

**2023**  
**WINTER**  
**ZINE**  
**YOUTH**  
**AGES**  
**14-19**

# HEAR OUR VOICE



## **Winter 2023 Youth Ages 14 - 19 Zine**

***“Be yourself. Above all, let who you are, what you are, and what you believe shine through every sentence you write, every piece you finish.”***

**– John Jakes**

**You cannot be a writer unless you see yourself as one. Each program begins with an exploration of ourselves as writers, creators, and communicators. Some work is developed by the individual, and some work is a collaborative effort.**

**Enjoy youth pieces from Podium partners at:**

**Armstrong High School  
George Wythe High School  
John Marshall High School  
Huguenot High School  
Highland Springs High School**





# Poetry and Prose

Enjoy creative poems and narrative storytelling from our high school students

**A Campfire Story**  
**Anonymous**  
**Armstrong HS**

At this site, 20 years ago, something tragic happened. What if I told you that it happened on this day?

There once was a 12-year-old boy named Kyle. He didn't want to go to camp, but being told multiple times by his parents he needed to socialize, he set off. His time at camp was bad, to say the least, from start to finish. When he arrived at his bunk, other kids teased him, took his toothpaste and clothes, and played pranks on him. That was the worst part of all.

One day he decided to run away from it all and bumped into a counselor. The counselor convinced him that there's more to camp than he has been experiencing. He told him, "Come to the bonfire at 10:00 tonight, so you can see what camp is really about." Kyle wiped away the tears from his face and agreed to come.

The beginning of the bonfire was fine, until it wasn't. In an attempt to pull another prank, the kids poured oil on the fire to scare him. Little did they know it would not end well. I'm going to spare you the details, but I'm sure you can figure out what happened.

Legend has it that on this day, every 5 years, Kyle appears.

**Nuestro Amado Pueblo**  
**Yeferson A.**  
**Huguenot HS**

Hay un evento muy importante en nuestro pueblo mañana. El día anterior, sucedió algo muy grave y tengo que salvar nuestro pueblo. ¡El volcán se hizo erupción! Yo avise a las autoridades que la erupción estaba empezando. Nadie estaba seguro. ¡Empecé a decirle a los ciudadanos que tenían que salir de la fiesté y correr, AHORA MISMO!

**Our Beloved Town**

There was a very important event in our town. The day before, something happened that was very serious, and I had to save the whole town. Our volcano was erupting! I told the authorities the eruption was starting. No one was safe. I started to tell all of the citizens that they had to leave the party and run, RIGHT NOW!



**A Day to Remember**  
**Jomauri D.**  
**Armstrong HS**

If I remove my personal hygiene,  
I will get bullied.  
I will smell bad for the day.  
People will not sit around me.  
I will cry,  
and then cry some more.

**Life is like a Basketball**  
**Jakobe A.**  
**Highland Springs HS**

Life is like  
a basketball game.  
You will always  
win some  
and lose some.

**A Friend's House**  
**Anonymous**  
**Huguenot HS**

This is the story of three statues.

It was on a Thursday, and a man named James Mchamon had just woken up from a nightmare. His house was built right next to a steep cliff. It was common for James to have dreams about falling off the cliff, but this nightmare was a strange one. At the front of the cliff there were three statues. The statues were made of an all-black ore, with an ominous red light coming out of the middle.

The dream that James had on this particular night made him so fearful because he was always too scared to go to the peak of the mountain. But, on this night, at 1:00 a.m., he felt drawn to it. And the closer he got to the peak, he was able to see that ominous red light. When he finally got to the top, he saw the statues and started to hear whispers. He became so afraid that he sped down the mountain in his car so fast that he when he hit the ice, the car ran off the road and he was never seen again!

That's the story of James Mchamon. They say if you dream of these statues, your time has come.



**At Peace**  
**Najah W.**  
**Armstrong HS**

I feel most at peace when I'm at my house and in my room. There are other places that make me feel at peace, but I choose my room. I choose my room because it's where I feel most comfortable. I don't like my bed too much, though it's the only place that I can generally have my own space. An alternative to my bed is at my Godfather's place. He has a really nice apartment, and I have a lot of my own space when I am there.

I feel that my most unrealistic place for peace would be in a forest. I feel like there would be a nice comfy spot out in a forest somewhere. I would put up a hammock, some lights, and maybe a little cabin to live in. I, of course, would have a cat or maybe a couple of cats living with me.

I feel most at peace with my dog Solo. I've been around him since he was a pup. He is so fluffy and pretty big. I love how cute his face is and how chubby his jowls are. He doesn't like to stay still a lot which is something I genuinely like. I like this because I need moments where I'm active and distracted. He brings me happiness.

**Hallucinations**  
**Camryn C.**  
**Highland Springs HS**

Your eye is your beholder.  
Be careful and watch your back.  
Someone might get you when you least suspect it.

It's always watching you....

**Things That Make Me Happy**  
**Markel D.**  
**Huguenot HS**

I love mozzarella sticks because I love the cheese that's inside of them. I love my sister because she makes me feel better when she's around. I love my mom because she is my best friend. I also love games because I love playing them and knowing how good I am! I love anime because I love the look and sound of it. I love my friends because they are a joy to be around. I love my siblings because I love playing with them. I love sounds because I love hearing them, music because I love the sound it makes, and GameStop because that is my hobby.

**Under my Bed**  
**Catherine C.**  
**George Wythe HS**

“The space under a bed is actually a portal to another world.”  
When I go under my bed,  
I feel like I'm in my own world.  
When I go under my bed,  
I fall into Hawaii.  
My Teddy Bear comes and asks me,  
“Would you like to go into the portal to Hawaii?”  
It is tropical in the islands.  
The wind feels like a sweet breeze.  
I get a nice tan from the sun and enjoy swimming in the beauty of the beach.  
Playing in the sand,  
I believe that the space under my bed is a portal to Hawaii!

**Get Going**  
**Mahogany L.**  
**Armstrong HS**

I woke up. That's it. Just woke up and sat there, looking at nothing and everything. I start to feel parched, but I ignore the feeling. I look at my hands and think, “Gotta go fast.” I have to quote God each morning, so I go and wash my face. As I come back, I remember that I am in an immense amount of debt to a fictional raccoon. I eat whatever is on my bed and almost choke. “Damn,” I say, as a stale Dorito taco attacks my throat. I ignore the threat to my life and continue to get dressed. I feel tired, but I ignore the feeling and continue on with my thoughts. Then I hear my alarm. “Oh yeah, I have to go.” I head out of my house and hop on the bus.

While I'm in school, I choke on air and almost fall asleep all day. I get to rehearsals, but I just can't do it. I go home where my father asks me a question, but I'm too tired to answer. I eat, clean my dish, and go upstairs. I close my eyes to feel the sweet embrace of sleep, but it doesn't happen. I don't sleep. I'm just awake in my pain and misery. I think I should play Animal Crossing but then remember that my favorite singing dog isn't there, so I just sit and cry until 6:00 am.

Then, I do this all over again.





**Alarm**  
**Keyionna C.**  
**Highland Springs HS**

This makes no sense. I was just in my bed. My soft, warm bed. So, WHY am I in school, and what happened to my clothes? Everyone's eyes are on me. I look down at my feet, and they're wet. I look up again and see a shark! Bruh, what is happening? I look to the right, and I'm in Outer Space. I can't breathe. What's happening to me? I close my eyes and open them, where I am now standing in front of a lion, tiger and bear. I run as fast as I can. My legs hurt so bad, but they won't stop following me. I start to hear this ringing, but I keep running. I trip, fall over a cliff, and just fall into the dark.

I jolt up and out of my sleep, turn off my alarm, and start getting ready for school.

**Cousins**  
**Debbie G.R.**  
**George Wythe HS**

It was a stormy, rainy day in El Salvador. My two cousins, Steven and Fabiola, and I were role playing that we were in a forest. The sounds of the rain around us made us think of nature, so we pretended our tent had four rocking chairs so old that they had lasted two entire generations. We had a long blanket for cover and electric candles as lanterns. My cousins and I loved being in that tent, although Abuela would get mad at us because we always messed with her sacred things. This wasn't a real tent, remember, nor were we in a real forest, but I loved making those memories because it reminded me of how close we were and how much we loved and cared for each other.

Now, my one cousin Fabiola still lives in El Salvador, and my other cousin Steven lives in Los Angeles. It's rare that we talk to each other, and this makes me sad.

**Comfort**  
**Zion L.**  
**Armstrong HS**

I feel most comfortable  
and at peace in my living room.  
Most of my best memories happened  
in that room,  
and in that house.  
I have an emotional attachment to that room.





**The Job**  
**Christian C.**  
**Highland Springs HS**

“You have the job, Tim!” exclaimed Thomas. Tim seemed happy about his hiring, so he requested to start work immediately. His request was approved, and he went to work. Before he left, he grabbed his meds and ran out the door. He drove as fast as he could to his job. Before he walked in, he grabbed a pill and put it in his pocket. He walked in, sat down in his office, and got to work.

Just then, his coworker Omar walked in and reminded him to take his meds. Tim was confused as to how Omar knew he had to take medicine. Out of nowhere, all his coworkers swarmed around him and forced him to take the pill that was in his pocket. He saw everyone fade away, and his office turn into an abandoned hospital.

**Reasons**  
**Shyla S.**  
**George Wythe HS**

In July, I felt as if I was in a box filled with negative thoughts and words about myself. A box that was blocking my voice, so that no one else could hear me. A box that made me feel as if I would be swallowed whole by my loneliness and sorrow. I finally realized the friends I had poured my heart and soul out to left me as dry as sand. They walked away after taking advantage of my kindness and love for others, and people ask me why I tend to not care about making new friends.

**The Zombie Movie**  
**Quinton B., Chania B., Xavier R., and Jamari J.**  
**Armstrong HS**

The outbreak started because Quinton was caught eating turkey. It took 4 hours for him to contract the virus and start eating ankles. One month later, it went from ankles to kneecaps. The virus was then passed on to Chania, but for some reason Chania did not catch it, so she was able to escape from Quinton and went to Xavier's house.

In the meantime, Quinton was walking through the darkness, following the smell of Chania's ankles. But, instead of Chania, Quinton attacked Xavier's ankles and everyone else's ankles that he could see. The hardest person to catch was Jamari, but once he tripped over a wet sandwich, Quinton was able to bite him. He slipped and was getting bitten, but he was trying hard to fight against the virus. He ended up in a lab and met the scientist that had created a cure. He received the cure himself, and then gave it to his brother Xavier and sister Chania. Ever since that day, they have been surviving.



**Nuestro Amor**  
**Erik Á. and Arlin H.**  
**Huguenot HS**

Mi novio y yo nos conocimos en la escuela. El día era uno normal. Nos empezamos a hablar ese día y nos fuimos conociéndonos poco a poco. Con el tiempo, nos fuimos enamorándonos. Después de habernos conocido más y contamos un poco sobre nuestras vidas. Nos hicimos novios y desde ese día hemos estado muy feliz los dos.

**Our Love**

My boyfriend and I met each other at school. It was a normal day. We began talking that day and we began to get to know each other. With time, we began to fall in love. After getting to know each other, we began to share little bits about our life. We became a couple and since that day we have been very happy together.

**The Lost Girl**  
**Jamesha H.**  
**George Wythe HS**

Jason was with his group of friends, Millie, Jessica, Zay, Brandon, and Mac. They decided to go camping in the haunted woods called "The Weeping Willow Woods." They are the most haunted woods in Virginia. They made it to the woods and set up everything they would need.

Jason and the guys went to go get some wood, but they heard a girl crying. She sounded like she was around the age of 6-9, and she had on a black gown. Jason asked her what was wrong. She chopped his face up and force fed every inch of his body to his friends. She did the same thing until the last person, and then she ate them herself. That's the end of the story of the Weeping Willow Woods.

The story was being told to a group of kids who started to cry and begged to go home. They all thought that the story was true, and then, the storyteller ate the kids.

**Help**  
**Jovan B.**  
**Armstrong HS**

I need food stamps, so I need to get a job.  
But I don't want to because I don't want to work.  
My legs help me walk.  
My arms help me carry things.  
My brain helps me think.



## **The Flavor of Intensity**

**Christopher S.**

**George Wythe HS**

When it hits, things happen that I can't explain.  
It's not only like a bomb going off over and over,  
But like riding the most intense roller coaster in the world.  
As soon as you hit that first bank turn,  
That's when the magic happens.

It's war, but not meaningless war.  
The war of two sides fighting for what they believe in,  
Fighting with honor, power, and especially respect.  
That is what happens when that bomb goes off.

It happens so commonly,  
I don't know how many people share this,  
But I know there are a lot.  
I understand why!  
This feeling is outstanding,  
And I love this feeling too.

The fact of the matter is:  
They are only \$2.30 at the dollar store!  
Wow. Takis.

## **Missing Teacher**

**Jamarcus F.**

**Huguenot HS**

I think there is a teacher missing from school. She is probably dying from food poisoning, and nobody knows what happened. Maybe the Principal poisoned her food because the detectives looked through the security cameras and found evidence that the principal poisoned her? The principal must be put in jail for 2000 years for attempted murder!

## **What Family Means**

**Tae'Quawn M.**

**George Wythe HS**

The day that I felt a bunch of love directed towards me was at my dad's memorial. Just by having new family around, meeting them, knowing that they felt love for me, and having my siblings around made me feel so good that day.



**The Necro Virus**  
**Jadon M. and Jamian H.**  
**Armstrong HS**

The world was unprepared for what was about to happen. It started with a simple virus, just like any other, but this one was different. This one could turn people into flesh eating cannibals.

It started in a small village in China, spreading from saliva and blood. Before long, it started to change innocent people into mindless, flesh-eating monsters. The government tried to contain it, but it was too late. The virus was spreading beyond their control.

The virus was called The Necro Virus.

**Karma**  
**Exon M.**  
**Huguenot HS**

En Huguenot High School, en la clase de 425, había un chico que le gustaban las películas de acción. Un día llegó un estudiante nuevo que le sacaron de otra escuela por molestar mucho a sus compañeros. Por eso, le pasaron a la nueva escuela y la primera vez que vio a José, lo empezó a molestar. Un día, José se cansó y empezó a entrenar y hacerse fuerte para que no lo volvieran a molestar. Desde ese día, el bullí de José nunca lo volvió a molestar. Lo que aprendió José y los demás es que nunca le hagas bullí porque tarde o temprano le puede llegar el karma.

**Karma**

At Huguenot High School, in classroom 425, there was a child who loved action movies. One day, a new student arrived after being removed from another school because he was always making fun of his classmates. For that reason, he was moved to the new school, and the first time he saw Jose, he began to make fun of him. One day, Jose became tired of it, so he began to train and become strong so that he was never bullied again. Since that day, Jose's bully never bullied him again. What Jose and everyone else learned was never to bully someone because sooner or later karma will come along.

**The Raccoon**  
**Jenee G.**  
**Armstrong HS**

Things feel very normal until a scientist develops poisonous venom. He decides to test the effects on a raccoon to see if it works, but it fails. He thinks that nothing is wrong with the animal, so he lets it go into the wild. Days go by, followed by weeks and then months. Finally, it's around Christmas time.

The raccoon had gotten into some trash, and a family heard the noise. It was late at night, and the dad went out to see what was going on. The raccoon jumped out and bit him. The dad threw the raccoon off but soon realized he had no control of his own body. This virus spread throughout the city but left one person alive. She was new to the city, and her move had turned into a nightmare. Eventually, as the months went by, she also was bitten and turned into a crawler.





**Principal's Office**  
**Brianna N.**  
**George Wythe HS**

One day I was called to the principal's office. I knew why I was getting called there.

*\*Flashback\**

It was a Monday, and I was in first block. A girl came up to me and yelled, "Have you been talking to Jacob?"

I said "what?"

The girls' name was Taylor, and she said again, "Have you been talking to Jacob?"

I said, "don't talk to me like that," and the next thing I knew, someone was dragging me off of her!

*\*End of Flashback\**

Now, I'm sitting in the principal's office with Taylor, her parents, and my parents. I explain my side of the story, and Taylor says hers. I ended up getting suspended because I had to be separated from her!

The reason this all happened is because Taylor came up to me and asked if I was seeing Jacob, but I was confused by the question, and we had never had a conversation about it before. She started cursing at me and being disrespectful. I don't allow anyone to be disrespectful to me.

**DayBreak**  
**Ce'von G.**  
**Armstrong HS**

December 25th, 6:05 a.m., Queens New York:

Mikey stepped outside and started walking to Times Square. The fresh air smelled like morning dew. The sky was a pure light blue.

And then...zombies appeared, and the earth was in chaos. There was no cure and no escape. Only slaughter.

**Memories**  
**Mekhi R.**  
**George Wythe HS**

I have very good memories of playing football.  
I always scored 8 touchdowns a game.





## **Un Corazón Noble**

**Mario R.**

**Huguenot HS**

Un día que no había escuela, un niño llamado Esteban encontró un carro muy lujoso enfrente de su casa. Esto le llamo la atención entonces decidió echar un vistazo y se percató que las llaves se encontraron en el interior. El niño, con un corazón noble, fue en busca de un oficial de policía, el cual le ayudo a encontrar el dueño. El dueño y la policía se pusiera manos a la obra y entre los dos lograron sacar las llaves. El dueño del carro le agradeció al niño y le dio cien dólares. El niño regreso a su casa muy feliz.

## **A Noble Heart**

One day, when there was no school, a boy named Esteban found a luxury car in front of his house. This caught his attention, and he decided to go have a look. He noticed that the keys were inside the car. The boy, with a noble heart, went searching for an official from the police, who helped him find the owner. The owner and the police got to work, and between the two of them, they got the keys out. The owner of the car was very thankful towards the child and gave him one hundred dollars. The boy returned to his house happy.

## **Abandoned Car**

**KeNyah S.**

**Armstrong HS**

Chania found an abandoned car outside her house, realized it was her boyfriend's car, and that his keys were still inside. She called and texted him for hours, but he never answered. She called the police the next day since the car was still there and nobody had come for it. She went around the neighborhood and went to every door but couldn't find him. He still has not been found to this day.

## **The Love Doves**

**Sierra M.**

**Highland Springs HS**

One day, a male dove flew in a tree, met a female dove, and they fell in love. But, another dove was also in love with the female dove. He noticed that the other dove was cheating on his girlfriend, so he fought like a bull and won. The female dove was furious, and they broke up! Their hearts were broken, and the dove didn't know what to do. So, he flew to the tree and gave her flowers. He said he was sorry for fighting, so they flew around together in the sky and into the clouds. Meanwhile, in the springtime the flowers were blooming, and the love doves had eggs. Soon there was a bunch of baby doves. They had all become a family, and now the two doves are in love again.

## **Carpet**

**Dominique S.**

**George Wythe HS**

“OMG, look what you did! I can’t believe you just spilled wine on my parents’ \$4 million carpet. Look Janelle!”

“I don’t know why your parents have a \$4 million carpet anyway.”

“You took out the wine saying that we should raid my parents’ liquor cabinet. Don’t blame them.”

“Okay, I’m sorry, but how are we going to get this out? Maybe we should just tell them?”

“No, please! I can’t get in trouble with them even one more time.”

“Well, maybe it’s because you keep lying to them. Just tell them the truth.”

“Okay, fine. Maybe I can just tell them.”

Two hours passed.

“Come on, now is your chance to tell them.”

“Okay, fine.”

As I walked down the stairs, my heart was pounding, until I finally reached the bottom step. It felt like a thousand years had passed.

“Hey, Mom, hey Dad, we have something to tell you guys.”

“What is it?” they said.

I took a deep breath and started to speak.

“We spilled your wine on the carpet.”

“You did what?” Dad said looking so mad.

“Come on, at least she told us,” Mom said. “Okay, this can go two ways. One month without your phones and you have to take that stain out of the carpet, or you girls go to Grandma’s house and help her out.”

It wasn’t a question. We picked no phones and went upstairs. “I told you to just tell them the truth.”

“Okay, you were right!”

## **Past and Future**

**Mariah J.**

**Armstrong HS**

Andi Mack had a stroke. MJ was sad as Andi was laying on the floor. MJ went in her pocket and stole her wallet. With the money from Andi, MJ got some ice cream at the ice cream place. MJ met Rena, and they fell in love and got married.

Andi woke up from her stroke. It had been 20 years. She looked for her wallet. She thought long and hard about the last person she was with, and remembered it was MJ. She went to look for her, and after a long search, she found MJ and asked for her money.

### **Reconnecting with my Cousin**

**Jachaun T.**

**George Wythe HS**

I can't remember the day, but I remember where I was. I think the time when I felt the most love was when I reconnected with my cousin. It was about 4 years ago, and I remember that I was in my mom's car. I saw my cousin. She came inside the car to hug me and started to cry!

### **The Long Nap**

**Almira M.**

**Armstrong HS**

Hi, I'm Gina Lopez. The date is 2/15/23, and according to the doctors and my dad, I've been asleep for 20 years. The last thing I remember is getting ice cream with my dad and my sister. I slipped and fell into a table!

### **A Cure**

**Abby S. and Laron T.**

**Armstrong HS**

One day, a scientist made a formula that he thought was a cure for Smallpox. He didn't realize that the vaccine would kill people, so he went ahead and decided to give it to people. People started getting infected, and it began to spread to the outside world. One man got bit and got smallpox, and others became sick as they were trying to help.

### **Mickey Mouse**

**Xylah W.**

**Highland Springs HS**

Mickey Mouse was driving, listening to music, when he had to slam on the brakes. Something flew right in front of his car. He jumped out of the car to see what it was and if it was okay. It was a person. When they stood up, he asked if they were alright. "Yes, I'm fine; thanks for not hitting me," the strange lady said. "Yeah, I'm sorry about that. What happened there?" Mickey asked. "Umm, we don't need to talk about that." Mickey asked for her name, and she told him it was Gabby.



# Power & Authority

**Enjoy student reflections and imaginative stories on what would happen if they were left in charge of a situation.**

**Mrs. Robinda  
Jayla C.  
Armstrong HS**

Mrs. Robinda left 2 weeks ago because her grandma was on the verge of death. Earlier in the semester, she told stories about her relationship with her grandma. They were the best of friends. She left me in charge to help regulate the class's behavior. Personally, this was my first time ever being in her class, so I didn't know any of the required material. I did not feel eligible to teach a class of seniors in high school. I never told the other students that she left me in charge, so that made it easier to not take on the responsibility. The school was forced to send in a substitute, Mr. Bonder. Now, I can learn without carrying the burden of teaching.

**Dos Semanas de Fútbol  
Erik Á.  
Huguenot HS**

La maestra salió de la clase por una emergencia y ella me dejó a cargo de la clase. Desde ese momento, hace dos semanas y aún no ha regresado. Se enfermó el papá de nuestra maestra y ella tenía que salir de la escuela. Lo primero que hice era jugar pelota y me sentí libre. Estas dos semanas eran las mejores semanas de nuestra clase. Estábamos mis compañeros y yo jugando fútbol.

**Two Weeks of Football**

The teacher left our classroom because of an emergency, and she left me in charge of the class. Since that moment, it has been two weeks, and she still has not returned. Our teacher's father got sick, and she had to leave school. The first thing we did was play ball, and I felt very free. These two weeks have been the best two weeks of class. My classmates and I were all playing football.

## **El Accidente**

**Mani G.**

**Huguenot HS**

Mi jefe salió y me dejó como encargado. Hubo una emergencia y pasaron tres semanas desde que salió. Aún no ha regresado. Pasó un accidente y quedó lastimado Juan. Lo mandaron al hospital y el doctor dijo quién vio como pasó el accidente. Lucas vio como sucedió el accidente pero no quiso de decir porque él tuvo la culpa.

## **The Accident**

My boss went out and left me in charge. There was an emergency, and it has been three weeks since he left. He still has not returned. There was an accident that happened, and Juan was hurt. They sent him to the hospital, and the doctor asked who saw the accident. Lucas saw how the accident happened but did not want to say because it was his fault.

**JJ**

**Jailene C.**

**Armstrong HS**

What happens when the teacher has to leave and puts JJ in charge? JJ ends up not taking control. The whole class starts doing whatever they want. The reason for this is that JJ isn't feeling well. When the teacher returns, the whole class stops and looks at JJ. They see that something is wrong and, after comforting JJ, everything goes back to normal.

## **Missing Teacher**

**Daquan C.**

**Armstrong HS**

My teacher, Ms. Andi had to leave the class for an emergency, and she put MJ in charge. A few minutes later Ms. Andi still hadn't come back. We had to do something, so we called her mom and dad, and told them that the teacher had to go out and handle something and had not returned. We thought she was kidnapped or missing.



**Reconnecting with my Cousin**  
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**George Wythe HS**

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**Mickey Mouse**  
**Xylah W.**  
**Highland Springs HS**

Mickey Mouse was driving, listening to music, when he had to slam on the brakes. Something flew right in front of his car. He jumped out of the car to see what it was and if it was okay. It was a person. When they stood up, he asked if they were alright. "Yes, I'm fine; thanks for not hitting me," the strange lady said. "Yeah, I'm sorry about that. What happened there?" Mickey asked. "Umm, we don't need to talk about that." Mickey asked for her name, and she told him it was Gabby.

**Pobre Maestra Sara**  
**Cesar M.**  
**Huguenot HS**

La maestra Sara salió de la clase por una emergencia. Ella me dejó a cargo de la clase, pero hace dos semanas y no ha regresado. La emergencia era que su padre fue hospitalizado. En el camino ella tuvo un accidente y también fue hospitalizada.

En la escuela, durante las dos semanas no llegó ningún suplente así que toda la clase salimos a jugar soccer todos los días. Hasta que después de las dos semanas nos enteramos de lo que había pasado con la maestra. Entonces, cuando nos enteramos toda la clase la fuimos a ver al hospital y acompañarla en este tiempo.

**Poor Teacher Sara**

My teacher Ms. Sara left the class for an emergency. She left me in charge of the class, but it has been two weeks, and she has not returned. Her emergency was that her father was hospitalized. On the way there she had an accident herself and was also hospitalized.

During those two weeks, no substitute arrived, so the whole class went out to play soccer every day. We were not informed of what happened until two weeks later. When we found out, the whole class went to go to the hospital and be with her during this time.

**Don't Scream**  
**Jayla M.**  
**Armstrong HS**

My teacher had an emergency today, an otherwise pretty normal day. She left me in charge, even though I didn't ask to be, and it got weird after a couple of hours. No one checked on us. Not even that nice teacher next door.

It's been 3 hours, and I'm starting to get even more worried. It's now 30 minutes before the end of the day. Just then, the lights cut off. Me, along with the rest of the class, screamed!

Lucy screamed while looking out the window. I was scared to turn around, but curiosity got the best of me. The next thing I saw scared me for months. It was a man with a note pressed on the window. The note said, "Don't make a sound. They are listening."

But Lucy didn't listen. She screamed at the top of her lungs. The next thing that I saw was the beginning of my nightmares. A man in a gas mask came in, grabbed Lucy, and looked around the room for something.

**Missing Teacher**  
**Ta'Miyah W.**  
**Armstrong HS**

The teacher, Ms. Smith, left the class because of an emergency. I have been left in charge as the substitute. It has been two weeks, and she has still not returned. Later, we found out that her kid was kidnapped, was never found, and that Ms. Smith had disappeared. School was let out for the rest of the year after that.

**La Emergencia**  
**Jennifer P.**  
**Huguenot HS**

La maestra salió de la clase porque tenía que viajar a otro país, ya que su hija estaba enferma. Ella necesitaba ir a verla. Al salir de la clase, la maestra dejó Lindsay a cargo del grupo. Ella dijo a los alumnos que tenían que terminar su trabajo para poder salir a su lunch y para poder ir a una clase con otra maestra.

**The Emergency**

The teacher left the class because she had to travel to another country because her daughter was sick. She needed to see her. When she left the classroom, the teacher left Lindsay in charge of the group. She told the students that they had to finish their work before they could leave for lunch and then go to another class with another teacher.

**Eris and Umbra**  
**Rishawn P.**  
**Armstrong HS**

After their teacher left them in charge, Eris and Umbra feel rather unbothered. That is, until a global emergency has found itself right behind the classroom door. Unbeknownst to them, unknown beings from a completely different universe have invaded their world. These are beings known as "Heartless," and will not stop until Eris and Umbra's world as they know it is consumed completely by darkness.

Slag wakes up after 20 years, with no memory of what once was. He has nothing to lose, nothing to gain, no one to love and no one to save. He is completely without limitations of fear. He wanders aimlessly until he finds an exit, but upon opening the door, he finds nothing.

**Happy****Allanah H.T.****John Marshall HS**

The most recent moment where I felt happy was two weeks ago, at my boy's regional wrestling match. I felt really satisfied and happy, because they worked so hard for months, and made it to States this week. This was an energetic moment after seeing them win their matches and place 1st and 3rd in their weight classes. During this moment, I was with my coach, Coach Torres, and my friends Kevin, Khaliq and Haydn. Kevin and Haydn both placed for States. I felt really proud of these two after 4 months of practice, hard work, wins and losses, and they still made it.

**Substitute****Albiegelle S.****Armstrong HS**

OMG, my teacher left me in charge of his class! It's not that many people, so I think I'll be fine. It's been ten minutes of silence because I have no idea what I'm doing. Maybe I can give the students the work on the desk, but as soon as I start walking to the desk, the fire alarm goes off. I take the students outside, but I lose them. I didn't panic, though, because they just went home.

**Assassin****Jamari J.****Armstrong HS**

The teacher had to leave because, in secret, she was an assassin. Two weeks later, I found out someone had confiscated her kneecaps, and she was forever straight legged. So, without her around, I decided to host parties every day and boxing matches. I also said there was no more homework for the rest of the year.





# Dreams, Goals, and Aspirations

**Creer**  
**Kerem C.**  
**Huguenot HS**

Escojo la puerta que dice “lo que quiero” porque esa puerta me llevaría hacia el lugar más seguro y lindo que tengo en mi vida. Ese lugar es donde está mi mamá. La extraño mucho, extraño los momentos que compartía con ella. Esos momentos que compartía con ella son algo que me haría muy bien en mi vida, y sin ella, mi vida no tiene sentido. Quisiera abrazarla y conversar con ella. Me hace falta sus regaños, sus consejos, y estar sola en este país es mucho sufrimiento porque es difícil enfrentar la vida sin mis padres.

Atrás de la puerta que escogí, estaría un boleto de avión y mi residencia para poder regresar a mi país para no solo ver a mi mamá, pero también a mis hermanos, mi papa, y mi abuela.

**Believe**

I choose the door that says “want” because that door would take me to the safest and most beautiful place that I have in my life. That place is where my mom is. I miss her so much; I miss the moments that we have shared. Those moments that we have shared are ones that make me well off in life, and without her, my life has no meaning. I want to hug her and converse with her. I miss her scolding, her advice, and being alone in this country causes so much suffering because it is difficult to face life without my parents.

Behind the door that I chose would be a plane ticket and my residence, so that I could return to my country to see not only my mom, but also my brothers, father, and my grandmother.



**Mi Mamá**  
**Rosy D.**  
**Huguenot HS**

La puerta verde que dice “lo que quiero” es la que yo entraría. Lo que quiero es que mi mamá esta acá y quisiera que estuviera conmigo. Ella no está aquí en los estados unidos y la extraño. Quisiera que ella este atrás de la puerta para poder abrazarla y pasar mucho tiempo con ella.

**My Mom**

The green door that says “want” is the one I would enter. The thing I want is that my mom is here and that we could be together. She is not here in the United States, and I miss her. I want her to be behind the door so that I can hug her and spend time with her.

**Self-Improvement**  
**Cemia S.**  
**John Marshall HS**

I have improved a lot when it comes to my self-control and anger. I’m learning how to control it and improve my grades in school while also being able to focus and not get so distracted easily. I’m working to be on top of my stuff too.

My improvement in the future will be going to college and medical school, so that I can be successful at my career. My goals are realistic and will come true because I am going to work hard. I love working and making money.

**My Goals**  
**Josue I. & Ayala C.**  
**Huguenot HS**

My Goals:

1. Graduate from High School,
2. Play the drums,
3. Go to college; and
4. Help my family earn money.

My head will help me understand my goals and how they will help my future. My legs will help me to walk away from negative influences and things that will keep me from accomplishing my goals. My arms will help me to do my homework, so I can graduate and go to college. My heart will tell me when I am on the right track to accomplish what I strive to achieve.

## **Mis Metas**

**Arlin H.**

**Huguenot HS**

Mis Metas:

1. Graduarme del High School
2. Ser enferma
3. Comprar una casa

Mi cabeza me ayudara a pensar y aprender para poderme graduar del High School. Mi torso y mi corazón son mis métodos para lograr estos objetivos y me conectan con las personas en mi vida que me ayudarán a lograrlos. Mis manos me ayudaran con las cosas que tengo que hacer. Mis pies me ayudaran a poder llegar al lugar donde lograre mis metas.

## **My Goals**

1. Graduate High School
2. Become a nurse
3. Buy a house

My head will help me think and learn so I can graduate from High School. My body and heart are my methods of accomplishing these goals and connect me with the people in my life who will help me accomplish them. My hands will help me with the tasks I must complete. My feet will help me get to locations where I can accomplish my goals.

## **Motivation**

**Kenneth B.**

**John Marshall HS**

1. My willingness to study and improve on something (ex: subject; activity) will help to motivate me.
2. If I can keep the same motivation to learn more and actually apply it to be better.
3. My goals are very realistic. I just have to want to do better.

This is realistic because it's possible, but I think it will be difficult because I tend to lose focus easily depending on the topic. I may be passionate at first, but then it slowly fades away. I think the best way to gain motivation in studying is to erase all distractions such as electronics, noise, people, etc.

# Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Enjoy student reflections and imaginative stories on what would happen if they were left in charge of a situation.

**Princess Diana**  
**Jenee G.**  
**Armstrong HS**

You see, I want to be deeply remembered. I want to help, so like Princess Diana once said, "Anywhere I see suffering, that is where I want to be, doing what I can." Princess Diana was one of the best people in the royal family. She was one of the only people in the royal family that physically gave back to the kingdom. Almost all the others in the royal family are A-List snobs. She worked tirelessly for the homeless and for those suffering from HIV/AIDS. She was a patron to over 100 charities.

**Will Smith**  
**Kevaughn B.**  
**George Wythe HS**

I think Will Smith is the best actor. Why is he the best actor to me? Because I remember he was in a movie called I Am Legend, a classic movie with a German Shepherd named Sam. My favorite quote of his is "Money and success don't change people."

I want to take Will Smith to dinner so we can hang out.

I feel this way because Will Smith is respectful to others and is a very patient and smart person. I feel like he gives out good advice to people and to me.

I also feel this way because Will Smith said, "The things that have been most valuable to me I did not learn in school."

**Summer Marjani Walker**  
**Jaria B.**  
**George Wythe HS**

Summer Marjani Walker is my favorite singer and a good person. Summer Marjani Walker won the Billboard Award on October 14, 2022. She was able to beat Lizzo and Beyoncé. I would love to go to dinner with Summer Walker. She keeps 50% of the money she makes from her music and gives the other half to her family. She has a kid now, so she has been saving up for her and her child. Summer Walker is really nice if you meet her in person.



**Farrah Fawcett**  
**Olivia C.**  
**George Wythe HS**

“Everything has positive and negative consequences.” This is a quote from Ms. Farrah Fawcett.

What made Farrah Fawcett important is what she would say on a date with a fellow citizen. I would like to ask Ms. Fawcett why she became an actor. She was in Charlie’s Angels. That’s so cool! I might have watched the movie! Maybe my grandma really liked her in the movie? I’m also curious as to why my grandmother named her daughter after her.

**BTS Nam-Joon**  
**Debbie G.R.**  
**George Wythe HS**

Kim Nam-Joon of BTS is a singer, songwriter, composer, rapper, and producer. The group was nominated for the Grammys and became the first Korean album to achieve #1 status on iTunes. Nam-joon gave a speech with the rest of BTS to the United Nations General Assembly.

He has donated \$71,590 two years in a row for the preservation and restoration of Korean artifacts outside of the country. Nam-joon and BTS also donated \$1 million to the Black Lives Matter Foundation.

Nam-joon is the leader of the famous boy band BTS and he, along with the other members, led BTS to the international success they now have. He is hard working, respectful, thoughtful of others, and educated on everything he does. I would like to go to dinner with Kim Nam-joon.

Kim Nam-joon, also known by his artistic name RM, is the leader of BTS. He has contributed so much to BTS’s success from his raps, singing, lyrics, and producing.

**The Walking Dead**  
**Shevontae J.**  
**George Wythe HS**

I would go on a dinner with Glenn from The Walking Dead. He remained human even though everything around him changed and people around him grew dangerous. He did what he could to survive. He tried to start something but was cut off abruptly.

The reason why I want to go to dinner with him is because I admire him. I admire his strength and his determination. Despite what he went through, and despite the people he lost, he kept going. If I had the chance to have dinner with him, I would simply gawk in shock because he’s a fictional character.



**Jhené Aiko**  
**Laylianah M.**  
**George Wythe HS**

I want to meet Jhené Aiko. The reasons that she is famous are her music, that she is smart, she is very pretty, she is married, and that she has a child and is going to have another one. I chose her because she is understanding, relatable, and has her life together and in order. Jhené is my idol and is very inspiring to me.

**Kevin Hart**  
**Miyah M.**  
**George Wythe HS**

Many people call Kevin Hart small and/or little just like me. Kevin Hart is a funny person that has a lot of money. He used his passion for something he's good at to get something he loves: money.

I chose Kevin Hart, out of all people, to go to dinner with because he's funny, and I would have so much fun with him. I feel I could learn a lot from him because he uses his passion to create something he can make money from. I want to be a poetry writer and get paid for it. I want to go places with my poetry like he does with his comedy.

Kevin Hart makes \$500 million a year and makes at least \$70 million per show. He is making the money I'm trying to make.

# Stand Up!

Enjoy pieces and debate outlines on advocacy and change.

## Slavery Reparations

Sheyna E.

Highland Springs HS

Should America pay slavery reparations? Yes.

America should pay slavery reparations, but if they are going to do it, they have to do it right. Instead of \$200,000 upfront, they should pay \$1,500 each month per African American over the age of 18 in each home. This should be done for the next 150 years so that it represents the number of years they were enslaved.

## Stuffed Animal Debate

Taleah C.

George Wythe HS

Stuffed Animals Come Alive at Night

1. I believe stuffed animals do come alive.
2. There are about 4-5 movies about toys and animals coming alive when the owners aren't around.
3. Stuffed toys and animals have a soul and life of their own. This has been stated in news reports and paranormal activity.

In this debate, I believe that stuffed animals do come alive at night. There are multiple facts and much evidence that states that stuffed animals are alive. There have been news reports and statements as well as articles stating that stuffed toys/animals have come alive. Most of the evidence shown has been at night, or very early in the morning, around the "witching hours." It is also believed that stuffed beings have a soul or life of their own, as paranormal activity has shown.

**Pro: Teenagers Have the Right to Vote!**

**Jamari J., Jahkirah T., and Caleb S.  
Armstrong HS**

Teens should be allowed to vote – it allows them to take time to learn about politics before they do! More importantly, it allows them to share their voice! It's a fact that teenagers contribute to our society; for example, those who have jobs pay taxes when they earn money. They contribute to our society, our country, and their voices matter!

**Con: Should Teenagers Vote?**

**Nia R., Xavier R., and Chania B.  
Armstrong HS**

What do teenagers know about politics? That information is not clear besides the little information we learn in school. In fact, most kids today are influenced by social media but never confirm what they learn on other sources. Is this information they are consuming really accurate? If we let kids vote, they will let this misinformation influence them and things will not go well for our nation. We don't think teenagers should vote. They are too willing to let media influence their ideas, and we cannot have their lack of knowledge regarding politics cloud their vote.

**Don't Judge a Book by its Cover.**

**Carmen I.  
Highland Springs HS**

Black females are stereotyped for being too loud. Or they are too "ghetto." Not all black females are like that. Black females get misgendered, and some black females are not what people think they are. People need to know and understand this. People should not think all black women are the same because they are not. Never judge a book by its cover!

## **Cloning**

**Riley C. and Jaria B.**

**George Wythe HS**

We believe that human cloning should remain illegal because it has disturbing consequences. Human cloning will always have spiritual, moral, and ethical consequences. It has also been mostly unsuccessful. More than 90% of cloning efforts made to treat humans have been unsuccessful. Human cloning could also lead to exploitation.

Most people think that cloning could help infertile couples create a child, but the process of extracting the eggs that are needed for human cloning has actually led to infertility in some cases. This type of cloning could also limit our genetic diversity. Without genetic diversity, humans are more prone to inherited diseases and other health issues.

In conclusion, human cloning would impact the population negatively, and we would never fully recover from the health consequences.

## **Con: Say No to Student Created Dress Codes!**

**Torrie W.**

**Armstrong HS**

If dress codes are created by our student body, everyone will be distracted by the way their peers dress! The debate around school dress codes has existed for a long time, and I think we can all agree that it needs to be updated. But, it needs to be reasonable and fair to all. That does not mean that students should be the ones creating it. These updates should come from administration, not our student body.

## **Pro: Students for Student Created Dress Codes**

**Laron T. and Jailene C.**

**Armstrong HS**

The dress code should be made by our student body! Students know how to dress, and they should be allowed to dress how they want. We believe that they should create them in a way that is appropriate, meaning nothing too revealing or that would create an issue. This will allow students to express themselves as who they are while also eliminating student complaints about our current dress code. With some guidance, the student body can create appropriate and fair dress codes for all, and we believe that they should be empowered to do so!



## **Eliminating Over-Exaggerated Dress Codes!**

**Najah W. and Zion L.**

**Armstrong HS**

Do colleges have dress codes? Our teachers constantly remind us how they are preparing us for adulthood or to go to college. If that is truly the case, then we should be allowed to have some of the freedoms that college students have. We argue that students should create our dress code.

Students wear clothes that follow the rules, not our administration! If students were to choose our dress code, there would be less complaints coming from our student body. As it stands, two main complaints that are heard about our dress code is that the administrators exaggerate the issues of distraction. Their rules based on these “distractions” reflect differently and unfairly on different genders. There is no freedom to express ourselves because of these strict rules. We propose that student created dress codes can be accomplished in a way that hears everyone’s voice. This will ensure that complaints do not continue about these rules. Students would vote on various dress code ideas presented to them, and the dress code would be decided based on those majority votes. That allows all students to express themselves and their views on what the dress code should be.

## **Electronic Devices**

**Jamesha H. and Tae’Quawn M.**

**George Wythe HS**

Some apps are useful in school and some aren’t. For example, Photomath is a useful app, while an unuseful app is TikTok. We also think that cellphones should be encouraged in schools.

If we are mad, anxious, or irritated, we can use our phone to write in our notes. This is very helpful. Cellphones, tablets and other devices open up a world of facts and ideas for us.

Cellphones are also useful because they help us to communicate with our parents. This helps to keep our parents updated with our lives.

Another reason that cellphones are useful is that they help students to be self-sufficient learners. Teachers work better with self-sufficient students, and this helps to make better relationships. Each student has a different learning style.

Students should be allowed to have cellphones at school. It’s nearly impossible to ban them. Would you also go as far as banning computers, apple watches, and tablets? One can argue that they are all also distractions.



## **Technology**

**Brianna N., Lanasia M. and Jamal S.J.**

**George Wythe HS**

TECHNOLOGY! We can't live without it...or can we?

Technology has made us lazy. In the 21st Century, technology has evolved to accommodate more convenient lifestyles and to meet every need that a person has.

Technology makes us physically lazy because you can do easy daily tasks from your couch. Feeding your pet, changing the temperature in your house, vacuuming, working from home, seeing who is at your front door, and even going to the bookstore. You don't even have to leave the house to see your friends!

Technology also makes us lazy in completing our education. All our work is online. We don't have to write anything. We also become distracted by our phones during class, which leads to us not learning as much as we could.

With technology, you can even pay somebody to run errands for you. Now you can have your dishes washed, laundry done, have someone mow your lawn and cook your food, all while you sit back and read your favorite book or flip through a few channels on TV.

With our lives quickly becoming more effortless, we are constantly trying to find new ways to fit more of what we want into our day without having to do it ourselves. Through the science of technology, quick fixes and life hacks have made it easy to see that technology has made us lazy.

## **Social Media**

**Jesiah R.**

**George Wythe HS**

64% of social media is noted to be a bad influence, leaving only 36% to have a good influence. That 64% is filled with sexual activity, cyber bullying, creating jealousy, insecurity and hate. Social media is hardly being used for its original purpose anymore.

I believe that the impact social media has on relationships is more harmful than helpful. It is not truthful, and it has a ton of false information. It is also possible to be addicted to social media.

## **Social Media's Impact on Relationships**

**Debbie G.R. & Jesiah R.**

**George Wythe HS**

We believe that social media is harmful to relationships because of the danger, expectations, and increasing social anxiety. Meeting people online can be very dangerous. When you meet someone online, you only meet their internet persona, not their true self. The person you're talking to can be telling you lies. They could be lying about their age, name, pictures, and where they live.



**Are You Happy with the Dress Code?**  
**Christopher S., Amauri D., and Brianna N.**  
**George Wythe HS**

**Debate: Pro Administration Created Dress Codes**

This is the way it is: most kids are happy with the current dress code. They are comfortable with it. Why should we let kids who usually only come to school to dress and impress decide on the dress code? The dress code protects people's religions and cultures. It might be a little restrictive, but ultimately, it protects all of us. If the students have their way with the dress codes, some individuals will not be comfortable with the way others dress.

Yes, it is important that all students are able to express themselves, but our current dress code allows us to do so in a way that protects students. Some people are comfortable with showing skin and expressing their fashion choices freely. Others are not comfortable with seeing skin – the current dress code keeps these people happy and makes sure students clothing is not distracting to others.

Our classmates, in arguing their point of view, are assuming that everyone would be comfortable with the dress code created by students. But maybe these same students will say that they don't want students to wear rainbow shirts, and is that fair? No.

In summary, we do not believe students should create the dress code. It is not fair for them to assume they know what all students are comfortable with. The dress code as it currently is accommodating to students regardless of belief systems or religions, while still letting all other students express themselves appropriately as they wish.

**Students Express Through Dress**  
**Shyla S., Devlyn C., Jessiah (Renee) R., and Catherine C.**  
**George Wythe HS**

**Debate: Pro student created dress codes**

Expressing ourselves as who we are and what we believe in is impactful to a student's experience in school. By having students define the dress codes in schools, they are empowered to create a dress code they agree with and can use their dress and fashion to empower themselves.

The idea that clothing is a distraction to students is simply not true. We see people dress freely everywhere we go; crop tops or shorts are things we are used to seeing. For that reason, students are comfortable with seeing others wear what they want. Our dress codes as they stand do not treat feminine- versus masculine-dressing students fairly. Student created dress codes will change that.

Our classmates have expressed that student created dress codes could be restrictive or oppressive to students, but this is simply not true. Student created dress codes will allow all students to be comfortable with what they, and others, are wearing.





## **Workload**

**Shyla S., Christopher S., and Catherine C.  
George Wythe HS**

How much workload do you think an average teenager in this generation has? As teenagers ourselves, we have too much of a workload to do in just one day. We are trying to balance things like family, work, homework, and extra circular activities. These all weigh us down during our younger years. We are definitely in agreement that teenagers in this generation have way too much workload. It is taking a toll on our social life, and our mental health.

Our schedules are jam packed with things we are required to do just to get an education. Not only that, but we are also required as students to pass certain subjects to graduate. According to the students at our school, most of them drop out because they are not focused, feel stressed, and are not getting enough sleep. They drop out in order to ease their pain.

As soon as we get home, you would think that we would get a break. In reality, we have homework to do for many classes, and the homework is due the next day. Over 50% of students have reported feeling stressed, and 25% of students have reported that homework was their biggest source of stress. On average, teens are spending one-third of their study time feeling stressed, anxious, and stuck.

School takes up too much energy because we are in school too long, and it doesn't leave time to spend with family or to hang out with friends. This leads to more emotional problems, less sleep, and higher stress levels. These items that we have talked about, including our schedules, homework load, and how much energy is sucked out of us, all contribute to our argument that all teenagers have too much of a workload. We are getting more and more drained each day because of this constant stress.



# For the Love of Family

Enjoy pieces written about love and self-care from our family night  
at Highland Springs HS.

## **What Is Really Love**

**Keyionna C.**

**Highland Springs HS**

Love wouldn't talk because just saying "I love you" doesn't mean it. Love would be a figure that fits a person's eyes. Love wouldn't just talk to anyone but to the ones that need it or don't feel it, even with everyone they know around them. Love would bring light to the ones in the dark. Love may speak a few times to say, "I love you and I'm here for you." Love wouldn't just say it, but love would show them how loved they are.

## **If Love Could Talk**

**Justin C.**

**Highland Springs HS**

If love could talk, it would say be patient. Love would talk to the young people. Love would look like a kind person.

## **If Love Could Talk**

**Hazel (sibling)**

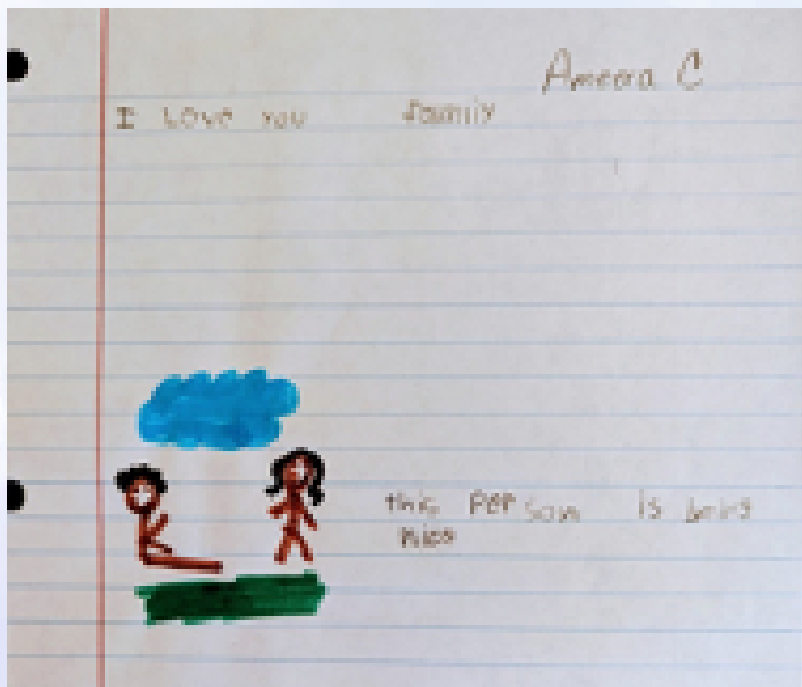
If love could talk, it would  
Talk like, "Hey baby girl."

Love will talk to ones that need  
To be loved.

Love will look like:



**What Would Love Say**  
**Ameera C. (sibling)**



**What Would Love Tell You**  
**Jordan C. (sibling)**

Love would tell you what you need to work on to better yourself. "I love you. What a wonderful person you are." Love would look like a healthy couple clear of toxic arguments. A clear mind and clear soul.

**If Love Could Talk**  
**Kristin C. (parent)**

If love could talk, it would say be patient, true to yourself first, be kind-hearted, humble, and show love to the fullest. Love looks like everyone. Different colors, shapes, forms, acts of kindness, compassion. Love looks like faith, family, friends, and community. We are love.

**If Love Could Talk**  
**Mary W. (parent)**

Love would say, "In order to love, you must first love yourself, know what makes you happy, share it with others, so they can show you love your way." Love is reciprocated, caring, attention, affection, and kindness to those around you, strangers, and the enemy.

**If Love Could Talk**  
**Ms. Moore (parent)**

If love could talk, it would say remember your worth. Maintain your boundaries. Always bring good vibes and keep the energy flowing.

If love could talk, it would talk to me.

**Love**  
**Anon (parent)**

If love could talk, what would it say?  
Love yourself first and foremost.

Who would love talk to?  
Others and me.

What would love look like?  
A beautiful, cosmic energy.

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