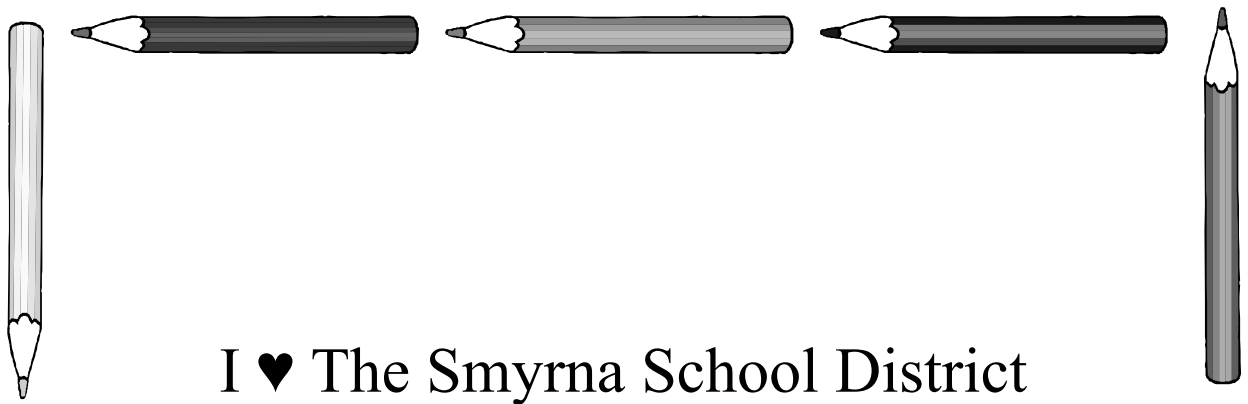


Smyrna School District

Essay Contest

2008

Adult and Student Winners



I ♥ The Smyrna School District

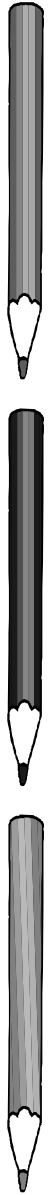
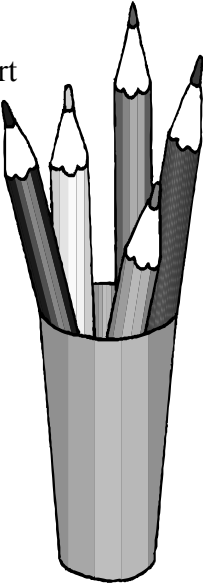
The eighth essay contest to support the five Smyrna School District core values of *Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Integrity, and Compassion* was held during the month of January 2008. There were two categories of winners: adults (18 and over) and students (K through Grade 12). During “I Love the Smyrna School District” day on February 23, 2008, first, second and third place winners received medals and certificates noting their accomplishments.

The 2008 writing contest focused on the value of *Compassion*. Hundreds of touching and heartfelt essays were submitted. This booklet contains the essays of first, second and third place winners at all levels.

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

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

Debbie Wicks
Superintendent



For the eighth annual “I Love the Smyrna School District” essay contest, students and adults were asked to write about *Compassion*, a core district value. Contest rules and a writing prompt were disseminated to students (via their teachers) and the community in January 2008. 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, 2008):

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

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

ADULT WINNERS: First (gold), second (silver), and third (bronze) place winners receive medals and certificates noting their accomplishments. Winners and runners-up were recognized during the “I Love the Smyrna School District” day (February 23, 2008).

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 were recognized during the “I Love the Smyrna School District” day (February 23, 2008).

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I have chosen to write this essay in an effort to explore compassion in both its idealistic and in its physical forms. I have been a social worker for 15 years working with children who are both emotionally and physically abused. Compassion is no stranger to me nor is it unknown to those who work in the social work arena. As part of my regular duties, I am responsible for training new social workers. My biggest task is to attempt to bring out empathetic qualities and enhance the understanding of compassion. It is an arduous task because generally people resist transitioning past their own history. Understanding one's own gifts and deficits is imperative. I have rarely found an individual who is capable of understanding the process of becoming a truly compassionate person and even rarer a person who is willing to develop and employ a genuine kindness toward others.

I would like to introduce you to Tracy Zlock. She is a kind, considerate and humble person. Her motivations are purely altruistic, and she is guided toward alleviating the suffering of her fellow human beings. Her gentle hand, soft-spoken voice, and patient demeanor draw others to her. She does not protect herself from the ugliness of the world by becoming callous and withdrawn from others. She has the gift of an open heart, and she recognizes and nurtures that gift by allowing herself to feel the sting of a lonely child, the despair of the elderly, and the discomfort of the ill. Tracy is motivated by her compassion for others' life circumstances, and she acts without hesitation on their behalf. She joyfully assists those who have less. With graceful elegance, she comforts those who simply have less hope. As a Eucharistic minister she is able to help those who are shut in from the outside world. Tracy brings hope, comfort, and faith to those who need her. Her open heart and desire to help is felt in her touch as she holds the hand of a sick friend. She offers support to the youth in our schools by taking the role as mentor and friend. We are all taught a lesson in compassion when she sympathetically wraps her arms around a scared child. Tracy Zlock does not focus on the differences of people; she actively concentrates on discovering each person's gifts. She nurtures each person's individual gifts allowing them to develop their own sense of compassion and care for others. Her efforts can be seen both in plain and deeply thoughtful ways. I believe her to be meaningful and entirely compassionate. She is a role model for us all, and I am eternally grateful to know her. We are all blessed to have her helping our community by helping our people.

Pamela Denney-Griffiths

Gold Award, Adult

Finding compassion for the child that doesn't fit the norm is difficult. Finding that compassion in a high school administrator is a godsend and a blessing, and can change that child's life forever. Smyrna High School is fortunate enough to have such an administrator in David Paltrineri, and I am happy to have this opportunity to talk about him.

In the fall of 2006, my son began a downward spiral of emotional distress. During the next six months things got progressively worse, affecting not only his health but also his grades and behavior. By March of 2007, the situation had become so severe that my son was experiencing anxiety attacks and needed to take two weeks from school to receive outpatient counseling. Throughout this time, Mr. Paltrineri was a never-ending source of support, both to my son and to me. He made it a point to see my son almost every day, whether it was before school, in the

hallways, or at lunch. He e-mailed and called me often, not only to tell me the facts but also to reassure me that he believed in my son and had faith that things would turn around. While my son was out of school, Mr. Paltrineri made sure that I received all assignments and notes. When he returned to school, Mr. Paltrineri was there to facilitate my son's re-entry with his teachers, making sure that work was accepted and that he wasn't punished academically for his time off. As the year came to a close, Mr. Paltrineri's support never faltered; and when my son had to re-take Algebra II in the summer, Mr. Paltrineri was still there touching base whenever he could.

This year my son's grade point average is 96%. He was on the High Honor Roll for the first and second marking periods, and had the lead in the fall drama production of *Dracula*. He is happy, he seems to be over his emotional distress, and his focus is toward the future. Mr. Paltrineri still checks in on him occasionally, and e-mails me with encouragement, praise, and support. I have no doubt that without the understanding and compassion of Mr. Paltrineri, my son would not be where he is today. It would have been easy to just dismiss my son as a lost cause and to focus only on the punitive measures that were necessary, but Mr. Paltrineri looked beyond the symptoms and saw someone worth saving. He is a huge asset to Smyrna High School's administrative staff, and truly embodies that part of the school's mission statement that says it will help students to possess "the positive attitudes necessary to successfully adapt to and function in an ever-changing environment."

Diane M. Dolan

Gold Award, Adult

I believe my 17-year-old sister, Laurie Doughty, knows the true meaning of compassion. When she was in the fourth grade her mother was diagnosed with cancer. At only ten years of age she became her mother's primary caregiver—not because she had to, but because she felt it to be the right thing to do. She voluntarily gave up her play time and much of her childhood to devote her time to care for her mother. As her mother was too sick to care for herself, Laurie took it upon herself not to ask why but what could she do to make her mother's life easier. She learned to clean, cook, change bedding, and do the laundry. She would even take the time to massage her mother's feet. Every day she would make sure her mother would eat. While her friends were hanging out and playing, she would stay up and clean up after her mother who would get violently ill from chemo. At times Laurie would even sleep across the foot of her mother's bed to make sure she was breathing at night all the while getting herself together to go to school the next day. Although she wanted to stay home from school to take care of her mom full time, her mom (being a teacher) knew the importance of school.

My sister Laurie devoted two of her summers to being a candy striper at Shore Memorial Hospital so she could once again take care of others. She also raised money all year long for The Relay for Life every year. She was the top youth fundraiser for two years for the Eastern Shore District. She also joined the community band to spend more quality time with her mother and perform for community events.

At fifteen my sister had kidney failure. For over a year she had to be home every night at eight o'clock to do nine hours of dialysis through a tube inserted in her stomach. She had to change

her diet and her whole way of life; but she didn't complain about constantly taking medications, weighing herself, and taking her blood pressure. Not only did both her kidneys fail, but she developed several ulcers, high blood pressure, and heart damage. During the summer she was once again unable to run and play or to go swimming because she couldn't get her dialysis tube wet. She still tried to go to school but spent most of her time in the nurse's office because she was too tired or sick.

On one of her many trips to the Children's Hospital, she met a girl named Chelsea who had started a campaign called Chelsea's Bears. My sister, with her compassion and caring heart, put her hurt aside to assist in this campaign. Ironically, on the same day as her kidney transplant they donated 300 teddy bears to the cardiac unit of the Children's Hospital. She has continued to collect the bears to help make the children going to the hospital feel a little better. Her goal this year is to collect 500 bears and hopefully increase every year after.

Although she will be on anti-rejection medicine for the rest of her life and still has to watch what she eats, she continues to care for others. She is home recovering from her transplant and cleans the house so her mother won't have to when she gets home from work. Laurie has developed a virus due to the donor kidney but only says she's a little tired. Now for seven weeks she will have to go to the hospital for treatments that are four hours long.

She may have lost a lot of her childhood but has gained more compassion in her life than most of us will do in a lifetime. If we all cared for others and had a little compassion in our hearts maybe the world would be a better place.

Kimberly Long
Silver Award, Adult

Most folks in their 80's start slowing down, to say the least. Often, they give into the temptation that whispers in their ear, "You've done enough! How much more can people expect from you? Let someone else do the work now!"

But then there's Kevin. (I can't use his real name as members of the *St. Vincent de Paul Society* do all their work anonymously.) He moved to Smyrna many years ago, and as soon as he arrived he looked for ways to help others. It's what he's been doing his entire life.

He's had his share of suffering. Illness and death of loved ones has taken a big toll on Kevin, but every morning he comes to church to pray and then to discover who's looking for help. Sometimes it's a single mom trying to make ends meet, or a person trying to cobble together some money for gas and food to return home far away. Other times it's a widow who can't pay her electric bill, or someone who needs emergency housing for a night or two. Sometimes it's a member of our church, but most times not.

No matter. Kevin is always there to help. He takes the money our parishioners donate and wisely uses it to assist those who seem to be in genuine need. Black or white, old or young, clean or dirty, it doesn't matter. He treats them with respect and dignity.

We have the easy part—putting a dollar or two in the basket when there’s a collection for the needy, or dropping some loose change in the poor box—but Kevin is the patient, listening man who opens his heart to see and feel the pain of others. And when he looks at them, he sees not just an individual or a family in need—he sees Jesus Christ who said, “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto Me.” Kevin remembers the words of I John: “If you do not love your neighbor whom you can see, then you cannot love God Whom you cannot see.” He also recalls the counsel of Mother Teresa of Calcutta: “You must recognize Christ in the distressing disguise of the poor.”

That’s what compassion is all about. To Kevin it’s not just a word—it’s a way of life. Feeling other’s pain and doing something about it.

Fr. Tom Flowers, Pastor

Silver Award, Adult

What is compassion? It describes the good qualities in a person. The letters in compassion tell you more about an extraordinary lady who always puts others first with no hesitation. She treats everyone with nothing less than respect and dignity.

- C – caring
- O – overflowing heart
- M – magnificent
- P – passionate
- A – admiration
- S – sacrifice
- S – savior
- I – inspiration
- O – outstanding
- N – nice

The person I feel has all the qualities in this magnificent word “compassion” would be my mother, Marilyn Watson-Duker. My mother drives a school bus in the MOT area; she has driven over 25 years. She has the love, devotion, and compassion for her community to transport children to school for over two decades. Most of the children she formerly drove to school now have children riding her bus. It is so amazing to see two generations of students still being transported by my mother. Every student who rides her bus respects her and her kindness towards their safety.

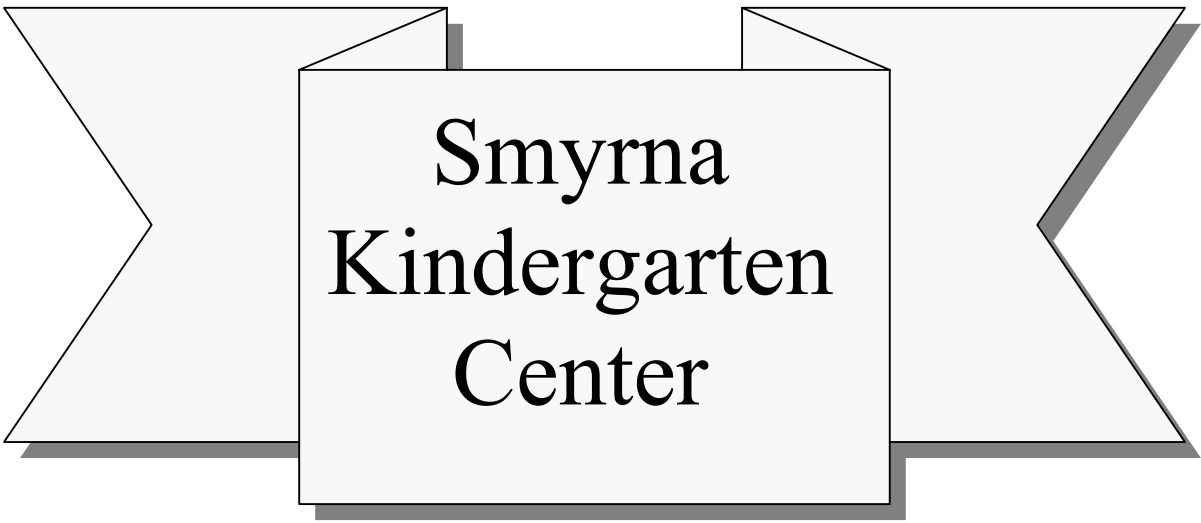
Parents all know Miss Marilyn on a first-name basis. They come to her bus or call her just to let her know how thankful they are to have an extraordinary person as their child’s bus driver. As a parent, I want a trustworthy individual taking care of my precious cargo without any worries or doubts—a person caring for my child’s safety and well being. Every child who rides my mother’s bus loves her unconditionally and she returns the love back unconditionally. She treats every student like her own—no more or less.

People who know that Miss Marilyn is my mother comment on how great a person she is and how lucky I am to have her as my mother with such a great heart. I have never met someone who didn't have a good thing to say about her. My mother will give her last to anyone in need—she has a heart of gold. I recently lost my job, and my mother made sure that my family had what we needed without us even asking her. It comes so natural that she doesn't hesitate to open her heart in time of need for family, stranger, or friend.

Compassion is a word that someone has to qualify for by showing all the kind caring acts in an individual: an overflowing heart, a magnificent personality, a passion for others, an admiration for others, the sacrificing of one's self for others, a savior when someone is in need, an inspiration to others to do the same, outstanding in generous acts of kindness, and just a simply nice human being with an enormous heart to help others. I believe my mother, Marilyn Watson-Duker, shows qualities of this magnificent word "Compassion."

Rosaria Cephas

Bronze Award, Adult



My uncle shows compassion when I jump off the step and hurt my foot.

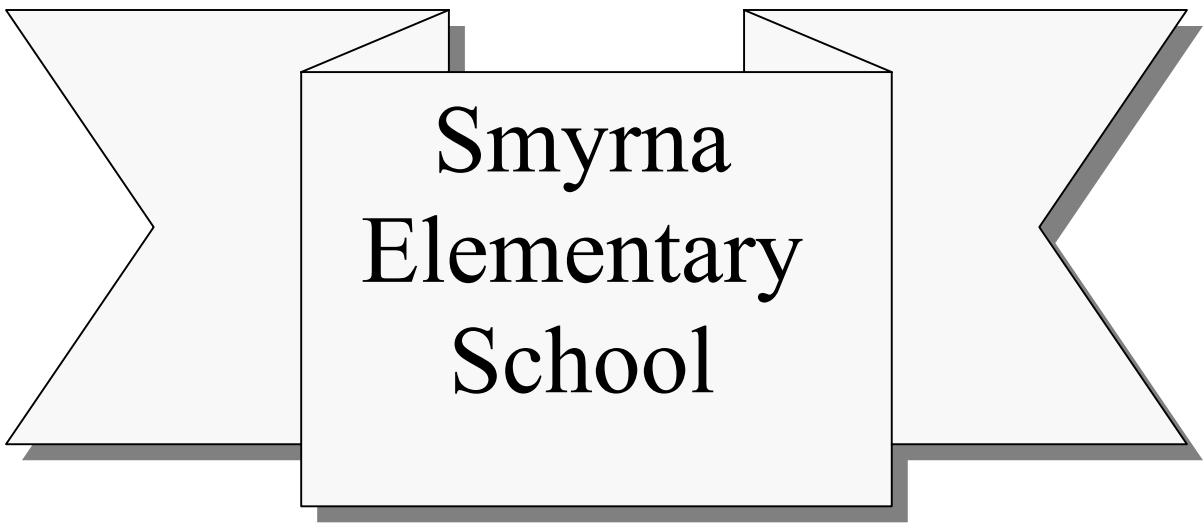
Angel Moreno
First Place, Kindergarten

My mom shows compassion when she helps sick people get better.

Sarah Charles
Second Place, Kindergarten

I help Trey build a house. Then he won't cry.

Starlyn Stevenson
Third Place, Kindergarten



Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

I showed compassion when I helped my mom sort the garbage in the trash can.

Semaj Harris

First Place, Kindergarten

One time Isan fell and I gave Isan a pat on the back.

Ariana Ayala

Second Place, Kindergarten

I showed compassion by helping Azrel feel better because somebody hurt her feelings.

Keira Anderson

Third Place, Kindergarten

It would make the wonderful world a sweeter and kinder place if everyone showed compassion. Compassion is a wonderful thing to have!

Tyler Yeomans

First Place, Grade 1

My aunt is the most compassionate person I know. She helps me with my homework by reading to me. She helps me swim by moving my arms and legs. She helps me go to bed by tucking me in bed! She is kind and sweet and caring. She is my aunt. She makes me feel great!

Safa Baqi

Second Place, Grade 1

I am writing about a wonderful person who shows compassion. Her name is my mom Brande. My mom is kind, friendly, and gives me hugs and kisses. She takes care of me when I'm very sick. Other people should be like this person, because it would make the world an awesome better place. I hope she takes care of me again.

Davin Bryfogle

Third Place, Grade 1

Are you feeling in need? Are you feeling more different than others? Mr. VanVeen is the one to help you! I met him in kindergarten. He will help you with anything. Even the hardest jobs he will help you with!

Mr. VanVeen helps me a lot. I couldn't walk to school alone when I switched schools. He helped me by playing Candy Land with me and walking me to class. He also got me a buddy so I could find out what it felt like to walk alone. My buddy's name was Sarah. She was really nice. She is also my next door neighbor. He also helps others, not just me. He helps kids who are mean by getting them together with nice people. The mean people can learn how to be nicer. He helps people who do not understand things like math by doing special math with them. He helps people who are sad by playing games with them. Lastly, he makes learning fun. He helps kids who do not understand by talking closely to them. He also makes sure school is okay. That's why Mr. VanVeen is so compassionate. He will help you with anything. He makes school great!

Kaeli Kirk

First Place, Grade 2

Do you know who I'm writing about? I am writing about my big brother Michael. He is very compassionate.

Michael shows compassion in many ways. He helps me with my homework most of the time. He helps me up when I fall. He shows compassion by trying his best to be a big brother! Michael shows compassion because he never hurts me. He lets me watch TV in his room. He says please and thank you to me. My brother Michael has been there for me always. He is very helpful with a lot of stuff. Michael takes my back. He does teach me things I don't know well most of the time.

Well, I told you who I think is compassionate. I told you all the things he does. I told you his name. I want him to be there for me even when I get old because he is my big brother, and I want him to be around for a really, really long time!

Amanda Ivry

Second Place, Grade 2

The most compassionate person I know is Julia. Julia spends her time either helping me or playing with me. She's extremely polite to people. One time somebody bullied me on the playground because I didn't know how to play football. Julia helped me and this is how. At recess I wanted to play football so I started to play, and he said, "You don't know how to play." Julia came over to play. She had heard what the person said and she said, "You can't talk to people that way" and she told me to play with somebody else. Julia helped me with my spelling word in first grade. It was the word out. I thought it was spelled aut but Julia told me where it

was on the word wall. Julia makes people happy by giving neighbors gift baskets at Christmas. Now those are the reasons why Julia is so compassionate. I'm so glad Julia is my best friend too.

Colin Shalk

Third Place, Grade 2

Hey! I want to tell you about somebody who boosts my spirits all the time! This is somebody who cares for me every single day without a complaint or yell. Can you guess who it is? If you guessed my mom you are correct! She's helpful, kind, and also generous. Keep reading on and you will really know how much she is compassionate.

My mom is helpful to me and other people every day. One of the ways she is helpful is helping me do the laundry. If I have tons and billions and millions of laundry, my mom helps me fold the clean laundry. When my toy room is a complete mess, my mom helps me clean up the toys (most of the time). When it's time to practice for basketball she helps me. We do certain drills to help me shoot, dunk, pass, and even more. Those are the ways my mom is helpful to me.

Next, she is kind to everybody she sees all the time, every day. She is kind by helping my little brother Miles up when he tumbles off his shiny yellow, blue, and orange bike with three wheels and cuts himself. She cleans the cut and puts a band-aid on the cut. When my babysitter is really sick, my mom takes food over to her house. She even takes her over some medicine to make her feel awesome! Also, she taught me how to swim on top of the water and under the water. I hope you understand how kind my mom really is!

Finally, my mom is always generous to everybody! Sometimes when I'm really, really, really, really, really good she will get me a toy or a video game. She gets me things like spy toys and video games for my psp or Nintendo Wii and other gadgets I can use or play with. If I drop anything she will pick it up for me. If my dad drops his keys on the ground she will pick them up for him and in a nice way say, "Here are your keys." In the movies if I drop my popcorn instead of saying "Oh well, I guess you don't have popcorn," she will buy me a whole new bag of popcorn. Even if she really, really likes this part of the movie, she will either share or get me another bag. Those are the three ways she is very generous.

Now you know how compassionate my mom really is. I hope you really, really know how nice my mom is. You'll even see her help a student at school (she does all the time). I wrote about my mom because she is very nice and sweet and I love her. She's a caring person who cares about every single kid on the planet. That's why my mom is compassionate.

Arthur Ashe

First Place, Grade 3

Hey you! Do you know what compassion means? Compassion means being kind, friendly, caring, and generous to others. Well I know just the right person for this topic! It's my best friend Emily. Three important things about her are that she is generous, caring, and friendly. I think she is very compassionate.

One example is she is very generous. She is full of care. If someone's hurt, she's there to help. Also, if somebody's crying she's there to make sure they are okay. Next, she is always helpful. If you need some help on work she will assist you. Anything that brings you to the topic of help, she will lend you a hand. Now on the playground that's the time to have fun, but some kids don't have fun. So she goes over there and plays with them. She makes them feel better.

To kindly move on, Emily is also considerate and caring. No, teasing is not on her list. That is extremely hurtful. Emily always uses encouraging words. For example, "keep trying" and "you can do it" are two of the phrases she says. Sometimes there are some happy kids playing around the lonely kids that don't have anyone to play with. But they just ignore them. She's the right person to play with because she includes others.

To wrap it up, she is so-o-o friendly. She's got the mind of friendliness. To make people happy, she makes them laugh. She tells the funniest jokes ever. Sometimes some kids don't have friends. Well, she'll help you make friends. Lastly she always shares. She's no meanie. She shares things with people to make them happy.

I hope you will agree with me that Emily shows the most compassion. She is very kind to others. Three important things about her are that she is generous, considerate and caring, and friendly.

Colleen Henderson

Second Place, Grade 3

This year in school one of the five core values we are learning about is compassion. I would love to let you know some ways that someone in my family is compassionate. Guess who it is first. I'll tell you—the person who is compassionate in my family is my mom. She is generous, kind, and helpful. She is wonderful!

Well first of all, my mom is really generous. She used her time from about 9:35 to 3:45 just to teach one class in one day. Better yet, she taught my class once. She helped us, checked point card practice, and showed the people that got it wrong what they did wrong. One time she gave me canned goods to deliver with my class. The thing is that the canned goods we delivered were for the people who don't have a lot of money to go to the store and buy food for themselves. She also collects box tops. That's really generous because giving box tops to the school raises money for my school. I'd say that is pure generosity.

Next, my mom is really kind. She is kind enough to help me with my homework. For example, she helps me study my times tables. Also, she stops Alex and Michael from screaming

especially while I am doing my homework. Another kind thing my mom does is that she lets me go over to my mom-mom and pop-pop's house to use their computer. On their computer I like playing Webkinz, Littlest Petshop, and Nick. It is great. I think my mom is so wonderful and kind.

Last of all, if you are looking for help just ask my mom—she is super helpful. She helps with the PTO and she substitutes. She even raises money with the PTO and used to help with Santa's Secret Shop in December. Also, she helps with fundraisers with cookies, candles, pizza, brownies, and much more. Another thing that my mom does is that she helps me with reading. She helps me with hard words in my AR book. If you don't know how helpful my mom is well then you have to meet her.

You have heard about all the generous, kind, and helpful things about my mom. My mom shows one of the five core values and that one is compassion. If you haven't met my mom you just have to. I think that my mom is wonderful, loving, and joyful. That is why I think that my mom is the most compassionate person in my family.

Kylie Womer

Third Place, Grade 3

Compassion is the great . . . Oops! I forgot my manners. My name is Hannah. I'm telling you about a person who I think shows compassion. That person is my mom, Pam. I think compassion is . . . there I go again babbling my mouth. You will learn why I picked her; how she is generous, forgiving, and caring; and see examples of her compassion and what compassion is. Come on! Compassion is on the case.

First, this is why I chose my mom. My mom works for a company that helps abused children, and she shows compassion toward those little children who get beaten. She also takes care of my friends. Last, she listens to other people when they're in a bad situation. Super Mom! Oops, I mean Super Mom of Compassion. This is why I chose my mom.

Second, this is how she is generous, forgiving, and caring. My mom takes care of her family (even her parents, mother-in-law, my sisters, and me) when they are sick or injured. Also, she is generous when she has treats like gum or candy. Lastly, she forgives others and doesn't hold grudges. Wow! Amazing! This shows how she is generous, forgiving, and caring.

These are some examples of her compassion and what compassion is. Once she had a deep feeling for my old dog before she died. Compassion is being kind and friendly, but it also means to have a deep feeling or pity for something. Last, she showed me compassion by caring for me when my fingernail ripped off. She nurtured it. Again I say "Super Mom of Compassion." This shows the examples of her compassion and what compassion is.

Compassion, compassion, compassion everywhere as far as the eye can see. I told you about a person who I thought shows compassion. My person is my mom. You learned why I chose her; how she shows generosity, forgiveness, and caring; examples of her compassion; and what compassion is. Farewell and thank you for listening.

Hannah Griffiths

First Place, Grade 4

I want to introduce you to my special friend, Keira. She used to be my neighbor, but she moved away. But she is very compassionate. She helps me through heart-breaking drama, and she is there when I need her; and I will show you what compassion means to me. So let's give it up for my best friend Keira.

To begin, I will tell you about that heart-breaking drama. It started one day when I was feeling blue (not yellow but blue). I was depressed because my poor cat ran away. So you know what I did? I automatically picked up the phone and called Keira. After that I didn't even remember what I was upset about. She is magic with her compassionate touch.

In addition I am happy to explain how lonely I was. Of course, I had nothing to do. Nothing to do except call a friend—a friend of compassion. Guess who? I zoomed to the phone. There is nothing better than talking to Keira and her friendliness.

For the moment of truth, here's what compassion means to me. I think it means being kind to others. Also, you should help others out when they need it. Most importantly, you should be there when others need you. That is exactly what Keira does.

As you see, Keira is a compassion queen. She is always my kind, special friend. So I know I can count on her. She is the person who would most likely show compassion. She is the one who helps me when I have some heart-breaking moments. She is someone who is there when I need her, and this is what compassion means to me and that's who shows it.

Bryndon Tompkins

Second Place, Grade 4

Hello my name is Taylor, and I'm here to tell you about something called compassion. Also, I'm going to tell you about someone I know who shows a lot of compassion. So sit back, relax, and join the fun because the word compassion has just begun.

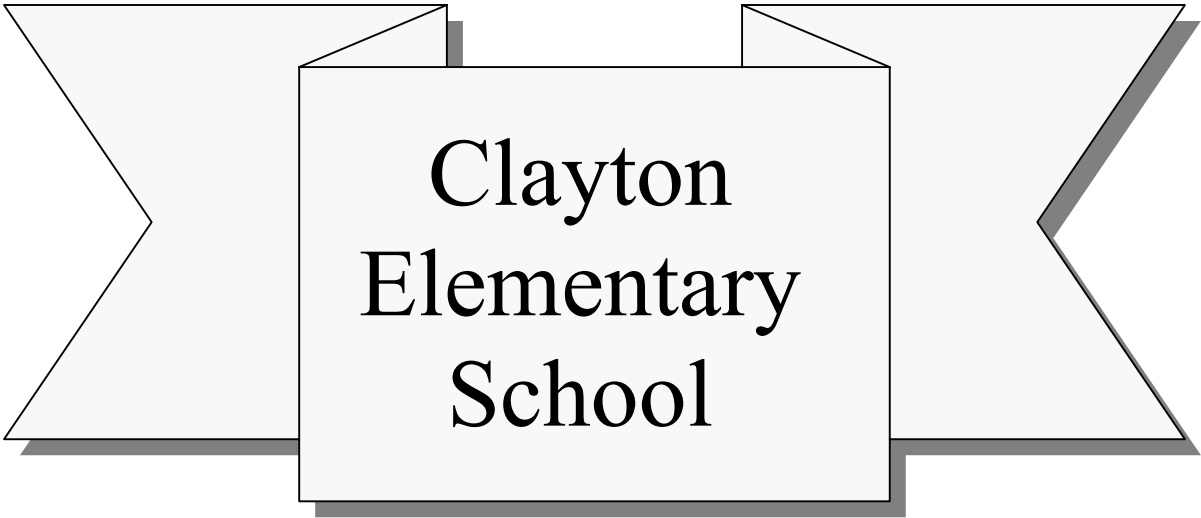
The reason I'm writing this is because I want to tell you about compassion and my daddy who shows compassion. I picked my daddy because he is the best guy I have ever met in my life, and he's the only man who has been in my life. My daddy shows compassion because when I'm sad he makes me smile, and when I'm lonely he makes me feel like I'm not alone. My daddy shows

compassion when I hear my mom-mom's favorite song. It makes me cry because my mom-mom passed away and I feel sad so he cheers me up. My dad is the best compassion shower in the whole world. He also likes to help people. Like he started giving my sister's daycare clothes that didn't fit us anymore. Also, he likes math so he helps me a lot. These are the things that show that I picked a person who shows compassion. Oh, I forgot compassion means to be kind and friendly to others, be kind to students around the school and at work, and to help people if they need help. Last but not least the golden rule . . . Treat people the way you would want to be treated.

Thank you for listening to what I had to say about compassion and the person who has compassion. Maybe one time in your life you will write about someone who has compassion. I hope you enjoyed it.

Taylor Butcher

Third Place, Grade 4



Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

My mom showed compassion by helping my dad up when he broke his kneecap.

Jordan Ide

First Place, Kindergarten

My mom showed compassion by helping me when I had a scratch.

Asianna Thomas

Second Place, Kindergarten

My mom shows compassion by taking care of me when I am sick.

Skyler Ryan

Third Place, Kindergarten

Alex shows lots and lots of compassion. I chose Alex because he tells my mommy when I get hurt. Alex cheers me up when I am sad. He also feels sorry when I am sick and can't come out and play with him. Last he will help me fix my toys if one breaks. Alex is the best compassionate person I met.

Aaron Lewis

First Place, Grade 1

My friend Lily is compassionate. She helped me up when I fell off the monkey bars and she took me inside to the nurse. She helped me up the stairs, and Lily got me to the nurse. Then my mommy took me to the doctor. That's why my friend is compassionate.

Caleb Stewart

Second Place, Grade 1

My mom shows compassion for other people. I chose my mom because she gives me everything I need like a nice house, a nice family, and food I like. She helps me and Anna when we are sad, and she helps my friends too! Camreyn fell down and my mom took her home, and her dad gave

her a band-aid. My mom cares about anyone even if she doesn't know them. My mom helps me with lots of stuff. She helps me with my homework. I help my mom with my little sister named Anna. I love my mom so much.

Rachel Hexamer

Third Place, Grade 1

Have you ever met Billy Evans? Well you should because he gets the world record for most compassionate person. I'd better not waste any of my time. So, the first thing I want to tell you is how he stopped people from picking on me. I was scared to climb a tree and everyone was laughing at me except for him. He told every single one of them to quit that now! Even if I wore diapers he wouldn't laugh. I bet he wouldn't even giggle. Once when he saw older boys hitting a younger boy, he went over there and told them to stop. My friend is so compassionate that once he was playing a very, very fun game with his friends, and he saw another kid with no one to play with. So he asked him if he wanted to play, and his friend's said no, he's not allowed. So he quit that game and played with him. Did I mention sometimes he helps me with my homework? Hey, did I tell you that once I fell at recess and he helped me up. Even if people said I robbed a bank he would say I didn't. So that is why I think he is the most compassionate person in the world and I think you should too.

Justin Johnson

First Place, Grade 2

Do you know who the most compassionate person is in the USA? My mom, Mary Berchtold, is the best mom in the USA. I think she should have a trophy. I love her so much. Now I'm going to tell you why I picked her. Last Monday she came to the bus for me. Plus she helps me with homework and helps me when I'm hurt. Last but not least, she makes fancy meals for me. She even takes care of me when I'm sick. When my sister was sick and had to stay in bed, she gave her ginger ale. Isn't she sweet? Of course she is. I think she needs a break. She does so many things for us even though she can't come to lunch every day. But she is still very, very compassionate. She even lends a hand to my dad. Mom assists him with the lawn, shed and more. She even cleans our rabbit's cage even though it's stinky. I told you some of the stuff my mom does to show compassion. If you know someone with a heart as big as the universe like my mom, write a note that says "Gracias for your compassion."

Casey Berchtold

Second Place, Grade 2

My teacher Mrs. Sharp is the most compassionate person on this earth. Do you want me to tell why? She is a very helpful teacher. She has won a lot of trophies for being so compassionate

since I have been in the 2nd grade. She cares for me and helps me with math and social studies. Plus she shares with me. You know what they should call her—Queen Compassionate. A show should be on TV called Compassionate Idol. Now let's get back where I stopped off. She is very helpful to others, parents, teachers, and staff. By the way, she cares for all kids. Now I've told you all the good things that my teacher has done and hopefully she will do it for you.

Kessiah Hawkins

Third Place, Grade 2

I'm here to tell you about my mom and how she shows compassion. Compassion to me means putting others' feelings first. Sometimes I think her middle name is compassion. My mother is the heart and soul of my brother and me.

My mother has taught me lots of things like caring for other people besides yourself. One time when I was sick, she was the one who comforted me the most. I looked from my bed and saw my mom coming toward me with a steaming hot bowl of chicken noodle soup. I felt like she was wasting all her time for me.

Also, my mom shows compassion by giving advice on a bad day. My mom knows what to do on your worst day. She serves hot cocoa with marshmallows and whipped cream on top. Yummy! Then we sit down and chat about the horrible day, and every time the problem is solved. I don't think anybody is more helpful than her.

Another time she was compassionate was at Christmas when she was generous to my brother and me. We always wake up, dash downstairs, and run as fast as we can to the Christmas tree. We see our mom getting up with a smile on her face. We look back at her side of the tree and see only two presents. We ask her, "Why are you so happy, you got two presents." She says she doesn't care, she just wants to see us both cheerful.

Finally my mom is the only one who is compassionate to my family and friends, but most of all she cares for me. One day when I have kids I will tell them to act just like her when they grow up. She has taught me to care and give to people. Because of her I know that sometimes you don't always get what you want, but you should be thankful for all that you have.

Julia Cox

First Place, Grade 3

Compassion is when you do something for someone and not want anything in return. My little cousin Jordan shows compassion a lot and she is only six. Also, she has helped a lot of animals and people. Next, she has short brown hair and brown eyes. Most kids say someone under eight can't show compassion, but they are wrong. All wrong! Children to adults show compassion in many ways; it does not matter how old you are.

One of the compassionate things Jordan did was save four baby bunnies. That day we were inside watching the rain fall. Then we saw four baby bunnies running around in the rain. After the rain stopped we ran outside and dug a new hole for the bunnies because the other one was flooded. Next, we took the fur out and put it in the new hole. Finally, Jordan picked up the bunnies and sat them in their new hole. Ever since then we always have had a love for animals. I think people can learn that you can help animals no matter what the problem is.

Jordan also helped my older cousin Lauren. One Saturday Lauren was riding her bike over to Jordan's house. Once Lauren got close to Jordan's white house, she hit a rock and fell off her bike. Then Jordan saw what happened and ran over; she helped Lauren get up, go to the house, and put ice on her knee. Only some dirt, little rocks, and mud got in it. Also Jordan felt good for what she did. I learned that you could feel good when you help someone.

Finally Jordan helped me when I almost broke my leg. I ran outside, down the steps and I slipped! Crash! I fell down on the step. "Jordan, Jordan," I kept yelling for her till she came. Then she came with her mom, and she said that I just sprained my ankle. "Woo!" I said. "Good thing I did not break anything." I learned everyone could help in situations.

In fact, I think Jordan changed my life by showing me that anyone can show compassion. Also, I think anyone who reads this piece will learn something about compassion too. Now then, don't forget what compassion means—it means to do something for someone and not want anything in return. I am proud of Jordan and I want to show more compassion.

Ashley Hurd
Second Place, Grade 3

Do you know someone who has compassion? I do and her name is Ashley Hurd. She is my best friend and I saw her do a lot of compassion. Compassion is something you do for others without expecting something back. Compassion is also a feeling of being sorry for someone else's hardship and wanting to help. You can do something for a sick person who can't do any of the things we can do. That is compassion and I know that Ashley has a lot of compassion in her heart. She is nice, generous, and funny. She is nine years old and goes to Clayton Elementary School. I'm going to show you how she has compassion.

The first time she did compassion to me was in kindergarten. I was playing karate with the boys. One of them hit me in the nose, and my nose was bleeding. Ashley told the teacher and helped me to the nurse when I could not see. My hands were on my nose and part on my eyes. It was like I got shot in the nose.

The second time Ashley showed compassion is when I went over to her house. She was playing and feeding her pigs, goats, and lambs at her farm. She does all those chores without getting a single penny. She helps her parents and grandparents so the animals can survive. I know she loves to do those things. Maybe her animals love it.

The last thing that I know that Ashley did for compassion is go to the hospital and visit the sick. There was a drawing on the speaker at school. Mr. Dulin, our principal, announced the winners from kindergarten to fourth grade. Ashley won for third grade, so she went with our counselor Mrs. Burnheart. They went to the hospital to give the sick some hearts that Clayton Elementary made. Since these paragraphs are about compassion, so were the hearts and Ashley came back with nothing in her hands.

To sum up, what I learned from compassion is that when you do something for others you don't expect something back. Ashley had done and showed compassion. You can see that Ashley has a lot of compassion in her heart. As you can see she has done it way back in kindergarten. In summary Ashley means a lot to me. She changes my life by showing a sense of compassion and perseverance. She is brave, healthy, pretty, and does a lot of things to help others. I chose her because she is my best friend.

Jasmine Akins

Third Place, Grade 3

Compassion is having sympathy for others often including a desire to help. Do you know someone who shows compassion? I do, and that person is my grandmother.

My mom-mom shows a lot of compassion and not just to me. For example, both of her parents are in a nursing home and she visits them every chance she gets. Also, at Christmas she always buys presents for the people who help out at my pop-pop's farm and she doesn't have to. Those are just a couple of compassionate things that my mom-mom has done for other people.

My mom-mom is very kind, caring, and generous to many people too. Last summer I think she showed the most compassion ever. That summer one of my grandparent's friends was diagnosed with cancer. Each day my mom-mom would either call or visit them. After he passed away, my mom-mom would cook dinner and take it over to his wife and family. Also, my great-great aunt was in the hospital. Now my mom-mom is having her live with them and has hired a nurse to stay with her while she is at work. This is how my mom-mom shows generosity for other people.

Lastly, my mom-mom has helped me out in the past. If I've had a bad day, my mom-mom is always there for me. One time when I was sick and both of my parents were working, she stayed with me. The time I learned how to ride my bike and I fell down, my mom-mom was right there to see if I was okay.

These are the ways I feel that my mom-mom shows compassion to others. To me she is more than just a grandmother—she is a hero!

Allison Wheatley

First Place, Grade 4

Hello judges. I heard that you were holding a writing contest and the topic is compassion. I have the perfect person in mind that shows so much compassion it's hard to explain. The person I am writing about is my best friend forever and beyond—Jalen Summers!

Here's a story about when she was compassionate. It all started when we were at recess. "Hey Tayler, catch," Jalen said. "What?" I said. I turned around and then all of a sudden all I saw was grass. "Ouch," I yelled and guess who comes to see if I was okay . . . Jalen. "Are you okay?" she asked. "I guess," I said. She showed compassion that day and that's why we're friends to this day.

You heard the story of when she showed compassion that one day. Here's how she shows compassion every day. Jalen helps me when I need help. When I am sad she is the one who makes me laugh. When I do something she backs me up no matter what it is. She always has a smile on her face. You can never get bored when you're around her. She treats me like a sister. Last but not least, you can count on her.

The last thing I will tell is the way she shows compassion to other people. There is always a smile for everybody she meets. She's a great role model for other kids and sets great examples. When someone gets hurt she's there to help.

I bet I know what you are thinking—Jalen sounds like the girl I want to hang out with. Well bud, I have four words for you—you can't have her.

Tayler John

Second Place, Grade 4

Compassion causes kindness, caring, and smiley faces. I know somebody who can really put a smile on my face. That person is my mommy. I know you're thinking—well yeah, she would write about her mom. But my mom can make the bumps on your skin jump up and say "that will always be a compassionate helper." She can do so many nice things you couldn't keep track.

My mother is that person who comes around every couple of years; most people will not be like that. For example, she will make each one of us a different meal at dinner, and there are five people in my family. That's some work. In addition, she will go to the store and buy you tons and tons of stuff and not even say a single word about us giving or doing something back to repay for what she did for us. I'm talking about my mother. My mommy does all this stuff for me and it comes from her heart. I don't think anybody could replace her.

You ask why my mom is generous, kind, and loving. That is because she loves me down to earth. One of the other things she does for me is going on the computer and ordering us some really cool stuff. When it comes in the mail she says nothing about it and surprises me with it. Like I said before, she can really put a smile on my face. Last Saturday I went on a shopping

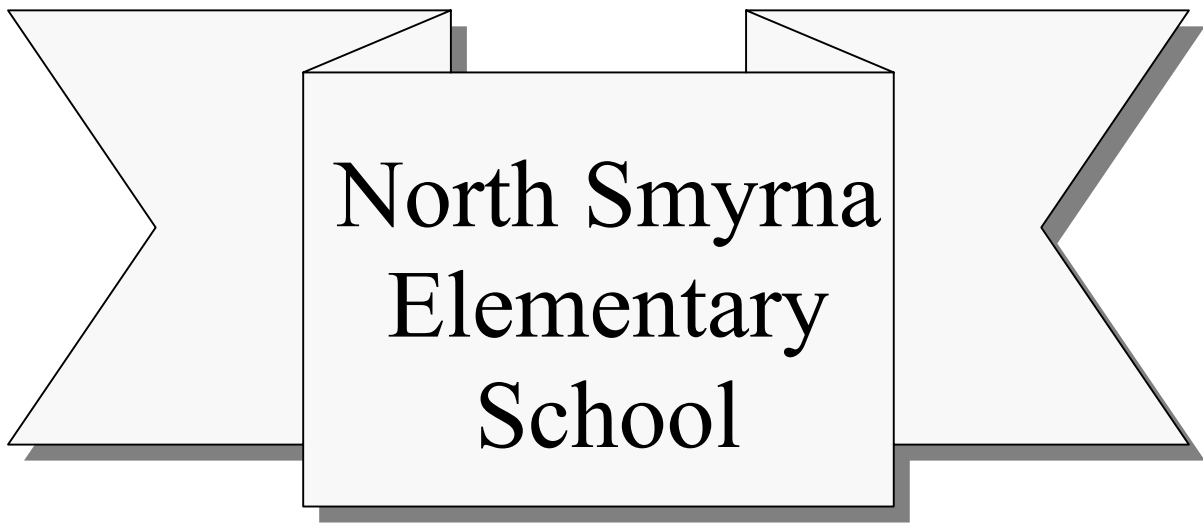
spree because my mom said that will be very nice to do. Well, I went on that shopping spree and had a very great time because of my mother. Everything my mom does for me is one of the nicest things somebody has ever done for me.

Every school day in the morning I ask my mom to do this and that and more of this and some more of that, and she does that with lots and lots of compassion. My mom is not the only one in my house who has compassion. My dad has compassion, my sister has compassion, my little brother has a little compassion (but at least he has compassion). Some people in this world have no compassion whatsoever like mean people, rude people. My mom is not mean or rude, she is a compassionate person.

My mom is getting ready to donate clothes to Clayton Elementary—my school. You can say most likely I have a great mom. I picked my mom because she is the most compassionate person I have ever met, and also because you can trust her. In addition, my family hasn't written anything about her so she's very surprised. There you heard it—my compassion piece. I really enjoyed it. My mommy can really put a smile on my face.

Heather Alfree

Third Place, Grade 4



Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

I helped a dog get home when he was lost.

Hunter Stewart

First Place, Kindergarten

I helped my mom when she was crying by giving her a blanket and hug.

Autumn Patille

Second Place, Kindergarten

I helped my dad when he was sick by giving him a blanket.

Lauren Barkley

Third Place, Kindergarten

Compassion is feeling sorry for others in a time of need. I show compassion to others. I helped Mrs. Snyder our library teacher. I helped her by picking up some books she dropped. She needed help. If everyone showed compassion the world would be a better place. To show compassion you should be caring. I want to show compassion everywhere.

Logan McKinney

First Place, Grade 1

A person who shows compassion is my brother. One day I tripped and fell. My knee hurt so bad and was bleeding. My brother cheered me up because he asked if I was okay. I got a huge band-aid. Since my knee hurt, my brother did all of my chores for me. He had to feed the dog, clean the walls, and sweep the garage. My brother and I had to go to the doctor. He was there the whole time with me. Now that is one compassionate brother.

Max Morrissiey

Second Place, Grade 1

God shows compassion by helping others and by caring for others. He helps people by giving rain and sunlight. This helps make food for us. God gives us trees to make wood for us to build

homes. He cares for us by making us feel better when we feel sick. God loves us.

Raina Semenick

Third Place, Grade 1

Dr. K is compassionate because she does divorce groups in school. She helps kids if they are stressed. She still likes you if you get in trouble, and she likes you for who you are. And she took the job to be a counselor at North Smyrna Elementary School. She eats with kids at lunch time. Sometimes, only if I eat lunch with her, she usually buys me McDonalds. And in first grade she called me down to the office to plant yellow, gold, purple, red, blue, and green plants around the school. Dr. K is compassionate to us.

Kyle Wentling

First Place, Grade 2

Hi! Do you know who I think is compassionate? I think my dad is. Do you know why I chose my dad? There are multiple reasons but I chose these four. First, every month my dad, my brother and I go out to the pond behind his house and pick up trash. Second, he's always trying to make me laugh when I'm hurt or sad. The third reason is if my uncles go out my dad watches their kids who are my cousins. The last reason is he's always trying to help my brother and me with our homework. He's always so, so compassionate to everyone. Those are the reasons why I think my dad is compassionate. Do you think my dad is very, very compassionate? Those are the reasons I chose but there's much, much more that I can think of but it would be really long.

Cecilia Carter

Second Place, Grade 2

Compassion means generous, caring, and forgiving. You know if there was a contest for the most compassionate person my dad would win. One reason, I will tell you one word that means compassion and that is what my dad is—caring.

I'm telling you my dad is caring because he works for us. Even if we ask if he can stay one day home with us, he says no. So now I know that my dad should get respect from others. Another reason my dad is caring is that because of him we always have food to eat every single day.

My next reason is generous. My dad is like that because he gives what we need. Like giving my mom money, and with that money that he gives us we go shopping for food and jackets for the winter. For example, he gives us everything, and also if other people need something and he has it he gives it to them. That's how I think my dad is very generous.

Forgiving is another word that means compassionate along with my dad. He's forgiving like when we went to my aunt's house and we had a certain time to go back to my grandma's house. But we weren't there at that time so he got mad, and he demanded us to go to sleep early so we did. The next day he forgave us and let us go to my aunt's house. He didn't yell at us. That's how my dad forgives people, and I like the way he forgives because the days will be calm and not be mad.

That's why I tell you if there was a contest for the most compassionate person, my dad would win because now you and I know that he is the world's most compassionate person in big letters and with the details I told you. Wouldn't you like to meet my dad someday?

Anílu Paneda

Third Place, Grade 2

My nine-year-old cousin Karli has had a very hard and stressful life, but one person has tried to make it better every step of the way. That person is my highly compassionate Aunt Trina. She is extremely helpful, caring, and generous to all people. All our family is very fortunate to have her.

She is very helpful towards every person, especially towards Karli. My cousin Karli has cerebral palsy also known as C.P. So my Aunt Trina helps her talk, walk, and eat. She also goes out of her way to help Karli have a great time and make friends. Aunt Trina helps other kids like Karli and their family too.

My Aunt Trina is also truly caring. She shows us in very many ways. She never forgets important family members and friend events, even though she is so busy. She makes sure Karli is included in all things we do, yet she makes sure we have fun too. Those are the main ways she is caring.

My Aunt Trina is astonishingly generous. She helped Karli's friend Haley, who has C.P., get a swing set because she never had one. She teaches kids about disabilities so they understand Karli. She also donates old equipment to needy children.

Always remember how caring, helpful and generous my Aunt Trina is especially toward her daughter Karli. Don't forget how she donates old equipment to kids. Also remember how she helps Karli walk, talk, and eat. Never forget how compassionate my Aunt Trina is—she is the best aunt ever!

Justin Nash

First Place, Grade 3

Do you know what compassion is? Compassion means having sympathy for others and being loving. Do you know someone who has compassion? I do. Her name is Oma. I've known Oma

my whole life, but you're going to have to read more to find out about my Oma. (Grandmother is Oma in German).

Besides Oma being someone I knew my whole life, Oma is very loving. Every night before Mom, Alie, and I get home from school, Oma makes us dinner. Whenever I'm sad I can come to her and she'll make me feel better. After that we play Skip-Bo and Dominoes. Oma can sure make me feel better!

Another way Oma shows compassion is by being generous. She does "Operation Shoebox." "Operation Shoebox" is where the poor kids in other countries get shoeboxes filled with candy, toys, and cosmetics for Christmas. She also takes time to bake for her friends. Besides doing stuff for people she donates money to the cat sanctuary. That is where homeless cats get their own home with food, toys, and someone to love them.

Finally, Oma shows compassion by being caring. She is caring when she brings food to her paralyzed friend Hilde. She invites Hilde and her husband to our house for dinner on holidays since she has no kids. Oma also shows compassion when she drives her friend who can't see at night. Since Oma's an awesome seamstress she stops everything and sews for us, and when I get a new brownie patch she sews it on my vest so I can wear it at my next meeting. That would make me feel good if I was her.

As you can see Oma is a very loving, caring, and generous person. Just by doing a few nice things it could make the world change. I think Oma is the most compassionate person I know. I wish everyone was like Oma or had an Oma like I do. I hope you're inspired by all the nice things people could do.

Anna Hall

Second Place, Grade 3

Do you know someone who is compassionate? Well I do. His name is Bob and he's my uncle. He is very compassionate. The first detail will express to you how he is nice. Next I will write about how he is helpful. Last I will write about how he is caring. My uncle is a nice person.

Now I will write about how he is nice. He is nice because he helps my grandmom at the airport. He also helps her at her house. Also he helps me solve problems like when my cousin Todd and I argued about who was the tallest. We found out I was the tallest. Last he calls the people that I wanted to come to my birthday party, tells them that they are invited to my birthday party, and tells them where we are going to have it. This is how my uncle is nice.

Now, I will write about how he is helpful. He is helpful because he helps me do my homework every day. He also does the homework with me if the paper says you will need an adult to do this worksheet. Next he helps me if I can't find a controller to a game. Last he helps me if I get stuck on a word in a book. This is how he is helpful.

Now I will write about how he is caring. My uncle is caring because he hugs me if I'm lonely. Also he makes me feel better if someone in my family dies. Next he plays Halo 3 with me whenever I want. Last he never raises his fist at people if he is really mad. This is how my uncle is caring.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you how my whole family is compassionate. He is compassionate because he is very nice to me and my grandmom, and also helpful to me and my cousin. Last he is very caring to me. This is how my uncle is compassionate.

Cody Sanchez

Third Place, Grade 3

Wow! My pastor has done many great things for his community. He feeds the hungry, buys clothes for kids, and takes money out of his account for others. He's a wonderful person you can count on.

My so giving pastor goes out on his own time to feed the hungry. He goes to the streets of Wilmington. He gives them all the food he possibly can. Other people from our community help support my pastor and come and help him. All my pastor wants to do is give!

Every year around Christmas my pastor has a program where people donate clothes. After all the clothes have been donated, he gives them to a shelter called the "Sunday Breakfast Mission." There they take the clothes and give them away to people who can't afford them. He puts smiles on their faces.

I think generous is the word to describe my pastor. He always has a way to give back to his community. He actually puts 10% of the money he makes in a separate account so he can take it to an organization called "Martha's Carriage House." He also donates clothes, toys, shoes, and even food. They love it and they really appreciate that.

My pastor has helped his community in many ways. Many people admire him—especially me. He's a fantastic role model. My pastor shows compassion to everyone in need of help.

Alicia Bowers

First Place, Grade 4

Can you guess who shows compassion in my family? Why it is my mother. She does a lot. My mother helps at school, helps her friends, and helps people at work. She is a very friendly person.

First, my mother helps her friends. I feel she gives her friends the absolute "best" advice. Also, she babysits for her friends every once in a while. Then sometimes she picks her friends' kids up from school. This is one way my mom shows compassion.

Also my mother helps out at school. First my mom volunteers to go on field trips. Next my mother helps teachers do things that they need to do. In addition to that she also helps the Parent Teacher Organization PTO. That is another way my mom shows compassion.

Another example is she helps a lot of people at work. My mom loves to talk to her customers so now she has made friends with a lot of them. Then she fixes their machines. Next my mother pays her customers up to as high as she can. This is another way my mother shows compassion.

So you can see my mother shows a lot of compassion. First she helps out at school. Next my mom helps her friends. Then my mother helps a lot of people at work. So now you know how my mom shows compassion.

Tiffany Caballero

Second Place, Grade 4

Do you know someone who's compassionate? Well, I do. It's my dad. He's the most compassionate man I know. Since he's really compassionate, why don't I tell you about him?

The first thing to say about my dad is that he's in the Army. He helped tons of people in the Iraqi War. My dad flew Blackhawks and picked people up and dropped them down at their destination. That was really helpful. My dad's done other sincere things like that.

Here's the second thing. Now that you know my dad's in the Army, you probably know he's busy. But instead of doing his work on Wednesday, my dad takes me to Cub Scouts. He could have a stack of work and it wouldn't matter. He's that compassionate. I bet now you know why he's the most compassionate man I know.

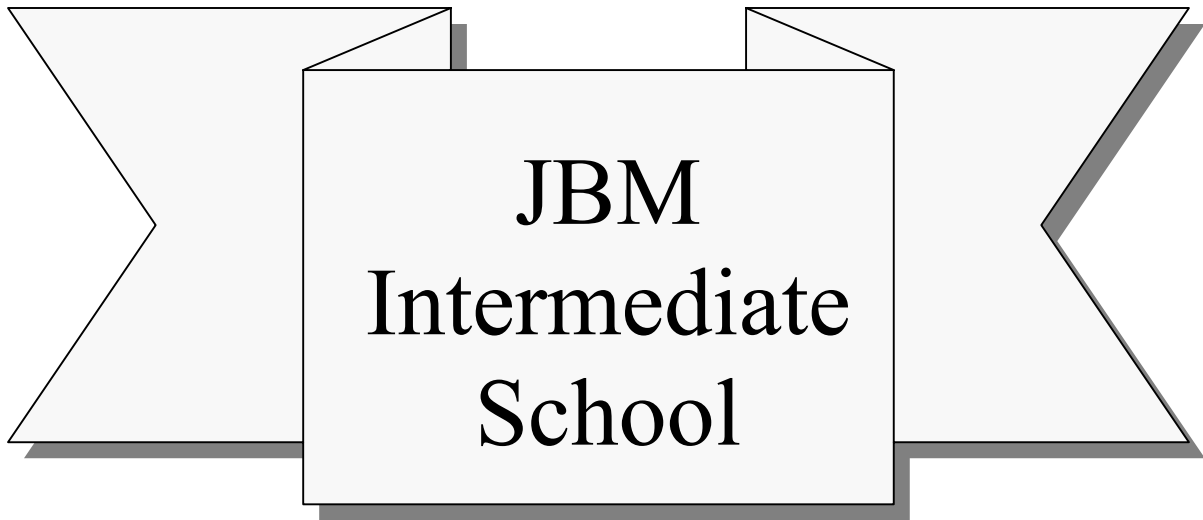
The third thing about my dad is that he helps everyone. Whenever I need help he's there. If my baby sister wants something he gives it to her. When my three-year-old sister needs to get over a gate my dad helps. He's done more than that.

The last thing I'm going to say about my dad is that he loves and cares for everyone. He so loves that I know he won't stop loving anyone without him telling me. And he's so caring that he did everything I said already. Now I'm done saying everything about my dad.

Now let's review. My dad is in the Army. Second, he gives up every Wednesday for me. Third, he helps everyone. Last, he's loving and caring. That's how kind my dad is.

Evan Garramone

Third Place, Grade 4



Grades 5 and 6

One day I was curious as we human beings often are. Curiosity can lead us to things we never knew, such as in “Curious George”—stories where a little monkey gets into all sorts of mischief because he wonders about all sorts of things. Anyway, I must resemble our little primate because I had the urge to go where I had never gone before . . . www.Shakira.com! Shakira is just an upbeat pop star or at least that’s what I thought until I found out about her obsession for children. Shakira is actively involved in a few children’s foundations and has recently visited developing countries. Not to mention she is building a school for kids in need and is a Goodwill Ambassador. What a busy schedule.

Sometimes in our life we find ourselves thinking—gee I wish I could do something for the world. Well Shakira is doing something that involves helping the world. Like I said, she is a Goodwill Ambassador. She was appointed this duty on October 24, 2003, and is now one of the people who go out of their way to help the 120 million children who don’t have a home and are still not in school. Shakira was born in Columbia so she saw the difference Goodwill made, and she wanted to give something back.

If you were to look in the dictionary right now to look up the word school, it would say a place where all children go to learn. However, this is unfortunately inaccurate. Take Columbia for example. There are only some children who attend school. This is why there are many children who are inspired to join gangs or radical groups in South America. Shakira noticed this problem, thought education was the key, had a concert, and put that money aside to build a school which is now under construction. This is only one example of the many positive things she does. For instance, 40 million dollars were donated to some poorer countries. Everybody knows that being generous is good, but there is a point where one can be too generous. Now it is appropriate to say Shakira is being too generous.

Almost everyone loves to travel whether you are going to Disney World or the Grand Canyon; you know your trip will be fun and exciting. The outgoing pop star travels too, but she won’t be coming to Disney any time soon. She recently visited Bangladesh, a country hit by a cyclone. She states, “I feel it’s critical that the people of the world support Bangladesh. They desperately need international support to rebuild their country and their lives.” For her it’s not send a get well card and everything’s better; she takes things seriously and takes responsibility. That’s why you might have found her in a foreign country right before Christmas—to help, to donate, and to rebuild what was lost.

I’m going to get straight to the point. The world has leaders known for being so compassionate and Shakira is one of them. Without her there would not be any new schools being built. Gangs and radical groups would be increasing, and hope would be gone for people in still developing countries. I’m glad Shakira is always available to help.

Matthew Comollo

First Place, Grade 5

The person who I think is compassionate is my dad, John Fuhr. He owns a well-drilling company called John's Well Drilling. He is always helping people who have no water. He tries to help everyone as much as he can.

One time he drilled a well for an older lady who didn't have a lot of money. I went to the jobsite with him and saw her house. It looked so bad that I thought it would fall down. He told her not to pay, but she insisted. She paid five dollars every Friday. She never once missed a Friday. Finally, when Christmas came around, my dad told her Merry Christmas and told her not to worry about paying the rest (even though she still owed a lot more money). It showed how compassionate my dad really is because he didn't care about the money, he just wanted to help.

Another time my dad was compassionate was when he saw a homeless man standing outside of Golden Corral. The man asked if my dad had a couple extra dollars. My dad told him it was his lucky day. My dad took him inside and paid for his dinner. The man was so happy that he gave my dad a big bear hug. This showed how compassionate my dad is because he could have just walked past the homeless man.

My dad also shows compassion by working hard every day, all day, to give me and my family a good life. He makes sure we have a roof over our heads and food on the table. He worked long days to get us a pool because he loves us. My dad helped my cousin one time too. My cousin's name is Bruce and his tires were going bad. He didn't have a lot of money to pay for new ones, so my dad took him and bought him a whole new set. Bruce was really happy and he thanked my dad. He always puts his family first.

Everyone sees how caring my dad is. I see it at home and others see it when he is around. He helps anyone and everyone he can. That is why, when I think of compassion, I think of my dad.

Chelsea Fuhr

Second Place, Grade 5

The word compassion makes me think of the most compassionate person in the whole world—my mom. Right now you are probably thinking of someone in your life that is compassionate. To me, my mom is the one on my mind. My mom helps many people like Leon and Mrs. Lofland. She volunteers at our church, makes dinner for guests, and loves my sister and me through thick and thin.

Now, there are probably a thousand questions going off inside your head like “Who are Leon and Mrs. Lofland?” Well, Leon and Mrs. Lofland are mother and son who live together. They live together because Leon is blind and Mrs. Lofland is elderly. My mother drives to Felton (where they live) and helps Leon pay his bills. Then she helps Mrs. Lofland do the same. My mom is always helpful to everyone she meets, especially Mrs. Lofland and Leon.

People can count on my mom when volunteers are needed at St. Polycarp's Parish (our church). She helps the teachers at P.S.R. when I go to class there, and she helps out at the main desk

answering phones like a secretary. Some nights she has to stand outside in the cold waiting with other kids until their parents pick them up. She never complains, no matter how cold it gets! My mom is also like a decorator. When the church needs to be decorated for some occasion, mom is there helping.

Most of us like to go out for dinner, especially when we have guests. Not my mom. She makes a homemade dinner for our guests. When my dad's friend Paul visited she made delicious macaroni-n-cheese, and grilled cheese sandwiches. When another of dad's friends visited, she made chicken quesadillas with beans on the side. Even when I have friends over, she makes wonderful dishes like lasagna. All of her foods take your mouth on a roller coaster of taste. Through it all my mom also did all the clean up.

My favorite way that I know my mom is compassionate is the love that she shows my sister and me. Even when we both get on her nerves, she still loves us. Once my sister and I were arguing over something to do with the Wii game system; my mom got angry and yelled at us. I asked if she was mad, and she said, "I am angry that you two won't get along, but I will always love you." Mom has always been so forgiving to us both.

Finally, the time has come for me to finish here, and I hope that after reading this you find my mom as compassionate as I do. I hope that you have a wonderful day filled with compassion. I know that I will!

Madison Spadifino

Third Place, Grade 5

Have you ever met someone who is full of compassion? I have and his name is Jacob Hanberry. When I found out that the core value this year was compassion, I knew exactly who I was going to write about. You are probably thinking, "Who is Jacob Hanberry?" Well, Jacob was the ICU nurse that helped my great-grandmother enjoy (or at least feel comfortable) during her final days.

First of all, Mother's Day was just around the corner and my great-grandmother wasn't feeling great. But Jacob Hanberry refused to let her pass on Mother's Day. He knew how important mothers are and just couldn't see her die on a day to honor her and all mothers. It was such a big deal that she couldn't die on Mother's Day because his mother died when he was a very young child, so it meant a lot to him. Even though he didn't have his mom, someone else did. That is as compassionate as I think you can get.

It takes a very strong person to work in the Intensive Care Unit. I don't mean physically strong, but mentally. In the ICU there are very many ill or sick elderly people and even some who are young. Every day, one of those wonderful people who has a family dies. Jacob has to tell the upset family that their loved one has just passed away. One time I watched Jacob tell a family member their loved one had died and he cried. He had cried over someone he had never met in his life until the moment they came into the ICU. That is just pure love for one another or should I say compassion.

As a result of my great-grandmother having pneumonia, the doctors only gave her one to two days to live. They wanted to give up and not try to help her, but Jacob would not give up. Jacob had a commitment to my great-grandmother and would not let her die under his care. He tried his best to make her comfortable—this much compassion can't even be measured.

As I have said, Jacob Hanberry is absolutely the most compassionate person I have ever met in my whole life. To him compassion is more than just shedding a tear here or there. Compassion to him means just showing love for one another. I think everyone should be as compassionate as him.

Breanna Wharton

Second Place, Grade 6

Compassion is a word of many compliments; it shows a great deal about a person. The definition of compassion is a feeling of love, respect, friendship, kindness, and generosity about someone. Well, that is how I feel about Lorie. I don't have any siblings and have always wanted a big sister. Lorie has always seemed to be able to fill the position perfectly.

Most of you probably don't know Lorie, but if you do you know that the definition of compassion fits her perfectly. I met Lorie when I was eight years old. I had just started riding competitively and she was my assistant horse trainer. She doesn't work for my horse trainer any more, but it is definitely not the same without her. She is my big sister and I miss her dearly.

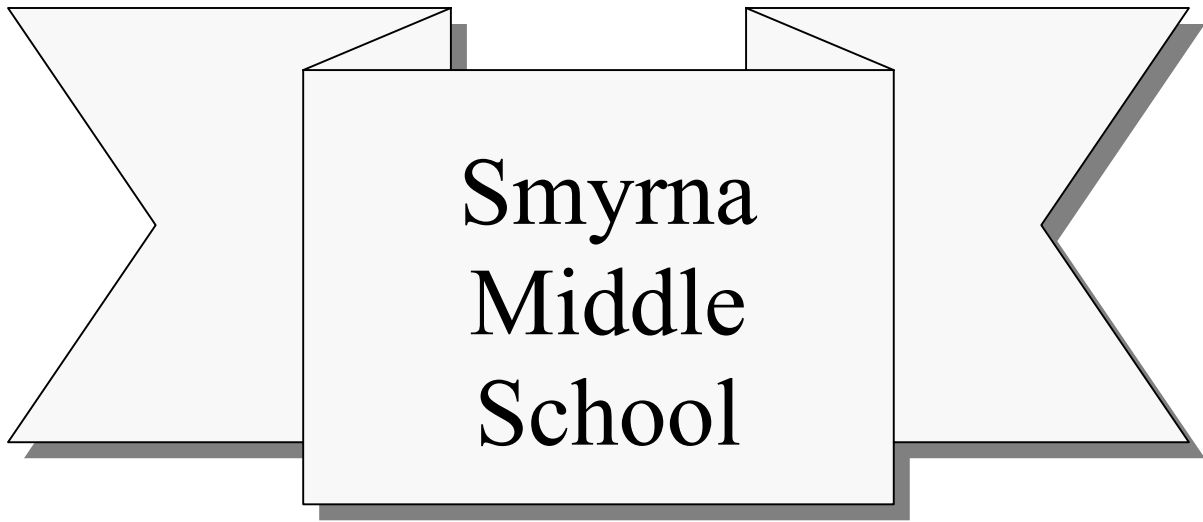
Lorie is a very generous and caring person. She can tell when someone is trying their very best and putting their whole heart into things (even horses). She can tell when a horse shows the willing attitude where they would break their heart for you or do anything you ask. She was always willing to help my horse and me improve. If you were doing something wrong, she would tell you like it is—not beat around the bush. She would also tell you how to fix your problem, and tell how to prevent it from happening again. She always knew the right thing to say about everything.

When Lorie worked for my horse trainer, she would always have to drive one of the trailers to the shows. Sometimes my parents couldn't take me to the shows, so Lorie was always there to take Bailey and me wherever we needed to go. It actually worked out for her because she got to stay in the trailer with me and eat as much as she wanted. Lorie was always there for me and still is. It doesn't matter how far away she is, I know in my heart she never left. If I was ever frustrated, sick, or upset she would always be able to cheer me up.

In the end I don't see her very much anymore, but all I have to do is look into my heart and there she is. Lorie and compassion are equivalent; she demonstrates those characteristics all of the time. She is very caring, generous, and kind. She would never tell anyone no, if they needed help. I could always count on Lorie to help me at horse shows. She could always find the

answer to my worries or problems. She is a very unique person; it is shame God didn't make more like her. This is what a true compassionate person looks like.

Taylor Dixon
Third Place, Grade 6



Grades 7 and 8

What is compassion? To me, compassion is to have sympathy for others or to go the extra mile to help others. A compassionate person always does just a little bit more to help someone in need. The person who is most compassionate in my opinion is not just one person, but instead it is a whole team. The team name is Pryer, Ordway and Company, also known as POCO. Team POCO was a basketball team that consisted of the most compassionate people that I will probably ever know. They were the living version of what compassion should be. They demonstrated this quality by being caring, patient, and understanding.

This team consisted of twelve girls. We all went to different schools and came from different neighborhoods, but we all came together to play basketball. This team did consist of one special player name Allie (her name is changed here). Allie taught us many things. Allie was a disabled girl and was in a “special program” for the disabled. She had autism, which caused her to act differently from the other girls her age. At first we didn’t really understand Allie and why she did the things that she did, but little by little we learned how to get along with and work with her. We cared about how she felt and about how much fun we could make basketball for her. We got Allie her own special basketball. She used it at every practice. This made her feel good about her team. At the end of the season every player signed it for Allie.

The POCO players were always very patient with Allie. Sometimes it was difficult to be patient with Allie since she had mood swings and temper tantrums. Allie was always a little slower than the rest of the team so we always had to wait on her to finish the drills. Instead of just standing there chatting, we would run back and finish her sprints with her. In case Allie was in a bad mood the girls would run behind her and act like monsters just to get her to finish. This made Allie laugh and she would always hurry up to finish her sprints. The team also helped her learn the plays by showing them to her and explaining them over and over again just to make sure she knew the play. Team POCO was always very patient with Allie.

POCO always understood and never got mad at Allie even if she did something wrong. Allie would pass the ball to the other team sometimes, but the girls never yelled at her. They would just encourage her to do her best. Sometimes she would even set up at the wrong end of the court. Even if it was an important game, we never got mad at Allie. Allie could be a major grump and could be rude to everyone on the team some days. The team didn’t get mean back; but instead we would try to find ways to make her happy by telling jokes, letting her win at knock out, and playing games with her. Allie would miss practices sometimes, but they understood her condition and would just help her more when she came to the next practice. Team POCO was very understanding and never got mad at Allie.

Team POCO consisted of the most compassionate people I will ever know! They have changed my life by teaching me that there is more to life than just winning. POCO was and still is a compassionate group of girls. I know that I learned more about compassion in that one season of basketball than I ever knew before. If everyone was as compassionate as team POCO, the world would be a much better place. POCO’s motto was “You are only as good as your worst player.” This wasn’t meant to be degrading. Instead it meant that we all had to work together to help each other succeed. This meant that we had to think about our teammates first and how we

could make each other better. We did just that during that season. Everyone on that team scored a basket, received a pass, passed the ball, and showed compassion to their teammates.

Shannon Strosser

First Place, Grade 7

Imagine a world where you look different from everyone else. Imagine a world where your speech is slurred or you cannot talk, where people sometimes laugh at you or ridicule you. This is the world of people with physical and mental disabilities. My aunt's best friend is the Executive Director of a place called Kent Center. Her name is Carol Callaway (but we just call her Miss Carol). Kent Center is a facility where people with special needs can learn to live their lives as normal as possible. Miss Carol helps the clients of Kent Center accomplish this while she expresses great generosity, thoughtfulness, and kindness.

The first trait Miss Carol expresses that makes her the most compassionate person I know is her generosity. Every year Miss Carol throws a party for all the workers at Kent Center. She decorates her house and buys food for all the people at Kent Center. Every day she wakes up early and goes to work with a broad smile. She donates almost all of her free time there. Many times she even goes to work on the weekends. To me Miss Carol has the stuff of a truly, undeniably, generous person.

The second trait that makes Miss Carol a compassionate person is her thoughtfulness. Miss Carol comes up with many ingenious ideas to raise money for Kent Center. When the building was getting too old and small, she organized fundraisers to raise money to build a new Kent Center. One fundraiser last year was called the Goosebump Jump. This fundraiser was held at Betterton Beach, Maryland. People would give donations and jump into the freezing cold water. This event made a grand total of \$64,000! Many times a year Miss Carol organizes and participates in fundraisers to raise money for Kent Center. I believe this expresses great thoughtfulness and ingenuity.

The last trait Miss Carol expresses is her kindness. Most people look at people with special needs as different or weird, but Miss Carol believes otherwise. She looks at these people with great respect. She does this because she knows what they go through every day. Miss Carol sees how much courage and perseverance the clients of Kent Center have. Miss Carol donates so much of her time to people with special needs, and even helps them cope with their problems. I think Miss Carol is the most generous, thoughtful, and kind person I will ever know.

Miss Carol has inspired me to look at the clients of Kent Center with great respect. She also inspired me to look at them as individuals just like everyone else. Even though most people at Kent Center have disabilities, she helps them live their lives to the fullest possible extent. Miss Carol never fails to give to people with special needs, whether she organizes fundraisers or helps them with their disabilities. I believe that Miss Carol is the dictionary definition of compassion.

Patrick Coleman

Second Place, Grade 7

Compassion is a quality that I admire immensely and is key to getting through life. Some don't show very much compassion; some seem as though they have never even understood the concept. While it might seem that those people are everywhere, some people do show compassion. Among many others, my dad is one of those people. Whether he's helping a man in an accident, improving a community, or even doing a simple job, he always shows compassion.

Once, on a rainy day, my family was driving home in our gray pickup truck returning from a restaurant after eating our fill. Everything was fine—just like a normal drive home. However, just outside of the entrance to our development we spotted a man on the side of the road distraught and soaked. He was letting out a steady stream of curses and throwing his arms in every direction. Maybe five feet in front of him was that man's small blue truck stuck in a muddy ditch, its door ajar. My dad pulled over and asked the man what had happened. The man responded in a very rude fashion, his anger speaking for him. Despite the man's attitude toward him, my dad offered to help the man get his truck back. The man took the offer without as much as a "Thank you." My dad stepped out of the truck and walked to the bed, taking out a cable that he had stored in it. He attached the cable to the back of our truck and then to the back of the man's truck. My dad ordered the man to get in the truck and go into reverse on the count of three. At the same time that he went into reverse, my dad slammed on the pedal and pulled forward. His truck slowly churned through the mud and after about five seconds his truck had been pulled out of the ditch. After thanking my dad, the man offered him a reward which my dad humbly turned down, stating that it was just the right thing to do. The man drove away content with the condition of his car. A wash would have it shiny in no time.

A couple of weeks after that incident occurred, my dad's thoughts wandered back to the place where we used to live, Baytree. Memories of trash on the streets, fights happening daily, and drug dealers lurking on street corners did not make my dad fond of that place. But then he thought about making that community better and remembered that there was a group of people determined to do the same thing. He consulted them and after a while they let him into the group as chairman! He did as well as he could have done by decreasing the amount of violence, getting more police to come through the area, and helping pick trash up from off the street. After about a year, the development was a shining example of what developments should be like.

For you to really appreciate this final act of compassion, I must first give you some information about the CDSA league. CDSA (Central Delaware Soccer Association) is a recreational league based in central Delaware with a team for every city in central Delaware. This makes finding people to coach these teams hard. What makes it even more complex is that there are age groups—about five of them. So that means there are five teams for every city in Delaware. Well, during the application period there was no coach for the Smyrna team ages 13 to 15. At first, it wasn't a problem because there usually is no coach right away. But once we started to near the season's beginning we started to get worried. There was still no coach, meaning that the kids in that city and age group would not be able to play. Now my dad is a very busy person. He has to wake up at 4:30 am and then drive to New Jersey every day! However, he knew that the kids would not be able to play and felt horrible for them. Even though he was dead tired at the end of the day, he volunteered to coach the team. The team went on undefeated throughout the season all thanks to the compassion that my dad showed.

Now these are only acts of compassion that really stood out to me. My dad shows compassion wherever he goes. Helping disabled people up stairs, holding the door for many, many people at a time, and many others are all that my dad does. He has always shown compassion and will continue to do so for the rest of his life. Compassion is key to getting through life as it makes the world a better place.

Chris Harris

Third Place, Grade 7

“You’re stupid!” Usually these are the words of a disrespectful and uncompassionate person. Incredibly, this time they are not. These words actually came from one of the most compassionate psychologists today—Dr. Phil. Many people see Dr. Phil as mean or not nice, but he helps people with their worst problems, which shows compassion. Dr. Phil shows this compassion and problem-solving theory in three ways. Dr. Phil is compassionate in the way he listens and reacts to a problem, his problem-solving tactics, and the solution he creates.

When people approach Dr. Phil as a problem solver, he never runs away or ignores it; he and the troubled person face it head-on. No matter how complicated, like a life/death situation, he makes it look easy like how to tie shoes. The person just tells Dr. Phil what’s wrong while he listens with respect and finds a way to solve it. Now, Phil shows compassion in a way of what ignorant (not mean way) people would think was harsh. Although secretly Phil’s teachings alter the person’s life, he says, “You’re stupid, you can’t keep doing this!” He has to be rough or show tough love to his patient because enforcing it and telling the situation as it is will not always be nicest, but will work better than being soft and letting the person ignore you.

Finally to add onto his compassion, Dr. Phil finds a solution to the person’s problem no matter how long it takes. If you thought that’s all his compassion, he still has a lot left. He just doesn’t say “Here’s your solution, good-bye.” Instead he gives the person confidence to overpower the problem if it ever occurred again. Say if someone was afraid on the boogeyman, Dr. Phil would work with the patient until that patient is 100% cured of his boogeyman problem. He doesn’t need to do it. He’s just compassionate.

I am so glad that there are people who are like Dr. Phil. Nowadays people treat you badly, but there will always be hope as long as people like Dr. Phil remain compassionate. Let’s follow his example and we can make this world a friendlier place.

Rex Baker

Second Place, Grade 8

Compassion to me is much more than just a ten-letter word. Compassion is when someone is in need and a person helps him or her instead of walking past them. Taking the time to stop caring about yourself and finding it in your heart to help someone else is being compassionate. I know

a man who goes out of his way to show compassion for others. This man happens to be my dad Tyrenza Bonner. There are many ways he shows compassion through working with the Air Force, in our home, and even at our church.

One of the ways my dad shows compassion is working for the United States Air Force. When he signed up for the military, he knew there were other people in this world who needed his help. It didn't matter if it was locally or all the way in the Middle East. So he decided to use compassion to help people in need. Just a few days ago my dad got deployed to Qatar which is a little place near Iraq. It truly takes a heart of gold to put his life on the line for other people he doesn't even know, and to make an effort to make this world a better place, not just for us, but for everyone.

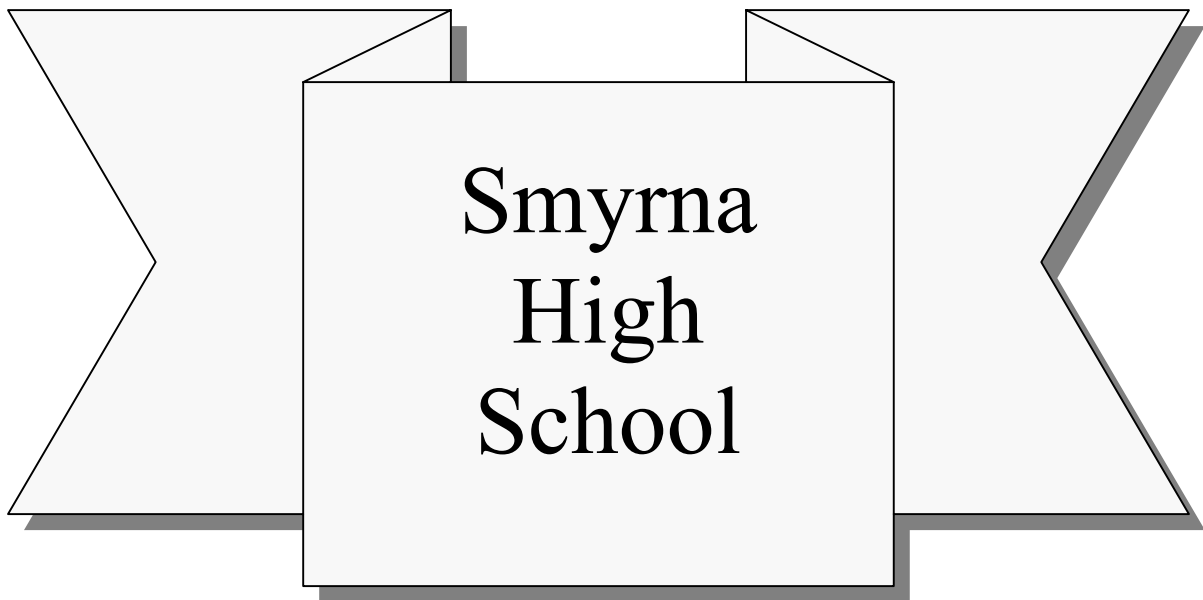
My dad also shows compassion in our house. Sometimes I would swear he has super powers. It always seems that whenever I am sad, depressed, or angry he always knows how to help me feel better. He knows when to talk to me seriously and when to tell a joke to get me in a better mood. He always takes time to listen to me and understand my situation, which is why I can always count on him to help me feel better.

Another instance of my dad using compassion is at my church. My church is not the biggest, but we are all very close to each other. When one of the members of our church is in financial trouble, my dad is always there to help them. First he puts some money in his hand, then he goes up to them and gives them the money in a handshake. Because my dad knows what it feels like to be in their situation, he always takes an extra step to help them to get out of their financial drought.

So in my eyes, the definition of compassion should be under my dad's name Tyrenza Bonner. He's always there for people especially my mom, my brother, and me. He's never too busy to listen to someone else's problems, which makes him a tremendous role model for others. He truly has a heart of gold.

Larenz Bonner

Third Place, Grade 8



Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12

I could take all the time in the world telling you all the qualities of compassion and what it means, etc.; but that doesn't mean you'll ever understand exactly where I'm coming from with this or know exactly what I'm talking about. You probably think you know though, which is very common; but until you meet that special person who possesses that unbelievable trait, you are far from relating to what I mean. I have been extremely lucky and fortunate to have experienced such a compassionate person in my life. For me, this person is Martina Cooper. Martina shows prime examples of compassion from her physical actions, to making others happy, and by simply being herself.

The first overall example of why I believe Martina is compassionate is because of her physical actions of how she acts toward others. She looks people in the eye and smiles the majority of the time. Martina doesn't let herself get into situations where negative people or anything that could harm her surrounds her. There are little things that she does like giving someone gum or picking up something for someone who accidentally dropped it. Those little things might not be a big deal, but they definitely add up and present her to be the compassionate person that she is. This girl gives out as many hugs as a tree would sprout leaves. Sometimes, honestly, a simple hug is all you really need to get through the day.

My second reason for choosing Martina as the most compassionate person is because she goes out of her way to make others happy. That's an important part of being compassionate and Martina definitely has it. I have never experienced a person with such a strong desire to help. An example of this is that she compliments others often. She also points out all the good qualities in people and tells them how much she respects them for being the way they are. I'm proud to say that Martina can always bring out the good in someone and open up a new point of view to them. I tell you what—I wish very much that I could do that for everyone. She's positive and always looks on the bright side. This girl made my self-confidence do a complete 180 when I got to know her. She was always so kind and made me realize that I'm special and beautiful just the way I am. Martina tells her honest opinion about a lot of things. I know what you're thinking, "Anyone can do that." It's different with Martina. This girl always puts her opinion in the nicest way possible. That trait is very respectful and shows exactly how Martina is so compassionate about others' feelings. She's one in a million.

Martina shows compassion just being herself. I had never experienced a compassionate person until I met her. She opened up so many doors to that word. She is forgiving, kind, generous, and also shows love and friendship as well. It's not an act she puts on. It's real and it's her. I knew and know many people who put on this act and aren't as compassionate as you would hope to think. Martina is the most optimistic person I have ever met and know. She keeps me going when the going gets tough and is right by my side the whole time. This girl loves just about everyone, and lets him or her know it. I find it unbelievable how compassionate one person can be. I'm surprised she hasn't bust from all of it!

In conclusion, I have shared three important examples of how Martina Cooper is without a doubt the most compassionate person in my life. She possesses everything a compassionate person should and would. Just knowing her has changed my life. Her compassion has gotten her a permanent part in my heart. I will admit she's not perfect. Sometimes Martina lacks common sense and has her days. Nobody is perfect. In addition there's also nobody whose compassion

overrides and makes up for the imperfections in every way like Martina's. In my opinion, Martina Cooper is an angel and the kind of friend that everyone should experience having. Although she couldn't have done it without one thing—that ten-letter word compassion.

Kristen Norris

First Place, Grade 9

Compassion means having sympathy for others, often including a desire to help. Who do you think has compassion? I believe that my brother Ben has compassion because he is caring, helpful, and loves his family.

My brother Ben is caring because he takes care of his family when they are sick. He also cheers me up when I'm feeling down. Ben takes care of his whole family as well as himself. He is very respectful to his family. That is why he's caring.

He is helpful as well as caring for others and family. Some reasons why he is helpful are that he helps with the chores around the house. He sometimes does the grocery shopping for his family members. Also, if we are in need of help he will kindly ask us if he can help.

The last reason why he has compassion is because he loves his family. He takes care of this fiancé and her baby. When she had the baby, he stayed by her side the whole time. He has compassion because he loves helping and taking care of his fiancé's baby.

In conclusion, anyone can have compassion. To me, my brother Ben has the most compassion because he is caring, helpful, and loves his family. So tell me, who has compassion to you?

Shannon Mast

Second Place, Grade 9

Compassion is the deep awareness of the suffering of others. Compassion isn't just a simple thing that you gain overnight; it's something that you need to work on if you don't have it already. There's only one person that stands out in my mind as compassionate, and that person is my grandmother Marie Carney. In my eyes, I see my grandmother as the best representation of the word and definition of compassion.

Over the years my grandmother has shown many acts of compassion. She has given up her time so many times to help out others in need. I remember this one time we were exiting the pews in church, and we had noticed that an elderly woman had fallen in the aisle. So like any human would do, everyone went to see what was going on; but of course, no one bothered to help the poor woman get up. But not my grandmother; she steered her way through the crowd and put out her hand to help her up. Then afterwards she made sure that the lady wasn't too seriously

hurt from the fall. Even the little things like that act of kindness can be considered compassionate.

Do you remember all those times that you were sick as a dog and your grandma would make you an oversized bowl of chicken noodle soup? Well, I don't know about you, but my grandma loved creating different flavored soups for me when I was sick. The hilarious thing about it was that I had no idea what was in those soups. I slurped up those soups like there was no tomorrow, and they always made me feel brand new. In addition, not only was I served some delicious soup; but she would also pull out a deck of cards and we would play for hours (of course she would always win). Looking back I realized by having her company on those days that I was sick, she was teaching me compassion.

My grandmother is also the kind of woman who could always tell when something was bothering or upsetting you. I remember one time when I came home from school, and I was really down in the dumps. My grandmother was there because she had to stay with us for a while when she was looking for a new house. So instead of greeting her with a hello, I brushed right past and headed straight for the huge swing in the back yard. Within a few seconds I felt my grandmother's arm's wrap around me, and she told me to tell her about my day. After I told her she said, "Tomorrow is a brighter day!" To have her comfort me like that was truly compassionate.

I have learned so much from this woman, but I would have to say that I have learned about compassion the most from her. So every day I find some way to help someone out or to just comfort a friend in their time of need. To me and to several others my grandmother Marie Carney is a symbol for the word compassion.

Sean Pyle

Third Place, Grade 9

What is compassion? Is it something that is easy to acquire, or do many not show it? Compassion is a very special trait that many people would like to obtain, but few actually possess. When I think about compassion, I think of one person—my mom. She's a woman who can be so tired from work, yet still have the time to help me. She helps everyone with anything they might need, as well as always being there for me and always caring.

Not everyone is about to work a full eight-hour day, come home, cook, clean, and make sure the family is still okay. Not everyone can sit up for hours just to talk; my mom is one person who can. It amazes me how she can go through her own day and then still be there for me, giving me everything and anything I might need. Not everyone can say that they do that every day.

My mom is one of the most caring people I know. She is forever completing tasks or helping someone else. If there is ever a problem, you can count on her to be there. This is pretty much for anyone. It doesn't really matter to her. Whatever is possible for her to do to be helpful, she does whatever she can no matter what.

It takes a very special kind of person to just be there—to honestly and thoroughly care. My mom is there for me through anything. Whether I'm sick, hurt, or just needing someone to talk to, despite many trials and struggles throughout the course of her lifetime, she doesn't stop. Some people would just completely shut down, but not her. She just gets right back up, looking for another way to give me what I want or need.

So if you are still wondering, "What is compassion?" Think of someone who is like this woman—someone who helps everyone, who is extremely caring, and someone who is always there for you no matter what. Think of someone like my mom. You then will see the true definition of compassion.

Marcy Campbell

First Place, Grade 10

Compassion is one thing people look for in other people. The ability to give sympathy for things is a great quality to have. The most compassionate people I know are my parents because they are trustworthy, caring, and forgiving.

My mom is a very compassionate person. She is one of my best friends, and I know I can tell her anything. She would support me through it. My mom is very trustworthy. I don't have any sisters to talk to so I talk to my mother about everything. I know I can trust my mom. My dad is also trustworthy along with caring.

My dad is awesome! He is very caring. Sometimes he's not as sympathetic as my mom, but he's close. He helps me with things around the house. For example, electronics and cooking if I ever need it. He sticks by me in tough situations, and he's got my back at all times. We might fight sometimes but I love them both!

My family consists of my mom, dad, and me. There are many petty things we fight about like who didn't wrap up the cereal or who left the clothes on the line when it rained. As always, I get blamed. Even if I did do it, my parents always seem to forgive me no matter what goes down.

So in conclusion, my parents are the most compassionate people I know because they are trustworthy, caring, and forgiving.

Sarah Gatta

Second Place, Grade 10

Compassion means having sympathy for others, often including a desire to help them. My mom is a very compassionate person. My mom shows compassion every day. My mom advocates for people who are disabled, volunteers all the time, and always puts others before herself.

Everyday my mom faces a new battle that she fights so hard for. She desperately tries to help anyone in need. She advocates for people with disabilities and helps break down barriers that people experience every day. Each day there is a new struggle that she always seems to persevere through to help those in need. She is very compassionate about helping others.

My mom volunteers in a lot of organizations. She volunteers for Girl Scouts and was even a leader for a few years. She also volunteers at church functions. She also visits people who aren't well enough to go to church. She always thinks of others.

When I think about my mom I know she's never thinking about herself. "Who can I help today?" is what she's thinking. She never worries about herself. She never puts herself before anyone in need. She rarely does anything for herself. She puts her needs aside to help others. My mom is always advocating for or helping someone in need.

Overall, her work with the community advocating for people with disabilities, and breaking down barriers in everyday life and institutions definitely qualifies her as a compassionate person. She never puts herself first and always helps anyone in need. My mom exhibits all five core values, but the one that defines my mom would definitely be compassion.

Hilary Shiber

Third Place, Grade 10

There are few people who hold the sort of compassion needed and desperately wanted in our society. My life, fortunately, has been filled with many compassionate individuals. The person who stood out the most, though, was an unlikely character with a propeller topping his Redskins cap. Rick Majors has had an incredible impact on my life in the past few years. He is a constant; a rock in the up-and-down world we inhabit.

Helping out with Vacation Bible School, I met Rick who encouraged me to join the youth group and start attending church. Every Sunday Rick stands by the doors and greets each person with a hug, a handshake, and a kind, honest concerned, "How are you?" He encourages us to also brighten someone else's day with a smile.

During holidays he helps our youth group get involved in charitable activities such as making meals at Thanksgiving, or visiting those in a nursing home. When we don't come to church, he'll give us a call to make sure we're okay. At least once every other day he'll give us a buzz just to check in. Every time he does, it makes me feel warm and cared about.

Giving is sometimes hard to do . . . possessions and time are too important to give up. And yet Rick doesn't seem to think this way. He has truly mastered the art of giving. If someone needs a helping hand, there's Rick giving his time as if he had an unlimited supply. Not many people are dedicated enough to put another's needs before their own. Rick is. He donates food and clothing and when he can't he acts as a passageway for those who can. He is involved in many community service activities. He came up with a list of addresses of soldiers we could send

Christmas care packages to. Rick is one of the most charitable people I know. He truly enjoys giving back to the community.

Every time I see him, with his trademark propeller on top of whatever hat he happens to be wearing, he is sporting a rosy-cheeked, eye-crinkling grin. You could be having the most miserable day of your life with a black cloud hovering ominously above, and, after a few minutes' conversation with Rick, be smiling with the cloud lifted. He makes people feel warm, as though they've been basking in the sun on a favorite beach in perfect weather. Even when Rick shows sympathy he helps one to see the good things in life and the light in everything.

Rick's not perfect. His jokes aren't always up-to-date and he doesn't always remember everything, but his flaws make him the man he is. Remember how the Grinch had a heart two sizes too small? Rick has a heart two sizes too big. I have never known another person who cares about people the way Rick does. He doesn't hold grudges, always sees the good in everyone, and won't hesitate to help. Sometimes I wonder if he'll spontaneously combust due to the compassion inside him. He truly is the most compassionate person I know.

Victoria Hodgson
First Place, Grade 11

Compassion is defined as having sympathy for others, often including the desire to help. This word has a strong meaning and can be used to sum up one person in my life: Mrs. Susan Broome, Smyrna High School's school nurse. She is truly a person who shows every aspect of compassion. She goes above and beyond the tasks that she is faced with everyday, and she does all these things while showing great Smyrna Pride!

Everyday students line up to see the nurse expecting a quick glance and a Tylenol along with a send-off to class. Mrs. Broome goes out of her way to give each student a little Tender Loving Care and motherly kindness, no matter what the situation might be. To me it is like having a second mom at school. Just like my mom, I can go to Mrs. Broome with any problem and know that she will give me advice and help me through the best way that she knows how. She always finds a way to bring a smile to my face—no matter how I'm feeling

Mrs. Broome has a few diabetic students in this school, including myself. I know by personal experience that she goes out of her way to make sure all of her diabetics have checked their blood sugar and have taken insulin. She even takes our lunch menu and creates a carbohydrate counter for us to use before lunch. Mrs. Broome takes time out of her schedule to organize "The Walk for Diabetes" right at our school, along with fundraisers and luncheons. She has helped us raise significant amounts of money for the American Diabetes Association. To all diabetics that is the most compassionate deed anyone could do. By doing all these wonderful things, she gives every diabetic hope that one day a cure will be found.

I could say much more specifying the compassion Mrs. Broome shows to this school, the students, and the teachers. I love knowing she is an adult I can trust and can go to with anything,

and she will see me through. She doesn't realize how much she is appreciated in this school, but without her Smyrna High School wouldn't be the same. In my three years at SHS I've never seen anyone like Mrs. Broome; compassion is what she is all about. What's my new definition of compassion? Simple -- Susan Broome.

Erika Shane

Second Place, Grade 11

Compassion is usually associated with an understanding elder, someone who knows how you feel because of having been there once, or someone who is mature and dependable enough to help. Although I also believe it can be someone younger.

Of course I find my mom, dad, sister, brother, and even my dog compassionate. Nonetheless, when this essay was assigned, a very different person came to mind—a young lady of the mere age of 16—Paige Ferguson.

As a junior at Smyrna High School, Paige is one of the varsity athletes who most underclassmen aspire to be. With nothing to gain, Paige took on a freshman field hockey player who was completely new to the sport. Paige helped develop this naive, timid, little girl into a confident, defensive JV starter. She encouraged her and even stayed after to practice one on one with her. Paige supported her during games and always found time to act as a peer coach. All of this occurred under the teammates' noses, but did not go unrecognized by me. This evolving freshman was my little sister, and I appreciate Paige's unasked for help more than she knows.

Another trait that contributes to Paige's compassionate personality is that she is very considerate and understanding. She always helps with her family. Even though Paige is the youngest of three, she still is very supportive of her two sisters. Paige helps in subtle ways and never asks for anything in return.

What amazes me the most though is that Paige is so determined to help other people that she sacrificed her summer and free time, not to party with other high school students or to sit around the house, but to raise money and train for the San Francisco Marathon. She pushed herself and ran a total of 26.2 miles and raised over \$6,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation. Paige did not do this to get in shape, or because she likes running, but to help others. It's inspiring to know that someone so young could impact so many people's lives.

Paige sympathized with the suffering patients, as well as their families, and felt the need to help them. Being the youngest person ever to run a national marathon, Paige made sure she did all she could to reach out. Her outstanding effort did not go without appreciation.

Paige Ferguson is simply an ordinary girl, but what sets her apart is that she generously extends compassion. Paige might believe it to be an everyday thing, but the people she has touched through her experiences will never forget all she has done. I know I won't.

Jessica Carl

Third Place, Grade 11

What is compassion? To know the true meaning you must know someone who is truly and whole-heartedly compassionate. Such a person has not only sympathy but also love and the desire and overwhelming urge to help others. While I cannot think of one person in my life that is more compassionate than all the others, I can say who the most compassionate people are. They are soldiers who everyday train and die for this country and all the people who live in it. They sometimes must make the ultimate sacrifice to risk or give their life to help other people.

They leave their homes still at the tender age of eighteen when really they are still teenagers not yet men. They leave everyone and everything they know and love to go off and train in the unfamiliar. Then when they are done training, they may get some time off to come home and visit with their loved ones. But that's all it is; a visit or a short break from their new lives.

If they are lucky this is in a time of peace, and they are just sent far away from their families to a distant military fort to be alone with strangers or perhaps new friends. They don't do this with sorrow though, because they are full of compassion for their country, their freedom, and hundreds of thousands of people they don't know. But still they want to help and protect them. They go out of their way to risk everything so we can live free.

However, that is only if they are lucky. But just like now and many times before, our soldiers are sent to distant lands to risk their lives every day, with every breath and beat of their hearts, not knowing if they are ever coming home, or if they will ever see their families again. They get stationed overseas in a land they do not know, to do things that most of us could never dream of doing, and witness things that are even worse. These soldiers are full of compassion and the desire to give—to give a better life to their fellow Americans, to give protection to people, and to help comrades.

To know someone who is a soldier or ever was is to know someone who is full of compassion.

Teal Murphy

First Place, Grade 12

Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to help alleviate the suffering. Sadly, in today's world, this trait is not as common as it should be. However, in the small but growing town of Smyrna there are two somewhat recent additions to the community that I feel show this mannerism at its best.

These compassionate people are pastors at Asbury United Methodist Church—David Humphrey and Carol Terry.

Compassion is a prerequisite for being a pastor, but the compassion that Pastors Dave and Carol showed for my grandmother went way beyond the job description. About four years ago, my grandmother went to the hospital for what was supposed to be a routine procedure. However it did not go as routinely as expected and resulted in her spending over three years in hospitals and nursing homes until her suffering finally ended. Pastors Dave and Carol were both relatively new to the area when my grandmother’s ordeal began. Neither one of them really knew my grandmother that well, yet they both showed much support and compassion through her entire struggle.

When my grandmother’s stay in the hospital began, Pastor Carol made frequent visits to her bedside. For a while she would stop by on an almost daily basis and sing with her, no matter how difficult it was for my grandmother to sing along. It was completely unnecessary for her to do that, but it was one of the few things that brought joy into my grandmother’s life at that time. When my family received a call from the nursing home saying that my grandmother did not have much time left, we rushed over to be with her. We called Pastor Dave to let him know, and he came to be with all of us. It was late at night and he was with his family, but he still came. Another completely unnecessary act, but it shows just how much compassion he truly has.

My family is definitely not the only one to have benefited from the compassion of Pastors Dave and Carol. The two of them visit many other sick people in the community. They spend countless hours of their lives working in the church. They also work on food drives, clothes drives, and other things to help needy people in the town. Both of them are available just about any time when someone needs help. The compassion that these two people have is exemplary.

Many people these days are “too busy” to show compassion for others. Some may do something compassionate occasionally, but those who do so all the time are few and far between. There are two people that I know who show more compassion than anyone else, Pastors David Humphrey and Carol Terry of Asbury United Methodist Church. They have supported my family as well as many others in our times of need. Some may say that they have to be compassionate because of their job. Although compassion is needed, the amount they have goes way beyond the requirements.

Howard Fortner

Second Place, Grade 12

I can still remember her face like it was yesterday; a tall, beautiful, dark-haired girl sitting right next to me helping me when she really didn’t have to. It was about ten years ago when Jessica Martinez and I met. Of course it was through my stepmom, but I still knew her and had a crush on her too. I remember her as the girl on the block who always helped everyone. No matter what it was, she was there to help any creature who was created by God. My story goes as follows.

When I was eight I came to the United States from Puerto Rico with no knowledge of the U.S., the culture, and most importantly the language. It was rough for me to make it because I didn't know English, and it was hard to learn. Throughout this time is when I met Jessica. I didn't see her much because she was always active at the KHC, which was a volunteer program to help kids out who were challenged in any kind of way. I only saw her about twice a month. But then she decided to do something for me, something that one day will get me somewhere, something for which I can't thank her.

Ms. Jessica decided to cut down her time from the KHC to teach me how to speak English. When my parents told me this I figured it would be unfeasible. I thought there was no way I would learn this language they called English. Since I liked Jessica, I decided to attempt it. It all started slowly, reading books, pronouncing words aloud, talking to her, writing, talking to my parents, and even talking to myself. Slowly I began to be acquainted with the English language. It was great—I felt so good about myself.

I would have never thought someone could maintain such a welcoming environment for me, even accomplish to teach me how to read, write, and speak English. To me it was incredible and it still is. My parents thanked her so much after all the time she spent with me, and after six months I went out on my own. I thanked Jessica but I was too young to mean it. Now I wish God hadn't taken her away from me so I could thank her. Jessica Martinez was shot in a drive-by in the Bronx, New York City. When I found out I was devastated. She meant so much to me and a big funeral was planned for her. Everyone at the KHC attended.

I am seventeen years old and to this day I don't suppose I would ever find someone with that type of compassion and empathy towards the world, her people and friends. To this day I thank God for her and to bless her compassionate heart. One day I will face the gates of heaven, and I will get to see her again. Until then, there is no tissue on the planet that can wipe my tears as I engrave these letters on this paper. Thank you, Jessica Martinez.

Alex Avila

Third Place, Grade 12

HONORABLE MENTION

SMYRNA KINDERGARTEN

Jeremiah Crossman

SMYRNA ELEMENTARY

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Kobe Conomon | Kindergarten |
| Azaria Lewis | Kindergarten |
| Paige Kirk | Kindergarten |
| Gabrielle Lane | Kindergarten |
| Devon Brooks | Kindergarten |

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Rachel Seeney | Grade 1 |
| Hayley DiCarlantonio | Grade 1 |
| Anthony Baker | Grade 1 |
| Elias Navarro | Grade 1 |
| Jadyana Fortune | Grade 1 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Samuel Mace | Grade 2 |
| Dezmond Brinson | Grade 2 |
| Cordriana Pierce | Grade 2 |
| Joshua Perez | Grade 2 |
| Rebecca Calderon | Grade 2 |

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Sara Field | Grade 3 |
| Lindsey Asbury | Grade 3 |
| Jimmy Latavitz | Grade 3 |
| Jayzhia Harmon | Grade 3 |
| Jordan Sinclair | Grade 3 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Alison Sayers | Grade 4 |
| Tyana Pierce | Grade 4 |
| Ezra Rudinoff | Grade 4 |
| Carissa DeCarlantonio | Grade 4 |
| Brandon Bishop | Grade 4 |

CLAYTON ELEMENTARY

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Bryce Gordy | Kindergarten |
| Logan Kosky | Kindergarten |
| Olivia Reynolds | Kindergarten |
| Billy Shomper | Kindergarten |
| Alexandra Fleming | Kindergarten |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Rahsaan Matthews | Grade 1 |
| Aurora Siena | Grade 1 |
| Paul Pesce | Grade 1 |
| Annika Burgoyne | Grade 1 |
| Kade Evans | Grade 1 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Jeffery Turner | Grade 2 |
| Jessica Bright | Grade 2 |
| Anthony DiRubbio | Grade 2 |
| Mia Watts-Tucker | Grade 2 |
| Jack Guzman | Grade 2 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Dylan Snow | Grade 3 |
| Elizabeth Smith | Grade 3 |
| Josh Evans | Grade 3 |
| Leah Miller | Grade 3 |
| Michael Chandler | Grade 3 |

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Brianne Crossan | Grade 4 |
| Elijah Scott | Grade 4 |
| Sam Lilly | Grade 4 |
| Jake Culbreth | Grade 4 |
| Jeremy Kloepfer | Grade 4 |

NORTH SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

JBM INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Kaitlyn Pham Kindergarten
Kisoun Misla Kindergarten
Ava Acton Kindergarten
Bre'yon Colander Kindergarten
Sydnei Ruff Kindergarten

Gabby Virdin Grade 5
Emily Sakalauskas Grade 5
Mallory McKee Grade 5
Dominique Walker Grade 5
Shanyn Austin Grade 5

Daphne Hastings Grade 1
Emily Marthaler Grade 1
Sierra DeBenedictis Grade 1
Kassy Morris Grade 1
Destin'ee Skinner Grade 1

Richard Muniz Grade 6
Blaine Dumire Grade 6
Jessica Wattay Grade 6
William Pearce Grade 6
Brandon Taylor Grade 6

Brendon Donaghue Grade 2
Sara Honaker Grade 2
Naomi Bowser Grade 2
Michelle Coleman Grade 2
Theodrick Onley Grade 2

SMYRNA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Jordan Gosnell Grade 3
John Colatranso Grade 3
Alek Collier Grade 3
Alexis Scott Grade 3
Shelby Mast Grade 3

Michael Herbert Grade 7
Michael Cruz Grade 7
Jaquille Pierce Grade 7
Charlie Stibbs Grade 7
Nick Capetola Grade 7

Alyssa Brewer Grade 4
Robbie Morgan Grade 4
Mesha Mosley Grade 4
Chris Baker Grade 4
Rashanda Richardson Grade 4

Logan Brannock Grade 8
Jenna Williams Grade 8
Jeffrey Leager Grade 8
Becca Burns Grade 8
Rachel Cote Grade 8

SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL

Casey Clark Grade 9
Terah Garnett Grade 9
Baryoe McBorrowh Grade 9
Khaleah Williams Grade 9
Paige Wilkerson Grade 9

Amber Caldwell Grade 11
Marsalis Cerdan Grade 11
Caryn Deakyne Grade 11
Mark Garofoli Grade 11
Anthony McCarthy Grade 11

Mary Dimeo Grade 10
James Jones Grade 10
Kristian Lalonde Grade 10
Alexander Rector Grade 10
Kyle Wigmore Grade 10

Sunita Amiri Grade 12
Meghan Boyer Grade 12
Abigail Broome Grade 12
Cara Morris Grade 12
William Ogden Grade 12