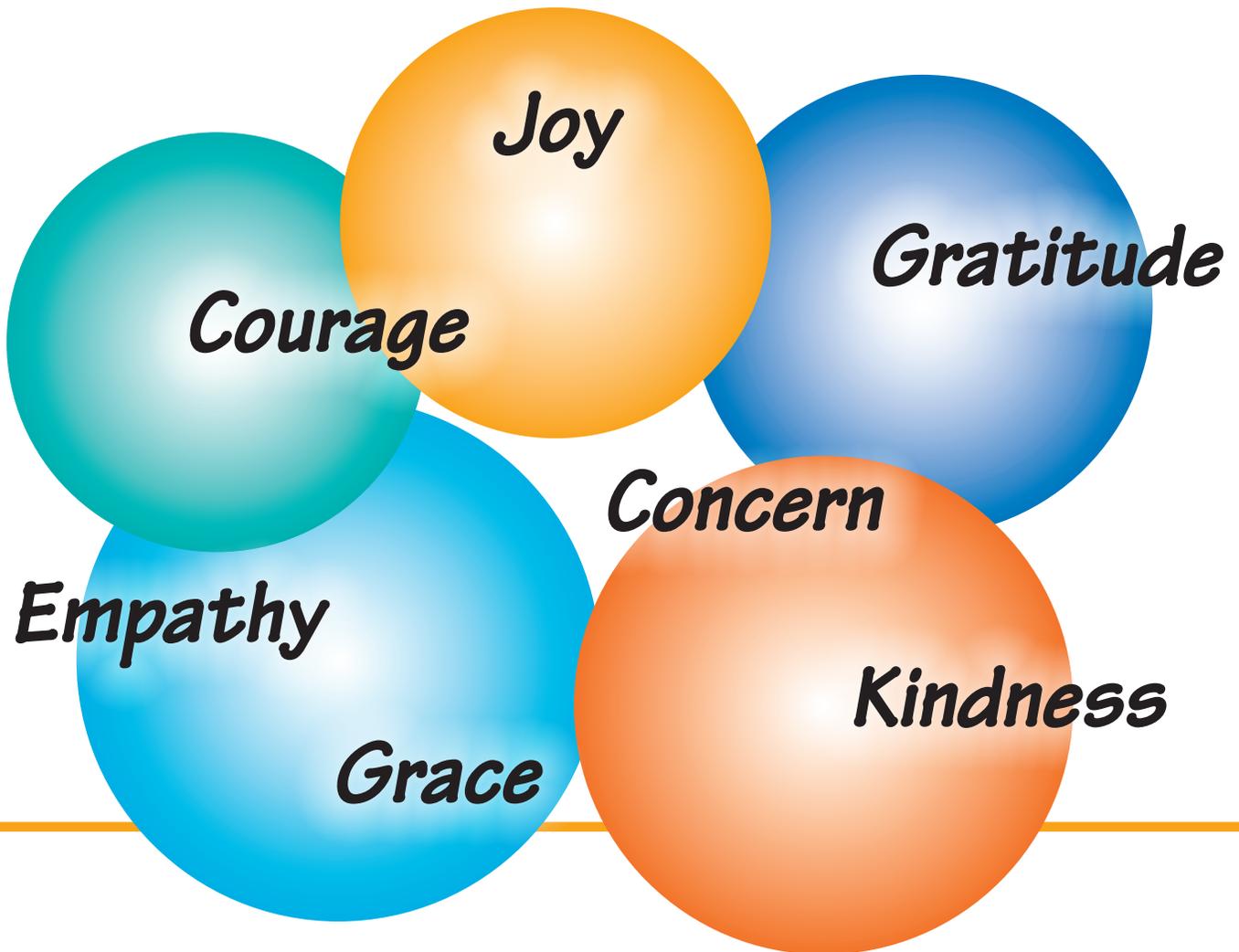


Laws *of* Life



THE GEORGIA
ROTARY CLUBS
LAWS OF LIFE
ESSAY CONTEST
2018



The Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest challenges students to uncover their unique qualities and articulate how they demonstrate them in their lives. As a signature program of the Rotary Clubs in Georgia, the contest takes Rotary's emphasis on ethics, education, and advanced literacy into schools and classrooms throughout the state.

The original Laws of Life contest was started by the late Sir John Templeton, a pioneer in financial investments and a distinguished philanthropist. Templeton believed there are a set of rules, ideals, and principles, or "the laws of life," that should guide one in living a full and joyous existence. He created the program to encourage young people to reflect on these principles. Today's contest is modeled after Sir Templeton's original contest.

For almost 20 years, the Georgia contest has successfully been a leader of character education and ethical literacy. The contest encourages students to see themselves and others in a new perspective so that they may live their best, most compassionate, and most courageous lives.

Facts and Benefits

The Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest is the largest contest of its kind in North America. More than 620,000 essays have been written by Georgia students since the contest started.

The contest fulfills the state of Georgia's mandated character education requirements for high schools.

In total, the **2017-2018 Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest** had **46,269** essays written by Georgia students from **60** partner high schools and is awarding **\$20,000** in student and teacher award money to **167** student winners and **49** teachers.

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is an outreach of the Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to transform lives by promoting positive values and by building ethical literacy in students.



THE GEORGIA
ROTARY CLUBS
LAWS OF LIFE
ESSAY CONTEST

"Help yourself by helping others."

– John Templeton

As always, we received many excellent essays. Choosing only seven winning essays was a difficult task. We sincerely congratulate our winners – your heartfelt essays reveal hope within hopelessness, compassion within pain, and life-lessons in our everyday lives. It is truly an honor to be a part of this program.

Each year the success of the Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest depends on so many individuals and organizations. We are grateful for everyone's efforts. The students who shared very personal stories, the teachers who went above and beyond to guide their pupils, our Rotarians who value this mission and volunteered time. We also thank Rotary clubs, foundations, corporations, and individual donors: without ALL of you this would not be possible.

This year saw change for the Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest as Susan Mason, the Program's Executive Director for the last eight years, retired. For fourteen years Susan devoted her talent and leadership to the program and selflessly nurtured the contest and the process. Thank you, Susan, for your dedication to the contest and, more importantly, to the students of Georgia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol J. Gray".

Carol J. Gray
Executive Director, Georgia Rotary
Districts Character Education Program, Inc.
& Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay
Contest, Member, Midtown Atlanta Rotary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renee Welch".

Renee Welch
Board Chair, Georgia Rotary Districts
Character Education Program, Inc.,
Member, South Forsyth Rotary

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Noah Arnold

Cass High School – 12th Grade

State Winner

How far can an act of kindness take you? Does it fade in the moment the action is complete, or does it stay with you forever? On December 12, 2017, I discovered just how easily an unimportant after-thought to me could become a life preserver to someone drowning in the pits of their darkest hours. Fourteen seemingly insignificant words and a number that I wrote on a whim, ended up saving a young girl's life.

It was a Tuesday, and I was feeling great. For the first time in a long time, I was content. I was excelling in school, my home life was feeling stable, and I finally felt like I was in a good place with all my friends; I was happy. I started the day as any other day by going to school and to the morning meeting that the FCA hosts on Tuesday mornings in the school's health room. It was a regular meeting, and we planned everything that we were going to do for that Friday's FCA huddle, when it hit me. I suddenly had the urge to go write on the whiteboard. I walked up to the board and wrote fourteen simple words I hoped would make someone smile. Along with my cell phone number, I wrote, "I'm here for you and I love you. If you need anything, call me."

I often try to write little words of encouragement or jokes on my teacher's whiteboards to try to brighten someone's day, but I've never written my phone number before. I'm not quite sure what I was expecting. Maybe I wanted someone to text me to find out who I was, or maybe I wanted to meet new friends, but I certainly did not expect anyone to actually call in need of anything serious. Most people don't have the courage to admit that they need help, much less to a stranger.

For the rest of the day, I received a few random texts asking who I was or complimenting me for being so nice and supportive. Eventually, they stopped coming and I forgot that I had even written anything. After a long day at school and swim, I came home exhausted and in need of some sleep. I started my nightly ritual of showering, brushing my teeth, and getting into bed. I laid in bed and started watching "Saturday Night Live" to try to ease myself to sleep. Then it happened. At about ten o'clock I got a call from a blocked caller ID. I answered expecting a machine selling some useless product that I'd never use, so I was surprised when a girl started talking.

"Did you mean what you wrote on the board earlier, that you care about me?" she said. I was taken aback. Someone cared enough about what I wrote to call me? I quickly told her that I meant it

Law of Life:

"One act of kindness can change the world."

and that I'd be happy to help her with anything that she needed. She went on telling me how no one had ever told her that they loved her and how much she needed to see something like my message that day. Then she dropped the bomb. She told me that she was planning on killing herself that night and that my little, insignificant, after-thought of a note on the whiteboard in the health classroom saved her life. She said that through the note she saw hope that she had previously given up on. I was awestruck. I quickly told her that I would help her with anything that she needed. I referred her to a few counselors and teachers that could help, tried to gather information about her, and begged her to stay on the line, but sadly she hung up.

I laid in bed all night after that not knowing what to do. I had just accidentally saved a life. What would've happened if I wouldn't have written that on the board? Would there be one less student at Cass High School? It still haunts me to this day, but I learned a valuable lesson from the whole experience: when an opportunity to be kind presents itself, take it. You never know when a smiling face, an outstretched hand, or a small note on a whiteboard can make a difference or save a life.

Kindness

Law of Life:

“For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something else. It is about your outlook towards life. You can either regret or rejoice.”

Throughout my relatively short life span, I have unfortunately experienced a copious amount of tragedy. The hole that formed early in my life forced me to make a decision on the type of person I wanted to be and how I react to adversity. I also learned that as long as I focus on the positive facets of life, blessings will come from the darkest of circumstances.

My first encounter with immense hardship came shortly after Christmas when I was eight years old. My mother had been ill for some time and would spend most of her time in the hospital away from home. While she transferred from hospital beds to her own multiple times over the course of a month, I stayed with my aunt and uncle. After a few weeks of going back and forth from my aunt and uncle’s house to my own house, I remained at their house for two weeks. This was unusual because Christmas break had ended after I arrived at my aunt’s home. I was confused and slightly delighted that I did not have to go to school. Once the two weeks had passed, I was taken back to my house to see my parents. On the way back, I noticed that my aunt was noticeably stressed. She did not look at me that much either, but when she did, she always gave me a concerned smile that haunts me to this day. Once we arrived, I saw a plethora of cars in the driveway, so I thought someone was having a party. When we pulled up to the house, I got out the car and leaped into my dad’s arms since I

had not seen him in weeks. He then took me aside and hesitantly said that Mom was gone. I did not believe him, so I lightly hit him in the shoulder. When he did not react, I knew something was wrong. I went inside the house and never saw my mother. I was immediately overwhelmed. I avoided everyone because being around family forced me to think about the person that I lost.

After a few years, I was able to put the past behind me. I had just started sixth grade when the unthinkable happened. What seemed like a normal day quickly turned eerily similar to the day my mother passed. My aunt and uncle came to town and took me to dinner. I was puzzled and I suddenly realized my dad had not gotten back from work. After dinner, my aunt was unusually nervous. The closer to home we got, she looked back and smiled that same concerned smile. Suddenly, something in my mind clicked, and I knew exactly what happened. I could not let myself believe it, but once I saw cars in the driveway, I immediately broke into tears. After I went inside and saw everyone, I went to my room and just fell asleep, praying that the day was a dream. When I woke up without my father there, my heart sank lower than ever.

Even though I survived the unimaginable, I decided to not allow myself to get consumed by grief. Instead, I chose to live my life. When I stepped back and looked at the bigger picture, I realized that I am tremendously blessed. I have an amazing aunt and uncle who love and support me, I have an amazing education, and I have even more friends. When I think of what happened, I become inspired to write another chapter in my life and make my parents proud.

I always heard that having courage is very important. I did not know what courage exactly meant until a few years ago. In my eyes, courage is staying true to myself when all odds are stacked against me. I have come to find that “For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something else. It is about your outlook towards life. You can either regret or rejoice.” No matter what life throws at me, there are always two paths: have courage and keep going, or live in the past and sink.

Andrew Hama

Lambert High School – 12th Grade

2nd Runner-Up

Last summer, as I entered the classroom on my first day of SAT tutoring, I remember feeling the glare of students' eyes trained on me. I looked around, expecting the cursory glances I received to be hateful – they weren't. In fact, I received looks more towards the tone of "I wonder why he's here" and "how did he get here" than "he doesn't belong here," and, quite frankly, this puzzled me.

Many months later, as I entered my accounting class on the first day of school, I recognized one of the faces that regarded me with piqued interest when I had first walked into the tutoring center. As we discussed our memories from the tutoring class, the student revealed to me something very interesting. Apparently, on the first day that I had walked into that tutoring center, the students there had assumed that I was an Uber driver coming to drop off a student. Intrigued, I asked him why. His face immediately flushed with embarrassment, he answered, "Well you know...umm...b-b-because you're...bl-." He stammered, unable to finish the sentence. He then began laughing nervously as if to suggest that it was a joke, but I understood what he meant.

Living in Forsyth County, Georgia, a county that forcefully expelled all 1,100 of its African-American residents in 1912, a county that had a black population of roughly 0% from 1912 until the mid-1990's, a county that is frequently touted as the former breeding grounds of the Ku Klux Klan, the other students had never seen a black student at that SAT tutoring center before, nor had they expected to. The predominantly Asian tutoring center I had chosen was known for its rigor and intensity, and the picture the students had painted of a black teen did not coincide with my apparent desire to be pushed academically; to them, I was an anomaly.

Until that conversation with my classmate, I always thought that negative stereotypes and unreasoned profiling originated solely from malicious roots, but I never considered the fact that such preconceived notions may perhaps also come simply from a lack – or fear – of understanding. In his speech at the King Chapel in 1962, Dr. Martin Luther King expanded on the consequences of such irrational fear: "People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other." As this quote suggests, out of ignorance and a fear of knowing otherwise, many project singular experiences or hearsay onto an entire group, often

Law of Life:

"People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other."

–Martin Luther King, Jr.

leading to illogical assumptions and fundamental misunderstandings. I realized that, in such instances, seeking personal interaction in order to paint a complete picture is essential to halting this perpetual cycle of prejudice, and to progress towards true understanding.

After looking critically at myself, I remembered a distinct experience in which I had also subconsciously projected a stereotype onto an unfamiliar person. In a basketball game last year, I remember the utter bewilderment of my teammates and I as we noticed that one of the opposing team's players was Indian. I did not expect much from the player, but much to my astonishment, I quickly realized that not only was this Indian player much better than I expected, he was one of the best players in our region, and now, someone I am grateful to call a good friend.

With that experience in mind, and determined not to contribute to the cycle of prejudice, I decided that I would not be held captive by a fear of unfamiliar people; rather, I would seek to engage with those that are most different from me. I would embrace the very people that the status quo says I shouldn't. That day, I decided that, once again, I would be an anomaly.

Empathy

Law of Life:

“Just be kind.”

I sat on the corner as tears flooded my eyes. Having pushed my father’s last button, he’d snapped at me. At seven years old, I was propelled by an insatiable curiosity, coupled with a lack of awareness that my constant questions could be exhausting. On vacation visiting an Asheville, North Carolina, antique store, my dad finally broke on a question about art, or Asheville, or the origin of the universe. Of course, my eyes instantly welled up. As I bawled, he banished me to the bench outside to calm myself down.

My nose ran and my breathing stuttered, when suddenly a streak of blue raced by, a bicycle skidding to a sudden halt on my left. A young man dismounted his vehicle with a dramatic swoop, backpack on shoulder. Wordless, he strode my way, set down his backpack, and pulled out three spheres. He gave me a wink and started juggling. I was mesmerized. My sobbing stopped as I stared at the magical circle of flying orbs, filled with wonder, a mortal before a god. When he finished, the deity extended his hand, offering one of those magic globes. “Do me a favor,” he smiled. “When you see someone who’s upset, take the time to cheer them up. Everyone could use some caring.” He gave me a small wave goodbye, mounted his bike, and flew off into the afternoon.

Fast forward to middle school where I was still that curious, small-statured, bespectacled

Poindexter. I struggled as it dawned on me that I was gay, often facing depression and, sometimes, suicidal thoughts. I wasn’t sure how I fit in, especially in my conservative family. Carrying that burden into high school, and remembering the juggler’s words, I made a conscious decision to look beyond myself, to fight my own demons by lifting up others.

Freshman year, I took a leap, ran for class vice president...and won. A few weeks later, I found myself sitting on the gym floor, the freshman class representative at the Homecoming pep rally. Surrounded by bleachers of screaming schoolmates, I stuffed my face with cold, unsalted Chick-Fil-A waffle fries, 14 of them. Embarrassed, I’d lost the interclass battle of the fries, but now they knew my name and my willingness to play the fool. I’d get a “Hi Jackson!” in the hallway. In my mind, I needed to respond “Hi!” but with their name, too. I’d want to know, “Who are you? What’s your story?”

By genuinely showing interest in everyone, by being vulnerable and transparent in my interactions, I encourage others to open up. If I’m exposed, honest, and authentic, they can be, too. I cherish the opportunities to listen and to serve – from the guy whose ex-girlfriend committed suicide, to the shy brown-eyed little girl who hugs my legs on the last day of Sunday school. And I happily lead the senior class march each Friday morning, dancing the Macarena, inviting others to join in. And they do.

Ten years later I still have that petite, matte silver ball on my desk, and with it, the values it signifies to me: extending a hand to someone who feels different, down and out, without regard to how silly or awkward it makes me feel. That orb has taken me from the class nerd, bullied and picked-on, to the student body president and homecoming king.

As I reflect on my tearful seven year old self, I realize I didn’t seek to be voted “Most Likely to Brighten Your Day,” but only to reach out, extend a hand, and just be kind. I’ve grown into a juggler – someone who balances risk, skill, and courage instead of silver orbs. And like that juggler who changed my life’s outlook with a simple act of compassion, I’m exhilarated to share with others the joy I’ve found. After all, “everyone could use some caring,” right?

“Appreciate what you have before it becomes what you had.” We’ve all seen or heard this at some point in our lives. As an avid reader, I’ve come across many books where there is some sort of loss in the story and the main character struggles with it, as they were not prepared for it. I felt empathy towards these characters, thought I understood their pain, but, at the same time, I wondered how they didn’t realize what they had in front of them until it was gone. It wasn’t until I stood in that graveyard three years ago, the leaves changing color and falling around us, while I witnessed a priest give prayers over a casket, the heart-wrenching sobs of an inconsolable woman, the pain in the eyes of those near me, that I finally understood.

I was twelve when my family was invited to the second funeral I’ve ever been to. It was being held for my mom’s distant relative, a man whom I had never met, so I first felt as if I’d be intruding on his family’s time of mourning. After all, the only time I’ve lost someone was when my grandfather died when I was four. I wasn’t able to form a close bond with him, so I’ve never felt the crippling loss of a loved one. I mused on this subject on the way to the cemetery, distantly noting the grey sky, as if the day was grieving too. Once there, the first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the aroma of freshly tilled dirt. I stopped a healthy distance from the grave, and the priest began his prayers, his voice a sharp contrast in the otherwise silent graveyard. I looked down at the grave and felt the sadness that accompanies knowing that a person isn’t coming back, that even if you didn’t know them, somebody else did and loved them. With a glimmer of sadness, I looked up and my gaze landed on a woman. She was wearing black, as was customary for this type of affair, but the color matched her perfectly, emphasizing the sobs that wracked her frame, the desolation in her hunched shoulders. My eyes wandered the crowd, noting the quiet pain in the eyes of some, the tears drenching the cheeks of others. My gaze strayed to the men near the woman, their stiff stances hinting at their inner turmoil. Finally, my eyes veered towards my parents, my world coming to a standstill. My eyes jumped between my dad’s dark eyes, my mom’s lighter ones, and those of my brother, the same as those of our mom. I saw every fight, every laugh, and every memory we all had together. I recalled the late hours my parents worked, the small gestures of kindness from my brother, and every time I didn’t say thank you, or

Law of Life:
*“Appreciate what you
have before it becomes
what you had.”*

snubbed them for some petty reason. This is why, after leaving a flower on the casket, I walked back to my dad, put my arms around him, and decided I’d never let go.

Putting myself in the shoes of that woman was the moment I realized that nothing in life is guaranteed. That woman, who’d had plenty of time with her family, had not been prepared for this death. That’s because none of us are ever going to be ready to say goodbye. Seeing the effects death has on people firsthand has helped me understand that I should appreciate what I have, instead of taking it for granted. I’ll end up with regret if I don’t.

“Appreciate what you have before it becomes what you had.” This is an ideal I have come to live by, one I started incorporating into my life because life doesn’t guarantee anything. We forget this at times, going about our days as if they are infinite and everything we have going for us is set in stone. Seeing people experience loss, however, reminds you just how easy it would be for you and that person to trade places. You remember that nothing lasts forever.

Law of Life:

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.”

–Mark Twain

Hello,

You don't know who I am, but I know you, a little too much for my own liking. I know you like Hell knows fire, or like the abused knows a bruise, hesitantly. But I've always underestimated you; I thought that you came for the elderly, thought you had no interest in the younger generations. However, now I know that you'll stop at nothing to wreak havoc and spread your own internal misery.

You, with your droopy eye and sagging mouth, with your dragging leg, you look pitiful at first glance. But as one looks closer they may see the hateful gleam in your eyes or the blood cached under your nails. Or perhaps it's dirt from all the graves you've caused people to dig. Is it a trophy to you?

You've taken too many lives, dear one. The lives of brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, alike. Each time you come back, with your arm swinging like a dead man's leg dragging behind you, you take a part of him with you. Yes, he is why I have called upon you, you thieving creature. Of course, he is the topic of our conversation. Every time you pay him a visit, he looks more like you, but kinder. His pain is the kind of pain you want to take upon yourself, to shelter him from any hurt; your pain stems from your own anger, it makes you more bitter with every breath that you wheeze. When you visit, his leg drags more, his arm dangles.

We saved him from your clutches once, nearly healed him, but you weren't satisfied over the lack of bloodshed. You came back with a vengeance, and now his eyes are glazed over like he sees something in the distance that no one else can; maybe he sees hope. His laugh isn't the same, just a sharp intake of breath, a groan, and a half smile, but oh, that smile is like a breath of fresh air against your rotting presence. His eyes sometimes light up like a light in the dark and I know, he is fighting. I know he won't simply lay down and allow you to claim him. He will fight because that's what we do, that's all we know how to do. We will fight until there is nothing left to fight for, and I will fight with him. I won't let you take him. I won't hand him over like a present with a bow, like he's nothing. He is everything. I won't let him die without anyone else fighting for his life; he knows that as long as I am here, I will fight. He's only 21; you are taking his life before he has even had a chance to live. How is that fair? I know that I cannot trade bodies with him, that it isn't physically possible. If I could, there is no doubt in my mind that you'd be staring me in the eye instead of him.

It seems to me that my father is always the bearer of bad news. He told me the other night to prepare myself, to start saying my goodbyes. “There may not be anything that we can do,” he says. If that is true, then I will have lost both my mother and my brother before I have the chance to turn 16. Mark Twain once said, “Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” So I don't want to be angry anymore. This letter is me refusing to let my anger and hatred of you blind me any longer than it already has. This is me asking you – no, begging you to leave him alone. He is just a boy; let him live, please. And if you cannot leave without another life on your hands, a bit more blood under your nails – take me. I don't know what life is like without him, nor do I want to, so please spare him and take me.

Signed with shaky hands, but a hopeful heart,

Me.

George A. Stewart Jr. Character in Action Award*

Sarah Taphom

Rockdale County High School – 12th Grade

There are a lot of things people get wrong about the people that want to kill themselves. They think that it's so easy, that we can just silence the voice in our heads with things like smiling, yoga, or fresh air. Going outside. Finding love. But what if it isn't just a single voice – what if it's several, and what if it's out there, in the real world, talking in whispers and the things people leave unsaid. What if it's out there, creeping among your every conversation, twisting the words into the lies that leave you broken. But how could the mind be so self-destructive? That's what people can't imagine.

They think that depression is the same for everyone. The tragically beautiful girl staring listlessly out of the car window as life passes her by, the black-and-white pictures with the sad quotes and vintage overlays. That life is all about being sad. Forget the mania, the anger, and the numbness that comes with the experience of feeling absolutely nothing. Because, to them, a depressed person could only ever be a sob story for what comes after.

Nobody ever cares about the before.

Before the tears, before the cuts, before the scars...before the end.

And it was that kind of mindset that drove me away from the people I loved most. Not because they were callous, but because they could have no possible idea what I was going through (or so I thought). Or maybe they did, and their attempts at helping me only sank me further. But I was relying on other people to save me from drowning; I didn't realize that I needed to swim.

And, perhaps, a little part of me wanted to drown. The little part that spent its time whispering into my ear about how I deserved it, how no one deserved to feel the pain I was in, and that I was an even worse person for wanting to share it with anyone else.

So I hid. From everything. From everyone. My loved ones felt so far away. The things I loved to do became impossible. Because I didn't deserve the things that would make me happy, that could silence the voice. I deserved to lose myself to this internal, infernal whispering. So I began to sleep.

And the more I slept, the less I dreamed.

My dreams of becoming an author shipwrecked on a glacier of insecurity, doubt, and fear. I stopped reading. I stopped writing. I stopped being me.

Life carried on, day after day, week after week, month after month. I didn't sink or drown, but I didn't swim either. I just floated on. A shell of who I was.

Law of Life:

*“Happiness
comes again
if you let it.”*

Until the day I finally realized that, yes, I am worthy of happiness. I am not just my depression.

I am a perfectly imperfect whole that cannot be hollowed by things like mental illness, anxiety, and stress. And as much as it pained me not to hear this from the people I loved most, this was a life-lesson that could only be learned, not taught. I finally learned it.

So, I started living again. Smiled more. Laughed more. Read more. Wrote more. Anything I could do to recover from my brief bout in the sea. Eventually, I stumbled upon a book that would reopen all of my old wounds and thrust out all of the dark, depressive, horrible things I had ever thought right onto the page. And I rejoiced.

That book was aptly titled *More Happy Than Not*.

FINALLY, I knew I wasn't alone. That someone else, even in a book, had known exactly what I was going through. And they went through the very same lesson that I had figured out for myself.

“Happiness comes again if you let it,” the book said.

And I'm letting it.

* The George A. Stewart Jr. Character in Action Award, which carries a \$1,000 prize, is presented in conjunction with the Dunwoody Rotary Club to honor Dunwoody Rotarian George Stewart for his dedication to student character education and for his long-time service to the Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest.

Joy

**2017-2018
School
Winners**

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest

Alpharetta High School
Michael Victor Cardozo

Apalachee High School
Omar Al-Obaidi

Arabia Mountain High School
Patra Williams

Bainbridge High School
Noemi Noriega

Berkmar High School
Isatou Mariana Gaye

Bremen High School
Abby Carlton

Brookwood High School
Mei Deng

Brunswick High School
Joshua Tyler Anderson

Carrollton High School
Kamryn Marlow

Cass High School
Noah Arnold

Central Gwinnett High School
Ashlee Martinez

Central High School (Carrollton)
Kayla Batchelor

Cherokee High School
Haley Hutchison

Columbus High School
Derek Huell

Cross Keys High School
Stefaie Pena-Reyes

Dawson County High School
Jadin Cronan

Deerfield-Windsor School
Logan Clark

Eagle's Landing High School
Abbey Fontaine

Evans High School
Bryson Clements

Forest Park High School
My Le

George Walton Academy
Kate Hutter

Gilmer High School
Cortney Crawford

Griffin High School
Kayla Jancze

Hardaway High School
Temple Douglass

Heritage High School
Macy Gutierrez

Independence High School
Olivia Hatton

Jonesboro High School
Vivian Huynh

Lakeview Academy
Hannah Perkins

Lamar High School
Noah Buice

Lambert High School
Andrew Hama

Marietta High School
June Mwanlki

M. E. Stilwell School of the Arts
Brian Raiford

McIntosh High School
Maya Kulpinski

Milton High School
Will Buchanan

North Cobb High School
Malory Pickens

North Forsyth High School
Addie Harris

North Gwinnett High School
Grace Forren

North Springs Charter High School
Abraham Godinz

Northside High School (Columbus)
Briana Davis

Parkview High School
Grace Pritchett

Pickens High School
Caitlin Shipman

Rockdale High School
Sarah Taphom

Rome High School
Ashlyn Earnest

Roswell High School
Jackson Snellman

Sequoyah High School
Olivia Rexford

Shaw High School
Kiera Moore

Shiloh High School
Alysa Puento

South Forsyth High School
Nadira Javid

Spalding High School
Jason Forrest

Thomas County Central High School
Aubri JoLynn Johnson

Thomasville High School
Maxwell White

West Hall High School
Ashley Alcantar Magana

Westover High School
Leha Berry

Wheeler High School
Colette Matas

White County Ninth Grade Academy
Shelby Spain

Winder-Barrow High School
Timothy Ckiar

2017-2018 Georgia Laws of Life Teachers of Distinction

We salute the school contest chairs who achieved a 20 percent or higher student participation rate.

Apalachee High School
Becky Hasty

Arabia Mountain High School
Alicia Hamilton

Bainbridge High School
Heidi Chambers

Berkmar High School
Sherri A. Ellis

Bremen High School
Jessica Allen

Brookwood High School
Mr. Jesse Hancock

Carrollton High School
David Bryson

Cass High School
Amanda Ward-Wilbon

Central Gwinnett High School
Roxanne Rogers

Central High School (Carrollton)
Stephanie Trumble

Cherokee High School
Shannon Hemphill

Columbus High School
Lynne Jenkins

Dawson County High School
Lindsey Luchansky

Deerfield-Windsor School
Irmgard Schopen-Davis

Eagles Landing High School
Shannon Vessell

Evans High School
Terry Wimburn

Forest Park High School
Stephenia T. Hill

Forsyth Central High School
Antonia Alberga-Parisi

George Walton Academy
Wrynn Carson

Gilmer High School
Stacey Hadden

Griffin High School
Melanie Underwood

Hardaway High School
Angela Moore

Heritage High School
Jennifer Howell

Independence High School
Linda Legros

Jonesboro High School
Shaunice Sasser

Lamar County High School
Carol Parrish

Lambert High School
Woody Van Treek

Marietta High School
Kristina Nesbitt

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts
Christopher Prince

McIntosh High School
Maggie Walls

Milton High School
Carolyn Flis

North Forsyth High School
Elizabeth Smith

North Gwinnett High School
Barbie Nelson

Northside High School (Columbus)
Sonya Trepp-Fuller

Parkview High School
Patricia Buschman

Pickens High School
Brenda Dial

Rome High School
Amanda Howell

Roswell High School
Megan Volpert

Shaw High School
Mr. Parise Bailey

Shiloh High School
Gayle Bankhead

South Forsyth High School
Clori Rose

Spalding High School
Kristin Smith

Thomas County Central High School
Sharon Davis

Thomasville High School
Rebecca Ramsey

West Hall High School
Melissa Giggey

Westover High School
Tye Beck

White County Ninth Grade Academy
Sarah McCollum

Winder-Barrow High School
Michell Harris

We would also like to congratulate the English teacher of our State Winner:
Ms. Micaela Armona, Cass High School

As well as the English teacher of the George A. Stewart Award :
Ms. Amy Baxter, Rockdale County High School

Additionally, we congratulate our teachers that had 100% participation:
Ms. Roxanne Rogers of Central Gwinnett, 2,134 students wrote a Laws of Life essay
Wrynn Carson of George Walton Academy, 272 students wrote a Laws of Life essay

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