The Belmont Chronicles

A Threshold of Student Voice

Belmont Middle School Literary Magazine
2021 - 2022
1st Edition

Cover Design: Sabrina Lu
Editorial Staff Notes

Thank you to all students who submitted their writing and artwork for publication. We admire and appreciate the bravery it took for you to share your work and allow others to hear your artistic voice.

All work is published exactly as it was submitted. This means the only changes made to any work is changing the size for fitting onto pages.

The staff would like to thank the BEM PTO for sponsoring the prizes given to each of the category winners. Prize winners are listed on the next page.

The Belmont Chronicles Staff
Asma Amer
Olivia Baek
Emma Bubb-Clarke
Chloe Lee
Kelleigh Wright
Winners

**Magazine Name Contest**
Terrell Armstrong

**Cover Contest**
1st Place - Sabrina Lu
2nd Place - Sydney Kelly

**Best Artwork**
1st Place - Anjali Pheng
2nd Place - Danny Shaban

**Best Poetry**
1st Place - Anonymous Student
2nd Place - Bree McKay

**Best Prose**
1st Place - Anagha Lokesh
2nd Place - Frank Addai
🏆 First Place - Artwork

By: Anjali Pheng
🏆 First Place - Poetry

“Sad Boy” by Anonymous Student

Sad Boy
Everybody sayin
Your never gonna
Pass boy
They be making s*** up
To get you on you’re a** boy
Don’t be hating
Don’t ever let them
Get you
Mad boy
Sad boy
Sad boy,
Sad boy
Thinking you won’t make it
I’m saying that you
Can boy
Don’t be sitting patient
And waiting for your
Chance boy
You just gotta chase it
Your futures in your
hands boy
Don’t be sad boy
“The Pride and Joy of Giving” by Anagha Lokesh

Giving. The word giving can mean so many things, like giving back to the community, giving more than you take, or simply the definition as given by the Oxford dictionary; providing love or other emotional support, and caring. The word giving for me mainly retains to give back to the community. Back in January of this year, I was casually flicking through an after school program’s website. Suddenly, something caught my attention. “Hey,” I said as I walked towards my Mom, “Can I attend this meeting that’s on Saturday?”

“Sure,” she said, “What’s it about?”

“My teacher is bringing in the CEO of a non-profit organization in Uganda, and he is starting a new project to help them.”

“Of course you can attend it!” she exclaimed, “I think I’ll attend the meeting with you.”

“Ok,” I replied, and went back to scrolling through the website, waiting for Saturday to arrive. Finally at around 11:30 am on Saturday, I joined the meeting with my mom, and we waited around for a couple of minutes for them to start the meeting.

“Hello everyone!” suddenly chirped a lively British accent. I was really surprised and started to look for the speaker, but as I was looking I heard, “I’m Joseph Cummiskey, and I’m the CEO of a non-profit organization called Hands for Hope.”

Oh, I thought in my head as I exchanged glances with my mom, So that’s who the guest speaker is.

Mr. Joseph continued, “Hands for Hope helps the poorest of the poor kids who are from the Namuwongo Slums, in Kampala, Uganda, and helps get them the best possible chance in life with basic needs.” He then told us that in 2009 he started Hands for Hope, and he had moved from the UK to permanently live in Uganda to run his organization and to help all the children who needed it.

“That’s really cool,” I told my Mom. I was really amazed and surprised at how much Mr. Joseph had accomplished in the past few years, and he wasn’t really getting anything for it. It was just charity work. “I wonder if we can do some sort of donation project for them.”

“Yeah,” my Mom said, “That sounds like a really good idea.”

I was about to ask Mr. Joseph on how we should help, but then my teacher said, “Wow Joe, that was a very touching story, is there any way we could help you?”

“Yes, in fact there is,” he replied, “We would love to start a teaching project with your academy, to help these kids with their education. Any donations would also be greatly appreciated.”
“Alright then Joe,” my teacher replied, “We’ll let you know when we have the funds so we can start the teaching project.”

I wanted to donate money, but not only that, so I decided to visit the Hands for Hope website to see what else I could do.

“Hey look,” I eagerly said to my Mom as I shoved my computer in her face, “There’s an option for us to sponsor kids for life with their basic needs like food, water, medicine, etc.!”

“That’s interesting,” she said thoughtfully as she looked through the website, “I have an idea, why don’t you try and show this to our extended family members, and see if they will donate and maybe sponsor a kid.”

“Oh yeah, that seems like a really good idea. I could make a presentation, and then present it to them.”

“Sure. I can help you if you want?” my Mom offered.

“Yeah, I guess. It wouldn’t hurt to have someone to give me feedback.”

Over the course of around two weeks, I worked every day to make the presentation compelling enough to get some funds, and to get kids sponsored. Finally, I reached out to all of my family members, across the globe, and we scheduled zoom meetings so I could show them what I had created. Although I had rehearsed so many times with my Mom, I was really nervous, and wanted to make sure I could convey what I was trying to say, clearly, and concisely. When it was finally time for me to start, I cleared my mind, and just started to speak, “Hello all, thank you for coming to this meeting to discuss my fundraiser for the Hands for Hope organization…..

“Good job!” my Mom said after I finished presenting. Overall I did a good job, but sometimes I stumbled, but they all got the message I was trying to convey.

In the end, I raised about $2,500 and got six kids sponsored for life. Mr. Joseph decided to use the money to build two virtual classrooms, with computers, projectors, and even tools to help the students learn better! As an extension to this project I am now actively involved with a team of students and planning a virtual classroom to teach the kids from Hands for Hope. I learned a lot from this experience, and found it very rewarding as well. When I went to the next meeting for the project, Mr. Joseph, along with my teacher, recognized me for my efforts, and I felt very proud of what I accomplished. There is one quote from an ancient Hindu scripture, and it states, “Charity given to a worthy person simply because it is the right thing to do, without consideration of anything in return, at the proper time and in the proper place, is stated to be in the best act of goodness.” I think that helping the kids in Namuwongo is a worthy cause to start an act of charity.
🏆 Second Place - Artwork

By: Danny Shaban
Second Place - Poetry

“Almost Expired Yogurt” by Bree McKay

Oh almost-expired-yogurt-in-the-back-of-the-fridge,
How you keep me company in the middle of the night
I love how you always say “your the best”
Or maybe that’s because you’re almost expired

Oh almost-expired-yogurt-in-the-back-of-the-fridge,
You are so lucky to have me keep you safe from the bin
You always seem so scared when my parents open the fridge
I wonder what you think of them

Oh almost-expired-yogurt-in-the-back-of-the-fridge,
You always taste different than the others
I wonder how you became so unique
It couldn’t have been because of that silly date on your back
Second Place - Prose

“Jeremy and the Fire Phoenix” by Frank Addai

Hi my name is Jeremy, I had just finished sixth grade and ran home for summer break. I did the usual stuff: eat junk food, play games with my friends and watch movies. I finally relaxed and went to sleep after cramming for tests and S.O.L.s. After a week of doing this routine, I got bored and went to my backyard. Me and my big brother Andrew were playing basketball, and the basketball accidentally went over our fence. I said I would get the ball but when I went into the forest behind my backyard to get the ball, there was a trail of burn marks. I followed the trail without telling my brother and the trail led me to see a fire bird injured.

I was really surprised and looked at it. One of its wings was cut. It said to me “help me, I need you, to go down to my home and stop the war that is happening, please.” Jeremy said to the fire phoenix, “why should I help you?” Then the bird went silent.

“Whatever your heart desires I can give it to you”, said the phoenix. “Oh like a genie, okay then I'm in” said Jeremy, then the bird gave Jeremy one of his flaming feathers strangely enough it didn't burn him but extinguish, “now go” said the bird as it opened the portal and so I left not knowing the things that would lay ahead of me.

When I walked in I felt really nauseous so I closed my eyes to feel better and just thinking about what I had done, I had just left home without telling my dad and mom or anyone. I was having so many worries that I lost track of time and then I heard a weird sound almost like a bird chirping but its voice was almost echoing so I opened my eyes to get a glimpse of what that was. I found I was in a candy land sort of a fantasy world where the sky was a glow in the dark purple and the trees were so colorful, and the bird that was there was made of some chocolate. I was surprised and noticed I was on a path and I thought wait how will I live in this world where I know
nothing about it? After that, I also thought there could be other people like me that were transported here, so I followed the path that was in front of me.

I walked a little for five minutes and found a village with wood and bricks. As I kept walking I thought maybe this is just like my earth. But just then I saw the weirdest thing it was like a troll green and really tall holding a hammer so I ran because I am not being eaten today so I ran to a store where I thought maybe it's safe here and then I saw that the shopkeeper was (I presume) a blue fairy with purple wings and somehow dark blue hair said “hi I’m Catie how can I help . . . wait a minute, are you a human?” I said “uh, yes?” Then she examined me looking me up and down and said “oh you want a peace treaty now of all the times” I said “wait what” she said “wow, I’m surprised that you would not know, well I guess it can’t hurt if I tell you what it means, so basically we the “monsters” and the humans had peace and then they wanted more land since they were using up there land for cities and such, so we told them that they should remember when they first came out of somewhere that we split the land so we could have peace. But they took none of that and now are forcefully trespassing the border of the land between us and them.”

“Wow I am sorry about that.” I said, “is there anything I can do to help because I kinda feel responsible for the war.” The fairy said “wait who, I asked we call them the leaders. First the Hydra, the most powerful dragon ever, if you cut one of his heads off he grows two more.” “Wait, did you say one of his heads?” “Yeah he has multiple, then the cave troll faction where they have an army of goblins and troll an army to fight. That's good there's the cyclops, a giant one eyed figure so a warrior I'm guessing next one. The Sirens from the sea faction luring anything with its songs to it so it can eat ok maybe we don't recruit them the minotaur who lives in labyrinth (a maze ) he is half human and half horse okay I think that might be the
easiest one and the phoenix a dragon on fire that can not die it just gets birthed from a dying feather
Okay that all of them I said then Catie mumbled “yeah.”

“Wait quick question, why are they not working together to fight the war already then because they are?”
“Arguing with themselves at the moment the trolls don't want help the hydra does not want his treasure stolen when he is gone even though he can just dig a hole and hide the sea faction is worried because they are already in a war with sea snakes the minotaur is impossible to get to because the maze is unbeatable.
The cyclops is scared of going to war and the phoenix is missing oh so basically I have to just have to solve their problems one by one and get them to fight this war before the humans win? If that's all I have to do then that is, what will I do?”

To be continued….

Read the next novel

Editor: Kashika Nagar
Haikus by Emmie Freer

“Sunlight”
The sun showers me,
Bathing me in golden light,
Giving me new hope.

“Solar Eclipse”
The solar eclipse,
Sun and moon share a brief kiss,
Then promptly depart.

“Hi :))” by Jules Hodges
I had a dream of pursuing an acting career, I thought entering Newsies would be a great opportunity to get started. Even though I didn’t get the role I wanted, me having really bad stage fright. I was still so grateful to be a part of the show. Plus, I met tons of new people and had so much fun. I feel the experience made me more confident about being myself and myself in general. It also boosted my social skills by a lot. It was so hard with all the rehearsals everyday but in the end it was SO worth it. I honestly wish I enjoyed it more.
By: Anjali Pheng
What’s It Like to Be That Man? by Sabrina Lu

Approximately two percent of the world lives in a home without a house.
No house to call home, but a home to tender to and treat like a baby,
Just like each of us would love to be treated.
Driving home through streets of urbanized city,
I see and stare recklessly
At a young man
No younger than thirty; no older than forty.
He carries with him
A sign aged with crinkles
That advocates a wistful, intriguing retrospect
Possibly even his own.
The yellow light flashes off as the red awakens to life,
Responsible for hindering the tires of our car.
We just so happen to be on the very left lane,
The lane closest to the man of which I had been surveying.
I know why he’s there,
But what I don’t know
Is why father won’t give him money.
I dare to beg, something I would have never imagined myself fighting for,
Like a river fighting to cry.
“Father, would you please give him money?”
I shouldn’t be testing him,
After all,
He is my father.
But I do,
With as much concern as
An ocean trying to drink.
He stares ahead for some time, perplexed.
I watch his face in the mirror.
He gazes off to the side—to the man, not once, but twice.
Finally, he sighs, murmuring with shame.
“Because it is too risky.”
I consider his words, frowning, and ask,
“Is it not risky enough to be him?”
“Inside Out” by Asma Amer

Happiness, a trait,
That decides your fate.
Confidence, what you can always gain,
Through happiness and some pain.
Sadness, a feeling that makes you want to quit,
At a time when you lose your grit.
Anger, something that makes you rage,
An emotion you should put in a cage.
Fear, a feeling that everyone has felt,
And no matter what, must be dealt.

“Amy Hates Bees” by Eknoor Singh

Amy hated honey                          Amy was in shock
Because she hated bees                  She felt a bit unease
She always wondered                     As her foot slipped
Why they didn’t have knees              She felt her body freeze

One day as she was at rest              Amy was on the floor
She felt a soft breeze                  As she was about to sneeze
She stood up to see                     But she stopped and
A beehive in the trees                  Let the bees sleep in ease
By: Annabel Ianuzzi
“Inhale & Exhale” by Rishi Madduluri

Inhale...
Fresh air
That strengthens the lungs
Food
That fuels the body
Families
Spending time together
Making more memories
Nature
That sprouts new life each season
As fruits and flowers in bounty
Exhale...
Fresh Breaths
Essential to good health
Thoughtfulness
Be mindful of everyone around
Joy
Smile & spread happiness
Love
Sprinkle around in plenty
The saying goes,
You reap what you sow
The harvest we received is
A pandemic of epic proportions
It is now time to both inhale & exhale
Hope,
That the human race
Sheds its ego, and
Awakens to a second chance
To undo all that is wrongfully done
By: Alyssa Miller
The place where 19,000 people died on the first day, the start of our problems
You should realize we never needed this.
Do you really want your sons and daughters to die here?
We didn’t agree to this.
Die of diseases like Mustard gas that could suffocate to death.
Die just because their commander forced them to go, “OVER THE TOP” to No Man’s land: life expectancy
there is only 30 secs.
That’s why you should choose to not go to war.
Do not lose your child, so you can see them grow.
These are the kind of problems that can be avoided if we don’t go to War.
We didn’t sign up for this.
America” we needed you to protect us but you can’t do what’s right.
America How could betray us
Like you left us on the frosted step of your door.
Positivity teaches more than words will ever do.
It’s not a mantra, not even advice,
Only an ordinary statement.
Or not so ordinary, if it becomes your choice
To be happy and

to see the world through new lights.
Positivity isn’t just joy,
It doesn’t mean an eternity of glee,
But with the laughter and peace
That comes along with it.
One cannot always be happy,
For life resembles an ocean.
Sometimes bright and clear,
Mimicking the sun,
Mirroring euphoria,
Sometimes murky and

Not being able to see what lies ahead.
Yet amidst all the darkness,
The lighthouse on the edge of the sea
Brings hope and strength to reality.
“The Shoulders We Stand On” by Asma Amer

The lens we see our nation in, doesn't just have to be black and white.
Some say our nation is torn.
And I admit some problems are worn.
But our nation just needs to be polished, a few things abolished.
For there is always light, if only sometimes it could be a bit more bright.
What happened on January 6th was uncivil.
Yet our nation will never shrivel.
Because we the people stand united on each other’s shoulders.
No matter how high the boulders.
By: Sabrina Lu
“Will She Understand” by Sabrina Lu

My duties as a father
Always come before my duties as an officer.
It has split my allegiances
In more than two halves.
My mind is the center of New York City,
Times Square, to be exact.
Chaos flashing on and off,
Blinding passersby
Forcing citizens to seek refuge
With each passing thought too insignificant to be noticed.
I am invisible wherever and whenever I work
And those whom I work with
Are heartless and act inhumanely
And are possibly even inhuman themselves.
I’m edging closer to insanity,
Not sure when another wave will gush over
And drown me beneath the depths of the surface.
No one will bother
No one will care
To ask how I’m doing
To look me in the eye
To greet me
To treat me as a human.
I stand for hours without moving,
Drinking,
Only relying on my breaths and blinks
To make it through each day.

(continued on next page)
I stand alert and with confidence
On the outside, yes,
On the inside, merely a remnant of my ego.
I can finally go home after standing.
I have done my job and my service
But with a price.
A heavy price to pay
Leaving me in so much debt.
My legs are unfathomably numb;
My feet, secretly dazed;
The soles of my shoes stealthily scarred beyond redemption from their age.
But so is my poor mind.
But that's all I can do.
That’s all I can give.
I can only do so much
For my daughter.
I hope she understands.
Aspire to inspire before we expire.

By: Sabrina Lu
Cover Contest Runner-Up = Sydney Kelly