



First-Place Winning Entry

Tragedy of the Heart

I am one person. I am but a tiny and miniscule particle of the world. Yet, I am strong and intelligent. I can make a difference. I have never truly appreciated what I have in the past, but I have the whole world at my feet. There are entire nations that suffer daily without food. Meanwhile, I sit at a lunch table every day and eat food that is only heard of and imagined by some. I have a roof over my head and clothing on my back. There are people who sit naked in the cold, dying from lack of warmth and shelter. I sit at my desk at school and imagine that I am somewhere, anywhere, but there. There are children who yearn to be able to read a book or learn their ABCs and numbers. I have so much, yet I crave for more. I am rich and never happy. I am full and never satisfied. I can do so much and never try. However, my eyes have been opened wider than ever before, and I can see.

The REAL. LIFE. Exhibit has shown me more disaster than I would ever want to imagine happening in one lifetime, much less a few decades. I felt pain as I saw the children with burns, waiting to die. I heard crying as I looked into the orphanage. I became part of the crowd and felt the sorrow of death and hunger as it lingered in each person's eyes. I was enraged by the mistreatment of children: the use of children for war and as slaves, unable to escape. I felt myself drowning, being torn by the waves of the tsunami. I have never known such pain, such agony, before this. Now, I can do everything in my power to help as well.

My aunt has gone to Haiti with Medical Teams International and always returns with a smile on her face and stories to tell. I want to experience that. I can volunteer my time and energy to help where and when I can. I have always known that volunteering can be the most thrilling job in the world, not to mention the most satisfying. I will volunteer my services where I see that things need to be done. If I give my time, I can help to make a difference. Even if I manage to influence only one life, that is one life that I will have, indeed, influenced, and one life in which I have managed to create a difference for the better. One person CAN make a difference in the world, and that person may be me.

Bette Holmes

Age 17

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