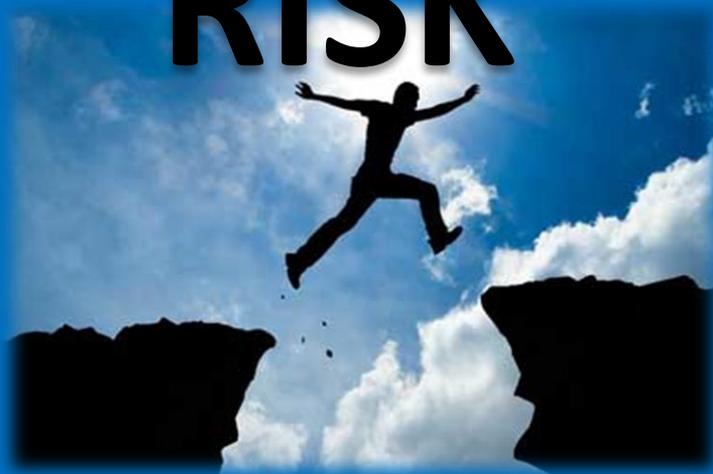


THE WRITE CHALLENGE

Anthology

May 2017

RISK



Lakota★LEADS

Lakota's Enrichment and Academic
Development of Students

RISK

This year's Lakota LEADS Write Challenge theme is RISK:

Making a new friend, traveling to an exotic location, auditioning for something, investing money, even driving a car—large or small, risk is a part of life.

/risk/ 1. Possibility of loss or injury. 2. Someone or something that creates or suggests a hazard. 3. The possibility that something unwelcome or unpleasant will happen. 4. Actions taken with no assurance of the outcome. 5. To expose (someone or something valued) to danger, harm or loss. 6. To venture upon; take or run the chance of.

Thank you to all of this year's entrants. Here are the top three students in every category and their wonderful literary works...all interpreting this year's theme of RISK!

Hosted by:



Lakota★LEADS

Lakota's Enrichment and Academic
Development of Students



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POETRY K-2: 1st PLACE

My First Sleepover... without my older sister

By Aubrey Yeazell

It was my best friend`s birthday
She was turning seven!
She invited me to a sleepover
I was in heaven!

But then I got nervous.
My sister wouldn't be there!
My mom said, "Your friend came to your party."
So I knew it would only be fair.

At last the day of the party came.
I was getting ready to go.
I packed my things in the car.
Even the present with the big bow!

My mom dropped me off.
We played hide and seek and had dinner.
Then we watched a movie.
It was a real winner.

The next day we had donuts for breakfast.
They were really sweet!
I'm so glad I came.
The party was neat!

ESSAY K-2: 1st PLACE

Taking a Risk

By Madison Springmyer

Taking a risk is really hard. Taking a test is a risk. In a test you sometimes feel stressed, rushed or nervous. It's not easy but once it is done you feel much better than you did before or during the test.

Sometimes you still feel stressed or nervous even after a test. You might not get the test right. You just have to stop and breathe. Just take a break when it gets too hard.

A risk is something that might make you feel nervous or rushed, like when you don't study for a test. It's a hard risk to make sure you get the test right and the test might seem long and boring.

When you have a test, something scary, or something you don't want to do remember to STOP and breath or take a break when it gets too hard.



POETRY 3-4: 1st PLACE

Take the Risk and Go to Syria

By Kais Alwawi

My friend told me to go to Syria
He told me that they will hear me, yeah!

I went on the airplane and thought about the risk
The risk is high, I may die now my heart is brisk!

Well, I don't care, I will dare and I'll go there
People lost hope and they need a life that is fair.

When the airplane landed, I saw a kid who was all in red
I thought he's dead and that his story will never be read.

I decided to stay there and fight
I'll fight and never retreat or fright.

My mom told me things will always be all right
My mom told me that the future will be bright.

I've fought and fought and for victory I've sought
The evil was defeated and bad people were caught.

Taking the risk was a wonderful idea
Love and peace spread all over Syria.

POETRY 3-4: 2nd PLACE

Risks Make Life Better

By Bonny Kirkmeyer

Risks,
They are the things you can do to achieve your goals,
Risks.
Try,
These are the things you can do this to develop your talents,
Try.
Love,
This is the thing that makes you closer to others,
Love.
Risks, Try, Love, it makes me think of a sentence.
Try risks in love.
Risks help you to achieve your goals, trying makes you more
talented, love makes you closer to others.
Try risks in love.
Achieve your goals to get more talented and to get closer to
others.
Risks, they make life better, you can achieve your goals and
love one another.
Risks
😊

NARRATIVE 3-4: 1st PLACE

The Great Mouse Escape

By Madeline Kirkmeyer

Once there was a mouse named Chip. He was brown, small, and fuzzy. Chip lived at the zoo. One day he found out that in 2 days he was going to become owl food! This frightened little Chip. Soon he decided he was going to take the risk and run away. He had 2 days to come up with a plan. After just 1 day he had an idea. The plan was when the zookeeper comes to feed the mice the morning of the big day, Chip would jump out of the cage and hope to land in someone's pocket. Usually when he was being fed, there were lots of people around at the zoo and he could get lost among everyone. When he would get far enough he would hop out. " Good plan." He thought.

The big day came and he was ready. He took a deep breath and as soon as the cage door opened Chip jumped as far as he could, and found himself in someone's pocket! He got comfy very fast. The inside was soft and warm and the outside was a jean pocket. Inside there was a penny, a dime, a \$5 bill, and a small handkerchief that he used as a blanket. He wrapped the blanket around himself and peeked over the top of the pocket. It was noon and he was hungry. Holding the blanket, he jumped out to find crumbs to eat while the boy stopped to get some food. When he was full he jumped back in the pocket for a ride the rest of the way. A little while

later Chip looked out and the boy was leaving the zoo.
"Hooray" he thought.

When he got out of the zoo, holding leftover crumbs and the blanket, he jumped out of the boy's pocket and when he landed on the ground, he took a moment to see the zoo exit. Then he scurried under the bushes to start a new life. He was happy. "What an adventure." said Chip. THE END 😊



NARRATIVE 3-4: 2nd PLACE

A Risk I'm Willing to Take

By Calleigh Ethier

One dark evening by the fire of an old house in a village no bigger than a couple miles, sat a little girl named Annabelle. Annabelle, (or Anna as her friends liked to call her) was just an ordinary 10-year-old girl, but she had a heart like no other, a heart as big as the moon.

With a lot of friends and a big family that loved her, Anna could not have been happier with her life. Well, that is, before it all came crashing down.

April 9, 2016 Annabelle Rose Johnson officially turns 10 years old. She went to school that day acting like the happiest girl on Earth. She went straight to her classroom, and there met up with all her friends. Later that day she was sent to the office for early dismissal. She had no idea why she was leaving so early, but she didn't care she was just too excited to think about it.

She found her mom in the office ready to leave with a face full of sorrow. Anna couldn't exactly figure out why her mom was so sad on such a happy day. They got in the car and Anna finally asked, "Mom, why do you seem so glum?" Her mom didn't answer at first, but then she started to speak, "I just got word that your grandfather has passed away, because of cancer." Anna's smile started to fade "Your dad?" She asked. Her mom replied the only word Anna did not want to hear, "Yes".

Annabelle did not care for her other grandfather, she just didn't love him the way she loved her mom's dad. Anna finally had the courage to speak again, asking where her mom was taking her. "His funeral" she replied. "your father is meeting us there." "Why did this have to happen, not today" Anna thought.

Everybody was at the funeral, Annabelle's entire family. They were all glad to see her, but upset about her grandfather. The funeral was now over, but what Anna didn't know was that there was more bad news heading her way.

When they got home Anna's parents had a conversation with her right away. "Honey we need to talk." her dad said. "I don't know if you are aware, but grandma has been sick as well, and now that grandpa is not there to help her..." Her dad didn't finish his sentence for a while. He started again, "We are planning on moving closer to your grandmother so we can visit her and check on her more often." "If you don't want to go we won't go, but I think it's for the best that we move."

This was the biggest decision of Anna's life. Could she pick between all her friends, the only life she ever knew, and not to mention missing the party that her friends have been planning for her for months! They would hate her!

Day after day she was trying to find the right moment to tell her friends the news. She just couldn't make out the words. She went home one day and Anna's parents could see her stress. They didn't want this to happen either, but they told her she had to decide.

After a lot of thinking Annabelle Rose Johnson had officially decided. Her face was red, her heart was pounding, but "At the end of the day," she began, "the right thing to do

is to move.” By now she was crying. Her parents knew she had made the right choice “I’ll go,” she repeated. “I’ll go.”

The next day at school she had finally found the courage to tell her friends everything. The good news: her friends weren’t as mad as Anna expected them to be. The bad news: Annabelle had to move, for a good cause, but she had to move.

It was a risk she was willing to take.

The End



NARRATIVE 3-4: 3rd PLACE

Trying Sushi

By Bonny Kirkmeyer

I laid in my bed one day, eyes glued on the screen of my I-Pad. I was watching Youtube. On the screen was the official video of Maroon 5's "Sugar". I really liked it! I was on the main chorus when mom screamed to me "Bonny come down here with your sister, we need to discuss dinner!" "Come on Mom! I was in the middle of a video!" I yell downstairs. "No talk backs or we're having sushi!" Mom says.

That word, the one mom just said 'sushi'. I hated that word. It made me shiver like a cat out in the rain. Every year on Mother's Day, Mom and Grandma always made us go to Sushi! I thought it seemed too fishy and looked weird!

I went to my sister Madeline's room and said, "Madeline, we need to go downstairs to discuss dinner." "Okay!" Madeline says. When we get downstairs, we start talking. "Girls, I want you to try something new, what about sushi?" Mom asks. "OK!" Madeline says back, "sushi isn't too bad!" "Yeah I know," I say. "I would like you to take the risk and try it. We've been there a couple times and I'm sure you would find something to eat!" Mom says. "Ok Mom" I say. "Bonny and Madeline let's just try it." Dad then says to us. "OK." I say back.

We drove to Mason where the Sushi restaurant is and we ordered the Jedi Roll, the Sith Roll, and a few others. I liked the Star Wars themed rolls. Mom ordered us Chicken

Teriyaki and shrimp sushi (shrimp on rice). Also, we ordered drinks such as apple juice and lemonade, and rice and edamame.

We got our food within 20 minutes. “Very fast for sushi!” Mom says. I grab my shrimp with my chop sticks and take a bite of it. I shrug, it was good-ish, and I eat it all. Then I take a piece of chicken and put it in my mouth, I LOVE it. I gobble it all up. Mom and Dad say that they were very surprised and encouraged by me trying new things.

When we get back in the car I say to Mom. “On Mother’s Day, Grandma will be surprised I like sushi.” “She sure will! Oh, and also, aren’t you glad you took the risk to try something!” Mom says back to me. I was glad! It made me feel good to try something new. ‘Now I’ll be able to try other stuff!’ I think.



ESSAY 3-4: 1st PLACE

Ruby Bridges, Risk Taker

By Sophie Hard

We read a book about Ruby Bridges in my class. I saw pictures of Ruby walking with U.S. marshals and learned about how people shouted mean things to her as she walked by them, trying to go to school. It was so unfair. Everyone should be treated equally, no matter what color their skin is.

It must have been so hard for her, but she did it. I think she was only 6 years old when this happened.

I told my mom and dad about Ruby Bridges and what we learned in class. She reminded me of my all-time hero Rosa Parks, so I wanted to know more. I turned into “research girl”! I looked at my school library for books and Googled her name. I learned that she is still alive and that she is 62 years old now.

Then my mom and dad took me to the public library to get a movie about her. I found the movie “Ruby Bridges” and I was so happy, I watched it the night that I got it! It was really good, but it made me sad to see what she went through.

I thought about Ruby and how brave she was. I’m not sure I could be as brave as her. So, I decided to write her a letter. I decided to write to Ruby because I thought what she went

through was very hard and I would not want to be treated like that. I wanted Ruby Bridges to feel special.

This is what my letter said:

Dear Ruby Bridges,

My name is Sophie Hard and I am 8 years old. We read about you in my class at school. I think you are very brave. You took a risk. How did you feel when you had to walk with the marshals? It must have been really scary for you.

The bravest thing I have ever been through happened when I broke my arm. I got through it.

The second bravest thing I have ever done is go on the Woodstock Express. That is a roller coaster at Kings Island in Ohio. I was scared and the only reason I did it was because my dad wanted to get a picture of me riding it.

I hope when I get older, I can be brave like you and do something to take a risk like you did.

I think you must be very confident in yourself. I admire you and I hope I can be like you someday.

Sincerely,

Sophie Hard

I'm going to send my letter to Ruby tomorrow. I hope she will write me back. I really want to show it to my class!

ESSAY 3-4: 2nd PLACE

Nickie's Risk

By Bonny Kirkmeyer

Nickie Karelston was a nine-year-old soccer player. She played for a club called "Farland FC" (FFC). She was their goalie. Nickie saved many shots each game, she let only a few go in and had the upfield take care of the rest. They were a good team. Nickie's uniform was bright blue and hung up in her room. She wore Nike Hard Core gloves as goalie.

Nickie had red hair that was short and curly. She had freckles all over his face. She had bright green eyes too! "Looks like Halloween cats are in your eyes!" was how her mom described them. Nickie had 2 brothers, twins actually. Mike and Mickey were their names. They were 3 years old. They were annoying! Nickie's best friend was Kaylie Loudmout. Kaylie played on FFC too! She was a striker and also very good.

In the park, Nickie once punted the ball so far it went into the goal. She went to the edge of the penalty box, punted it and it bounced over her dad's head and into the goal. She did this in a game too. They won that game 2-1.

Nickie was a good goalie, but she was afraid to dive for the ball. She thought that he would get injured or someone would step on her knee if she dived for it. But one game, the state championship, she had to.

The game started against South D United, and FFC quickly got the ball. They scored! They were excited Kaylie scored. Then South D ran up the field passing and passing; then #27 took a kick and Nickie wanted to save it, she really did but she was scared. She had thoughts going through her head like concentrating on long division. She heard one that was saying 'Nickie take a risk, jump towards the ball and save the goal!' She hesitated for a moment. She was as frightened as a little puppy out in the snow! Then heroically Nickie jumped to the side, arms, hands and legs tight. She stretched and...

Nickie saved it! She took the risk and got to the ball. Nickie was happy. Mike and Mickey started screaming. After they won 2-0, Nickie's mom took everyone to Yogurt Time Fro-Yo! Nickie then said to her mom while she was eating her ice cream "Mom! I took the risk and saved the goal!" "You sure did. Good job Nickie!" Her mom said proudly.

The End



ESSAY 3-4: 3rd PLACE

Karate and Risk Go Together

By Tori Schneider

Karate and risk go together. I feel this way because I have had two years of training in martial arts and there are a lot of risks to take. You need to have strength in order to strive and conquer the risks you take. You should never feel defeated, because if you do, you will not be successful at anything. Being brave is also a big part of taking a risk. Somebody who is brave will have more courage to take a challenge. Taking a risk in karate could be during a belt test for a new rank, learning a new kata, fighting in kumite, or participating in a tournament. In belt tests, you have to give it your all. In kata, you have to perform your best and learn more challenging stances. In kumite, you have to fight and practice harder to be a better fighter. In tournaments, you are getting judged by the judges and you're scared at first, but then you take the risk and you either win or lose. When you win, you feel good because you know that all of your hard work paid off. When you don't win, you feel sad at first, but then you realize that you have something to work on for next time. Before you take the risk, you should always remember that you are unique and special in your own way. Don't compare yourself to other people, because you'll just want to be competitive and it makes you feel hard on yourself. Just work at your own speed. Be confident, like I always say, "When you are confident, you will be dominant." This goes for all sports. I feel that you should take a risk, or your life will be

dull. You will achieve a lot if you just take the risk. Do not be scared to take a risk, because you take risks every day of your life. It pays off to go out and try something new.

Understanding karate is a big risk, for example, in belt tests, you have to understand Japanese words, along with performing kata and kumite. Loyalty is a big part, too. It is a risk because you are required to put in the time and dedication. Encourage other people that are also taking a risk. This cheering and encouragement will help them accomplish their goal and more persistent to succeed in the risk they are taking. You also need to have protection while taking the risk. In karate, you need to wear the appropriate gear to fight, or else you will get hurt and you couldn't participate in anything. There are many risks to take in karate and in life. I feel that they both go together.



POETRY 5-6: 1st PLACE

The Risk In Her Eyes

By Angelica Bhatti

Her Mysterious eyes, I could study for hours...

Is it a beauty?

Or a monstrosity?

She devours my emotions

As they transform into an avalanche,
of

Hidden thoughts

She's making them tumble

Over and over again,

Watching on the edge of a cliff

Curiously

Falling with joy

Feeling the wind come along the wash of excitement, rolling over me!

Knowing the freedom!

Knowing there is no worry at the end!

A joy ride to look forward to.....

But to die in despair...

The truth of her plan,

Unfolds itself to me

It Can be horribly, horribly bad

But beneath the surface.....

her love can be seen

Her eyes *burning* with danger

A candle. Like life, it
is too short.

So why not
spend it with risk?

POETRY 5-6: 2nd PLACE

Choose One

By Audrey Shooner

Life is perfect, or so I thought,
It's really just a battle, waiting to be fought.
Love is strong, and shall prevail,
Hate is weak, and it shall fail.

Hate will rule,
If that's your fate.
Love will fail,
If you're consumed by hate.

Which one will you choose?
Which one will you follow?
Is your heart full of love,
Or is it just hollow?

What will you do?
Love gives you lots of friends,
And hate gives you few.
So what will you do?

The choice is half the battle.
The battle is your life.
Your life is a risk,
Will you take it?

What do you choose?

POETRY 5-6: 3rd PLACE

Risk is the thrill of actual life.

By Anna Axelson

She gives to us

 Boundless hope and joy

To the Tearful and Broken.

 Unspoken love is her lie less generosity

Flakes of abundant admiration

For those

Who oppose

With open unprotected, bare, and trusting hearts

 Ready for her challenge of life.

 Dependent upon her

Grant Of Passage.

Her freedom shows no limits, which can hurt, and
sometimes wound.

But her breath-taking risk can be boundless, the figure,
embodiment, of pure danger

 And thrill.

Walking through us like fleeting moments of true beauty,
True confidence, hope to the broken, and punishment to
the cruel.

 We fear

 Worship,

 And ignore her calls...

 Choosing the binding,
 lonely, limits over her dangerous
 Excitement

 Risk is....Her battle plan.

NARRATIVE 5-6: 1st PLACE

Where Am I? (A Don Stark Story)

By Sara Sparling

My sister Julie is extremely hurt and sick. I'm currently lost. I tried to find a doctor for Julie, because there aren't any around the woods we are staying in. We are desperate for help! I'm actually worried for both my health, and Julie's, since our mother is stranded in the Middle East. I left my best friend Dean with Julie, but I'm not sure he can help her.

I make my way through a small town called Hoeghenbury, looking for any possible help. I realize that I'm about to cross the deadliest canyon in the world. Everyone that has attempted this stunt has tragically passed, or hurt themselves badly. But I need to do this for Julie. I'm really fearing for my life... I'm risking my life right now for her. As I climb along a jagged rock, my foot barely fits in a really tight space. I just slipped! I'm barely hanging by a small rock! "Ahhhhhh!" I fall and hurt my knee really bad! I can't move! I'm getting dizzy, and my eyes are getting heavy...

(2 hours later)

Did I pass out? I have a very bitter metal-like taste in my mouth. I realize I have busted out a tooth as my mouth fills with blood. I spit it out with pure disgust! I try to call for help, but I am too weak. It doesn't seem like anyone is around to help me. I try to get up again, but my legs won't let me. I'm certain I'm going to die right here, right now.

Twenty-five minutes later, I try to stand up again. I fumble to do so, but I manage, thankfully. I slowly limp back over to the rock wall. I realize that I had indeed fallen about 50 feet. I yelled in pain as I tried to climb the wall again. My knee hurt so bad. I thought to myself about perseverance. I hummed a little chant to myself as I climbed the wall very slowly, my foot sliding every 5 steps or so.

Suddenly my foot descended! I fall another 75 feet and know I am going to die! There are too many aches, pains, and so much blood! I knew I couldn't get out of that canyon! I air-kiss my mother, and Julie goodbye, close my eyes, and go to sleep.

NARRATIVE 5-6: 2nd PLACE

8:05

By Madison Price

“Honey, time to wake up!” My mother hollered from the kitchen. “Ugg!” I grunted as I pulled the covers over my head. “Just a few more minutes mom!” “I’m making pancakes and bacon!” That shot me out of bed in a flash. My mom rarely makes breakfast since my dad walked out on the family. As I flew down the stairs I smelled the sizzling bacon and the golden, flakey, syrup covered pancakes. At my table spot I saw a heaping pile of bacon and pancakes. “Mom, you shouldn’t have!” “Oh sweetie, just hurry up and get ready for school, I’ll get the car ready.” So, I raced up the stairs and slipped on my favorite, glittery, royal blue dress. I thought that today was going to be fantastic! “Hurry, its 8:05!” my mom called from below. Once again, I raced down the stairs. My mom already had on her fuzzy, brown coat and boots on. I threw on my white cover-up and my lacey, white flats. We walked out the front door and jumped into the car. “Buckle up buttercup!” “Mom!” I groaned. “What?” she said as she cracked a smile. We drove around the bend that exited my neighborhood. Then as we were driving onto the highway, we noticed a semi-truck driving strait towards us. “Hold on” Mom screamed. It was too late. “Crash, Bang, Smash!” Then, everything went silent except for horns and hollers from people. Then, I blacked out.

“Beep, beep, beep.” My eyes fluttered open. I was lying in a hospital bed. I saw a doctor standing next to me.

“What am I doing here?” I said groggily. “Oh sweetheart, you hit your head hard in the accident.” “What accident?” I was really confused. I didn’t hear what she said next because all of the screaming, honking, and screeching came back to me. “Where is my mom?” I practically shouted. The doctor hollered for Dr. Penski and rushed out of the room. I was alone for only a couple minutes processing what just happened. The door creaked open as Dr. Penski walked in. “Elizabeth, your mother was crushed in the accident, she’s dead. I fainted.

“Elizabeth, Elizabeth!” “Huh?” “You fainted, but I have something to tell you.” “Since you don’t have a dad, a friend of mine would like to adopt you.” This was all happening way too fast. It just didn’t seem right. Dr. Penski’s friend walked in. They were the meanest looking people I have ever seen. “Wait!” I screamed at the top of my lungs. “Elizabeth, Elizabeth.” They were talking to me. “Elizabeth! Wake up!” My eyes opened. “Mom!” I gasped. “Is that really you?” “Yes, did you have a bad dream? I was trying to wake you up so we could go to the pool.” “Could I tell you about the nightmare I had on the way there please?” “Sure!” “Oh, I learned two things today; one life can change in an instant, and two risk is a part of life.”

NARRATIVE 5-6: 3rd PLACE

The Unexpected Audition

By Meera Kandambath

Hansika looked out of her bedroom window. *What a nice view*, she thought. She never really paid any attention to the view outside, because she was always playing games on her phone. She put on the bunny slippers she got for Christmas, and went downstairs to eat breakfast.

"Good morning, sleepyhead," her mom said. "I have been wanting to tell you something, and I think it is time I did."

"Uh-oh," said Hansika. "I knew you were going to tell me something from the smell of the chocolate-chip pancakes. You only make them when you are going to say something that I don't want to hear."

"Okay, well..." said her mom. "I put you on the list of auditions for the biggest show in Sunnybrook Middle School." She had a worried expression on her face when she said this.

"You did *WHAT?!*" shouted Hansika. "And without even asking me! This is not fair, and I should've gotten an earlier notice about this!"

"I'm sorry, but I thought it was a good way for you to get used to the idea of shows in school, because trust me--"

"I don't want to hear it!" Hansika shouted, interrupting her mother. "How would you feel if you were told out of the blue that

you were put on the list of auditions for the biggest show in your middle school, and especially when you were having a good day? I am not doing the audition, and you should probably figure out a way to take me off of the list, because it is not happening!" With that, she stormed up the stairs to her bedroom and slammed the door without looking back. She thought that after a while, her mother would come in to try to fix everything, but she never came.

Hansika was really hungry, so she snuck down the stairs to get her chocolate-chip pancakes. She took them upstairs to her room, and locked her door quietly. While she was downstairs, she heard her sister and her mother talking quietly, and maybe even her mother crying.

Hansika decided to just let matters go, because she knew that she should be the one crying. She opened up her laptop, and her best friend, Neeti, had been requesting a face call with Hansika.

She accepted it, and told Neeti all about the bad day she was having so far, while eating her chocolate-chip pancakes. "It's not fair, don't you agree?" she asked her friend.

"I guess so, but you probably made matters worse by storming up to your room and slamming the door like that," Neeti said.

"Great, everyone is on my mom's side, and that is not fair," said Hansika. With that, she slammed her laptop closed, and Neeti started to request a face call again, but Hansika refused to accept it. She decided to just pet her cat, Cookies, and she knew Cookies agreed with her. "At least you're on my side. Even my so-called BFF isn't," said Hansika, sadly. Then came a knock on her bedroom door, and when she opened it, her mom stood there with tears in her eyes.

"I'm so sorry, Sika. It was not right of me to give you a late notice on something really important like this," she said. "I feel like a terrible mother, but please forgive me."

"I'm sorry, too, mom," said Hansika. "I shouldn't have stormed up the stairs, and slammed my door."

Her mom looked hopeful. "Are you still going to do the audition?" she asked, filled with hope.

Hansika laughed, and her mother joined in. "I'll do it for you, mom," she said. "Just for you." She gave her mother a big hug.

After her mother left the room, Hansika made up with Neeti, and invited her to the auditions. "Come on, you're getting an invitation from a VIP contestant, Hansika Rajgopal! You have to accept it!"

Neeti laughed. "How could I avoid it when it's coming from a VIP?" Neeti said. "Of course I'll come!"

With that, Hansika had a nerve wrecking, but exciting audition, dancing through the spotlight, and even though she didn't win first place, she was really happy that she got second place! Come on, it was the biggest audition of Sunnybrook Middle School!

This proves that taking a risk once in a while pays off! If Hansika had not taken the risk, she wouldn't have landed in second place, or even experienced being a part of such an exciting event! We should all consider taking risks in our lives. That way, we would have a better perspective of failures and wins.

ESSAY 5-6: 1st PLACE

The Risk in Life

By Samantha Sjoquist

What is risk? A risk is something you take, not give. A risk is scary. Sometimes when you take a risk you like the outcome. Sometimes the outcome isn't what you had in mind.

A risk can happen at anytime, anywhere, any place. A risk can be singing in front of a large crowd, trying out a new position in soccer, or telling your crush that you like them. It can be good to take a risk because you only live once. It's like they always say, "Go big or go home."

Have you ever played truth or dare? Risk applies to that. Picking either one is a risk. Because if you pick truth you might have to tell an embarrassing secret. If you pick dare than you might have to do something weird. If that isn't risk I don't know what is.

A risk cannot be given, but they can be taken. Risks can be everywhere. They can make you make decisions and they can also test you. The question is, are you ready?

"To know what life is worth you have to risk it once in a while."- Jean-Paul Sartre

ESSAY 5-6: 2nd PLACE

Every Chance You Take

By Kaitlyn Wilhelm

What really is a risk? Is it something that always involves danger? Could this word always be the meaning to what's negative? Risks are part of life. We all take risks; choosing our life career, making the final mark on a test and this. Yes— Writing this is a risk. Thinking about what to write, how to write it, thinking about the point, if you're doing it right, and most importantly, what others will think about it. Would they find it hilarious? Would they find your writing confusing? Would they even like it?

There's always that fear in the back of your head; would everybody like it? You stress about the details and every single word that goes in to writing. Personally, I get struck in art like this. That One voice in your head telling you it's not good enough, it's not your best. Sometimes, even giving up would make you satisfied—but not happy. All in all, what you really have to know about life, it's not how others see it, it's really how you see it, or if you like it, or want to take that one risk, even when everyone tells you not to, if you want to do that risk, I think you should jump right in and just do it!

The next worry that comes to your mind may be the wrong perspective. Will they think it's funny? Will they think it's too confusing even though your words are clear as day. Or when the mood is depressing and others see it as hilarious.

There's always something to worry about. Will it be a success; success is what we're all looking for.

Success is what we all look for as writers. They will love it—A little optimism there, what if everybody loves it? Then you took the risk and made it work. Then, after all that needed stress, you'd look back and think, hey, I made it! That wasn't so bad. If everybody likes it, we grow proud of our work.

Risks are a big part of life. Not only in writing, but also in everything we do. What matters most of all is not how others judge the risk you take but how the risk creates a better you in the end. To have success in life, you have to take that risk. Like I said, if you want to, do it. If someone tells you not to, don't you even listen. That might even make you want to do it.



POETRY 7-8: 1st PLACE

They Call It Risk

By Anitvir Taunque

Knowing that you might not survive
Yet, you still strive
Leaving the comforts of your home,
For in danger you roam

Saying the hard good byes
Breathing the hard last sighs
Going to protect what you think is right
Going out of your line of sight

Doing what you know can't be done
But choosing not to run
Going against all the odds
No matter what they throw - pots, pans, sticks, or rods

Going out from the bright light
To fight your last fight
Traveling in the utter darkness
Where the situation you can't assess

They call it risk
All of its movements are brisk
It invades the comforts of your home
No matter where you roam

It can stop the bravest of the brave
It can serve as a reminder of the grave
But...Without it, there is no prize
And with it, you can reach the skies

Going where you may not survive
Yet you try your best to strive
Forcing you to leave the comforts of your home
For in endless danger you roam

They Call It Risk



POETRY 7-8: 2nd PLACE

My Voice

By Allison Reed

I whisper in the crowd.
I shout in an empty room.
I get lost in the quiet.
And cower in noise.

I took a risk.

The sound of my voice echoes in my ear.
The power of my words shakes up a storm.
The eyes of the strangers burn in my brain.
The beating of my heart is leaping in my chest.

I took a risk.

I spoke.
I screamed.
I said my piece.
What will the people make of me?

The people close in,
Breathing down my neck
I shake, I convulse,
But only in my brain.
My composure is stellar.
My voice is loud,
The shock registers in the crowd.

I took a risk.

What am I saying?

Who is this?

This is my voice.

I have traveled long and far to share my piece.

I have spoken.

There is no peace.

A riot is beginning.

Anger shows in their eyes.

Change is good,

I try to speak.

I have spoken.

I said my words.

My risk was made.

What will happen?

POETRY 7-8: 3rd PLACE

Life is What You Make of It

By Caroline Batt

Life is all a game...

And no one is to blame.

No risk, no reward in order to conquer the prize.

For which I surmise...

To achieve success, I study and try

It isn't always easy, I can't deny.

The golden ticket comes to those that gain

the ups and downs and significant pain.

Giving life a chance and hungry for more

yet losing it all in the final score.

A love no more and suddenly its goodbye

Feeling like you want to break down and cry.

However, the moments of adversity and strife

Can lead you to live a better life.



NARRATIVE 7-8: 1st PLACE

Every Single Day

By Daniel Moftakhar

6:00 am

I am so tired. I literally can't move. Why is this alarm so loud? 20 more minutes is fine, right? Sure...

6:20 am

No. No. No. No. That was not enough. Go get ready for school. Remember when you did this last time? No breakfast, you were in a rush and you were grumpy ALL day. Fine...Or I could just lie here for another five minutes. Just rest my eyes for a few more minutes.

6:53 am

Wait. What year is it? What time is it? Oh god! Not again! "YEAH MOM I KNOW, I'M GETTING READY!!" I don't want to go to school. I don't want to go to school. I don't--no time to complain! Alright, pants, shirt, shoes. Wrong foot, idiot. Teeth. Go brush your teeth. No time to pee, don't even think about that right now. "I'M COMING!" Where in the world is my homework?? Shoot there's the bus! Time to run! "Bye mom! Love you!"

12:13 pm

Lunch time! That stomach grumbling is what I get for risking the extra sleep. Okay focus and put the right combo in or else you're going to be last in line. 22...3...oh my gosh. Look at her

go. God she's so cute and her laugh is so funny! Should I go say something? What if I embarrass myself again? I don't want to risk it. I should risk it. No. I'm gonna do it! "Hey Sara!" stop waving like that you creep. "Hi Kevin." Kevin?? Does she not know my name? Oh, my God. I thought... never mind.

2:21 pm

Ugh. I don't want to go to soccer practice. I just want to go home and sleep. Stupid Kevin. I should just go. Dad would be so mad if I skipped, I don't want to risk getting grounded again. Ughhhh. Stupid shin guards. Stupid cleats. Stupid ball.

10:57 pm

FINALLY done with my homework. That 3 hour Netflix break probably didn't help. Whatever, it was fun. I should call Yas, right? I didn't yesterday and she'll start thinking she's not my favorite sister. But it's late and I'm tired. Yea...she'll be fine. I don't want to risk another day of accidentally sleeping in. I can just talk to her tomorrow.

11:35 pm

Oh, my God.

Get ahold of yourself. She's.... she's...Yas.... She fell asleep while driving home from the hospital. I should've called. I could've made sure she stayed awake while she drove. I'm so selfish! All because I wanted to sleep? I couldn't just talk to her for 30 minutes? What if she doesn't make it?

Every single day, we take risks. Some of them can seem small and insignificant but sometimes they have life altering consequences. Taking a risk doesn't have to mean going cliff diving or completely stepping out of your comfort zone, it's simply making a choice that can impact either the next five minutes or the rest of your life.



NARRATIVE 7-8: 2nd PLACE

The Final Wave

By Allison Reed

The thoughts drown me; pulling me down and hooking my feet to the bottom. I can't keep my head above the water. Exhaustion nips at my brain but the adrenaline screams at my body. Sleep will never come.

I sob. The deep ugly sob that makes you hiccup until you feel as though you'll vomit. I shake. The fierce stabs as waves of pain pull you under. I die. My fragile heart tears into tiny pieces.

The hot tears stream down my face, to my lips, and down my throat.

I can see their cruel faces dancing in the dark taunting at my meek, small, worthless body.

NO!

I can't think about this, I need to stop. But the memories still come of the pushing, shoving, and words.

Sticks and stone may break my bones, but words will never hurt me. Not. True. Words hurt, scar, and leave wounds all the way down to my soul!

Depression:

Noun

1. A feeling of severe despondency and dejection.

It's a terrible thing. I am nothing. I am useless. I am weight. Worst of all, I want it gone.

That's the worst thought. The one that screams, shouts, and bangs inside my head. It's a tiring fight. Always trying to repress the thought and only letting small waves hit.

My cell phone buzzes as the insults come in and the hurricane hits. I can already predict what they say. I lay in my bed curled in a tight ball hoping it would shield me from the world.

Don't let it get to you, I tell myself. "Tell someone" is what they say to you. That would make me a coward, I can fight this fight alone.

The ache inside my chest is so deep. It's the deep raw ache that will never completely leave. It can only fade.

Death. Death. Death.

Easy. Easy. Easy.

Gone. Gone. Gone.

All the ways to die.

I almost did.

So close.

Then the screaming and the chest compressions and my mom crying over me.

Then the darkness.

12 AM

1 AM

2 AM

3 AM

All the ways. Hundreds.

Mom and Dad,

I'm Sorry. I couldn't take it. I couldn't hold on.

-Daughter.

The knot slits around my throat. I know it will hold. I hear nothing. I see nothing. I feel nothing.

I push the chair back.

That knot tightens.

I can feel it now. I can feel it all.

The pain is sharp into my neck waking me up from the desperate daze.

The pain is also in my heart as I say goodbye and the wave takes me down under. The pain is loud. I struggle to resurface and to touch the safe ground of Earth.

I know no one will save me this time.

What a risk.

NARRATIVE 7-8: 3rd PLACE

Risk

By Claudia Meador

It was the winter of 2015 and I was in the last class of the school day. I've been waiting and sometimes dreading today. Basketball tryouts. All week I've been getting more and more nervous. My friends were so excited to try out and that I was trying out alongside them. I could already tell that tryouts were not going to be easy. The moment I heard the bell ring, I slowly went to my locker, packed up my homework, and changed into my basketball attire. I inhaled slowly, trying to calm my nerves. I exhaled slower, wishing that some in some way, tryouts were going to be cancelled today. My wish didn't come true.

I met up with my friends, and walked down the stairs and went to the cafeteria. I had fifty minutes before I had to go to tryouts so I did my homework and talked to my friends who also were trying out. They were all talking about positions they want to play. I didn't understand some of the things they were saying. Anxiety. Fear of humiliation. For once I wished for study tables to go by slowly. Before I knew it, the ladies in charge of study tables dismissed us to go to the gym. My friends dragged me into the locker room and then into the gym.

The moment I walked through the gym door, all I could hear was loud dribbling. I looked over to see the 8th graders playing rather aggressively. I hoped that the seventh graders didn't have to play alongside the eighth graders. I saw

a group of my friends grab a ball and started walking towards one of the six hoops. I followed. I watched my friends play, and they were pretty good. I could tell that they had a good chance of making the team. A sharp, high pitch noise filled the air, a whistle. The coach then told us to all come up so he could talk to us. I was considering faking an injury and calling my mom.

All of us, seventh and eighth graders combined, were told to line up in a straight line and be randomly picked into a team of five players. We started to play a game against the other team. I was so nervous and before I knew it, one of the eighth graders passed me the ball. I started to run, dribbling the best I could, and then something hard knocked me over, onto the floor. Some eighth grader grabbed the ball from me and scored for her team. I got up slowly, hoping the coach wasn't paying attention to my game.

Later the cuts were being made. We were all assigned a number. The coach read off three numbers and one of them was my number. The coach pulled me aside and told me I was cut. Even though I was disappointed in myself, I thought it was worth the risk to try out.

ESSAY 7-8: 1st PLACE

What Really Are Risks?

By Dana Shi

There are many different definitions for the word “risk”. Just one four-letter word has seven different definitions total in the Merriam Webster dictionary. If you’re curious, look them up. You will find that even with seven different definitions, the words chance/ possibility, loss, and hazard keep repeating. So, we could conclude that the general definition of risk is the chance of losing something or being in hazard. But, is that definition really accurate? Does it tell the whole truth of what risks are?

When most people think of the word “risk” they think of something bad and dangerous. But is that really true? In life, every one of us has taken enough risks that we don’t really even think about them anymore. Think about this, have you ever had a big test in a truly boring subject, and you didn’t study, saying to yourself that you will just take a chance at it. That’s a risk that you are taking, you could get a really bad grade on the test, but because of your boredom or unwillingness, you are willing to take the risk. There is almost always a certain drive to take a certain risk. You don’t just think to yourself one day that you will go skydive without any reason. There must be a reason behind it, even if it subconscious. But, like many many other words, this word also brings many different thoughts and emotions for each individual. “Risk”—what do you think about when this word is

mentioned? Does it bring you feelings of fear, excitement, challenge, or something else?

Taking risks can also make you feel more connected to your human emotions. Without taking any risks in life, it would be genuinely boring. There would be no excitement in thinking about the possibility of what might happen. No emotions of fear, anxiety, and other feelings that are completely human. The emotions that show us what kind of person we really are. In turn, when we take a chance of losing something, it might as well be a self-discovery of sorts.

Taking risks is a part of life. One risk, one decision might lead us down a different path than the one that was planned. Risks can change us. They are also a part of us. Without the risks that we take, we wouldn't be the same people that we are. Whether it's a small risk or a big one, we will always be taking risks, even when it seems like you've logically thought through about it. It's just a part of life. It's something that will be happening lifelong. Doesn't make sense now that there are so many different definitions for the four-letter word "risk" just in the Merriam Webster dictionary?



ESSAY 7-8: 2nd PLACE

Jobs at Risk

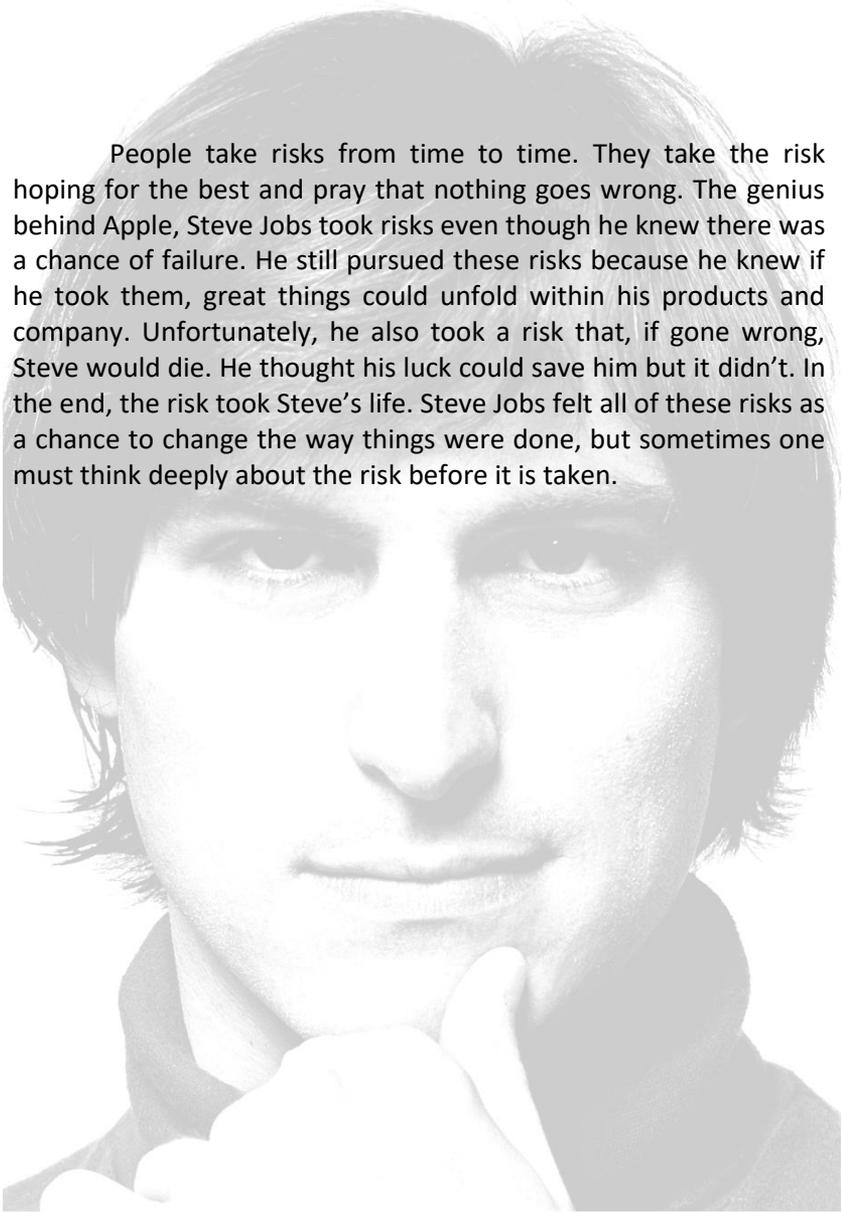
By Supreeth Koppula

Many people take risks in their life. A risk is something that has a chance of going bad. Those who take risks overlook the possible negative outcome and pursue the good things that could happen. A man who did this is the well-known co-founder of Apple, Steve Jobs. He took risks which led to greater developments of his products but also took a risk which tragically affected him.

Steve Jobs took many risks building the Apple Macintosh. Steve and his crew changed many things at the last moment before the day of their big presentation of their new innovation of the computer. Many people back in the 80's didn't see the purpose of having a personal computer in their home. They all thought it was a waste of money and space. Steve and his crew took the risk of making the computer very high-tech and modern to impress the people.

Not only did Steve take risks in his work, he took a major risk in his own life. Towards the early 2000's, Steve was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The doctors said it wasn't too serious but they needed to do surgery to remove his tumor. His friends and family begged him to take the operation but he simply replied, "I don't want my body to be cut open." Steve tried other methods such as dieting and taking vitamins. A year after no successful attempts of clearing his cancer, Steve decided to finally take the operation, but by that time it was too late. A few years after this, Steve left everything behind and died only at age 56.

People take risks from time to time. They take the risk hoping for the best and pray that nothing goes wrong. The genius behind Apple, Steve Jobs took risks even though he knew there was a chance of failure. He still pursued these risks because he knew if he took them, great things could unfold within his products and company. Unfortunately, he also took a risk that, if gone wrong, Steve would die. He thought his luck could save him but it didn't. In the end, the risk took Steve's life. Steve Jobs felt all of these risks as a chance to change the way things were done, but sometimes one must think deeply about the risk before it is taken.



ESSAY 7-8: 3rd PLACE

Risk

By Caitlyn DiFillipo

Is risk a good or bad thing? Risk can be interpreted in different ways. Some people immediately think of a possibility to get injured physically or emotionally. Others think of it as a chance for something. It all comes down to the situation to determine whether risk is good or bad. I had risk in my life when my family moved to Ohio, I tried out for the Hopewell Junior School tennis team, and when I bought items from the dollar store.

My family moved to Ohio from Maine because my mom was offered a job here. We were not guaranteed anything else. We took risks of not liking it here, not finding a house to live in that fit all our priorities as a family, and not seeing our relatives that live back in Maine. Luckily, we came out of the situation with a house to live in, seeing relatives a few times a year, and we liked all the opportunities that Ohio had to offer. This situation was risky but I believe it was well worth the risk.

Towards the end of sixth grade, I was made aware that Hopewell Junior School had a tennis team. I wanted to try out for it but I hadn't played tennis in about four years. I talked with my dad about it because he played tennis in high school and he tried to convince me to go out for the cross-country team instead. I was not feeling right about running for the cross-country team so I convinced my dad to help me practice to make the tennis team. I was willing to take a risk

for doing something I liked but wasn't necessarily good at. I worked extremely hard and got frustrated at times, but I ended up making the team and I could not have been happier about my choice to risk not making the tennis team.

As you may know, dollar store products are not the most reliable. Sometimes when you buy a product, it does not work as it is supposed to. When I buy products such as markers I risk paying money and the markers being all dried out. If you buy makeup from the dollar store, the products are not always the best quality and often do not work. If you buy makeup products, you also risk the products not working and that would be a waste of a dollar. If the product does end up working, it is worth the money.

When you are in a situation and you do not know whether to take the risk, you want to end up making sure whatever you did was worth the risk. Obviously, the situation you are in plays a factor in how your mind is functioning, but you should still think clearly and make sure you are not making any mistakes. One of the worst things in life you can feel is regret.

POETRY 9-12: 1st PLACE

Risk

By Emma Jack

There once stood a daunting figure,
Sparking hearts to pound and flitter.

He confused his foes
So, they would never know
He sought to end adventure.

With hope opponents came
To save Adventure's name.
The one they knew could give
Them a new place to live,
Outside the town of Same.

But this creature puts a mist
Over hopes his foes have kissed.
They're searching so they find
What they've dreamt of in their mind,
But they're stopped by daunting Risk.

"Is Risk worth all I have?
Could it really be that bad
To stay with all I know?
Or should I get up and go?"
Are questions many asked.

Some gave in to fear of Risk.
Others could indeed resist.
But those who conquered
Became much stronger
In taking opportunities most miss.

What could be so wrong
With ignoring one so strong?
He does no other harm
As long as no alarm
Has say in Constant's song.

Safety lives in Same and Known,
Where Adventure has no home.
Given chance for greater power,
Fighting in some reckless hours,
Whose victory would be shown?

Life teaches of Safety's peace,
Mentioning Risk as a horrid beast.
But if we change our view
To see something brand new,
Risk is Life's missing puzzle piece.

POETRY 9-12: 2nd PLACE

Onward!

By Shannon Pullyblank

Why do we all so boldly venture forth?
Is it to quench a raging thirst inside?
Why do we charge to West or South or North?
Why do we seek to conquer, not to hide?

For we go forth not without sacrifice;
Adventurers who risk face fear each day.
Perhaps we think the end is worth the price
To plant the flag and cry "I know the way!"

As humans we all long to make our mark
From ocean depths up to the lonely moon.
Perhaps what draws us to the deep and dark
Is that we leave this planet all too soon.

So onward! To the world which we create
To live out the adventures that await.

POETRY 9-12: 3rd PLACE

Conquer

By McKinley Addington

She steps over the edge,
Fearing not what lies beneath her,
Where her soul will go.
How her life will end.
And so she fell, but she fell up.
Through the stars until she reached the Heavens
Nothing had stopped her because the sky was not a limit for
her
She had no limit for herself in life
Fear failed to drag her down and bravery carried her high
Her life was an endless array of peril and possibilities
An enigma she attempted to solve day after day
Though it had no meaning she was millimeters from her
admittance to heaven
Praying she could reach a little further
We all have our own worlds to conquer
And she had risked everything to conquer her own

NARRATIVE 9-12: 1st PLACE

Ignite

By Tyson Jung

Me, a child. It is a risk to follow my parents out to the garage where they have a smoke. Who knows what mood they'll reside in, what temperament will be shaken loose from its cage by me and my persistent annoyance? Late at night, they don't talk much, merely fighting the eye-rolls as I pour the stories of today onto them. Early in the morning, tiredness is with them as well, although it is a hopeless kind of tired. They had just come from the sanctity sleep; they were not about to enter it. After school, it varies. Before dinner, my mom is enthusiastic, eager. Before dinner, my dad is run-down, unwilling. Burdensome, I know, is a conversation with me.

During these spouts of self-reflection, I ramble about music, art, school, life. Yet they know all there is to all these things, and they keep their knowledge from me, I suppose. I can talk about one incident, a minor calamity, surpassing twenty minutes; at that point, my traditionally-silent father will pipe up, just to tell me to pipe down. "We're trying to have peace and quiet, here," he says in between ashing the stick between his fingers. So many die here, I think.

“I understand,” I say, lying; “but this one kid today...”

Yes, I used to be talkative. Now, not anymore, for the stories and the self-reflections are no longer from a golden age in my life, but from a tarnished, rusted, depth. No, I cannot ramble about my teetering sagacity. I am just as tired for you, father, yearning for the time machine to breakfast that sleep provides, yearning for the security of a distorted reality that reams evoke... yearning for a life so out of reach in this dark, dank, depth.

The smoking garage, the cigarette graveyard, bears no more burdensome conversation. Don't worry, mom and dad; I am old enough now to internalize, old enough to realize the quietest ones have the loudest minds. I wonder, as you two sit in silence, wire-thin smoke plumes an eye fixation, what your minds are saying. For no words are spoken there, no. It is a cemetery of addiction. Perhaps, also, it is the resting place of my fragile youth.

NARRATIVE 9-12: 2nd PLACE

Audition

By McKinley Addington

My hands shook as I took my flute from its case. I was already sweating profusely and my directors hadn't even walked into the room yet. All the other flute players are frantically playing scales and practicing their solos before the audition officially began. I took out my lucky Adventure Time mug and tried to drink some water to get rid of the desert in my throat. I didn't know why I was so nervous. I tried to tell myself that it's just a school band audition, no big deal, but for some reason it means so much more to me. I had felt music and it lived inside of me. I wanted to keep it alive and the anxiety and fear I felt in that moment was something I was willing to weather. The directors finally walked in. They sat down at a grey plastic table in front of us all and took out a huge binder and all their pens to write down our scores. I had spent so much time preparing for this day, March 23, but I still couldn't untie the knots that were forming in my stomach. I had finally recognized my love for music in the past year, especially during the marching band season. I was taking lessons and practicing and I wanted them to know how hard I had been working. I came back to my senses when they started handing out the audition forms. We had to print our name, instrument, whether we were in marching band, and any other musical accomplishments we could think of. I didn't fill up that extra space very much, and it made me nervous. I asked myself if I was good enough because I didn't take a solo

to Solo & Ensemble, I didn't make the cut for Honor Band, and most of all I don't think I valued my skills much either. After all the shuffling of paper and movement had ceased the directors asked us who wanted to go first. The one word everyone at the audition dreaded, "first." No one ever wanted to be first, but thank God school band is built off of tradition. The tradition in the flute section was that the next first chair player in Symphonic Winds, our highest band, would always go first during auditions. The downside, however, was that the next first chair player was always amazingly talented and tried to scare the underclassmen through intimidation. Our directors would ask you to play two random scales and a chromatic scale then your prepared piece. The first chair flute played Vivaldi's "Winter" and let me tell you, it is an incredibly fast tempo but beautiful piece of music. You could hear when someone was nervous. Their voice was quiet, breath hitched, and tone shaky as they played. I sympathized with these people, most of them freshmen. Everyone was nervous, but it depended on how well you could hide it when you played. I listened as long as I could before I accidentally made eye contact with one of my directors, and they chose me. The moment I had been dreading finally came and I embraced it. I walked up to them and put my audition form on the table and headed back to my chair. The directors always tried to lighten the mood by asking the next performer a silly question before they played, another tradition I enjoyed. They asked me what was my favorite word or phrase. Naturally, my thoughts were slightly improper and I asked if my word had to be school appropriate. They laughed and I felt a sense of accomplishment already, but now I actually had to play. They asked me to play my Ab and D scales. I played them with no

mistake, and the D scale double octave. The term double octave may not make sense to those uninvolved in music but playing double octave shows a higher level of skill and sounds impressive. Likewise, with my chromatic scale, I played it well and made no mistake. Lastly, my prepared solo. I had been working with my lessons teacher Mrs. Pease on this solo since February. I was playing Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 1 in G Major. The piece was beautiful and elegant, I had to do it justice. I had been practicing for this moment for so long and I was ready. I raised my flute to my face and positioned my fingers for the first note. I inhaled deeply. And I played it seamlessly. My notes rung out with emotion as I displayed my desire and passion through my music. I took a risk. I had poured myself into band and I was not guaranteed the payoff I wanted. I had taken the chance and I may not be put in Symphonic Winds. I may not be the best player. I don't have the most talent or the best tone. But I love it and have a passion for music and nothing could hold me back from doing what I loved. I think that's worth the risk.

NARRATIVE 9-12: 3rd PLACE

Resilient Through Risk

By Eva Due

This is it, “Great Miami Crew, add pressure”, and within twenty strokes, I am in the midst of one of the most rewarding experiences of my life this far. It is a cloudy day in Boston, Massachusetts, and I am racing in the 52nd annual Head of the Charles Regatta, the largest rowing event in the world.

Soon enough we are 500 meters into the 5,000 meter race, the boat is moving almost as fast as my heart is beating. I am in stroke seat, setting the pace and rhythm for the three girls behind me in whom I have full confidence. With every stroke, it becomes clearer how we got here.

I am using every muscle in my body to push this boat, and so is the girl behind me, following my every stroke. Payton, my best friend of three years, is my pair partner in the boat. My prior failure against Payton freshman year led me here. Our novice season of rowing, Payton and I were not working for a common goal; we were competing against each other for the last spot in a boat with a plethora of potential. Our coach had us seat racing for weeks, a method used in rowing to determine which of two individuals is the most valuable in a race. I thought that if I worked for it and wanted it enough it would fall in my lap, but this wasn't the case. Payton got the seat in the boat and I was devastated but

proud of my best friend. After my loss against Payton I started paying more attention to our team's fastest rowers, studying them in hopes of becoming more like them. What I learned was that they were passionate, hard working, and resilient, all attributes that I was ready to commit to. I knew that by dedicating myself like they did, I was at risk of a second failure, but that was a risk I was willing to take.

Over the next few years, I worked even harder, and learned how to use Payton's strength as motivation to get stronger, rather than an excuse to be weak. Little did I know, that in 2016, the two of us would be racing together, pushing together, and succeeding together, a dream come true.

Junior year my coach announced that four girls and one coxswain from our homegrown team would compete to attend The Head of the Charles. A new determination came over me. From the minute that it was announced, I knew that I wanted to be in that boat. After weeks of what seemed to be never-ending competition for the spot, my coach announced the lineup. Not only did I make the boat, but my coach had awarded me stroke seat, a position of influence and leadership.

We now have 500 meters left of this race; Payton is behind me rowing her heart out. 250 meters left, we are sprinting, and I now know how we got here. It was losing that seat race that gave me the passion to work harder. It was the bond that I made with these girls that mended my heart, each and every time I lost a seat race or felt weak. Rowing has taught me a great deal about success, but it has taught me even more about failure, how to recover from it, and how to take risks. Every day that I don't give my full effort in everything I do, I fail. I owe it to myself to try. Never again will I let an opportunity pass me by because I am afraid to fail.

Since that day, I stopped waiting for things to fall into my lap, I stood up and started working for my goals, knowing that I was at risk of failing. I now hear the air horn go off, indicating that we have crossed the finish line, having raced 5,000 meters down the Charles River. I now know how I got here.



ESSAY 9-12: 1st PLACE

Risk

By Sarah Wilson

Life isn't about walking on a concrete sidewalk or drawing in the lines. It's about jumping where there is nobody standing to catch you and learning how to catch yourself. Fall off of a tight rope, dust yourself off, and find a rope that better fits you. Find solace in the fact that you are something that nobody else can be; you. At times you will waltz, at others you will stumble, but one thing remains constant; the value of your being. Run with cheetahs, graze with zebras, and return to your niche so neatly kept in place. Dance in the danger zone, skip in your safe place, and find where you feel most at home. There is no guaranteed success; you must fight to win any battle. Wars are not won by simple desire, but by those who bleed and put their weakness aside. This world is not one for weakness, so trade it in for strength. Chances are not often given twice, so take advantage of the moment in front of you and grasp it with both hands. If it happens to slip through, there will always be more opportunities. Never allow yourself to regret; only allow yourself to reminisce on moments when you took a risk that built you into a stronger person. Every occasion has its purpose; don't let yours slip away out of purposeless fear.

ESSAY 9-12: 2nd PLACE

RISK...a synonym for Opportunity!

By Alex Smith

Risk is unavoidable in life. If you are alive, every moment is a risk, as every moment is filled with choices. And each choice taken has two possible outcomes: goal achieved or goal not achieved. These choices can be very simple with totally irrelevant consequences, such as do I drink milk or orange juice this morning. Or momentary choices can be very simple, yet present life altering outcomes, such as do I try to make this green light or not. However, the ultimate choice—the ultimate risk—was expressed by Hamlet, “To be, or not to be, that is the question.”

Now, certainly Hamlet as taken in context, had unquestionable anxiety driving his approach to risk. Should he “suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune”, or “...die, to sleep—no more—and by a sleep to say we end the heartache”. I, however, believe the important question of “to be or not to be” is the defining question in one’s mind when approaching all levels of risk with one’s lifetime of choices. Do I maintain my GPA, score as high as I can on the ACT, train hard to excel on the varsity track team...and use my part time guitar hobby to try and turn myself into a rock star!?

Yes, a rock star! After all, who would Bob Dylan be today, had he not faced risk head-on and made a conscious

choice to try and transform himself into a rock star? Well, he would simply be Robert Zimmerman and maybe be employed in the local bookstore in Hibbing, Minnesota. Of course, he might be living a very fulfilling and wonderful life in this alternate universe...but that's not the risk he chose to take and not the action he pursued, with no assurance of the outcome.

In 2015, I chose to take this same risk--I chose to try my own hand at rock stardom. With the advances in modern technology, I had an understanding that this venture was entirely within my grasp. I'd taught myself guitar at age 13; I understand computer software easily, hence knew I could grasp recording/mixing/mastering technology; and I knew it would take just as much work as it did talent. So, I took a dream and proactively turned that dream into a tangible thing—it became a risk I opted to take head-on, it became an opportunity that I created for myself! Do I just dream forever...or do I lay out my action plan, set myself deadlines, research all that I can about the music industry, and write, record, and produce my own music album? I chose the latter! Here's what I did:

1. co-wrote music and lyrics with my dad
2. played all instruments
3. upgraded second-hand, used laptop with new RAM and hard drive to support recording (in basement)
4. learned digital recording software and how to use a digital audio workstation
5. recorded all tracks
6. learned how to “mix” and “master”

7. started my own label company, Darlar Productions LLC, to publish my album
8. copyrighted all songs
9. registered all songs with multiple recording artists agencies, for royalties
10. learned open source code (and free) “WordPress” to set up my own webpage:
www.thealexsmithband.com
11. constructed my own “green screen” and lighting for filming my music videos (in basement)
12. filmed and produced music videos using open source code (and free) CGI software, Blender

The net result? My music album was released for sale on I-Tunes, Google Play, Amazon, and CD Baby on Dec. 20, 2016. (I would like to highlight that any profits I might make on two songs, *Aylan & Aylan Died*, will be donated to *Doctors Without Borders*.) And guess what--so far, I’ve made it onto the air (radio) in Chicago, Olympia, St. Louis, Portland, Providence, Calgary, Montreal, Hamilton (Ontario), and San Diego! But, unfortunately no radio airplay in Cincinnati...yet.

Was this a risk? Not with earth shattering consequences, no, but certainly a path fraught with failure as one of the potential outcomes. Was it an opportunity? Certainly, it was! It was an opportunity I created for myself and chose to pursue, with still no clear indication of the ultimate conclusion. Will I be a “rock star”?maybe! 😊

ESSAY 9-12: 3rd PLACE

Risk

By Isabella Curcio

What is a good definition of risk? How do you describe something you would consider risky? As kids our parents keep us far away from danger because they don't want us to risk getting hurt or sick. Risk is an everyday thing, people risk their lives and jobs by just simply mailing a letter or not looking both ways. At midst of all this there are some people who live their lives at risk every day for the fun of it or for something they love for example, Jane Wicker.

Jane Wicker risked her life every day to do her passion, wing walking. She applied for a job as wing walker at the Flying Circus in Bealeton Virginia in 1990. She learned how to walk on an airplane while it was flying. She trained very hard for her passion and even though it was extremely dangerous she continued to do it because she loved it. Jane Wicker died in an accident at the Vectren Dayton Air Show. The plane she was walking on took a fatal plunge and exploded at direct contact to the ground around 12:45 pm. She and the pilot were pronounced dead.

People take risks every day for their hobbies and for the things they love. Jane Wicker's story shows that even though she had a chance of losing her life she continued to do the thing she loved most. Sometimes taking a risk in life is worth the chance of losing something and can give you opportunities to find what's important to you.

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- Lakota Classroom Teachers
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About LEADS

Lakota's Enrichment and Academic Development of Students (LEADS) is primarily aimed at the parents of children identified as gifted, but welcome ALL families in the Lakota School District.

LEADS mission is to identify, provide and/or sponsor enriching academic and social opportunities for students of the District.

www.lakotaleads.org



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