Lessening Violence in My Neighborhood

I am five years old, but I know how to play nicely in my neighborhood. I have two parks in my neighborhood. I take turns on the slide. I do not push because the kids will fall. I swing on the swings. I help push some of the boys and girls if they can’t do it.

I play football with my brother and my friends. I try to catch the ball, but sometimes I get hit and it’s hard. My friends help me up. We shake hands at the end of the game.

I play basketball with my brother and my friends. We shoot the baskets. We do not fight over the ball. We cheer when someone makes a shot. If they don’t make a shot, I just don’t say anything.

I play hide-and-seek and tag with my friends. When I tag them, I touch them real soft because I don’t want them to fall down.

I have fun with my friends without being mean and rude.

[J’aun dictated this to his teacher. It was too much for him to write.]
Learning to Read
Is The Role of Kindergartners in the Struggle for Justice

D is for Do the Right Thing.
R is for Reach.
M is for Man.
A is for American.
R is for Real.
T is for Together.
I is for Imagine.
N is for Never Give Up.
L is for Love.
U is for Us.
T is for Today.
H is for Heart.
E is for Everyone.
R is for Ready.
K is for Kind.
I is for I can help.
N is for Nice.
G is for Go.
J is for Justice.
R is for Reading.
Lessening Violence in Our Neighborhoods

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wanted the world to be a better place. He also wanted to make peace with all people.

Our neighborhoods would be better places if people would use kind words instead of fighting and shooting. Please stop robbing, shooting and killing each other! Please show love and happiness to make the world a better place and our neighborhoods better places.
Lessening Violence – Camp Good Society

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed black people should get respect. He told African Americans not to fight but use their words. Some people didn’t agree with Dr. King, but he did it anyway for the world.

I have an idea to make a camp called Camp Good Society. It will help stop violence from infecting our society. It will teach kids to be good. It will be a three-week camp. Camp Good Society will teach kids to be calm and not stressed. Then they won’t rob banks and gas stations or break in houses when they grow up.

Camp Good Society will also teach kids to use their words, not their hands. It will teach them to love. That’s what Dr. King told us to do.

Camp Good Society will be the best camp ever because it will teach kids to be better people. With Camp Good Society we’ll have a better world and no violence!
Malcolm and Martin: What I Have Learned From These Two Leaders

What I have learned from these two leaders is that violence is not the right thing to use. Instead of speaking with your fists, speak with your words.

Also, I’ve learned that if you have freedom, use it wisely. If you do good things, good things will come back to you.

Another thing I learned is how to be a young man of peace.

I also learned how to be a man of my word, to control myself and to fix things in the world if they don’t seem right.

I have also learned how to give a speech about my dream and how I feel and how to believe in myself.

How to respect myself and others is another thing I learned.

Last but not least, I learned how to live my life in a good way and always move forward.

Thank you, Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X!
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dreamed that one day all people would be treated equally. He dreamed that this nation would one day not judge people by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. Forty-six years after his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, many Americans showed that his dream had come true. Mr. Barack Obama was sworn in as the first black president of America.

For many years blacks were treated badly by whites. Whites didn’t think blacks were as smart as they were. Whites and blacks lived separately and were not given the same education. They were not able to ride in the same part of the bus, eat at the same lunch counter, or drink from the same water fountain. Many blacks in the South were not allowed to vote.

The NAACP helped fight for equal rights in the courts. In 1954 the Supreme Court said separate schools were unequal and that schools should be desegregated. Everyone didn’t agree with this, especially in the south. Many people, young and old, black and white had protests and boycotts as well as sit-ins, so that we all would be treated equal and have the right to vote.

Mr. Obama had a black father and a white mother. He was able to get many people to look past his skin color and see his character. He went to Harvard Law School and showed everyone how smart he was. There were not a lot of black students at Harvard.

He went on to help many people in Chicago help themselves. People loved him. He became an Illinois State Senator and then a U. S. Senator.

In 2008 he ran for the office of president of the United States of America. People of all races and backgrounds saw past his color and looked at his character. He gave speeches across the country about overcoming our differences and bringing people together.

In November 2008 people came together and voted and made Dr. King’s dream of judging people by their character come true. Mr. Barack Obama was elected as the forty-fourth president of the United States of America.
What We Have Overcome in Terms of Racism and Oppression

Even though our country was “sweltering in the heat of injustice,” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream. His was a dream of equality in a world very unequal. Black Americans have overcome many injustices. Slavery, unjust laws and racism are just some of the hardships they have worked to overcome.

Slavery was, without question, the most awful aspect of the oppression of black Americans. Slaves were usually forced to work, without pay, for their entire lives. The conditions in which they lived were very harsh. Cruel slave masters would often brand their slaves to show that they “belonged” to them, like objects or animals. Enslaved human beings were treated like property until slavery was abolished after the Civil War.

Although slavery ended, black Americans still faced much inequality. There were laws that prohibited black Americans from enjoying certain justices. The laws prevented people from drinking from some water fountains, eating in some restaurants, or sitting down on a bus because of the color of their skin. Dr. Martin Luther King protested these injustices. He brought people together with his influential speeches and boycotts, and this kind of inequality was made illegal by the Civil Rights Acts.

Even after the Civil Rights Act helped end some inequalities, black Americans still faced much racism. Many times racists, like the Ku Klux Klan, would act out violently, and people were killed just for being born with dark skin. Black Americans were not treated fairly by the legal system. Their ability to buy homes, to get jobs, to vote, or even just to be treated with respect were constantly threatened by racism. Without the same opportunities, black Americans were more likely to live in poverty. Over the past decades, racism seems to have gradually diminished, but it still exists today.

Throughout our country’s history, black Americans have overcome many obstacles, including slavery, inequality and racism. Martin Luther King and other leaders have accomplished an incredible amount to help black Americans achieve equal opportunities and rights, but there is still a long way to go toward fulfilling Martin Luther King’s dreams.
What We Still Must Overcome

My brethren, listen to me, for the fate of humanity depends on what I have to say.

We have banned segregation from the streets, but does that stop people from committing it? No! Have we stopped hurting each other physically and emotionally? No! Have we stopped judging others by their skin color or sex? No! Have we stopped discriminating against others? No!

My dream is like Martin Luther King’s and Rosa Parks’ dreams: to rid the world of discrimination. Why do we make fun of another person because they’re fat, or short, or because of anything else? Everyone has something that people make fun of. God did not create us so that would hurt each other. He created us so that we could live in perfect harmony, so we should stop discriminating against others and let them live without being picked on.

Violence is another issue. Every day I hear that someone has been killed. Violence solves nothing. Why do we hurt each other? To be pleased with ourselves? Why can’t we just bury the hatchet?

So, the summary of my speech is that we still must overcome violence. We still must overcome racism and sexism. We still must overcome discrimination.

Thank you.
What We Still Must Overcome: Cultural Stereotyping

Some cultures must still overcome being looked at as lower ethnic groups than others, especially African Americans.

We are all children of God and we are all human beings. Why shouldn’t we respect our own species? This is what God would want. We are God’s people and even if you don’t believe in God, you should believe in kindness, generosity and respect.

Why would we let color and culture interfere with success? A prime example is the heartlessness that many selfish politicians and other racists in general are showing to President Barack Obama. They need to move on. We have a black president now and the least they could do is show a little respect. They don’t have to agree with him, but they should honor him for being in that high office.

Some people want to make him look bad because they don’t want to see a black man succeed. They’re scared that President Obama’s side will succeed as a whole. They want the glory and the money for their own selfish reasons. Yet, they’re not thinking of the country and our troubles.

African Americans are sometimes stereotyped as a ghetto/hood-like people among whom crime and sex are normal, but not all are this way. Even in school, students make fun of African culture and stereotype them in the way they celebrate. Many visualize the culture in China as Chinese people in their local Chinese restaurant. The point is that we don’t want to rely on one view of a culture. The media and some schools present only the negatives of some cultures, but we have to realize that there are positives and not everyone in a culture is one way. I think that cultural stereotyping is what’s breaking us apart as a nation and separating us from other countries.

For the upcoming generation, kids need to be brought up in multi-ethnic neighborhoods and surroundings. They must be taught that we are all people and that we are all special in God’s sight so that the generations to come will be racism-free.

Racism isn’t good for anyone. That’s why we should all give to each other and do what’s right. As Martin Luther King stated, we should not be judged by the color of our skin, but by the content of our character. We shouldn’t shut people out because they are different; we should bring them in because of who they are inside. We should all rise up together as the human race because who knows? Our differences can help others if we accept and encourage their ideas.
What I Have Done to Make One of Dr. King’s Dreams a Reality

I am a ninth grade student who has become a role model for others in my school to follow. I am learning how to be a better person every day because it is something that I enjoy doing. Being accepted by my peers, teachers and parents has enhanced my self-esteem to a high degree.

I started on this path while I was a sixth grade student. Each year I have done greater things to make me a better person and, in turn, to make my school and community better. This is the same thing that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did when he was growing up. He was a peace activist and I am striving to be a peace activist like him. I am a positive person and I want some of these good character traits that I have to rub off on other students who may be experiencing problems in school or in their communities.

In my school and in my community there are many challenges that I encounter. I found a peaceful solution that takes care of everything and that is becoming a Conflict Manager at Work. As a Conflict Manager, I have learned the six steps of the mediation process which allows me to resolve my peers’ conflicts peacefully and rationally. Conflict mediation has a process that has to be done in steps in order for the conflict to be resolved peacefully. We have to take a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach to solving a problem. If it’s going to be resolved the right way, I have to do it the right way. I have learned to agree to disagree because in a conflict or argument, you cannot take sides with either of the disputants. You have to remain neutral in resolving conflicts. I know that conflict is going to happen, but how you react to what is being done or said shows your character.

I feel that when I mediate situations in school or at home, students learn how to resolve problems for the future because they know how to problem solve. If this kind of problem ever happens again, they will know how to resolve it.

I have always been impressed with Dr. King being a role model and high achiever. He has shaped communities everywhere and has influenced the lives of people of every nationality with his speeches, his confidence to speak out against what he doesn’t like, and his efforts to help resolve problems and conflicts peacefully without violence. Dr. King once said, “Our world is a neighborhood. We must all learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will perish together as fools.” I live by that motto. In Mediation Training, we learn from some of Dr. King’s materials, videos and books. I think he knew about Conflict Management before it even started in schools or in the whole world.

In closing, I have learned to bring peace into my life, school, home and community. I will continue to be good and to do all the good that I can do at all times. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for peace. I will do the same.
What We Have Overcome

What we, as African Americans, have overcome are the odds that were put against us. For years and in our lifetime, we have been put down and stepped on. We were considered inferior by people who mistakenly thought our minds were too small to think of the things that we invented. For example, Garrett Morgan invented the automatic traffic signal. Many other inventions that are here today have come from the minds of African Americans.

Great leaders helped pave the way for the next generation and changed the way we are looked at. Many looked down on our race, but what they could not see was that we were soon to go above the line that they felt should not be crossed. Presidents were white and now we have President Barack Obama, who is an African American. That is something no one saw coming.

The day that Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his I Have a Dream speech, Americans of every race heard his voice. Every word he said came from his heart and made sense. Rosa Parks had been arrested. Fire hoses were used as weapons by racists. The people who went through it all were able to get back up again. That is something very few could do. To experience that treatment and keep going to make things better is remarkable. We have recovered from every obstacle thrown at us. Being generous enough to forgive the ones who have done such cruel things without regret shows the world that we won’t stoop to their level.

Long ago we had very few rights. Now we have the same rights as everyone else because of the people who had the courage and the strong will to speak their mind about what is right. I know that we have overcome. Now when there is a child of any race who wants to be something, he or she can. Having a black president shows that the barrier has been broken, and the goals and high expectations that anyone can set. America is proud to say, “You can be what you want to be. We rose above the things that were unjust in the past.”
The Role of Youth in the Struggle for Justice:
Youth in the Civil Rights Movement

We, the youth, are the future. I always hear adults saying this to us. I guess during the Civil Rights Movement, they realized that nothing could be achieved without the help of the youth. At that time, they were the youth. Through civil disobedience, youth made an impactful mark on the Civil Rights Movement.

Student sit-ins at white-only eating counters helped integrate public eating places. These student sit-ins contributed to the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a youth-led organization against segregation. Although these youth risked their lives and faced the violence of racist whites, they kept true to their name and didn’t fight back. Often they were jailed. SNCC also addressed the issue of segregation through protests and voter registration campaigns.

The struggle to desegregate interstate travel led some youth to join the Freedom Riders. The Freedom Riders were devoted, brave people—both black and white—who traveled through the south sitting together and in the white sections of buses. This form of protest received national attention and, after Freedom Riders were attacked and beaten, the protection of the Alabama National Guard was ordered by President Kennedy. Many of the Freedom Riders were injured and jailed.

In 1957, when nine black students attempted to attend formerly all-white Central High School, the Arkansas National Guard stopped them from entering. Violence broke out as soon as the National Guard was removed and the students entered the building. In response, President Eisenhower sent federal troops to protect them. These daring students were known as the Little Rock Nine. They were one of the many youthful groups who contributed to the desegregation of schools.

SNCC, the Freedom Riders and the Little Rock Nine are some of the roles that youth took in the struggle for justice. They helped to desegregate lunch counters, buses and schools, and to extend the right to vote through civil disobedience. Their actions show how the future can depend on the youth. The youth were and still are the future.

Today’s youth need to be like the youth of the Civil Rights Movement. They need to be more aware of the world around them. They should get involved in their communities and let their voices be heard. By doing so, we, the youth, can have a greater impact on justice and can take hold of the future.
Malcolm and Martin: What I Have Learned From These Two Leaders

Nelson Mandela once said, “For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” This quotation reflects the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Although these two leaders had their differences, they both contributed to the pursuit of equality for African Americans. They both lived their lives altruistically, open-heartedly and courageously, not only to better themselves but also to better the lives of others.

Because of inequality, many African Americans lived with fear in their hearts. It is my belief that every African American who witnessed or experienced the cruelty of inequality had a dream. It took a person with a bold heart, determination and intelligence to stand up and lead Americans into freedom in order for those dreams to be realized.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were two leaders who took a stand. They both gained power and used their power to the best of their ability. When they spoke, people listened. Many whites feared them, because obstacles never stopped their determination.

Education is known for being the key to overcoming obstacles. Despite segregation, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. obtained a phenomenal education, superior to that received by the majority of blacks and whites. He attended a segregated school in Georgia and graduated at the age of 15. He received his B. A. degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, his B.D. from Crozier Theological Seminary in 1951 and his Ph. D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University. Dr. King was extremely knowledgeable, and his education allowed him to correct those who were ignorant about what he was doing and why he was doing it. He had a good understanding of every decision he made, and understanding is an important trait for a leader.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a nonviolent activist because of his beliefs. God was Martin Luther King’s leader, so he led his people in a godly manner. He was also strongly influenced by the teachings and the actions of Gandhi, who believed in direct action to open the eyes of the opponent and lead to negotiation. Martin Luther King was determined to bring about change. He pursued his dream despite opposition and threats against his life.

Martin Luther King’s words were filled with hope and faith. In his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” he wrote, “Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow, the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with their scintillating beauty.” He encouraged his listeners to realize that freedom is possible and that freedom is beautiful. Martin Luther King fought for the rights of his people until his dying day.
On the other hand, Malcolm X dropped out of school during the eighth grade. He educated himself while he was in prison for committing a robbery. Prison transformed Malcolm’s life. He enlarged his vocabulary by copying the dictionary from A through Z. In addition, he became a Muslim, took his religion seriously and studied the teachings of Elijah Muhammad.

Malcolm X rejected Martin Luther King’s nonviolent direct action. He believed in the right of self-defense. He triumphed over fear. He was very blunt and straight-forward. Losing was not an option for him.

Like Martin, Malcolm was a powerful, motivating speaker. In “The Ballot or the Bullet,” he said, “Black people are fed up with the dillydallying, pussyfooting, compromising approach that we’ve been using toward getting our freedom. We want freedom now, but we’re not going to get it saying “We Shall Overcome.” We’ve got to fight until we overcome.” The courage that Malcolm X displayed persuaded blacks to believe that freedom was attainable if they had enough determination. Malcolm X helped lessen the fears of black people and encouraged them to fight for their rights. He never gave up on himself or his people.

Nelson Mandela once said, “There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountaintop of our desires.” I believe this quotation also reflects the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Both of these leaders had to struggle. Although they fell many times, they got back on their feet and chased their dreams until death permanently took them. These leaders sacrificed their lives so that generations after them would have better lives. These leaders understood the consequences of leading, and they were willing to suffer those consequences. They died fighting not just for themselves, but also for the rights of others. They both lived their lives altruistically, open-heartedly and courageously. Their dreams continued after their death because they did not give up. Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. are not only leaders, they are also heroes.