

First Place - \$1,000 Scholarship
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James Bowie High School
Senior

Wake up, and rub your eyes. Wash your face, brush your teeth, change into some jeans and a t-shirt, and attempt to do something with your hair. The world outside awaits you. Today is another day, another chance to turn it all around; just keep walking.

On your way to the bus stop, you pass the imposing granite lion of Mrs. Wu, a statute of the Virgin Mary in Mr. Morales' garden, and old man Jenkins' house with his Christmas lights still erected. As you round the corner, you can hear both the tired, groggy voices and the way too chipper for 7AM voices of your peers. On the bus, you choose a seat not because it's in the front or the back, but because it's next to your friend, joining a community journeying together.

At school, you see brown hands holding yellow, black holding white, walking united down the hallways from class to class. You make way for kids in wheelchairs to get to the elevators, you reflect on how short that freshman that skipped two grades is, and you wonder how that guy got his mohawk to stay up like that. Even in your IB Biology class of five, there are two Vietnamese students, one Chinese, one Indian, one African-American and a Caucasian teacher, which only makes the lesson on evolution that much more effective. During your next period, you hurry to join the conversation and get the juice: though races may be different, the gossip is the same. In every one of your classes there is troublemaker, an introvert, a genius, a pest, and that pair that constantly flirts. While you, yourself, do not seem to fit in, you still remain one part of the class, a part helping to make up the whole.

Lunch comes, and there is a section reserved especially for the disabled. To be quite honest, you barely even notice them, because you have grown so accustomed to their presence; they are like any other group. The male Asian security guard pauses his conversation with his female, pepper-haired boss to give you a high five. Despite much dissimilarity among your lunch group, you all agree that today's mystery casserole has hit an all-time low.

This is the world through my eyes. Each day, I open them to something different. Dr. King made racial diversity possible, but now my world has been transformed so that all differences, whether they be in beliefs or personality, age or political views, abilities or height, are embraced. His dream has helped us to open not only our eyes to see past appearance, but also our minds, hearts, and arms to accept all the people of the world. Though we may disagree on certain points, everyone shares the same desire to be successful and happy and the same blood that runs red. If we would open our eyes, we could see that diversity is the result of the realization that you are the same as me.