



Excerpts from contest entries

“Going through the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit was an epiphany that reopened my eyes to the condition of the world. I was by no means oblivious to the world’s occurrences; I’ve been introduced to those issues before by videos and in-class projects. However, none were as demonstrative as the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit. The sights, smells, and sounds made the exhibit come alive, and that experience made me again realize how great my life actually was. Growing up in an unstable neighborhood where simply strolling outside was considered unsafe, I was conditioned to look at life as the things I was lacking, instead of the blessings I had. The exhibit showed me, compared to the rest of the world, that I had a lot.”

From “My Awakening Moment” by **Carol Pengshung**
David Douglas High School, grade 11, teacher Kelly Holboke

“ ‘I am only one person, but I can make a difference.’ These words struck me somewhere deep in my soul the first time I heard it. I am one, and only one, but I can make a difference. After visiting REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, it made a really big difference in my life. Today I am not the same anymore; I don’t go a minute without thinking about those people who suffer. Since the visit, every time before I go to bed, I pray and cry for those children who are left with nothing more than misery and sorrow in their life. I ask myself, Why? Why them and why not me? How am I any better or different from them? Why do they have to suffer, while I live in here in luxury? After I thought about this for a while, I finally found the answers. I am living here for a reason. I could be one of them, but I am here, and because I am here and not one of them, I can make a difference in their lives. This is the only reason why God has placed me here in this country.”

From “Making a Difference” by **Alyona Vasilchenko**
Clark County Skills Center, teacher Leslie Hinton

“There are people that have seen more horror in one day than I have seen in my entire life. I wake up every day not even thinking that people don’t have any of the things that I do. It is terrible to think that while I’m safe in my bed, many people live in fear and poverty. Why me? Why them? I may not know the answer, but I have come to realize that no human being should have to live that way. We are all children of God and worthy of a life full of love and happiness. All people should have food to eat and a home where they can feel safe. No one deserves to be mistreated. . . . This experience has opened my eyes to the sad truth and the harsh reality of life. It has also opened my heart to reach out to others. I can give money, volunteer, pray, or even just be aware of other people’s lives and be grateful for my own blessings.”

From “The Power of One” by **Mariah Delegato**
Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“On the car ride home, no one spoke. I just stared out the window and contemplated everything I was grateful for. I kept thinking and praying to God,. *I am so blessed*, I thought. I felt remorse for being blessed. How could I share what I have with the people I learned about in the exhibit? Ideas rolled around in my head, thinking about how I could use my talents and gifts to gain money. What do I have to offer? I’m just a fourteen-year-old girl. Can I truly make a difference? The answer was yes. Ideas suddenly sprouted in my head, and I began thinking about how I could put these ideas into action. I wanted to do everything I can to help. I began praying every night, asking God for his help . . . to bless those in need and that the power of God would come over them. I am one among millions, but the power of one voice can be heard, if it speaks loud enough. I am here to speak.”

Natalie Ferland

Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“Is it fair that little, helpless children are forced to fight and kill? . . . Is it fair that people suffer from hunger and diseases? No. The answer is simple, and trying to do something is simple too. We just have to work together, and a lot can be accomplished. . . . It’s not fair, but God is there. We can bring hope, care, love. . . . Once everybody is helping, we can make this world a fair world. I may be only one person, but I will make a difference.”

From “Is It Fair?” by **Jessica Lumba**

Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“The visit to the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit was an eye-opening, moving, life-changing experience. With each step I took, I could hear my heart pounding faster and faster. The lump in my throat kept rising as I tried to hold back my tears. With every glance at the pictures, I grew more and more ashamed of myself. Those were only some of the feelings that were racing through me as I made my way through the exhibit. Each of the disasters that were displayed in the exhibit were like small awakenings. I noticed, sadly, that most of the victims were young children. Thus, when I reached the display of the children’s hospital, the lump in my throat turned into hot tears streaming down by face. To me, children are some of the most significant beings on earth. I have a baby sister; I love her more than anything in the world.

Visiting this exhibit, I realized just how clueless and selfish I am. In Mexico, half of the children never live to reach their fifth birthday. Thousands of children have never felt the touch of love, or heard words of affection spoken to them. What have I done to help them? Nothing. Thanks to this experience, though, that has and will change. . . . The experience has completely turned my life around. I understood that I should never take any part of my life for granted. . . . I realized that I don’t appreciate how blessed I am. I am no better than any of them, but for some reason God has put me in a life where I have all the necessities for life and even much more. Why? . . . One person’s small act can make a big difference in the lives of others. That’s what we were put on this earth to do. To serve others.”

From “One Person, Small Act, Big Difference” by **Marina Kalachik**

Clark County Skills Center, teacher Leslie Hinton

“The statement ‘I’m only one person, but I can make a difference’ is so true because many people have five dollars to spare, and that is equal to what you would pay for a coke and burger, or two cups of coffee from Starbucks. With that small sacrifice, we can feed people, give shelter, and provide medicines for one month.”

From “What REAL. LIFE. Meant to Me,” by **Grant Stoddard**

Christ the King Parish School, grade 8, teacher Francine Buker

“The biggest thing I can do to help at this point in my life is to pray for all the children and people who have all these horrible things happening to them. I will also pray for all of the Medical Teams International workers so that they know exactly what to do in a really tough situation. I will also be praying that the program gets all of the funds they need to support of the people who need it the most. . . . When I am no longer attending school, I could possibly go on a mission trip to one of the places that need it the most.”

From “Real Life” by **Amanda Finnegan**
Clark County Skills Center, grade 12, teacher Leslie Hinton

“After I came back from the exhibit, . . . I wondered how I can make a difference. From the tragedy in my life when I lived in Russia, I have experienced what the people in these situations have. I know how it is to lose something that is precious to you. People helped us in our time of need, and I know that if I helped in any way I can, I will make a difference. The first thing that we should do is support each other, respect, and help. I looked inside my heart and realized that we all have to help others.”

From “Real Life” by **Adina Primchenko**
Evergreen High School, teacher Leslie Hinton

“If you think you cannot make a difference, you’re wrong. Imagine if there were a hundred people like you, and they each give the same refugee camp one dollar. That could save thousands of people’s lives or even just get them through another day. You and I can make a change. I will start by going to Mexico on missionary trips to poor villages and showing them that there is still someone in this world that cares about them. . . . I can make a difference. You can too!”

From “I Can Make a Difference” by **Alla Stakhova**
Clark County Skills Center, teacher Leslie Hinton

“We all need to understand that if we don’t help, who will? Can you image living in a garbage dump, getting your food and clothing after someone else? Sometimes when we open the full refrigerator, we complain that we have nothing to eat. But those children and parents . . . live off a dollar or less per day. We can help those people by not going to a fast-food restaurant for a week and donating the money to people who need it and can live off it for a long time. . . . We all should thank God for the roofs we have over our heads, for the food we eat, and for something warm to wear. People around the world need our help. . . Just look at the Moldovan clinic, the Romania orphanage, and the Mexican garbage dump and imagine: *What if I had to live like them?* I know that I can make a difference for those people, even something as simple as praying for them or just donating things.”

From “I’m only one person, but I can make a difference!” by **Victoria Kaminskiy**
Clark County Skills Center, teacher Leslie Hinton

“If we donated money every time we were about to buy a pop, then people in other parts of the world could have clean water and be a lot healthier. . . . I felt very sad every time I saw the blinking light, knowing that every time it blinked, a child died. . . . Every time it blinked, I felt a sharp pain in my heart, and I wanted to smash the light so it would stop blinking, hoping that it would stop those kids from dying. . . . I look forward to the day I get to help people in need, and the day I see that I have really made a difference.”

From “My REAL. LIFE. Experience” by **Ally Dean**
teacher Leslie Hinton

“Walking through the exhibit for me was like walking through the streets of the actual places. How traumatic and disastrous is their life. I thought when my brother died that nothing could compare to the pain our family was feeling. Now I can see that these children's pain and suffering is ten times more painful than ours. . . . I may be only one person, but I know that I can make a difference if I tried. By making Hope Kits, sending in money, and volunteering to make a dream come true. Everyone deserves to be loved in this world. I believe that if everyone took the time and helped someone in need, we will make a difference no matter how small it may be.”

From “I'm only one person, but I can make a difference!” by **Maksimenko Elvina**
Summit View High School, teacher Leslie Hinton

“One of the things I learned was that one person can make a difference. Before the fieldtrip, I was doing a project for my Advisory. One of the things I was asked was what I wanted to be when I grow up. I thought for a few minutes and then decided I wanted to either be a teacher or a fashion designer. During and after the visit to the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit, I kept thinking of how awesome the people of Medical Teams International are for helping rebuild people's lives. Then it dawned on me that what I can do is become a missionary. I would get my teacher's degree and then be able to teach anywhere, a way to help families in need and make a difference.”

From “I Can Make a Difference” by **Lydia Denny**
La Center Middle School, grade 7, teacher Mrs. Broten

“I have always known horrid tragedies such as the ones displayed at the REAL. LIFE. Exhibit existed, however I had never before taken the time to actually think how blessed and lucky I truly am to have a loving family, a roof over my head, all of my rights and to live in America. Seeing all of the poor little children who don't even have a decent meal to eat, and yet I can complain about being 10 pounds heavier than I want to be. It broke me inside when I saw all of the deprived people of the world and I now believe it is my duty to make a difference someday, somehow. . . . I now truly believe it is my life purpose to help the less fortunate than me. I have all of these rights, and I want to share them. I think everyone should go to the exhibit or, one like it, to be able to not just learn but see how good we really have it, and inspire them to volunteer.”

From “I Can Make a Difference” by **Megan Randall**
Clark County Skills Center, teacher Leslie Hinton