overcoming my fear of riding. I say we, because I could have never done this on my own. It was Miss June who pushed me until I could not be pushed anymore,

when I was as low as I could go and wanted nothing but to jump off my enormous horse and go home.

This one person comes to mind first, when thinking of someone who has my highest respect. She didn't save any lives or write any books. She spends her days taking care of her many animals and her evenings giving riding lessons to young kids. Miss June is not afraid to tell you when you do something wrong. She will criticize, yell, and make you do things over until you get them right. She can make you hurt and make you cry. To most people, she would be the last person that would have their highest respect. But to me, Miss June has shown me things that I could never have learned any other way. She taught me discipline, she taught me the value of hard work, and most importantly she taught me how to ride.

*Brooke Mazujian*

Third Place, Grade 10

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In my generation, respect is revered more as a duty to our elders than as a display of honor that we can grant to whomever we feel deserves it. As teenagers, we are expected to show respect to our parents, teachers, managers, and all others who have seen a great deal more of life than us, in the form of quiet, inarguable obedience. Since our elders have gone through hardship and gained the wisdom that only time can bring, it is not unreasonable to have respect for them. Yet, is it really necessary to have an age limit on those whom we can respect? If someone our age has endured more than most adults and come to understand things that many others cannot, should he not deserve my respect? In my beliefs, this person is immensely more qualified for my respect than someone twice his age who has finally reached the same point of maturity in life. For this reason, I hold 20-year-old Dennis Lindgren in the highest respect.

Dennis, or DL as I've always know him, became my big brother figure when I was very young. The friendship between our parents sparked a friendship between us. With a four-year age difference, it wasn't long before I found myself looking up to him as a role model in my life. In him, I saw everything that I wanted to be.

At the age of eighteen, DL enlisted in the army, promising to serve his country following his graduation from high school. It was, and still is, difficult for me to understand why he would want to leave his home just as he was gaining the freedom of adulthood only to serve under even more strict authority. Perhaps he felt the need to follow the footsteps of this father, who also served in the army. He may also have wished to take advantage of the army's benefits, such as a free college education. Despite the attractiveness of these possible explanations, I feel that the true reason Dennis enlisted runs much deeper. I truly believe that he felt the calling to serve his country.

After basic training, Dennis informed us of his next assignment; a two-year deployment to Iraq. Devastated as his friends and family were, we all approved because we could see how much he



wanted to go. So, with a “good luck,” a few “stay safe’s,” and a very long “goodbye,” DL began his journey into the hardest two years of his life.

Come August, Dennis will have completed his two years of service. But there is no forgetting the things he has seen. At the young age of nineteen, he was deposited on the front line of the war in Iraq. Every day he lived on the edge, fearing death for himself and his newfound brothers. Visits home were tragic, because they would inevitably have to come to an end, and then our worries would present themselves once again. With all of this hardship, it was impossible for me to see why he endured it all.

Yet, in a recent conversation on one of his few visits home, I have found that Dennis does not regret a moment of it. The two years in Iraq have changed the DL I once knew. He’s no longer the kid I grew up with. Hardship has forced him to mature; duty has caused him to find a confidence in himself like I have never seen. He is proud of himself, just as I am proud of all his accomplishments. While other teens his age have partied in college, Dennis has sacrificed for his country.

They say that respect for a person signifies that you look up to them. If this is true, then I hold Dennis Lindgren in the highest respect because he is the greatest role model I have: as a soldier and as a friend.

*Kurt Reed*

First Place, Grade 11

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When you were younger, the world was pretty much perfect and all the grownups knew everything. All the teenagers were super cool in your young eyes, but as you grew up things began to change. Suddenly the world didn’t look so rosy and perfect anymore. You found out grownups could mess up a lot and those super cool teenagers were not much better than you. You found that the many people you so greatly admired had many flaws and imperfections. As a teenager caught in the whirlwind of change and discovery both about yourself and the world, it’s hard to find people you truly respect and admire. However, I found someone in this whirlwind. In all the years I have known her, she has demonstrated many awesome qualities, such as determination, confidence, and above all friendship. The amazing young woman is my friend Dana Doughten, and she has earned my highest respect.

One quality that I greatly admire about Dana is her determination. She is constantly pushing herself to become better. One place that this is apparent is in her commitment to sports. All during the school year she plays one sport or another. Even during the summer you can find her being active, whether she is swimming or going to field hockey camp. Dana never skips practices, but is always there to encourage others and do her very best. Dana can be constantly seen pushing herself to put in everything she has till the end of practice, even when most give up or start to slack off. Although highly determined in sports, she is more highly determined in school. While playing sports year round, Dana is still able to maintain an A average. She doesn’t just do all her work and the extra credit for her classes; she does her best on it. When

doing group projects for class, I know I can count on Dana to do her best on her share and get it done on time. Due to her high level of determination, Dana was just recently accepted into the National Honor Society, an honor which is most outstanding. Dana's determination has inspired me to push myself to do my best in everything I do.

Dana is not only determined, she is also confident. Maybe this is what gives her the strength she needs to persevere; the knowledge that she can accomplish anything if only she puts her mind to it. Even as short as Dana is, she has the self-confidence to make even the tallest person forget her height, especially when she wears her bright, red high heels which only she could pull off. Yes, that's right, Dana is a style guru and she has the confidence to pull off any kind of fashion, from the runway to her own special creations. Of course all of her outfits look totally awesome, however it does take confidence and a little bit of fashion sense to wear sparkly tights to school. Dana's confidence also gives her the ability to make friends with just about everyone. Because of the ease and respect she is able to talk to teachers with, all of her teachers have come to love her. This confidence has also given her the strength to follow her convictions about what is right and what is wrong; not only in major issues, but also in the little things. Even when most girls are defining their self-worth by their boyfriends, Dana is content to be without one. Even as confident as Dana is, she is not even close to being pretentious. She recognizes her failures and weaknesses, except that where most people are content to try and ignore their shortcomings, Dana works to fix hers.

The greatest reason I respect Dana, however, is not because of her confidence or her determination, but because of her awesome demonstration of friendship. This is perhaps why just about everyone that knows her loves her. She is always kind, even to the people most others look past. I remember one Christmas when she made all her friends beach glass necklaces. Later, one of the girls in our class that no one really notices came up and thanked Dana for the necklace she had received. Dana hadn't overlooked anyone. Not only does Dana not overlook anyone, but she is also constantly aware of the emotions and feelings of others. Whenever you are down, Dana is the first to ask if you are feeling all right. I remember she showed me a small gift she had made for one of her friends that had had a bad week. Dana is always so kind, always taking into consideration the feelings of others. A simple example of how selfless Dana is is how she will not even take a person's last piece of gum. Dana's selflessness extends even to the smallest matters. I am so blessed to have such a wonderful friend like Dana.

Dana's determination, confidence, and friendship have earned her my highest esteem. Not only is she one of my closest friends, but she is also an awesome example to me. My friends and I used to tease her, partly out of jealousy, about how perfect she was. Now however, after coming to know her better and realizing her imperfections, she serves as an inspiration to us all. We can only hope that we too will be able to obtain the same determination, confidence and friendship that she has shown.

*Erin Riley*  
Second Place, Grade 11

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At a young age I was taught to respect the elderly, handicapped, complete strangers, and anyone else who didn't fit into those categories, but seemed to be of that caliber. I was never really taught the true definition of this action but understood it to require me to be polite and quiet. In all honesty, respect is often given to those who don't deserve it and those who deserve it often don't receive it. This prestigious trait is given to those of high authority, position, skill, and is sometimes even based solely on the way they look. It can be derived from fear, love, or complete ignorance. But I am not going to tell you why I respect the president of the United States or an Oscar-winning movie star. I am going to tell you about a person that I can barely remember but whose brief presence in my life still has had an impact on who I am today. The truly respectable human beings are sometimes the unsung heroes of yesterday. She sparked a change in me that is still taking place and will never be forgotten.

To my seven-year-old eyes she was the stuff of nightmares. Gray, unruly hair grew out of her head and seemed to absorb all surrounding sunlight. Wrinkles were engraved in her pale face revealing the years of her life she refused to disclose to listening ears. And the thick glasses that rested upon her nose only intensified her piercing eyes. This was Mrs. Reagle; my caretaker during the next three months of summer. Undoubtedly for the first time, I longed for the school year to begin immediately thereafter.

She looked down at me obviously unimpressed by the seven-year-old specimen shriveling in front of her. My fragile frame and baby doll-like face did not seem to sway her apparent skepticism. Mrs. Reagle referred to my generation as a "lost cause" (which she repeated numerous times through the day). This remark didn't discourage me but only increased my determination to prove her wrong.

I recited multiplication tables, the alphabet, and painfully long Bible verses in an attempt to impress what could be mistaken for a brick wall. Mrs. Reagle was proving to be a challenge for my severely diminishing determination. But being the stubborn seven-year-old that I was, I refused to give in, faithfully choosing not to become a part of this "lost cause." Instead I wanted to be found. My problem was that I had no idea what I was searching for. After a considerable amount of pouting, Mrs. Reagle finally gave me a clue.

"Sit up straight," she commanded. "Now what's all this whining about?" I opened my mouth to reply but she abruptly cut me off. "I know what your problem is," she bellowed. "Little Ms. Draine is disappointed because she's not getting the candy, rewards, and compliments she believes are long overdue." I nodded in approval and, of course, she came with her rebuttal. "Anyone, everyone can learn the alphabet! It is a helpful skill I agree, but what else can you do? Knowing the alphabet alone won't help you achieve greatness. Do you want to be a lost cause? What about your future? Have you thought about your future?" she questioned.

"I'm only seven," I answered. My biggest problem was getting to the bathroom just in time.

"Only seven! That's a poor excuse. Seven is much too old to undermine your possibilities." She paused for a second to ponder, "I want you to meet someone."

The next day we went for a drive as we normally did. We stopped at the church to drop off food and graced the supermarket to buy unnecessary items (she refused to buy anything that tasted good; it always had to be “good for you”). But on this particular day we made a new stop in front of a house I had never seen before. On our way up to the porch she explained the situation, “This is my daughter’s house. I want you to meet her daughter Maggy. She’s such a joy.” Mrs. Reagle’s face lit up in a way I had never seen before and she looked at me with mild admiration.

The house door opened letting out all the warm smells that only a lived-in, loved-in house could create. Her daughter stood at the door with a greeting smile as she looked down at me and I suddenly felt happy to be there. Maggy came plummeting down the steps bundled up like an Eskimo and she latched onto Mrs. Reagle with an inviting hug. When she was through, Maggy turned to me and, as if she’d known me all her life, she whispered, “Come, I’m pretending to be in the south pole. Do you want to play?”

She held out her hand and I grabbed it, grateful to play with someone who wasn’t ten times my age. We played for what seemed like the rest of the day until finally Mrs. Reagle came upstairs to fetch me. She seemed to be a whole lot nicer on that day than I had ever remembered her. With a smile she brought me some cookies she had retrieved from downstairs and told me it was time to leave. Maggy then began to take off her “Eskimo gear” along with me. To my surprise she removed her hat revealing a bald head. I looked up to Mrs. Reagle but she just smiled gently as if it was to be expected. I gave Maggy a hug, trying to contain my bewilderment. Mrs. Reagle took my hand and we left her daughter’s house much to my discontent.

When Mrs. Reagle and I were finally in the car she took a deep breath, looked down at me, and smiled. “I’m reminded every time I see her,” she said more to herself than to me. “I suppose you are wondering why Maggy had no hair.” I nodded in agreement.

“Maggy has Leukemia. She’s dying and yet she seems to be more put together than any of us. I’m seventy-two and she’s seven but I guess death has an ironic way of never going in order. Do you see what I am saying?” she questioned.

I nodded even though it was obvious that I was completely lost. “I’m saying that even for a seven year old, life can be too short. Life is not just about being able to read or knowing your times tables, it’s about who you are and what you make of it. Today is not too soon to start thinking about tomorrow.”

I took in every word, but never fully understood what she was saying until years later. To me, Mrs. Reagle is deserving of respect from me because she has had a huge impact. She has been the one who has me questioning not the meaning of life, but the meaning of my life. Anyone who can change the mindset of a teenager into a positive picture deserves to be honored. She may not have won the Super Bowl or the NBA championships, but she has won my attention. Those who deserve respect aren’t the ones necessarily looking for it, but they are the ones who can change someone’s life just by simply being who they are.

*Nijae Drainé*  
Third Place, Grade 11

Rays of sunlight penetrate the early morning's clouds and reach the newly-awakened plants that are ready to be fed and are anxious to experience a new day. Those plants show their deepest respect for the greatest force in the universe, the sun. In one aspect, they depend on the sun as a source of energy; in another, they fear its absence which would mark the end of their lives. Therefore, they bend their heads and worship what gives them life and a purpose. For similar reasons I respect my mother like the plants respect the sun. I respect her for giving me life, reason, experience, knowledge to survive, and the passion to live and succeed in this world. To me she symbolizes the sun, which is the greatest source of necessity on earth. My mom is an individual filled with integrity, character, compassion, patience, devotion, and sympathy; she has always been there for not only me and my family, but for the ones who need her. Therefore, she deserves my deepest gratitude and respect.

My mom's patience and endurance surpass those of athletes and marathoners for she has proven that she could overcome even the most draining tasks in life. It was many years ago that she faced one of the hardest challenges that one could face; my dad became sick to the point where he could not move a single muscle in his body without agonizing pain. At the same time my grandma was going through the same situation as my dad, but suffered from a deadlier disease. They both relied on my mom to take care of them even though she had to work full time and at the same time take care of her children. She took the task without any hesitation and for one long year she took care of her children, my grandma, and my father while working full time during the day. One could not even imagine the passion and endurance with which my mom performed a seemingly impossible task. She worked like the restless sun without any complaint and with love and compassion. Despite those tough times she brightened our day and helped us continue our daily activities without any interruption.

Ever since I was a kid, my mom started to incorporate values in me that were critical in society. She taught my siblings and me the proper ways of communicating, studying, and functioning as a whole. Sometimes she would take time off her busy schedule and teach me lessons that involved both school and life. One specific thing that I admire and respect her for having done is teaching me to never give up. Throughout my life, she has emphasized the importance of hard work and achievement. I remember a day in which I was frustrated to have lost an essay on which I had worked for one week. I simply gave up any hope of finding it and realized I would need to write another essay. I told her about my problem and her advice for me was to think of the assignment as a new task and redo it. She told me that life is a beautiful thing, but it involves some complications that one has to try to work out no matter what it takes.

The sympathy and the generosity that she possesses could not be overestimated by even the most powerful words. She is an individual who has a keen passion to help others. She helps the poor, the helpless, the people who need advice, and all those around her with all sorts of problems. I have never seen her reject one's request for help. She raises funds and sends them to those who are homeless and those who are in need. Her encouragements have led me to become involved in community service programs and other charity organizations. Through such works, my mom has earned the respect of her family and friends.

To survive the shadows of nature, I depend on my mother for support and advice. Like the sun, she guides me through the direct and bright paths that lead to happiness and success. She has my

highest respect and will always maintain her place in my heart. Her personality and characteristics are the main causes of my respect for her. She always tries to help people and contributes to the community. Her valuable lessons will always live in my mind and murmur the answers to me during the ups and downs of life.

*Ahmed Siar Baqi*

First Place, Grade 12

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When asked the question, who is the most influential and respected person in my life, I respond with not one but two answers. I would answer the question by not only naming my mother, but my father as well. It really wouldn't be fair to name one without the other because both of them have made a tremendous impact on my life in many ways. The morals and values that I possess today have been instilled in me over the years by my parents. They also have shaped my outlook on life and the attitude I have towards others. My mom and dad showed me how to develop positive relationships with others and how to be happy with the person that I am.

Over the years my parents have helped me realize and distinguish what is right and what is wrong in any given situation. If I was at all at fault for something that I did, my parents would make me aware of it, inform me of the right decision, and of course give me the proper punishment in adherence with what I had done. They also always made me take responsibility for my actions. If I had said or done something incorrect, my parents would make me own up to it. My mother and father also taught me how to interact with others and be respectful. Thanks to them I have developed a lot of great relationships with others and try to be as mannered as possible. Since my parents taught me the value of responsibility at a young age, I am happy to say that I am a pretty responsible and organized person.

Today most teens despise being around their parents let alone holding an actual conversation with them. I find that most kids my age really don't communicate with their parents the way I do, and they can't wait to get out of their house and away from them. I have to say I am the exact opposite. I am even planning on going to a college not too far away from home so I can still live at my house. Another thing I have noticed is that the morals and values that my parents worked so hard for me to have don't really matter to a lot of other kids in my grade. It sometimes feels like I am the only one who has a conscience and actually thinks and weighs the consequences instead of acting on impulse. I have a great relationship with my parents and we always have a good time. When looking at others my age, I am very thankful to have parents like mine who actually care about my well being. They are so easy to be around because of their outgoing personalities. My parents are very dependable, caring, and loving people. They are always looking for ways to assist my brother and me, and always are there for us in our times of need.

Out of all the ways my parents have helped me and influenced me, there is one major aspect of my life with which they have helped me and for which I will always be grateful. It is one of the main reasons I respect them. They have helped me find my individuality and who I am as a

person. By influencing me in a positive way, by giving me advice with hard decisions, and by guiding me on the right paths, I know what I want to accomplish as a person. My parents have helped me establish a healthy balance between work and play, and I know the elements I need in order to be successful in life. Throughout my lifetime they have always supported me whether it was dealing with sports or school, and I am very appreciative of that. I now know how important it is to be supportive of others and how one cares in order to make a positive impact. My mom and dad have helped me determine what kind of person I want to become as I grow older.

As one can probably tell, my parents over the years have made a huge impact on my life and continue to do so to this day. They have sculpted my attitude, affected the way I interact with others, and helped me realize who I am. I have so many wonderful memories with my parents, and I am very happy to still have a great relationship with them. They have always put my brother and me first and have always been our biggest supporters. For this and everything they do for me every day I will always be thankful. I will never be able to show them how much I truly appreciate all they do for me, and that is why my parents have my highest respect.

*Katelyn Baker*  
Second Place, Grade 12

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There is a woman I know extremely well, and I have spent the majority of my life observing her conquer all fears and hurdles that she has encountered. To many people she is a suburban, stay-at-home mom. The community doesn't realize she is more than just a mom; she has many jobs. To her children she is more than their mother; she is also their father, their friend, and the most stable thing they have in their lives. She is the all-knowing, the psychiatrist, the cook, the maid, the chauffeur, the gardener, and the accountant. This significant lady has gained my respect over and over again, and she doesn't even realize it.

Many people in her situation would have given up by now; they would have turned to alcohol or run away. As a teenager she strived to be a success. Graduating from high school was a hard task to do when taking care of four younger siblings and working forty hours a week on top of school. After graduation she went to dental hygienist school, paying her own way with weekly installments from her pizza shop paycheck. This was a rough life, but it built character. During her high school and college years she had fallen in love with one of her best friends, and he felt the same way. His life had been easier; his parents could afford to send him to an Ivy League school. In August of 1974, she expected to never see him again. They had their emotional goodbye. Two Fridays from when he left, she found herself driving her green Volkswagen bug in the pouring rain to see him, and they have been together ever since.

Then in 1978 they got married and moved to Delaware so he could start on his masters. She worked in a dentist office to pay for the small apartment in Wilmington and his tuition to the University of Delaware. She always seemed to work and support others, but never herself. This unselfish woman and her husband grew closer and closer together enjoying their new

surroundings. The husband received a wonderful job from the state and they decided to start their family. They had three girls, and all were a combination of both parents' aspects.

When the children were young their father died of cancer. When that happened, their mother, the strong, unselfish woman, stood up and took charge. She became the one and only person on whom they could rely. She fought to keep her family afloat. She didn't want to uproot the family and take them back to New York where all her family was. She didn't want to lose the house that her husband and she had fixed up. She wanted everything to stay the same. She has never looked for a replacement for her husband or the children's father; she took the burden of being everything to them.

Most people don't see her like I do because this woman is my mother. She has done all I have ever needed and more. She has my highest respect because she has never given up on herself or on me. If I could only be half as strong as she has, then I will feel successful. Her integrity, consideration, and compassion make her super woman. I wouldn't want any other mother and I am proud to be her daughter.

*Alyson Ferguson*  
Third Place, Grade 12



# HONORABLE MENTION

## SMYRNA KINDERGARTEN

Kyleigh Boone  
Emily Brittingham

### SMYRNA ELEMENTARY

Sarah Workman	Kindergarten
Amanda Ivry	Kindergarten
Alec Shalk	Kindergarten
Colin Shalk	Kindergarten
Rebecca Calderon	Kindergarten

Colleen Henderson	Grade 1
Michael Bruno	Grade 1
Arthur Ashe	Grade 1
Raymond Jenkins	Grade 1
Jy Air Baltin	Grade 1

Luis Sanchez	Grade 2
Kayla Thorpe	Grade 2
Markel Weldon	Grade 2
Lucas Zlock	Grade 2
Avis Falder	Grade 2

Keira Newkirk	Grade 3
Alanis Hernandez	Grade 3
Matthew Sarkissian	Grade 3
Haley Lloyd	Grade 3
Jasmine Ewing	Grade 3

Christa Phillips	Grade 4
Ashley Simpson	Grade 4
Megan Thompson	Grade 4
Bianca Lopez	Grade 4
Ryan Walter	Grade 4

### CLAYTON ELEMENTARY

Jenna Anderson	Kindergarten
Jared Christine	Kindergarten
Logan Clough	Kindergarten
Karla Pagan	Kindergarten
Kayla Thompson	Kindergarten

Joshua Ellis	Grade 1
Anthony Ferretti	Grade 1
Katie Hennessy	Grade 1
Elizabeth Smith	Grade 1
Michael Yochis	Grade 1

Miranda Cook	Grade 2
Shawn Dulin	Grade 2
Jonathan Gordy	Grade 2
Raevyn Horton	Grade 2
Nnennaya Okorie	Grade 2

Claire Cassell	Grade 3
Sean Finney	Grade 3
Shawn Pfau	Grade 3
Sarrah Walker	Grade 3
Logan Wilson	Grade 3

Hannah Boyles	Grade 4
Brittany Hindt	Grade 4
Breanna Lunsford	Grade 4
Morgan Popovich	Grade 4
Linda Staats	Grade 4

NORTH SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Hannah Pace	Kindergarten
Kole Bowersox	Kindergarten
Taylor Brittingham	Kindergarten
Travis Fletcher	Kindergarten
Erin Currie	Kindergarten

Kelsie Spence	Grade 1
Trevor Shetzler	Grade 1
Derron Marvel	Grade 1
Kailyn Wilson	Grade 1
Nyah Henry	Grade 1

Robbie Morgan	Grade 2
Destiny Alioa	Grade 2
John Barkley	Grade 2
Todd Reuben	Grade 2

Hunter Pritt	Grade 3
Lizzie Birney	Grade 3
Caitlyn Ramsey	Grade 3
J. T. Hammond	Grade 3
Dominique DeMoe	Grade 3

Ricky McTheny	Grade 4
Kacey Poisson	Grade 4
Marianna Herreida	Grade 4
Courtney Ford	Grade 4
Robyn Corso	Grade 4

JBM INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Charlie Stibbs	Grade 5
Jaquille Pierce	Grade 5
Nick Marthaler	Grade 5
Brittany Wilson	Grade 5
Kelsey Carney	Grade 5

Rachel Cote	Grade 6
Ben Shalk	Grade 6
Marshay Johnson	Grade 6
Erin Segars	Grade 6

SMYRNA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ashley Chase	Grade 7
Leonard "Bo" Voss	Grade 7
James Linden	Grade 7
Alexa Fowler	Grade 7
Kelsey Knab	Grade 7

Matt Nelson	Grade 8
Jasmine Johnson	Grade 8
Whisper Whitley	Grade 8
Krystal Iacone	Grade 8
Shelbi Minge	Grade 8

SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL

Cole Brenner	Grade 9	Michael Natrin	Grade 11
Ben Natrin	Grade 9	Tyler Parsons	Grade 11
Wykeem Bryant	Grade 9	Jennifer Schrader	Grade 11
Kristie Hall	Grade 9	Jessica Davidson	Grade 11
Katie Deinert	Grade 9	Cerita Marcum	Grade 11

Chelsea Coldiron	Grade 10	Steven Deakyne	Grade 12
Leila Sammänder	Grade 10	Tess Swiggett	Grade 12
Beth Humphrey	Grade 10	Morgan Scuse	Grade 12
Krista Attix	Grade 10	Christina Smith	Grade 12
Brittany Gardner	Grade 10	Nick King	Grade 12