**Skipping Stones**

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**Think Peace:** One Planet

5 Thoughts and Visions on Bringing Peace

6 Danger and Opportunity • My Dreams of Peace

7 Islam is Not the Enemy! • Innocent People

8 A Letter to the President of the United States

9 Transcending Revenge • Stories Untold

12 Teshuvah: Deep Inner Work • A Jewish Prayer

13 There Was a War when I Was a Child

14 A Youthful Reality: With the Dalai Lama

16 The Dream

17 Kwanzaa: An American Holiday • Umoja

18 A Social Worker Visits Ethiopia

**Indonesia**

20 Beautiful Bountiful Indonesia

22 Neighborhood Unity

23 Discussing Diversity in Indonesia

27 Malin Kundang • Useful Indonesian Phrases

28 Nature Poetry

29 But Who Shall Lead Us?

30 Living With Diabetes

31 Thanksgiving Kaddish • Gift Wrap • I’m Thankful

32 Perfect Pitch

**Regular Departments**

3 From the Editor

4 What’s On Your Mind?

10 Skipping Stones Stew: Poems of Peace

11 Dear Hanna

33 Pen Pals Wanted

34 Multicultural BookShelf

35 A Guide for Parents and Teachers

36 A Journey to China

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**Skipping Stones** is a nonprofit children’s magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity, and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore stewardship of the ecological and social webs that nurture us. We offer a unique forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. **Skipping Stones** expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We seek suggestions, submissions, subscriptions, and support.

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Nonviolence and tolerance are not new concepts. As a student in India, I learned that the pages of our history have refreshing, peaceful turning points such as the ones below:

In the 3rd century B.C.E., Emperor Ashoka, became a Buddhist after winning the fierce Kaling War, which he had launched to conquer more land. He saw the futility of war, after hundreds of thousands deaths on both sides, and he vowed never to fight another war!

Ashoka instead sent spiritual teachers and messengers of peace all over Asia. That’s one reason why Buddhism has spread to China, Japan, Myanmar and other Asian countries. Today, the Indian flag and the official seal both show the Ashok Wheel, the Wheel of Dharma.

Moslem Emperor Akbar ruled India from 1556 to 1605, with fairness to all, irrespective of their religions. He had Hindus in high posts, and he married a Hindu princess. He was an illiterate man, yet he encouraged tolerance and equality for all and promoted arts and education.

Mahatma Gandhi, who was born in India in 1869, studied law in England and later practiced it in South Africa. He had studied all religions and respected each one of them. He moved back to India after developing nonviolent ways to protest racial discrimination and injustices in South Africa.

Gandhi used Satyagraha (insistence for truth), which is nonviolent refusal to cooperate with injustices, successfully to free India from the mighty British Empire.

Gandhi’s nonviolent methods respect the opponents but do not give in to their unjust laws or practices. They have been adapted by many movements during the last fifty years in places such as Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe, and South Africa. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., César Chávez and the Dalai Lama are among the many great leaders who have carried the torch of truth.

For 40 years, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet has shown us that peace, love and nonviolence is the only way, even when we’re pained by loss of life and suffering due to violent and unjust actions (See page 14).

Perhaps, you will learn about some of the nonviolent social and political changes that have been implemented in the world.

You’ll discover that when changes are brought about by accepting the truth and responding with love and compassion, they last longer. Violence and weapons of destruction can neither kill the human spirit, nor bring lasting peace. Recognizing this, President Mandela’s government in South Africa set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to heal the deep wounds of racial crimes and discrimination from the country’s long apartheid era. And, in Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi (below) continues her nonviolent struggle for democracy despite her decade-long house arrest by the military rulers.

Since September 11th, Skipping Stones has received over 50 communications suggesting peaceful solutions to the world crises. In the following pages, we’ve excerpted some of them. We hope that the leaders will address the root causes of violence and injustice to bring true peace.

May your hearts be showered with peace and happiness!
America's Truth and Lies

I invite you to take a look at the world through the eyes of a young black man in America. Racism is not confined to hate groups and an offensive word. It is assuming the worst about a person you might not even know for something that s/he can’t control.

Does racism still exist in America? I want you to examine this question after reading these examples.

A man is shot 41 times on his front steps in the middle of the night. He was trying to take out his wallet to prove he was innocent. His killers were supposedly men of the law. They walked free. America is supposed to be the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” Well it doesn’t seem like freedom to me. And are enforcers of the law “brave” when they shoot an innocent man on his front steps? I don’t want anybody who is willing to kill an innocent man working for my law enforcement agency, which is supposed to protect me. The victim could have been my father, or my grandfather, or a family friend reaching for his wallet—a man being a good citizen. But he was a black man, and so the police assumed he was reaching for a weapon and presumed him to be dangerous.

I also don’t think enforcers of the law should have the right to pull an innocent man over just because of the color of his skin. Should the police start pulling over people just because of the color of their hair or eyes? How about because of their height? Does anyone presume that blondes, or people with green eyes, or short people are somehow inherently dangerous?

Here’s another example: four innocent girls were killed and many others injured when a grown man felt the need to bomb a church in Birmingham. The worshippers, who don’t look so different from girls who go to my church, were in Sunday school at the time. What’s even more intolerable is that these killers were found innocent. So while the bombers live long lives, those girls will forever be teenagers.

Do you think America’s youth is not racist? When I was nine years old at summer camp, I was called a name that has degraded my race for centuries. I was called that name because I laughed at a joke about somebody’s lunch. I again encountered racism in the third grade. I overheard somebody saying to one of my friends that if she and I ever had a child it would be “messed up” because it would be half black and half white. The racists I have encountered in my life have been well-educated, Northern suburbanites. These are people who laugh and joke with me on the bus, people who sit in classrooms in a school full of privileged youth.

My mother told me once, “Paul, if you ever get pulled over by a police officer, keep both hands on the wheel. Do not speak unless you are spoken to. Be polite, and try not to disagree with the officer.” She also taught me not to take toys into a store with me; it will be assumed that I stole them.

The truth of my America looks different from other people’s. I see America through different eyes, and it sees me differently. I feel that we’ll never truly get over the racial barrier, and it saddens me greatly.

—Paul Washington, 7th grade, Germantown Academy, Landsdale, Pennsylvania.

I don’t think New York will ever be the same. I don’t think I will ever be the same. No New Yorker ever will be. I remember Manhattan’s skyline. I have so many questions now. Why did they do this? Why did they have such an urge to kill? Why are there such horrible people in the world? Why did I never go to the top of the World Trade Center?

But my biggest question is, why are we in a war? War. I hate the sound of that word. I hate that feeling, knowing that brave Americans could be dying right now, maybe clasping a child’s photograph and murmuring a loved one’s name. The death toll from this war might be even more than the casualties in New York. But I know that we need to avenge the innocent citizens’ deaths, and I think America is picking a good enemy to take our fury out on. We are not only helping Americans; we’re helping the world.

I think President Bush is handling this extremely well. I think it is quite brave of him not to just break down and sob in public. I am also very happy that Britain is on our side. But why can’t the Taliban just be sensible and hand over Osama bin Laden? It would help them; it would help us, and it would help the people of Afghanistan, too. I don’t think they really make a good government. I think that they just want a position of power, where they can intoxicate the people with their fanatical ideas and their hatred of America. It is like the children’s proverb, “No troublemaker wants to be alone.”

—Emma Morrison, 10, Brooklyn, New York.
If people would ponder deeply the plight of those who were trapped in the burning buildings—the distress they suffered, their desperate cries for help, and the intense panic that even caused some of them to jump out of the windows—no one would ever commit such an atrocity again.

My children, let us pray for the peace of the departed souls, the quick recovery of those who were injured, and for the welfare of all beings in the world.

—Ammachi, spiritual teacher, Kerala, India.

I am afraid military retaliation will only provoke an even more severe terrorist attack. I pray for no more killing of innocent people anywhere. We all share this planet. Let's keep it peaceful and beautiful for generations to come.

—Yumi Kikuchi, environmentalist and mother, Japan.

The terrorist attack on the United States gives us an opportunity to literally turn around world history. President Bush could very well establish himself as the most important leader in history by moving forward from a position of strength rather than reacting with a posture of power. World peace and prosperity should be our goals.

The United States is the sole superpower in the world. We are in a wonderful position to show the world our generosity, goodness and leadership. We should seize this chance for genuine leadership. Instead of wasting our great wealth for revenge through military power, we should extend the hand of friendship and help to all of the most impoverished (and therefore the most dangerous) areas of the world. We could use just a little of our wealth to build schools, hospitals, desalinization plants or whatever is most needed. Through such a bold plan for alleviation of misery we could find true security and peace. With goodwill, respect and admiration from the entire world, who would oppose us?

An unending cycle of hate, violence and revenge is not the answer. Christianity is not alone in requiring us to love our enemies. All religions have this same command, including Islam. Let us show the world that we are serious about our beliefs. What an example of true leadership that would be.

—Bill Hessling, educator, Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Those who engage in unforgivable acts of terrorism, intimidation and violence claim that they are fighting a jihad, a holy war, but a war can never be holy. Only peace is holy. That which is holy is peaceful, loving and compassionate. War, by its very definition, is none of these. The terrorists claim they are fighting a war in the name of God. However, there is no such thing. War cannot possibly be undertaken with God’s consent or to win His favor. How can we, in God’s name, kill His children, His creation?

—Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Rishikesh, India.

Bombings, war and terrorism are cousins in the same family of cruelty and destruction. Violence brings more dissention, resentment, anger and desire for retaliation. Why do we ask kids to understand that, yet we show them as a nation that we don’t believe it?

We can declare that war is barbaric and outside the bounds of human decency. We can use our resources to seek understanding, prevent violence, nurture life and learn new ways to live. Let us lead the world into this understanding of reality.

—Kathy Beckwith, author & educator, Dayton, OR.

The terrorist actions of Sept. 11 came as no surprise. For years, certain people have been going to great lengths to make a point to the U.S.—a point that we have failed to grasp.

The world’s wealth and resources are extremely poorly distributed. This poor distribution of wealth is a direct and deliberate result of foreign policies first pioneered by the colonizing European countries and then honed to a fine art by the U.S. We have toppled various democratically elected governments and worked to prevent meaningful democracy in many other places. We have murdered peasant families from Viet Nam to El Salvador. In the Middle East, we’ve supported Israel, contributing to a virtual apartheid situation for the Palestinians living in that area. All of this has been in an effort to maintain U.S. power and domination of world resources.

If we are really concerned about terrorism, we should begin examining our own behavior. My deepest hope out of all this is that instead of rallying around a cry for retaliation, we as a people will begin a period of soul searching that will ultimately result in a better world.

—Robert Bolman, eco-builder, Eugene, Oregon.
Danger and Opportunity

I believe that we are all connected on this Earth, by the air we breathe, the water we drink, the children we bear and the spirit we share. We are all created from the same stuff, but we happen to have been born into different societies. Look at the way strangers are pulling together because of this crisis. What is this telling us?

The opportunity I see here is to recognize that the greatest, strongest and most privileged nation on Earth now has the opportunity to practice the peace-making we ask other nations to embrace. If we find we don’t have the will to do it here, how can we ever hope that the long histories of violence and retaliation in the Middle East, Ireland, Africa or Southeast Asia can possibly change?

If we aren’t free enough to respond to this atrocity with anything other than conditioned reflex, then there is no true freedom, and our human interconnectedness will make itself evident, endlessly, only in the torment we cause each other. If we only struggle to defend ourselves instead of healing, we will waste our wealth, freedom, spirit and energy for generations to come.

What if this great nation were to start making amends for its political mistakes and economic injustices? What if we were to start asking humbly for the forgiveness of others? What if we supported the vital interests of humanity everywhere, as opposed to only narrow American interests? Certainly there would be tremendous resistance within our country, but with strong leadership it could happen.

This is not a plea to let the perpetrators go free. We must seek to contain the violence and seek justice for criminal acts. But how can we, having experienced the pain inflicted when innocent civilians become the target of someone’s desire to get even, believe that there is ever a way for suffering to be made “even” through retaliation?

I have little hope that our current administration will be able to understand this, or even listen to it, unless there is a groundswell of support from the people. I’m the people. You are the people. Do we want a peaceful world for our children? What are we willing to give for it? Are we willing to seek healing instead of vengeance? Are we willing to learn how to forgive?

Give this opportunity your voice. Make a new vision part of your conversations with others, part of your letters, part of your prayers. Pass this message on, and add your hopes to it. Tell your legislators.

As poet Leonard Cohen observed, “There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

—Peg Marson, Canby, Oregon.

My Dreams of Peace on Earth

When I close my eyes I see a world full of flowers and decorations, a world without wars and violence. I see in the diversity of our world a magical, beautiful harmony and order. Humanity is a rainbow of different cultures and races. Every people must have its color and lifestyle. Big cities show me magical and mysterious signs by their nighttime lights, but it gives me great pleasure to be in villages as well. Culture and nature can exist in harmony.

I don’t understand why people are in conflict with one another. The reasons behind all wars seem absurd and insignificant to me. Conflicts destroy harmony and cause intolerance and distrust. Distrust becomes barriers and limitations between people and cultures. Culture is the bridge and path of spiritual exchange for kind and beautiful ideas, deeds and endeavors. No one should be isolated from kindness. No one should think: that they can’t change the world.

With kindness from all of us, we can find the harmony and peace to make our planet a happy home for all humanity. This home should have a place for great and small, new and old, strong and weak. I imagine the people on Earth as a marvelous field full of multi-colored flowers. Every nation is a living flower with a unique color and smell. Together these flowers can give us real harmony in diversity.

Since I was five years old, I’ve been collecting my innermost ideas and my little living observations. I wish to share some of my personal vocabulary and my definitions of different notions:

**Beauty:** Where all things are in order.

**Freedom:** Breath without obstacles.

**Love:** The feel of gluing together.

**Life:** The motion of sensation.

—Eva Ionesova, 10, Samara, Russia.
Islam Is Not the Enemy!

Abraham Lincoln, your assassin failed. Slavery is dead. Martin Luther King Jr., your assassins failed. Your dream is coming true.

John F. Kennedy, your assassins failed. Your death did not make us warmongers and haters; it made us love each other, other nations and cultures. The Berlin wall has come down, and we are now all Berliners.

Malcolm X, your assassins failed. African-American Muslims, including Louis Farakkan, have abandoned racism and rejoined mainstream Muslims.

John Lennon, your assassin failed. We can now imagine. We love each other as if there are no countries and no religion, and yes, all we need is love.

Anwar Sadat, your assassins failed. Egypt and Israel are at peace. Izhak Rabin, your assassins failed. Israelis and Palestinians are determined to make peace.

Brothers and sisters in New York, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania, your assassins failed. We’ll not make war for your sake, but we will make peace. We will not hate each other for your sake. We’ll love each other more than before. Your death will not create ignorance and prejudice, but enlightenment and unity.

America’s principles are in the spirit of the Torah and the Gospel, but the Qur’án (Islam’s holy book) has the blueprint for our democracy and our strength.

“If you fight to protect each other’s monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, then I shall make you victorious and give you power.”—Qur’án 22:40

The terrorists want America to declare war on Islam. They think they are “martyrs,” dying for a just cause. They are wrong. They don’t understand their religion. In Islam, a martyr is one who dies as a witness for goodness or against evil. The martyrs are the victims, our brothers and sisters in the airplanes and the towers and the Pentagon. They are witnesses over an America that will become better for their sake.

President Bush, instead of declaring war, let’s just punish the guilty. Let’s finally accept that Islam is part of our spiritual heritage and part of the foundation of our way of life. Let’s create world peace and end wars based on myth and prejudice.

Muslims all over the world, America is not the enemy of Islam. America is the best Islamic state on Earth. Americans, open your eyes! Islam is not America’s enemy. Islam is our way of life.

—Tammam Adi is the director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Eugene, Oregon.

Innocent People in other Countries

I was born in a country where communism was considered the enemy, and the U.S. was going to come to our rescue. My mother was North Korean and had to leave her family, friends and home to cross a border in her own country—hoping for a chance at survival. The U.S. wasn’t necessarily the “bad guy,” but it was one of the factors in destroying a beautiful country with beautiful people.

The people of Korea had no real say in whether they were democratic or communist. They were merely told what to do and when to do it. They watched armies destroy their land, their homes and their loved ones. They watched as foreign soldiers raped, terrorized and destroyed their families in the name of some foreign cause. Korea has been overrun many times by many people. They were used to this.

I’m tied to a history and background that reminds me that retaliation has never solved anything. Never. We do have to fight for freedom on occasion, but there is a difference between wanting a person “dead or alive” and fighting for personal freedoms.

What happened in New York and Washington was atrocious, but we can’t believe that starting a war with a fanatic will end quickly or efficiently. We’ve played this game many times in the past four decades—always with dire consequences and no resolution. Remember that most citizens of other countries are innocent, with some bad people hiding in their midst.

Our feelings run strong when our own innocent people die on our own soil, but I ask you to take a moment to think of innocent people in other countries that may have to die to achieve someone else’s goals.

—Jean Chapin, Korean American, Dublin, Ireland.

Our group, which includes Muslims, Jews and Christians, wants to express its horror, shock and grief. We know from personal experience that the majority of people in Middle Eastern countries hold human life sacred and wish for peace and prosperity. The fanatic assault on Americans was an attack on all the world’s people. It was perhaps most devastating to those who seek peace in the Middle East. No person’s cause was furthered by these horrendous, inhuman actions. We fear the escalation of violence, the deepening of hatred and the delaying of true peace. We are sending a plea to respect people of all ethnic, religious and national backgrounds.

—The Eugene Middle East Peace Group, Oregon.
A Letter to the President of the United States

Greg Nees, a former Marine and current member of Veterans for Peace (www.veteransforpeace.org) wrote this letter on September 13. After mailing it to the president, he sent it to friends and family via the Internet. They circulated it around the world and collected enough money to have it published as a full page advertisement in the New York Times on Oct. 9.

Dear Mr. President:

I am a former Marine Corps sergeant who served his country well and was honorably discharged in 1970. I have never written such a letter before, and I hope that it will somehow reach you through the bureaucratic filters.

Like every other American, I was appalled by the death and destruction we witnessed on September 11. We have suffered a horrible attack and far too many of us have suffered and died. Saddened and sickened by the carnage, I know you too are suffering with the victims and their families. I can feel your anger and frustration as well as your desire for active retaliation. I understand it well. It is a natural and justifiable reaction to such a heinous criminal act. Yet I would counsel you to proceed carefully. A mistake on our part could easily widen the spiral of violence.

Mr. President, you now have a historic opportunity to prove that the United States is more than just an economic and military power to be feared. You can show the world that the United States is also a civilized country that can be trusted to follow the law, guided by wisdom and compassion.

I urge you to use all legal means at your disposal to determine who perpetrated this horrible crime and to bring them to trial before the appropriate court. Let them indeed find the justice the world awaits and needs.

But I beg you, let not one more innocent life—American, Israeli, Palestinian, Afghan or any other—be lost. Too often our weapons have taken the lives of innocents. The military euphemism is “collateral damage,” but in reality it is manslaughter if not outright murder. What right can we claim that allows us to take more innocent lives? Is that not also a form of terrorism? Will we rise above the level of those who attacked us?

You have chosen to describe this as an act of evil. I fear using such language will only inflame the situation and incite a lynch mob mentality. What we need is compassion and cool reason to reach our true goals: peace, prosperity and democracy for all peoples. Lead us, Mr. President, with dignity and wisdom. Show the world that you are a leader with the strength and courage to seek understanding and restorative justice, just as Nelson Mandela did in South Africa.

It is critical that we see not only their willingness to use violence, but also the political and historical context in which this atrocity and their self-sacrifice has taken place.

As a former Marine, I know what it means to be willing to sacrifice one’s life for a cause one truly believes in. Is it not possible that these people were horribly misguided, hate-filled and desperate, rather than cowardly or evil? If they see themselves as Davids fighting against a Goliath out to destroy their way of life, we certainly need not agree with them. But we must understand them if we ever hope to achieve a lasting peace and avoid a world locked down and bereft of the rights and freedoms we cherish.

Months ago, we saw unbearable images of a father and child helplessly pinned down in cross-fire. As a father yourself, can you imagine that parent’s anguish as he felt the life ebb from his son? If we undertake military action which callously traps other families in cross-fire, anywhere in the world, we deaden what is most human within us.

This moment of deep crisis is also a moment of immense opportunity. I urge you to move our world away from violence and suffering and toward peace, freedom and abundance for all. Bring the culpable to justice, but also let the voices of desperation be heard. Let’s not make the mistake we did recently at the U.N. Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, but rather bring all voices to the table, even if they are screaming and telling the stories we do not want to hear.

We are truly a superpower, used to talking and expecting others to listen. Show the world that we are also strong enough to learn to listen. I pray that you will continue to resist the calls to rashly lash out in violence. May God give you the wisdom to find the opportunity that lies in this tragedy, for creating a lasting peace. I hope that future historians will look back at your actions and applaud the greatness of spirit and cool sense of reason that moved our world closer to justice and democracy for all.

Respectfully,

Greg Nees

Vol. 13 no. 5
Transcending Revenge

If the U.S. can transcend this tragedy, we can rise to a destiny beyond the pain of war. A gentle message is welling up within me, and I cannot silence it.

It is time to lift ourselves beyond the solution of revenge. If we do not use this opportunity to reach a higher level of existence, thereby providing an example to the world, humanity may never survive.

I believe that America has been spared the suffering of the rest of the world so that we can transcend. It's not that we are "better" or "more holy" than the rest of the world, but that we are being given an opportunity to lift humanity to another level. We can say to the world, "We will not retaliate. There is another way, and it begins right here, right now, with us." How many times have we wished the Israelis or the Palestinians would do just that?

Let this answer open the door for humanity to move in a different direction. Let's redefine who we are as a nation. Let's convene the United Nations and call for a worldwide ban on weapons production and exportation. The U.S. is the world's largest weapons manufacturer and exporter. We can change the world. Such a statement could change the course of humanity. Please urge our government, our media and every citizen to carry this message throughout the world.

--- Bill Douglas, World Healing Day, Kansas City, KS

Stories Untold

Sometimes, when the entire world is cringing in horror, it is the most important time to keep your eyes wide open. Though it may be comforting to know that the entire nation is tuning into the same story, I ask you to think about which stories aren't being told. The mainstream media has been providing a suspiciously "unified" (i.e., one-sided) point of view. Consider which questions the reporters aren't asking and how they effect your opinions of current events. What makes a person an enemy? Is anyone purely evil, and how do we know? What are the good and bad points about unified opinions and unanimous decisions? Where does diversity fit into that scheme? Is it okay for the roles of government and religion to co-mingle? What do "freedom" and "justice" mean, and how are they truly attained?

In your search for the truth, please continue to question everything. Look past the propaganda. Read between the lines. Communicate with each other by discussing what you see and what you read. Continue to study history and gather information. What are the major issues in the Middle East? What kind of recent foreign interventions has the U.S. had and with what results? Talk to your teachers, to your friends, to neighbors and parents. Go to the library.

Tough issues like the ones we now face are the growing pains of humanity. We can use our hurt, confusion and outrage as motivation and as a learning tool for becoming a brighter, more compassionate and content world. I urge you not to accept simple black and white answers. Keep an open mind and try to find the most accurate truth. Keep putting your ideas out there and learning from one another. Follow your hearts and speak your minds.

--- Michelle Lieberman, assistant editor.

We urge everyone to wage peace, even as many of our leaders prepare for war. Violence does not end violence; it begets it. Somehow we must find the courage to break the cycle. Please search your heart and help find the path that provides an outlet for grief and outrage while encouraging actions rooted in compassion and cooperation.

--- Fellowship for Intentional Community, Louisa, Virginia.
**Blinding Light**
Awaken from the cold sleep of hate.
Awaken from the ancient coldness.
Awaken from the darkness.
Blinding, shimmering,
swaying light exploding
from the spirit.
Vibrant, falling images of light.
Laughing, grasping, rhyming
coloring the world in beams
of white light.
—Helen Plamp, 17, Superior, Wisconsin.

**Hidden Children**
Children hiding
From real monsters
Not imagined
Innocent victims
Still and quiet
Always waiting
Stalked by ruthless hunters
Hidden children
Their childhood stolen
Living in shadows
Their voices silenced
Children living nightmares
And never awakening
Crying silent tears
Deprived of their mothers’ arms
Sunlight, laughter, and their identities
Denied their faith
Their dreams vanishing
Like sand through fingers
Children made invisible
Living with strangers
Fearing being found
Hidden children
with shattered dreams
And broken hearts
Nurtured only
By their memories
And the whisper of hope
—Scott Limbacher, 11, Ambler, Penn.

**City of Peace**
It’s all so ironic
Jerusalem means peace
when it has never experienced
that harmonious feeling.
From the days of King David
to the millennium bash
the cries of hatred
have echoed through the ancient alleys.
A child has to grow up
in a family that burns with anger
confined to the tradition
of hostility toward his neighbor.
But if one mother
can see the bewilderment and fear
in her child’s eyes
she may realize it is enough.
Let his holy city
live up to its name
where you can admire its beauty
with security in your heart.
—Arielle Cutler, 6th gr., Middlebrook M.S.,
Wilton, CT. “I have family in Israel, and I feel especially affected by the violence in the Middle East.”
There was a time and a place when fear of encountering the sea monster, Sisiutl, produced incomprehensible terror. At any moment, the horrendously enormous, two-headed monster could rise out of the water. If you had lived then, here is the secret you would have needed to know: should you so much as twitch hoping to flee, Sisiutl’s two heads would pursue, blowing and dashing you against rocks. If, instead, you remained totally calm and motionless, Sisiutl’s two heads would approach you from opposite sides, and the eyes of the two heads would thus have the opportunity to gaze into one another. When the monster saw the other half of itself, it would see the whole, ultimate truth. You thereby gave Sisiutl the most blessed moment, the opportunity to experience truth. In gratitude, Sisiutl would protect you thereafter, whenever you were in need.

Terror came close to many of us in a recent crisis. On September 11th, we were stricken with an incomprehensible terror when hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. I examined our reactions to terror, and I felt that there is much to be learned about coping with fear from the Nootka people’s (of Vancouver Island) tale of Sisiutl.

• When we look at ourselves, do we only see half of the truth about ourselves? Do we see a one-sided point of view slanted in our favor? And if that is the case, is our partial view of ourselves intentional? Do others see another half of truth that we prefer to avoid looking at?

• If the situation calls for it, have I mastered my responses enough to be able to remain totally still and calm, to show no fear?

• Have I trained myself to see the whole picture in any situation? Am I as mindful of other’s desires and feelings as I am of my own—even to the extent of my adversary’s needs?

None of us can avoid experiencing moments of terror in our lives. However, each of us can prepare ourselves to handle them as well as possible.

Illustrations by Laurel Loughran, Eugene, Oregon.

Send your questions or comments to:
Dear Hanna c/o Skipping Stones
P.O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403

In peace,
Teshuvah: Achieving Inner Clarity

My strongest feeling, after this heinous act, is that we must go to our deepest inner place of grief and experience it fully before we act. Otherwise any actions we take will harm ourselves and other innocent people here and around the world. When we react to a flood of powerful emotions before allowing ourselves to experience or process them fully, we lack the needed clarity for appropriate action or response.

The Jewish High Holy Days help us achieve such inner clarity in all areas of our lives. This season, which encompasses 40 days of inner work, deals with the process of Teshuvah, self-examination. It allows us to better understand ourselves and return to the essence of who we are. It is the highest expression of our capacity to exercise free will, a manifestation of the divine in humans. The process of seeing ourselves completely, and thereby raising our consciousness, is not easy. The important Teshuvah work requires:

- Learning to be gentle and kind with ourselves.
- Drawing deeply from the wells of forgiveness and knowing that the condemnation of oneself is not from God, but from ourselves.
- Acknowledging pain without feeding it and seeking joy in the midst of darkness.

Rebbe Nachman, who died in 1810, taught us, “We must not lose our faith in living, even as a difficult time has come upon us. We must not despair. Our joy must fill the air!”

Though the task may seem overwhelming, we should keep trying to grow as human beings. As Rabbi David Hartman said, “We must continue to affirm life and our commitment to justice and peace even in the midst of troubling uncertainty.”

—Rabbi Hanan Sills, Eugene, Oregon.

My Guarding Angel Against the World

When my life opened like a flower about to bloom,
When my love rose for her like the dawn,
I bonded with a guarding angel against the world.
She would make me laugh and smile like a playful butterfly flying in the never-closing doors of spring.
When tears of sadness would come like rain from clouds her warmth like the sun would dry them all away.
She cared for me like a tender petal of a blooming flower and gave me strength like thunder in the sky.
Compassion is what she had for me, like the wings of a bird.
She never wanted anything, but to know that I was loved and cared for.
She was and always will be my guarding angel against the world.
—Kumba Sennaar, 13, Baltimore, Maryland.

A Jewish Prayer of Forgiveness

You, My Eternal Friend, Witness that I forgive anyone who hurt or upset me or who offended me by damaging my body, my property, my reputation or people that I love; whether by accident or willfully, carelessly or purposely; with words, deeds, thoughts, or attitudes; in this lifetime or another incarnation. I forgive every person. May no one suffer because of me.

Help Me, Eternal Friend, To keep from offending you and others. Help me to be thoughtful and not commit outrage by doing what is evil in Your eyes. Whatever sins I have committed, blot out, please, in Your abundant kindness and spare me suffering or harmful illnesses.

Hear the words of my mouth, and may the meditations of my heart find acceptance before You, Eternal Friend, who protects and frees me. Amen.

—Rendered from the Hebrew by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, and edited by Rabbi Hanan Sills.
There Was a War when I Was a Child

There was a war when I was a child.
I remember Papa hiding rice sacks
in an earthen jar
under our bamboo floor.

Mama dug another hole
near a quiet stream,
and dropped her mother’s locket
in it.

I dug deep into sand,
following tracks to where
a hermit crab’s journey
ended.

The day before soldiers came to our
town
Uncle fled to the hills
and stayed there,
hiding from guns and bayonets.

I ran to the tallest mango tree in our
yard to escape from Raul’s slingshot.
He used paper
rolled up into bullets,
but sometimes
he hid little stones in them.

There came a time,
after we had hidden many things,
and lost many things,
when we moved to another place.

We crossed the water
in a little outrigger boat;
once we got there
we found many new things,
even cousins I never knew I had.

There came a time
when soldiers followed us
to the place we had found.
And we had to move again
and again
and again.

But each time we moved
I claimed a piece of ground
where I could lie down at night,
just as I claimed a piece of sky
where my stars blinked,
the ones that followed me
wherever I went.

And though I haven’t seen Uncle in a while,
and have left many things behind,
I still remember
where my grandmother’s locket lies
waiting
for someone with a spade.

And from the piece of ground I now claim
as my own
I can see my stars;
they shine down on me
from a piece of sky
I never lost.

—Almira A. Gilles was born and raised in
the Phillipines. She wrote this poem based on
her family’s experiences during World War II.
Almira now lives in Palatine, Illinois. Art by
Mariel Degley, Eugene, Oregon.
A Youthful Reality

It's been a while since I've ridden on a school bus, but despite the straight-backed benches and slight motion sickness, I feel incredibly fortunate to be here. My companions are a group of students from Churchill High School in Eugene, Oregon, and we are headed to Portland for the "Educating the Heart Youth Summit," led by the Dalai Lama. The radio blares pop music, but it is ignored under the din of discussion. Strangely, this chatter does not revolve around boyfriend gossip, TV or homework; they are discussing the pope, the president and the man of the hour, the 14th Dalai Lama.

Kellen Terrett, 17, points out that since the Dalai Lama can’t return to Tibet, this is a unique opportunity for the world to hear his message. “He’s the only Dalai Lama who’s been exiled, so to miss this would miss so much.”

Maki Doolittle, 18, comments that when she first heard about Tibet’s struggles, she knew she needed to learn more and try to help. “I was horrified. It made me really sad when I saw all that culture being destroyed. It’s impossible to hear about it and not want to go out there and do something about it.”

Youthful Reality

Two hours later we are at the doors of Memorial Coliseum. About 7,500 students are filing through security checks. Drums and xylophones beat out joyful music. People dance in line. A few protesters scream monotheistic dogma at the passing crowds.

Inside the arena, big-screen videos prepare us with background on the Dalai Lama and on Tibet’s occupation by China. They show the Dalai Lama as a precocious child and then as a young ruler who was forced to flee Tibet. Later, we see him in India receiving weary and frostbitten refugees, parents whose children didn’t survive, and monks whose monasteries were destroyed. We also see how he has continued to unite and lead his people while in exile.

What the videos don’t prepare us for is His Holiness’s infectious laughter. The Dalai Lama begins his address with jokes about his graying hair and the possibility of dying it blue, thanks to fabulous modern advancements in styling products.

As the laughter peters out, his tone turns more serious. He reminds the students that this is their opportunity to shape the world. The 65-year-old Dalai Lama and his generation won’t be here much longer. “The major portion of the 21st century belongs to you. You have a long future, a bright future and a lot of responsibility.” The past is gone, and the present is a creation of the past, he says. “The world is rapidly changing, so reality is rapidly changing.” The old generation’s attitudes don’t change quickly, so problems arise because of the reality gap. “Young people have a view closer to the reality.” He councils the audience to use their frustration with the establishment positively. “Realize the mistakes and try to change them and make a better world.”

Sticky Issues Come Unglued

Unlike many political leaders, the Dalai Lama doesn’t dodge issues with wishy-washy answers. From the start, he takes a hard line against military action. “The concept of war is out of date,” he says, a statement which seems to carry more weight since his own people and culture are being decimated and driven from their homeland. He reminds us that we can use our struggles to make ourselves stronger. He is still willing to work with China for a peaceful solution, and he hopes that the rest of the world can follow his nonviolent example. The world is now heavily interdependent, he says. “The concepts of we and they are no longer separate. Taking care of others’ interests is actually taking care of yourself. Destruction of your neighbor is destruction of yourself. Our goal should be to demilitarize the world.” He stresses that internal disarmament, changing our emotional world, is as important as external disarmament, getting rid of weapons.

From the religious angle, he adds, fighting and racism are self-defeating. “If you accept that there is a Creator, then we are all brothers and sisters. Discrimination based on skin color is senseless.”

However, he warns that there will always be
conflict of some sort. So for us to live in harmony, compromise is the way to go. “Compromise does not mean you are weak because we are all linked.”

He also lists the three most crucial areas we, as humanity, need to develop: education, will-power and self-confidence. A balance between those areas is essential. “Sometimes students pay so much attention to education that they don’t pay enough attention to the heart.”

Developing compassion is critical for attaining happiness and a more peaceful world. Even from a purely selfish viewpoint, he says, increased compassion leads to better physical functioning. If jealousy, fear and hatred are constantly in our minds, it leads to loss of sleep, bad moods and thus ill health. “So from the selfish viewpoint, if you want [good] health, look deeper into your emotional world.” He adds that inner beauty is far more important than physical beauty, and good character creates a good image. “I tell businessmen, ‘if your company wants a good image you should show more compassion toward workers.’”

**Talking Tough**

Ways of responding to violence has been a main focus of the Dalai Lama’s life, and it was a main focus of the discussion. “Violence comes mainly from negative emotion, so the best way to change is to persuade in a nonviolent way,” he says. Half-jokingly he adds, “If someone is pointing a gun at you, don’t stand there and be a target. Run away!”

Nonviolence does not mean foolishness. Forgiveness is important, though, for both internal balance and external progress. One should restrain from developing hatred while keeping in mind the wrong that was done. “Forgiveness does not mean that you forget the act that was committed.”

Despite the trouble we cause, he says, people have the capacity for infinite altruism. “I believe basic human nature is positive and gentle. Aggressiveness is not the dominant force.” We should distance ourselves from negative emotions and embrace positive ones such as love, compassion and truthfulness.

“Existence is reality.” As we tackle seemingly monstrous problems, he says, keeping things in perspective is key. “If you look at a problem close up, it seems big, but the same problem from a distance seems small. If you think globally, your mind widens, and [personal] problems don’t seem so important.”

The bottom line is that happiness is the goal. “All sentient beings want happiness. Our existence should not be a cause of pain for others. Everyone has every right to a happy life.”

**Back on the Bus**

Comments fly back and forth as we await our turn to escape the knot of buses in the parking lot. It’s similar to an after-concert scene, with fans repeating the lead singer’s lines. People are reliving favorite insights and the Dalai Lama’s now-infamous wise-cracks, “To reduce the world’s population, more young people should become monks and nuns.” Or his delayed response to a question because a piece of candy was stuck in his tooth. Students share their surprised amusement and awe for the wisdom he shared.

“You could understand him because you could relate to him,” says Jessica Flitcroft, 16. “He had the charisma.” But Jessica, who was raised in a fundamentalist Baptist church, was also disturbed by the protesters. “It was very disappointing to see people outside protesting someone who is trying to be open-minded.” Jessica says everyone should seek the truth for herself. “Listen to others and then decide.”

The Dalai Lama wasn’t “preaching,” Kellen says, “What he was saying was, ‘hey, take my ideas, and do what you want with them in your own life.’” He’s not just a religious or a political leader. He’s really a leader of everyone.

“He’s showing us a fundamental concept of how to be a better person in a better world,” Maki says. “It’s nothing new, but it’s spoken by someone who’s gone through so much inner-battling. He talks about compassion. I feel compassion for him.”

The general vibe on the bus is hopeful. As Jessica said, “Maybe when I get angry now I can turn it over and look at it in a different way.”

Her comment sends me thinking of the challenges her generation is facing: threats of war, school violence, racism, teenage apathy and rampant materialism. But I am only uplifted by the intelligent, open-minded, caring presence of these students. The Dalai Lama’s words are still ringing in my ears, “Please remain optimistic. That is the foundation of a good future.”

—Michelle Lieberman, assistant editor.
The Dream

Dreams. Dreams and hopes. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream — I was there!

I was lying in bed thinking about what we had learned about Martin Luther King in school that day. Our teacher had said to think about him and his dream. I had thought about him all afternoon, and I still was!

As I faded into dreams, I was still thinking about him. My thoughts became a most incredible dream. My dream started out foggy and slowly became clearer.

I was floating through a calm space. The stars were shining and seemed to be singing. Then an enormous human face became clear. It seemed to be close but distant at the same time. The face was changing nationality by the second. It would be Japanese, then Native American, then African American, then Irish, etc. As it was changing, it was chanting these words: “Racism rips us apart; civil rights bring us together... We are all one!”

These words took over my body. I felt a family’s tears of joy when their mom came home from a long day of maid work. I felt the pain of a mother, jailed for seeking justice in a march, as she thought of her children at home.

I screamed. I couldn’t handle it. My scream pierced through the sky and began to echo, over and over. I started to fall, not like on Earth when you don’t realize it until you’re on the ground, but slowly, gracefully.

All of a sudden I was on land, on a street. My scream was still echoing, but it wasn’t my scream anymore. Many African Americans who were marching were being attacked by police dogs.

I gasped in complete sorrow and horror. I felt a hand on my shoulder, and a deep voice said, “I know — it’s awful.”

“Martin Luther King!” I gasped. He nodded. For some reason I exploded in words. “Oh, it gets better! Little children, black, white, Asian, any-

one can play with each other! If you saw my school, you’d be so happy! There’s a mix of everybody! Hispanic, Native American! Oh sir, it changes!”

He smiled. I smiled back and took a deep breath.

“Come with me,” he said. Before I could say anything, I was in an African American family’s home. They didn’t seem to see me or Martin Luther King.

“It isn’t fair that my boss’s children go to a great big school with good teachers and new books, and our kids don’t!” the mother was saying.

“I know, times will change, Rachel. Our kids’ lives will be better,” the father whispered.

“I hope so; I guess hope is all we got!” the mother said and started to cry. She leaned on the small, worn table. I noticed their small house was horribly shabby, with barely anything hanging up and paint peeling off the walls. I cried, too.

“Are you ready to go?” Martin Luther King asked. I nodded.

In the blink of an eye, I was standing in the audience of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Each word he said touched my heart. The words, “I have a dream,” rang beautifully in my mind, so familiar and wonderful. After he had spoken, I closed my eyes.

When I opened them again, I was in a bright, shiny field. The grass was lush and green. Blue skies went on further than I could see. Flowers speckled the fields, but the most incredible thing was all the people — men, women, girls, boys, people of all skin colors, hair colors, all shapes and sizes, all eye colors — were singing, playing, and working together. Martin Luther King Jr. was standing next to me holding my hand.

“This is my dream,” he whispered.

I smiled and whispered back, “Yes, mine too.”

Kwanzaa: An American Holiday

Kwanzaa is an American holiday! In 1966, in the aftermath of the Watts riots, Dr. Maulana Karenga searched for a way to rebuild the self-esteem of his community. He created a holiday that would embrace values and traditions from many African cultures. The word “kwanza” means first fruits. He added an extra “a” to distinguish the unique, African-American celebration. That is how Kwanzaa was born.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of the good things we have done all year. The holiday is built around the number seven — seven days, seven principles and seven symbols.

Seven Days: December 26 – January 1. Kwanzaa is celebrated this week to represent the end of one year and the beginning of a new year.

Seven Principles: Kwanzaa is built on a value system called the “Ngozo Saba.” These values come from traditions of many African cultures. There is a principle for every day of Kwanzaa.

- Dec. 26, Umoja: Unity. Come together! We all work together for the good of everyone in the community.
- Dec. 27, Kujichagulia: Self-Determination. Remember your history and who you are. Use it to do and be the best you can.
- Dec. 28, Ujima: Collective Work and Responsibility. We help and care for each other.
- Dec. 29, Ujamaa: Cooperative Economics. We create and support each other in business. We profit together from our work.
- Dec. 30, Nia: Purpose. We have goals, dreams and a special purpose in life.
- Dec. 31, Kuumba: Creativity. We do things to make the world better and beautiful.
- Jan. 1, Imani: Faith. We have faith in each other and in our communities. We are thankful for the blessing of each other.

Seven Symbols: These symbols help us remember our culture and values. The Mkeka is a mat. It is a symbol for our history. All symbols are placed on the mat, just as history is the foundation for culture. The Kinara is the candleholder. It is a symbol for people from the African diaspora. We come from many places, but we share our African descent. The Mishumaa saba are the seven candles. They are a symbol for the Ngozo Saba, or seven principles. The Muhindi are ears of corn. They are a symbol for the children—one for each child in the family, or you could place one ear of corn to represent boys and one ear of corn to represent girls. The Mazao is a basket of fruit. It is a symbol for the first fruits of the harvest—the goals we’ve met and the good works we’ve done. The Kikombe cha umoja is the unity cup. It is a symbol for unity. We share the cup that honors our past, present and future. The Zawadi are the gifts we share. They’re a reward for our good works. They are often, books, educational gifts or cultural items. Handmade gifts are important to share, too.

The Celebration: Finally it is time to celebrate! Spread out the mat on a table devoted to the Kwanzaa items. Place the candles in the candleholder: red candles on the left, green candles on the right and a black candle in the center. Place the bowl of fruit and the ears of corn on the mat. Fill the unity cup with grape juice and place it on the mat. Finally, arrange the gifts until everything looks beautiful! You are now ready for your guests. Although it is an African American holiday, you don’t have to be an African American to celebrate it. Community celebrations welcome everyone. Check out your local calendar of events and get involved in this important American holiday. It is a joyous time for celebration and learning.

—Claudia Burney, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
A Social Worker Visits Ethiopia

I am a social worker in New York City, and I work with people who have HIV/AIDS. I have studied ways to help people work through their problems and their feelings. Sometimes I am a person they can turn to when they have nobody else to confide in. I help them get benefits. In New York, people with AIDS can get housing, food stamps, health insurance and welfare. People with AIDS often need extra help because the illness makes it hard for them to work. At times I also see children whose parents have HIV/AIDS. I help people get health care supplies and nurses who can visit them at home so they don’t have to stay in the hospital so long. The part of my job that I love the most is talking to people about their problems. Emotions can be very hard to deal with.

There is a difference between HIV and AIDS. HIV stands for “Human Immunodeficiency Virus,” the virus that causes AIDS. You can have HIV and not be sick at all, but if you start to get sick, it’s called Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome or AIDS. HIV can be transmitted between people but not very easily. You can’t get HIV from hugging or kissing someone or from living in the same house as a person with HIV/AIDS. HIV attacks the cells in your body that fight off illness. When those cells die, people can get many other sicknesses. (See Vol. 9, no. 1 for more information about AIDS.)

Part of my job involves traveling to other places to help teach people about HIV/AIDS. While AIDS is a big problem in the United States, in

Many Ethiopian children are poor and live on the streets, but they still laugh and play like children everywhere. Life may be hard, but they also find joy.

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(Top): A gravestone with Amharic writing, the main language of Ethiopia. Amharic comes from the same family as Hebrew and Arabic.

(Left): Until very recently, Ethiopia was led by kings, like the one on the left. Ethiopians have a lot of respect for history. Despite poverty, they love their country and its culture.

The statue (on the right) at a church looks European, probably because there is a strong Italian influence in Ethiopia, though it is the only African country that never was colonized.
many places it is even worse. Africa is a beautiful and diverse continent, but AIDS is a very big problem for many countries there. These photos were taken in Ethiopia, which is in the "horn of Africa," the northeastern part of the continent. I was in the capital, Addis Ababa, to speak at the First International AIDS Conference. The conference brought together experts from many different countries to talk about the impact this disease is having on the people, politics and culture of this land. Until very recently, Ethiopia was closed to Western influence. But in the past 20 years enormous hurdles have arisen including famine, war and now AIDS. When I was in Addis Ababa, I was confronted with the horrifying realities of this devastating illness and its impact on a country already torn by lack of resources and internal strife. I noticed people are very uncomfortable talking about AIDS, much more so than in the West.

At the same time, I was astounded by the richness and diversity of Ethiopian culture and the sophistication of its literature and traditions. Ethiopia has had a profound impact on history and world culture, but it is one we rarely see in the West because the newspapers and TV often show only images of starving children and shelled-out towns and villages. The photographs on these pages are an attempt to convey the other Ethiopia, one filled with hospitable people, delicious food and deep religiosity and reverence. It is my hope that this country, and all the others in which people are suffering, can draw on their strengths in order to overcome the obstacles presented by AIDS.


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Traditional Ethiopian houses look like these, but there aren't many in the capital. Injera, a pizza dough-like bread and wot, stew, are traditional foods. You pick up the wot with the injera and eat it with your fingers.

So far more than 12 million people have died of AIDS in southern African countries, a quarter of them children.

Every day about 5,500 people die of AIDS in the region.

A 15-year-old in South Africa has a 50 percent chance of dying from AIDS before s/he turns 30.

—Dr. Lutz van Dijk in P.T.S.S.R. Newsletter

Typical Ethiopian features are large eyes and high cheekbones. Ethiopians are proud, beautiful people. (Children shown here do not have AIDS.)
Daily life here fills the senses with sights and smells—hand-lashed fishing docks, stacks of multicolored fruits, pungent smells rising from the market. With laughter and hard work, the people of these islands reap the harvest of...

**Beautiful, Bountiful Indonesia**

*Above:* Tony walks on the dock of his house in the Tondano Lake fishing community, North Sulawesi.

*Right:* Fish sellers in the traditional market of Airmadidi Village, North Sulawesi, are excited to have photos taken of their fish.
Right: A fisherman is fixing his net in a village in Central Sulawesi.

Below: A fruit stand in Salopompong, Central Sulawesi, displays durian, one of the best-known fruits of the area. Some foreigners say, "It tastes like heaven, but it smells like hell."

Above: A worker fixes a bulldozer wheel at a logging mill in Karosa, Central Sulawesi.

Left: A father and son on a cart pulled by oxen in North Sulawesi.

—Detty Saluling is our Indonesian intern from University of Oregon.
Neighborhood Unity

I grew up in Ujung Pandang, the capital of the South Sulawesi province. Like many Indonesian cities, Ujung Pandang is mostly Muslim, although there are growing numbers of Christians and Buddhists. My family has lived there for almost 27 years. The families in our neighborhood came from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but we always lived in harmony and peace.

Every day, around 5 a.m., an Ulama (Islamic leader) would start to chant from the mosque on the corner, waking and calling the Muslims to their morning prayers. This chanting was our wake-up call to begin the day. My father would then get my brothers and I ready for jogging around the neighborhood. Our route often passed the church that was two blocks down the street, where my family and other Catholics went every Sunday. While jogging, we would meet and greet other neighbors who were exercising and the Muslims who were walking home after the Sholat (prayer) at the mosque—the men in their sarongs (robes) and peci (caps) and the women in their white mukenahs (prayer robes).

We would also meet the elders of the community, who were the most diligent and disciplined in doing their morning exercises. Some neighbors would play badminton or jump-robe, which made their exercise more fun and enjoyable. People could be seen sweeping the front porch or working on the lawn and garden.

Meanwhile, Pak Tua would come out of the alley pushing his old grilling cart where he was baking his traditional coconut cakes, baroncong. Neighbors would gather around Pak Tua to order his famous cakes for breakfast or for children’s lunches. At the same time, bread sellers would appear on bicycles or carts calling people to buy their assorted breads and sweets for that day. There were also Javanese women who carried big baskets on their backs containing jamu, a traditional mixed drink for different curatives.

Then, the neighborhood would become quiet as parents and children prepared for school and work. At 7 a.m. the noises of the sellers would disappear as bicycles, rickshaws, motorcycles and cars busied the streets, and groups of uniformed children and teenagers on their way to school occupied the sidewalks.

One of my favorite childhood memories from Ujung Pandang is the religious celebrations. Every Christmas, friends and neighbors, both Christians and Muslims, would come to our house to celebrate with us. We served the guests drinks and cookies my mother had baked. She prepared special meals for Christmas and New Year’s.

Similarly, when the Idul Fitri arrived (a celebration at the end of the Islamic month of fast), my family visited our next-door neighbors, who were like family to us and who celebrated the holiday. It was great to see houses decorated accordingly during these religious celebrations. People wore their best clothes, music played in the houses, and specific traditional foods were served. These community celebrations have been a tradition here for centuries. Neighbors share the joy of each other’s company and strengthen the bonds and unity between neighbors and friends.

—Detty Saluling is our Indonesian student intern. Art: Laurel Loughran.
Indonesia: Discussing Diversity

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world with about 17,000 islands and a population over 200 million. It is located in Southeast Asia, just above Australia. This tropical country is populated with hundreds of tribal and ethnic groups, each with their own dialect, but Bahasa Indonesia is the national language. Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhism and Hinduism are the five official religions. An 85 percent Muslim majority makes Indonesia the biggest Muslim country in the world. The capital city is Jakarta, and 26 provinces comprise the country.

Our Indonesian intern, Detty Saluling, talked with five Indonesian students at the Univ. of Oregon: Moris Roesmanto a Muslim from Lampung, South Sumatera (business major); Kartika Soekasah, a Javanese Muslim from Jakarta (economics major); Iova Margoyungan, a Chinese Indonesian Buddhist from Medan, North Sumatera (journalism major); Nashran Ahmadin, a Javanese Muslim from Jakarta (political science major); and Minerva Laisina, a Protestant from Jakarta, (business administration major). She is a Moluccan, a large ethnic group in East Indonesia.

Detty: How do you define diversity? What do you think about the diversity in Indonesia?

Moris: Diversity for me means a rich culture. Before, Indonesia was unified, but now it seems to be split up and scattered. I think it is because people feel that their rights and opinions are the most important. Their egos only listen to themselves.

Kartika: In my opinion diversity is a difference in ethnic background, race, religion or language. Yes, there is a division because of lack of education and knowledge, especially among those of who live in villages. They have little or no education, so they are very easily influenced.

Iova: For me there is a connection between diversity and tolerance. Tolerance is to acknowledge differences but not necessarily to accept them; diversity is both acknowledging and accepting differences. Indonesia used to have both tolerance and diversity, but now there are many problems.

Detty: What are the values that you feel strongly about? Where do these values come from?

Iova: Togetherness and family spirit. I mean, people here can easily sue their neighbors when they have conflicts, but we do not do that back home.

All: Yes! Togetherness is very important.

Iova: Also taking care of parents and the elders. The values come from home.

Kartika: These values also come from the surroundings. We spend more time outside with friends than we do at home. The roles of our society and surroundings are very important in making us who we are. Parents, religion and surroundings are all crucial in building a strong foundation for children and their future.

Detty: If you could pick one individual whom you admire the most, who would that individual be?

All: Parents!

Moris: Maybe, Albert Einstein. I like him because, although he was a genius, he did not use his talent for negative causes or to destroy the environment.

Kartika: I would say Soekarno (the first president of Indonesia) because without him, Indonesia might not have achieved independence at all. When Indonesia finally achieved its independence, Indonesians lived very far away from each other, scattered all over the country. Soekarno made it possible for everybody to know that our country had become independent. He had charisma.
Iova: I would say Madame Kartini (a Javanese aristocrat who was known for her fight for women’s rights).

Detty: What are the American values or attitudes that you agree with and why? If you could choose, would you prefer to live in Indonesia or in the U.S.?

Iova: Freedom of speech. Here, people can criticize the president, but you cannot do that in Indonesia. But living in Indonesia is much easier because it is our own country. In the U.S., we have to take care of a lot of regulations regarding immigration. Back home we have more rights because we are citizens.

Moris: I would prefer to live in Indonesia. I feel more comfortable, culturally, back home.

Minerva: I would prefer to live in Indonesia too. It’s always difficult to live in another people’s country. I feel happier at home.

Kartika: I would also prefer to stay in Indonesia. I came here only to study and gain knowledge to build my country.

Detty: What do you think about gender equality and the changing roles of women?

Minerva: I really support equality. In this era of globalization, what’s needed is intellectual competence. Yet, I still think that once women are at home, they should understand their duty as wives and mothers. They should know the boundaries both outside and inside the household.

Moris: I do not feel challenged by the fact that women are working in industry, as long as they know their predestination as women. Women should know that they still have to take care of their family and chores, etc. They should not neglect their families.

Detty: What if the wife has a better profession and salary than her husband, and the husband stays home instead?

Moris: Both the husband and wife should discuss it. I feel like, as a husband, that I would not want my wife to feed me. I guess it’s my ego.

Kartika: Although the wife has a better job and salary, the husband is still responsible for the whole family because he is the head of the family.

Iova: It should be okay for her to work outside instead of him. Yet, when she gets home, she should know that she still has responsibilities to her family instead of handing them over to her husband. Both husband and wife have their own responsibilities. There should be a balance in the household.

Detty: Moris said that he does not want his wife to feed him. Well, how about if a wife thinks similarly? What if she does not want her husband to feed her? Isn’t that equality?

Kartika: I think when a wife works, it should be just for pleasure while her husband takes the responsibility for the family. I also think that a wife should work so her husband will not underestimate her. Sometimes a husband thinks that since he provides everything for her, she would not be able to survive without him.

Moris: I do not want my wife to underestimate me either.

Nashran: I think equality now is everywhere; it merely depends on people’s interpretations, which are based on different customs and cultures. For example, when I asked my mother, sister and friends about gender empowerment, they were not pleased with the statement that many women are being underestimated. Girls and boys have different roles, and there is respect between them. Indonesia just recently got its independence, however, and the influence of globalization definitely makes changes in gender roles. But, talking about our tradition, our women are proud of it. It all depends on how one looks at it.

Detty: Nowadays many foreign companies come and open or extend their businesses in developing or poor countries. It is referred to as “globalization,” where countries in the world are interconnected, usually by business and trade. This allows for a free-market system with open foreign competition. What is your opinion on the increasing foreign investors and multinational corporations (like McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Nike) in Indonesia? What are their influences on the society, economy, politics and natural resources?
Kartika: Globalization has both positive and negative impacts. It opens more employment opportunities, and foreign investors who come to Indonesia can share their knowledge with local workers. It can boost our economy. The negative aspects, for example, are related to education-level issues. We know that the education level of people in Indonesia is lower than that of people in the West. The problem is, these companies can hire workers with a higher level of education and skills than Indonesian workers, which will not give us any opportunities. About the natural resources, the government needs to limit the use and exploitation of the resources instead of selling them off.

Moris: Some of the timber is sent to and processed in the U.S. and then sold back to Indonesia. It’s just like importing our own resources.

Nashran: It is good to promote the economy but only for the short-term. If there is no compensation, Indonesia will always lose. Foreign investors can take our natural resources and then move to different countries. They will leave us with nothing, and the economy will crumble again. The problem is not the corporations but our government because it makes deals with the corporations without the appropriate regulations. That, in turn, brings losses to the locals and abuse of the resources. There are plenty of foreign corporations that are going global, but hardly any of our corporations are able to globalize. So far, globalization for us is still in a negative phase.

Detty: For the last few years Indonesia has struggled economically and politically. Many people, within the country and abroad, claim that religion and ethnic clashes are the sources of the conflicts. What is your take on this and what may be the solutions to stabilize the country?

[Here we focus more on Molucca and its capital city, Ambon, in eastern Indonesia. In 1999 there were so-called religious clashes between Christians and Muslims that killed thousands of people and literally destroyed the infrastructure of the region. Many analysts think this destruction was created by politicians and clashes between political parties. The situation became worse and spread through other areas in Indonesia after the Asian economic crisis.

Minerva: Initially the source of friction in Ambon was not religion because they (Christians and Muslims) used to live in peace. Molucca was a Muslim region until the Dutch came [The Dutch colonized Indonesia from 1600's to 1940's] and some converted to Christianity, so everybody was brother and sister. Then there was political infiltration [The central government and politicians in Jakarta were accused of being the source of the conflict.] that distorted Molucca and its political and economic condition. If it were only a war between villages and had only wasted people's belongings, people would have been able to forgive. However, because their families got killed, it was impossible to forgive. Both the Moluccans and the local government need to work together. The disturbance was brought on by outsiders, so probably politicians should have mercy, as they were not the victims of their games.

Detty: Minerva, although you are Moluccan, you lived in Jakarta during this turmoil. Did you feel any hatred as a Moluccan and a Christian in Jakarta?

Minerva: Because I did not live there, I was not really affected by it. But I know one friend who lived in Ambon who had her education totally disturbed. She was not able to go to college because of it.

Kartika: This fracture in Indonesia was said to have occurred because of religious differences, but actually that was only a scapegoat. It all began with the inequality of the people's social status.

Moris: Not really! I have friends that always think their religions are better than the rest. This kind of attitude can definitely cause religious clashes. So at some point the misconception is already there and not merely because of the social status inequality.

Kartika: Well, I never think like that. The Islamic religious lessons I had when I was young taught me that there are other religions out there, and they are different. I do not want to be suspicious of other's beliefs. I really think that it all stems from the inequality in Indonesia. For example, a native Indonesian wonders why the Chinese people are rich and is afraid that they will take all of the resources of the country.

Jova: In my opinion, the principal difference is in the education level. If we all could recognize the existing
differences, could analyze things reasonably, and had a decent education these conflicts would not have happened. Yet, it also comes down to human nature—we always presume that whoever we are or whatever we believe is the best.

Nashran: It also stems from poor central policies made up by the government that bring disadvantages and injustices to the other provinces. Initially it was the outside influences [influences and strategies of rival political parties] who made the situation worse. There was solidarity between Christians and Muslims. A long time ago both groups lived in peace, and they helped each other, even in building churches. But now, why did they split up? There are many factors; it all depends on how we view this matter.

Detty: What do you think about the representation of Indonesia in the U.S. media? Is it accurate?

Moris: Definitely not accurate. A lot of time it is too exaggerated. Yes, there were riots and killings in Indonesia, but they did not happen all over the country. The media seems to think: that everywhere in Indonesia was chaotic.

Detty: What do you know about East Timor and its independence struggle issue? What is your opinion on the Indonesian government in this case?

[Even after Indonesia got its independence from the Dutch, East Timor was a Portuguese colony until 1975. Because of its proximity to Indonesia, within months after independence, leaders of East Timor asked the government of Indonesia to take East Timor as part of the country. However, some East Timorese leaders and human rights activists claim that Indonesia actually invaded the area and killed people with the assistance of Australia and the United States. In 1999, with help from many international human rights organizations and the U.N., East Timor obtained its independence from Indonesia. The issue of East Timor has raised arguments and confusion within the country, as it has claimed thousands of victims.]

Iova: I was quite shocked because the history courses told us that East Timor was the one that requested to join Indonesia, and there was no chaos at all. I heard there were only different opinions between groups in deciding whether or not East Timor should be an autonomous state of Indonesia or an independent nation. But I was very confused by the news reports from Indonesia and the U.S. because they were all different from each other.

Nashran: I think this is only America’s game for Indonesia. When Indonesia entered East Timor in 1970’s, the U.S. had a deal with Indonesia regarding East Timor, but now that there were human rights violation issues, Indonesia was blamed by the U.S.

PS: Oct. 20, 1999, Indonesia had a change in national leadership, when Abdurrahman Wahid was elected as the first woman president. But the turmoil continues.

Indonesian Proverbs

- Sepandai—pandainya kancil melompat, suatu waktu akan jatuh juga.
  As agile as a chevrotain can hop, one day it will fall down. No matter how good you are at lying and cheating, one day you’ll get caught.

- Seperti padi, semakin berisi semakin nierunduk.
  Humility makes the master. Like a crop of rice, the more it matures, the more it bows. The wiser one gets, the humbler one becomes.

- Semut diujung lautan terlihat, gajah dipelupuk mata tak terlihat.
  An ant behind the ocean is seen, but an elephant in front of the eyes is unseen. Sometimes people see other’s mistakes, but they don’t see their own.

- Buah mangga jatuhnya tidak jauh dari pohonnya.
  A mango falls not far from its tree. A child’s attitude and behavior reflects that of his or her parents.

- Besar pasak dari tiang.
  A bolt that is bigger than its pillar. To live above one’s means. We should not spend more than we can afford.

- Tong kosong nyaring bunyinya.
  Empty vessels make the most sound. The one who knows the least usually talks the most.
Malin Kundang

A long time ago, a woman lived with her son in a small village in Sumatera. The son’s name was Malin Kundang. His father passed away when he was very little, so his mother had to work hard to support both of them. Malin Kundang was a good son; he always helped his mother put food on the table for both of them.

Because their village was not far from the beach, Malin Kundang and his mother sometimes went there to fish or play. Then one day a big merchant ship arrived at the beach. It attracted the villagers, and the news spread all over the village. Malin Kundang also ran to the beach and was amazed by the luxurious ship. He wanted to go sailing with them, so he went to the merchant and asked if he could come along. He promised he would do any work, and the merchant did not need to pay him. Because of his enthusiasm, the merchant agreed to take Malin.

Suddenly Malin Kundang remembered his mother. He ran home and told his mother that he was going to sail on the big ship. His mother was very surprised and sad to hear that. She asked him not to go, but he persisted. So, with prayers and tears, she let him go.

Malin Kundang was a diligent and strong man. During the voyage he worked hard without any complaints. The merchant was so happy with Malin that he decided to make him the captain of the ship. With much hard work, Malin Kundang gained wealth and success from his voyages.

Years later, Malin Kundang’s ship landed on the beach of his old village. Some villagers recognized him, and the news that Malin Kundang was now a rich merchant spread all over the village. When his mother heard the news, she was very happy. She made his favorite snack, fried bananas, and carried it to the beach. There she saw a huge ship and a handsome man, her son.

She ran to Malin Kundang and gave him the fried bananas. But Malin, dressed in nice clothes and with his beautiful wife beside him, was ashamed of her. He yelled at her, “You are not my mother. You are just an old, poor, ugly villager.” Then he ordered his crews to take her off his ship. His mother was broken-hearted by Malin’s attitude. She prayed that God would teach him a lesson. Malin ignored her and set his ship to sail.

When the ship was on the sea, a big thunderstorm came. The ship was wrecked, and all of the crew drowned. The waves brought Malin back to the beach where a lightning bolt turned him to stone.

If you visit this area, you can still see the stone with water dripping out of it. People say that it’s Malin Kundang still crying for forgiveness.

—Detty Saluling is our Indonesian intern from Univ. of Oregon. Art: Laurel Loughran, Eugene, OR.

Useful Indonesian Phrases

Hello! Halo!
Good morning. Selamat pagi.
Good afternoon. Selamat siang/sore.
Good evening. Selamat malam.
How are you? Apa kabar kamu?
What is your name? Siapa nama kamu?
Where are you from? Berapa umur kamu?
What are your hobbies? Hobi kamu apa?
Good night/goodbye. Sampai jumpa.
I’ll see you later. Sampai berjumpa lagi.
Nature Poetry

Garden of Posterity
I like to think
of a garden of posterity,
where flowers of all backgrounds,
shapes and colors
can grow peacefully together
in perfect harmony.
Where weeds are optimistic
and imaginative.
Where roses don’t care what other flowers look
like or how they smell,
only what they feel and love.
Where flowers are touching the blue sky.
I like to think of a garden of posterity.

—Erin Parkinson, 15, Beaver, Pennsylvania.
“My cultural heritage includes Italian, Croatian
and German. I am a member of the Jadran Junior
Tamburitzans of Aliquippa, an ethnic dance group
that focuses on the Slavic area of Europe.”

Fascinated
Fascinated, are we?
By the safety of the womb,
the calculated speed of light,
the distance to the moon.

A whimsical world
of love and hope,
a dizzying kaleidoscope.

To run barefoot adjacent
to the roaring sea,
the heavens spinning
majestically.

To feel a baby’s
heartbeat race,
spiraling through
time a space.

Fascinated, are we?
By graveyards’ ancient tombs,
pyramids of Egypt,
and babies in the womb.

—Sara Schneider, 14, Westhill
High, Stamford, Connecticut.

THE TREE
The weather here is so bad.
When it’s windy my hair falls off.
When it’s sunny I get a bad tan.
But when it rains I feel happy.

There are a lot of friends
who come and sit
on my arms,
and I feel happiness
running through my body.

—Sheila Martinez, 12, Los Angeles, CA.

Change
If the sun never set, we would never see bright stars.
Geniuses die to make room for new idea-dreamers on
this barren Earth.
Trees relinquish leaves to let snow find its way to
covering branches.
Yet we still hate to say goodbye.
Geniuses die to make room for new idea-dreamers
on this barren Earth.
Mothers teach deaths should be ululated always.
We still hate to say goodbye to Mother Theresa’s and
Martin Luther Kings,
But Hitlers are murdered, and we rejoice?
Mothers teach deaths should be ululated always,
Even cocoons that die to transmogrify into the most
beautiful sight — butterflies?
But Hitlers are murdered just after the murdered lose
presence.
Maybe the world will not ever have to say goodbye.

Even cocoons who die turn into the most beautiful
sight — butterflies.
Trees relinquish leaves to let snow find its way to
covering branches.
Maybe the world will not ever have to say goodbye,
because we wonder.
If the sun never set, would we ever see bright stars?

—Sari Bourne, 15, Short Hills, New Jersey.

Fire Leaves
Red, fiery leaves drift
From the solemn autumn trees
Telling of the frost.

—Jessica Somers, 14, Gibsonia, PA.

Deer
Deer leap through the brush
Bounding away like rabbits
Quickly, white tails spring up.

—Kevin Duensing, 13, Gibsonia, PA.

Page 28

Skipping Stones
Vol. 13 no. 5
But Who Shall Lead Us? by C. S. Perryess, Los Osos, California.

Gracie Maloy never misses the opportunity to greet. She may forget to eat for a day or two, but she never forgets a name. She stands there on Capitol Street, just down from Spencer’s Books and Videos and across from the closed fish mart, where the local boys practice their tags, and the kids pull broken glass from their feet.

“Mornin’, Tom. G’mornin’, Maggie, Mrs. Hobson, hi’ya, Franklin.” Gracie’s voice is a part of Capitol and 11th Ave. So are the dreary thrum of idling engines and the lurid flashing of neon from Spencer’s.

Some try to avoid eye contact with her, just as they try to avoid the ‘green and brown shards of glass that gleam at dawn and dusk but disappear any other time and cut you nonetheless.

Gracie’s voice is gravelly — it’s as though she is talking over years of sand and tobacco, over hard times and lost children, over symphonies, aches, and gentleness, over life itself.

“Oh, Mr. dawkins, g’mornin’, Cecilia.” Gracie’s pale face flushes with the pleasure of good work. “Well, hello, Mr. Santos. G’mornin’, Andrew, and who is this sweet girl?”

Even the most reluctant passers-by smile and reveal their names. It’s some magic Gracie holds deep within, some benign enchantment.

“Rosita, I’m pleased to meet you, m’dear. I’m Gracie Maloy. Andrew, you be good to her. G’mornin’, Clancy, and Mr. Vasquez, how’s that sniffle? Good, m’dear, glad to hear it.”

Pale wisps of Gracie’s gray hair escape from under her old bandanna and flutter, as though they endorse her greetings with waves of their own. The rest of her clothes are raggedy and baggy but cleaner than they might be. Her hands are veined and gnarled with living, her arms and legs spiky and angular, and her face nondescript, except for the eyes which are magnetic. They exert a magic on everybody coming down the street. Even the rushers, the late-for-appointments, the hunted, the shoe-gazers, the paranoid and drugged can’t help but look up from their compulsions, see Gracie, and be greeted.

Dropping their little private worlds, stunned, annoyed, or frightened, people who would never look up are drawn to do just that.

They see the scrawny street-woman, receive their greetings, and move on, usually a bit lighter of step, possibly even noticing the glint of blue above the cacophony. Morning, noon, evening, there she is, offering unexpected but needed greetings to the ebb and flow of humanity. Like sea-churned stones we receive our greetings. She knows each wave, each swell, each of us by name.

On my way to morning classes, I leave the apartment a little early to receive my greeting. Then I sit here in Rotunda Donuts, at the window, watching Gracie work the crowd. It’s a good way to spend ten minutes before the bus shows up. Today my overfrosted maple bar bleeds oil through the paper plate onto the day’s news. The styrofoam cup squeeks against my teeth as I try to drink without wincing. Behind the counter, Mr. Liu silently wields his sponge as some talk show plays from a plastic clock-radio.

Gracie approaches a couple on their way down 11th. The guy ends up shaking her wrinkled hand, and the couple moves on, their faces less set and anxious, actually approachable.

I turn to my somewhat translucent newspaper: debauching senators, a serial killer, disasters proclaimed in five midwestern states, settlers dying in the holy land. Out the window Strauss, the dry cleaner, stands in an unmoving eddy of poor crystals, nailing plywood where windows were the day before. The local boys battle for space on the wall at the closed fish mart. Knives are pulled, threats made, nations topple and grow, and Gracie greets a huge well-dressed man with a bald mahogany head.

Mr. Liu silently sponges the table to my left, his eyes averted. He has learned how to be invisible. The plastic name tag hangs askew on his stained white apron, and across the way Gracie greets a group of teenage headbangers — the one with the tattoos gives her some skin. The others stoop for a few seconds to receive their greetings then move on.

Draining my coffee, I stand, and in slides the yellow sponge, efficient, immediate. I look down on the bent head, the grey hairs carefully combed.

“Mr. Liu.” I say, clearing my throat.

He half bows, not looking up.

“He half bows, not looking up.

“Mr. Liu,” I place a hand on a tensed shoulder, soon to look into those startled eyes, adjusting to sudden visibility, then softening to comprehend. “Thanks,” I say, “and g’morning.”
Living With Diabetes

I have had diabetes for eight years now. I want to say that I am used to having it, but that is not totally true. I say this because as I get older and my body changes the amount of insulin my body needs changes. I have had to adjust and re-adjust my insulin doses many times. I also have gone from checking my blood sugar only four times a day to checking it six times a day. The reason I do this is to regulate my blood sugar better. I also had to start getting three shots a day instead of two because my blood sugar has not been as regular as it should be.

I have also had to deal with four seizures. About four years ago, during the night, my blood sugar went very low. I did not realize it because I was asleep. My body reacted, and I went into a seizure. That is when my parents heard me. They ran in and gave me a glucagon shot. That shot, which contains glucose (a form of sugar), helped my blood sugar get back up. The seizure stopped, and my parents took me to the hospital. It was good that the glucagon was there for me. I was not able to swallow at all, so getting my blood sugar up without it would have been hard.

At the hospital the doctors and nurses kept me the rest of the day to check whether or not my blood sugar was stable. Then I was allowed to go home. We were told that I needed to check my blood sugar at night from then on. So now I set the alarm clock for around midnight to make sure my blood sugar at night from then on. So now I set the alarm clock for around midnight to make sure my blood sugar isn’t going too low. Most of the time I am fine. If my blood sugar is low, though, I have to eat something at that time. This can be a problem because it causes me to lose sleep, but it is worth it so that I don’t have any other seizures. The other three seizures happened when I appeared to be okay at the midnight check, but then I went lower and had a seizure.

I do not feel like diabetes totally runs my life, but I do feel that it has become something I must think about more often. I am always watching what I eat so my blood sugar does not go too high or too low.

What I want kids with diabetes to know is that they are not alone. Diabetes can be controlled, but there is a certain amount of discipline and diligence that goes along with it. I am a normal teen. I like to play video games and computer games; I read and play soccer. I fish, ride bikes, and hang out with my friends. I also happen to have diabetes. Things could be worse, I know. I am happy, and I look forward to my future.

—Nathan Goble, 13, Tell City H.S., Indiana.

Ready for Winter! by Mariel Degley, Eugene, OR.
The Gift Wrap

The deterioration of Christmas
Is something to mourn.
It was the death of a birthday.
Three original gifts,
Gold, frankincense and myrrh accepted
Inside a cold stable, called “home,”
By mother, father and Son.
Pure and sincere presents,
no need of anything in return.

And now, people rushing, arguing, fighting
To get scooters, video games,
And other paraphernalia
Have suddenly melted Christmas
From a feeling of love for the people around us to
A wasteland of Gift Wrap.
Mounds and piles of “To’s” and “From’s”
And sales and phrases of “I love you”
Being used by mistake
Instead of the words “thank you.”

It’s become a time where snow is no longer
Appreciated, but shoveled away.
After all, cars do need to make their trips easier
From store to store to store to store.

December 25th used to be a day
That meant something.
Now it is a tool, a hammer, that companies
Use to pound consumers’ hands deep,
Down into their wallets.
An excuse for people
To ask and receive.

Christmas is in the snow.
Buried in the white,
So deep that it’s cold.
Peel away its wrapping paper and find it.
It’s a need for warmth.
The appreciation of the necessities,
Of the so little and so important
That we really have.

—Patrick Gan, 17, Filipino-American, New City, NY.

Thanksgiving Kaddish
in memory of Grandpa George

Yitgadal veyit kadash she’m rabah...
A stale smell drifts down the dimly-lit hallway
and over the dinner table.
The turkey, over cooked.
Mashed potatoes, lumpy and cold.
Silver-plated forks and transparent glasses are
raised to touch lips,
salty from tears that run into their crevices.

Page 52, the Mourner’s Kaddish. Both my mother
and father read it, line by line...
ose shalom bimramah, oov ya se shalom...
in loving memory of grandfather,
who passed away 13 hours earlier...
alenu vialchat yisrael viemru...

My sister and I sit in the living room,
our plated food before us,
and the TV set to
“A Flintstones Thanksgiving.”

amen.
—Randi Kobulnick, 15, New City, New York.

I Am Thankful

I am thankful for my mom who has given kindness
For the spirits who blow wind and freshen the sky
For my dad who is joyful of all my works
I am thankful for nature’s good smells in the sky

—Pao Lee, Capitol Hill School, St. Paul, Minnesota.

I thank Sister Wind for making the world
cool for us because I am happy in it.
I thank God for making corn and food and
making us or else we wouldn’t be here.
I thank God for making frogs who sing to us
and birds to make the world more beautiful.
I thank Aunt Flower for making flowers.
I thank Brother Moon for giving light to us.

—Jennifer Garcia, Capitol Hill Sch., St. Paul, MN.
Perfect Pitch

I threw my mitt on the patio and slammed the front door behind me.

“Oh, no,” I complained when I heard my sister, Lynn, banging away at the piano. “She’s been taking lessons for two years, but she still can’t play even one piece so it sounds right!”

“What are you so upset about, Adam?” my mother asked. “Did you have a problem at Little League?”

“The usual,” I answered. “Every time I pitch, the guys on the other team walk all around the bases. And then everybody on my team is mad at me.”

My feelings were already bruised and now, listening to Lynn practice “Für Elise,” my eardrums were getting bruised too.

“Why can’t you get it right just once?” I yelled. I shoved Lynn out of the way roughly and sat down at the piano bench. I knew her feelings were hurt, but I didn’t care.

“Look how easy it is,” I told her. I had only fooled around on the piano a few times, but I knew the melody by heart, having listened to it every time Lynn’s piano teacher came over to give her a lesson.

“Adam, when did you learn to play the piano?”

“Never,” I said. “Anyone can hear the way it’s supposed to sound!”

Mom walked away from the piano. “It’s fine to be good at something, but you don’t have to make somebody else feel bad.”

I apologized to Lynn. “I’m sorry I was so nasty to you.”

“It’s okay,” she said. “I know I have no talent for the piano. When I started taking lessons, I liked it well enough, but now I’m bored with it. I’d rather be outdoors, running around, but Mom and Dad won’t let me stop taking lessons.”

When Dad came home that afternoon, Mom asked me to play “Für Elise” for him.

“Okay, so you memorized one piece,” he said. “Let’s see how you do with Lynn’s piano books.”

Dad was right. I couldn’t read a note of music. I’d never tried.

Lynn said, “I’ll teach you the notes if you’ll throw some balls with me afterward.”

“Sounds good to me.”

By the time Mrs. Rudenko arrived the following Friday, Lynn and I had done lots of batting practice, and I had gone through all of Lynn’s beginning piano books. After Lynn taught me the notes, I figured out the simple pieces on my own.

“He has perfect pitch,” said Mrs. Rudenko.

“What does that mean?” my mother asked.

“He can hear all the notes in his head just the way they sound on a musical instrument. Many singers and most composers have perfect pitch,” she added, “not to mention piano tuners.”

“And piano teachers?” I asked.

“No,” she said, laughing. “It’s a great asset but not a necessity. Anyone can learn to read music and play an instrument. Part of musical ability is inborn talent, but a lot of it is just plain love for the music.”

After Lynn’s lesson, Mom spoke to Mrs. Rudenko for a long time.

“You can stop playing the piano whenever you like,” Mom told Lynn. “We want you to enjoy music, not be forced into doing something you don’t like.”

I thought a lot about what Mrs. Rudenko had said. Maybe the ability to succeed at baseball worked the same way as playing the piano. Could I learn to throw the perfect pitch just because I loved doing it, even if I didn’t have any special talent for playing baseball?

“I guess you understood what Mrs. Rudenko told us,” my father said. “With your talent, you could play the piano better than Lynn ever will. That is, if you want to.”

I had wanted so much to succeed in baseball. To me, “perfect pitch” meant throwing the ball so fast that the guy at bat could hardly see it. I had never thought about playing the piano. I was mad and a little jealous when I saw how well Lynn was learning to hit and pitch. It looked almost effortless. Why couldn’t I be that good at it?

Mom and Dad told me to take my time making up my mind. I could just enjoy music and put all my effort into making the perfect pitch in baseball. Or I could start taking piano lessons and probably do very well with just a little effort.

Now, all of a sudden, I had a lot to think about. Maybe I could do both!

—Leslie Cohen, Kibbutz Ein Hashofet, Israel.
We designed the seed packets with help from our mom. But we make the packets by ourselves. Sometimes it is very hard to make them. We made some mistakes in the beginning, but we still work every day on Young Bean Garden. So far we've sold about 20 packets. We hope many people will buy our seeds.

-Shantonu, 9, & Manosi, 7, Chatterjee, Bose Pukur Kasha, Calcutta, India.
**Marco Polo for Kids: His Marvelous Journey to China** by Janis Herbert (Chicago Review). Take a trip back to the 13th century and travel with 17-year-old Marco Polo as he journeys from Venice to China. Try out some Hindi, Turkish and Chinese phrases and create a mosaic or a paper lantern. An active, fun way to learn history for ages 9 and up. ISBN 1-55652-377-7.

**Mama Does the Mambo** by Katherine Leiner, illustr. Edel Rodriguez (Hyperion). Bright, colorful drawings capture the movement and sensuality of Latin dance in Havana, Cuba. Sofia loves to watch her mother dance, but after her father’s death her mother stopped dancing. With Carnival approaching, Sophia tries to find her mother a new dance partner, but who could replace her father? Ages 5 to 9. ISBN 078680646-X.

**So, You Wanna Be A Writer?** by Vicki Hambleton and Cathleen Greenwood (Beyond Words). An excellent resource for young writers who want to learn to improve their writing and submit it to publishers. Contains tips from the pros and from ten kid authors. Includes a list of websites, publishers and contests. Ages 9 to 16. ISBN 1-58270-043-5.

**Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters** by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustr. Stephen Alcorn (Harcourt). Meet ten African American women of courage who helped shape a brighter future for their people during the last 200 years. These brave women worked tirelessly to end slavery or discrimination and improve the race relations in the country. All ages. ISBN 0-15-201005-X.

**Luke’s Way of Looking** by Nadia Wheatley, illustr. Matt Ottley (Kane/Miller). With a head full of imaginations, Luke saw things differently from other students, which caused him troubles in art class. Entering the world of the art museum changed not only his perspectives but also others’ ways of seeing him. This book recognizes the importance of being who you are. Ages 5 to 9. ISBN 1-929132-18-2.

**How Much Land Does A Man Need?** by Leo Tolstoy, illustr. Elena Abesinova (Crocodile/Interlink). The greedy peasant, Pakhom, travels all over to obtain better, cheaper, and more land. His desire to acquire more land never stops, but does he ever find peace? The diversity of Russian culture is well-illustrated through Pakhom’s journey and intricate drawings. Ages 4 to 11. ISBN 1-56656-407-7.

**We Need to Go to School: Voices of the Rugmark Children** by Tanya Roberts-Davis (Groundwood). This is a touching collection of personal stories and art by Nepalese children who once worked in carpet factories. This unique child-to-child book helps us understand the life and the problems of low-income communities. Ages 9 and up. ISBN 0-88899-425-7.


**Brother Sun, Sister Moon: The Life and Stories of St. Francis** by Margaret Mayo, illustr. Peter Malone (Little, Brown). Born 800 years ago in Italy, Francisco became probably the most beloved saint in history. When Assisi was defeated in a war, he was imprisoned for a year. Read how life changed for him soon after his release. Ages 7 to 12. ISBN 0-316-56466-4.


**Birds In Your Backyard** by Barbara Herkert (Dawn). Fascinated with birds? Want to know how to identify and feed them? Learn how to build a nest box and become familiar with the types of plants that “attract” birds. Bird-lovers will find many interesting tidbits. Ages 4 to 12. ISBN 1-58469-025-9.

**Art for Fun Projects:** by Sue Lacey (Copper Beech). Step into art history with these activities based on the styles of world-famous artists. Sections devoted to landscape, people, animals and more give one-page biographies followed by projects imitating each artist’s technique. Ages 9 to 13. ISBN 0-7613-2277-9.
Music can be used to help children explore and experience peacemaking. Music is an art form that is familiar to both teachers and students, as well as parents and children. The following are positive, creative, experiential activities and ideas that encourage peace within oneself and peace in the world. The activities, which are designed for kindergarten students through seventh graders, will help them expand and express their peacemaking potential.

- Prepare a powerful musical message that families should hear. Choose a theme like cooperation, lifestyle, ecology or compassion. Gather compact discs, records or tapes of popular songs or traditional music. Play several of them and listen carefully to the content. Choose words, phrases and lines that are meaningful and put them together to form a "musical collage" peace message. Play each selected segment and record it onto a blank tape. Continue adding sections until the message is complete. For a variation, each student could act out a piece of the music.

The project may be done individually or in small groups. Allow the children to take turns sharing the message with their own families or set up a special display or show so that many families may hear it.

- Provide a variety of songbooks or hymn books. Have the students look through the subject headings and indexes to find songs pertaining to peace, for example, "Peace Like a River," "Imagine" and "Let There Be Peace on Earth." Some songs to use with younger children are "I Am a Promise" and "If I Were a Butterfly," or folk tunes like "If I Had a Hammer" and "We Shall Overcome."

The students can make a mobile using song themes. Pick one song for the entire group to illustrate or have each person pick a song to use. Each person should cut three shapes out of construction paper, then write the name of the song on one, record information about it on the second and draw a picture illustrating it on the third. Or have each student choose three songs and illustrate one on each piece, with the song title on the back. Punch a hole in the top of each piece, run yarn through it and attach the pieces to a hanger.

- Try playing "Musical Chairs" in ways that stress cooperation rather than competition. For background music use folk songs with peace messages. Remove a chair each time the music stops, but do not eliminate any children from the game. The fun really begins when only a few chairs remain and all of the students attempt to get on. Another method is to stop the music and have each student hug the nearest person. Continue playing as long as the children are having fun.

- Go on a Sound Scavenger Search. Take a walk through the neighborhood and listen for sounds of peace: a neighbor shoveling an elderly person's driveway, a father reading to his daughter, birds chirping and children laughing or playing a game.

Take along a cassette recorder and make a tape of the sounds. Use one recorder per group or one for each child. After the walk, play back the tape(s) and talk about sounds that contribute to peace in the neighborhood.

- Invite children to learn different peace songs and to combine them for a community concert. This event should feature the music of various ethnic and religious groups as well as folk songs such as: "Down by the Riverside," "Turn, Turn, Turn," "Sim Shalom (Hebrew)," "De Colores (Spanish)," "Sukiyaki (Japanese)," or Native American chants. Provide opportunities for audience participation.

- Stress recycling by creating rhythm instruments from throwaway objects. Provide a variety of materials for the children to use and show a number of ways to make the items. Design a tambourine by punching holes around the edge of an aluminum pie plate and attaching bells. Fill empty plastic bottles with pebbles to create shakers. Cover two blocks of wood with sandpaper and rub them together. Make drums from coffee cans. Tie nails of various lengths on a string, attach them to a coat hanger and strike them with a spoon or fork to make chimes.

Explain that people come from many different ethnic backgrounds. Then play music from each of these cultures. Invite the children to keep the beat with the instruments they have made.

- Pick several commercial jingles that have been aired on national television and rewrite them as peace slogans. For example, change "Oh, what a feeling, Toyota!" to "Oh, what a feeling, peace is!" Send the jingles to a family, group or school in another part of the U.S. and invite them to continue the process.

- Select magazine pictures that depict positive international images. Choose one picture for each group of children. Glue the picture to cardboard and cut it into puzzle pieces. On the back of each write the title or chorus of a familiar peace song (e.g., "Kum Ba Ya"). Randomly give one piece to each player and have them sing the song on the back of the piece while attempting to find others who are singing the same song. When the children find each other, they should complete the puzzle together.

—Phyllis Wezeman is director of Christian Nurture at First Presbyterian Church in South Bend, Indiana, and president of Active Learning Associates, Inc.
"Peace. The small departs, the great approaches." – *I Ching*

**Journey to China** by Prema Kusra Kapuler, Corvallis, Oregon. More in the next issue.

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