

## Contest Entry Excerpts

“I felt that my experience at the REAL.LIFE. Exhibit really changed my outlook on not only my life, but just life itself.... I know that I can’t change everything in this world, but I can try to change as much as I can. Some people say, ‘*Maybe* I’ll help at least one person,’ but I say, ‘I *will* help as least one person.’ There are so many people that say ‘maybe’ in this world, but there are only a few that stand up and say ‘Yes, I *will* make a difference.’ I want to be one of those people that say they will make a difference and actually help make a difference. It might not be today, or anytime soon, but because of my experience at the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, I am determined to someday in my life be able to say ‘Yes, I made a difference, and I’m proud of it.’”

—**Madi Weaver**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“I thought my life was the worst in the world, or at least in Oregon. But when we went to the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, I saw some sad things that made me realize my life isn’t so bad. Now I’m more thankful for what I have. In the Uganda room, I read that a 13-year-old boy had to kill his own father. I was sad and wanted to cry because I love my father very much and would never want anything to happen to him. When I walked through the rooms, I could feel the pain of the people. The smell, the pictures, and the sounds made it real.... I feel like I must help some way, but I’m not sure how yet. But I do know that even though I’m only one person, I can make a difference.”

—**Bailey Colling**, Five Oaks Middle School, grade 6, teacher Patti McKeen

“Some people might think just because they are one person out of billions on this earth that they cannot make a difference because one is not enough. But for some many less fortunate people, one person could save a life, feed a starving child, restore broken homes from tsunamis, and shelter people in need. That one person could do all that if they just stand up and take action. So going through this exhibit made me realize that if one person can do all that just by themselves, think of how a group of those same determined people could change a country. Walking through the exhibit gave me inspiration and confidence to know that by donating just one HOPE package, I could give someone the chance that they needed to survive. But our school donated over 200—and that could change lives in a small village.”

—**Johanna R. Wilson**, David Douglas High School, grade 11, teacher Kelly Holboke

“When I went through the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, it really surprised me a lot. I didn’t know so many people were suffering around the world. It was a heartbreaking experience. The one exhibit that affected me the most was the Romanian orphanage.... I thought to myself how many of those children want the love and protection of a parent, to be held in warm loving arms. I would really like to help those children feel protected and loved in their time of need and suffering.”

—**Ashley Chon**, Pilgrim Lutheran School, grade 7, teacher Chris Herold

“When one of your sisters or brothers falls down, you do not watch them struggle in the dust, but rather you lend them a helping hand, without pity, and full of compassion. Whether you are a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, mother, father, or grandparent, it does not matter. Each one of us can be the hand.... If people are in need, we must answer strongly, and without reservation. The path to action is awareness.”

—**Kirsten Myers**, Westview High School, grade 9, teachers Jessica Keskitalos

“On the car ride home that afternoon, I thought of all the things I take for granted. When I get really sick, I am able to go to the doctor, and get the medicine I need to get well. I have clean drinking water and even water bottles. I also started to think about all the waste I personally create. Examples of waste include drinking half a water bottle and leaving the rest and taking more food than I need. I can make a difference by not forgetting about the people in other parts of the world and their way of life. I get busy with family, school, activities, and friends, and I forget about those who are struggling. Right now, the best way to make a difference is to spend time daily thinking and praying for the people who are in these horrific situations.”

—**Annie Dulwich**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“I did not know that people suffered so much in the world. Learning about people dying of hunger, illness, and diseases in poorer countries gave me a different perspective on life.... The REAL. LIFE. Exhibit inspired me to go out and do something to help people. I can collect money, food, clothes, and anything else that would positively have an impact on people’s lives. ‘I’m only one person, but I can make a difference!’ I can give! I can act! I can volunteer! I can pray! I can love! And I can make a difference! ...My experience at the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit was the most inspiring, moving, amazing, and encouraging exhibit I have ever seen. Without a doubt, I was determined, motivated, and dedicated to make a difference. I may not save everybody, but I can save one person at a time!”

—**Danica “Mackie” Anukam**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“I am only one person, but I can make a difference!’ So many different feelings and thoughts go into this one sentence.... If I want to help, then I can. A simple donation will feed a family or help in some way. That one decision I make feeds and maybe saves someone.... Just because one child wants to help. One can become many, a little becomes a lot.”

—**Jazmyne Clark**, Five Oaks Middle School, grade 8, teacher Patti McKeen

“I hadn’t heard of child soldiers before, and it surprised me to see people using children as shields. I thought the UN had dealt with the wars besides a selected few, but I had no idea something like this was and still is happening. Seeing the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit really touched me and showed me how great I have it here. The thing that scared me the most was the pictures drawn by the kids that had been through all of this. Suddenly realizing that so much suffering is going on at one time really shocked me, but so did the fact that Medical Teams International can help take the edge off of it.... The exhibit has compelled me to start saving money toward the refugees. It informed me of how little they have, and it showed me how much God has blessed me. After all, I may just be one person, but I can make a difference.”

—**Ryan Herold**, Pilgrim Lutheran School, grade 7, teacher Chris Herold

“Something powerful that struck me during this exhibit was that we hear about horrible, terrible things on the news every day, but we do not ever stop and say, ‘I need to do something about this.’ I know that many people do great things to respond to something terrible, but a lot of us are too absorbed in our own little world to take the time to respond. Our own little world doesn’t usually include the aspect of, ‘Hey, I can make a difference in that issue.’ Each of us **can** make a big difference, and together we can make a **huge** difference in the world around us. Just remember this statement, **‘I’m only one person, but I can make a difference!’**”

—**Jeffrey Hyzer**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“When I heard about the REAL.LIFE. Exhibit, I imagined it to be a boring lecture and a slideshow. It was far from that. In it were actual smells, photos, and activities. This was an amazing experience that truly opened my eyes, as I hope it did for many others. I came into the exhibit not knowing much about life outside of the United States. I remember walking out, thinking of all the ways I could raise money for the people in these countries that were enduring such peril. I realize how truly blessed I am, Living in the United States, with a loving family and great education. I may be only one person, but I can make a difference.”

—**Kenzi Harris**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“When I went to the REAL.LIFE. Exhibit, it really changed my life. I wanted to do everything that I could to help the people that had to go through these experiences. It’s hard to believe that people are suffering and dying every minute! It would be really hard going through there without any emotion at all because I felt like it wasn’t fair that they had to go through such horrors. . . . I felt this pain inside of me and knew I could not forget the people out there in the world having a hard time. After going through there, I wanted to become a member of the Medical Teams International so that I could save and comfort people. I had this calling inside of me that wanted to change their lives.”

—**Alexandria Noel Tierney**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“Visiting the REAL.LIFE. Exhibit was one of the most worthwhile, eye-opening experiences that I have ever had. You always see pictures, videos, places and people who need our help, but the REAL.LIFE. Exhibit made them become a part of my life. This experience was heartrending. When I saw the light that flashed every 3.6 second for a child that died from preventable diseases, it made me feel sad that there isn’t more medical care available to everyone in the world.... It makes me feel appalled that some places in the world are in such turmoil and that we don’t do enough to help them. Until now it’s not that I didn’t want to help, or I couldn’t, I wasn’t just sure how. I will try to volunteer my time and make donations when I can. Now that I have seen what is happening in the world, I am ready to go and help others. Becoming aware makes a difference. I think it is important to share not only what we have but also what we have learned and are ready to give.”

—**Nick Wetherbee**, Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker