



Smyrna School District

Essay Contest

2017

Student Winners

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

I ♥ the Smyrna School District

The sixteenth 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 2017. During “I Love the Smyrna School District” day on February 25, 2017, first, second and third place winners received medals and certificates noting their accomplishments.

The 2017 writing contest focused on the value of *Perseverance*. 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 annual “I Love the Smyrna School District” essay contest, students were asked to write about *Perseverance*, a core district value. Contest rules and writing prompt were disseminated to students (via their teachers) in December 2016. Ryan Buchanan, Supervisor of Instruction, prepared the prompt and assisted with coordinating the essay contest. Jamie Cox, Smyrna School District Curriculum Office secretary, completed the typing and formatting of the publication and assisted with the layout and editing of the publication. June Wicks 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:

Perseverance is the act of trying, failing, learning, and trying again until success is achieved. People that *persevere* complete a challenging task in spite of difficulties they may face. We admire people who *persevere* and never give up.

Write about a person you admire who has the qualities of perseverance. Tell in detail why you chose this particular person, what specific qualities this person possesses, and give specific examples of how he/she demonstrates perseverance.

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 25, 2017).

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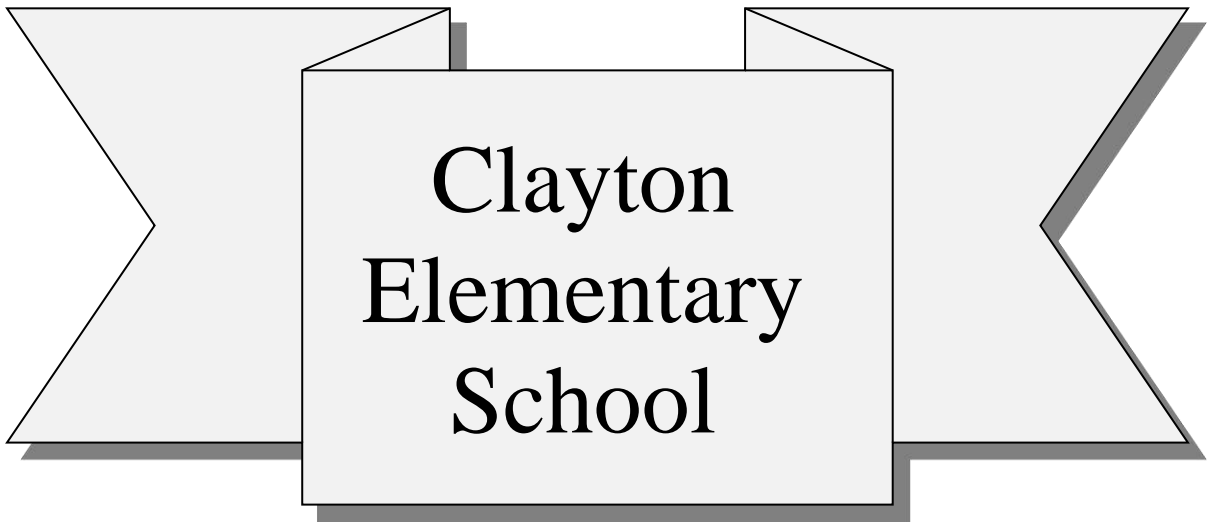
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Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

I had perseverance when I learned to ride my two wheel bike. I had to keep trying when I fell down. Finally I did not have to have training wheels. I can ride by myself!

Paisley Massey
First Place, Kindergarten

I had perseverance when I was on the monkey bars. I had to get up when I fell down and try again. Finally I did all the monkey bars and did not fall.

Cassidy Bowersox
Second Place, Kindergarten

I had perseverance when I learned to ride a bike. First I had training wheels then I learned to balance. I got a big girl bike.

Eden Savin
Third Place, Kindergarten

My grandpa shows perseverance because he keeps trying even when he is sick. My grandpa never gives up. He has cancer. He tries to eat even when it is hard for him. He broke his hip but he still tries to walk. I love my grandpa so much.

Jolene Mikhail
First Place, First Grade

Auntie Jessica is a person who shows perseverance. She is my aunt. She went to law school and worked a full time job. She studied for the bar exam for months. This year she did not pass but next year she will try even harder! I learned a lot from her.

Ryleigh Sheehan
Second Place, First Grade

I think my mom shows perseverance. My mom never gives up. She goes to school and does her homework even when it is hard. She works during the day and goes to school when it is dark. My mommy always tries her best.

Keeley Riendeau
Third Place, First Grade

Do you know who I think shows perseverance? I think my friend Garret. Garret means a lot to me. I picked him because he keeps on trying and trying.

He perseveres and he never gives up when he is writing a story for me. He keeps working on his homework when it is hard. When he gets out in baseball he keeps on smiling. Garret challenges himself by making math problems on a piece of paper. Garret keeps trying his hardest to catch the football. Garret has a good attitude. Garret is important to me because he keeps on trying his hardest. He never has a bad attitude. He is the best friend you could ever have.

Liam Conway
First Place, Second Grade

Wow! Do you want to learn how my dad shows perseverance? I picked my dad because he shows a lot of perseverance. He always tries his best.

My dad keeps trying to get better at air brushing. He got it for Christmas from my grandma. He has a good attitude when he does it. My dad never gives up. He just keeps on trying.

He challenges himself a lot. My dad worked on it for about two days. He stuck to it.

My dad endured. He tried to get better at it. He got better and better and made me and my brother a picture.

The way I feel about my dad is a lot of things. He is great, amazing, awesome, and outstanding.

I picked him because he is someone I love. I also did because he shows 100% of perseverance. He is a great person to pick. He made something special for my mom.

Kaci Lloyd
Second Place, Second Grade

Do you show perseverance? Do you know what perseverance means? Well, perseverance means working hard and never giving up till the goal is reached. How do you show perseverance? My mom shows perseverance by never giving up on a patient who might have heart failure, and if a patient does have failure they have to work really hard to try to save the patient's life. I hope you learned a lot about perseverance.

Addison Glass
Third Place, Second Grade

Have you ever heard of the word perseverance? Do you know what it means? I know what it means. Perseverance means to never give up and to keep moving on. Here are three people that stand out to me when I think of the word perseverance. Did you know people said Walt Disney lacked imagination? Wow! How about Steve Jobs? He got fired from the company he started. Crazy, right? Do you know Michael Jordan? Well guess what he got cut from his high school basketball team. All these people have one thing in common. They never gave up and reached their goal. They showed perseverance.

It is important to show perseverance outside of school because if you don't you won't succeed and meet your goals. Here is a way I showed perseverance outside of school. At first I was really bad at cheerleading. I could not do a backbend. I kept trying, asked for help, and practiced at the park. Now I am much better with my backbend. I am determined to show perseverance and get better. I am hoping if I keep it up I will have a perfect backbend.

Don't forget to show perseverance in school too! Here are a few ways I show perseverance. I am not that good at rounding but I keep trying and asked my teacher. Sometimes I get words wrong on my spelling tests so I study my words. I also worked on my spelling packet and do a practice spelling test. I never give up.

Do you how perseverance? You should not give up when something gets hard. It is important to be perseverant in all aspects of your life because if you don't you will never succeed and meet your goals. Do you choose to be perseverant?

Aubrey Coker
First Place, Third Grade

Perseverance means to never give up. When you show perseverance you just keep trying. Things may get hard, and you might get frustrated but you just keep moving forward.

One example of someone who showed perseverance is Thomas Edison. Did you know that he failed more than 10,000 times before he created the light bulb? He could have given up, but he persisted and over time he accomplished his goal. Mr. Edison and his light bulb is a great example of perseverance.

A time in my life that I showed giving up was not an option was when I learned how to ride my bike without training wheels. At first I felt very scared, because I didn't want to get hurt. I decided to practice in the grass before I learned in the street. That was a good choice because I fell off multiple times. Finally I got the courage to take it to the street. It was a success. I am so glad I never gave up. Riding bikes is fun!

This year at school we have learned how to play the recorder. Playing the recorder is not easy. The first note we learned to play was B. I sounded horrible. Day after day I got better and better by practicing. I could have given up, but I did not. Because I kept working on it the third grade concert sounded awesome. I can't wait to learn more songs.

It is important to be perseverant in everything you do because that's how you accomplish dreams. My mom always tells me "No one becomes a champion by giving up." It's okay to fail, but it's not okay to quit trying.

Nyla Drobinski
Second Place, Third Grade

Don't fear perseverance is here! Perseverance can change your life. Perseverance means don't stop believing. An example of a person who has shown perseverance is Jackie Robinson. He was the first black person to play baseball. He never gave up even when people were being mean to him and saying mean things to him. The crowd threw things at him and they were being mean just because he was different. Because of Jackie Robinson, I know if you stop believing you will never achieve your dreams!

A time in my life I had to show perseverance is when I learned how to ride my electric scooter. When I first tried I wasn't very good, but I didn't give up. So I kept practicing and I got a lot better. Now I can ride it very fast and do tricks. All because I never gave up!

At school I never quit at kickball. When I played kickball for the first time it was hard, and I didn't know how to play. It was hard to kick and throw the ball. When it was in the air I couldn't catch it. When I went home I practiced catching and kicking the ball. Every week I got better and better. Now I can catch and kick very well because I never gave up.

Although I'm perseverant in all aspects of my life I feel like I can try harder at the softball field. I can improve on this by practicing at home and by focusing on the ball and when it's coming. Now I'm a lot better because I never gave up and I give it my all.

It is important to be perseverant in all aspects of your life because when you do the right thing and follow your dreams, you will live a good life. You should always accept challenges, they will make you stronger.

Kylie VanHorn
Third Place, Third Grade

The person in my life that I think shows perseverance is my Dad. Over the years he has done many things to work hard toward his goal of being a police officer. My dad first became a correctional officer and worked at a prison. Next, he joined the Air Force and got military training. After all of that, he worked on getting his college degree in organizational management. All of these things helped him to become a good police officer.

When my dad first started being a corrections officer, he worked at a prison in Wilmington. There he had to learn all the laws in the prison and what time everything happened. He also got to know the community and the people he worked with. He learned a lot and did his job every day. My dad always worked hard at everything he did even though he did not know everything. My dad always made sure that he was doing his best.

While he was working with the Department of Corrections, he also worked in the military. He worked in the Air Force and also worked on a military base. We had the chance to visit him while he was in training. He went to Texas for his training and was there for six months. The military helped him get prepared for his job as a police officer. While he was there he learned tactical moves. My dad worked really hard because he had to do a lot of physical training. One time, he got yelled at and had to carry a brick all week because he did not bring a piece of equipment with him to class.

The last thing that my dad did to prepare himself to be a police officer was to finish up school and get his college degree. When he started school, he did not know what he would get his degree in. He finally decided to get a degree for something that could help him with his current job as a police officer. My dad is currently finishing up his Organizational Management degree in college. He is taking many classes to learn about organizations and how people work together. My dad started taking college courses three years ago. He went to school while he was working full time. After all the classes he has taken, my dad has six more months until he gets his final college degree. All of his hard work in school will pay off.

Even though it has taken many years for my dad to be a police officer, he has learned many valuable things in his life. From working in the military to getting his college degree he has worked very hard to accomplish his goal. My dad will always work hard for whatever he does he will always do his best and never give up no matter what he does in life. My dad has inspired me to always do my best and never give up.

Isabella Buscemi
First Place, Fourth Grade

The person I picked to be the person I write about is my Sensei Steele. He shows a lot of perseverance. In the dojo he is very respectful. He also will never give up.

My sensei always works hard to get things done. Like when he has to get things set up and then take over the class. He also gets things done when he has to make our attendance cards and our green sheets for game day. He always works hard to teach us.

My sensei will never give up no matter what. He also always does the right thing. He always gets our stripes and belts on time. And never gives up helping us with our Kata.

Sensei Steele is a great role model. He always tells the truth. He is a great role model because we can always look up to him. He also tells the truth because we are his friends.

He always has fun with us. We got green sheets of paper with a Bushido code we have to earn points for following the code. If we earn 100x our age of points we can come to game day. At game day we play fun games like dodgeball, jump the river, jump the stick, laser light dodgeball, white-out snowball fight, jump the snake, jump rope, and animal race. I love how we have fun with my Sensei Steele.

I hope you have seen how my Sensei Steele shows perseverance. He is so inspiring to me and my dojo friends. We all like him and look up to him. He is an amazing sensei and tries very hard. We all at the dojo appreciate my Sensei Steele.

Emily Walls
Second Place, Fourth Grade

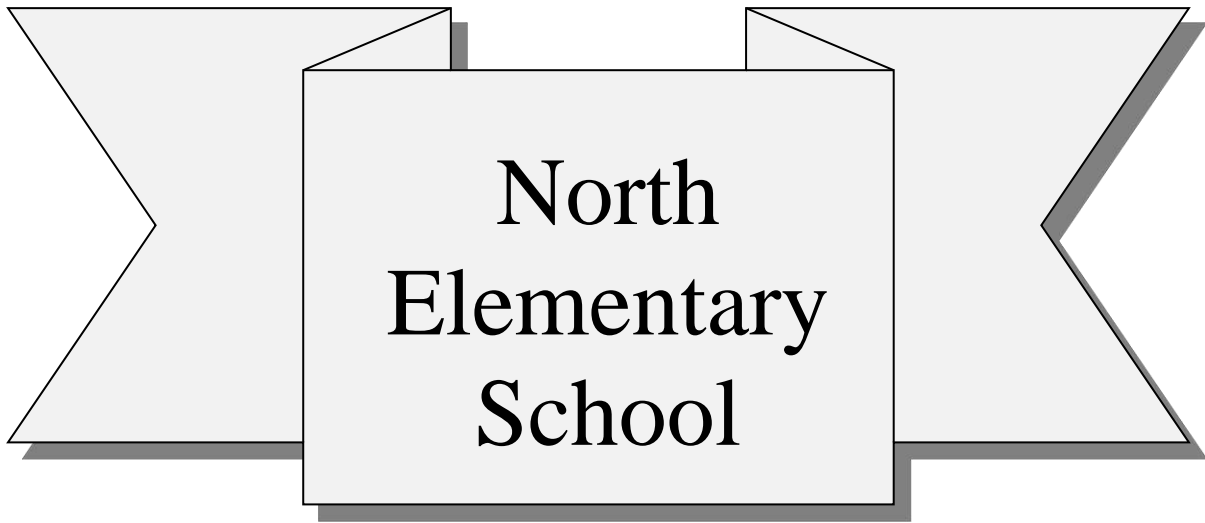
Do you want to know about my dad? My dad shows perseverance every day. Perseverance is when someone never gives up, and does the right thing. They also are role models for other people. He does everything for other people. My dad is kind, loving, and caring.

My dad shows perseverance because he has MS. MS is a disease that affects the nerves in your body and makes your muscles tired. He does not let that stop him. He coaches my sister and my softball team. He also brings us to volleyball.

My dad is always on time. He is never late. He is responsible all the time. He shows perseverance because he still exercises and goes to the gym every day. He also goes on walks with my dog.

I am proud to say that he is my dad, because he inspires me and other people too. He shows perseverance to everyone. Nothing can stop him. I love my dad!

Brooke Berge
Third Place, Fourth Grade



North
Elementary
School

Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

Perseverance means you don't stop. I will persevere. I keep trying to cook noodles.

Kaci Burnette
First Place, Kindergarten

I persevered when I tried to ride a bike, but it was hard.

Mariah Nelson
Second Place, Kindergarten

I persevered when I rode my bike without training wheels.

Veda Ipnar
Third Place, Kindergarten

Do you know that my dad is so cool? He persevered when he learned how to fix people. So now he knows how to fix people. He has to look on the computer a lot to study. Perseverance means to never give up. My dad has worked so hard to be an EMT. He never gave up and he stuck to it. It was a challenge for him, but he tried so hard.

Alexandra Lineberry
First Place, First Grade

My brother's name is Kyle. He shows perseverance to cook. He tried to cook. He did it with mommy. He cooked a pie! He showed perseverance because he kept trying to cook a pie! Kyle is my twin.

Kendyl Jones
Second Place, First Grade

What does perseverance mean? Today, I learned what it means to persevere. It means to keep trying. My mom works to pay the bills and give me and my sister what we need. She never gives up. I love my mom!

Devin Washington
Third Place, First Grade

Do you know someone who works and never gives up? The person I chose is Maliah. Maliah is special to me because she is my best friend. We are in the same class and we are cousins. She and I are in Mr. Craig's class. He's nice. Maliah shows perseverance when Mr. Craig is talking to her. She is always listening to the teacher. Whenever something is hard, she never gives up! Even when she gets the answers wrong, she never gives up. She always tries her best.

Amia King
First Place, Second Grade

Perseverance is somebody who never gives up. Did you know how Danette has perseverance? She works hard at everything she does at school.

Danette works hard at school. Every day, Danette gets all her work done and turned in, even if it is tough. She is not disrespectful to anybody. She is a good friend to me and helped me when I fell.

Danette is very smart and never gives up, even when something is really hard. She says she likes school.

Hope DiMaio
Second Place, Second Grade

I am writing about Mrs. Thomas. She is very nice. She's been there for Marissa. For example, Marissa fractured her foot or when Savannah gets hurt, Mrs. Thomas and I are there for her. An example for me—when I fell or got hurt, Mrs. Thomas was there with a hug when I needed one. She is fantastic! She has been a substitute for Mrs. Vance when she had surgery on her foot.

Mrs. Thomas also has perseverance. She's confident. Also, when the class is very loud, she is still very nice. I love Mrs. Thomas.

Gracelynn Scotton
Third Place, Second Grade

When you're on the bus, at school, at home, or even in the shower, do you have a dictionary? I hope if you had a dictionary in the shower you looked at page 314 in the Webster Dictionary before getting it wet. Why so specific? Because the word persevere is on that page. It means to never give up even in tough times. I have done a lot of essays about character traits and I think this is my favorite. It's about my little brother, Joshua.

Joshua Charles was born on December 14, 2013. He is three years old and is very smart. But he didn't start that way. Just like all of us, we start out as little babies who don't know anyone or

anything. Babies have to learn how to walk and talk and lots of other things in life. But it's how Josh learned. It's how he learned that made him extraordinary. Josh started walking at eight months old and knows almost every song we ever sang to him. Of course just to hit the spot, Josh watches what we watch. There was this one show we started watching and to our surprise, we found Josh sitting on the couch, the remote in his hand, watching the show! He acts like a parrot, repeating everything we say.

The greatest persevering Josh has ever done was probably with his alphabet. At first, we tried to say the alphabet to him but what he said was always "DA DA DA" followed by constant hitting. Plan one had failed but we were not ready to give up. Hey, you could say we persevered too! Plan two was getting foam letters. We got Josh a backpack including foam letters, number cards, safety scissors, kids glue, a calendar, and a notebook. We dumped the foam letters out of the bag and arranged them in alphabetical order. We did that for many days until one day, we saw him on the floor saying the alphabet in the correct order. That was a day I can't forget.

Josh now knows his shapes, colors, phonics, knows how to count up to thirty, and knows how to count up to fifteen in French. The way he learned his alphabet is the way we should persevere. If a baby can do it, we can do it too. You're welcome for telling you the meaning of the word persevere without getting your dictionary wet.

Gabriella Charles
First Place, Third Grade

What is Perseverance? Perseverance is when you stick to something and keep on trying and work hard even when it is not easy. Do you have anyone in your life that shows perseverance? You know who I think shows perseverance? My mom! She showed perseverance when the babies were born and she had to find a job. She had to watch my brother and sister while looking for a job. She had to take interviews and tests. It was hard for her but she kept on trying and what do you think happened? That's right, she got a job!

Do you know, when there is food on our table, who had to cook it? My mom! She has to cook dinner for me, my dad, my brother and sister and herself. That's a lot of people to cook for and she has to do it all by herself. She has to pick out every meal and go shopping for it. Did you know when you are having fun on the weekends she is at the store buying groceries? That's not fun is it? She has to go to work every day very early. When she gets home then she has to cook. It is not easy because she has to do it with one hand while she holds my brother and sister in the other.

I chose my mom for this essay because she shows so much perseverance every day that I can't keep up with her. So to sum it all up, I think that when you have perseverance you show courage and a positive attitude. Everybody should have that. I know my mom does.

Payton Navarette
Second Place, Third Grade

Do you know someone who perseveres? I do. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK Jr.) persevered to make the black and white friends. This is what he did to persevere. He made the black and white friends, freedom of speech, and stopped fighting when the bomb got in his house.

Now I will be talking about what it was like before Martin Luther King Jr. did anything. The bus was a mess. The blacks had to sit in the rear of the bus and if there were no more spots, the blacks had to give them their seats. Some of the water fountains had white only and black only signs. Blacks could only drink water from the ones that said black. Some of the restaurants had white and black only signs too. White and black had to eat different food.

Now I will be talking about how MLK Jr. persevered. MLK Jr. was a kid too so we can too. MLK Jr. made the black and white friends. It took a lot of time to do it. MLK Jr. had to stop his family from fighting when the bomb got in his house. Then some people started to like him. He then led a march and a lot of people came.

It was sad when he passed away. He died in a hotel called "Lorraine Motel." MLK Jr. got killed by a white man that did not like what he was doing. MLK Jr. died in April, 1963.

So this is how he persevered in his life. MLK Jr. was a kid and we are too so we can make a change also. Now you know how Martin Luther King Jr. persevered in his life.

Reed Schultz
Third Place, Third Grade

Have you ever wondered what does the word perseverance mean? It means not giving up and trying no matter how hard it is. Do you know someone who shows perseverance like dad, mom, coach, or teacher? Well, I know someone—his name is Adam McCarthy (or my dad). These are three topics with lots of examples of how my dad shows perseverance.

My dad's mom, or my grandma, was sick with cancer. My dad had to work hard and not give up. He was the one who took her to the doctor. Sometimes she could not remember his name, so he had to repeat his name a lot and he never gave up. Also, he had to not give up on thinking she was OK. That is how my dad persevered with his mom.

My dad had to work really hard in school because he was studying to be a teacher. He got frustrated because it was hard. One reason it was hard is he had other jobs for thirteen years. He had to work harder each year. But he persevered and became a teacher in 2004.

My dad had to go to three colleges in four years. Sometimes when he transferred colleges, all his credits would not transfer so he had to work harder to make up work. He did not have a car so he had to find some way to get to school but he did not give up. Also, he could not afford college, so he had to go to free colleges for two years and he had to work hard to get into a better college. Therefore, my dad had to do extra stuff to graduate on time. He worked hard and did not give up.

This is how my dad shows perseverance. He never gave up in college, not in school, and not with his mom. My dad shows lots of perseverance.

Kara McCarthy
First Place, Fourth Grade

“There will be OBSTACLES. There will be DOUBTERS. There will be MISTAKES. But with hard work, there are no limits.” – Michael Phelps

The feeling in your heart that pushes you forward; the determination that keeps you going is called perseverance.

Even though my great-grandmother has diabetes and breathing problems, she does not give up. She is strong and perseveres. She has trouble getting around and is even a little scared to go places outside of her apartment. But that doesn't stop my great-grandmother. She leaves her apartment and takes walks with her friends.

My great-grandmother also has to take medicine every day to stay fit. She listens to her doctors and does what they tell her to do. If she wouldn't take her medicine every day and persevere, she would not be healthy and would be very sick.

My great-grandmother fights through her medical problems and perseveres every day. She takes notice of what she eats and has a special diet to make sure she stays healthy and fit.

This shows how a person in my life demonstrates perseverance.

Lilly Altenkirch
Second Place, Fourth Grade

The person who shows perseverance the most in my life is my mom. The reason why I chose my mom is because, though she has six children, she makes sure that each one of us feels loved, special, and empowered. She shows us how to be better people by being nice to others and helping everyone she can, even though she is doing without so much.

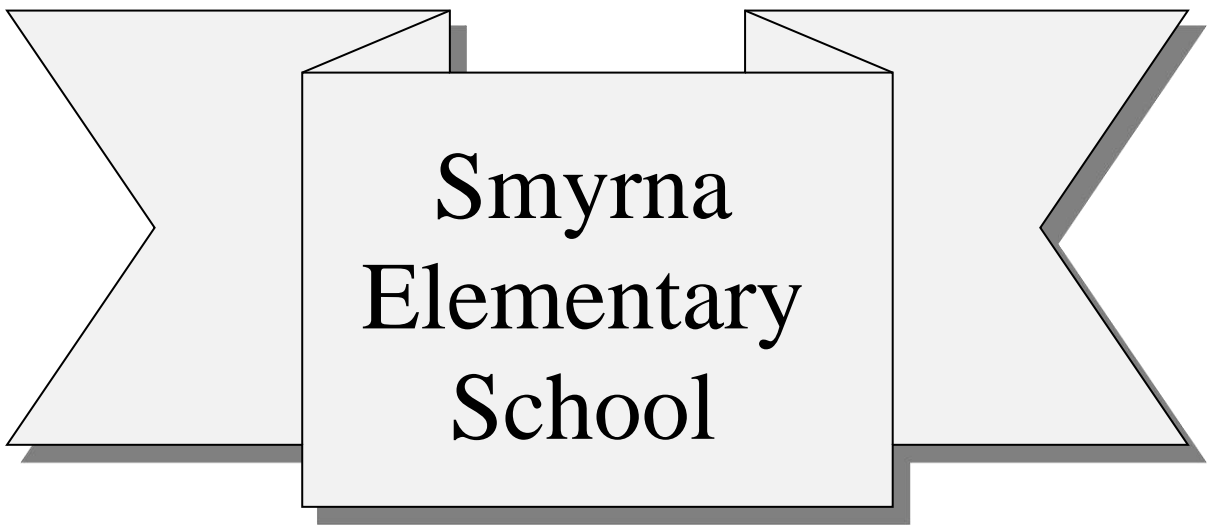
My mom cooks homemade meals for us because she wants us to eat healthy. She even learned how to make pizza, French fries and the best grilled cheese sandwiches. Everyone loves mom's mac and cheese so they try to make it, but fail. So I might not fail at mom's homemade mac and cheese.

My mom used to flip houses so she could stay home with her six children. She learned how to put up walls, install insulation, and to paint walls without dripping. She also designed houses too. My mom did lots of things until she had surgery because of a car accident.

Right now my mom is still hurt but she still has hope that one day she can do the things she used to do. Also, my mom has written a few books and has one published. She is now working on about five more books when she has the time. But, my mom has been really busy taking care of her family.

My mom and I have lots of plans for the future including book tours and flipping more houses. She taught me, things may be hard now, but that doesn't mean it will be hard forever. My mom believes that the best is yet to be.

Amelia Alley
Third Place, Fourth Grade



Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

I kept trying to roller skate at my friend's house. I kept trying. I fell and helped me up and I almost did it. I persevered.

Marissa Martin
First Place, Kindergarten

Perseverance means never giving up! I cannot play basketball yet. I will show perseverance by practicing every day.

Amber Galloway
Second Place, Kindergarten

Perseverance is doing my best. I will never stop trying to do gymnastics. I want to sit on the bar.

Natalie Ballard
Third Place, Kindergarten

I'm going to tell you about perseverance. I hope you like it. In the story the fox didn't show perseverance. He gave up and he really didn't try and he lied and said the grapes were sour. Well I was on my bike and I fell but I got back up. Because without perseverance you just fall off your bike and never get back up or say I'm never going to do this. You just have to believe in yourself. You have to never give up. That is what perseverance is all about.

Brazil Burton
First Place, First Grade

Do you know someone who persevered? I do. In the story "Snowflake Bentley," Bentley persevered. He tried to get a good picture of a snowflake. I show perseverance by climbing the rope at Stick It. I climb and climb and climb. I tried so hard and one time I climbed to the top! Persevering is important because if you did not keep on trying you won't get it right.

Alaina Tracy
Second Place, First Grade

I do perseverance. Do you know perseverance? Perseverance is trying over and over and never stopping. In the story, "Fox and Grapes," Fox didn't show perseverance. He tried one time to get the grapes on the tree. Then he said, "They're sour anyway." Then he ran away. In my life, my Mom showed perseverance by never giving up. She ran a 5K and never stopped running. I think perseverance is important, because it might be something like you never giving up or doing something nice. You can do perseverance all the time.

Molly Marinelli
Third Place, First Grade

Have you ever shown perseverance? I have! Let me tell you how. My popye showed perseverance when he had a stroke. He had to go to the hospital. We were crying, me and my family. It was hard to know what he needs. He had to practice on a board to do words. He got some words right. My mom was so amazed. We had to go to speech. He practiced his words in the car. After speech we watched TV in the TV room in his house. He was doing his words. He said Tony, Megan, no, stop, and bad words. He saw my dad come to popyes house. The dog was jumping he said to stop and no. I said good job popye! I would read books to him. He liked it. Thank you for listening to me.

Layla Strzalkowski
First Place, Second Grade

Let me introduce you to someone who shows perseverance. I'm going to tell you about a person who does show perseverance by giving effort. My cheer classmate, Olivia, shows perseverance. First, Olivia learned to do a walkover at Stick It! Gymnastics and she tried a lot. When Olivia fails she stops for a little bit and takes a deep breath and tries again.

Now you know someone who shows perseverance. I told you how Olivia shows perseverance when she tried different things. Have you shown perseverance?

Amelia Coker
Second Place, Second Grade

This is what I think perseverance is. You should persevere when things are hard, and you shouldn't give up. Keep trying when you want to give up. Perseverance is never giving up.

I choose my mom because she shows perseverance every day. She does it at her work, at home, and everywhere. She even persevered when she was a kid.

One time she persevered when she went swimming. It was really hard to dive and cannon ball into the pool. Also when she cooks. She's a really good cook, but me and my brother don't usually like it.

She also persevered at riding her bike. She fell off a lot. When she edits her papers because she makes a mistake a lot of times and wants to give up. She perseveres!

My mom persevered a lot of times. She never gave up. That is why I chose my mom.

Caroline Maher
Third Place, Second Grade

The people who show the most perseverance that I know of are doctors. They are very special to me because of that. Perseverance means someone never gives up. Here are some ways they show perseverance.

One way they show perseverance is when they try finding cures for people. They just never give up. Think about it like this. When you visit the doctors and you are sick. They try to find a cure for your sickness. They try their best. If it does not work try again and never give up.

Here is another way how they show perseverance. When something does not work they never give up. Even if they tried a lot of times or if they don't want to.

The last way is when somebody is sad. The doctors try to cheer people up by making people think about the bright side. Matter what they never give up and keep on trying.

Doctors persevere when their job is hard and icky. But they don't give up and keep on going. I feel comfortable when they are around me. And that is why I think they persevere.

Addison Borrelli
First Place, Third Grade

I would like to introduce Dalton (brother). My brother perseveres when doing tae kwon do. Tae kwon do is very challenging especially when you get around this level rank.

He perseveres in sparing matches (fighting). The hard thing is that sparing includes you have to have stamina and you really want to make sure your equipment is on right or it's going to hurt. When it is getting really hard he pushes to his full potential.

He perseveres even more and more with tae kwon do, like for another example testing to rank higher in belt level. Performing or demonstrating in front of an audience when he is messing up.

Board breaking is hard when you mess up, so it takes perseverance too. My brother (Dalton) really has perseverance.

My intelligent brother (Dalton) perseveres when building with Legos. Recently we built a boardwalk with jet skis that shoot out of a corner. We kept trying and finally got it. He thought of a lot of solutions. My brother (Dalton) perseveres a lot.

We persevere when together when building a spaceship from scrap. He persevered when his Mega Super Buster failed and he'd try again until it worked. He perseveres when finding Lego pieces for building kits like when we worked together to build a maze. It is really hard. So what I'm trying to say is my brother (Dalton) really perseveres.

Harrison White
Second Place, Third Grade

Hello! Today I am going to tell you about my little sister, Annie, who is five years old, and how she shows perseverance. Perseverance is when you get something wrong, but you keep on trying and trying, and you never give up until you finally get it right. Annie is struggling with plenty of things in her life, but there is something that she seems to be struggling with the most. That thing is reading. Annie is really struggling on learning how to read. That is going to be my topic for today. I am going to talk about how Annie shows perseverance when she is working on learning how to read.

Annie does not know how to spell or pronounce many words. When she first started reading small and simple books her small knowledge of words and their pronunciation caused her to read the majority of words in the book wrong. When she tried to pronounce a word she did not know she usually pronounced a word that does not even exist.

My mom makes me practice Annie's spelling words with her. When I am practicing Annie's spelling words with her, and I tell her the words to spell, and she spelled them she spelled the majority of her spelling words wrong. When I told her she got some of her spelling words wrong she gets really frustrated.

I practiced reading with Annie by reading small and simple books with her. She got better and better with reading. She is now pretty good at reading small and simple books because of her hard work and practice.

My sister, Annie, is still struggling but is getting pretty good at reading. How do you show perseverance?

Hadassah Pierre-Louis
Third Place, Third Grade

Have you met someone that makes you feel so good? Someone that makes you feel like a cloud was blocking the sun, he or she always knows how to make it shine again? My heart is gleaming like a star when Mrs. Hurlock makes me and my classmates laugh. It feels like I'm on top of the world. Mrs. Hurlock is the world of my heart.

My teacher is one of the most hard-working people in the world (in my opinion, of course). I look at her, and I know she works hard. She works hard to make us educational. If I feel sad, Mrs. Hurlock is going to try her hardest him or her smile. If my class doesn't understand something, then Mrs. Hurlock will teach us another way for us to understand.

Mrs. Hurlock's mother got eight strokes, and that was when Mrs. Hurlock was little, and she still stood up strong. I mean, if I was Mrs. Hurlock, I would cry a river. If brave little Hurlock didn't stay strong, Mrs. Hurlock probably won't be here. Mrs. Hurlock got bullied when she was little, and she still stood up strong. You have to admit, she had a rough life. Look at Mrs. Hurlock right now! She grew up to have a fine life. She has a different life than people, when she comes home (as a kid) she barely had food! Poor little Hurlock.

She never gave up on teaching her mother words. When her mother gets a stroke, she forgets to say things. Maybe that's why she wanted to be a teacher! Little Hurlock and her siblings taught her over and over again. If my class needed help with something, like a math problem or question, Mrs. Hurlock jumps into action! Mrs. Hurlock teaches us almost a thousand different ways (not really) for us to learn. Mrs. Hurlock is really successful. She started from a little seed in the dirt and now she is a beautiful flower teaching us seeds how to grow.

I know Mrs. Hurlock isn't the best teacher/person in the world, but she works hard, she is a special type of flower, and never gives up. Maybe I'll grow into a different type of flower. Just remember. "The best things in life are worth fighting for."

Sherry Lin
First Place, Fourth Grade

Do you know what perseverance is? I sure do and if there is one person who is special to me and shows perseverance it's my little sister Molly. To me perseverance means having a growth mindset, never giving up, asking for help, doing things till your proud of them, and when I think of those four things I think of Molly.

Molly shows perseverance in trying to become a better reader. When she has trouble with a word in her book she would ask for help or try to sound it out as best as she could. Molly also reads the book she's reading 4-5 times to get to the point where she knows the words instantly. One other reason Molly shows perseverance is that she tries to extend her knowledge and learn things to the best of her ability. Molly perseveres at math facts too. She is constantly practicing math on a sheet of paper.

Overall my sister is the perfect example of a person who shows perseverance. She has a growth mindset, never gives up, and asks for help.

Mason Schulenburg
Second Place, Fourth Grade

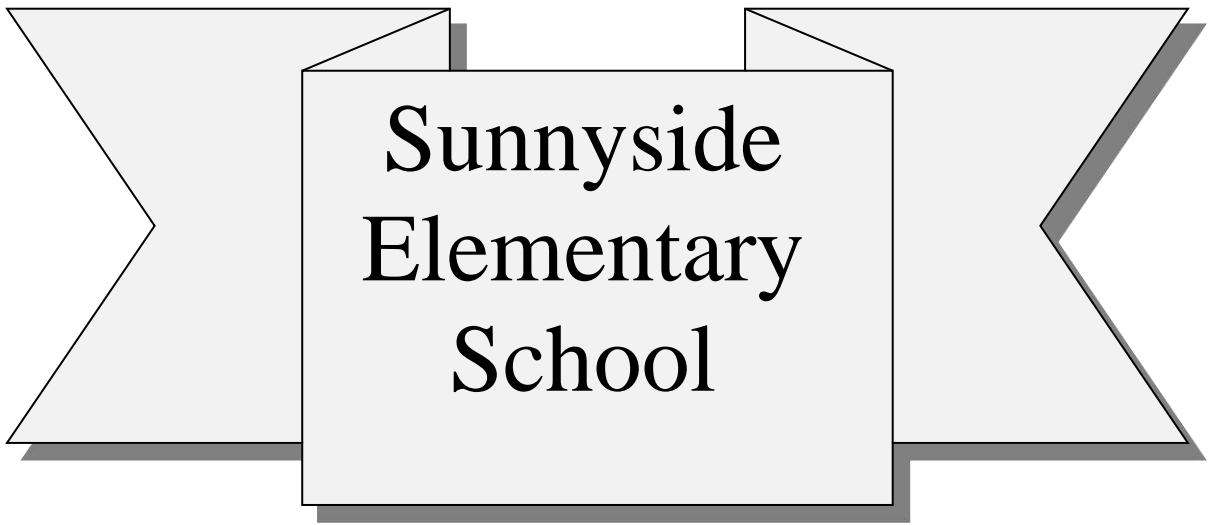
Do you know what perseverance is? Well in a short way it means to never give up. Wanna know more? Well we will talk about a person who I know perseveres every day. My hard working mom mom who always chases her dreams no matter what.

Why my mom mom is special, she stopped taking nursing classes to take care of me. Not a lot of people would quit their classes to take care of their granddaughter. She never has told a lie in her life. She never would say she passed a class just to get in a LPN program. She is the most honest person you'll ever meet. The most important thing is she never ever gives up! This is why I chose her to write about her for the theme of perseverance.

This is how my mom mom has persevered at and continues to persevere at. When she quit nursing classes again to take care of me she tried to find a care taker for me that would work with her hours so she could go back to classes and she never stopped trying. She worked multiple jobs so she could get into a program that had a daycare program but they denied her request she still continued for many years. Even when she had got into nursing again it had been easier because I was living with my dad. But she had broken her leg which had made it harder to get to classes but she still found a way to make everything work out for her and she almost passed but something had come up and she was again had to quit but no matter what she has never given up.

Now I think we all can agree that my mom mom has had to persevere so many times in her life. But no matter what she has always succeeded in perseverance even when it was tough. She's never failed anyone in persevering in her dreams that is why I chose my mom mom for my perseverance writing piece.

Alyssa Stronach
Third Place, Fourth Grade



Grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and 4

I did not speak English. But I did not give up.

Maja Opechowska
First Place, Kindergarten

Mable and I tried to build a castle and we did not give up.

Sydney Bianco
Second Place, Kindergarten

I try to swim at the YMCA. I never gave up.

Sophie Wescott
Third Place, Kindergarten

I believe Michael Jordan shows perseverance. One reason is he wanted to play basketball but he didn't make the team at first. Another reason is he practiced then he got better. Lastly, he became a pro. Who do you know who shows perseverance?

Micah Larson
First Place, First Grade

Perseverance means never give up. My sister Cailyn shows perseverance. She and I were playing Pokémon. I beat her 10 times. She came up with a strategy and beat me!

Wentzel Briar
Second Place, First Grade

Perseverance means never give up. My brother Quamere shows perseverance. He had hard homework he had to return back by tomorrow and he got an answer wrong. He kept trying and when he turned it in the next day, he got all his work right!

Nyema Redic
Third Place, First Grade

Have you ever persevered? I have. Perseverance is when you try again and keep trying until you do it. You probably think perseverance is hard, it is. Sometimes you want to give up. This is my story. It was my first day of Girl Scouts, I was very shy. I thought I'd never fit in. I had no friends at the meeting. I did not want to talk. At the next meeting I was even shyer then before. A few days later we made birds out of paper towel rolls, pipe cleaners and feathers. They even let me put hair out of soft feathers. They laugh at me because I did it wrong. The next day I did not want to come. I felt scared that they were going to laugh at me more and more. At the meeting I asked for help they said, "Yes!" So they help me but I still did it wrong. They laugh at me more; I cried my mom was sad. No matter what I do I couldn't seem to get it right. The next meeting they did not laugh they whispered about me. Felt sad inside. The leader talked about cookie business I did not want to taste any. Even though I did not want to come to any more meetings I persevered and went. We read a Girl Scout book. I'm a very good reader. When the other girls heard they were amazed. They said nice words about me. I went up to them and asked if they would be my friend. And guess what they said, "Yes!" Having perseverance is very hard work. You can get very, very mad you want to throw it in the trash. All though you should try, try again. You will feel very amazed when you reach your goal. You will be very proud of yourself.

Sydney Anton
First Place, Second Grade

Do you know what perseverance is? Hold on to your hat because I'm going to tell you. Once I ran a 5K. A 5K is when you run 3.5 miles. That's a long way. Seven people in my family wanted to run the 5K to support people with cancer. We have only run a mud run before but not a 5K. We knew we would have to practice and a lot of practice we did. Every day I ran up and down my driveway. I didn't always like it. Some days I wanted to give up because my legs felt like dying. I kept on practicing. When it was raining I still ran. When it was hot I still ran. When it was cold I still ran. Finally the day came. I was nervous. What would happen if I didn't make it? People were passing me but I didn't give up. I had to stay with my family. I was breathing hard and almost passed out. But guess what? I made it. I ran the 5K in 3 minutes and 54 seconds. Perseverance is hard work. Never give up when it's important. When you reach your goal you will feel very excited.

Makenna Wisk
Second Place, Second Grade

Once upon a time there was a girl who persevered. Her name was Kaitlyn and that girl is me! Here's my story of perseverance. Before I start can you explain what perseverance is? Perseverance is trying again and again and never giving up. This is how I persevered. Ok we can start the story let's go! Once when I was two or three years old I said I wanted to play soccer one day. I went to practice. At first I was no good and sometimes I fell on my face. The next year I tried again and again and I got better and better at soccer. One day in June I was

practicing soccer and my coach said, “You are doing very good at kicking the ball.” That made me feel great. Day by day I got better because I kept practicing. As the year went by I got better like my coach had said. When I had try-outs I could not believe I have made the team. Some of my friends were watching me and some were playing on the field with me. That year I was very happy that I made the team for real. This is how I persevered and how I got to be a soccer player. I love soccer and I will keep working hard to get better. It was all of my friends and coach and my family! Having perseverance is hard work but you should never give up. When you reach your goal it feels like Christmas morning.

Kaitlyn Gines
Third Place, Second Grade

“You are only as strong as you allow yourself to be; never get discouraged, never give up because consistency and dedication is the key to success” is a famous quote. Out of everyone I know, I think my grandmother is the best example of perseverance. When I say perseverance I mean that my grandmother works hard, never gives up, and stays focused on achieving goals. The three times my grandmother has demonstrated the core value of perseverance are when she broke her leg in 2014, this past December she broke the same leg again, and on top of all this she suffers from type 1 diabetes. Despite all of these setbacks, my grandmother continues to overcome obstacles that get in her way.

First off, in 2014 my grandmother broke her femur. She was off her feet for a month, and she had to stay in a hospital bed. With a head held high and a bright smile as wide as the Pacific Ocean, she got out of the hospital and started healing from her fall. She stayed focused on getting stronger and learning how to walk again. When she was still healing she went on vacation with us to help celebrate my birthday at Hersey Park. When we were there she took an attempt to go on all the thrill rides. She went on upside down, really fast roller coasters. With that you could hear screams, laughter, and even the car shoot out of the inning. After a day of fun-filled adventures we went back to the hotel and were exhausted. Her leg was extremely sore because of the day with hills, but she did not complain. Through perseverance and strength my grandmother got much better and was able to have fun with her family!

Unfortunately all good things come to an end and once again my grandmother broke her tibia on the same leg this past December. We were so heartbroken to hear that once again she had a broken bone in the same leg. We fought back tears and went to visit her, but she held her head high even though she was in pain. We were glad to see that the broken leg was lifted and healing. When she came home after surgery she started physical therapy to start learning how to do things by herself again. She started to learn how to walk, sit up, and climb the stairs. During her free time she did the exercises doctors recommended. While she got better at the exercises her leg got better too. Hard work can really pay off! My grandmother is now back on her feet again and can do things by herself.

On top of all of this, my grandmother has type 1 diabetes. She needs to take four shots a day (how awful!). Even though this rare sickness makes it hard to live normally, she won't let things get in the way of doing what she loves, such as spending time with her grandchildren. Even if her sugar gets too low and things seem stormy, she keeps a head held high and stays as calm as the sea. It is also very tough because she needs to follow a healthy nutrition diet. She takes numerous trips to the hospital and doctor because she gets sick often. When times are rough she takes deep breaths and knows whatever is about to happen could be dangerous. She always stays calm and never gives up! In the end, I think my grandmother has come a long way.

In conclusion, my grandmother has worked very hard to get where she is now. I think that my grandmother's perseverance shows a lesson. I think this lesson is you can take lots of risks but know whatever happens next can be good. Along the way my grandmother has also learned that even if you're going through a lot you can still be successful. All in all she has made it far and hasn't gotten discouraged. The most successful experiences I think she had were when she recovered from her broken leg in 2014, again this past December she fought back to get stronger from another broken leg, and on top of that she fights to stay healthy with type 1 diabetes. Great work, Grandmom!

McKenna Wilson
First Place, Third Grade

“Doing your best means never stop trying.” – Benjamin Franklin

Perseverance means don't give up and to try again. Someone special in my life that has shown perseverance is my mom. My mom perseveres by going to work every day as a Correctional Officer. My mom shows perseverance by going into work, protecting my family, and staying positive. Now let me tell you why my mom is my hero.

The first example of how my mom shows perseverance is going into work. Every day my mom wakes up early in the morning around 4:00 am and gets ready for work. I'm not even awake! She does her job well and she shows integrity by always going in on time to work. Sometimes she even stays late! My mom works in a dangerous place, so she has to be alert to keep herself and others safe. My mom works hard to be successful.

Another example of how my mom shows perseverance is by protecting my family. First, my mom protects my family by locking the doors at night, so the bad guys don't get in. Next, my mom protects my family by making sure the inmates stay locked up and don't get out. Another way my mom protects my family is by being brave going into work. Prison can be a scary place! My mom perseveres by protecting my family and the community to keep us safe.

A final example of how my mom shows perseverance is by staying positive. First, my mom shows perseverance by staying at work late when she's tired and only complains some of the time. Next, my mom shows perseverance by going into that disgusting and weird building, when

she could find a job that is safer. Also, my mom's attitude about work inspires me to have a good life. My mom stays positive to do better for herself and my family.

My mom is my hero by persevering every day as a Correctional Officer. She perseveres and goes into work every day. She also perseveres to make sure my family is safe. My mom is successful by staying positive every day. Last year she had surgery on her leg from an injury at work. She was out of work for months. Now, they are giving her a hard time about coming back to work, but she never gives up! Who's your hero? Mine is my mom.

Carlee Courtney
Second Place, Third Grade

“Doing your best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment” – Oprah Winfrey

Perseverance means to not stop trying to accomplish something just because it is hard. Someone special in my life that shows perseverance is my mom. My mom has persevered by staying positive when her dad passed away. She also shows perseverance by supporting me at my events like basketball, baseball, and football. A final example of how my mom shows perseverance is by always putting my brother and I first. Let me explain to you why my mom is my superhero!

The first example of how my mom shows perseverance is when her dad passed away she stayed positive. She fought through the sadness of her dad passing away by remembering the good memories with him. My mom stayed positive when her dad passed was she took care of his grave. My mom is always a positive person.

My mom also shows perseverance by supporting all of my events. She has a busy job, but always finds time to support me. She goes to my parent luncheons at school and chaperones some of my field trips. She supports me at all of my sporting events too. She makes sure I get to all of my practices and games on time. My mom will always support me even if she has a busy job.

My mom shows perseverance by taking care of my brother and I. She gets food for my family from the store and makes us our meals. My mom also does laundry so we have clean clothes. My mom buys my brother and I shoes and clothes so we have the right clothes for each season. My mom always puts our family first.

My mom is my superhero who shows perseverance every day. My mom is a special person in my life. I will never forget how she always perseveres in every situation. She always has a positive attitude. Superman might be your favorite superhero, but my mom is my favorite superhero.

Chase Pritchett
Third Place, Third Grade

Collin Beamer is 17 years old. He has autism, Down syndrome and some other things. He is my best friend's older brother. Collin always lets his perseverance shine through! He keeps trying no matter what, gives his 100%, and he doesn't care about his disabilities.

Collin keeps trying no matter what. Sometimes he gets stuck. He LOVES video games but they can be hard for him. If his family can't figure it out he keeps trying. Collin never stops trying.

Collin always gives his 100%. He goes to Smyrna High School. Sometimes it is hard for him but he gives his 100%. Also, he always tries to get you to laugh. He does a good job of it too!

Collin does not care that he has disabilities. He always has the best attitude. No matter what happens he has the best mood. What I love is that he will make sure you have a smile on your face.

Collin is an AWESOME friend. He has Down syndrome, autism, and some other things. Perseverance means you never give up. Collin shows this. I hope you have a friend like this too!

Channing Baker
First Place, Fourth Grade

I'm writing about my dad who has persevered for a lot of things.

In the morning me, my dad, and my brother got to his job to help him out at his job. Sometimes I wash his knife for him but not all the time.

My dad is never late to work even though he works far. That's also why I wake up so early in the morning just to go to his job.

When I'm upset or sad or mad my dad always helps me with the problem that I have. It's not easy but he is fine.

My dad never gives up persevering for me or anyone at all. He is very special to me. He is the hardest worker that I know.

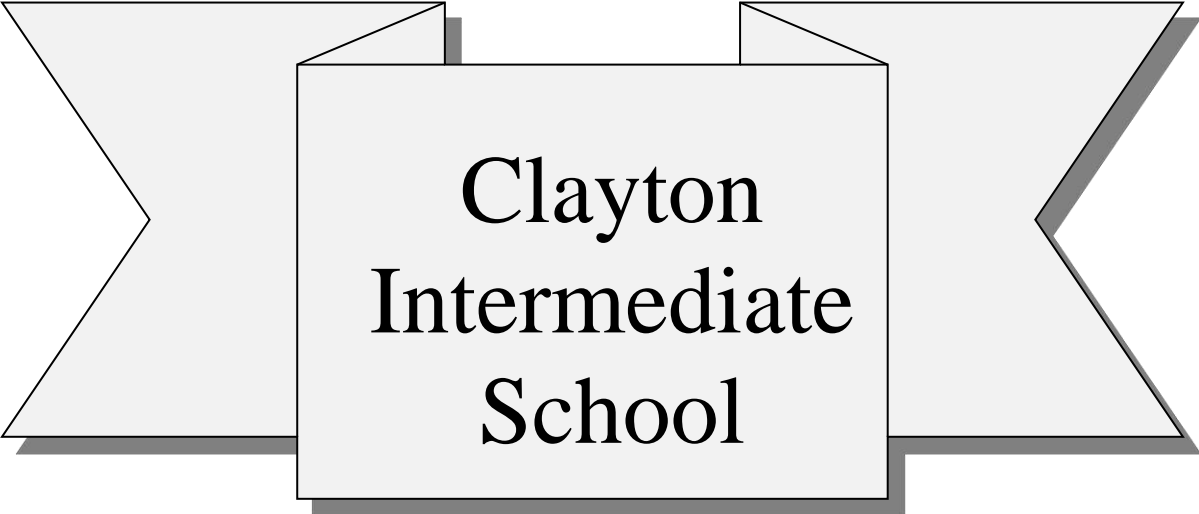
Armando Velazquez
Second Place, Fourth Grade

Do you know what perseverance is? Well let me tell you. When someone perseveres they never give up, work hard, and do their best. My cousin, Jenny, does those things every day. Jenny is a person who never gives up, works her hardest, and does the best she can. I know it's what she does best.

Jenny never gives up even when she wants to. One day she could have gone to work and earn some money. Instead she decided to stay home and study for some test. She studied hard and did her best. This young woman persevered and did her best.

She worked hard on the test to get a good grade. Working hard is a great way of success, and that's what she did. Jenny worked hard for something superior. If she hadn't studied she wouldn't have done as well. As you can see Jenny works hard and is very perseverant.

Kelsey Lowman
Third Place, Fourth Grade



Clayton
Intermediate
School

Grades 5 and 6

Losing your most dearest and beloved being can be the most devastating thing that can happen to a person. Well, that happened to my Great Grandpa Leiter. On a Tuesday in 2015 my Great Grandma Leiter passed on to heaven at 3 am. It was a really sad day for all of the Leiters in the family. So my Grandpa Leiter was utterly devastated. But he still never gave up. What happened to him reminded me of a special quote by Walter Elliot. "Perseverance is not a long race it is many short races one after the other." This means that every day is just a lot of short races and not a lot of long ones.

This problem was overcome by my Grandpa Leiter never giving up, and treating everyday like any normal day would go, but without Grandma Leiter. So every day he would get up and go swimming for an hour, workout (to make sure that he stays healthy), and then would go out to have a spectacular day. He never gave up and he never gave in. We visit him once in a while to see how he is doing. He always acts happy, but we all know that he is still hurting on the inside. We all have proof because Grandpa Leiter is making a poster on his living room wall that has pictures of him and Grandma Leiter in them. The pictures are from the year they met to the year Grandma Leiter died. That tells me that every day he thinks about her (because when he wakes up, the first thing that he sees is a picture of Grandma Leiter, on his bed side table.) But he still is happy and doesn't let one gruesome thing let him have an awful and miserable life.

The impact on my life was pretty big. Every time I think about my Grandpa Leiter, I think about stepping into his shoes. Granted, they may be a little big, I would probably not be very happy everyday like Grandpa Leiter. So whenever I feel like giving up, I always think about how other people feel. So what I am trying to say is that when you feel like giving in and not trying. Think about what somebody else feels like. Do they feel discouraged, sad, angry, or just hands down frustrated? Then try to persevere through and make them feel hands down happy!

Caroline Davis
First Place, Grade 5

Perseverance means to continue your efforts to achieve something that is difficult or hard. Also, it means showing dedication and having a good attitude to go with it. That means even if you face failure or hard obstacles, there is always a way out of it if you persevere. When I think of someone who shows perseverance, the person who pops into my head is our former President, Barack Obama. He persevered not only through issues in our American government, but also in his personal life.

When Barack Obama was a young child, his father left and returned to Kenya. As a child, he was bullied for being a skinny boy with big ears. He was not happy growing up without his dad, and he made many poor choices, like drinking and taking drugs. He did not take school seriously. With the support of his mother and grandparents, Barack Obama was encouraged to work hard and study to make the most of himself and reach his full potential.

As President Obama got older, he faced other obstacles like being a black man with a big dream to make a difference. This was hard for him because a lot of people criticized him for what he

believed in. Even when people criticized his ideas, he still wanted to make a difference. When he moved to Chicago after college, he applied for jobs as a community organizer. He wrote many letters to different places seeking jobs, but no one replied back to him. Finally, a little church in Chicago accepted him to help in a bad community. He got that job by persevering and never giving up on his dream of helping improve the lives of others.

President Obama also persevered when he ran for office in 2008 and 2012. He got bullied by the other party that was going against him. They were making fun of him because of the color of his skin. The other party said that he was not a true American. People made up lies about him that were very hurtful. He was criticized for the policies he tried to pass in order to help others receive health care and to create more jobs for people. But Barack Obama did not give up; he fought for what he believed in and helped many Americans get the health care they needed. He reduced the unemployment rate. Through all these challenges he faced, he never gave up on himself or the people of America. President Obama is a true model of perseverance.

In conclusion, Barack Obama made an impact on my life because he taught me that no matter what color I am, no matter what I look like, never give up on my dream and always persevere. “Making your mark on the world is hard. If it were easy, everybody would do it. But it's not. It takes patience, it takes commitment, and it comes with plenty of failure along the way. The real test is not whether you avoid this failure, because you won't. It's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction, or whether you learn from it; whether you choose to persevere.”

Hailey McCutchan
Second Place, Grade 5

Perseverance means to me to have a continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. When I hear that word, I think of Yamir Knight because perseverance means to face obstacles along the way. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” Yamir did something like this. For instance, in one of our games this season, Yamir showed a lot of heart and perseverance by playing while he was sick.

Even though he was sick and had asthma, he made one of the longest touchdown runs that game. We didn't play him much, but when we did, he took full advantage. Instead of sitting home lying down, he went to the game, played, and scored three touchdowns to win the game for us. He impressed everyone on the team and got to break it down at the end of the game.

Yamir showed me that there is no I in team. So, instead of playing just so I can have a good game, I play for the Town of Smyrna, my teammates, and the kids that can't play at all. People should show perseverance because you never know what you're capable of until you try.

Andrew Ransome
Third Place, Grade 5

Perseverance is the repeated effort to achieve a goal despite difficulty, opposition, and failure. My father, Mike Osborne, shows perseverance. He is the pastor of Trinity Church. He has been very successful in raising me and my sisters in Christ and has mentored us many, many times. Sometimes he succeeds and sometimes not. That's what perseverance is, the repeated effort to achieve a goal!

When our family moved to Delaware, my dad did not have a job, and he was totally depending on God. He wanted to plant a church in Smyrna, so we would hold meetings every Sunday morning in our living room. Because that job wasn't providing quite enough, he started working two more jobs. He coached the soccer team for the high school, and he would substitute teach every chance he got. Over the last eight years, our church has grown to about one-hundred and seventy people, and we are raising money to build our own building in Smyrna by the Willis car company.

Another way my dad shows perseverance is in sports. When he was 14 his soccer coach put him on the B team because he played basketball and soccer. Everyone on the team knew he should've been on the A team, so he worked very hard. Then the B team and the A team played one another, and the B team won! When he was just twelve he got five-hundred juggles. A juggle is when you keep the ball in the air with your feet, head, or thighs. He'd practice ball control (which is juggling) by balancing the ball on his foot and jumping up and down the stairs. Then he'd switch feet. He could have been a professional if he hadn't pursued ministry. My father shows perseverance in many ways, but the third and final way I'm going to share, is how he has raised me and my sisters. He started telling us about Jesus since before we were able to speak. We'd do family devotions every night and now we call it renewal time. Every day he says right before we leave for school, "Remember who you are." He says we are made in God's image, and tells us to be strong in his love and God's love. He has never stopped continuing to speak truth, even when we don't want to hear it. My dad has never given up or wavered in his love for our family.

As Walter Elliot says, "Perseverance isn't a long race; its many short races one after the other." This means whatever challenge you face, you don't have to face it all at once. My dad has persevered throughout his life in many short races, one after the other. He told me and my sisters that hard is good and he has impacted me in these ways that I have listed. I am very blessed to be his daughter and hope that one day the same would be thought of for me.

Karalyn Osborne
First Place, Grade 6

One word to describe Bethany Hamilton is perseverance. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, perseverance is, "the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failures, or opposition." Bethany Hamilton is no doubt one of the number one people that have persevered. Bethany Meilani Hamilton is an American surfer who is one of the all-time best surfers that have ever lived. She is not this because she has surfed 100 foot waves, or because she

has won first at multiple national surf competitions. It is because she done this with only one arm.

Bethany realized she wanted to be a pro surfer at age 9 and worked hard at achieving her dream all her life; however, at the age of 13, while Bethany was surfing on Kauai's North Shore, a 13 foot tiger shark bit off her left arm. She was immediately taken to the hospital where she stayed for a while, depressed, and afraid of losing what meant most to her in her life; surfing. For a while, she thought that with only one arm, it would be impossible to even stand up on a surfboard, let alone ride waves. But with a little help from her family, she was able to go back into the water which convinced her to compete in the regional surfing competition. Even though Bethany had to be taken out by a jet ski because of a broken board and wanted to quit, she later reconsidered and wanted to give it another chance. She hit the water again and started training for the national competition where she actually rode a 50 feet tube wave. Now she is famous for her generosity and her inspirational story, and is still surfing all over the world.

A quote stated by Bethany was, "courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid, courage means you don't let fear stop you." This quote was really inspirational to me because it lets us know that you shouldn't let fear get in the way of your dreams. Another two quotes of hers which are somewhat similar are the following. "I don't need easy, I just need possible." And "Life is a lot like surfing. When you get caught in the impact zone, you need to get right back up, because you never know what's over the next wave, and if you have faith anything is possible. Anything at all." These quotes and her story overall are very touching because they express a feeling of hope and belief. She showed people that even though there might be challenges that might be almost impossible to overcome, there is always hope, and there will always be good times ahead.

I thought that Bethany Hamilton was by far the best person to talk about when writing about perseverance. Because of her courage, determination, and dedication, she was able to overcome a devastating shark attack, which would have prohibited most from ever stepping foot into the water again. Not only has she gone back into the water for recreation, but she has become a professional surfer. Her constant strive to better herself as an athlete and as a person has inspired many people of all ages from all over the world. Bethany is an amazing role model in the water and out of it. This is why I wrote about the victorious Bethany Meilani Hamilton.

Amber Sayers
Second Place, Grade 6

Walter Elliot once said, "Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after the other." This couldn't be more true about the recent journey that my grandma has faced. In this essay, I will tell you about a hard fought, faithful journey that my grandma faced. My grandma is a huge inspiration to myself and many others. My grandma has changed and impacted my life in so many ways and continues to everyday.

My grandma's perseverance act started when she had basic knee replacement surgery. She was in the rehabilitation section of the hospital, and about a week later, she started to get a high fever

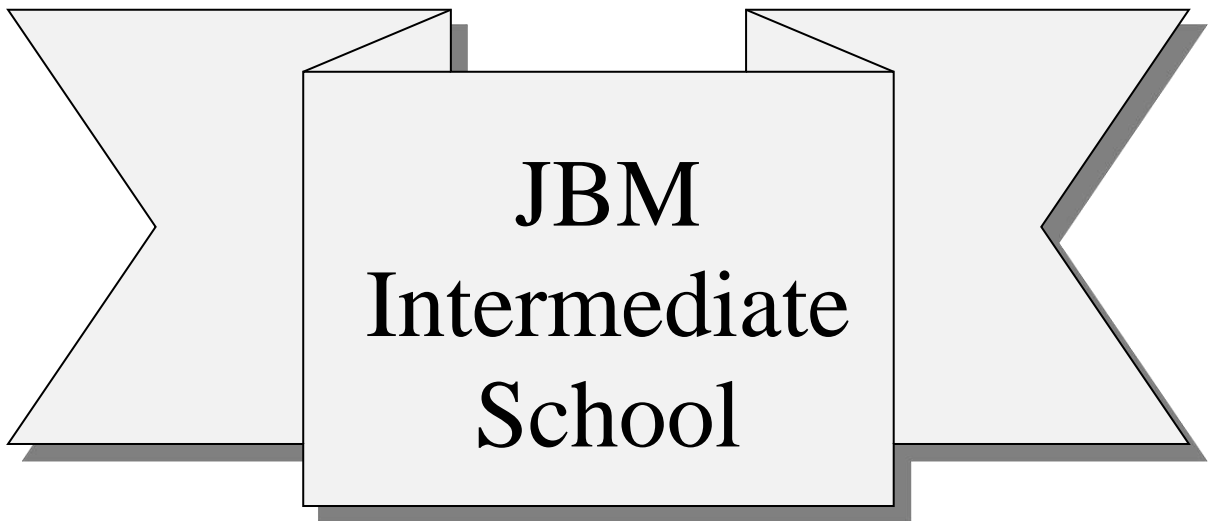
and not feel well. The doctors soon realized that a rapid infection had formed and that they needed to do something about it immediately. Everyone quickly registered that she needed emergency surgery or she would quickly pass away. The best solution was to amputate the bottom portion of her right leg. She had to stay strong in her faith to get through this frightening time.

After the successful surgery, my grandma knew that she had a long road to recovery ahead of her. She was in the hospital for five months and went through nine months of physical therapy. During this time, she had to learn to do everyday things again. Throughout all of this, she had a huge support system made up of her friends and family. She also stood with and looked to God through the rough times. It was a long road to where she is now, but she pushed through it and made it, always with a smile on her face. She was simply grateful to still be with us.

Throughout these events, my grandma has impacted my life and many others. One of the biggest lessons I learned was that no matter how old you are, you can overcome anything with God. Also, no matter if it is something little, like a grade on a test, or a life or death situation, that you can get through it with faith. She is a huge inspiration to other amputees and talks about the event with others. My grandma also has taught me not to complain about things. During all of the ups and downs, she has never complained once. This showed me what an incredible and amazing person she is.

In conclusion, I have never met someone that applies to the definition of perseverance as my grandma does. During this time, it was frightening, but she never gave up. While recovering, she never mentioned giving up at all, and she didn't. My grandma has and continues to inspire me every day. Today, she can stand on one leg to put things away on high shelves, comes with us on family vacations, and even stays home alone for long periods of time. I love and admire my grandma so much, and nothing will ever change that.

Caitlin Thompson
Third Place, Grade 6



Grades 5 and 6

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow.' At least that is how I feel now, but when I was trying out for the role of Annie, I felt differently.

I wanted to try out because the movie was just like my life because I was in foster care and I was also adopted. When it was my time to go on stage, I choked and then I tried to sing but I could not sing very loud due to my severe case of stage fright.

Later on in my life, I overcame my stage fright by singing at baptisms and going to drama camp. Now I have asked my mom if I can try out for another movie. Because I wanted to one day be able to try again. This happened this year when I was watching "School of Rock" and I saw that if the other children can sing and play instruments in the "Battle of the bands then I can at least audition for a movie.

I know that I can try out for bigger and better things. Also now that I am a better singer and actor I have built up enough courage to try out again for another movie because I have persevered and never gave up on my dream.

Olivia Allman
First Place, Grade 5

Perseverance is a word you may not think that often, but trust you do it all the time. If you don't know what perseverance is it's when you do something over and over again until you get and you never give up. Here is a famous quote of perseverance "I haven't failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."-Thomas Edison. Now here is a story of me persevering to accomplish a goal I hope you guys will enjoy it.

It was a long time ago but not too long ago when I was outside with my Dad and I was just learning how to ride a bike. It was my first time and right from the start I knew I wasn't going to be very good at it. I got on and I fell I knew I had to keep trying but when trying to ride I needed to get an idea of what to do to get better, so I tried to work on one thing at a time. First, learning how to keep my balance; so I was working on that until I got the hang of it. Then to ride a bike and to go forward you need to pedal, so I had balance then I had to keep trying and I never stopped until I got it. When I did I was happy and I started to get the hang of it but I still needed to work on riding to get much better.

I already knew almost all my friends could ride a bike without training wheels. I was way far behind all of them but, did that stop me, no I kept on trying, and when I did get it I felt good but, I still had to work on it. To get better at my bike I made little challenges that would help me get a lot better. None of that would of happen if I gave up. It took me a few days to get it, but I did and now I keep on getting better at it and just never give up If you feel like you're not good at something keep trying and don't worry, you will find different ways to do it. You will feel so good when you accomplish it, but you still need to persevere to get from point A to point B or get from the bottom to the top. If you stop you will never make your goal!

Now, my advice to persevere and never give up is to think of the end and how good you'll feel when you do it. Also get some people to help you. Some things in the world you just can't do alone. If you can get a group of people you know that are working on the same thing and if someone gets it before you ask for help. Then you already accomplished your goal and on the nine hundred and ninety ninth time you thought you weren't going to do it, but on the thousandth time you did it because you never gave up! If some people brag that they got it before you ignore them and do your own thing. When you finally accomplish it they can't make fun of you. You keep working on it to get better and never stop because if you stop then you might never get it. You just have to persevere.

I hope you guys enjoyed my writing on perseverance? I really hope you guys will persevere to accomplish a goal you have to do and I just really hope you like my writing.

Tyler Crutchfield
Second Place, Grade 5

Me and my cousin

What does perseverance mean? Perseverance means that no matter how many mistakes I make or slow I progress; you're still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying.

Event

Me and my cousin came to America and we had to learn English. She came first, then me. She has "4" years in here and I have 2 years here and she doesn't know how to speak English like I do.

How the event overcome

I got help from my aunts and my teachers and kids from my class. My cousin did, too, but she is not trying. My teachers were Mrs. Weaver, Mrs. Sparks, and Mrs. Petraske.

Impact of my life

My cousin came to the U.S. first then me. I came second. That was 2 years later I came and in one year later I knew how to speak a little bit English, and my cousin doesn't. Sometimes I speak to her in English and she doesn't know what I'm telling her so I have to speak to her in Spanish because she just knows a little bit. Now she is trying because we need to show my little cousins that she can do it, too. She can learn English to show our Moms that we are smart too because they said that we have a long time in here and that we don't know English. Another reason that I want to learn English and our Moms are beating with us because they just got into English classes and that will help my cousin to learn English, too. My aunt can show her and my mom, too. My cousin hasn't given up, she is still trying same as me and my mom. So they are now helping my cousin first, my mom, then my aunt, then my uncle. So they now are solving the problem by my mom, aunt, uncle. Teaching her perseverance helped me by not giving up and that no matter how many mistakes I do or how slow is my progress you're still way ahead of everyone who is not trying. By working with your family together is the best way to teach someone in your family.

Dayana Campos
Third Place, Grade 5

Merriam-Webster states “*Perseverance is the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition.*” I think that perseverance means to move through a conflict, and to be able to push through and to move on. Walter Elliot once said, “*Perseverance is not a long race, it is many short races one after another.*” This means that there isn't just going to be one huge problem, and when you succeed you achieve. Life is one thing after another for us to get through. Good things, bad things, they come and go in life and help us define who we are, and once, not too long ago, I really had to persevere when my dad had passed away.

It was about July 10th, 2012. Me and my sister were coming back from my grandma's house. Her and I found it a little strange that we were going to our nana's house, instead of our house. I walked into the house, which it was usually bright and cheery, was now dark and depressing. We walked into the back room, where my mom and my relatives were sitting around, looking pretty bummed out about something, and when we asked what was wrong, we got handed the bad news, that our Dad had passed.

This was a huge blow underneath the belt. Moments ago, I was as happy as could be, and now, I sat there shocked, kinda thinking and hoping it was just a nightmare. I couldn't move, for a couple of weeks after the funeral, which I only stayed for practically four minutes, we stayed at my nana's house. It took years to overcome my grief. For some reason, I thought it was my fault, as I did nothing. Over time, I realized that there was nothing that I could have done, so I started to accept the fact that he wasn't coming back. Ways I helped myself persevere through those times where I spent time with my family, as knowing they were still there warmed my heart. I also thought about happy memories I had of him, helping me know my time with him was fun.

The ways this event impacted my life were bittersweet. I made a lot of new friends, started new activities, moved to a new house, went different places, and my mom got a new boyfriend, but I still miss my dad, but if that didn't happen, I wouldn't have had all these good things that came out of it. At the end, I learned that I just had to persevere and move on.

Tony Robbins once said “*No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow your progress, you're still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying.*” The only thing that can stop you from doing something is you. I think perseverance is insanely important because if we didn't do anything with perseverance, we could have never done anything. Thomas Edison would have given up the first time he tried to make the lightbulb and failed, and we wouldn't have lamps, street lights, phones, or the laptop I used to write this, we wouldn't have a single thing!

Ryan Conway
First Place, Grade 6

How does being sick for seven years sound? Not so good, right? Bipolar disorder affects approximately 5.7 million adult Americans over 18 every year. Unfortunately, for my mom, she was one of those 5.7 million people. Right after my younger sister was born, bipolar disorder took over.

When my mom was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, she was forced to quit her job as a nurse at Delaware Hospice. For the first couple of years, she was mostly bedridden. Not only was bipolar itself making her exhausted, but some of the medications would cause serious fatigue. When she did have the energy, she would clean up around the house and pay bills and such. She would also take us to school.

She would take all kinds of different medications that didn't really show any sign of improvement. Most of the medications would include side effects such as sickness, exhaustion, and etc. At the end of her illness, she had taken 37 different medications that did not even work. Not only did they not help but they gave side effects that made her worse.

While my mom was showing a tremendous amount of perseverance, so was my dad. While my mom was sick, my dad was taking care of her, along with my brother, my sister and I. My dad was the one taking care of us most of the time, like driving us to sports, taking us to school, making dinner, and other things that my mom did not have the energy to do. It was physically and mentally exhausting for both my mom and my dad. Imagine everything I just said, but for seven years.

After seven years, my mom was hospitalized for a month. We would visit her once a week, and each week her spirits were even higher. That month was more effective than all seven years of doctors and medications. Watching my mom show the greatest amount of perseverance through quitting her job, taking medications that showed no improvement, and seeing my dad step up to the plate taught me that perseverance can make all the difference. The impact that my mom had on me changes the way I look at the word perseverance. Perseverance is not just a word, but the will to keep pushing forward no matter what obstacles cross your path. "If you can't fly, then run, if you can't run, then walk, if you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep on moving. - Martin Luther King Jr.

Benjamin Guzman
Second Place, Grade 6

"Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations"- Unknown. Perseverance is a skill that we all possess, and many of us have used this quality in various different ways. Perseverance is when you don't let hard times around you ruin your mood. I have experienced several losses over the last two years. My parents separating, losing one of my parents, and moving to a whole new town, were terrible ordeals that crashed my life all at once.

During my parent's separation, I felt very uncomfortable when everyone around me said "it happens to almost everyone." I didn't want to hear it. I didn't want to be like everybody else. I

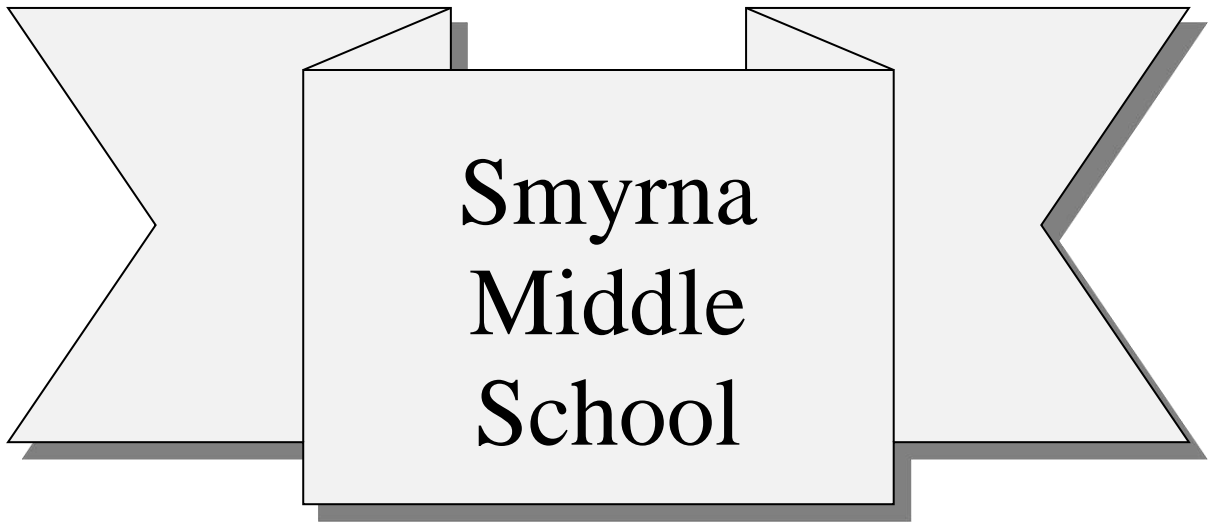
wanted to be happy and keep my family the way it was. Clearly my destiny said otherwise. I felt very self-conscious about it being my fault and felt I was too much trouble for them. Fortunately, I was able to talk to my siblings about my feelings and it made me feel better.

While my parents were settling the situation my father became ill. He was diagnosed with heart problems. He was instructed to take several medications. It was difficult to watch my dad go through so much. I tried multiple times to tell my dad that he didn't have to do so much for me. Luckily, I was able to get him to take us out for his birthday. I was set on the idea of making him happy and I succeeded and made him smile. On July 14, 2016 my father passed away at work. I was told by my mother and couldn't believe it. I cried myself to sleep for a long time and had so many dreams about my dad that made me wake up crying. I created several inspired by my father. It is tradition to go to his grave every year for his birthday and Father's Day.

Before my father passed, I was told that my mom wanted to move away from where this happened. We moved to Delaware and I was excited to witness a new environment. I was not thrilled to proceed to a place where I would be far away from most of my family, friends, and my school. I was going to miss all the qualities I loved so much about Philadelphia, but I was certain I could find many things to love about Delaware.

Even though I lost so much, I still have to keep in mind that my father is watching over me and wants me to smile every day of my life. It's true I can't get back what I long for so dearly, but that gives me an opportunity to learn, discover, and uncover new things about myself. I believe everyone has the power to persevere over crazy and devastating obstacles with encouragement and determination. "I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail a ship"- Louisa May Alcott.

Robyn Swinton
Third Place, Grade 6



Grades 7 and 8

Professional soccer player Lionel Messi has said “You have to fight to reach your dream. You have to sacrifice and work hard for it.” This comment represents how he faced an obstacle and displayed perseverance. His medical battle at a young age became one of the events that changed his life. His inspiring story can help others face challenges, persevere through, and display a positive attitude to achieve their goals.

Messi, a famous soccer player, was born to Jorge and Celia Messi in Rosario, Argentina on June 24, 1987. Messi’s hard obstacle he faced was Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD). GHD is a medical condition caused by problems arising in the pituitary gland, in which the body does not produce enough growth hormone. It is a rare condition that affects just one in every 20 million children. Growth hormone is called “somatropin” and is a polypeptide hormone which stimulates growth and cell reproduction. His development of soccer skills was viewed as amazing by his coaches, but his lack of size due to the GHD affected his game playing. At a young age, he made an important decision to face this issue.

Messi displayed perseverance by sticking with his treatments for GHD for three years. This treatment was not easy for a child. Messi said, “When I was 11 years old they discovered that I had a growth hormone deficiency and I had to start a treatment to help me to grow. Every night I had to stick a needle into my legs, night after night after night, every day of the week, and this over a period of three years.” He persevered by doing this treatment for so long, so that he could be the best soccer player he could.

All of the athletes who have faced limitations and soccer fans around the world can be inspired by Messi’s story. If he hadn’t undergone the treatment he wouldn’t have become the elite soccer player he is now. His soccer talents led him to a career in Spain in his teens. He is currently a forward with FC Barcelona and is the only football player in history to win five FIFA Ballons d’Or, and the first player to win three European Golden Shoes. He was the youngest player in history to ever score a professional league goal in 2005. He has also set records for the most goals scored in a season. He is Argentina’s all-time leading goal scorer. He had led Argentina to three final matches and got a gold medal at the 2008 summer Olympics. Lionel Messi worked hard to claim these achievements after overcoming the GHD.

Messi’s an example of perseverance of how he never gave up while facing and treating a medical condition. His motto, “You have to fight to reach your dream,” and his athletic accomplishments prove to be an example for others. Obstacles are not overcome by accident; it takes hard work to achieve goals. If you have any obstacles, you may be able to look at Lionel Messi as an example.

Auden Jones
First Place, Grade 7

Perseverance is never giving up. If you try something new and fail, you can learn from your mistakes and try again until you succeed. People who persevere face difficulties, but never give up. Bethany Hamilton is a person I admire because she never gave up during her tough situation.

The situation that Bethany faced was getting her left arm bitten off by a 14 foot tiger shark. In 2003, Bethany was 13, she was surfing off the coast of Kauai in Hawaii. She was out with friends when she was attacked. It took her friends twenty minutes alone to paddle her back to shore. Once on shore, her friend's father made a tourniquet out of a surfboard leash to wrap around the stump of her arm. She lost sixty percent of her blood and doctors were not sure if she would survive. However, Bethany was only in the hospital for a week, and in just one month she was back to the water to surf. The board she rode was custom made. It was longer, and a little thicker than a normal board. It also had a handle for her right arm to make it easier for her to paddle. On January 2004, she entered her first major surfing competition since the accident. Since then, she has won most of the surfing competitions she has entered.

In order to persevere through her difficult times, Bethany had to depend on her family, friends and faith. Bethany has said she remembers a paramedic telling her, "God will never leave you or forsake you". Bethany's family and friends gave her encouragement and support. They helped her to never give up on her dream of returning to surfing. She has said her marriage to youth minister, Adams Dirks, and the birth of her son gives her strength to push herself. Bethany also dug deep into herself for the determination to get back on her board. She overcame the loss of an arm, fear of the water, and physical limitations. Besides surfing, Bethany has also competed on the television show *The Amazing Race 25*, with her husband Adam, and placed third. This is an example of how she continues to push herself beyond her physical disability.

If Bethany had given up, the world would have lost an example of how a person can overcome anything. Even though she lost a limb, she never stopped trying to get back on her board. Not only does Bethany live a completely normal life as a wife and mother, but she also surfs, make television appearances, and speaking tours. She gives hope to people to try something new, and never give up. Bethany wrote an autobiography in 2004 titled *Soul Surfer: A True Story of Faith, Family, and Fighting to Get Back on the Board*. She wanted to share her story with as many people as possible. She encourages people to live a healthy lifestyle, and to keep pursuing their dreams. Bethany Hamilton persevered, and encouraged people to do what she did, which was to power through difficulties.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines perseverance as, "continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition". This means never giving up. People can persevere through many things, such as illness, accidents, and other personal tragedies. Bethany Hamilton lost a limb and almost died. Instead of giving up, she worked hard, believed in herself, and came back stronger than ever. She gives me and people from all over the world hope. Bethany Hamilton is an example of why we should never give up.

Matthew Sells
Second Place, Grade 7

“Where there is no struggle, there is no strength.”-Oprah Winfrey. This quote was written by a girl who would soon grow up to be an immensely strong and powerful woman. The true meaning of perseverance is to never give up. Oprah Winfrey had an abundance of problems that she faced growing up, and every single problem she persevered through with power. Oprah didn't capitulate when life was extremely hard for her. She shows women from all over the world how to be strong, patient, and to persevere even when they feel paralyzed to act. Oprah endured terrible circumstances growing up, she learned how to cope with these, and changed the world for the better.

Growing up, life was difficult for Ms. Winfrey. She was sexually abused, pregnant at the age of thirteen years old and experienced depression, which included suicidal thoughts. These circumstances are the reasons why Oprah is loved by many across the world. People love Oprah because of how strong she is for dealing with all these problems, and many more. Problems such as these put a lot of stress on her life, especially at the age of thirteen. The stress build up was too much for Oprah, and eventually caused her to attempt to consume detergent while pregnant. Circumstances Oprah faced were definitely not the greatest, but she made the best out of them, and that's how she achieved the rank she is today.

Through the difficult times, Oprah learned how to appropriately approach causes of problems. She was very upfront and honest with what she went through during her difficult era. She hosts several television shows that talk about different techniques and tricks she used to help herself cope with the hardships. Oprah is also an author of cookbooks, life books, and depression stories. Oprah is just one independent woman who managed to accomplish all these things, and helped people all over the world.

Oprah has achieved many things in her career, and life without her is hard to imagine due to the fact of the increasing amount of people she helps. Life without Oprah would be difficult, because without her as a mentor, people wouldn't be convinced that they are so much more than they think. Also, people with depression would have no one to look up to and no one to relate to. Oprah has improved so many lives, it seems like fiction. Considering all the changes she has been through, she proves how impactful her life actually is.

“Where there is no struggle, there is no strength.”-Oprah Winfrey. Oprah Winfrey has endured extreme struggles throughout her lifetime, and has incredible emotional and mental strength. She is amazingly talented and shows perseverance in almost everything she does. She shows not only perseverance, but other interesting and important values like courage, integrity, compassion, and respect. One woman can do a surreal amount of things in such an extraordinary manner.

Tyler Downward
Third Place, Grade 7

As Walt Disney looked at the movie screen showing “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves,” he probably wondered how he had gotten there. He was only a farm boy from Missouri. But he was

there, watching his creation break records and make more than a million dollars. Walt had seen difficult times, overcame the obstacles, and created a franchise that we would be worse off without.

Walt Disney faced many difficult circumstances. He originally had a company called Laugh-O-Grams; a character named Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, and was working on a new cartoon. Soon, however, “Walt ran out of money, and his company Laugh-O-Grams went bankrupt.” As if that weren’t bad enough, the new cartoon ended up being a flop. Walt then found out that his friend had stolen the rights to Oswald, and Walt was stuck in Hollywood with nothing but his brother and \$250.

When faced with these situations, Walt would always keep trying. After going bankrupt, he moved to Hollywood to try to find success. When that didn’t work out, he continued to try, and started a new company with his brother, Roy, in their uncle’s garage. In the garage studio, Walt and his brother continued to persevere, and soon they got “an order from New York for the first *Alice in Cartoonland* [...] featurette,” which was a success and helped them grow their business. Soon enough, Walt created Mickey Mouse and things took off from there.

If Walt Disney had given up, the world of entertainment would be much different. Walt created theme parks and many iconic movies and characters. Among these movies are “Pinocchio,” “Fantasia,” “Dumbo,” and “Bambi,” which are considered classics. Without a persevering creator these movies, theme parks, and characters would’ve never seen the light of day, and people wouldn’t be able to enjoy the whimsical franchise we have today.

Walt continued through many difficult situations, building an amazing world with perseverance. He made a lasting impression; with the company he made continuing to make movies, characters and much more. Needless to say, Walt Disney was a great man, whose perseverance and subsequently, creations continue to inspire people, even to this day.

Kyle Gomez
First Place, Grade 8

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” Thomas Alva Edison explained that giving up is the worst thing to do through hard times. The best way to overcome your obstacles and accomplish your goals is to have determination in what you’re trying to complete. Perseverance is an example of this type of attitude. All people could learn from the example of Ben Carson. He shows that persevering through your struggles is the only way to get things achieved. Ben Carson persevered through the consequences of being a child of poverty. By not letting his obstacles get in the way, he has been able to change the world of medicine. Had he given up at that moment, there would still be medical mysteries in neurosurgery!

Ben Carson suffered through the struggles of being a child of poverty and not meeting the expectations of kids his age in school. Early on in Ben’s life, he was a very privileged child.

He lived with both his mother and father and his older brother. Things were going great for Ben, but soon everything changed. As Ben started to get older, he noticed that his parents had argued a lot. His father then left the family leaving his mom who only had a third grade education to raise both boys. They had moved to the projects because it was all they could afford and struggled through life. They often had to live off of what little earnings their mom received from cleaning houses and watching other people's kids. In addition to him living in poverty he often struggled in school. Anne Clarrissimeaux stated, "Ben was lost, hopelessly behind in his schoolwork in a school that was competitive. The other kids picked on him and called him "dummy". Ben lashed back with his fists. He resigned himself to thinking he was stupid." He often found himself not understanding what he was being taught and fell behind in learning basic skills for kids his age. This led to a lack of confidence in what he could do. Through all of the obstacles Ben Carson faced, he remained optimistic and never gave up.

When faced with these adversities, Ben Carson remained persistent and faced his troubles head on. Ben attended a very competitive school and was often teased because he wasn't at their level. Though he sometimes reacted physically, he learned as he got older that there were other ways to deal with his problems. He became more involved and interested in his school work and quickly saw the positive outcomes from it. Ben usually spent all of his free time taking in knowledge and soon realized he may make it big out of the projects. The editors of biography.com stated, "At first, Ben resented the strict regimen, but after several weeks, he began to find enjoyment in reading, discovering he could go any place, be anybody and do anything between the covers of a book." It later stated, "He began to view his prospects differently, that he could become the scientist or physician he had dreamed about, and thus, he cultivated an academic focus." Though Ben struggled in school, he had all the motivation he needed right at home. His mom encouraged him to start reading more books. He was hesitant about doing it, but he still obeyed his mom's command. Little did he know that a seed had just been planted and was soon going to blossom. As he got into the habit of reading more and more books, he realized that it wasn't so bad after all and he actually enjoyed learning that way. He noticed that his grades started to get much better and began to find that he could accomplish something great. Ben had many obstacles that suddenly entered his life. Because they happened so often, he learned to embrace and take on any challenge that came his way and because of that, he's the person he is today.

Had Ben Carson given up on his future plans, he may have not made an impact on neurosurgery all around the world. He has performed many surgeries that other world-class surgeons have turned down. Yes, he has had challenges and yes he has had doubts and worries about all of the negative outcomes, but he still remained optimistic and because of his determination, he changed the face of medicine. The website yourdictionary.com reported, "In 1987, neurosurgeon Ben Carson successfully performed an operation to separate Siamese twins who were born joined at the head. It was a milestone in neurosurgery, but was far from the only noteworthy achievement of Carson's career." It later stated, "...in other instances Carson has performed operations which have greatly expanded scientific knowledge of the brain and its functions." In other words, Ben performed a very high-risk surgery and successfully completed it. Though the surgery worked in his favor and got a lot of positive attention, he was very far away from the peak of his career. He completed as many as 400 surgeries per year, which is a lot for a neurosurgeon, and was able to find an advanced technique to separate the twins without them bleeding out. Fortunately, he didn't keep his techniques here in the U.S. He went all around the world and made medical

history by completing surgeries like these. Because of his successes in surgery, he became the youngest chief of pediatric neurosurgery, earned 60 honorary doctorate degrees, and was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom. All in all, Ben Carson accomplished many of his lifetime goals because of his devotion and determination to his practice.

Though Ben Carson faced many hardships, he was determined to tackle any obstacle that came his way. Because of that attitude he has towards life, he is the world-class surgeon that he is. Perseverance is a key value in life. It can be challenging to see things go wrong but if you follow people like Ben Carson you could accomplish something great. Thomas Edison showed that anything is possible through perseverance and Ben displayed that. Giving up is the worst thing to do through tough times. The only way to get things accomplished is to remain persistent and never give up on your plans. Everybody faces challenges and there is no way to avoid them, but there is a way to solve them and that's through persevering!

Deanna Sinclair
Second Place, Grade 8

“It is very important to know who you are. To make decisions. To show who you are.” -Malala Yousafzai. Malala is trying to say you should not only figure out who you are in life, but show others who you are by the decisions you make. Along the way you will have failures and successes, but never stop persevering in your journey to figure out who you are. Malala Yousafzai is a stellar example of what perseverance means. Malala was deprived of education and attacked as a young girl. Despite this, she recovered and started the Malala Fund for other uneducated children.

Malala began fighting for her education very early. Starting at a young age, she was unable to attend school due to the Taliban issuing an edict that banned all girls from going to school. Eventually, Malala was able to attend school. “On 9 October 2012, as Malala and her friends were travelling home from school, a masked gunman entered their school bus and asked for Malala by name. She was shot with a single bullet which went through her head, neck and shoulder” (Malala.org). Malala was attacked for wanting to go to school, but she still recovered and continued her schoolwork.

Before and after the attack Malala was starting to become famous. In 2009, she began a blog about education. In 2011, she was later awarded the first ever Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize. In 2014, she won the Nobel Peace Prize. Of all of these accomplishments, starting the Malala Fund in 2013 was probably her greatest. “Malala became a global advocate for the millions of girls being denied a formal education because of social, economic, legal and political factors” (Malala.org). Malala has persisted through her attacks, threats, and the Taliban's edict.

If Malala had not gone through all that she has, fewer children would be educated. Malala has opened a secondary school in Syria, for the girls who are not allowed to be educated. Without her perseverance, all the girls in her school, and other schools alike, would not be getting a good

education. Malala's father, Ziauddin, has said, "Most fathers, in our modern society, are known for their sons. But I am known for my daughter, and I'm proud of it." (TED Talks) Malala has done great things for the world and has shown exemplary perseverance throughout her life. It is because of this that many young girls now have education. Not all, but some.

Despite Malala being attacked and threatened, she has many amazing accomplishments and has changed the world as we know it. She has shown a terrific amount of bravery, heart, dedication, and, most of all, perseverance. As stated in her quote, "It is very important to know who you are. To make decisions. To show who you are." Malala has done just that. She realized that she was not her true self without an education. She made a crucial decision to fight for her right to be educated. Along her journey she has shown her true colors. Malala has shown the world that girls can speak up and do big things too. Anyone, even you, can achieve greatness through perseverance.

Taylor Christensen
Third Place, Grade 8



Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12

“Setbacks and failures can improve motivation.” (Pollock 1) Kobe Bryant is a great example of a person who has been through this and has been motivated to continue; he has shown perseverance in our history. He was raised in Italy and always moved. He was also picked 13th in the NBA draft and didn't get many minutes during his first season. But he stepped up to the challenge and now he is known as one of the best NBA players ever. Perseverance is defined as the inner strength to remain constant to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles. This includes dedication, consistency and having a positive attitude. George from *Of Mice and Men* really connects with these qualities. Although George kills Lennie, he still shows perseverance by always caring for Lennie and saving him whenever he's in trouble.

For example, George shows dedication by always taking care of Lennie. In *Of Mice and Men*, George says, “We're gonna work on a ranch like the one up north.” (Steinbeck 6) George finds a job for both himself and Lennie. This job is also going to help them achieve their dream. In all honesty, George could be more than alright by himself. But his loyalty and brotherly love for Lennie just won't allow George to ditch Lennie. A great example is when George and Lennie argue and Lennie says he would leave, but George says, “I want you to stay with me.” (Steinbeck 104) George knows that if Lennie was alone, he would get in a lot of trouble or worse. These are all a great way of showing that George truly cares for Lennie, getting him a job, including him in his dream, and always looking out for him, even though George would be much better without him.

Also, George always watched Lennie's back, and tried to keep him out of trouble. Just like when George was talking to Lennie about his plan if Lennie ever got into any trouble. George said, “If you jus' happen to get into any trouble, I want you to come here and hide in the brush.” (Steinbeck 15) This is a great example because it shows that George is thinking ahead, making sure that even if Lennie does get into trouble, they have somewhere to meet. Yet another example is when the two talk about Curley, “If he tangles with you, Lennie, we're gonna hit the can.” (Steinbeck 29) Here, George is showing that he cares about Lennie's well-being, and is being consistent with making plans just in case something goes wrong. As one can see, George always goes one step further to ensure Lennie's safety and is determined to protect him.

Even still, George shows a lack of perseverance by killing Lennie in the end. George shows that he has thought about how great life would be without Lennie dragging him down when he says, “If I was alone, I could live so easy.” (Steinbeck 11) Lennie has even thought that George would get violent before. For example, when Lennie said, “George gonna give me hell” after Lennie kills a puppy. (Steinbeck 100) Now, even though that is evidence towards George becoming easily flustered, it is not good enough. George wouldn't intentionally kill Lennie; rather, he killed Lennie for his own good. Also, George says that he would be better without Lennie many times. But he would never leave Lennie; he cares about him too much. So, although it seems that killing Lennie is giving in, it actually took a lot of perseverance to go through with it. And George did it out of love for Lennie.

Despite killing Lennie, George shows perseverance by always having Lennie's back, and making sure he's safe and unharmed. Remember, George saves Lennie from his troubles in Weed. He acted on pure wit, and got them out of there. He also thinks ahead, just in case Lennie does something wrong again. And although he did end up killing Lennie, it took a lot of perseverance

to do it, because he cares so much for Lennie. And George knew that if he killed Lennie, he wouldn't have to worry anymore. In conclusion, George showed great perseverance, and did what he did out of love and care.

Michael Thornton
First Place, Grade 9

Where others stop, one should keep going. Perseverance is important to finding one's way to success. Perseverance means to go through struggle and continue through it until goals are reached. George, from the book *Of Mice and Men*, is protective and caring of Lennie, and with these qualities he shows perseverance. He doesn't open up to many about his personal struggles with taking care of Lennie. George travels with Lennie across America, working various jobs to get money for their dream of having their own place to settle down. Although towards the end of the story George shows some weakness, overall he shows perseverance.

George spent a very long time traveling with Lennie across the country. In the text, George says to Slim, "When his Aunt Clara died, Lennie just come along with me out workin. Got used to each other after a little while." (Steinbeck 40) Since Lennie's aunt passed, both Lennie and George have been moving around for work. It is hard for George to constantly be looking after Lennie since Lennie has a mental disorder. George would like to be alone for once; it's a burden to have Lennie. Despite this, George keeps Lennie around because he does truly care for him. In the article, "*The Science of Perseverance: How Your Beliefs Can Strengthen (or Weaken) Your Motivation*," it says, "When it comes to creating change in your life or achieving your goals, it probably won't be easy, you may struggle." (Pollock 1) With everything piled on top of George, caring for Lennie, traveling, working, it can't be easy for him but he has endured. He juggled all his responsibilities and powered through additional issues better than most would. Despite Lennie constantly being there with George, George stayed with him until the end.

Furthermore, George still went on despite the problematic incident in Weed. Lennie got the both of them fired for a major misunderstanding. George says to Slim, "An' that night we scrambled outta there" when he explained what happened in Weed. (Steinbeck 42) They lost a job because Lennie touched a girls dress which scared her and they continued on to work someplace else. Again, in the article it mentions, "Struggle, setbacks and short term failures don't have to drain your motivation" (Pollock 1). George and Lennie didn't let Lennie's mishap stop them. They found another job to do. They never lost hope for their dream. The Weed incident is the biggest setback described in the story and the main characters got out of the pickle.

On the other hand, George is weak when demonstrating perseverance. George shot and killed Lennie, "He pulled the trigger. ...Lennie jarred, and then settled slowly forward" (Steinbeck 106). Yet, George did what he had to do. If he hadn't taken things into his own hands, Lennie would have been killed painfully by Curley. The article says many successful people have gone through countless failures time and time again (Pollock 1). This is just another struggle George must overcome. It's a failure that changed his life. To add to that, he has to face it without his

best friend. With the death of Lennie, it is possibly the roughest thing George will face, but he can overcome it as he's proven to be strong with other problems.

Throughout the book *Of Mice and Men*, George shows perseverance many times. George had been traveling with Lennie for a very long time which had proven to be difficult. Even after the incident in Weed, George did not give up on Lennie. When he pulled the trigger, George gave up on the dream and gave up on Lennie though he had no choice. Many people go through great struggle but they don't lose hope despite being exhausted with life's punches.

Cara McGaha
Second Place, Grade 9

When a person shows perseverance, they show determination and they are persistent. They are focused on achieving their goal so they keep trying. The novel *Of Mice and Men* has many characters that show various examples of persevering versus when they're not. An example of a character that lacks perseverance is Lennie Small. Throughout the book you see he causes a lot of trouble. He could not stay out of trouble and he was unable to keep a job for an extended period of time without causing disruptions or trouble.

Lennie was constantly getting into trouble. There was an incident in the book where he did something bad affecting him and his travel partner, George Milton, greatly. George was telling Slim about what happened and why they had to start working at the Ranch and why they left work in Weed. He says, "he seen this girl with a red dress... he wants to touch ever'thing he likes... So he reaches out to feel this red dress..." (found on page 41) Lennie thinks that it is okay to do this. No matter how much George tried to keep him out of trouble, Lennie didn't try hard enough to do the same. Other evidence that is shown that he cannot keep out of trouble is, "... that girl rabbits in an' tells the law she been raped. The guys in Weed start out a party to lynch Lennie." (found on page 42) This proves that he does not persevere to learn wrong from right so he continues to do wrong. His refusal to learn these things causes him to get into trouble. Because of Lennie's actions in Weed they couldn't stay and had to flee elsewhere. Since he constantly gets into trouble it caused him to be unable to keep a job.

As stated in the previous paragraph, we see that what he does causes him to not be able to keep a job. Not long after George and Lennie start working at the Ranch, Lennie gets into a fight with the boss's son, Curley. Textual evidence states, "Curley's fist was swinging when Lennie reached for it... his fist was lost in Lennie's big hand. George ran down the room, 'Leggo of him, Lennie. Let go.'" (found on page 63) Granted, Curley did pick a fight with Lennie, but if Curley had gotten away Lennie would have been arrested. He almost lost, not only his, but also George's job. More evidence that backs up how Lennie lacks perseverance is as follows, "and then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck." and then Lennie says, "I done another bad thing." (found on page 91). Lennie broke Curley's wife's neck and he was aware of what he did, but he didn't listen to her when she told him to stop touching her hair. When she started to scream he killed her. This causes him to get into trouble, yet again. He didn't listen to George when he was told to stay out of trouble. The men were looking for him to kill him for what he

had done. His actions not only caused him to lose a job in Weed, and almost lose his job at that Ranch, but it also lead to him losing his life.

In some ways, Lennie did show perseverance. He was determined to follow the dream that he and George shared. George says, “but you ain’t gonna get in no trouble, because if you do, I won’t let you tend the rabbits.” (found on page 16) Even though Lennie didn’t want to get into any trouble, he did anyways. He didn’t try hard enough to keep himself from getting into any more trouble. Lennie later says in the book, “If I get in any trouble, you ain’t gonna let me tend the rabbits.” (found on page 30) He was always focused on this dream of theirs, but no matter how much he repeated this to himself he never truly had the determination to stick to this goal. Lennie wanted to achieve this dream, but if he was really persevering he would have listened to what George told him.

In conclusion, Lennie is an example of a character that lacks perseverance. He never learned wrong from right. He was not persistent in listening to George. Everything he did, his actions, caused a domino effect throughout the book. Since he couldn’t stay out of trouble, he was unable to keep a job. Lennie was not persistent or determined to learn to keep out of trouble, therefore proving he did not persevere.

Sarah Hamilton
Third Place, Grade 9

Smyrna School District defines perseverance as “the inner strength to remain constant to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles. This includes dedication, consistency and having a positive attitude.” There are those that believe that perseverance is a quality of emotionally intelligent people, and arguably that the Emotional Quotient (EQ) is more valuable than the Intelligent Quotient (IQ). EQ is an individual’s ability to stay aware of their emotions and manage their behaviors and tendencies. (Bradberry) Though some may argue that IQ is more valuable than EQ, EQ is shown to be significantly important and achievable.

According to the article “Why You Need Emotional Intelligence to Succeed” written by Travis Bradberry, emotional intelligence is responsible for 58 percent of an individual’s performance. It affects how we behave, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results. According to the article, there is no known connection between IQ and EQ. IQ and personality does not change in a person’s lifetime; conversely, EQ is a “flexible set of skills that can be acquired and improved with practice.” (Bradberry) There are very strong arguments that maintain an individual who utilizes perseverance can work towards achieving a higher EQ. Perseverance is a trait that will help develop and strengthen Emotional Intelligence. If individuals persevere and continue to increase their EQ, they can also increase their likelihood to perform in almost all aspects of their life. According to Bradberry, “...90 % of top performers are also high in emotional intelligence”.

In the past, IQ was viewed as the defining determinant of success. (Cherry) People who had high IQs were believed to be the individuals who would be most successful in life. However, researchers came to realize that while people with high IQs experienced greater academic success, thereby often earning more money than those with lower IQs, it was not the only determinant of success. (Cherry) EQ is ever changing and developing. Perseverance can aid in the development of an individual's EQ. A person can achieve growth if they persevere and focus on achieving their highest EQ.

With perseverance, a person can see positive results in their life; specifically in their Emotional Intelligence. Perseverance cannot increase an individual's IQ, or change their personality, but it has a tremendous impact on EQ, thereby affecting almost every aspect of a person's life. A high emotional intelligence impacts everything a person does and says each day. (Bradberry)

Perseverance is a trait that will allow us to achieve higher emotional intelligence. It is not an easy task, but with perseverance we can see past obstacles along the way. Perseverance allows us to reach our goals, despite adversity, and encourages growth in our life. In regards to intelligence, we know that our IQs remain constant throughout our lives, but our EQs do not. We have the opportunity to increase our EQ, which can be just as valuable, if not more, than IQ. With perseverance and a desire to succeed in life, we can improve upon our emotional intelligence, yielding tremendous results.

Lauren Iglia
First Place, Grade 10

Elena Delle Donne, who was diagnosed with Lyme disease, constantly fought against her shortcomings by working through her own issues instead of letting them consume her. The word perseverance is defined as the act of powering through harsh events. Through perseverance, Delle Donne has triumphed in the sport of basketball, along with gaining a gold medal in the Olympics. Delle Donne's determination, admiration of her older sister, and honesty allowed her to persevere through her obstacles.

A quality of Delle Donne's that helped her persevere was a strong sense of determination. Delle Donne explained to her fans that "it was tough with a chronic illness. I had to work hard, train hard, and pour good things back into my body by eating healthy." (CC News) By taking care of her physical well-being in general, Delle Donne showed her determination to not let her disease set her back in her quest to achieve success in basketball.

Delle Donne's admiration of her sister, Lizzie, also helped her persevere through difficult situations. Lizzie's example of perseverance helped Delle Donne achieve success: "Lizzie is blind, deaf, autistic, and has cerebral palsy. But more importantly, Lizzie is Delle Donne's role model." ("WNBA Star Elena Delle Donne's Inspiration: Her Sister Living with Cerebral Palsy") Delle Donne has explained that Lizzie's demonstration of perseverance is admirable. Delle Donne revealed to her fans that what drives her dedication to overcoming her obstacles is, "my older sister. Doctors told her [Lizzie] that she wouldn't be able to do anything, and she has

achieved so much. I want to emulate her.” (CC News) Delle Donne’s admiration of her sister has helped her fight against the odds to become the successful athlete that she is known as today.

Finally, Delle Donne displays perseverance because she is open with others about her struggles. Delle Donne was the sort of individual that was willing to be honest about her flaws. By deciding to be honest with others about her Lyme disease diagnosis, Delle Donne was true to herself by admitting that her disease was challenging. At the same time, however, Delle Donne accepted that her disease was a platform that could allow her to progress. When asked about how she was continually able to persevere, Delle Donne responded that, “many times I was down and out. I was lucky that I was able to share with my mom, who helped me put things in perspective. She taught me that it’s healthy to express it when you feel the pain.” (CC News) Delle Donne was able to gain valuable advice that led her to face said obstacles and never give up. Delle Donne’s honesty about her struggles with her Lyme disease helped her conquer her illness and achieve her dreams.

In conclusion, Delle Donne was able to overcome adversity because of her qualities of persistence, admiration, and candor. Because of her persistence, admiration of her disabled sister, and openness about her shortcomings, Delle Donne was able to face her setbacks and move forward.

Quinn Boyd
Second Place, Grade 10

Perseverance is defined by the Smyrna School District as “the inner strength to remain constant to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles.” This is a quality that can help people get past difficult situations. Everyone has had moments where giving up has seemed like the best option, but it is up to that person to decide if they are willing to accept defeat. Perseverance plays a major role on why Emotional Intelligence Quotient, or EQ, is more important than Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, in a person.

EQ is the way an individual is able to manage and understand not only their own, but also others’ emotions. Being able to comprehend emotions is important for many reasons. Allowing one’s emotions to determine the outcome of something allows for the mistakes made to be fixed. Acknowledging that something went wrong and being able to react properly to the situation is what a person’s EQ is all about. Without EQ, many people would not be able to properly react to situations in life. The higher a person’s EQ is the more opportunities they are able to have because it means that they can adapt to the behavior and feelings of others.

The IQ is what describes a person’s level of intelligence. Kendra Cherry states: “IQ is still recognized as an important element of success, particularly when it comes to academic achievement.” Although this may be true, people fail to realize that there is more to being successful than just being intelligent. An individual’s IQ is a number that comes from a standardized intelligence test. Cherry states: “Some psychologists believe that standard measures of intelligence are too narrow and do not encompass the full range of human intelligence...”

Intelligence is not the only element necessary in order to persevere; the ability to control one's emotions towards others is equally important.

Perseverance is a quality of emotional intelligent people because being able to react in the right manner to a situation and having the capability to move on from it demonstrates what it means to persevere. EQ is more valuable than IQ because it enables you to develop relationships with others. In the article, "Why you need emotional intelligence to succeed," it states that in the workforce, "people with a high degree of emotional intelligence make more money--an average of \$29,000 more per year than people with a low degree of emotional intelligence." (Bradberry) When looking for a job, it is important to have the necessary skills and knowledge of the job, but hiring managers look more into an individual's personality and the way they interact with others in tough situations. Many jobs need more than just a smart person; a person that displays perseverance and a high EQ, has more opportunities than someone that does not.

Because emotional intelligence is accountable for more than fifty percent of one's performance in the workforce, it is crucial to understand how it can play a major role on a daily basis. If one is able to persevere, emotional intelligence can be developed and help the individual to find success in life.

Ana Uribe
Third Place, Grade 10

The keys to success were at my fingertips, but I just couldn't figure out how to use them. This situation probably sounds familiar to most. Everyone experiences problems they don't know the answer to right away. Some decide to back down from the impending challenge, believing it can't be accomplished. However, only a determined spirit can find the solution. The keys to success were quite literally at my fingertips seven years ago, and although I was unable to utilize them at first, my perseverance helped me to achieve my goal.

With the talent show a few weeks away, I had to learn this song. I stared at the sheet music for the piece I wanted to play: Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World." To a 4th grader, the 4-note chords appeared to be a foreign language and the words "legato" and "ritardando" definitely were foreign. I had just started taking piano lessons from my grandmother, and I loved it. When the talent show was announced, I signed up immediately so I could show my classmates how much I had learned. I decided to tell the teacher I would play "What a Wonderful World." Now to actually learn it. My first attempts were filled with incorrect notes and long pauses, my fingers maneuvering themselves hesitantly about the keys while I tried to find the right hand positions. I was a bit shaken at first when I saw the difficulty of the piece, but this was the song that I had selected: I was going to persevere and learn it.

After a few days, the opening and first few verses sounded excellent. I had mastered all the difficult chords and rhythms that had daunted me previously. Now I had to perfect the bridge. The bridge was filled with arpeggios in the bass clef that were tricky to play with my tiny fingers. Every time I reached the bridge of the song, it was challenging to focus on playing the

melody when I had to put almost all of my concentration into the bass line. Every time I practiced, however, I became more and more acclimated to the music in front of me. Now it was time to figure out the ending. Looking at the final chords, I noticed familiarities between them and the beginning. With some perseverance, I had learned how to play “What a Wonderful World.”

I anxiously approached the piano bench after my name was called, book in hand. No cringes after any wrong notes. No pauses while I figured out the correct hand positions. The audience rewarded me with a loud applause as I had realized the result of all my perseverance from the previous weeks. That foreign looking sheet music was something I was now able to play.

While everyone encounters obstacles, its how one acts towards them that determines the outcome. Those that shrink away from problems after a failure will never achieve success. It takes determination to solve problems. It takes perseverance.

Samuel Mace
First Place, Grade 11

Perseverance is denoted as “a steady persistence in a course of action in spite of difficulties or discouragement. The core value that has resonated with me since I joined the Smyrna School District in 3rd grade is perseverance. I have most firmly grasped the concepts of perseverance through examples in the school district, at home, and my own experiences.

Perseverance is exemplified in Smyrna School District in a wide array. My Pre-Calculus teacher perseveres daily with my class of overzealous gifted math students in her ability to prepare us for AP Calculus. I have taken 3 Advanced Placement classes at Smyrna High, and of those, 2 teachers have had to take maternity leave in the course of the year; they were still able, despite absences and pregnancies, to prepare our classes to pass the AP tests. I have had the immense pleasure to have Mrs. Wicks as my superintendent. Mrs. Wicks executes her duties with grace, poise, and dignity regardless of struggles. I have obtained an appreciation for perseverance so easily because it has been so readily available in my school, home, and life.

In my home life perseverance can be seen in the form of another word that begins with “P”: parents. My parents are the embodiments of perseverance in their efforts to raise 4 well-rounded children while juggling a plethora of other responsibilities. As a registered nurse, pastor, student, and mother, Grace Class-Peters has as many obstacles to overcome as one could imagine; from being on call, to having mountains of homework, to having to prepare a sermon, she must have the greatest bank of perseverance to even wake up in the mornings. My father, George, must overcome obstacles in the forms of being a substitute teacher, being a reverend, being a stay at home father. They persevered through having to migrate from Ghana, West Africa to New York, then migrating from New York to Smyrna, all in the pursuits of providing their children with better lives than the ones they were afforded in childhood.

I have also been faced with many opportunities to exemplify perseverance. The greatest example

of perseverance would be my experiences with the National FFA Agriscience Fair competition. I have participated in this contest for 5 years now, and I am glad to say that I have never attained victory. I am glad to say this because Julie Andrews once said, "Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th." In my first attempt, I received 21st place. In my 5th attempt, my partner and I received 4th place in the nation and a ranking of silver. I am choosing to persevere, and attempt for a 6th time to attain the aforementioned spoils of victory. I didn't quit, nor will I quit now. I have been blessed with the ability to have strong examples of excellence in perseverance in my school and home life; so blessed that I must persevere until I reach any and every goal that I have.

George Class Peters
Second Place, Grade 11

When I think about my life and my experience here at Smyrna High, my mind becomes filled with wise words from Maura Schafer, my indoor track coach. She reminds her athletes about the importance of perseverance, and how conference titles and state championships don't come easy. Coach Schafer has instilled upon us the mindset that we will only achieve success when we go after the task in front of us. We must fight for every inch in our race. This indoor track season has showed me what it feels like to persevere to achieve my goals, to fight through the pain and push for greater accomplishments in the end.

Entering the high school realm is a new world for everyone. We see students take new, unfamiliar opportunities. We see their change in mindset and change in character. As a freshman, I too experienced this change. I was encouraged to become involved in clubs and sports that I previously knew nothing about. My freshman year, I made the decision to join the indoor track team with the hope of staying in shape for softball. I soon realized how different track was than any other sport. I was uncomfortable at first. As I progressed through that indoor season, I realized how intense it was to compete at a track meet against hundreds of others. Every girl on that track had identical mindsets: "I will win." To feel that pressure was like nothing I've ever felt before. I didn't know how to overcome my nerves and clear my mind before stepping on that track. I focused so much on the possible outcomes that I lost sight of what was in front of me. I forgot about my training. I forgot about my preparation. The only thing on my mind was the fear of failure.

I decided it was time to become mentally tougher. I was tired of feeling weak and not believing in myself. I spoke with Coach Schafer about my concerns. She reminded me that I can only be as good as the work I put in, and that I needed to trust that my training would prepare me for the events come competition time. Every practice I fight to make the times expected of us. I found that feeling fatigued and exhausted after a workout was good because I was improving as an athlete. There are also days where I feel weak, unable to keep up with my teammates. Those days of weakness are what have made me a tougher athlete today. I fight to better myself in order to help my team in the end.

Listening to Coach Schafer's inspiring and encouraging words has assisted me in becoming a well-rounded athlete who can persevere through any obstacle. Although track has never been my main sport, I am thankful I made the commitment to persevere through each and every practice and meet because it has not only made me a stronger athlete, but a better person.

Kaelyn Press
Third Place, Grade 11

In literary works published throughout history, some of the most iconic characters have been made so because of their representation of an admirable trait, most commonly one of the main core values of the Smyrna School District. Compassion, Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, and Perseverance are all traits of protagonists in a number of stories, and as a result, these characters have become inspirations for many. One of the most iconic and influential members of literature is the character of Atticus Finch, from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. His character is the true representation how to live with the core value of perseverance.

Set in Maycomb, Alabama during the Depression Era, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel centered on the character of Atticus Finch. Atticus is a father, lawyer, and ultimately a key representation of how to persevere and pursue your goals even in the face of obstacles. During the course of the story, Atticus is appointed as the defense lawyer to Tom Robinson, and as a result becomes somewhat of an outcast among his peers. His friends, family, and other members of the community attempted to stop him from representing Robinson and spoke harshly about him throughout the novel. Atticus refused to step down from his position. He held steadfast in his fight for justice and continued on despite this adversity. He was a true role model to both his community and readers of the novel showing what it truly takes to exhibit perseverance in everyday life.

Atticus also demonstrated perseverance through his relationships with his family. When talking to his two children, Jem and Scout, Atticus once stated, "I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do." (149) Atticus instills the idea of perseverance in his children by showing them that it does not matter who or what attempts to stop you from your achieving goal, it is important to see things through. The quality of perseverance is also exhibited by Atticus many times outside of the courtroom. For example, when his son Jem was convicted of a crime and was set to face charges, it was assumed by many that Atticus would defend his son and get the charges dropped, but he refused. Atticus was often pushed to reverse his decision, but he knew that the experience would benefit his son and stuck to his decision.

It is often challenging to persevere in everyday life, but Harper Lee was able to capture it in the character of Atticus Finch. Despite all obstacles, Atticus fought for what he believed in and used his inner strength to overcome whatever may come his way. He was persistent in all aspects in life and through this he was rewarded in his success as both a lawyer and father.

Samantha Sawyer
First Place, Grade 12

Perseverance can be described as the refusal to give up, no matter how many times failure is suffered or how severe each failure is. Perseverance is the drive to never stop trying to accomplish and innovate, no matter how difficult the path may become. Famed former Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz said that, "You aren't going to find anybody that's going to be successful...without perseverance." There have been many great examples of perseverance throughout American history, inspiring others and leading to revolutionary innovations.

Michael Jordan is widely regarded as one of the best professional basketball players of all-time. In high-school, however, Michael was cut from his high school basketball team. Steven Spielberg, the director behind blockbusters such as *Jaws* and *E.T.*, was rejected by the University of Southern California film program twice. The Beatles, one of the most recognizable bands in history, were rejected by several recording companies, in particular Decca Records, which stated that The Beatles had, "no future in show business." Television icon Oprah Winfrey lost her job at a news station in Baltimore. Today she owns her own television network. James Dyson went through 5,125 prototypes before he was finally able to create the first bagless vacuum. Thomas Edison was said to have failed thousands of times before finally inventing a long lasting, practical lightbulb. All of these people have two things in common. One is that they are revolutionaries that changed the way people view the world. The other is that they all failed before they changed the world.

Perseverance changes the world. If Michael Jordan had have given up on himself after he was cut in high school, we may regard Scottie Pippen as the greatest Chicago Bull of all time. If Steven Spielberg decided that film just wasn't meant to be, we might never know the dangers of recreating dinosaurs from preserved DNA. If The Beatles had given up on the music business after their rejection, we may have never realized that love really is all you need. Oprah Winfrey without perseverance would be a jobless Oprah in a world without intimate celebrity interviews. If James Dyson quit after his first failed prototype, we might still be emptying a bag after cleaning and dealing with the hassle of vacuum cords. Finally, if Thomas Edison decided that lightbulbs just weren't possible, we might still be using oil lamps to light our houses. The point is, without perseverance, the world would be stuck. There would be virtually no advances in technology and we would live in a world rife with stagnating ideas.

In conclusion, perseverance drives the world forward. Perseverance is change. There have been countless numbers of people who were doubted, rejected, and labelled failures, but with perseverance, they were able to overcome and achieve their goals. Perseverance is one of the most important core values in our society today, one that truly embodies the American spirit and a drive to succeed in the face of failure.

Nathan Williamson
Second Place, Grade 12

People often have different concepts of what perseverance means to them. One true definition of perseverance means a steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement. Now, the Smyrna School District has about the same definition, but adds that perseverance means the inner strength to remain constant to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles; which includes dedication, consistency, and having a positive attitude. British literature has introduced us to many characters who display perseverance throughout the action of a story. However, I believe Macbeth best demonstrated perseverance through his actions. I chose Macbeth because he did everything he could to become king and powerful with the mindset of nothing stopping him.

It all began when the witches informed Macbeth of three prophecies; he would be Thane of Glamis, then Thane of Cawdor, and finally the King of Scotland. When Macbeth hears this he is astonished and the thought dwells in him. He is so anxious that he cannot wait for it to happen by chance, so he takes it into his own hands. Macbeth plans the murder of King Duncan and he succeeds. With the help and constant pressure of Lady Macbeth, they murder Duncan, the King of Scotland. His ruthless act results with Macbeth being crowned king. You would think that would be enough for Macbeth, but he is determined and wants more power.

The witches had also prophesied that Macbeth's best friend, Banquo, had a son who would become King. That immediately worried Macbeth that his future children would not take the throne. So, through his steady persistence to make sure he remained in power, Macbeth orders two men to kill Banquo and his son, Fleance. Macbeth is successful in the murder of Banquo, but not Fleance...resulting in his plan not working. That was not the last of him though, he had more planned.

Macduff was one of the men skeptical of Macbeth and wanted him dethroned. Of course, Macbeth worried about remaining king and in power, so he decided to have Macduff's family killed. He did everything he could to get what he wanted and never stopped until it killed him. In the end, Macbeth, in the face of those who want him dead, is still boastful and tells the people no one can kill him. He is dedicated to keeping his position as king and remaining in power.

Although this type of perseverance resulted in complete tragedy, it still shows the act of persevering. Macbeth did get what he was aiming for, to be King. He remained in power for as long as he could and never stopped trying. His dedication was serious but his ambition got the best of him. There was words once said by William Cobbett that go like this, "Men fail much oftener from the want of perseverance than from the want of talent," and that can put Macbeth's situation in perspective.

Briana Henry
Third Place, Grade 12

HONORABLE MENTION

CLAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Peyton Holt	Kindergarten
Joe'Lee Holmes	Kindergarten
Ava Nix	Kindergarten
Selena Mujica	Kindergarten
Frank Furr	Kindergarten

Emma Holman	Grade 1
Dominic DelDuco	Grade 1
Tanner McNatt	Grade 1
Zuri Blackwell	Grade 1
Olivia Aurand	Grade 1

Elayna Zeitler	Grade 2
La'Ryna Roberts	Grade 2
Gabrianna Lehnert	Grade 2
Rory Whitehouse	Grade 2
Madison DiMattia	Grade 2

Taylor Martinez	Grade 3
Annabella Mumley	Grade 3
Jackson Pleasonton	Grade 3
Addie Kline	Grade 3
Grace Holt	Grade 3

Keira Shahan	Grade 4
Cadence Baker	Grade 4
Nathan Roscoe	Grade 4
Millie Skaggs	Grade 4
Kylee Lehnert	Grade 4

NORTH SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bella Cuevas	Kindergarten
Valerie Wyre	Kindergarten
Savannah Turner	Kindergarten
Deana Washington	Kindergarten
Colten Sturgis	Kindergarten

Jadyn Pizarro	Grade 1
Justin Smeltzer	Grade 1
Aslyn Merrell	Grade 1
Anakin Hogle	Grade 1
Lillian Penix	Grade 1

Marcus Naklicki	Grade 2
Dimitrius Herard	Grade 2
Christian Stewart	Grade 2
Simon Markowitz	Grade 2
Kaden Puetz	Grade 2

Abigail McAllister	Grade 3
Hayya Coursey	Grade 3
Gabrielle Bowser	Grade 3
Alyssa Spicer	Grade 3
Kaitlyn Tippy	Grade 3

Meghan Bowers	Grade 4
Yaniyah Jones	Grade 4
Ciara Murray	Grade 4
Raquel Kakari	Grade 4
Natalie Naylor	Grade 4

SMYRNA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Augustus Purdy	Kindergarten
Jeffrey Clark	Kindergarten
LeVaughn Smalls	Kindergarten
Kyler Stevens	Kindergarten
Trey Sparrow	Kindergarten

Cody Dorris	Grade 1
Oluwatoni Adejoro	Grade 1
Shylah Bruce	Grade 1
Gavin Connor	Grade 1
Chase Williams	Grade 1

David Akyea
Laquan Stokes
Kierstyn Robey
Aubrey Huester
Angel Hardy

Andrew Fioravanti	Grade 2
Ida Corrah	Grade 2
Alyxa Burrowes	Grade 2
Saige Wilson	Grade 2
Isabella Bento	Grade 2

Adriana Marchesano	Grade 3
Adison Weisenberger	Grade 3
McKayla Kirch	Grade 3
Rachel Kane	Grade 3
Audrey Laird	Grade 3

Grade 4
Grade 4
Grade 4
Grade 4
Grade 4

SUNNYSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Violet Brown	Kindergarten	Taylor Rybicki	Grade 2
Payton Bullock	Kindergarten	Patrick Winslow Hill	Grade 2
Natalie Webber	Kindergarten	Madelyn Margavage	Grade 2
Ryder Hughes	Kindergarten	Naima Johnson	Grade 2
Lillyana McLaughlin	Kindergarten	Bryanna Baker	Grade 2
Parker Wallace	Grade 1	Noah Nye	Grade 3
Leah Easton	Grade 1	Kaiden Norris	Grade 3
Rose Waltemire	Grade 1	Kai'Lee Thomas	Grade 3
Gabrielle Smith	Grade 1	Elijah Harmon	Grade 3
Wesleigh McGuigan	Grade 1	Adjoa Asare	Grade 3
	Richard Shimp	Grade 4	
	Jocelyn Tejada	Grade 4	
	Ryan Snyder	Grade 4	
	Shauna Waltz	Grade 4	
	Mia Davis	Grade 4	

IBM INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Vanessa Bib	Grade 5
Alexander Gates	Grade 5
Isabela Richichi-Leon	Grade 5
Giada Tiberi	Grade 5
Joey Blankenship	Grade 5
Carly Littleton	Grade 6
Daniel Stout	Grade 6
Shay'anna Dennis	Grade 6
Dalayna Fountain	Grade 6
Juls Korup	Grade 6

CLAYTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Kailah Crews	Grade 5
Taylor Voshell	Grade 5
Heather Thwin	Grade 5
Quincy Simmons	Grade 5
Vincent Chas	Grade 5
James Guy	Grade 6
Jadelynn Hendricks	Grade 6
Lindsey Seeney	Grade 6
Faith Hewes	Grade 6
Hannah Heverin	Grade 6

SMYRNA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sarah Dinsmore	Grade 7
Thomas Bell	Grade 7
Delaney Smenkowski	Grade 7
Kaitlyn Collins	Grade 7
Laila Gilliam	Grade 7
Brynn Rifino	Grade 8
Megan Keller	Grade 8
Taylor Roy	Grade 8
Tanner Holden	Grade 8

SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL

Jahzeel Gregory	Grade 9	Tiffany Collins	Grade 11
Enock Kakari	Grade 9	Jordyn Reed	Grade 11
Jordan Hill	Grade 9	Rashawn King	Grade 11
Melissa Perez	Grade 9	Hector Rivas Gonzalez	Grade 11
Emmanuel Lewis	Grade 9	MarcAnthony Smith	Grade 11
Raiana Semenick	Grade 10	Jordan Sinclair	Grade 12
Tyler Yeomans	Grade 10	Lindsey Asbury	Grade 12
Olivia Smith	Grade 10	Cynthia Kayati	Grade 12
Grace Kayati	Grade 10	Wade Beisner	Grade 12
Morgan Holman	Grade 10	Gabrielle Ayala	Grade 12