

# We Choose All of Us



## Stories of Transformation

2019 Middle/Junior High School Writing Challenge

*Stories of Transformation* are poems and writings to create a future where everyone is valued, where everyone is safe, and where everyone can thrive.

Idaho middle school and junior high school students were invited to write on one of five themes – We Choose All of Us, Belonging to Beloved Community, Restoring Wholeness, Our Spirit, and Our Humanity, Together We are Stronger, and Earth is Sacred, Water is Life.

At the heart of these writings, we seek to end our culture of domination, extraction, and violence, and create a world with social equity and collective liberation for all human beings – a world rooted in interdependence, resilience, and regeneration.

The 10th *Stories of Transformation* publication was compiled from over 1,000 student submissions. Congratulations to Idaho's middle school and junior high school student authors whose selections are published as well as the *Stories of Transformation Award* recipients who displayed critical thinking and excellence.

A special thank you to Idaho's teachers who encouraged their students to discover new insights through writing and to the judges who read the amazing submissions by thousands of young people.

— Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence

*Cover art inspired by "We Choose All of Us".*

*North Junior High School – Artists: Kailey Owen, Brinn Waibel, Sasha Kingston and Sydney*

*Teacher: Hiram Miranda*

# OURGENDERREVOLUTION

[www.ourgenderrevolution.org](http://www.ourgenderrevolution.org)

## **We Choose All of Us**

We are a people who choose  
A world where everyone is  
valued, where everyone is safe,  
where everyone can thrive.  
A world where love is love and  
kindness is everything.  
Nothing less than this.  
Every day we choose love and  
in this love everyone belongs to  
beloved community.  
Everyone.

We are whole human beings.  
We believe in our collective  
humanity and our deep  
connection to all living things.  
We will create the world we  
want to see and move forward  
with courageous love and  
mutual responsibility.

We are all part of this story.  
When believe when we  
imagine together, we can  
achieve the unimaginable.

We commit to bringing  
forth a world rooted in  
interdependence, resilience,  
and regeneration.

We will live into this new  
story of Idaho with sacred  
responsibility, in silence,  
We look to the stars for lessons  
of interconnection,  
And abiding spirit.

We believe in the wonder of  
what wholeness can look like;  
the small glimmers of this  
place, first; and then the soft  
voice, growing stronger and  
clearer, until this world is fully  
realized.

Our choices have power.  
We will be bold.  
We invite you in.  
We choose all of us.

Join us at  
[www.WeChooseAllofUs.org](http://www.WeChooseAllofUs.org)

## **Gender and Violence**

Gender is one of the core  
ways we learn to identify and  
expresses ourselves. Gender  
is socially and culturally  
constructed — it's something  
we learn — not just something  
we inherit though our biology.

We learn and create our gender  
through our relationship to  
ourselves and our interactions  
with the people around us.  
And, even though much of  
gender is socialized, it is still  
very real; it shapes each of our  
experiences in profound and  
different ways.

Unfair treatment, harassment, or  
discrimination based on gender  
or gender expression is wrong  
and creates the conditions for  
gender violence – abuse and  
sexual assault – to occur.

We do not live single issue  
lives: we see the limitations  
of single identities of gender,  
sexual orientation, race, ability,  
class, religion, immigration and  
refugee status.

When identities like gender,  
race, religion, and many others  
are linked to power, control  
and domination, many people  
are devalued just for being  
who they are. When people  
are devalued it creates harm,  
including hurtful words,  
discrimination, and eventually  
physical violence.

We can change this by  
redefining what gender means  
to us and valuing everyone  
in our diverse communities.  
We can interrupt and end all  
forms of hate, oppression,  
and violence and create a  
world where everyone is  
safe, everyone is valued, and  
everyone can thrive.

**Shattered but Whole**

I once could say with certainty that I was straight  
But now I am unsure  
I once had the courage to embrace change  
But now, it's harder than it once was  
So many things have changed  
Like rocks smashing glass,  
It has shattered my identity  
Yet I am whole,  
My friends, my family,  
My community helps me see,  
From every point of view,  
So that I can pick up the pieces  
And form something new.

**William Alvarado**

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Mike Baker*

**she is art**

it was the intentions of Mother Nature  
creating something so beautiful  
grounding her feet on the earth like roots  
the sun shines on her face  
her arms out  
she's soaking up the warmth  
she takes as much space as she needs  
she is not ashamed  
she thrives  
her spirit could crush mountains yet it is so pure  
she is resilient  
she has fire in her belly  
light you shouldn't dare put out  
she is art

**Lucy Brown**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Christine Drick*

**Growth**

Trickling drops were once a river;  
the tallest sunflower, just a seed.  
A small, laughing baby will be such a great man,  
as rocks turn to pebbles that you toss in the sea.  
Healing isn't easy,  
it won't happen overnight.  
Plant the idea in your head, though,  
give it love and sunlight.  
Feed it lots of water,  
give it patience and care.  
Maybe soon you will find that  
a scab will be there.

**Dylann Davis**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Tyler Bevis*

### **The Together Reeds**

Alone, the reed sways and breaks in the wind. It falls and dies because it thought it could get through the storm alone. But together, the reeds sway and bend, dividing and cutting the work and wind, we can take anything.

#### **Demetrius Frye**

*Orofino Junior Senior High school  
Teacher: Michelle George*

### **Formula For the Future**

Math class isn't the only place with problems  
Math class isn't the only place with division  
Look at America  
We have positive variables here  
but they're being canceled out by the negatives  
It's not that hard to balance the equation  
We simply find common denominators  
Substitute knowledge for ignorance  
Love for hate  
And hope the idea multiplies

#### **Brooklyn Hallett**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Tyler Bevis*

### My Self

My root is in Myanmar  
But I went to Malaysia to get  
through USA  
I speak Malay when I get to  
Malaysia but I move to USA  
I speak Rohingya  
When I get USA I need to speak  
Rohingya when I get to home  
door  
But when I get to school's door  
Start English  
Like going back and forth  
Every single day  
Every week  
Every month  
Or every year

### Diri Saya

Akar saya di Myanmar  
Tetapi saya pergi ke Malaysia  
untuk melalui Amerika Syarikat  
Aaya bercakap Bahasa Melayu  
Apabila saya sampai ke Malaysia  
Tetapi saya berpindah ke  
Amerika Syarikat  
Saya bercakap Rohinyat  
Apabila saya mendapat Amerika  
Syarikat saya perlu bercakap  
Rohingya Apabila saya pulang  
ke rumah  
Tetapi apabila saya sampai ke  
pintu sekolah  
Mulakan Bahasa Inggeris  
Seperti pergi ke belakang dan  
sebagainya  
Setiap hari  
Setiap minggu  
Setiap bulan  
Atau setiap tahun

### Nurjannaj Mohammadali

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

### liquid hug

a calm breeze, greeting me from afar,  
standing in the green whole grass,  
the transparent water, letting me in,  
forgiving me of all,  
ignoring my past, present, future,  
letting me as a whole in,  
the cold sensation hugging me like a mother to her newborn child,  
Sinking into it, like candle wax melting from the heat,  
gone,  
accepted.

### Isabella Smith

*South Junior High School*

**Iuvenis (Young)**

They try to silence us  
Telling us we are  
Too young  
To know anything  
Too young  
To speak out  
Well I say I'm  
Too young  
To have friends  
Who are scared to  
To go school  
Too young

To hear my friends  
Yelled at in the streets  
Too young  
To hear that  
Kids like me die every  
day  
We must do something  
So let us rise up  
Together  
Because they will hear us  
Together

**Avery Sterling**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

**Fences**

As our fences have grown taller,  
we lost the connection that made our neighbors neighborly.  
Although we deny it,  
we are unwilling to deconstruct our fences in order to view each  
other unbiasedly.  
It was a rewarding time when we could count on our community  
to help us when we needed it,  
and to listen because we need it.  
Fences,  
sometimes we are all ignorant of the other side.

**Sophia Willmorth**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*



**Classifications**

She was a citizen of the world.  
He was a citizen of nowhere.

We are grandmothers' names  
that keep changing.

We are tongue tied on dry land  
still drowning in lost words.  
We stumble and fall through conversations.

One word remains –  
"immigrant."

On the tips of united,  
untied tongues  
it becomes a  
prison.

We arrive with nothing,  
they still manage to strip us of  
ourselves.

We clutch to asylum  
but they stand on our fingers.

**Katrina Wright**

*North Junior High School  
Teacher: Sarah Veigal*

**Earth's land**

The ground  
The soil  
The water  
The waves  
The plains  
The grass  
The mountain  
The ridges  
Earth is a story  
Ready to explore  
Across the ocean  
Across the sea  
Across the world  
Across the moon  
Around the sun  
Back to Earth  
On solid ground  
Stepping forward  
Into the unknown  
World

**Juniper Ammirati**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## Acceptance

Is what we all want,  
What we all deserve,  
And what we all need.

People have been greedy  
And only given it to the ones who  
Look like them,  
Act like them,  
And think like them.

People are judged for differences  
Which make them special  
And who they are.  
People are pushed into stereotypes  
Which make them feel like outcasts.

But everyone needs  
To be loved,  
Helped,  
And accepted.

### Nate Arnold

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## The Water in Me

Sea air  
Its salt stinging  
Endless water  
A mysterious expanse  
Just beyond reach  
The taste of salt  
The beach shifting  
before pounding waves  
A caress of icy droplets  
Merge before me  
And I realize  
With the infinite blue beyond  
Just how small I am  
And my heart swells  
Hoping you'll stay forever  
Because you make me whole

### Taelyn Joaquin Baiza

*Treasure Valley Math and Science  
Center and North Junior High  
Teacher: Timothy Rowe*

Water is 60% of me  
Ripples in a pond,  
Waves in the sea,  
Water is a big part of me,  
Without the Earth,  
It wouldn't be,  
On this Earth,  
As we live free,  
Greater features are  
Beyond the sea,  
The view of Earth  
Is what I call, "my natural health"  
Mountains, valleys,  
Birds, trees,  
This is a stress relief,  
Closing my eyes,  
Feeling the breeze,  
Smelling fresh air,  
Earth and its features  
Are beyond compare.

**Dallin Banister**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

**Halls**

Boy  
long hair, doesn't  
know who he is  
and his jokes are the best;  
no one hates him.  
Girl  
scarf over her head  
skin the darkest brown  
and the kindest heart;  
no one hates her.  
Hallway  
faces of all colors  
clothing of all cultures  
people of all histories and  
more than just that:  
a person, not just a face;  
no one hates anyone for  
just being themselves.

**Charley Beebe**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## **Her**

Voice  
dismissed by  
the ones saying  
they're better  
they're stronger  
than Her.

Mind  
says never give up  
never step down  
when they  
ignore Her.

If they're  
too arrogant to listen  
to Her  
then who will know  
when the sky  
is falling  
and the only  
one who realizes  
is Her?

### **Charley Beebe**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## **Symphonies**

In a world  
Where we grow  
Only as short as the ones before us  
seeing  
Only the darkness of our past  
singing the same song  
That was heard years ago  
A symphony  
The harsh pound of racism  
strings of homophobia  
With notes of sexism  
Still we sing  
sing without voices  
sing without choices  
As the conductor stands  
So does she  
challenging  
Without a voice  
But her actions were powerful enough  
To bring melodies of imperfection

### **Kate Beswick-Seidl**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

### **A Tasteless Absence**

Mother Earth providing the ripple in our puddle, to let our river flow,  
to take us where we were once before.

Springtime showers pitter patter our soil and soul, of what remains.

Our ground will expel beauty, and you will smell of that too.

Oh soon, she will provide a glass to soothe my throat, releasing the  
will of my mind.

Then I may speak that, discouraging none.

Myself as a whole.

A Tasteless Absence.

### **Shavonne Bostaph**

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Julie Davis*

### **Where Is Here**

Check on our own, the ones left behind and ahead.

Where their blood may stream and turn purple when soaked.

Where a strand of hair shows the encountered, ignoring no  
introductions, only explanations.

As seen in a small town film, where the main character disobeys.

Where it all melts away.

### **Shavonne Bostaph**

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Julie Davis*

## **CLARITY**

Looking down  
Over a hill, into a valley  
Glowing  
Yellow lights, like fire  
Everywhere  
Illuminating their paths  
Falling down into the swarm of lights  
Dancing magical lights above  
A galaxy  
Grass between fingers  
Looking up at beauty  
A serene feeling  
Clarity.

### **Danielle Brewer**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Tyler Bevis*

## **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

Although we think of things separately because they have different properties:  
happiness and sadness  
hope and despair  
joy and misery,

one cannot understand good feelings without the bad. In fact, there is not one without the other; they are all part of one glorious plan. One can only recognize the sweetness because they have tasted the bitterness. If we put our differences aside and try to help one another, we will experience this wonderful life.

### **Lindsey Brown**

*Tigert Middle School  
Teacher: Lorrie'L Jensen*

## **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER**

To play the piano you need all the notes.

The different pitches make harmonies and melodies.

Even though the harmony does not sound very good alone, it makes the melody sound better.

Together, they make music and then more people or instruments can be added, thus creating duets, symphonies, and more sophisticated sounds.

Humans can make each other better.

They can make new tunes, styles, and songs, but one person cannot do that alone.

### **Lindsey Brown**

*Tigert Middle School*

*Teacher: Lorrie'L Jensen*

## **Catching Water**

As a baby, I tried to catch it.

The water flowed through my grasping hands;

I tried to understand it.

I never did.

Now, on the trails,

I'm drawn to the sound of running water,

Flowing over rocks,

In raging currents.

It's dangerous,

Moving with unrelenting force.

I know I cannot catch it.

But I still feel its cool touch sliding over my fingers.

The same water which slipped through a child's hands.

My hands.

### **Allie Bruce**

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Mike Baker*

## Neutrons

There is no such thing as a good person  
Or a bad person, it just depends on perspective.  
We are all just individuals who share the same planet  
And deep down no one is "good" or "bad"  
We are the neutrons of our atom of life,  
We have no positive or negative charge such as the protons  
and electrons.  
But the neutrons that holds together the nucleus of life  
Charge-less, but the most important part

### Owen Carswell

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Mike Baker*

## Displacement

Do we belong anywhere?  
Wherever you go on this planet  
There will be one more place you haven't been  
Because our world is always changing, by man, by nature.  
Buildings are being demolished,  
War is being fought.  
People are always changing too,  
Nothing ever stays the same,  
So you can never really be lost,  
At the end of the day, our displacement is zero  
Because there was never X1 in the first place

### Owen Carswell

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Mike Baker*



### **The Sculptor**

She sits and watches  
By her pottery wheel,  
As the past sculpts the future.  
She is scared that she will be controlled  
That she will be delicate and weak  
Like a flower  
Being blown around  
Lifelessly in the wind.  
But she knows she is strong,  
Like a river,  
Can shape canyons and ravines  
The future.

#### **Olivia Case**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

### **A Lonely Bench**

Every day he waited  
No one noticed him.  
He was always alone.  
Everyday at school,  
Every day at home.  
He had no one.  
His heart was empty.  
His soul was broken.  
He always waited alone  
On the little bench  
But one day  
The other came along.  
That one day when  
Someone finally noticed him  
Someone finally talked to him,  
Someone showed him compassion.  
His heart became whole.  
His soul was fixed  
He wasn't alone.

#### **James Cirelli**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## **A New Reality**

I look down in the blue puddle  
I don't simply see a little puddle.  
What I see is a light and hope.  
I see a world away from reality  
I see no darkness in our eyes  
Only light awakens from within our souls  
Our world is bright, colorful and welcoming.  
We are all together, as one society  
I look up, I only find darkness  
We must bring light to Earth  
Only then is there happiness.

### **James Cirelli**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## **Identities**

We've made harm, darkness, sadness, depression,  
From all of this we've dehumanized our communities  
Our identities  
Hidden what's left  
We certainly can't change what we've done  
But we can improve, shape it  
Us as one whole community can make us who we are  
What we wanna be  
In the dark we'll see light  
In no success there's another chance  
If the odds just don't seem right  
Together we are stronger  
And that's alright

### **Linda Lee Craig-Slovak**

*Orofino Junior Senior High school  
Teacher: Michelle George*

## **Reclamation**

hearts broken over and over again,  
sweet memories of childhood  
lost to others inability to accept anyone  
that doesn't follow society's rules.  
our names turned into slurs,  
shouted across the hallway in an attempt to diminish our self worth.  
and yet,  
when the cruel words of those who cut us  
cut deep enough,  
we bleed not blood,  
but every color of the rainbow.

### **Lindsey Crandall**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Nicole Jones*

## **on conforming**

our society raised us to believe what we felt was so wrong  
told over and over again  
to confine to the rules that we as humans  
have clung to for far too long  
so we challenge the binary  
and step out of the norm  
proving to the world that we are  
not willing to conform

### **Lindsey Crandall**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Nicole Jones*

## **Truly Sacred**

Sacred  
highly-valued and important  
is the definition by book,  
but if it means valued then  
why aren't we treating our world as sacred?  
If it is our duty to take care of this world  
the one right now,  
then why are we killing it?  
You can value it deeply,  
but you're not doing anything about it?  
Why are we tearing each other down  
when we should be working together  
to save what is truly sacred.

### **Sydney Crandall**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **Why Does it Stay as a Hope?**

To have  
Love and Kindness  
is defined as being accepting and kind  
to others  
ALL of others  
regardless of their  
race, gender, sexuality, religion  
or their deepest values  
so when we want to hope  
for "radical empathy"  
and a loving kind world,  
Why does it stay as a hope?  
How deep that actually goes is your choice.  
It's simple,  
and yet why can't we change?

### **Sydney Crandall**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

### **The Greatest Utopia**

Love is a powerful thing  
to accept someone  
for being themselves  
makes them feel love  
and that's the best feeling.  
If the world was magic,  
with no stereotype  
or bias,  
the world would be a beautiful place.  
Our values, the deepest values,  
if they were accepted  
I think that would be  
The Greatest Utopia.

#### **Sydney Crandall**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

### **We Choose All of Us**

It means to me that you can't just pick my friend  
you have to pick me too.

#### **Capone Crumb**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **Grandma**

Sweet smells of the kitchen  
Warm fire of the living room  
Safe feeling all around  
The Warm hugs she gives  
The Great example she sets  
Feeling of belonging  
A place of gathering  
And good times  
The place everyone loves  
Grandma's house.

### **Chloe Davis**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## **Jungle**

Special  
Hunt for food  
Hunt birds to eat with family  
I go with the men  
Rain, Drip, wet  
Big green trees with vines  
Little dark and noisy  
Creatures and birds  
Homemade slingshot  
Marble, rock or dirt  
Made hard by fire

### **Kato Dieu**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## **We Have Purposet**

Our spirit is like a flower pot it's fragile but firm we get chipped and feel like life is not worth it any more but we still have a purpose in life we can be fixed again but only if we're willing to do so if you don't we crumble beyond repair we can still live life to the fullest we can hold something beautiful we are a garden of hope.

### **Robert Dirimo Dransfield**

*Crossroads Alternative School*

*Teacher: Robert Zumbrun*

## **water is life earth is sacred**

I walk as my eyes are closed.  
But I can see everything around me.  
As I walk, I hear the water running.  
The grass waving in the wind.  
I stop out of thirst.  
I see a pond and lean over for a drink.  
The refreshing taste gives me strength, it keeps me moving.  
There is nothing better, than the taste of fresh water and the smell of the earth.

### **Destiny Dursteler**

*Tigert Middle School*

*Teacher: Lorrie'L Jensen*

## **Paddle**

Swiping each ripple,  
paddle board beneath my  
feet.  
Depths overwhelm me.

Beauty.  
Obscure, unknown,  
cloudy.

Life and water.  
Never knowing what's below.

Water is future,  
open to change.

Clear, misty.

We rely on water  
to keep us afloat or  
to have us sink.

Water is  
uncontrollable.  
Freedom.

Water is a part of each life.  
Connecting.  
All.  
Together.

### **Violet Feigenbutz**

*Moscow Middle School  
Teacher: Tiffany Scriptor*

## **Little Things**

The little things  
I'm grateful for  
The blue sparkling water that quenches my thirst  
As it goes down my throat  
The food I eat which sustains me  
The water, the sun, the soil that nourish me  
These are the little things  
The roof over my head  
The family that I have  
The family that won't leave me  
The family that supports me  
These are the little things that I can't live without

### **Yahdira Fernandez**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*



### **My People**

My people  
the ones who are with me  
the ones who aren't with me

My people  
the ones who love me for me  
the ones who accept all my faults

My people  
the ones who know who I am  
the ones that I can count on

My people

### **Callia Findley**

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

### **Why do we make boundaries**

Why do we make borders  
When they hold us back  
Why do we say the sky's the limit  
When we've been to the moon  
Why can't we work together  
So nothing can hold us back  
So why should we  
Set the limit at the sky  
But why not have no limit  
We all are equal  
So why don't we  
Act like it's true  
After all we are stronger together

### **Kelson Fisse**

*South Junior High School*

*Teacher: Tyler Bevis*

### **My world**

I live in a world  
where I fear for my life  
everytime the intercom sparks to life,  
where I talk about  
guns  
more than classwork.  
With stereotypes I'll never exceed,  
and hatred.  
But I live in a world  
where I can make a difference,  
I can stand up for what I believe in,  
where everyone is beautiful.  
We continue to break society's stereotypes,  
and negative mindsets.  
Together, we make this world.

### **Shelby Hale**

*South Junior High School*

### **Step Outside We Choose All Of Us**

Our one connection to the world  
and to each other  
is through valuing each other's whole selves  
Everyone can be accepted for who they are  
instead of who other people assume they are  
We can live in a place where no one is afraid to step outside  
because they fear being judged  
A place where wholeness is valued  
and we hope for the success of one another  
and not failure

### **Razmira Hamidovic**

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **A United Force**

We stand together, strong.  
Fighting for rights.  
Fighting against hate people face.  
Standing for dreams trampled,  
Courage a heading force,  
Whole hearts beating louder,  
Stronger we stand,  
Against hatred and injustice.  
Fighting against fascist ideas TRYING to pull us apart,  
Those ideas failing.  
Emotional victories  
Still, fighting  
Days, months, years.  
Growing stronger  
Passion growing as fast as fear,  
Together.  
A united force,  
With only scratch.  
Stronger than most,  
A community fighting for a better existence.

### **Emma Hird**

*Anser Charter School  
Teacher: Julie Bu*

## **I Hope**

I hope by the time I'm gone, things are different.  
I hope people change.  
I hope life is loved not just lived.  
I hope people see beauty before flaws.  
I hope fighting stops, and peace dominates.  
I hope people learn more than what's on the paper.  
I hope every person on this earth knows they are worth something.  
I hope that before my life is over I will no longer have to hope.

### **Bentleigh Jones**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## **Regrowth**

you are a tree  
growing, changing, and  
with a core of iron  
when they hack at your trunk  
and rip off your leaves  
you survive.  
the stump of a severed branch  
is where the children swing  
and play, dreaming of a pirate ship  
or thick jungle  
or enemy invasion.  
the cuts on your trunk  
are where caterpillars hide  
and birds nest in your thick, strong branches  
and you survive.  
no, you thrive.

### **Grace Kadre**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **Water?**

Falling, falling down  
Ever hoping to reach  
The end.  
Only to  
Find that  
It keeps moving  
Down and down.  
As the water journeys,  
Down and down  
Waiting and working for  
That state of rest.  
Ever working, churning, working through  
The harsh rapids of cold, icy stings  
Always looking to the end, for rest  
For peace  
The beauty of nature, embracing the lake of which the water is  
And holding it for fear of disturbance.

### **Owen Kepple**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

Trees, chained to the ground by their roots,  
reaching up to the sky  
to feel the sunlight  
on their ever-growing limbs.  
A cold stream, constantly flowing  
through the seasons, regardless of the weather.  
My tent, resting in the grove,  
birds darting back and forth,  
chirping all the while.  
It's calming.  
No responsibilities,  
No needs,  
Just nature.  
It's quiet.  
No cars,  
Or trains,  
Just the trickle  
Of a waterfall.  
It's refreshing.  
It's hopeful.  
It's our planet.

**Alex Kitsinger**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

**Restoring wholeness, our spirit and humanity**

I felt sacred when I was on the phone with my dad. Every once in while, he would call me because he was in prison, but at the end of each phone call we would pray before we hung up and that made me feel sacred.

**Tashia Lackaff**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **A Better Place**

Imagine a peaceful world,  
with no more war,  
with equality,  
and freedom.

We always talk about making the world better place,  
But we really do nothing about it.

Do your part.

We are blessed with so many things

That are given to us to help others,

But we are all selfish to not help or give.

We get so many opportunities and chances to help others,

But we do nothing.

Let's change that.

### **Brisa Leon**

*William Thomas Middle School*

*Teacher: Ashley Matthews*

## **Love Yourself**

Boys and girls have many things in common:

We all think we have to be someone else in order to have friends.

You're wrong.

Don't be someone else to be loved.

Get to know yourself before you make a change.

Your personality, your talents, your emotions.

Don't hold any of that back.

Because if you change, you will lose who you really are.

And then no one will know who you are.

Not even yourself.

### **Brisa Leon**

*William Thomas Middle School*

*Teacher: Ashley Matthews*

## Malaysia

There was a lot of rainforests  
frogs making noises  
lots of water dripping  
streams  
there was never forest fires.

The elephants came as a group  
And stepped on the villages  
Sometimes they can kill people  
Sometimes you can hear the footsteps  
Sometimes you can hear the noise

It was really hot  
People used umbrella  
For shade

This is my home

## Htai Lin

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## Water

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore  
While I stand on the road way, or on the pavement's gray surface,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

## Stormy Locke

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

### **It's Ok**

Not everyone can see  
You are an introvert  
Like me;  
Eating alone and roaming free,  
Fighting away insecurity  
By wandering and independently  
It's ok

We're not all meant to be  
vibrant personalities  
Exuding extrovert qualities  
But we've built this world  
Around that belief  
Isn't it a relief  
Now we can stop trying to be  
Characteristically  
Someone we're not

### **Stormy Locke**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

### **Changes**

Depression  
Loneliness  
Crying  
Left out  
Bullying  
Abuse  
There's one common thing about these  
Us.  
We're the reason why others are hurt.  
We are who cause the hurt  
If we were just kind to each other it would change  
One change can help others  
If we could only make those changes.

### **Claudia Luna**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*



### **Live to Love**

Choose to love  
Love all of yourself  
Love all of someone else  
All or nothing  
There's no maybe or I will try in love  
From the roots of our hair  
To the bottom of our feet  
Self love is a feeling you get  
When you decide to ignore the world  
Not the kind and beloved  
But the negative and harmful  
Live to live  
And love to love  
Because love is love

### **Maddie Mann**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

How many plastic islands?  
How many forests need to be chopped down?  
How many oil spills?  
How many ducks trapped in plastic soda rings?  
How many beaches closed from illegal dumping?  
How many chemicals released?  
How many more people taking clean air for granted?  
How much more has to happen?  
How long until we make a difference.

### **Megan Marty**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

How many plastic islands?  
How many forests need to be chopped down?  
How many oil spills?  
How many ducks trapped in plastic soda rings?  
How many beaches closed from illegal dumping?  
How many chemicals released?  
How many more people taking clean air for granted?  
How much more has to happen?  
How long until we make a difference.

**Megan Marty**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

I'm not afraid  
Not afraid to stand up for what I believe in.  
I'm not afraid to swing up onto the back of a horse  
To capture frogs and bugs in a bucket  
To chase the boys too scared to hold the water snake  
I spent so long trying to catch  
Just because I am female.  
I guess you could call me,  
A boy-ish kind of girl

**Lauryn Mayne**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

**“Equality is a requirement but diversity is a choice”**

I choose all of us.  
It's been a hot minute since we all fit in.  
People treat each other like we belong in a waste bin.  
When someone accepts you for who you are there's a special bond.  
That special bond isn't supposed to be so special.  
It's a bond meant for everyone and everything.  
“Equality is a requirement but diversity is a choice,” Hazija Mberwa  
once said.  
We choose all of us.

**Hazija Mberwa**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

**Look into the eyes of love.**

People say love is complicated,  
is it really though?  
To me love is so simple a toddler understands it.  
Love doesn't have to be explained all you have to do is feel.  
Once you really feel the feeling of love you have looked into its eyes  
and that's just the beginning.  
Love can be experienced singular or plural.  
Look into the eyes of love then come tell me it's complicated, it's not  
... trust me.

**Hazija Mberwa**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## Restoring Our Humanity

We can live  
Without living.

We move,  
We eat,  
We sleep,

But we don't really live,  
We're not really awake.

We need to awaken.  
To really, truly, actually live  
We can achieve great things in life.

So how do we live?  
We just have to

***Awaken***

We just have to  
Discover the  
Physical  
Emotional  
And  
Spiritual  
world around us.

### **Vigo Miller**

*Moscow Middle School  
Teacher: Tiffany Scriptor*

## Water is Alive

"The water is alive. Once you dive it will immediately bear its fangs and attack. But don't be afraid, don't resist the water." Water, it lets me into a place where I can be me. Like a flood gate letting everything gently though the smallest rift of your emotions and brain calming everything in your body. Water is a sacred thing. It's how we live. Water is a calming piece of the world.

### **Brinkley Miller**

*Eagle Rock Junior High  
Teacher: Carrie Garner*

*Quote by Haruka Nanase, fictional character in the anime series Free!*

## **Water and forest**

water  
sound can say a million words  
if you just took the time to listen  
feel of the ice cold water hitting your hand  
as you slowly put your hand under the water.  
forest is beautiful in my eyes it is an art  
breeze rushing through tops of the trees.  
roughness when you put your hand on the tree bark as  
you run your hand down the tree the bark crumbles.

### **Jaelyn Miller**

*Orofino Junior Senior High school  
Teacher: Michelle George*

## **Artistic Nightmare**

In choir class, we are a family.  
In theatre class, we are strangers.  
We sing together.  
We act in our cliques.  
All semester.  
All semester.  
We are a family.  
We are strangers.  
How do you do it?  
We reach out.

### **Charlotte Mitchell**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

### **Water is Life**

What falls from the sky?  
What keeps flowers from getting dry?  
Water does amazing things,  
It helps flowers grow in spring.  
Water is to hydrate,  
It keeps life healthy and great.  
Trees grow with help of water,  
That way, we get photosynthesis,  
From the rivers to the lakes,  
Water is life it's not fake.  
Water is a way of life,  
Stare into a pool reflection and remember,  
Water gave us this.

#### **Grace Noe**

*Fremont Middle School  
Teacher: Neva C. Noe*

### **Earth is Sacred**

As the nature-filled days pass,  
Rain starts to fall from the sky.  
Trees are taller, rivers longer.  
This universe created beautiful things,  
All the way from winter to spring.  
Thanks, Earth for the valleys,  
For the dew on mountain tops,  
For all the wonders that make me stop.  
Take a moment. Thank Earth.  
Close your eyes and imagine treasures,  
Smell the flowers,  
Earth made this possible.  
Earth is Sacred.

#### **Grace Noe**

*Fremont Middle School  
Teacher: Neva C. Noe*

### **We Choose All of Us**

Treat others how you want to be treated  
Be kind and stop putting others down  
Get self esteem, confidence by bringing others up  
Feel good about yourself  
Love others  
Help others  
Connect with others  
Connect with yourself and  
Value yourself.

#### **Suzette Guerrero Ocampo**

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

### **We Choose All of Us**

To choose all of us  
Is to accept and look into our full humanity  
Disregarding our gender,  
Our sexuality, our beliefs.  
Because we all shouldn't just judge by looks  
It's better to get to know them,  
And understand them,  
Because choosing and understanding  
Can make us all feel much better about  
ourselves.

#### **Mauricio Ortega**

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **Pride**

together we stand  
broken and bent  
holding hands for the world,  
against it. We guard those  
who are not yet born.  
Each one of us is  
strong. Forged from our own fires of  
determination. Fueled by the words  
that pierce our skin. True beauty  
is stronger than hate. True love  
is stronger than protests.  
they jeer and mock us, but we stand.  
we stand for ourselves, and we glow  
with the colors of the rainbow.

### **Addison Peterson**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **We choose us.**

We choose us.  
We choose to stand up,  
to defend. We are all chosen.  
Some don't know that yet.  
"You can't do it," they jeer at us,  
thinking they are unpicked.  
Unwatched.  
But we are all together,  
we choose all of us.  
For every person who has given in,  
there are hundreds who begin to fight.  
Leaving behind their mark,  
big or small, our world begins to change.  
And through that change,  
comes you.

### **Addison Peterson**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*



## Community

My people are from a small country and a war-scared landscape. My grandparents, uncles/aunts, and parents have all been dehumanized before. During the war anyone who wasn't Serbian was treated as dirt. They executed people for even the smallest discretion. Some of my family's close friends were those people. I don't hate Serbians or Bosnians and most people don't now. We've learned that sticking together and being kind were better than revenge and violence.

### Dion Ramadani

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## Artificial is Ugly, Identity is Beautiful

Being yourself is hard to be,  
Never knowing what people are thinking about you  
Worse, always knowing.  
Why be you,  
When you're successful as someone else.  
Because that person will only get you so far.  
Your identity won't leave you,  
It may be the worst thing that you own.  
You can't find similarities,  
If yours are all fake.  
Be true to yourself.  
Or you won't find your life,  
You will be living in someone else's.

### Bella Rausch

*Hillside Junior High School*

*Teacher: Mike Baker*

### **Restoring Wholeness, Our Spirit & Humanity**

Sacred can only be described by internal peace. When you find peace inside yourself and can recognize that and nurture it, you and your activities become sacred. I think when you self-reflect and focus on making yourself better, sacredness is easier to attain. I think religion also helps many people understand the concept. Often life gets stressful and if you eliminate stress, peace and the feeling of being sacred can become a regular feeling.

#### **Alex Romriell**

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

Hard Times

Art.

That is what helps me through the hard times.

Friends.

To support me in my art.

Fans.

They give me inspiration.

Haters.

People who give me the hard times.

Also,

The ones who make my art possible.

#### **Kaylee-Ann Sample**

*South Junior High School*

*Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## **Our Voice**

We stand up to the corrupt,  
Crooked,  
and unethical,  
We stand as one.  
Hand in hand,  
Heart with heart.  
Let our voices be heard,  
And intentions undoubted  
We will no longer be bystanders,  
To the bigotry or hate.  
We will create a true land of the free for all,  
Black or white,  
Man or woman,  
Christian or Muslim,  
Gay or straight,  
We stand up to the rotten  
Shady,  
and unjust  
We stand as one.

### **CJ See**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

I am a drop of water  
a salty tear on a page  
Even after I've dried  
a crinkle of me is left on the paper  
People are trying to erase me  
and all the people like me  
but we are not pencil scratched thoughts  
and erasers can't impact an ocean

### **Jane Shoen**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

### **How Joy Feels**

As the wind blows through the trees,  
I walk on the path through the forest and start to notice things.  
I see birds fluttering in the trees.  
I hear mice skittering under bushes.  
The trees look magical under the golden sunlight  
as it pierces through the leaves and glows on the forest floor.  
I start to walk home  
thinking about how joy feels.

#### **Finn Simon**

*Riverstone International School  
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno*

### **My True Identity**

I walk through the halls of my school  
People pass and stare at me like I'm not the same person I was  
yesterday  
I'm still me  
The only change is that everyone now knows my secret  
I'm part of the LGBT community and I finally feel like I belong  
No more secrets  
No more lies about who I was hanging out with  
last night  
This is me and I'm Bisexual

#### **Megan Smith**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## **Mountains**

Water is Life, Earth is Sacred

They rise above us  
But they don't ridicule

They let you take parts of them  
But not too much

They stay still  
As they move

### **Thatcher J. Smith**

*Tigert Middle School  
Teacher: Lorrie'L Jensen*

We  
Bear the weight of the world,  
We've,  
Walked through more fires than you know,  
We're  
Holding up the sky, but nowhere near it,  
We,  
Support the bridge of peace,  
Hands reach out,  
We're  
No longer alone

### **Sada Soe**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

### **Lucky Charms**

Stars

No star is the same  
different pieces to a big puzzle  
like the night sky.

Perfect just the way we are  
all special in our own way.

A galaxy of different people from different places  
making something great.

We have the Milky Way  
We are the Lucky Charms.

### **Briley Standridge**

*Orofino Junior Senior High school  
Teacher: Michelle George*

### **Tiny Dancer**

A leap and a bound  
her feet touch the ground  
like a top floating on water  
she dances like it's no bother  
she is a ballerina, graceful and petite  
she is a drop of water gentle and free  
no one to please.

### **Briley Standridge**

*Orofino Junior Senior High school  
Teacher: Michelle George*

**Natus (Born)**

My heart is a flower  
That blooms through the dirt  
My words are the thorns  
Adorning my stem

In my darkest hour  
The water comes forth  
Restoring my power

As I rise from the Earth  
I take a look around  
To truly see

All that has brought me here  
And all I could eventually be

With the help of the water  
And the grace of the Earth  
I rise toward the sun

**Avery Sterling**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

**Amare (Love)**

Imagine a day without hate  
A day where everyone is free  
Let me help you illustrate  
This perfect day I see

Two boys walk down the street  
Hand in hand, looking sweet  
No one stares  
On this perfect day without a care

A boy runs  
His dress billowing in the breeze  
With hair a shade  
Of forest green

A beloved community  
Will never hate  
They stand in unity  
To never discriminate

**Avery Sterling**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## America

Living under all of this hypocrisy  
It's hard to believe that we're a democracy  
And honestly it doesn't feel as if  
We're governed by the people  
It seems as if we're governed by the Speaker  
The House, The Senate  
They seem to have much control  
But reality is  
Rather than being judged by what I wear  
Rather than being judged by who I support  
Rather than being judged by what I believe  
Let's work together

### Shaedon Stratton

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

## Ephemeral

I look up,  
down,  
up.  
Pause.  
Eyes locking with the sky,  
A staring contest.  
The intimidating sky,  
Color of crushed ice,  
Doesn't look away.  
Neither do I.  
I stare, knowing, there is  
nothing.  
Unpause.

### Sydney Summers

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Mike Baker*

I look down,  
Breaking the connection.  
Dark pear green ground,  
Stares back at me with disgust.  
Screaming.  
My thoughts get lost.  
Plastic bag floats aimlessly,  
Crinkling, shining.  
Humanity could be better.  
Look.  
The beautiful earth is breaking,  
Like a heart shattering.



By myself, I am weak,  
But Together, We are strong.  
By myself, I could move a rock,  
But Together, We can move mountains.

Together, we can make a world,  
Where there is no violence,  
No discrimination.

By myself, I am weak.  
But Together, we are mighty.  
By myself, there is chaos,  
But Together, serenity.

**Peyton Sumner**

*Moscow Middle School  
Teacher: Tiffany Scriptor*

**Thinking About the Sounds That Nature Makes**

I go outside to go for a walk across the Greenbelt for a bit. Thinking about the sounds that nature makes, I feel the wind hitting me. I start to focus on the sounds that don't appear as loud as the others, which makes the louder sounds more quiet. I turn around as the sounds that are far away get louder. As I listen, I start to think about what makes me more aware.

**Shoki Takagi**

*Riverstone International School  
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno*

### **A Strand of Thread**

A single strand of thread alone, cannot save a life,  
But a thousand can.  
In a rope, there are many strands of thread,  
The more strands tied together, the stronger it is.  
The less strands on the rope there are,  
The more easily it will snap in half.

#### **Shaylee Taylor**

*Orofino Junior Senior High school  
Teacher: Michelle George*

### **whole, complete**

inhale.  
exhale.  
whole, complete  
i am here i was here i'll be here.  
whole.  
complete.  
here.  
in God.  
i am whole, complete  
i am loved and can love.  
whole.  
complete.  
i belong.  
i am here  
i can love  
and be loved.  
unconditionally!  
whole, and complete.

#### **Savina Tulilov**

*Fairmont Junior High School  
Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **water; falls**

water;

falls.

down cliffs in rivers underground.

from the clouds, nay, the skies, nay, the heavens!

water. it falls.

water is clean, clear and beautiful.

also dirty, dangerous, diseased.

like us.

water is sacred, perfect, pure.

water is gentle, water is free.

water can refresh and nourish.

water can torment, drown, destroy.

....

like us.

water fills the seas and carves the canyons

and we kill. destroy. torment.

and still.

water

falls

## **Savina Tulilov**

*Fairmont Junior High School*

*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

## **Quickly Forgive, But Never Forget**

One girl sits on her porch, looking out to the stars, as she thinks about what she just read.

In her school, she is learning about the Holocaust, which she barely thought about before now.

She realizes that, as she touches the snow with her shivering, cold fingers, she can never change the past.

But, she can learn from it.

She can never repeat the mistakes of the past, and instead learn from her own.

## **Fiona Vant De Graff**

*Riverstone International School*

*Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno*

## Second Chances

No matter  
What we believe in  
What we hope for  
Who we love  
How we try  
Everyone  
In this world  
Deserves a second chance  
A life they can be happy with  
A place they can call home  
A person they can lean on

### Fiona Van De Graff

*Riverstone International School  
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno*

And  
The sight of beauty  
Everyday  
Someone gets wronged  
Someone gets left behind  
Someone cries  
None can stop the natural  
But everyone can try  
To save, to help,  
And to be kind

## Your Song

People always tell us we are all the same  
But truthfully, we are not  
Everyone is so different  
Spectacular, shockingly beautiful  
  
We aren't the same  
So don't let anyone tell you otherwise  
You are unique  
You are astonishing  
So just do you boo  
And keep on calling playing your song  
Called life

### Carly Veile

*Tigert Middle School  
Teacher: LorrieL Jensen*

### **That's When We All Win**

Imagine for a day,  
the whole world could come  
together,  
what we would accomplish,  
might repair our Earth

Imagine for an hour,  
the whole world  
could make peace,  
we would  
brighten  
the future.

If we would realize  
what we are capable of  
together,  
maybe we could put our  
differences  
aside.

Perhaps for a minute,  
we can come together.  
Alter the future, and  
make the whole world a  
better place.  
Afterall,  
that's when we all win

#### **Conner Veltrus**

*Moscow Middle School  
Teacher: Tiffany Scripter*

### **My Special Place By: Van Vestal**

Smell of damp earth and the old fallen leaves  
Sweet or bitter trees  
So calming just wanna lay down and day dream,  
The noises of the birds surrounds me  
Fresh air and the morning dew,  
Rivers pushing water  
Downstream effortlessly  
The force of the water is underestimated,  
The sun shining on my face  
Finally finding my place,  
The stars come out lighting up the sky  
Then the fireflies  
This is my special place

#### **Van Vestal**

*Hillside Junior High School  
Teacher: Micheal Baker*

## **Too Young**

You say I am too young  
Too young to know my own sexuality  
Too naive  
Too sensitive  
Too young to be depressed  
Too young to be hurt  
Too young  
And you are right  
I am too young  
Too young for  
HOMOPHOBIA  
RACISM  
SEXISM  
SELF HARM  
SUICIDE  
To be normal to me  
My generation has great knowledge  
of the marvelous and unbearableness of society today  
WE WILL BE THE ONES TO DO GOOD WITH OUR KNOWLEDGE!

## **Kiyara Wear**

*Moscow Middle School  
Teacher: Tiffany Scripster*

## **We Need to Hear Them**

We grew up in a world where people didn't listen,  
so we raised our voices.  
However, we shouldn't have needed to shout to be heard.  
Now, sometimes the air becomes so filled with deafening  
shouts and chants  
of those who are trying to drive their point through,  
that we drown out the quietly proposed opinions.  
When we choose all of us,  
We choose to listen to everyone, weather they strive to  
be heard or not.

## **Sophia Willmorth**

*South Junior High School  
Teacher: Amber Strickler*

## The Country

Placid, serene, and tranquil

Not a single car whizzes by, polluting the silence,  
only the organic swish of the rippling grass to tenderly caress your ears.

There are no other humans to interrupt or talk over you,  
only the listening existence of the worn cattle and sheep,  
who welcome you into their domain.

There are no towering buildings to obstruct the night horizon,  
only the unique and genuine sunsets paint the dark sky every night.

### Sophia Willmorth

*South Junior High School*

*Teacher: Amber Strickler*

\* Stories of Transformation Award  
+ More than one poem

### Anser Charter School

*Boise*

Emma Hird

### Crossroads Alternative School

*Meridian*

Robert Dirimo Dransfield

### Eagle Rock Junior High

*Idaho Falls*

Brinkley Miller

### Fairmont Junior High School

*Boise*

Lindsey Crandall+

Sydney Crandall+

Capone Crumb

Callia Findley

Razmira Hamidovic

Grace Kadre

Tashia Lackaff

Maddie Mann

Hazija Mberwa+

Suzette Guerrero Ocampo

Mauricio Ortega

Addison Peterson+

Dion Ramadani

Alex Romriell  
Avery Sterling+\*  
Savina Tulilov+

### Fremont Middle School

*Melba*

Grace Noe+

### Hillside Junior High School

*Boise*

William Alvarado\*

Juniper Ammirati

Nate Arnold

Charley Beebe+

Kate Beswick-Seidl

Allie Bruce

Owen Carswell+

Olivia Case

Yahdira Fernandez

Bentleigh Jones

Owen Kepple

Alex Kitsinger

Bella Rausch

Megan Smith

Shaedon Stratton

Sydney Summers

Van Vestal

**North Junior High***Boise*

Katrina Wright\*

**Moscow Middle School***Moscow*

Violet Feigenbutz

Vigo Miller

Peyton Sumner

Conner Veltrus

Kiyara Wear

**Orofino Junior Senior High School***Orofino*

Demetrius Frye\*

Linda Lee Craig-Slovak

Jaelyn Miller

Briley Standridge+

Shaylee Taylor

**Riverstone International School***Boise*

Finn Simon

Shoki Takagi

Fiona Van De Graff+

**South Junior High School***Boise*

Dallin Banister

Shavonne Bostaph+

Danielle Brewer

Lucy Brown\*

James Cirelli+

Dylann Davis\*

Chloe Davis

Kato Dieu

Kelson Fisse

Shelby Hale

Brooklyn Hallett\*

Htai Lin

Stormy Locke+

Claudia Luna

Megan Marty

Lauryn Mayne

Charlotte Mitchell

Nurjannaj Mohammadali\*

Kaylee-Ann Sample

CJ See

Jane Shoen

Isabella Smith\*

Sada Soe

Sophia Willmorth+\*

**Tigert Middle School***Soda Springs*

Lindsey Brown+

Destiny Dursteler

Thatcher J Smith

Carly Veile

**Treasure Valley Math and Science Center***Boise*

Taelyn Joaquin Baiza

**William Thomas Middle School***American Falls*

Brisa Leon+



## Support Friends Who Have Experienced Abusive Relationships or Sexual Assault

When someone is abused or sexually assaulted, they usually tell a friend first, if they tell anyone. Sometimes they don't say anything, but you may notice something is wrong and be worried about them.

While it can be hard to know what to do, you have a lot of influence in encouraging your friend to get the help they need. Here are a few suggestions to help a friend:

**Start the Conversation** – Begin a conversation from a place of concern, avoid judgment or lecturing. Let your friend know what you've noticed and don't be afraid to tell them you're worried. Be sure your friend knows that no one deserves to be hurt and that you aren't blaming them for anything.

**Listen and Be Supportive** – Ask them to share anything they feel comfortable sharing, then really listen. It's not your job to gather all the facts, just to support and listen. Let your friend talk about the abuse or sexual assault in the way that they need to. Make them feel safe with you as the person they choose to talk to and give them time to share their experience. Know your friend may not recognize the abuse (which may happen through texts, on the phone, or online), might be afraid or embarrassed to talk about a sexual assault, or may be confused about what happened to them. Also understand that your friend may not realize that coerced sex (when someone manipulates, tricks, or guilts a person into sex) is sexual assault. If your friend didn't want it to happen, then it shouldn't have. If your friend was sexually assaulted, encourage them to seek immediate medical treatment.

**Things To Say** – Encourage your friend to get help from a trusted adult, and help them connect to the resources they need. Don't judge your friend. Here's examples of things to say:

"I'm here for you."

"I'm sorry this happened to you. No one deserves to be hurt."

"It's not your fault."

"I am worried about you."

"How can I help?" or "What do you need?"

**Stay Connected** – Your friend needs you to listen and be supportive. Respond with understanding and empathy, not anger. Your friend may not want help from anyone. Understand what you see or hear may make you frustrated and upset. Don't close the door of communication by threatening to do something they don't want. Also, expect that your friend may share and then not say anything to you for several weeks or even months. Don't pressure them to talk, just let them know you are available when they want to talk.

**Get Support** – Your friend may feel more comfortable talking about the situation with someone anonymously over the phone, in that case, help them reach out to a local domestic or sexual violence organization, or one of the national support helplines listed on the next page. You can also call the helplines to get support in how to help your friend.

## **Where to get help**

### **National Dating Abuse Helpline**

1-866-331-9474 or [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org) to chat with an advocate online

### **National Sexual Assault Hotline**

1-833-656-HOPE (4673) or [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) to chat with an advocate online

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) to chat with a crisis counselor online

### **The Trevor Project**

1-866-488-7386 for LGBTQ young people ages 13-24 or [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org) to chat online

## **How to get involved with Our Gender Revolution**

Learn how to get involved with Our Gender Revolution, a project of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, by going to [www.OurGenderRevolution.org](http://www.OurGenderRevolution.org) to learn more.

For more information contact the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence 208-384-0419 or 1-888-293-6118.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-WR-AX-0008 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

**OURGENDERREVOLUTION**

[www.ourgenderrevolution.org](http://www.ourgenderrevolution.org)