

Writers Matter

at La Salle University



Summer 2011 Annual Newsletter

Student Writing Contest

This past spring's Writers Matter Writing Contest was to demonstrate how students have learned to use writing to express the things they care most about and helped give them a "voice" with which they can discuss their own lives and the issues that are important to them.

Students were asked to write about personal or social injustice including topics such as bullying, cyber-bullying, social media, racism, gender issues, and holocaust-related topics. Samples of their work, as well as winning entries, are featured throughout this newsletter.

Writers Matter Abroad

The Writers Matter Program and Bethlehem University in Palestine

Next year, the Writers Matter program goes international. Dr. Vogel has partnered with Dr. Sami Abdel Razzaq Adwan from Bethlehem University (West Bank, Palestine) to implement the program in this region of the world. We will be working with 7th grade students in eight different schools: two in Israel, two in Bethlehem, West Bank, two in East Jerusalem, and two in Philadelphia. The project aims at improving the writing skills of the 7th grade students as well as providing opportunities for the students to write about issues and concerns related to their experiences. Students will be encouraged to write about their lives, communities, and, specifically, how the ongoing regional conflict has impacted everyday living. The program will encourage active listening to the different voices and narratives of students representing different schools and cultures, and how they are personally experiencing the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. The first year of the project will culminate with a book that includes a training manual and selected student work translated into three languages - Hebrew, English and Arabic. In addition, the result of the work will be displayed through a public arts project that celebrates the diverse views of the students involved.

Letter from the Director

Welcome to our Summer 2010 newsletter for the Writers Matter program. We are currently completing our seventh year of providing innovative writing opportunities for students in the Philadelphia metropolitan region. Using journal writing as a vehicle for self-expression, this program focuses on personal life journeys and experiences, allowing student's voices to be heard while, at the same time, building essential writing skills.

In 2005, the Writers Matter program was created for middle school adolescent students in grades six through eight in order to provide them with an innovative and motivational approach to writing development. Over 4500 students have experienced this unique program since that time. During the 2010-2011 school year, 12 schools, 17 teachers, and approximately 1000 students participated in the program. Each year, Deb Yost of La Salle's Education Department conducts research to evaluate outcomes related to writing, personal, and social skills. The results consistently show that the program fosters more than improved writing skill development among middle school students. The program also:

- Produces a warm, nurturing classroom climate that enables students to flourish and succeed.
- Encourages greater teacher-student relationships and classroom management due to the trusting and mutually respectful relationships that develop between teachers and students.
- Enhances adolescents' motivation to write, which in turn increases writing skill development.
- Encourages multiple perspective-taking among adolescents, which breaks down cultural barriers and "cliques" that are part of the adolescent experience.
- Enhances deeper metacognition among adolescents, which fosters greater motivation for academic success and pro-social behaviors
- Provides a unique approach for students from different cultures, religions and family structures to find out more commonalities than differences about each other.
- Encourages young adolescents to celebrate their personal voices and be heard by others.

A Renewed Focus on Writing Skill Development

A careful analysis of the research data over the past two years revealed that there was a strong need to focus professional development sessions on writing instruction. As well, our Writers Matter teachers indicated that they had a strong desire to learn more about mentoring texts, revision and editing, teaching of grammar and perspectives on identifying and recognizing errors. Much time was therefore devoted to analyzing student work and examining the strategies mentioned above to enhance student writing during our professional development sessions this year led by Dr. Marjie Allen. As a result of this need for more in-depth teaching of writing skills a new book is currently being written by Deb Yost and me with Marjie Allen and Kim Lewinski, all from La Salle University to address these professional development needs. Many of the teachers in the Writers Matter program will be contributing to the writing of the book by sharing their successes and units of study from the past few years. We are hoping to publish the book by January, 2012. *(continued on page 2)*

Letter from the Director

(continued from page 1)

Dissemination of the Program to a Broader Audience

Several Writers Matter faculty and teachers presented the program at national and regional professional conferences this year. The National conferences were: The National Middle School Association annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland (Deb Yost, Dianna Newton, and myself) and the Catholic Educators Association in New Orleans, Louisiana (Steve Clark and myself). The regional Conferences featured presentations at Pennsylvania Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Hershey, Pa. (Katherine Muc Francesca Cantarini, and myself). Additionally, a special presentation to all Middle School Principals in the School District of Philadelphia occurred in November 2010 at La Salle University (Michael Galbraith, Katherine Muc, and myself).

Books and Other Publications

In 2008 Michael Galbraith, an 8th grade literacy teacher in Philadelphia and I co-authored "Voices of Teens: Writers Matter", published by the National Middle School Association. This book is an essential component of the professional development sessions implemented for Writers Matter teachers every year. Participating students also receive a copy of the "Student Edition" of the book, which gives them tremendous insight into the program's focus and helps them to understand their role as fledgling writers and authors. Along with Deb Yost, I wrote an article featuring the Writers Matter program, entitled, "Writing Matters to Middle School Students," which was accepted for publication in the Middle School Journal, which is published by the National Middle School Association.

Writers Matter Mentorship Program and Campus Visits

The Writers Matter program continues to provide La Salle University mentors to many of the participating schools. This past May, the Henry School and Wagner Middle School visited the La Salle University campus to gain a better understanding of college life in the hope of motivating these students to contemplate pursuing a college education as a future goal, if they work hard and do well in school. This visit included a tour of the campus, meeting with faculty and students, exploring the dormitories and participating in a writing activity.

Special Thanks

Special thanks goes to Penny Nixon, Associate Superintendent of Schools and John W. Frangipani Assistant Superintendent for Middle Schools from the School District of Philadelphia. Their efforts and support have enabled this program to flourish.

This program is generously supported by the PTS Foundation (Pam and Tony Schneider) and the Tyler Aaron Bookman Memorial Foundation (Neil and Jill Bookman). These individuals continue to show great support and encouragement of this program and I personally thank them for their continued commitment and vision.

Thank You.

Bob Vogel

Director, Writers Matter Program at La Salle University
Professor, Department of Education, La Salle University



First Place Entry - "Perfectly"

Vare Middle School

What is wrong with the world we live in?
People hate on each other's ethnicity or the color of their skin
"Don't judge a book by its color", they say
But people judge one another by their looks everyday
Racism has been around for so long
Most people think it's okay, but it's really wrong
This big problem is everywhere
The next person they offend will probably tear
People say names and they just don't care
Rice bowl, Cracker, Nig__, Negro, or Di__
These are all racist and they make me sick!
Racism leads one thing to another
Soon they'll be saying all these jokes about their mother
All of these actions are so rude
It's very offensive, immature, and cruel
It should be stopped once and for all
There's no time to wait or stall
It doesn't get any better, but worse
People will discriminate and they will curse
There is no cure for it, but it's inside all of us
To bring peace and make the world a better place
Even though racism has been around for so long
It doesn't mean it can't be stopped or gone
We don't want to make the same mistake as our grandfathers
But try to work things out and be better
Racism sometimes causes trouble and pain
If they take it personally, they won't be the same
They will think of all the mistakes or troubles they've caused
And will regret that they ever lived and wish it would pause
They won't respect themselves anymore
On the outside they will act happy, but in the inside they're tore
We need to stop and think before we act
So next time people won't feel attacked
That may be true or not
But "Stop doing these foolish actions, just give it a shot!"
Racism isn't a thing anyone looks forward to
It's very stupid and a waste of time to do
No one should hate each other because of race
Even though a lot of people do it these days
So please don't contribute to this animosity
The only thing it does is prevent peace and unity
Whether you're black, white, or beige
God made you all perfectly

Help Support Writers Matter!

Your continued support will help ensure the current and future success of Writers Matter in Philadelphia schools.

Contributions can be made to the Writers Matter program by sending donations to:

La Salle University attn: Dr. Robert Vogel
1900 West Olney Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19141

- or -

Make a gift online at www.lasalle.edu/makeagift
In the comments section, please type "Urban Writers Program: Writers Matter"





City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

Partnership with the Mural Arts Program

As mentioned in the last newsletter, La Salle's Writers Matter program entered into a partnership with City of Philadelphia Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program, Philabundance, and the School District of Philadelphia to create a mural that centers on the theme of hunger. Students produced art work and writing focused on the essential question - "What are you Hungry for?" The mural design will incorporate student responses to this essential question. Our group teamed with nationally acclaimed mural artist, Meg Saligman to design a mural focusing on the theme of hunger. Twenty students were selected as "Writers Matter Scholars" to participate in the program. The mural will be constructed on the site of Philabundance, located in the food distribution center of Philadelphia only a few blocks from the sports complex. We are scheduled to have the opening for this mural on Thursday, July 14.

Student Writing Contest (continued)

Second Place Entry - "I am From"

Henry School

I am from . . . I don't know where I am from.
 I am from dumfounded, blank faces, and whiteout friends.
 I am from, where the word "FAITH" is replaced with hate
 Where the loving houses are only burned down crisis.
 I am from where the light of day is only a dream because the light is afraid of the days
 that belong to dark.
 I am from "LOVE" . . . wait, hold up
 Love is only in a fantasy
 My life is way under, below the low grounds of Christianity.
 I am from where a walk to the store is only a walk to hell, they have open doors.
 I am from Logan , valley, way past reality
 The word LIFE will have you shaking; i can tell your body is quaking
 I am from black, far away from whack
 I am from where dress down will have you shot to the ground.
 I am from where virginity is only in the past, because once you have laid too fast,
 you can't turn around and walk back!
 I am from, a sister that tries and a brother that would rather hide,
 I am from a dad that drinks, when he should be paying for his daughter to think.
 I am from an upside down smile, a backward crowd
 I am from low lives and bye-byes, broke up fears and unwanted tears
 I am from where school is a place that you don't want to face.
 I am from where hearts are broken and also a token, far away from were they have woken
 I am from where jumps are punks and punks are always flunks
 I am from where mace will always meet your face when you turn around to a fight that
 might be your last night.
 I am from when the boys come everybody grabs their gun and runs.
 I am from a place that you shall never come.
 I am from unwanted faces (continued on page 4)

Teacher Testimonial

"The Writers Matter program is revolutionary for our students at Henry. Not only do they learn the academic writing skills needed to prepare for high school, they also get an outlet to have their voices heard. This program creates a culture of camaraderie, trust, and success. These ingredients are key to any 8th grade classroom. When the students feel as if they are heard and understood by both the teachers and their peers, they are much more receptive to the everyday learning involved in the curriculum. Last year alone, all of my 8th grade students scored Advanced or Proficient on the Writing PSSA. Some also stood up to bullies with their poetic pieces, made new friends, and addressed the class at graduation. The Writers Matter program is a win-win for everyone involved. We are thankful to be part of this work with Dr. Vogel and La Salle University."

- Francesca Cantarini
 Teacher, Henry School



Second Place Entry - "I am From" (continued from page 3)

Henry School

I am from words that hurt and hurting from words
I am from hand-me-down's, sometimes that can't be hand-me no more.
I am from if you hustle and bustle you will always make the flow.
I am from the only education you will get is from the uneducated
I am NOT from a home, only a Nome, something close to be but not without my peeps.
I am loyal only to the foil of my bones.
I pray only to the voice above, but I lay to the voice of a scrambling love,
I am from hope, but the more I spoke of this hope the more hope will not be spoken.
I am from tricks that lead to lies and lies that lead to crimes
Crimes that lead to your hands grinding behind the cold mental bars of a jail cell.
I am from a place called hell!

"Secret"

Leeds Middle School

A struggle that I face in life is one that I wish I could change. In particular, I am struggling with my behavior. I wish I could change it, but I'm having trouble doing so. I try to be well behaved, but I can't seem to control my temper. Deep down I want to be good, but I just snap at everybody. I make excellent grades, but I know I won't be able to get into the college and high school of my choice due to my behavior. I try to act like I can handle problems myself, but I know I can't do all of it by myself. I know I got people to back me up 100%. For instance, family, friends, teachers are at my beck and call and are there to listen to me.

There are two main teachers I know want to help me, but I just have problems with them in the process. For instance, both Mr. Lebofsky and Mrs. Muc seem to care. Both want to bring the best of my potential out of me. I just can't accept that. One little thing they do or say just basically makes me attack them. I know they just want to help, but I just push them away like I do most people. I do not have a problem with people; it's just that I'm a little antisocial with others.

Now I don't want to be that way forever, but it's not a straight road. There are going to be a few bumps along the way. For me, my life is planned out already, but getting there is a problem. For example, everyone wants me to go to Central to be the best I can be. Everyone wants me to be a doctor even though it's been my life long dream. Everyone wants me to be this or do that, but I can't be everything. I'm one person trying to do all this alone, and the strange thing is they don't see how bad I'm struggling. All they see is a smart little boy, but they don't know how hard it is to keep that up. Sometimes I just want to say forget it and just stay home and go to sleep.

Now I know I sound selfish saying how hard it is for me to get up every day and go to school. Adults have to get up every day and go to work but I'm pretty sure that they feel the same way that I do. But I'm going to be what I want to be because this is my life and frankly I make the decisions. I appreciate the help, but I just prefer if they do it from the sidelines. Now I'm not just saying that I'm going to sleep, eat, and play video games all day, I'm just saying that I need a break from all the people in my life trying to tell me what to do and trying to tell me what to be.

I know they just want me to be successful and to get my behavior together, and I know I might need help along the way, but mostly I just want to do it by myself. They think I can't do it by myself and I can understand that because I'm not focused all the time. But I'm determined to get where I need to be. I'm determined to be the best I can be, to be successful, and to have the career I want. I also want everyone to know that I want to do most of it by myself to better myself on my own. If people aren't ok with that, then they can get out of the car because I'm driving toward success.

Honorable Mention

Third Place Entry - "Bullying to Those Who Are Getting Bullied in the World"

Vare Middle School

My world is starting to die.
And I slowly start to cry.
People talking smack,
Right behind my back.

The childish games they play
Need to end this very day.
I don't think they realize,
The tears coming out my eyes.

I hate how they get to me,
And how they don't see,
That my heart is bleeding,
And that my tears have meaning.

They mean I am hurt.
And I want them to stop talking dirt.
They mean that I can't take it.
And that there's stuff they just don't get.

There's more to me than they know.
I just don't let it show.
I hide the things inside.
But I wish I could speak my mind.

I wish they knew the real me.
Than they could leave me be.
I'm just so scared of rejection,
That I can't even stand my own reflection.
I hope they see who is the real Key!

People just don't understand,
I want to show who I really am.
There are so many things I need to say.
But even if I could they won't give me the time of day!

If only I could say it all.
Than I wouldn't easily fall.
They just don't comprehend.
That I could be a great friend.

I hate how they view me,
As small and weak.
Inside me I am learning to be tough,
I am able to fight through the rough.

I just wish that was who I could be,
On the outside that is I mean.
My world would be so much easier,
If I could be a little happier.

Like I have said,
Their childish games need to end.
And they need to realize,
That there is truth behind these eyes.



Untitled

Henry Middle School

You call me names
You pull my hair
You try to push me down the stairs
You tease me about the things I wear
Every where I go you stop and glare

I try to fit in
I'm doing my best
I tell the teachers
"I'll handle the rest."

Nothing happens
It never does
Back to square 1
Which is where I was

Still being kicked
Still being punched
Still sitting alone
While eating my lunch

No friends to have my back
No confidence to hold me up
Constantly under attack
On life I have given up

"Haiti - Buried in the Rubble"

Wagner Middle School

I see people crying, families dying
I see collapsing buildings, I see thieves stealing
I see a mom devastated by the disaster, whole families wiped out by the rubble
I hear screaming coming from the rubble.
I rush to help someone else when I can barely help my self.
I smell the bodies of the deceased, hoping I don't become one of them
A falling building, I pass by, I felt like I was about to die
I am so scared, I'm breathing toxic air
But then a building fell and I was in the way
Boom boom!
My dead corpse was swept away
But then my ghost creeps
It creeps high and low
And the other dead spirits say hello
I continue my reap thru the dangerous deep sea of rubble
Only dead bodies I see and one looks like me.



Other Selected Student Work

"Life is a Race"

Leeds Middle School

Round and round you go twist and turns around the track of the teenage life. Many dreams ahead of you and all your mistakes you made in the past behind you.

The haters who distract you and make you run off track. You lose your train of thought and are soon in last place. Your family and friends your motivations make you want to try even harder you sprint ahead and feel like a winner again.

When you feel like you've had enough and the race is over for you and you feel like giving up look ahead toward your goal, the finish line and you realize that you are worth the try and you are worth being proud of.

You run this race forever until the day you die and when the race comes to an end you're a winner because you have tried.

Life is a race!



"Hope"

Wagner Middle School

Hope is different than shame.
Hope means wonder.
Hope means surprise.
Hope does not have a fearful sound.
It has an exciting sound like angels singing, "AAHHHHHH."
Almost like walking up in the morning hoping something great will happen.
Or like being alone and hoping somebody will come to keep you company.
Hope makes you feel angry when it doesn't come through a
And surprised when it does.
It looks like a lost bear cub hoping to see his parents.
Hope is dark blue.
It as blue as a cloudless blue sky.
Hope is like that. Sometimes.
When you feel hope, you are happy.
Trust and pride keep you company.
You are not ANGRY.
Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barrack Obama are hope.
HOPE
Hope is beautiful to me.

"Sadness Is..."

Pennypacker Middle School

Sadness is fighting with your friends when you know it is wrong.
Sadness is being told you can't, you wont, it doesn't matter.
Sadness is seeing someone and knowing they have it better than you.
Sadness is crying every night because you know you may lose your grandmother to her long, long battle.
Sadness is gossip, lies and hurt. Words leave the deepest scars.
Sadness is being out on the streets without a home or anywhere to go.
Sadness is watching the news and seeing people getting shot, arrested or hurt.
Sadness is watching you dad leave you and your mom alone on their own and later someone taking you away from your mom.
Sadness is when you're the favorite one but now there's someone else that's The favorite one.
SADNESS IS...

“This Is The Day”

De Paul Catholic School

Have you ever seen a boy standing on the corner of a bar,
drinking a beer like it's a never ending thirst.
Like it's the first time a candy enters your mouth,
a drizzling dip of water on a hot sunny day.
Have you ever seen the water in the color of red filled with despair and fear?
A child...a child laying in a cold, icy red water
flooded over by a tear of a Father and Mother,
of a friend, an enemy, a sister and brother.
This is what our ancestors fought for?
More tears, more death, less hope? I think not!
They fought for free hands, fast legs, free minds.
This is what we fight for, strive for, grieve for.
With our two hands up in the air saying, “We surrender!”
I think not!
We have courage within us with the God almighty at our side.
We fight wars against Iraq, Germany, and for this land we have today, saying,
“We can't fight our own local battles in our neighborhood today.
With the black boys, and the drug selling, and the stealing of souls.”
I think not!
With a Mother and Father begging on their knees
Saying to their sons, “Please come home.”
With their two neighbors in their beds and when they finally wake up,
It's too late.
With a child in a grave and a mother in a cave filled with despair and fear,
What do you have to say?
When you see R.I.P. on top of your son's name.,
What do you have to say when the fault falls on you?
You see this generation, this day is a sad moment in history.
With our doctors in the streets.
I say...I think not!
Because if I'm strong enough to say that “I will not give up this day”
I will not give up fighting, I will not give up striving, I will not give up on you,
I will not give up on myself.
Then I know that
today is your day, that today is my day, our day to shape our history.
To shape our future.
Because this is the day that the Lord has made,
This is the day that we all shall have faith.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

“Racism”

Vare Middle School

Why is there so much racism in the world?
Where did man go wrong and start to hate each other?
All through time different races never mix.
Their gang wars because I'm black your not.
Even in jail they have fights about what is your skin color.
When did this hate against a person's skin color come from?
They just believe that one nationality is better than the other.
They use racism as a powerful weapon
to encourage fear and hate into the hearts of people.
When did racism start?
When you started to make me feel bad about my skin color.
Why did you make me feel so bad?
Why do you hate me if we never met before?
I know why you are afraid of me because my skin color is not like yours.
You are threatened by me because I'm black and you are Asian .
What is the meaning of racism if you hate the color of my skin?
You don't know that because you only know how to hurt people's feelings.
This is not how God wanted man to be,
he encourages everyone to love their neighbor.
So what can we do to stop racism we can start to love our neighbors.
I'm going start by loving my neighbors and pass this down to my kids.

“Sadness is...”

Pennypacker Middle School

Sadness is fighting with your friends when you know it is wrong.
Sadness is being told you can't, you wont, it doesn't matter.
Sadness is seeing someone and knowing they have it better than you.
Sadness is crying every night because you know you may lose your grandmother
to her long, long battle.
Sadness is gossip, lies and hurt. Words leave the deepest scars.
Sadness is being out on the streets without a home or anywhere to go.
Sadness is watching the news and seeing people getting shot, arrested or hurt.
Sadness is watching you dad leave you and your mom alone on their own and
later someone taking you away from your mom.
Sadness is when you're the favorite one but now there's someone else that's
The favorite one.

Untitled

Vare Middle School

You push ME
You tease ME
But why?...
Do you hate ME
I ask these questions to myself because I'm scared to ask you why.
Why do you put your anger on ME, so much that tears start to fall. So much
that fear starts to call.
What did I do?..

Can't we just talk it out?
Or that's old school.
Maybe you don't wanna talk about it.
Because you think that nobody will open their ears.

Is it something at home?
Maybe you don't wanna talk about it.
Is that why you come to school with anger and hate.

I wish I knew...
I wish you would tell me...
Maybe we're too different.
Maybe you think that my life is better than yours.
Trust me its not.
So don't push ME
So don't tease ME

Let's just work it out we're not kids anymore. We can get through this.

“.com Generation”

Wagner Middle School

The Internet is the .COMmon thread among us.
The cable wires that connect us,
The signal that goes through us,
The .COMmunication between us.
It is the .NETwork that brings us together.
That helps us stay together.
Learn together.
Exist together.
Like wolves in a pack,
Technology enables us to .COMmute,
To transmute,
To mp3 play or mute.
It assists us in .ORGanization,
GPS location,
Knowledge station.
Still, as JFK once said:
“Man is still the most extraordinary computer of all.”

“Sunrise”

Leeds Middle School

I woke up this morning in my own bed
the same place I woke up before
but something was special about today
I have noticed
As I opened up the door
The birds were singing in the trees
The air was nice and sweet
With the smell of the flowers in the air
The traffic even had a special beat
The neighbor’s yelling ‘hi’ to me
was such a welcome sound
I answered back, went out the door
to enjoy the sun white lying down
To my surprise it felt so good
it took my breath away
I stayed and enjoyed the wonder
of a special no-work day.

“Life”

Leeds Middle School

Love, hate is what we see.
Kids are dropping out of school with no place to be.
People are stuck with nowhere to go.
When it comes to drugs kids try to say no.
All around kids my age are dying.
Some kids parents are nowhere to be found.
Kids are trying to strive to meet their goals.
But they keep falling down in the big dark hole of life.
This is the way of life I finally see.
I am grateful that none of this happened to me.

“A Voice”

Henry Middle School

I have a voice.
I am rarely allowed to use this voice.
This book has allowed me to reclaim this voice.
This voice I have is often hushed by opposing views.
But not for long because when they turn their backs I let the whole world loose.
This voice is quiet, this voice is loud, this voice is very proud.
This voice is truth and never a lie.
This voice retaliates when haters despise.
This voice is soothing, this voice is angry.
This voice is letting itself be known.
THIS VOICE IS MINE.
MY voice is here and will never go.
MY voice is here and I’m not afraid to let it show.
MY voice is strong and beautiful, bright and overwhelming.
MY voice has caused other people’s eyes to start tearing.
MY voice is of passion, pride, and glory.
MY voice tells MY story.
A story of sadness, hope, and love, blowing kisses to angels above.
MY voice creates change.
MY voice is to speak.
MY voice is exciting and never bleak.
MY voice is tired of staying quiet, it’s been this way far too long.
The longer and longer she stays quiet, the louder her voice grows.

“The Bitter Truth!”

Leeds Middle School

You say one thing
Yet you mean another
You try to be up front
While hiding beneath a cover
Why are you so selfish?
And why so ignorant?
What exactly does love mean to you
Or should I say, meant?
I’ve never known someone so fake
Someone who cant speak the truth
Someone so terribly insecure
Someone so curt, someone like you
Why did you have to be like this?
You started off quite fine
You would always say how much you care
I guess that was just another “LIE”
I just sit around and remember
Of how much I used to enjoy your name
And how I so dearly loved
To play your little game
But now finally I know
That you aren’t at all what I thought
And it’s a shame, because I really liked you a lot.

Untitled

De Paul Catholic School

The tears that fall from my eyes represent the pain and hurt that I feel.
The emotions that I feel are sometimes confused
I don’t know whether to cry, or smile.
I don’t know whether I should be mad or be happy.
I cry anyway.
I let it all out.
And then, I write.

“Family Matters”

Henry Middle School

I feel left out.
You guys think I can handle myself, but I can’t.
I just can’t.
I’ve been struggling with this for a while now,
but I guess it has to finally come out.
Guys, I love you, but...
Now it’s getting harder.
I’ve been through fights and...I need your help.
My grades are fallin’ and I can’t catch them.
I finally know why.
Out of everyone, I was the normal one.
I was the smart one.
I never got complaints from the teacher.
I never was in trouble.
Mom, Dad – I love you guys.
I know you guys love me.
But, don’t let me fall.
Because if I do I wouldn’t be able to get back up.
Catch me before it’s too late.