Cover By
Linda Gil and Diona Keltanoska
The May Writing Contest theme was “Be Active.” This contest was an advertising contest with a different award. For this contest, the top 3 student entries were displayed, and each of those students received a new bike! Students created a print advertisement about some form of being active: biking, hiking, swimming, playing sports, etc. Students could create their ad using a computer program or create it freehand on computer paper.
BE ACTIVE

As teens, it is important that we exercise our MIND, BODY, and SPIRIT. In today's world, everyone is so busy doing things for school or work, that we put self care on the back burner. We need to take time to focus on ourselves, and worry about our health rather than self image. We need to exercise to be healthy, and this can include anything from cheerleading to weight lifting. Just as important as physical, is mental health. If you ever feel overwhelmed, stop for a little while to rest, and take a deep breath. In life you will face many strength and emotional challenges. Being active and keeping your body healthy are some of the best ways to prepare for this. The future is full of great opportunities. For today, embrace the world around you, and BE ACTIVE!
Don't wish for your dream, go outside and work for your dream.

Basketball: Kobe Bryant – Everything negative, pressure, challenges are all opportunities for me to rise.

Baseball: Don't let the fear of striking out hold you back.

Football: JJ Watt – Success isn't owned, it's leased. And rent is due every day.

Volleyball: Serve strong, dig fierce, spike hard.

Remember: Be active, get sweaty, feel great, repeat!
LET'S START MOVING.

To be healthy you don’t just need to be eaten fruits and vegetables, there’s something important that is called MAKING SPORTS.

Why is so important to exercise?

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your quality of life.

Running, cycling, etc. are some of the important sports in the world, the reason why is because just those two make your muscle stronger.
March Writing Contest

Growth

Write a story about some form of growth. The story can be about physical, social, emotional, or spiritual growth.
New Start

Anonymous

New words, new customs, new sights to see
I’m not from this land, I’m from across the sea.
What is this new food?
Why are you wearing that?
I’m an immigrant, that’s a fact.
“Where are you from?” they ask.
“Germany.”
They give each other a look
They pass me along “One Carry On”
Mother can’t speak English; Father needs a job.
He decides on a cab driver.
We find a home
An apartment, on the third floor.
We fill the empty space with our belongings from homes before.
My room the size of closet, I only barely fit.
Mother says “Be thankful” for the Lord’s ‘generous gift’
We go visit the school, and Father’s new workplace.
A car splashes Mother, mud on her dress made of lace.
This is our new home, America they say.
I wish we could go back, and forget that terrible day.
A Knot in the Bend

Kathryn C

I had been destined to lay in the sand,
The light of the morn washes over me, warm and bland,
Quite proud, I shall say, yet firm and stout,
I gaze at the treetops that I shall face upon forever, no doubt

Elsewhere, by the riverbed I glance at a child,
Her hair long, her face mild,
She treks along the quiet bank,
Till she grabs upon a rock flank

Her gentle hands grasp the chip,
And is tossed into the river with a gentle dip,
As she nears I begin to quake,
But before I can contradict, I have landed upon the bank

I begin to slip away
A silent plea as her figure turns gray,
As her oaky eyes disappear, a smile on her cheek,
She waves goodbye, timid and meek

Submerged beneath the waves,
The pounding continues, I fear I am enslaved,
Mercilessly obeying to the current of the river,
I realize I am now a captive of the bed, as I begin to quiet my quiver,

As I settle in amongst the shells I feel myself drift away,
My spirit swept far along the bay,
I sink into my resting place,
Destined to stay, as the water smooths my face

As the rest wither away only I am left, sunken deep
For I am alone, and to myself I keep,
Staring up at the watery blue
I long to be accompanied, as my loneliness brews

I am the stone you threw in the riverbed,
And you may not have a thought in your head,
About how you sentenced me to my watery grave,
Throwing stones as a child, I was the one you wouldn’t save
February Writing Contest

Blast From The Past

Write a story that involves the past in some way. It can include time-travel, nostalgia, historical fiction, or any use of the past that you can imagine. Stories are due Friday, February 22.
I sat there. The aroma of flowers overwhelming me. The colors of the flowers where almost too bright to look at. The frigid air sent chills down my spine. The empty rows of chairs waiting to be filled by distressed souls. I sat there. Joyful voices were singing. Halls filled with chatter and food being served. I sat there. I sat there like I wished for her to be alive again. The first row. The chair closest to her. Tears streaming down my red face. I sat there. I looked at the floor.

The casket. I stared. I saw her face form into a smile. I saw a sparkle in her eye. Her hair was as nice... as nice as that day.

She walked toward me. “Come with me princess,” she said. She extended her soft, cold hand toward me. I stood up, so fast my head spun. I stared. I slowly grabbed her hand. Her smile filled her whole face. I stopped crying. My cracked, dry lips turned into a smile. She took slow careful steps toward the wall, then jumped.

We floated down towards a boat...no a cruise. My dress floated behind me. We landed on the deck. Joyful music, laughter, and children screaming filled my ears. Her hair was just as it was the first time. I looked toward the horizon. The honey golden sun glistened off the waves. Wind blew in our hair. We walked hand in hand toward a table where we were served our meal. The aroma of seafood filled my nose as the server came in with our meal. The meal was the best meal I ever had. We laughed just like we did that day. We then walked into the sun. We walked on clouds.

I woke in my bed. I heard someone calling from the kitchen. I tiptoed out of my room and into the kitchen. There I saw her still with the twinkle in her eye, slaving over a hot stove. She looked at me and smiled. The kitchen smelled of sweet cake and delicious chicken. She handed me a piece of cake. It tasted like vanilla ice cream just the way it
melted on my tongue. I saw a smile creep onto her face as her favorite song came on the radio.

The song carried me to the beach where I saw her sitting in a beach chair, enjoying the beautiful sunset. The sounds of waves crashing and seagulls singing lulled me into a deep sleep.

I sat on her porch. I heard cars with music passing by. I laughed and talked about school. And different things.

I awoke to the sound of an ambulance roaring outside. I watched her being carried out in a stretcher.
Her emotion said, "Goodbye."
But I didn’t catch it.
I know she was saying her last words
While I couldn’t hear it.

That night I wondered, what happened? What if she… died. The next morning. I knew.

I opened my eyes to find I was back in the present.
I didn’t lose anything.
You can always go back in time and find those memories.
R.I.P
The Silencer

Julian J

December 20, 1939

Western Poland

This story is about a young boy who lives in Western Poland during the German invasion of Poland in 1939. He is sent to a concentration camp and must escape. Please take note that this story is located in a disturbing place, and takes place during a frightening time, some of the themes in this story, you may not want to read. Also, the characters in this story will speak their native tongues of Polish, Czech, German, and Italian. There will be English translations at the end of every sentence. I wanted to keep the story as authentic as possible. Thanks and enjoy!

Chapter 1: Home

Mamma was cooking up chicken soup and matzo balls for dinner, while Papa was baking some Kolaczki. My two sisters were playing with their dolls, and I was reading my favorite war magazine series, “Halics”. I had all my soldiers toy set up exactly how they were supposed to be. I got the issue I was reading for the final day of Hanukkah. It was a limited edition, behind the scenes look at the British army during World War II! I set up all of my soldiers in the way the British lineup was, and when I was done studying it, the lineup was perfect! Right when I was about ready to commence the battle, Mamma called out “Obiad gotowy!” (Dinner’s ready!)

“Badz tam za chwile!” (Be there in a second!) I rushed over to the table in our kitchen and was ready to be served. The aroma filling the room was unbelievably great! I poured some soup into my bowl and put a few Kolaczki on my plate.
“Znasz regule Tom, zadnych zabawek przy stole podczas kolacji!” (You know the rule, Tom, no toys at the table during dinner!), said Mamma.

“Przepraszam mamo!” (Sorry Mamma!) I replied.

“Modlmy sie teraz,” (Let us pray now) said Papa.

We held our hands and prayed together in harmony. When we finished our prayer, I gobbled up my soup and consumed my Kolaczkis whole. When we all finished eating, I stayed up a little longer and played with my new soldiers. When it was bed time, Mamma read me my favorite story, “Wielka przygoda z Froggy” (Froggy’s Great Adventure). Mamma turned off my light and went to go say goodnight to my little sisters. Soon enough, I fell asleep.

**Chapter 2: Silenced**

I was dreaming about meeting the British soldiers when I woke up to a strange noise. It resembled a rumble. There were no trains near our town, so it couldn’t have been that. I got out of bed and looked outside my window. Nothing. I went to go check in the living room window nad still saw nothing. We lived in an apartment so I couldn’t check the west side of the building. I pinched myself. Wasn’t a dream. I grab a glass of water from the kitchen and started to walk to my bedroom when I heard something creak open. It almost sounded like a door. I decided it was probably just my dad getting his midnight water. Yet, nobody was in the kitchen. His door wasn’t even open. I started to head to my bedroom when a dark figure emerged behind me.

He wrapped his hand around my mouth and nose. I tried to scream but my voice was silenced. Everything started to get blurry and I couldn’t breathe.

“Mach dir keine Sorgen kleiner Junge, du gehst jetzt zu einem glücklichen Ort,” (Don’t worry little boy, you’re going to a happy place now) said the man. “Shhh,” he said. Soon enough, I lost consciousness.
Chapter 3: Movement

“Co sie stalo?” (Ugh, what happened?) I still felt dizzy and sick. I felt like I hadn’t breathed in ages.
As soon as I got up, I threw up on the floor. It almost felt like I was, I was, moving?
There were other people around me, nad it looked as if we were almost in a train car.
We were. The train smelled like a mix of mud, barf, and … rotting flesh. I turned around
and saw a shriveled-up man on the floor. He was lifeless, and had flies swarming
around him. I barfed again. That was the first time I had ever seen a dead man, and I’m
glad I didn’t see one before this. I turned around and asked the lady next to me,
“Przepraszam, prosze pani, ale czy wiesz gdzie jestesmy?” (Excuse me, ma’am, but do
you know where we are?) I asked the lady.
“Moje dziecko! MOJE DZIECKO! Gdzie on jest?!” (My baby! MY BABY! Where is she?!) replied the woman. She was sobbing and screaming. Her eyes were red. It looked like
she hadn’t stopped crying since she was born.
About an hour later the train stopped, and the doors slowly started opening. I saw five
armed men right outside the door to (what I presumed to be) the train car. We had
arrived at the happy place.

Chapter 4: The Happy Place

The five men were tall and buff. They had perfectly blonde hair and strikingly blue eyes.
They looked as though they were teenagers. One of them came in and grabbed me by
my arm. His grip was tight, almost as if he deliberately wanted to harm me.
“Willkommen, kleiner Junge, zum glückichen Ort” (Welcome little boy, to the happy
place). He referred to this place as the happy place, like the man that suffocated me. He
said with a grin on his dum little face and continued to strangle my arm. I knew he was
speaking German but I couldn’t understand what he was saying. Another man came up
to the blondie and said, “Quindi, immagino tu abbia a che fare con I bambini” (So I
guess you’re dealing with the children) said the man in what I believe was Italian.
“Heh, dieser ging alleine und verloren in seiner Wohnung herum. Zumindest hat mir Dominic gesagt.” (Heh, this one was walking about the apartment, all alone and lost. At least that’s what Dominic told me) said Blondie. (That’s what I named him).

It was strange, one of the dudes was speaking Italian whilst the other was speaking German. It seemed like they understood each other, even though they were speaking different languages.

The happy place looked more like the depression place. The ground was muddy, the tents were dirty, and everybody looked like they hadn’t eaten in ages. Blondie finally dropped me off at an old, run-down building.

“Wenn Sie hineingehen, gehen Sie den Flur entlang und biegen Sie rechts ab. Dort werden Sie Ihre Lumpen anziehen und ich werde Sie zum nachsten Zelt bringen.” (When you go inside, go down the hall and take a right, there you’ll put your rags on and I’ll escort you to the next tent).

The only words I fully understood were “down hall” “right” and “put on rags”. Those were all the words I needed to know. The door creaked when I opened it and the tiles of wood were creaking. The walls were cracked and everywhere I stepped dust blasted off the rickety floor. Right down the hall to the right was an old lady behind a desk. She was sewing some clothes when she said, “Jakiego rozmiaru jestes mlody?” (What size are you, young man?)

The old lady got up from her chair and had a warm smile on her face.

“Mysle, ze dziesiec?” (A ten, I think?) I told the lady. I know, I know, it’s embarrassing that I don’t know the size of my own clothes.

“Zobaczmy, co mam.” (Let’s see what I have).

The lady got up and looked through the racks of dirty old clothes. She got one of the rags and gave it to me. I was going to put it on in the changing tent when she grabbed my arm and said, “Cokolwiek mozesz zrobic, wydostan sie z tego miejsca! Sa stosy umarlych i niekonczaca sie praca! Powiedz mi, ze kiedy uciekniesz, powiesz kazdej osobie...”
Scary Story Contest

The October Writing Contest is a Scary Story Contest. Your story must be original. Think about what scares you and others and try to recreate that idea on paper. Contest entries are due October 19.
Pandora's Twisted End

*Brethany C*

Aiko is walking down an alley from work because it is the shortcut she has always used to walk to her home and it's a very lonely road; never once has she ever encountered more than three people in this alley. But this day was different, because she was walking and a man had caught her attention. She looked at him then down at the floor and he approached Aiko.

As he speaks he is shaking violently and breathing heavily. He tells her while handing a black leather box to her: “Take box. No open. Keep safe.” Then he runs away.

Confused, she continues walking home. Thinking about what had happened, she is still shook and baffled by what the man had said. She holds the box close to her chest as she approaches her apartment.

Upon entering her home, she finds her husband sitting on the couch with a cup of green tea. His tie is loose around his neck extending down to his lower abdomen. He turns to look at her and eyes the box. “Box? For?” Aiko explains to him what had happened with the old man and the cryptic message.

Later that night Aiko and her husband had are getting ready for bed and as Aiko brushes her teeth slowly her eyes are focused on the sleek black leather that sits in the closet just above the shoes. As I walk across the cold floor to my bed as Hikari lays asleep peacefully in bed. The next day my husband heads to work and I stare at the box once again I lift myself up and crawl over to the box and I trace the opening to the box and I feel the urge to open it, I lift the top and nothing is inside I was made fool of ten minutes pass and I’m scrolling through the channels trying to get rid of my boredom the phone rings and I’m hit with unbearable news “Hikari has been killed with a cord tied around his neck and stab marks near his chest puncturing his lung, I’m sorry Mrs. Nakamura” I broke down in tears.
I look back to the box... but it is no longer there.
Could It Be Fate?

Charlie

“I don’t know about this guys, it’s getting late and it’s really cold out here.” shivered Bowdy.

“Ok. MOM. I guess if you’re too scared then you can just stay here,” teased Chrissy.

“Chrissy don’t be so mean,” I scolded. “Come on Bowdy, it will be fine. This shortcut will get us there faster.”

“If you say so,” Bowdy choked.

I gazed at the pitch-black forest before me. The gruesome trees towered over me. The wind hissed and crackled, the crusty branches of the timber making sounds like nails on a chalkboard. A whimsical vapor misted about. It was like an illusion.

I was terrified to go into the forest but it was the only way to get back to Chrissy’s house, and I didn’t want to seem like a chicken in front of my friends. “Ready?” Chrissy asked.

“Yes.” I lied. I took my first step into the forest. Inside the forest was even more disturbing than I had imagined. I turned to Bowdy. He looked pale. I looked around the forest for some kind of reassurance that I would be okay. No luck.

“Chrissy, how much longer?” anticipated Bowdy.

“Oh don’t worry, Bowdy, not too much longer,” Chrissy consoled. But you could tell she was lying. Chrissy didn’t know where we were and I didn’t know where we were and that could only mean one thing. We were lost in a dark forest with no type of communication at 9:00 p.m on Halloween, the creepiest night of the year.
It seemed like hours had passed. We had no luck. It was getting gelid. Bowdy came up to me and hugged me around the waist. “It’s so cold out here,” Bowdy murmured.

“I know Bowdy. I will ask Chrissy what the deal is,” I soothed.

I walked up to Chrissy but she stopped in her tracks. “Whoaaa!” Chrissy said, stunned. She looked astonished. I looked up. A horrendous building loomed over us. Chills went down my spine.

The building seemed to be an abandoned church. The paint was peeling. The door was a bizarre color. Red. The windows were all cracked. The stairs that led up to the door were all broken and nails were sticking out of them, as if someone tried to fix them. And to make it even worse a full moon gaped down on us. I was not going in there.

“Let's check it out!” gushed Chrissy.

“NO. WAY. PERIOD!” I declared. “You have already dragged us into this disgusting forest and got us lost. So, no way we are going in there.” I yelled.

“Fine!” Chrissy said. “I will go in and you two scaredy cats can stay out here.” Chrissy flung her head around and took her first step onto the stairs that led up to the church's door. They made an eerie creak. She looked back at us with a look of fear like she wanted to go us to go with her. But we remained still. She opened the door. She stepped into the frame. And then she went, off into the darkness.

“We can't let her go in there by herself Lenni!” blurted Bowdy.

“Well, look how much trouble has she caused us?” I complained.

“But still, she's our best friend and we love her. What if something happens to her?” exclaimed Bowdy. He was right. The thought of losing Chrissy, my best friend, my family, my buddy, my partner in crime wanted to make me hurl.
“Fine!” I answered.

I took hold of Bowdy’s hand firmly. “Here we go,” I reassured myself. “Do it for Chrissy.” I took a deep breath. I felt like turning back already. But I know I couldn’t. We took our first step onto the stairs. They made a blood-curdling groan. The second step, third step. We came to the agape door.

I studied the room. There was one singular light bulb that lit the vast empty room before me. The walls had graffiti on them that read “you’re next”. I didn’t think too much about it. The benches and pews were destroyed. In the corner was an eerie organ with a portrait of Jesus that sat upon it. Out of the corner of my eye behind the dusty old organ I saw something scamper across the floor. A mouse, a rat, a chipmunk. It didn’t matter, it was alive.

“C-chrissy!” I called out hoping for her response. There was a giant window at the end of the room. There I saw her silhouette. I ran to Chrissy. Her mouth was wide open. “Chrissy what is it?” I asked.

She pointed to the window. “Look, a graveyard!” Chrissy exclaimed. “I am going to check it out.” Chrissy opened the window and jumped down, crinkling the dead leaves beneath her feet.


I wanted to cry. I squinted. “I don’t know but we better follow her,” I said. Bowdy and I jumped out the window and followed Chrissy.
Bowdy looked horrified, like his life just flashed before him. I grabbed his hand. With each step my heart beat faster. My legs like Jello. I knew the worst was yet to come. “Happy thoughts. Happy thoughts,” sang Bowdy.

We approached the first stone. Chrissy dusted it off with her sleeve. The wind seemed to chant. It made the trees sway back and forth, back and forth, as if they were in a mesmerizing trance. Chrissy glanced at the stone and her face struck with horror.

“Guys. This is not good, not good at all.”

“W-what's wrong Chrissy?” I dared to ask.

“This gravestone says Chrissy Walker, February 3, 2003 to October 31, 2018,” she blubbered. Big fat tears plopped from her eyes onto her jacket. Bowdy gasped. Disbelief filled me. Chrissy ran to the next gravestone. “Oh no! This can't be happening!!!!!!!” Chrissy stumbled backwards. “No! No! No!”

“What does it say Chris?” I panicked.


“No! This is not real! It's just a dream!” I screamed. I scampered over to the next gravestone.

“Bowdy Lungrund January 27, 2003 to October 31, 2018,” Bowdy sobbed. I couldn’t breath. My heart was beating too rapidly Everything was spinning. Then. Darkness.
I Turned Around to See

Ryan S

I suddenly woke up. Where was I? How did I get here? It felt like a million thoughts just ran through my head. But the one that I kept hearing over and over was “Where was I?” I tried to stand up but my left leg wasn’t responding. I looked at it, my eyes finally adjusting to the darkness. I couldn’t make it out at first but there was a large, heavy bookshelf on my left leg. I tried pushing it off but it made this terrible sound, almost like a squeal. I tried squeezing out, and after a couple minutes, I did, I escaped.

I stood up and began to look at my surroundings. I was in a house, a deteriorating one. Mold was everywhere: the walls, the ceiling, even some parts of the floor. I started walking forward and found a cabinet. I tried to open the cabinet but it wouldn’t budge. I keep trying for a couple minutes, but eventually I gave up. I started walking away but then I thought “What if there is something important in there like a map or flashlight? Or maybe something cool like a knife, or maybe even a gun!” I walked back with a newfound excitement and tried to open up the cabinet again. This time it opened with ease. There was nothing inside of it.

I closed it and turned around, but something was different. There was a living room, two rooms and a spiral staircase now. Before I had just been standing in a room full of darkness. But now there was furniture, a lot of furniture. All of it was old and moldy. It looked like it had been abandoned for many years. I started walking forward to the dining table with a loud creak coming from the floor. But the table looked like it had just been bought, it was a beautiful golden brown with forks and knives scattered all over it. I heard a loud noise come from behind me and turned around. There was nothing there, but as soon as I turned around, the table was gone."Where was it? It was there just a moment ago." Just as I had finished this thought I heard a loud noise come from one of the bedrooms.
I walked down the long and narrow hallway to the door. I eventually reached the door and tried to open it. I met heavy resistance coming from the other side of the door. I tried again and this time it opened. Inside was a very large doll collection. I hesitated going inside, but something pushed me into the room. I turned around to face whoever pushed me in this dark and creepy room but as soon as I did they slammed the door with a loud BANG. I tried to open the door but it was locked. I kept trying but the door didn't budge. As I do with most things I eventually gave up and turned around towards my fate. I started walking forward, each time with a loud creak coming from the floor. It felt like every doll in the room was staring at me. I eventually found a door and reached for the handle. A rat scurried right by my feet, right before I touched the handle with my trembling hand. I practically jumped out of my skin. The rat found a hole to hide in while I'm gasping for air. I've had an irrational fear for rats ever since I was little.

I turned back towards the door but it had disappeared. I thought to myself, “Everything in this stupid house keeps disappearing!” I walked around the room a little bit more and found another door. I, again, reached for the handle and before I touched it, it disappeared. Now I’m mad, maybe even pissed. I started punching the wall where the door used to be. When I landed the first punch, the wall tore down. I checked my hand for any injuries, but there were none. I stepped forward over the crumpled paper into the open living room. I walked forward but the floor beneath me cracked and I fell down what seemed like fifty feet. It was pitch black. I tried to look at my hands but I couldn’t, even though they were right in front of my face. I walked around, listening to the noises around me. I eventually gave up and lay on the floor motionless, still listening to the noises. I fell asleep on the cold hard floor. I dreamed about some animal chasing me throughout the house, getting closer, and closer, and closer. I ran into a dead-end and turned around... I suddenly woke up, hearing a loud snarling behind me. I stood up and started running. I felt something touch my shoulders. I turned around and... I woke up again still on the cold hard floor. I looked around the empty room. Nothing. I walked around very slowly, jumping at any noise that I heard. I calmed down a bit, still walking in the pitch black dark. I found some stairs, but I was too scared to go up. I could feel something up there, something evil. I started to walk away, still sensing the
evil coming up from the stairs. I found another set of stairs. I didn't feel anything coming up from the stairs so I started walking up. I stepped on the old rusted metal stairs with a loud creak. I continued up the stairs in the pitch black.

I finally reached the top of the stairs. I found a bat and a flashlight laid out for me on the floor. I picked them up and walked forward. I found that I was in the living room again. I walked down the long and narrow hallway to the other room. Inside was a bed, a dresser, a table, couch, and cabinet with a night lamp on it. I checked the closet. Nothing. I checked under the bed. Nothing. I walked out of the room and looked back. It was gone. I walked up the spiral staircase to find another long hallway with two rooms on the right side and one on the left with a big beautiful window at the end. It looked like it was morning outside. I heard a noise come from one of the bedrooms. Suddenly, the doors to all of the rooms opened. I sprinted to the end of the hallway and broke the window with my bat. It was a three-story house so with little hesitation I decided to jump out of the window. I jumped and for a second I felt weightless. Reality suddenly came back to me and I braced for impact. THUMP. I landed on my feet. I collapsed on the ground, legs hurting. I heard something running down the hallway so I got to my feet and started running. As I was running, I turned around to see a cute dog barking at me. I heard a snarl come from in front of me and I turned around to see...