

# The Write Challenge Anthology

Spring 2013

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# Mistakes...

This year's Lakota LEADS Write Challenge theme is about mistakes. Making mistakes, learning from mistakes, admitting mistakes...all part of growing as a person. And mistakes can take on many forms:

1. an error in action, calculation, opinion, or judgment caused by poor reasoning, carelessness, insufficient knowledge
2. a misunderstanding or misconception
3. to regard or identify wrongly as something or someone else
4. to choose badly or incorrectly

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***POETRY K-2: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

**Everyone Makes Mistakes**

**By Ava Wallace, Grade 2**

There once was a boy who made a lot of mistakes  
Like the time when he put vinegar in his cake  
He felt so bad about all he had done  
So he left his home and went on the run  
Until he realized that everyone makes mistakes

***POETRY K-2: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

**Small, It Started**

**By Sarthak Dighe, Grade 2**

I made a mistake  
To not use a rake  
To do the task at hand.  
Now I have to roll up my sleeves  
One by one I pick up the leaves  
While my sister grins and then sleeps.

They blew all over the yard  
Jumping and leaping  
It made the job hard  
To stop them from creeping

It went everywhere!  
On the driveway and the street  
Then it started raining  
And formed an icy sheet

Now I have to wait till tomorrow  
To clean up the mess I made  
I have to miss the game, what a sorrow  
Oh, how I wish I had used the rake!

***POETRY K-2: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

**Mistakes**

**By Haylie Yeazell, Grade K**

I wish I never made mistakes

they always make me feel sad.

Mistakes scare me like snakes

because they make me seem bad.

My parents said mistakes can be good

because they can help you learn.

Like one day when forgot my hood

and my ears started to burn.



**always  
make new  
mistakes**

**(esther dyson)**

## **ESSAY/STORY K-2: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE**

### **Wrong Way Flight**

**By Jack Donovan Sweeten, Grade 2**

In Canada there were some geese. It was around fall and everything was getting cold. The geese were about to migrate! Every year Uncle Goose chose their leader. He said, "Reggie, you are the leader." And Reggie said, "What? Wha...?" Uncle Goose said, "You're the leader!" Reggie said, "Aw yeah, that's cool. I gotta go to sleep. Wait. Wait. Wait! What did you just say??!" Uncle goose said, "For the third time, Reggie, YOU are our LEADER!"

Later on, Reggie said, "Well, I'd better practice. Where is George? He knows north, south, east and west. He can help me practice!" Then out of nowhere, George tapped Reggie on the back. "We can get started, Reggie!" Reggie Said, "Ahhh. Geeze!"

A few weeks later, Reggie knew all his directions, but he forgot to have a practice flight. The next morning Uncle Goose shouted, "It's time! Get in your positions! Reggie, you are first!" He made all the geese line up in a "V" for takeoff. George was last, right next to Max, the pessimistic goose. They got ready for takeoff. All of the geese started running with their webbed feet, flapping their wings, and, with a loud "**hoooook**", they took off!

Since Reggie did not practice his flight, he went the wrong way. Instead of south, he went north. Nobody else noticed it

either, though. Five hours later, George started to notice something wrong. He started to think, "Wow! The south should be warmer than this." That's when he noticed that Reggie was flying the wrong way! George tried to get Reggie's attention by shouting. "Hooooonk! Hooooonk! You're going the wrong way! Hooooonk!" But Reggie did not hear him. Then Max, the pessimistic goose, finally spoke up, "Do you really think he can hear that? I mean, we are in the back. Duh."

Reggie said to himself, "We should have gotten to the south by now. Wait a minute! We are not even close to the south, we're in the north! I must land and tell George." Just as soon as he spotted a place to land, Reggie brought the team to a halt. Then Uncle Goose, right in front of George said, "Why did Reggie land us here? I mean, we're not even close to the south!" Then George ran as fast as his little webbed feet could carry him. "Reggie, Reggie, Reggie! We went the wrong way!" Reggie said, "I know we did. I forgot to do the practice flight. What do we do now, George? We've run out of time to fly down there in time." Just then, Max spotted a subway train. The conductor yelled, "All aboard for a trip to the south!" Reggie said, "I think that's our ticket out of here!"

Soon they were all in Florida enjoying sunny days. Reggie knew that next time he had to take a practice flight before leading the team, in case he was every chosen to be the leader again!

***ESSAY/STORY K-2: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

**Mistakes**

**By Sunitvir Taunque, Grade 1**

People make mistakes sometimes. Some people might feel bad when they make mistakes. But the best thing to do is to learn from them. When you learn from your mistakes, you don't do them again. If it happens with your friend, then say sorry. Just learn from it and do not repeat that mistake. Your friend will like you again. Mistakes are an important part of our lives. So don't be afraid to make mistakes, because if you learn from them they will make you a better person.

***ESSAY/STORY K-2: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

**Eye † made a BIG mistake!**

**By Andrew Willits, Grade 1**

In the car I told Mommy that I started seeing double and blurry. So she took me to the doctor because my eyes were red.

The doctor checked my eyesight. She drew a triangle and I drew ten triangles. Then she drew an "O" and I drew two "O's." So Mom took me to the hospital so the doctor could check my eyes, too.

My Mom believed me because some people who lose their hearing like me may lose their eyesight, too.

I didn't tell the truth until two weeks later. I told my Mom that I got the idea from a book.

I had to pay \$120 because that is how much it costs for the emergency room and doctor visits. It took me eight months!!!

## ***POETRY 3-4: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **The Monstrous Mistake**

**By Sam Shumpert, Grade 4**

I love to eat ice cream but I hate to do chores!  
Why should a 10 year old know how to clean floors?  
Chores take too long sometimes the whole day.  
I just want to eat ice cream and then go play.  
While cleaning my room I discover  
my chemistry set under the cover.  
“I can make ice cream!” I said to myself,  
As I opened the box with great stealth.  
A little of this, a ton of that  
this gray stuff is neat it matches my cat.  
Then, right before my eyes  
I saw a puff of smoke rise!  
I created a monster who spoke several words,  
most of which I’d never heard!  
He started to eat everything in sight.  
He kept on eating day and night.  
“You do my chores and I’ll give you food.  
That will put us both in a good mood!”  
So he did my laundry and picked up my socks,  
and for his reward I fed him rocks.  
He took out the trash and cleaned my room.

To my surprise, he was good with the broom.  
My chores got done but he needed to eat  
we were running out of food—especially meat!  
I’m sure to get caught – this is a mistake!  
What in the world did I make?  
There’s one thing to do to make it right –  
reverse the chemicals – I did it that night!  
Next thing I knew he disappeared with a boom –  
Thank goodness the noise was just in my room!  
I heard my mom come up the stairs.  
I cleaned up the mess with raised hairs.  
I finished the chores that were left to be done,  
then Mom walked in and said “Wow, my son!”  
Days wet by and I did my own chores,  
to my surprise, I wasn’t even bored!  
My feelings about chores turned out to be wrong,  
I’d rather do them myself than gather food all day long.

***POETRY 3-4: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

**Miss Takes**

**By Luke Eagle, Grade 3**

My name is Miss Takes and my students don't make mistakes.

They talk and mumble, be loud and grumble, but the never  
make mistakes

Now, my students may whine and bicker, laugh and snicker.

And I don't like it when I get hit in the eye,

With a spitball from the sky.

Also my best student takes special classes,

and almost never passes.

I'm Miss Takes and my students don't make mistakes.

***POETRY 3-4: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

**Keep Performing**

**By Caroline Batt, Grade 4**

Practice makes perfect is what they say

I practice my baton twirling with determination each day

Now it is time for the competition show

My coach gives me a nod and it is time for me to go

The routine starts out good but my baton starts rolling away

I want to stop the performance but there is no going back  
today

I can't give up now, I think for awhile

So I put my best foot forward and show my winning smile

Just keep my performance face on and leave the mistakes on  
the floor

My performance is over and I head to the door

Practice makes perfect is what they say

Keep moving forward and don't let mistakes get in the way



## ESSAY 3-4: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE

### Hammy's Friendship Super Powers

#### By Marleigh Winterbottom, Grade 3

It was Friday morning again and everyone sat down after the long, long, long Spring Break! But as always, I was sitting in my cage watching sit-still-Sara Stevenston and raise-your hand-Hope Young talking and giggling at each other and of course Mrs. Brisbane told them to stop talking and get to work. Meanwhile, I realized that wait-for-the-bell-Billy Tomason and I-heard-that-Kevin Bilford have not been talking much lately and I'm on the case!

It was 1:30 and the recess bell was about to ring. "Wait for the bell Billy!" Mrs. Brisbane called as he rushed towards the door.

Finally it was just me and Mrs. Brisbane alone but right when she was walking over to my cage, Mrs. Brisbane saw a fold piece of paper and my little hamster eyes could just make out what it said.



You are the worst  
Friend ever  
Kevin  
-Billy

It took me so much time to make out those words that I did not realize what time it was! All my classmates came rushing in to the classroom. Mrs. Brisbane pulled Billy over to her desk.

"Did you write this?" she asked him.

"Yes Mrs. Brisbane" said Billy quietly.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Brisbane.

"Well, when we play baseball, Kevin always picks me last" answered Billy.

"Well, go back to your seat and we will deal with this later" Mrs. Brisbane told Billy. Then, Mrs. Brisbane and Billy went on with their day.

It was close to the end of the day and Mrs. Brisbane asked who wanted to take me home for the weekend. Tons of hands flew up!

"Billy, did your parents sign the permission slip to take home Hammy?" she asked.

"Yes" Billy replied. So Billy took me home for the weekend.

When we got home, Billy's brother called "Ham, you're home again!" Then, the doorbell rang. It was Kevin. He said Billy's Dad told him to come over and play with him. Billy's Dad had told Kevin to come over to play with Billy because he saw that they were having problems and should work it out. They were making one the biggest mistakes ever by letting their friendship spread apart. The good news is that everyone makes mistakes and I was here to help Kevin and Billy fix theirs so I came up with the best, best, best idea ever. I opened my cage door and scattered across the room. The boys started to chase me. My plan was working because they had to work together to catch me! I was having so much fun that I got a little carried away with the whole running around thing and ran into the desk! When they caught me, they were both so happy that they didn't even notice that they were working as a team once again.

From that day on, Billy and Kevin were friends once again. If there's any other friendship problems or if someone makes a mistake, just count on me, Hammy the Hamster, to help save the day!

## ***ESSAY 3-4: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

### **Importance of Mistakes By Anitvir Taunque, Grade 4**

Everyone makes mistakes. People might think mistakes are a negative thing. In my opinion, making mistakes are a positive thing. They teach us a lot of things that we should or shouldn't do in the future. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes." Making mistakes and fixing them has brought us to where we are today.

Mistakes are a very important part of our lives. Mistakes might make you feel mad or sad because you knew the right answer but went with the wrong one. Mistakes sure do make me mad or sad but the big thing is, that I learn from them. Learning from your mistakes helps you a lot in life. They make you a better person from what you were before you made that mistake. Once I got a question wrong on a practice test and got that same question on the real test, except this time I didn't make the mistake. It taught me to be more careful in the future. I learnt my lesson.

Accepting your mistakes is a big part of your life too. It teaches you another important aspect of life, responsibility. If you are playing ball and break a window, Own up to it. If you don't, you will keep doing the same mistake over and over again till it becomes a bad habit and you can't control it. Owning up to your mistakes

prepares you for the future and helps you become responsible for your actions.

If there were no mistakes we would not have anything new in our lives. Life would be dull. Albert Einstein once said , "Anyone who hasn't made a mistake has never tried anything new." The world today is advancing forward. Today, our life is so different from the lives our parents had when they were kids. There was no technology back then but now we have Televisions, tablets, phones, etc., that make our lives so easy. All these things are the result of trying, making mistakes and improving upon them. If there were no mistakes the inventors wouldn't have been able to invent all the awesome things we have today. There would be no inspiration. We would still have primitive things today. If Thomas Edison hadn't tried and made mistakes, we would not have the electric light bulb. If Alexander Graham Bell had given up, we would not have the telephone today. If there were no mistakes we would've not made it to where we are today.

So, it is okay to make mistakes as long as you learn from them. They teach you important lessons in life, like being careful and responsible. Mistakes make you a better person. They also make the world a better place to live in. Mistakes move you forward.

## **ESSAY 3-4: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE**

### **Mistakes**

#### **By Hallie Gyarmati, Grade 4**

You can make many mistakes as a fourth grader, but hopefully you will learn from them. We all make mistakes in life. However, it is how we deal with them, and what we learn that makes us who we are. I believe that anyone can look at almost anything and find something positive in the situation. I watch many girls in older grades act disrespectful to myself and others, thinking it makes them look “cool.” I do not think they have figured out the mistakes they are making hurts others.

One major mistake that happens very often is thinking someone is better than someone else. There’s a girl named Katniss who bullies anyone younger than her, including myself, Hallie Gyarmati. Some of us tried to do something about it but, it won’t stop her. One day I was walking to my car when my knee fell to the ground, someone had kicked me. I turned around to find nothing but thin air. I realized a girl named Katniss had tripped me then ran away. She wears really short shorts, and tight shirts, and even fake glasses. Katniss also gives me mean looks, and her and her friends laugh at me when I walk by. It is like she does not have a heart. From then on I have been trying to find a solution to this bullying, but nothing has come to me besides, stand up for myself when needed.

One day I was talking by and noticed Katniss was crying I figured she broke a fingernail or something along that line. But, someone had made fun of her and taught her a lesson about being bullied. Everything mean she had done had finally caught up with her. Unfortunately, it took someone being disrespectful to her, for her to learn her lessons. I don’t think she learned from her mistakes, but she did learn from a mistake that someone did to her. Mistakes can happen to anyone but the important thing is that you learn from them and don’t make the same mistake again.



## ***NARRATIVE 3-4: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **The Land of Mistakes**

**By Megan Sullivan, Grade 4**

“Ugh!” 10 year old Katie Lace moaned. “My day was terrible,” she told her pet hamster, Layla. Layla stared at Katie then squeaked. “First, Alice, my best friend didn’t sit with me at lunch. Plus, she didn’t play with me at recess! Then, Mrs. Gracey caught me day dreaming in class and yelled at me. Lastly, someone splattered their spaghetti and meatball lunch all over my favorite shirt!” Katie pressed her face against a pillow. She began crying. When she stuck her face out of the pillow she wasn’t in her room. *Something’s not right*, she thought. “Hi,” a voice said. “I’m Willow, one of the many mistake fairies. You are in the Land of Mistakes.” “Huh?” Katie said. “Come sit!” A high and squeaky voice said to Katie. Katie turned around. “Layla?” Katie asked. Before stood a 4 foot tall hamster. Willow, Layla, And Katie sat down at a small white, round table. “What are mistake fairies?” Katie questioned Willow. “Nobody is perfect. Why? Because of us fairies! We have a list of perfect and imperfect people. You are pretty much perfectionist so we put a spell on you.” “Oh!” Katie said. Suddenly Willow vanished. Katie was now asleep in her bed. Katie learned not to be a perfectionist. In class she let others raise their hand. Katie also learned that it was a mistake not to make mistakes. Katie never saw Willow, but every so often she would see a twinkle when she tried to make something perfect.



## ***NARRATIVE 3-4: 2ND PLACE***

### **St. Patrick's Day Wish**

**By Kyla Gilligan, Grade 4**

Excited for today

It was a sunny Friday spring morning. I quickly got ready for school so I could go meet my best friend Sara and we could walk to the bus stop together. I was in a great mood. Tonight, Sara's mom was going to take us to a Hunter Hayes concert. We both love him. I thought today was going to be one of the best days ever.

My wish

"RRRRRIIIINNNNNGGGG," the 4<sup>th</sup> bell rang. School was over and I had not decided on my four-leafed clover wish. It was 3 days before St. Patrick's Day and I had found a lucky clover in the spring grass on recess. It's between having Sara sleepover tonight or asking for the best leprechaun in town. (I'm the only one in school who believes in leprechauns.) Finally I chose the leprechaun one.

The concert

We were finally at the concert! Front row seats! Hunter Hayes will sing the song "Wanted." Out of nowhere I

heard laughing behind me. A very, very small boy dressed in green clothes, an Irish tie, a tall black hat, and shoes that would fit an 8 week old baby was standing on my chair. My leprechaun had arrived.

My Leprechaun

"You really thought you would get the best leprechaun, AND the nicest?" my leprechaun asked. He chuckled.

"Yeah, I guess," I quietly said.

"Who are you talking to?" Sara asked.

"My leprechaun." I said quietly.

"What Leprechaun?" she asked. She doesn't believe in leprechauns, but she tries to understand. "The one behind me," I said. Even though I knew that she couldn't see him because she doesn't believe. "Forget it," I said. Then we started to hear music. Hunter Hayes was coming on! Then I saw my leprechaun on stage sneaking up on Hunter Hayes! He was going to do something to him! I was so scared. I didn't think of what I was doing until I did it. I yelled, "WATCH OUT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

The music stopped, and everyone looked at me. Then, Hunter asked me to come on stage. I did.

Dirty Leprechaun

Hunter helped me on stage. I was so scared. "Do you want to sing with me?" He was holding a microphone out to me. I wanted to, but what about my leprechaun? How could I

skip a chance in a lifetime just because of a stupid leprechaun only I can see?

“Yes.” I said. I was so excited! We started singing. Then I saw Sara. SARA! I totally forgot about Sara! Is she mad? Is she sad? Is she happy? Then I saw her smiling. Out of nowhere something tickled my armpit.

My leprechaun was trying to ruin the best moment of my life! When we were done singing, Hunter asked me to come backstage with him. “Could I bring a friend?” I asked him. “Of course you can! He said smiling.

“Thank you!” I ran to Sara.

## Backstage

“I am SO SORRY about yelling like that,” I said to Hunter backstage.

“That’s ok. I enjoyed singing with you.” he said with a big smile. Then he gave me a four-leafed clover. “Make a wish!” he said. I knew EXACTLY what my wish would be.

I wished for that stupid leprechaun to go away and to never, EVER see him AGAIN! I thanked Hunter and then I hugged Sara. I was so happy that the leprechaun was gone and I would never make the mistake of wishing for one ever again!

**When you make a mistake,  
don't look back at it  
long. Take the reason  
of the thing into your  
mind and then look forward.  
Mistakes are lesson of  
wisdom. The past cannot  
be changed. The future  
is yet in your power**

*Anonymous*  
Saturday - Sep 8, 2012 11:15 pm

## ***NARRATIVE 3-4: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

### **Joey's Mistake**

#### **By Michael Sprockett, Grade 4**

One day, a boy named Joey Hise woke up in bed. "It's the first day of school!" he said.

When Joey got to school he got to his class just in time. They got to pick their own seats! He got to sit by his best friend Marty.

When Joey and Mary got to lunch, they sit with some of their other friends like John, Kelsey, and Josh.

After school, Joey was playing baseball in his backyard with Marty. Joey was up to bat, two strikes, one out, Joey hits a ball so hard, it goes past Marty's glove, and through a window.

"OH NO!" he screamed in his head, "How will I tell her?" he said.

Luckily Joey's mom is out of town. "You can't hide that!" said Marty.

The next day, Joey woke up at Marty's house because his mom is out of town. "Marty, I had a horrible dream!" said Joey.

"That wasn't a dream Joey." said Marty sadly.

"What will we do? And my mom comes back tomorrow!"

They got ready for school and had a great breakfast. When it was time to go to school, Joey got to sit in the front seat.

When it was lunch time, Joey and Marty sat alone together. "Why don't we just tell her the truth?" asked Marty.

"Why would we? She'd kill us!" said Joey uncomfortably.

"If you can try to tell the truth she might be okay with it. Besides, if you don't tell her the truth now it will be worse, so just tell her when she gets home tomorrow." said Marty happily.

Third and last period went great. When they got back to Marty's house, they did their homework quickly so they could go check on the window. "There's still a big hole in it" said Marty.

"Yes, I see that" said Joey.

When they went to bed, Joey and Marty's minds were going crazy about telling the truth or not. They were up all night thinking of it.

The next morning, Joey decided that he was going to tell the truth.

"I hope that mom won't be too mad at me" said Joey.

When his mom arrived Joey told her, "Mom? When I was playing baseball in the backyard with Marty, I accidentally hit a ball through the window." Joey said sadly.

"Oh it's okay! She said, "I was going to replace it anyway. Besides, it was just a mistake!"

***POETRY 5-6: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

**Made of Mistakes**

**By Abby Pieratt, Grade 6**

This poem was inspired by the following quote, “All men make mistakes, but only wise men learn from their mistakes.”

– Winston Churchill

Mistakes can make a world  
Dark.  
But can make a life  
Colorful  
If you learn from them.

Mistakes are like the  
Particles  
That form a person.

Each mistake and how you  
Cope with it  
Help to determine who you are.

In my life mistakes used  
To enshroud me in a  
Column of darkness.

But as I grew as a person

I began to realize  
Just how auspicious mistakes  
Could be.

Each time I am confronted  
With a mistake  
I resolve the problem,  
Learn  
And plant my feet firmly  
On the path to success.

And now mistakes no longer  
Hold me captive in the dark,  
But are an illuminating light  
Of a new success.



***POETRY 5-6: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

**Mistake**

**By Megan Nabozny, Grade 5**

I can be your worst nightmare  
Or biggest lesson

I sit inside of you  
Waiting to pounce  
And do my job

I can be a single word  
Or small action that creates  
Trouble and leads to sadness

You wish that I had reset button  
And that I never existed

But, I am a teacher  
Showing you truth,  
Forgiveness, and maturity

I am a simple, everyday  
Mistake

***POETRY 5-6: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

**MISTAKES!**

**By Charlie Eagle, Grade 5**

A man walks up the street looking for a lost \$100 bill.  
A woman walks down the street and finds a \$100 bill.  
They meet and they love each other.

A boy walks down the sidewalk looking for a lost puppy.  
A girl walks up a street and finds a lost puppy.  
They find each other and have a play date.

A teenage boy walks down the street looking for a lost cell  
phone.  
A teenage girl walks down the street and finds a cell phone.  
They meet and chat online together.

An elderly man walks up a hall looking for a lost cat.  
A elderly woman walks down a hall and finds a cat.  
They meet and enjoy tea together.

The funny thing is they all met because of a mistake.  
Sometimes good things start with mistakes.

## ***ESSAY 5-6: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **Valuable Mistakes**

**By Reeya Dighe, Grade 5**

Most people consider mistakes to be something in their way, a pothole in the road of victory. Yet, they may be actually very valuable. Philately is one such field where a mistake can turn an ordinary stamp in to a priceless one!

For centuries, people have collected misprinted stamps, some of them estimated for over half a million! Misprinted stamps are a rare find and can be found in almost any country. These stamps are incredibly fascinating.

The most recent one is the Lady Liberty stamp. Instead of being based off of the actual statue in New York harbor, it was based off of the half-size one in front of the Las Vegas casino. Since these had been in circulation for some time now, they do not have much value.

Some of the older and more famous mistakes such as the 1918 stamp with the airplane flying upside were produced in very small numbers. The post office had tried to convince the buyer to return the sheet of misprinted stamps he had bought, to be destroyed, but since he had bought them legally, he held his ground. Some collectors were willing to pay \$1,000,000 for a single one of these misprinted stamps.

However, when a 1962 stamp honoring a United Nations secretary general showed up with its yellow background inverted, postal offices used a different strategy. They

produced these in large numbers to that every collector who wanted one could have one and the stamps value would go down.

Production errors are one thing, but when factual errors show up, that is a whole different embarrassment. In 1999, a stamp inscribed “Grand Canyon, Colorado” was produced by accident. The stamp was quickly replaced with a new one that read “Grand Canyon, Arizona” No sooner did that happen that the company had to confess to a whole different problem. The photograph of the canyon had been accidentally reversed.

Postal offices were less lucky with a stamp that pictured a cowboy named Bill Pickett, one of 20 different designs titled “Legends of the West” Unfortunately, the man on the stamp was actually Bill’s brother Ben. Attempts to withdraw the design failed, when it was apparent that some of the sheets had already been released.

As you can see, mistakes are valuable and quite an interesting topic to study. They can be worth up to \$500,000, 000. Some misprinted stamps are worth lots more than others. They will always be a reminder at how our country has not completely erased human error. What many people don’t understand is that there is more than one kind of mistake. There are hurtful ones, there are easy-to-make ones, and then there are the valuable ones.

## ***ESSAY 5-6: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

### **War**

#### **By Tyson Jung, Grade 6**

“Cant’ we just be friends again?” a text message reads as it lights up the screen of my phone as I brushing my teeth before school. As usual, I ignore the text like all the other ones I get from her. I think I deleted her contact anyway. But as I stare into the mirror, I don’t see who I want to see. My eyes are filled with regret and sadness. A tear rolls down the side of my cheek. I stuff my phone into my pocket. Time for school. Time to act like my ex-best friend isn’t even a big deal.

She was my best friend in the third grade, and we bonded really well. We’d pass notes, and talk all the time. The girl with the bow in her hair. I knew so much about her. Her presence made my heart pound, and her smile was the best thing I’d ever seen. I was crazy about her. Now it’s all changed. A mistake.

I make many mistakes. Every day. Every single day. She hurt me. So I was angry. I didn’t want to apologize. It’s not my fault. Is it? I don’t know if I’ll ever figure out. I denied her repeatedly when she kept on trying to make it better. I shrugged her off. She sent me pleading text messages and I sent back foul replies or none at all. I acted like the world’s worst friend. She tried and tried to make things right. At school she tried explaining. I walked away, driving the nail. I made a mistake. A huge one. And it’s not going to be easy to

fix, or even fixable. I don’t know what I want. So I can’t decide. We don’t talk anymore. She doesn’t text me, and I miss seeing how much she cares.

I can’t ask for advice. There’s none to give. She said she would e my friend forever, and I did the same. Funny how drastically things can change. Well not really funny at all. Sad. I’m caught in a war, ignorance and tears ammunition fired at me from both sides. I made a dumb decision, a stupid, selfish act of pure pain. And now I’m the one who gets shot at.

Life isn’t the same. I find myself pondering crisp mementos of shared laughs and smiles, and it shows me what I don’t have. I can’t just delete the pain. It’s not that easy. Ultimately, I hope one of us will lay down arms and forgive each other. I want the war to be over between us. To be forgiven.

## ***ESSAY 5-6: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

### **An Amazing Mistake by Anna Lavin, Grade 5**

I woke up that October morning and sunshine filled the room. I smiled. I knew that this was NOT an ordinary day. I ran lightning speed downstairs to help my mom prepare for the big day.

Early that summer, my mom thought it would be a good idea to have a big fundraising yard sale for the Luvfurmutts dog rescue. This is to honor my dog, Echo, who recently died from cancer. We got Echo from this rescue.

The birds were singing and the trees looked like fire with their orange and red leaves. The rescue had just come so they could advertise their dogs during the sale. Almost all the dogs ran out of the truck barking as rowdy as frightened horses, all except for one. This particular dog was black and went up to my knee, and was being very quiet. She looked adorable too!

Everyone in my family had to help manage the seven dogs. A dog named Rascal was mine, and I see where he got his name! We raced across the yard as I kept an eye on the quiet dog my dad luckily got.

The day looked BEAUTIFUL! The sun lit up our sale, the grass was green, and the sky was pure blue! But the day was a freezer.

"I'm really cold! Can I take a break inside?" I asked my mom.

"Sure! Why don't you take Abby with you?" She replied, pointing to the dog my dad had. 'She's old and probably needs a break.'" So I switched dogs with my dad and took Abby in the house. Abby was just as great as I thought. When we got inside she wagged her tail as she explored the new world. Then she lied down, and took a nap right on the floor! Wow, she really did need a break! I thought as I pet her. Even though she was sleeping, somehow it seemed like she still liked being petted.

"What is it girl?" I asked. Abby had pulled me out of the house and raced to our back yard, and I had no clue what was going on. Finally, Abby, stopped, lied down, and rolled on her back. As I got closer, her tail would wag faster and faster. Her belly was wide open asking me to scratch it. As I rubbed her belly she'd wag her tail and kick her legs faster and faster. By the time ten minutes had passed, she had run a marathon on her back!

The rest of the sale was a blur. Abby and I spent the rest of the sale together, so I had no choice but to REALLY like her. Yes, in the end we did end up adopting Abby!

Getting Abby was a big mistake. A mistake isn't something you regret. It's something you didn't mean to do, good or bad. My mom told me NOT to fall in love with a dog, but everyone fell in love with Abby, our favorite mistake.

## ***NARRATIVE 5-6 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **The Conceited King**

**By Ronit Hirzur, Grade 5**

Once upon a time there lived a tyrant named Drake, who ruled a town in Germany. He did not allow any mistakes in his kingdom, so very few people liked him. One day the king's royal robes tore. The king's attendant called the royal tailor, Abel, to immediately sew a new one for King Drake. Abel was a generous man. He had a shop of cheap clothes for poor villagers. When he reported to King Drake's palace, the king bellowed, "The robe must be done in one week. If you fail, I will make you wish you weren't born. UNDERSTAND?" "Don't worry. When I'm done, you will have the best robes in the world," Abel confidently replied. In four days, he brought the finished robe to the king. "So you're early," the king said. As he was inspecting the robes, Abel started sweating. "I shouldn't have rushed making these robes. What if he finds a blunder?" the tailor restlessly thought. Suddenly the king's eyes flashed. His nostrils flared. "YOU CALL THESE PERFECT!? THERE IS A LOOSE THREAD! I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR IMPERFECT FACE AGAIN! YOU ARE BANISHED!" Drake shrieked. The guards took Abel out of the palace and threw him into the neighboring kingdom. The villagers were furious about this, but were still too afraid to confront the king.

Abel started to work in the neighboring kingdom, which was ruled by a generous man named Serafin. By the next year, he had prospered and was now the personal advisor of Serafin. One day, a message came from King Drake's kingdom saying that all men in the royal court were invited to a night of sports, games, and fun activities. This gave Abel an idea to get even with Drake. He went up to King Serafin and said, "Drake is an unjust ruler. He reprimands people for the slightest mistakes. Please give me a chance to show him that it is not right." Serafin thought for a moment and said, "Fine. I will allow you to carry out your plans on one condition. If you humiliate this kingdom, I will have to let you go." "Do not worry your majesty," Abel assertively replied.

The next day at the party, Abel challenged Drake to a game of chess. "If you lose even one piece, you will have to surrender your throne," he said to Drake. When they played, there was no way for Drake to win without losing a piece. He finally understood why he had been challenged. "Now you see that it is impossible to triumph without making a mistake along the way. Mistakes are not always bad and they often lead us to getting better," Abel stated. "Thank you for teaching me that making mistakes is not bad. Mistakes are now allowed in my kingdom," Drake replied. The people lived happily together with King Drake for the rest of their lives.

## ***NARRATIVE 5-6: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

### **A Girl, a Ship, the Sea and a Birthday** **By Husna Kider, Grade 5**

A very long time ago, when Vikings raided towns, there was a little girl named Blue Thunder. Everyone put Blue Thunder down, when her high spirits soared up. But one day, Blue Thunder snaked out into her Papa's boat, the Lion of the Sea, to show everyone that a girl could do things that men and boys could do, too. On that night, Blue went as far as she could on the sea, to the deepest part of the sea. Blue Thunder's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday was coming up in one day, on Thor's day, (Thor's day, is Thursday.) Instead of getting presents from her parents, Blue wanted to surprise **her parents** with a present. Blue Thunder knew that explaining to her parents when, where, and why she went out alone would be hard. Blue Thunder was a Viking so she knew that she could convince her parents.

Anyways, Blue Thunder scouted the sea, like a hawk looking for its prey on that same night. Blue knew that her parents probably couldn't keep their wrath, or furious feelings, when she told them her long journey. This almost 13-year-old girl decided to go back home. But....., there were A LOT of rapid waves! Blue cried out loud so that the whole world could hear, "Oh no, what have I gotten myself into?!" Blue tried to steer the ship faster, and away from the rapids, but the rapids kept coming back!! After what seemed like five hours, Blue FINALLY reached shore, which was near her house.

"Blue Thunder, COME HERE NOW!!" Papa growled. Blue suddenly felt like she was a tiny, little ant. Mrs. Thunder (Blue's mama) was quite pleased that her daughter went out onto the sea, and was brave. Blue solemnly walked towards her Papa. Papa looked at Blue angrily, but his words came out, and sounded as beautiful as the sea washing up on the shore.

"Oh, I'm SOO proud of you my Blue darling, but why?" asked Papa. "Why did you go out to sea by yourself?"

"Well..." began Blue. "I just wanted to impress you, Mama, and the townsfolk. I also wanted to let everyone know, that women and girls could do things that men and boys did, too.

"Oh, But we already knew that, Blue. We never doubted you. Only the townsfolk didn't believe in you, WE do," Mama explained.

Blue thought about this, and thought out loudly, "It was my mistake to go out by myself Mama, I should've told you both. I could have gotten BADLY injured fighting those rapids. I should've asked for permission from both of you," cried Blue. "I'm SO sorry, will you forgive me?" asked Blue.

"Of course we will darling," Mama and Papa said in unison.

The next day, Blue turned 13! Blue's parents gathered all the townsfolk, and told them the great journey of Miss Thunder. Never again did anyone doubt or put down a woman or a girl.

## ***NARRATIVE 5-6: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

### **I'm Only Human**

**By Michelle Ballman, Grade 6**

The butterflies fluttered in my stomach. It seemed like only yesterday I'd been sitting with my best friend Piper pinky promising her junior high wouldn't break us up! But the whole summer has passed. Now it's the first day of seventh grade. I could see the social pyramid had already divided itself into cliques. I recognized the popular girls, Madison and Sabrina, taking their place at the top. They caught sight of me and rushed over.

"OMG, you look totally fabulous!" I looked down at myself. I got a new haircut, and I started wearing makeup, so what? I was the same old Lizzy, but they'd never complimented me before!

"Do you want to sit with us at lunch?"

I was a little confused, but excitement and joy found their way into my mix of emotions! I was being invited to sit with the populars!

Lunch finally rolled around and I sat down with Sabrina and Madison.

"I'm glad you're sitting with us and not your nerd friend Piper." Sabrina exclaimed. Oh no, Piper! I'd promised to sit with her! But part of me didn't want to leave. I still couldn't understand why I was finally good enough for them, and I didn't want to ruin my chance at popularity!

"Piper is so lame! Hasn't she heard of clothes from this century?" Madison's words interrupted my thoughts, and

everyone laughed. I didn't feel good about it, but I wanted to fit in, so I laughed too. I stopped instantly when I saw Piper behind me. She ran off in tears and I followed, guilt weighing me down. Piper ran to the bathroom and locked herself in the stall.

"I'm really sorry it was a huge mistake! I didn't like how they dissed you, but I just wanted to fit in! I should never have laughed!"

"Why do you need to fit in with them? They've been nothing but mean to us!"

I know. It was a mistake!" Then Piper opened the door, but she was no longer sad. She was mad. Her blue eyes glared at me, her black hair matching the darkness of her stare.

"You know what Lizzy! The only mistake was being friends with you!"

Piper stormed out of the room, and I was left shocked on the cold tile floor. How could I ever forgive myself, and how could I get my friend back? My mom always said mistakes are part of being human. And that sometimes mistakes are fate's way of saying it wasn't meant to be. Was my friendship with Piper not meant to be? Or was I supposed to realize all the populars do is hurt people? I hoped I was the latter, for I couldn't imagine life without my best friend. I rushed out to find Piper.

After a while Piper forgave me. I never talked to Madison and Sabrina again and realized to watch what I say and do to avoid more mistakes. Even though they'll still happen, I'm only human.

## ***POETRY 7-8: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **11 letters, 4 words, 1 sentence By Samantha Subler, Grade 8**

Faded paper with ripped ragged edges,  
cold, gray graphite,  
and a mess of imperfect letters.

To others it is just a piece of paper  
that has been written on.  
Simply words, to those who do not understand.

It is a measly little sentence  
one that wouldn't mean anything to the average bystander.  
But me, I'm not a bystander.

I am the main character of this cruel story  
the leading role in this nightmare  
and the sole player of this dangerous game called life.

So you see,  
this piece of paper means everything  
it is the definition of who I am.

It is me and I am it.  
There is no escaping that fact  
No matter how hard I try to hide it

I know what that sentence means  
what it stands for  
what those 4 small words did to my life.

Only I can testify the strength  
the power and the effect of this piece of paper.  
I am the only one who knows what it is capable of.

I carry around the burden of the sentence each day.  
Its words like a boulder that sits on my back.  
Slowly crushing me till there is nothing left.

And even though I swore  
I would never let myself do this  
somehow it has happened

I tried to fight it  
My brain battled my heart  
But the emotions had already won

That one sentence reeked havoc on my whole existence,  
and leveled the plane that was once my spirit  
like a bulldozer to and already crippled building.

Even so,  
I continue to rebuild my confidence  
Brick by brick.

I am just waiting for the day  
When I can wake up to discover  
my new wealth of confidence.

But until then I am stuck, with the knowledge  
and proof  
that I damaged myself

Behind the smile and laughter  
Lies a never-ending pool of uncertainty  
And doubt.

Those words written so carelessly  
tear apart my life  
day by day, minute by minute, second by second.

They analyze and criticize  
Each and every thing that I do  
from sunup to sundown

With my own hand,  
I wrote 11 letters, 4 words, and 1 sentence,  
the biggest mistake I ever made.



**POETRY 7-8: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE**

**Lucky**

**By Lincoln Addington, Grade 8**

It's not the first time  
you caught your breath in the back of your throat, and  
sweat flowed out of your pores like an icy river, but it may  
be the first time you made a mistake so god-awful  
*stupid*

You pace the hall, in a daze,  
for hours, wondering how  
your life went so , so wrong. "This isn't me",  
you try to tell yourself, but it is  
and it has been, for far, far too long.

But you're lucky, and God smiles,  
and he claps his hands, and you're okay.  
And you tell yourself you've changed,  
that your guilt made you better,  
but you haven't felt guilt in a long time. It was fear.  
That's all it was.  
Fear.

**POETRY 7-8: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE**

**Mistakes**

**By Sumedha Kappagantula, Grade 7**

They dot a person  
Like potholes on an old road  
The burden upon every shoulder  
A big and heavy load  
The guilt welling up  
Or not at all  
The sadness enormous  
Or very small  
The way they burn  
The way they hurt  
An opportunity to repent  
A lesson learnt  
And though you apologized  
May have forgiven and forgot  
That mistake is still there  
Entrenched in that spot  
The place where you  
As a person went wrong  
Where you repented and corrected  
Learnt and moved on

## ***ESSAY 7-8: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **The Gift of Bread**

**By John Ferguson, Grade 7**

As my mother and I walked quickly through Dubai’s back streets in the dead of night, the only thing on my mind was getting back to my hotel. I glanced around and a tiny trail of perspiration ran down my neck; not because of the intense heat or the physical strain, but out of fear. I never thought that I would actually have the nerve to visit the Middle East, a place depicted by media as the war-torn heart of terrorism—but there I was.

Having not eaten in several hours, I was weak from exhaustion. We were short on foreign currency and I needed to eat something, but I was too scared to approach anyone. All of a sudden, a tall Arabic man came up to me and offered me a piece of bread, asking in his weak English, “May I help you, young man?” As if I had woken from a nightmare, my state of fear, panic, and worry was gone and instead was replaced by an odd sense of reassurance. I struggled for words as I looked around and noticed things I had previously looked over: a group of men sitting in the street, laughing and sharing heaping bowls of steaming food, small children playing tag in the road, and a group of lively women chatting.

I felt bewildered. I thought that Middle Easterners hated Americans with all of their hearts, yet here was this total

stranger offering me bread. I thought back to all those news reports I had seen back home and how they only focused on the worst of everything. The only news that Americans see is about raging revolutions, the spread of violence, and the climbing rate of poverty, not only in the Middle East but all around the world. This encourages the buildup of stereotypes about other cultures.

Then I came to a realization: people of all backgrounds need to break through that wall of prejudice and open their eyes to what the world is really like beyond the TV screen. The only way that this is possible is through travel. Mark Twain once said, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.” The more you travel, the greater sense of global perspective you will gain, so much so that world peace could be accomplished if everyone had the opportunity to travel the world. Countries would understand other countries and conflict would be resolved without the eruption of war.

What I have learned from my mistake is that the world is not what you think it is. I hope that other people can also look and think beyond what they see, for then they can discover the hidden truth of misunderstanding about the world. People need to break through that mental attitude about other cultures and really get to build an accurate perception of them before the wall becomes too strong to break down.

## ***ESSAY 7-8: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

### **Don't Forget to Save**

#### **By Justin VanMeter, Grade 8**

It was mid year in seventh grade and I was just starting to write a report that I had known about for months. After procrastinating it until the very last day possible, I was going to have to hunker down and work all day to complete it. With six hours and three-fourths of the project finished, I decided to take a well earned break after such tedious work. Taking my mouse, I clicked the little box in the upper right hand corner of the computer screen, and little did I know, I had just sealed my doom. When I came back, I was terror stricken, because I had forgotten to save my six hours of diligent, tedious work.

At that point, all that was left of my previous hard work was the remnants of it barely hanging onto my memory. I had a decision to make, I could mourn over the loss of my efforts and come to school empty handed, or repeat what I had done previously and stay up late to meet my deadline. I chose the latter and worked my tail off the rest of the day. After hours of hard work and exhausting typing, I finally came out with a finished product. The next day, to my surprise, I was one of a few who actually completed their reports in time. With this, a sense of personal pride washed over me.

In this event, my mistake is clearly being careless about my work. This catastrophe could have been entirely avoided if I had not procrastinated doing my project in the first place, or remembered to save my work. With those two care free errors, I had dug myself a pretty deep hole, and getting out would require some serious work. But, every cloud has a silver lining, and I did learn very much from my mistake.

First of all, I learned that even when things were looking the worst, and not a sliver of hope was showing, I could still manage to come through. It goes to show that with time and effort, your goals can be accomplished. Furthermore, I learned to put first things first, meaning not delaying the things that need to get done, but putting in small amounts of time here and there. Lastly, I learned that mistakes can be corrected, even though it is very difficult to do. With genuine work, you can set things straight.

## **ESSAY 7-8: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE**

### **More Than Just a Mistake**

**By Erik Isele, Grade 8**

How do you take mistakes? Do you see them as a frustrating blockade? They are not only just a learning experience, which is discussed so much, but they are essential. Imagine your day without a single mistake. This would be extremely dull to the point to make you wonder why you are living this day. Why are you living and following through with the effort of your life?

Human kind relies on mistakes. We live for mistakes. We live to make mistakes. And finally, we live to correct mistakes. Then how could this benefit you, or how could it be applied?

I find this idea can simply be applied to everyday mentality. You could simply do things keeping aware of the fact you will eventually err. I find this could just reduce the stress of being perfect, and increase your productivity. It would also allow you to adapt to your mistakes, which will lead you to a better life.

I keep this in mind when I am playing my favorite sport, tennis. I am a very avid player and I am always trying to improve. Yet to improve, first I must make mistakes. A 0-6, 0-6 loss may seem to be a bad loss to many, but to me it is golden. The mistakes I made in this match will show me so much to learn. I think to myself, "*One day, if I work hard learning, I will succeed.*" If I did not make mistakes, I would not have the enjoyment of getting better.

Now I think, how would this help the world? What difference would it truly make? I believe if everyone in the world were to apply thoroughly this idea, many problems would be solved.

Instead of people going blind by strong emotions after a mistake, people could take a more objective standpoint and find out what is wrong. This leads me back to tennis, specifically one of the world's best players to play the game; Roger Federer. He always stays calm during a match. He always learns from his mistakes rather than becoming angry with them. Federer always is practicing to improve. I believe this makes him so successful.

When asked to write about mistakes, it's like being asked to write about being human. To be human is to make mistakes, and correct them, until we have learned how to reach success. This is how we live. I apply my mistakes in my daily life through the game of tennis, as Federer does to reach huge success. This idea could be applied to more than just tennis. Could this philosophy benefit the world?



**Experience is the  
name every one gives  
to their mistakes.**

**~Oscar Wilde**

## ***NARRATIVE 7-8: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE***

### **My Last Love**

#### **By Sarah Wilson, Grade 8**

Luke.

He was my everything. He was my reason to live. He was the only thing I couldn't live without.

We met three years ago at college. My friend Abby introduced us and we became great friends. A year later he asked me out. On our first date, he took me to the park. He had made a darling picnic and lit candles all around the blanket. I knew then that he would be the man I would marry.

Luke had planned this stunning dinner for our two year anniversary. I told him he shouldn't go all out, but of course, he didn't listen. That's what I loved about him. He was so spontaneous yet so compassionate. Words couldn't explain how much he meant to me. Today would be the day I told him I loved him.

I walked out to the parking lot and his red Volvo pulled up to the door. "Hello, Beautiful," he welcomed me with his glorious smile. "Hello, Handsome," I smiled back.

He turned on the radio to my favorite station and began to pull out of the complex. "So, where are you taking me?" I knew he wouldn't tell me, but it was worth a try. "It's a surprise," he chuckled at my attempt.

I realized he had parked the car and was getting out to open my door. He guided me, keeping my hand firm in his. Then we stopped. I suddenly had a flashback to our very first date. We were in the park, under the identical giant white oak, the picnic outlined by several lit candles. Awestruck, I hugged him and pulled him down to the blanket.

The sun was just setting over the New York skyline. After finishing the sandwiches, he pulled out my favorite dessert, chocolate

mousse. I devoured mine within a matter of seconds, but he took his time, glancing up at me from under his eyelashes every few seconds. He reached inside his suit pocket and pulled out a small black box. His face was suddenly serious.

"Hannah, you make my world complete. I love you more than anything and anyone in this world. Will you marry me?" I couldn't speak. Suddenly I was hyperventilating.

"Yes!" I breathed. I was suddenly in his arms, squeezing him so tight that any normal person would be suffocating. This was the perfect moment. He stood up, pulling me with him, swept me up in his sturdy, brawny arms and carried me back to the car.

Looking back, I wish I would've taken the time to preserve that moment. I wish I could've frozen time to take in every detail.

We stopped at a red light and Luke turned to look at me. "You are so beautiful," he whispered. "I already agreed to marry you, there's no need for flattery," I blushed. "I have a habit of stating the obvious," he continued. "Green light," I laughed.

I woke up in a hospital bed with a blonde haired nurse by my side. "Where's my fiancé?" I croaked. "Doctor, she's awake! Hannah, what is the last thing you remember?" she asked. "There was a black truck, and it hit Luke's side of the car," I trailed off in confusion. "Yes, it was a drunk driver. It's good that you remember that," she spoke as if I were a child.

"Where's Luke? Is he okay?" My head was throbbing in pain and I was getting impatient. "Hannah," she stuttered, "the truck hit Luke dead on at a very high speed. It crushed his entire left side and he suffered major brain damage."

"Brain damage? Where is he?" I demanded as the realization sunk in. "Miss Green, I'm so sorry for your loss. There was nothing we could do to save him." She looked down as she spoke. "It would have been Mrs. Johnson," I sobbed.

The biggest mistake of my life was not telling him I loved him. Now I never will.

## ***NARRATIVE 7-8: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE***

### **Struck Again**

#### **By Becca Lamanna, Grade 8**

I looked at the bed, admiring my handiwork. The streaks and puddles of scarlet contrasted with the delicate cream of the bed sheets. I had struck again. *Another one down, so many to go*, I thought.

I've changed time and time again to prevent myself from being convicted. I don't even remember my real name anymore. The fake ID's, the passports, the driver's licenses, everything have made me who I am now. My old self is gone for good. I become a new woman with each name. I choose their emotions, and they all come out amazing. But they've never been good women.

The first new identify was Pattie Benson. She was a sweet girl born in Topeka, Kansas. She met a charming man at a bar one night. They had a few drinks, but after she took him around back and stabbed him in the stomach. Of course, she was never caught because she quickly became Sylvia Jenkins, a woman whose mother came from the Czech Republic.

That was years ago. With each change came another murder. It was a part of who I was. Every time I changed, I tried to be a good girl. I just can't. I wouldn't call it an obsession. I'd call it a passion. I'm doing the world a favor. I'm getting rid of the scumbag deadbeat fathers of the world. I just dispose of them in a different way. It's a more efficient way. It's more permanent than putting

them in jail. That's what I always wanted to do to my father. I won't let the neglect of fathers hurt other children like I was hurt.

I grinned in the pale moonlight. I looked in the mirror at my face. The light from the window cast a sinister shadow across my already gaunt face. I put the knife on the dresser and snuck out of the apartment quickly and quietly. I would make my escape again. I was sure of it. In my motel room, I already have dozens of new identities to choose from. I would never be found.

It was his fault. Like all the others, he made the mistake of trusting me. They had to pay for it.

*Seven days after the latest murder of a crazed serial killer, the culprit was finally caught. The murders have been going on for years. 29-year old Julia Redcamp was arrested for the murder of Zachary Smith. So far, police have gotten confessions for 7 of the 10 suspected murders. Police have reason to believe she has also killed the three other victims due to her "signature mark": three slashes across the chest. We will have more on this story on the 10:00 news. Good night.*

## ***NARRATIVE 7-8: 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE***

### **Telephone**

#### **By Brooke Eckerle, Grade 8**

“I remember when the country wasn’t at war. Heck, I remember when people were happy. Yours truly was on the council of leaders. I was a follower, not a leader. Right down to the last issue. And I helped create the biggest error of them all.” I zone out as Edward dozes off. I close my eyes and try to think about the society he’s describing. I flash back to the dark rock corridor I just walked down. I remember my mom lying on her cot drawing her last breath. I remember my dad walking out the door in green camouflage, turning back only for one last glance of regret. *How long have we lived in this bunker? How long has the country been at nuclear war with the world?* I finally comprehend the last words of Edward. *I helped create the biggest error of them all.* What could be so bad that Edward still thinks about it? I rush to continue him. “Biggest mistake! Remember?” I yell as I shake him awake.

“Huh?” Edward yells as he jolts awake. He looks around noticing that I am staring intently. “Oh. What were you told about the retreat underground Kohle?” He asks.

“I was told that a threat of the country being bombed was imminent. The government ordered everyone age 15-30 to help in the war and all the others underground. The war is continuing. So for five years, we’ve been down in this bunker.”

He replies, “Well you’re wrong.” I wrap my head around it. Was the truth really that bad that they couldn’t tell anyone? Or is

Edward just losing his mind? “The country was bombed. Six times. The government did order everyone 15-30 to fight in the war. But no one was ordered underground. The council decided that because of the bombing of nearby cities, the fallout would kill most of us. Also our city could have been bombed at a later time. So I agreed to send the whole town underground. All of the citizens were told the same thing you were told and the council members all died of sickness. And I’m still here. To share the fault.”

My head spins. I look up as my stomach drops. *I cannot just stay here and accept my fate.* Edward glances at my puzzled face but misses my brain working like a child on a jigsaw puzzle. His gaze shifts and I follow his stare. My eyes find a dusty box with a rectangle. “They called I a telephone.” Edward remarks.

I stand and allow my legs a second to adjust. I wobble over to the wooden desk with the telephone on it. I pick up the rectangle on top and hear a click. The ceiling opens with a creak. “The only way out has been right above your head all along.” Edwards comments.

I straighten my body and look up to the sun.

## **POETRY 9-12: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE**

### **Listing**

**By Bailey Eckerle, Grade 10**

I often find that I  
Seem to do nothing right.  
No matter how I try.  
No matter how I fight.

I usually break things;  
I'm great at getting lost.  
I'm terrible at cooking;  
I can't keep straight my thoughts.

And if I made a list  
Of all that I'd done wrong,  
That list would prob'ly be  
A million miles long.

The first thing on that list  
Would be the list itself;  
For listing one's mistakes  
Will never help one's health.

Although I've always thought  
A list is a good way  
To organize your dreams,  
Or things to do each day.

So what I plan to do  
Is write a list instead  
Of all the things to try before I'm dead.





## **POETRY 9-12: 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE**

### **There is a Place of Darkness...**

#### **By Michael Siegert Jr., Grade 10**

There is a place of darkness that,  
exists deep inside you.

A city of thick, Iron Walls,  
of elegant Beauty but stark simplicity,

of topless skyscrapers—ripping through the  
blood dimmed sky, as dark mist fills the streets,  
and all vision is lost.

it is here that you truly live,  
and in here you are mine.

This city is a maze where I have trapped your mind,  
and for every decision you make,  
a new path is destroyed and another opened,

It is on those long darkened streets, where I still  
roam, biding my time and waiting for you to return.

And I see you, there on the corner of  
light and Dark  
Insanity and forgiveness  
life and Death ...

You do not see me but I am ever present in your thoughts,  
on crossroads your mind bends to wander, and once this occurs  
that empty alley beckons you; you step out of the blissful glow,  
of the city center, into my waiting arms  
and once there, you are mine.

I, the beast of your heart,  
your deranged nightmares,  
your sorrowful screaming,

The rigidness of my form takes hold of you,  
your mind becomes mush as my talons dig into your flesh,  
and you are gone – your body a shallow husk of fear.

That last moment is when I grow stronger,  
*When I feel less alone.*

with each of your gasping breaths, my will on you grows stronger,

*Bang*

Then the mist surrounds you, all is gone...

fear held you... but I pulled the trigger...

the wound isn't deep, you could live,  
but my hold is every present and,  
you feel it as your hand places the frigid metal against your head,

*“cold, so cold...”*

*Bang*

And your heart ceases to beat,  
as you cease to be.

*Uughhh*

But, Now I am nothing,  
the city is gone...

To think you would have walked through the gates,  
to a land free of smog, where harmony existed...

Wishful of me... I know no place exists...

Now no one cares for me...  
...Feeds my fire...

As your mistakes I can,  
manifest only in you  
but...

...my reach is not ... over,  
... my seed ... has reached many others,

And ... ever slowly...  
I ... Will end...  
Them all.

My, No, your mark...  
Forever—on the Earth... ..

... There ... the light at the end of the tunnel ...  
...all is gone...

... I have won...



## **ESSAY 9-12: 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE**

### **I Will Never Forgive You by Hannah Mehrle, Grade 12**

*I will never forgive you, I thought to myself, even if you are one of my best friends.*

I was pitching for my school's softball team in the sectional final against one of the best teams in the city. I was performing better than I had all year. We were up 2-0 going into the sixth inning. I knew our opponent was better than us, but I had faith in my teammates that we could pull through with a win. At the time, the right fielder on our team was my good friend. Even though we were a grade apart, we did almost everything together. I thought that out of everybody on the field, I could definitely count on her. That is until she missed a fly ball that was easily catchable. I was furious! Friends or not, I told myself I would never talk to her again. How could someone make such a horrible mistake? Couldn't she have caught it, for me? We both went into the dugout after the inning was over. "I'm sorry," she said, "it was weird, one second the ball was in my glove, and the next, it wasn't."

"Whatever," I mumbled under my breath, not even coming close to accepting her apology. No best friend would do that to me. I continued to take it personally as I stood in the corner of the dugout, too mad to talk. I knew it was wrong of me to act like this, but I didn't care. All I wanted was for my friend to go away and never talk to me again. I didn't realize at the time that if I behaved this way, it would be one of the biggest mistakes of my life.

It is just a game. Those were the words I needed to hear over and over again that day. Someone needed to knock some sense into me. Friendships are much more important than any game could ever be. Instead of going out to lunch after the game to celebrate the best season yet in our school's history, I went home and sulked because we had lost. I later realized that one game does not in any way shape, form or define a season, just as one play does not define a game. Softball is a team sport, you win as a team, lose as a team, succeed as a team and mess up as a team. It's never any one person's fault.

A while later, after I figured out how childish I had acted, I apologized to my friend for my actions. We have been friends ever since, but I still wonder if anything would be different today if I had approached the situation differently then. I can't take back what I did, but I can be more mature in the future. In thirty years, it won't matter if we won or lost, nobody will remember, instead we will remember all the fun times we had as a team, all that we accomplished together, and the bonds that we formed playing the game we loved.

# Thank you...

And hopefully we don't make a mistake and leave someone off of our THANK YOU list!

This 2013 Write Challenge would not have been possible without the support of:

- Lakota's Gifted Services Department
- LEADS Building Coordinators and Board
- Lakota Students and Parents
- Lakota Classroom Teachers
- Lakota's Board and Administrators
- And an extra big thanks to LEADS Board Members Christy Pulsford and Kari Gutzwiller for bringing it all together!

## **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. LEADS strives to create a venue for communication and interaction among the parents of Lakota's students, including providing effective needs support.

**[www.lakotaleads.org](http://www.lakotaleads.org)**



