



farmlib.org

Tell Your Story



Community Project

(Ages 0-18 submissions)

Summer Reading 2024

About the Tell Your Story Community Project

PLEASE NOTE: THIS VERSION OF THE TELL YOUR STORY PROJECT ONLY INCLUDES SUBMISSIONS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS UNDER 18. DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THE PROJECT WITH SUBMISSIONS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF ALL AGES AT [FARMLIB.ORG/TELL-YOUR-STORY](https://farmlib.org/tell-your-story).

Summer Reading is an annual program for all ages at Farmington Community Library (FCL) that encourages our community to connect through a love of reading and stories. During the 2024 program, we set out to celebrate not only the stories we read, but also the power of telling our own stories! Throughout the summer, community members of all ages submitted personal stories from their own life. This booklet is a compilation of those submissions.

We hope that you enjoy reading through the stories your neighbors submitted and that it serves as a reminder that all of us have a story worth sharing!

The Library provided three prompts to inspire community members when thinking about the experiences they have had that could be good stories to share:

Adventure Awaits: Tell us about an adventure that you have been on

What defines an adventure? That is for you to tell us! Adventures come in all shapes and sizes, from the mundane to the extraordinary. Some adventures happen on the way to the grocery store, others take place on daring adventures to new states or even other countries. Was the adventure planned? Or did you stumble upon it? Share the thrills, the unexpected turns, and the memories with us!

Celebrating Connections: Tell us about someone that you care about

Who holds a special place in your heart? Perhaps it's a grandparent who ignited your passion for creativity, a best friend or sibling whose qualities inspire you, or your spouse with whom you've shared cherished memories. Dive into the stories of the remarkable individuals who have shaped your life.

Life Lessons: Tell us about the most important lesson you have learned in life so far

Life is the best teacher! Reflect on your journey and share a valuable lesson you have learned. What pivotal moment reshaped your perspective? Was it a difficult or easy lesson to learn? Do you wish you had learned it some other way? Maybe someone else in our community is in the middle of learning the exact same thing.

The stories in this booklet are organized alphabetically by the author's first name. All anonymous submissions are grouped together. If the author submitted their age and a title for their story, this information is included.

The Library reserved the right to decline stories that were defamatory or not in the community spirit of the Tell Your Story project. Viewpoints and experiences in this booklet are solely those of the authors and do not represent the Library's stance on any topic.

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Aaliyah Dungy, Age 14

Untitled

One time when I was five or six I wanted to go to the neighbors house at my old house but my dad said no and he fell asleep. But being a five or six year-old I didn't really care what he said at the time so I went over the fence, just when I was about to jump off something pull the fence and hang over the fence with my shirt frightened I started yelling for help. Two dogs ran up to me and started barking alerting their owner, which was my neighbor. Soon after I was let down and my neighbor called my dad. I knew I was going to be in a lot of trouble even with him smiling I knew I would be in trouble. So when I got home, I got grounded for like 10 minutes and then after that, he just kind of forgot but yeah.

Aidan

Untitled

Once upon a time I went to Cedar Point. On the way there I listened to a play away called House of Robots. At Cedar Point, I went on the Iron Dragon, Wild Mouse, Gemini, Blue Streak and a lot of other rides it was so fun.

Alexandria Peratsakis, Age 15

Untitled

My mother embodies everything that I love, that I enjoy, and that I hold close to my heart. She holds the love of 1000 of the most lovable things all into one heart and she can convert all that love into one kiss or one hug. She is my hero amongst all heroes, like my umbrella in the rain. Her voice always gives me timeless advice whenever I doubt myself and my abilities even if she isn't next to me. My mother is my tree and I am her branch. I am the branch she gave nutrients to and kept strong while teaching me to flourish in this world. Through her, I gained my wings to fly.

What my mother knowingly or unknowingly set on me was the love of my homeland. She was born here but she grew up in Palestine. Through her, she showed me the best of the world and taught me how to respect it. She embodies the love of my homeland and has always instilled in me to be a proud Palestinian. I love to always say when I don't understand something, "Sorry, English is my second language" as a joke around my friends, but there is some truth in that statement. When I was young my mother taught me the beautiful language Arabic first but over time I forgot a lot of it, unfortunately. My mother is my homeland. She is my base in life and without her, I would be a goner.

My mother was named after her aunt who was a very strong woman. My great-aunt was 9 when her mother died. From the age of 9, she raised her 3 siblings. My mother is just as strong as her aunt. To me, my mother represents all the strong Palestinian women from the past, the present, and the future. My mother never fails to stand up for justice when she sees injustices occur no matter the repercussions. I know that if anything bad ever happens to me or my siblings, we can always count on her to protect us.

I am forever grateful to my mother for nurturing me into becoming what I am today. I can never thank her enough for having my back countless times, driving me to endless soccer events, igniting my dreams, and giving me the courage to even write this story about her. I love you.

Amelia Imirie, Age 9

Untitled

Last week I went to Cedar Point. When I went to Cedar Point last week I went for the first time. The first ride I went on was the Iron Dragon. I really liked it but the drop at the start scared Lou and Aidan. Because of that we went on some smaller rides next. When we went on the Wild Mouse the cart we were in turned us so we were backwards and there were some sharp turns. Aidan and me really liked that ride and we felt it was time to step it up. We went on the Blue Streak next. The first time I rode it I was scared and I wouldn't let go of my mom's hand. The second time I rode it I rode with Aidan and I put my hands up and I rose up out of my seat a bit. Next my brother Aidan rode the Gemini while I rode the Pipe Scream. When the Pipe Scream was over it was one minute until the park closed so I had to sprint to get in line for the Gemini. At first on the big drop but then I wasn't scared and I put my hands up.

Andrew, Age 6

Untitled

We went to Seneca Caverns. We went 100 feet deep under the ground. We saw stuff that was left in the cave like a comb, bottom of a shoe, and some bottles.

Anonymous

Untitled

Once when I was playing with my friends in school. Then a boy came up to me and asked to play with us but I said "No! You look so different." Then he went home then one my told me "Why did him go? It's okay to be different. Everyone is different in their own way." And that's how I learned my important life lesson.

Anonymous

Untitled

To always be kind to others. Always listen to others. Respect your elders.

Anonymous

Untitled

I care about my family a lot. They have been with me my whole life. They have helped me in my highs and lows. The time when I got a good score on my test or when I got a bad score on my test. My family has shaped me to the amazing person I am. This is why I care about my family.

Anonymous

Untitled

Going to the park with his friend.

Anonymous

Untitled

ON my birthday I had COVID and on my birthday everyone had cake other than me!

Anonymous

Untitled

Every Christmas my family and I eat cheese fondue. My mom makes sour dough bread and cuts it up then she melts the cheese and adds a little bit of wine. Usually we dip the bread in the cheese. Then we eat!

Ayla During, Age 6

Untitled

We drove to NY from MI. It was a long journey but we went through it. We made sure to pack a lot of food and water. Me and my sister and brother made sure to get some sleep on the ride too. We saw lots of animals on the ride there like cows and horses and we even saw farms. We drove through Pennsylvania and saw the Pocono Mountains!

Bree, Age 38, and Evie Schwartz, Age 6

Untitled

A while ago we went on a family adventure. First, we boarded an airplane to Boston. When we got there we met up with family to celebrate Auntie Hindy Day becoming a Rabbi. Next, we visited the big park called the Boston Commons. They have lots of pretty trees from all over the world, we took a ride on a swan boat, and found the "make way for ducklings" sculpture from our favorite book. Last, we had a perfect family beach day together on Plum Island. The piping plovers were nesting, and the water was chilly but fun to play in.

Dityaa, Age 8

Untitled

I care about my mom because she inspires me and she does all of the house work like doing the laundry, making the shopping list, cooks food, cleans the house like vacuuming, and she helps me with my homework and she takes good care of me and my brother. She plans the trips we go and spends time together. She helps me and my brother read books. Me and my mom has a special connection between us.

Emmy Washefski, Age 4, and Michelle Croal, Age 35

Untitled

(While the contents are the story are fictitious, the setting of the story-telling is true)

Emmy, Mama and Daddy are sitting at the patio table in the backyard, eating dinner and

enjoying the early summer evening.

Emmy "Mama tell me a story!"

Mama " What kind of story Emmy?"

"A Princess Emmy and Princess Vivian story. With a monster. A friendly one, not a mean one".

"OK, here we go. Once upon a time, there were two castles next to each other. In one castle lived a little girl named Princess Emmy and in the other castle lived a little girl named Princess Vivian. They liked to go on adventures together. One day Princess Emmy and Princess Vivian got on their horses - what are their horses' names?"

"Emmy and Margaret"

"Ok. So Princess Emmy got on her horse, Emmy-the-Horse, and Princess Vivian got on her horse Margaret. They went clippy-cloppy, clippy-cloppy over the fields, clippy-cloppy, clippy-cloppy past the villages, clippy-cloppy, clippy-cloppy over the bridge and clippy-cloppy, clippy-cloppy through the forest until they came to a cave. Princess Emmy and Princess Vivian peeked inside the cave and they saw two huge furry feet, and a big furry snout, and two furry ears and lots of sharp teeth! It was a monster! Snore, Snore, Snore! And they said 'Ahhhhhhh a cave monster!!'"

"No, not a mean one, a friendly one!" "Right right, a friendly one. So then the monster woke up and said 'Wait, I'm a friendly monster! I won't eat you! Look, I already ate breakfast - you can see my dishes are over there because I haven't cleaned them up yet. Do you want to play a game?' So Princess Emmy, Princess Vivian and the cave monster played some games. They played Yahtzee, and they played hopscotch and they played checkers."

"Let's go to Elsa's castle"

"Ok, so Princess Emmy and Princess Vivian asked the cave monster - wait, what's the cave monster's name?" "Emmy!"

"No, we already have Princess Emmy and Emmy-the-Horse. That's too confusing if the monster's name is Emmy too. Pick a different name"

"Emmy."

"What about Lulabelle?"

"Okay."

"Alright, so Princess Emmy and Princess Vivian asked Lulabelle the Cave Monster if she wanted to continue on their adventure with them and go visit Queen Elsa. So Princess Emmy got on Emmy-the-Horse and Princess Vivian got on Margaret-the-Horse and Lulabelle didn't have a horse so she walked. And they went clippy-cloppy, clippy-cloppy through the forest and clippy-cloppy up the mountain until they came to a huge palace made of ice."

"Make it a Mean Elsa"

"No, I don't like the stories where Elsa is mean. How about a Nice Elsa?"

"Okay"

"So Princess Emmy, Princess Vivian and Lulabelle the Cave Monster knocked on the door to

Queen Elsa's palace. Queen Elsa opened the door and said, 'Hello Emmy and Vivian! And who's your new friend?' and Lulabelle curtsied and said 'My name's Lulabelle the Cave Monster'. And Queen Elsa said, 'Why Lulabelle, where'd you learn such good manners?' and Lulabelle said, "Well I went to Good Manners School of course!" 'Amazing!' said Queen Elsa. 'What would you girls like to play?'"

"Roller-skates!"

"Roller-skates?! Wow okay! So Queen Elsa magicked everyone some roller-skates and they all roller-skated around the ballroom."

"No, ice-skates!"

"What? They already have roller-skates! So anyway, after they were all done roller-skating, I mean ice-skating, Queen Elsa made everyone pancakes with syrup for lunch. By then, it was getting pretty late, so it was time for everyone to go home. Princess Emmy got on Emmy-the-Horse, Princess Vivian got on Margeret-the-Horse and Lulabelle walked, and they all went clippy-cloppy down the mountain back to Lulabelle's cave. And Emmy said 'Bye Lulabelle, thanks for playing with us today, see you tomorrow!' and Lulabelle said 'Bye Princess Emmy!'. And Princess Emmy and Princess Vivian and their horses went clippy-cloppy back through the forest, clippy-cloppy back over the bridge, clippy-cloppy back past the villages, clippy-cloppy back over the fields to their castles. And Princess Emmy said, ' Bye Vivian, see you tomorrow!' and Princess Vivian said, 'Bye Emmy!'. And both princesses went home to their castles and had dinner and went to bed. The End"

Daddy, "Wow, what a great story!"

Emmy, "Tell another story!!"

Mama **inhales**

Evelyn Lenda, Age 11

Untitled

When I was 6 my parents got a divorce. That led me to being stressed out for awhile. I was a couch potato. I wasn't trying to do anything, at least not in school. It wasn't until I failed a test that I started trying. No matter how hard it was I studied and studied. Now I am going into 6th grade and I realized that no matter how hard life is you always have room for improvement. If you are having a bad day or a good day, you can always make it better by trying your best!

Evie Schwartz, Age 6

Untitled

My Grandmother Bubby

- She is kind
- She makes me noodles
- She sings me songs

My Grandfather Zaidé

- He is sweet and kind
- He plays with me
- He has lots of love to share

Evie, Age 6, and Tutu Schwartz, Grandmother

Untitled

Personal space is like a big hula-hoop between a friend. When you see the hula-hoop you also feel it and so your other friend sees it too.

Freyja, Age 5

Untitled

My dog Lola lives in Dowagiac with my Papa and Nano. Lola is the best dog ever. She is so white, cuddly, and only likes when I feed her. She is special because she loves me and I love her. Cute, cute, cute! I love her so much, she is the best doggy.

Ignatius, Age 5

Untitled

I went to the Heritage Park Nature Center with my mom and sister. I played with the camping toys in the Nature Center. I also read some pictures that described some animals. I played in the boat with my sister. I played with the flower stacking toys and the blocks. We also went on the story walk together. We read about the alphabet and trails. We had fun together.

Jovidhamanoj, Age 11

Cedar Point

Me and my family, friends went to Cedar Point. Me and my friends was so happy we went water park. First we went to a swimming pool it's not normal we can go in that river ride.

Kayra, Age 6

Untitled

That I learned in life is compassion is so great once I been mean to some people and I think that compassion is the best one because if you be mean they will be mean back.

Kiema, Age 10

Untitled

One day I was at a roller coaster place. They had a zip line, rollercoaster, go karts, and a drop

tower. I went on the drop tower with my mom. We went to the ticket place and bought the tickets. We waited in line then I saw a sign that said dune drop 125 feet tall. Finally we got on it goes up slowly, then down fast we screamed so loud. It was so fun and so scary. When we got off my mom was shaking so much she couldn't put her phone in her purse. But I was skipping around. She hated it a lot. And she said she would never go on ever ever ever ever again.

Lena, Age 7

Untitled

I went to a roller coaster place. There was a zipline, drop tower, and a roller coaster. I went on the zipline with my sister. You go up then stay up high for a second. Then you go down. I was happy and scared.

Lily Harris, Age 4

Untitled

I went on a school field trip. I went with my mom. We went to a barn. We took a hayride to a pumpkin patch. I picked my own Halloween pumpkin. We made apple cider and got to drink it.

Lincoln Smith, Age 5

Untitled

Hi, my name is Lincoln Smith and I am five years old. I want to tell you about two people that hold a special place in my heart. They are my best friends, and their name are Henry and Stella. Henry is four and will be five in July and Stella is six. I met Henry at pre-school and Stella is his sister. Our parents are best friends, so we spend a lot of time together. Some of the things that we do together are, go to the park, go to Lifetime to the pool, do crafts and watch movies. We also love to eat treats together. Last weekend we had a BBQ and a water party, and it was a lot of fun. One of my favorite things that we have done together is go on vacation to Florida. We went to the beach, played in the pool and went exploring on special walks with our Dads. I love Henry and Stella because they are nice, they are funny, and they care about me when I am sad or sick. I love them so much and I hope we stay friends forever.

Manjari Ravikumar, Age 7

Untitled

One day I went to Disney World. I went for so much rides. And one day on Wednesday we were about to go to the pool. Well we didn't go. One day we went and saw many Disney princesses and characters. And before that day I got a watch and a autograph book. And I also got a Elsa stuffy. And with the autograph book all characters signed it. And my parents made a printout of the photos we took with them. We also had a background picture. One day I went for a boat ride it was fun. After the boat ride we were walking and then my parents stopped in some place and I kept walking and I got lost. I was near the zoo I started crying and zoo keeper was near me and I was staying near the zoo keeper for few minutes and then my mom came and got me. I learned a lesson from this that we have to stay always near our parents.

Melina Peratsakis, Age 15

Propaganda

What is propaganda? It is something that influences opinions, and not always for the greater good.

Propaganda is little half-truths and lies all mixed together to create something...horrible. Because propaganda is not ever a good thing for the people or thing it is targeting. Case in point... Palestine.

You're hearing a lot about Palestine, specifically the little strip of land called Gaza. 26 miles long and 5 miles wide, home to more than 2 million people, Gaza is one of the most densely populated places on the planet.

Let's talk about the real Palestine, not the one that's been marred by propaganda that the news likes spitting out lately.

I am a Palestinian. My family is from a town just outside of Jerusalem that literally borders the West Bank. In fact, this town-known as Beit Hanina-is divided by the illegal border wall that separates the West Bank from the current state of Israel.

A few years ago, my family and I visited Palestine. Palestine is an amazing place, filled with natural wonders and beautiful architecture that collides with each other in the old city of Jerusalem, home of a melting pot of culture and the three Abrahamic religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

The old city is rich with beauty and culture. Walking into its walls is like stepping away from the modern world. Stalls are filled with fascinating items to buy. Walk past one stall and you can see an intricately crafted pyramid of spices, the alternating colors of each "step" aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Walk past another and you'll see alluring rugs and tapestries. Another stall will show you beautiful jewelry and golden tea sets. Still another will draw you to it because of the amazing smells from the ka'ak, a type of bread shaped like a large hoop; the hummus, artfully designed into a pleasing pattern of olive oil and spices; and falafel, fresh brown patties just off the fryer. The only thing that spoils the atmosphere are the soldiers that are everywhere, breathing down your neck and pointing their rifles at anyone they want. We used to eat ka'ak, falafel, and hummus every day for breakfast, stuffing our faces until we couldn't eat more.

Jericho, the oldest city in the world. A cable car took us up to the mountain, where a restaurant awaited us on the cliff to serve us delicious traditional Palestinian food. A literal hole in the side of the mountain sold us jewelry and beautiful thobes, which are traditional gowns with intricate designs weaved into them. Each design has a deeper meaning, not just random decorations to add at whim.

The Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea couldn't be more different. One, the Dead Sea, is saltier than anything you could imagine. There is so much salt it's impossible to sink, instead you float buoyant and can read a book if you wanted to. The Dead Sea is also boiling hot. This is not a sea that you go to for a refreshing swim. This sea is more famous for the clay that's there, clay that's rich in minerals and good for your skin. The Mediterranean Sea, however, is cold and refreshing, especially since the weather was on average 115 degrees during our stay. There were so many jellyfish! Little light blue creatures that floated along, stinging the unsuspecting swimmer, namely me.

And the people. My goodness, the people there were so generous and kind! We visited a mosque called Nabi Musa, believed to be the final resting place of Prophet Moses, and the Bedouins there refused to let us leave without first giving us something to eat and drink after a long day in Jericho. They even had camels that we rode.

There is so much more to this story than I could ever fit here. I could talk about the scenery, the miles and miles of olive groves at risk of deforestation by the Israeli military. I could talk about the fig and plum trees, of the miles of oasis-like countryside.

One thing I learned when I was there, though, was that the public image, the propaganda that most of the rest of the world knows, is so far from the truth that I can only blink in utter shock every time I hear yet another lie on the news. I cannot understand how Palestine and Palestinians can be reduced to violence and war. I simply cannot fathom how people can be complacent when Palestinians struggle under a brutal occupation.

So the next time you hear something on the news, ask yourself: does this seem sensationalized? Could this very well not be true? This is the only way we can avoid falling for untrue narratives and deceiving propaganda.

Merrick, Age 7

Zoo

I liked when I went to the zoo. Cuz I got to see the polar bear. It was the best to see the polar bear!

Mitchell, Age 5

Untitled

I had a trip to the park and played with the people at the park. Fun.

Moukthika, Age 9

Untitled

Imagine if you had an awesome adventure every day! That would be really fun, right? Well, I have a small adventure every day and it is so adventurous. Me and my family go to parks, walking trails, bike rides, water parks, and more outdoor fun stuff. If you're wondering "what about indoor activities?", then, that would count as a big adventure. We might go to these fun places in winter or when we're really bored. We go to trips in state or out of state too. Those happen often at summer when the weather is in medium temperature. I don't know where we are going as a big adventure this summer but I'm sure it will be fun!

Nadiah, Age 9

Untitled

If you lied you can be in trouble. I lied one time I got in trouble. But I do not lied. It can get you in big trouble. That is why I do not lied.

Nathan H., Age 2

Untitled

My Nana hold a special place in my heart. When I wake up I want to FaceTime my Nana. When we get ready to go somewhere, I believe that we are going to Nana's house. When Nana is talking to my parents or siblings, I interrupt because I want Nana's full attention. When Nana is on FaceTime, I take her everywhere And show her my dinosaurs and cars. I love my Nana.

Nina, Age 6

Untitled

Family. My family is the best family. 1 boy 1 girl (me) 1 man 1 woman. Oh yeah and 1 dog. 100 stuffies that they buy me. There's another person I'm writing about. Her name is Fiona. She's my little Elsa. She is the most bestest friend in the whole world. Family is the craziest family ever. So family is the best company. Fiona she taught me how to do this: you only get 1 pencil and you fling the pencil side to side and back and forth and back it's hard I can't do it. The end wait I don't want it to end.

Nolan, Age 9

Untitled

I love going Up North to Camp Daggett it was awesome the only downside about the camp is swimmer's itch. They had swimming, canoeing, sailing, taco tuesday, tie-die tuesday pizza on Thursday for dinner pancakes for breakfast on Friday and a cookout for dinner and the BEST PART IS NO PARENTS

Philip, Age 15 Months

Untitled

When I was 14 months old, my parents took me on a kayaking trip I won't soon forget! First we packed up the plug-in, hybrid Chrysler minivan named Hamton with our tandem kayak, paddles, life jackets, sunscreen, hats, and other gear. We met up with Ms. Jamie at a playground. Mom fed me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich while Dad and Ms. Jamie drove Hamton to the end destination. I climbed a ramp at the playground. The slides were too big and scary for me! Dad and Ms. Jamie came back. Mom put my sunscreen and life jacket on. I didn't like the feeling of wearing the tight life jacket. Mom and Dad pushed the kayak down a metal kayak shoot and into the river! Mom didn't help to push the kayak much because she was carrying me. Ms. Jamie pushed her red kayak all by herself. Mom got into the kayak first and then I joined her. Dad came on last and pushed us away from the dock. Off we went! On our trip down the Clinton River, we saw a Great Blue Heron, egrets, turtles, a Belted Kingfisher, and fish. Mom played with me while Dad paddled the big blue kayak. The kayak had some holes I enjoyed poking water through. I wanted to crawl up on the bow but Mom kept holding me back. Eventually, I got bored with playing with Mom so I went to visit Dad in the back. Ms. Jamie was going a lot faster than us. Zip zip zoom! After a while with Dad, I got bored with Dad so I went back up to Mom and peeked over the side of the kayak. Woah! Splash, splash, splash the water! So fun! Mom looked away for one second, and, while she did, I decided to take a DIP! I dove into the Clinton River, head first. Mom

reacted very quickly and grabbed me. My life jacket did it's job and I floated to the surface. I was no longer happy and my diaper weighed at least as much as me. Thankfully, we were close to our destination. We reached our muddy exit point and got out of the kayak. What an adventure!

Raina Cranson, Age 11

Untitled

One time when I was 7 years old, I was going to go to sleep away camp with my friend Nora. I was so excited. We were all packed up and ready to go but then we got an email. The email said someone got Covid. They had to close the camp for the rest of the summer because of that. We were so upset that we couldn't go so we planned a camp out. We had it at Nora's house and there was so many people. Not only was there Nora and I, but there was also Nora's sister, Clara, Nora's brother, Henry, My sisters, Sona and Shaila, their friends, Grace, Larkin, and Sully. We did a slip 'n slide and it was so fun. We all had tents to sleep in. Nora and I got bored and decided to watch a movie inside. We fell asleep. Meanwhile Clara and Shaila decided to go on the neighbors trampoline. They have permission to go on their trampoline, but it was two am! They see something moving in the shadows. They get really scared so they decide to run in the house. The thing was, they didn't know we were there. They run into the house screaming, "Cereal Killer! Cereal Killer!" We wake up. Nora starts freaking out. I did not understand what was happening. At this point Grace and Sona were also awake so they came inside the house. Meanwhile the boys are fast asleep. We are all freaking out. Someone asks what time it is so Clara looks at her phone. 3:00am Friday the 13th. This is when I started freaking out. Nora's house has a living room with all windows so we could see everything outside which made it scarier. I saw the reflection of myself and thought it was an actual person outside so I screamed! Shaila told us to try to go sleep in Nora's room. They have bunk beds and I was on the top right next to the window that was open. Nora fell asleep so I went back into the living room. The older kids decided to go back into their tent to get their sleeping supplies. They run as fast as they could and came back. Grace realized she dropped her pillow so she back for it but she swears she saw a person inside their tent when she went back. Finally morning came and we told our parents and the Boys the story. We found the "person" we were seeing was and umbrella blowing in the wind. That was one of the craziest moments ever.

Rowan, Age 4

Untitled

I went on the go karts and the sand dunes. I felt so happy. I was with my grandma, Pa, Mom, Dad, Kiera and Lena. I went on the lighthouse.

Ruthie

Untitled

My cat is the one I care about he is fat and fluffy, he is really nice. He is 5 ½ years old, and I picked him from the pet shop! His name is Master Peanut. And I got him when I was 6. I got him and he was so happy that when I touch him he was purring. He is light and dark brown. I like to use him as a pillow because he takes mine so I use him. And I pet him a lot and I call him "My Prince" because he is a boy and he is like my son and he is the kind of food. He like to eat a lot. He like to cuddle with me. We get a blanket to snuggle. We watch Scooby Doo together. I love him with my

heart to soul. Yes I do.

Sashvika Sridhar, Age 8

Untitled

Do you know who a friend is? A friend is someone who shares kindness and is a helping hand! In 2024, when I was in second grade, I had a friend who is nice and generous. She was no ordinary friend! Her name is Aaliyah.

One fine day, our class went out for an extra recess, everyone was overjoyed! Some were playing tag, and some were playing on the monkey bars while I had the plan of playing on the slide, so I dashed to the slide and grabbed onto the slide's edge. But Tanya who was playing tag wanted to go down the slide because she wanted to go hide, so no one would tag her. But instead of asking me to get off, she shoved me down. I was screaming and sliding down with fright ...AAAAAAH...But then I saw a purple fluffy jacket flying into the slide and I remembered that Aaliyah was wearing a purple fluffy jacket that morning. Anyway, I climbed out by tugging onto the jacket. When I reached up, I saw Aaliyah's grinning face. When recess was over everyone was out of steam and I hugged Aaliyah as tight as I could! And that one story explains why I care about Aaliyah so much!!

Sashvika Sridhar, Age 8

Untitled

Have you ever been on an adventure?! It is really thrilling and exciting!!!! I've been on one too! And it was really mysterious!!! One day we were collecting trash from the enclosed playground because it was Earth Day! But for some reason my friend Aadya raced over to a bush that was behind us. I turned over to see if she was alright but instead of a smile she froze, and her face was in horror! I quickly told the other girls who were: Aaliyah, Dawthlei and Tanya, we raced to Aadya "what's wrong" I asked while I was swishing my way so I could find what she was shocked about. Suddenly out of nowhere ...QUACK... I kept swishing even though I heard that sound. By the time I was almost finished we had to go to class. Two days passed by. The next day at recess I went straight to the bush where I was swishing and started doing the same thing, but this time I finished before recess was over and I saw a duck!!! "Maybe it's a mama duck laying eggs" Tanya said, "maybe I said" but recess was over before Tanya or me could say another word. The following day at recess I saw everyone crowded near the bush, when I went there, I didn't see a duck instead there were splattered eggs everywhere I thought maybe a critter like a rabbit or a bird who knows what it could have been? And that was my adventure that has been waiting for me!!

Sheraagvi Sheimanth, Age 6

The Family Trip

One day my family was going to Canada. We had to go in a very long tunnel to cross Michigan to Canada! In Canada, there were new sights and smells. First we went to a hotel and booked a room to stay in. There were shops in the hotel, and on a wall they had stuck jars with real types of jelly beans inside! Then we got in our car to visit Niagara Falls! Then we ate dinner and slept. The next day we went to a shop called IHOP and ate breakfast. I ate pancakes! Then we went to Niagara Falls. There I saw white birds! Then we went in a lift. The lift took us underground! There

was a tunnel! When we reached the end, we saw Niagara Falls! Then we came back and ate ice-cream! Mine was like a popsicle! Then we went to a place and saw a cartoon of the ice age! Then we were in the ice age! (The pretend ice age.) Snow fell from the walls! (That was soap). Raindrops fell heavily! (That was water). Then all that was done. Then we ate pizza and slept.

Silas Harrison, Age 8

Untitled

We just got to Pennsylvania a few days ago. So far I'm having fun. Today we are going to Willow tree for ice cream. Tomorrow we are going to the beach. We will have a lot of fun. The end.

Sophia, Age 7

Untitled

2 people I care about is Alice and Elliot. They are my cousins. I like to play with them.

Toby, Age 4 ½

Untitled

At school I learned how to do addition. It is fun!

Victoria

The Dirtiest Doorbell

My Grandma Emmy lives in a very tall building. It is so tall that sometimes the top gets lost in the clouds. My Grandma Emmy is my great-grandmother. When I first heard this I was so confused. My regular grandma is the greatest grandma how could this one be greater? Oh boy, I thought I'm in for a real treat. Well I think this grandma is not as great as my regular grandma because she can't run and play like my regular grandma can. I'll just call her Grandma Emmy. She likes that better anyway. She said great grandma makes her sound old. I told her "But you are old." She said let's keep that a secret. I think that will be hard because it says so on her face. I see my Grandma Emmy every week because my regular grandma always wants to check on her. I don't mind checking on her because she gives me hugs and cookies. She loves me, it's something I just know. My Grandma Emmy tells me funny stories about when she was a little girl. They are the same stories but I don't mind because she tells them different every time. I tell her she missed a part in the story and she asks me to fill it in. I'm always glad to do that. She has a story about a cow that chased her and how she used to ask the chickens to get up so she could get their eggs. One time, my mom and I went to visit Grandma Emmy. I ran ahead of my mom to the apartment, my mom yelled to me to push the doorbell. "I don't know which one it is" She answered "Sure you do, it's the dirty one." I looked up and down at all the door bells. Some were cleaning and shining and some were broken. But one was so dirty. I pressed it and Grandma Emmy answered "Who's there" I said "It's me Victoria" and she said "Victoria are you all by yourself" "No but I found your doorbell all by myself and mom and I went in.

When we got up to my great grandma's apartment she said "I didn't know you could read"

I said "I can't but I can find the dirtiest doorbell on the panel" "Oh" she gasped "I never see that doorbell downstairs, I didn't know it was dirty. Perhaps you will wash it for me." "Oh no" I said I would never be able to find your doorbell if it was the same as the others. My mom said "It's dirty because so many people come to see you and press your doorbell" Grandma Emmy said "The dirtier the better then."

Yumna During, Age 8

Untitled

We drove to NY from MI. It was a long journey but we went through it. We made sure to pack a lot of food and water. Me and my sister and brother made sure to get some sleep on the ride too. We saw lots of animals on the ride there like cows and horses and we even saw farms. We drove through Pennsylvania and saw the Pocono Mountains!

Zaid Zafar, Age 3

Untitled

This summer I went to Spain and Morocco with my parents. I had a lot of fun. My favorite part was eating ice cream and riding a camel. It was a fun adventure.

Zakariya Alavi, Age 11

Courage

Rain, Wind, Chaos. My fingers slipped, sweat drizzling down my neck as I gasped for breath in the darkness around. My hair was matted down to the point where my head looked flat. My eyes were bare, staring straight ahead at the thousands of feet below us.

Yesterday...

"I don't want to!"

"There's not an option," replied my uncle, despite my pleas of fear. If I had not been worrying too much, I would be playing with my cousins Noah and Ayan. We were visiting them at their new house, located in sunny El Salvador, for the first time. Why I was fretting was because we were about to climb one of the biggest active volcanoes in the world just the next day. Its name was Santa Ana, and it was thousands of feet tall. That night, I went to sleep with a lot on my mind. I'm not set up for this, I thought. Little did I know, I was. Maybe.

Climbing the mountain...

We had to drive to the start of the trail and that was already an upwards drive. Then we hiked a bit to the visitors station, used the bathroom, ate a bit of fruit, and started. The first bit was literally a hike through the woods. A bit of fear brushed off me. Then it started to get rocky. We seemed a bit high yet the sides of the path went down in more of a slant than a straight down ledge. There were lots of shrubs on the side of the path and I was mostly enjoying the climb. But I had only seen 10% of what was really in store.

Around three quarters to the top...

Sweat lathered on my skin as we stretched ourselves to the limit. Hot sun beated down on my neck. Then the humidity came, followed by the clouds. Splash! Rain slapped the ground as my cousins put on their coats and we learned that, just like the last few days, my mom underestimated the rain. What was just a sunny day was now a 10-year old drenching downpour. However, I still kept a positive attitude as I continued to climb more viciously than ever. But it wasn't my most vicious. It was some time later that the real climbing started.

Higher up the mountain...

As more rain came down the path was so narrow it was a wonder that there were no railings. Because right beside me was a drop of who knows how many feet. The towns below looked so small and if a person in that cluster of houses had come out, they would have looked like dots. So I started to ponder about the gloomy surroundings. Not only was it raining hard, it was now so foggy that it was hard to tell which was worse, the rain and fog or the narrow path and view of the thousands of feet below us. And because I was experiencing both, my mind was going into turbo mode. It was like for every foot high we were, a distress signal came into my mind. But every thought that came into my mind was responded to as this: blank...

A few ominously frightening moments later...

A boy crouched against the mountainside staring horrified at his surroundings. He was crying very quietly, and his mind seemed to be blank. I would suggest that the laughter and talk of everyone and everything else seemed either muted or muffled led to him. The stern cries of his mother telling his father to help him up. The laughter of his sister and cousins. None seemed relevant to him. And looking at his cousins, we are reminded of a funny thing. How we feel about others' thoughts. The last thing you want is to be embarrassed in front of people you know. The boy got up, wiping his tears, using the support of his father; not wanting anyone to see his devastating state.

I couldn't hold my dad's hand forever. I slowly let go, and started climbing. The rest was history. Eating popsicles from a seller on the top of Santa Ana. Experiencing the warmth of the sun drying our bodies on the way back down. I named my story Courage. I had courage. We all can. A helping hand helps. Cousins help (even if it means being slightly embarrassed). And inspiration helps. Hopefully this will be an inspiration. Inspiration to have, well, courage.

