

Game Seven

By Zachary Arthur

The bench was silent. We were down by 9 points going into halftime. It was the second round of the playoffs and we felt defeated. Our team had wanted this win against Voorhees since they beat us by 3.

My dad gets up "C'mon guys we can do this"

"Yeah let's go finish this strong, boys" added coach Conard. We sat on the bench and tried to forget the score.

TWEET!! It was time to get in the game. The coach said, "Alright let's get em"
"Bears on three-123 ,Bears" Joel yelled.

The team ran onto the court, I had the ball.

"Zach!" Carter yelled. In the blink of an eye I passed it to Carter "Shoot!" The whole bench yelled. Carter lets it go...it goes in and the crowd goes wild. Down by 7.

They brought it up, T.] and I swarmed the point guard and then got the ball. We ran as fast as we could down the floor. I stopped. I shot. THREE!! Down by 4.

We get another stop, in transition T.] passes to Carter, Carter passes it to me in the corner. ANOTHER THREE!! Down by 1.

Voorhees brings it up, they shoot and... a foul. The center misses the first shot and then the second. Voorhees gets the rebound but I knock it out. The ball gets bobbled around until I throw it to T.] down the floor. He misses the layup but Joel puts it back up for an and one. Up by 1. Timeout Voorhees.

As the players walked to the bench everybody gave high fives, fist bumps, and pats on the back. We went back out there with 19 seconds left. They pressured us, so we needed to get the ball in. Joel passed it to T.] and T.] gave it to me. I brought it up the court and gave it to Chase, he gave it back to me and I got fouled. 27 to 24. I

was shaking as I walked up to the line, I would have a chance to ice the game here with two shots. I made the first two shots. Vorhees got the ball, they shot... but no luck. We win! Fans poured on to the court congratulating us. Our team was exhausted but excited. This was the redemption we were waiting for. We did it.

The Contest

Sarayu Bhumula

I walk up to the front of the room -- where Edison's councilman, Sam Joshi and a few more people were standing -- with a big smile on my face. I reach out and grab the trophy happily. My mom and dad are in front of me, taking pictures to remember this moment.

It all started on a regular day at school. My class got a flier for a Martin Luther King Jr. writing contest for the next month. Most kids just stuffed their fliers in their desks or folders, not taking one look at it. However, the moment I saw the headline: *Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Writing Contest 2020*. Excitement and nervousness flowed through my head at the same time. The prompt was to write a short essay or story 100 words or less in the perspective of Martin Luther King Jr.

I was interested, and so were my parents. The problem was, I had no idea what to write, and I was nervous about how my writing would turn out. The first day I started to actually write my essay was when I started to gather all my information on a Doc.

"Martin listened to Gandhi's speech, awed. It inspired him to fight for equal rights without violence. He knew that this would be the way to end segregation," I researched. I had three books *and* the internet, but I still felt my writing wasn't good enough.

A few weeks later, my hopes got high when I got an idea that I knew would be better than all my previous drafts. *I would write a letter*. An imaginary letter from Dr. Martin Luther King Junior himself, that would explain how much the world changed, and the difference from now and King's time. It would explain how important it is to be kind to others. I knew this would work. It would be the perfect piece of writing.

Finally, it was the day before my writing's due date. As much as I was excited to give in my writing and see the coming results, I also was nervous. I was worried how I would feel if I didn't win, but I was also proud of myself for working hard. A few days later, my mom picked me up from school.

"Congratulations," she said casually. Excitement rushed through me. Although, school events caused me to forget about everything I've done the past days, so I had no clue why my mom was congratulating me.

"For what?" I asked.

My mom smiled. "You've won the MLK writing contest."

I felt a huge surge of happiness. It took a few moments to register those words in my brain. *I've won the Martin Luther King Jr. writing contest*. Yesss!!!! My wish has come true at last.

Myers

By Avani Gupta

I walked inside the living room, the rush of excitement filling through my veins, as I carried my puppy, a life I thought was more valuable than mine, a life that I lived for, and a life that I would forever love and protect. We would keep him here forever. Little did I know...

Grief filled my throat as I saw Myers sleeping peacefully, oblivious to everything that was happening, as my family discussed the matter of returning him to the shelter.

Papa sighed. "I don't know guys," he said. "I don't know if we can give him the love and protection he needs. We have so much going on in our lives. What if something happens..." his voice trailed off and he couldn't finish his sentence. But he didn't need to and we were grateful for that. The words he could have said would've been too much to handle.

I looked down, so nobody would see the tsunami of tears I was holding back.

"Let's see what happens," Mama said. "We still have a couple of days left."

The rest of the night was just a blur of sadness, so I went to bed early.

The next day, we sat down, deciding whether to return Myers or not.

Bibi sighed. "I love him with all my heart," she said. "But I don't think we can give him the love he needs." Tears formed in her eyes. Papa hugged us both as tears dripped onto my shirt. Mama was the only one not saying anything - *not even crying!*

Did she even love him? I thought but as I saw Papa carry Myers out of his cage, I instantly forgot about that.

"You guys have to go," Papa said. "I'll return him."

"Can we at least say goodbye?" Bibi asked.

"Of course," Mama said softly.

Bibi hugged him so tight, I thought he was going to explode. When it was my turn, I hugged him, a tear dropping onto his fur, and kissed him one last time.

“Goodbye,” I said, my tears choking me. “I love you.” As I stepped back, as I watched Papa take him, I started wondering if I would ever forget him. Part of me did. But another part of me knew that that was never gonna happen.

“I love you,” I whispered, as one final tear made its way down my cheek.

Powerful Girl

By Madison Ryan

Yes, I throw like a girl and I'm proud of it. My name is Madison Ryan and I am 10 years old and currently in the fourth grade. Sports have shaped my life and they have made me into the person I am today. Any girl or boy who is involved in sports should consider themselves lucky because they have been given the opportunity to develop self awareness, purpose, mental and physical power and a passion to succeed.

At the age of two years old, my parents enrolled me into gymnastics. I trained in gymnastics until I was seven years old. Practices were long and hard. I left many nights feeling exhausted but excited for the next day. As I got older and more experienced in the sport, I advanced toward competing. Practices got longer and more frequent but my muscles were getting stronger and my mind was getting sharper. Gymnastics taught me discipline and provided me with strength I never knew I had.

As I got older, I moved on to join soccer and basketball. These fast paced sports helped me become skilled at quick decision making and communication. Working with my teammates in high-speed situations taught me how to succeed under pressure. These sports also taught me a more important lesson...how to lose. Losing gracefully is something everyone should know how to do. It helps you deal with circumstances that are hard and at times, may not seem fair. This builds confidence and the ability to go with the flow when times get tough.

To this day, I am grateful that all of these awesome experiences have guided me to choose my most favorite sport...softball. My teammates are my “softball sisters” who I love and trust. Together we have determination, bravery and the will to win. We have won championships and we have also been through tough losses. Having these amazing girls, my coaches and my family by my side makes me feel like I can do anything, be anything and achieve anything. I am a powerful girl whose spark has been set on fire by sports and I'll never be put out.

Rainbow Fuzzy

By: Trinity Nicole Trotman, Grade 4

Lindeneau Elementary School, Edison, New Jersey

I held my daddy's hand as we crossed the street and walked into Menlo Park Mall. As we walked along the air conditioned corridor, we passed tons of people and tons of stores. Then, we stopped walking. We were there!

"Build A Bear!" I exclaimed. We walked into the store and I began hunting for the perfect stuffy. Then, I saw something. A rainbow leopard! I grabbed it and I skipped over to the stuffing station. There was a little boy in front of me, smiling as the woman gave him his bear. Once he walked away with his mom, I stepped up. "Hi," the woman greeted me.

"Hi," I said quietly. I handed her my leopard.

"Step on the pump," the woman told me. I obeyed. She turned my leopard around and around on the machine until all of her parts were filled. Then she stopped the machine and took out two hearts: one plaid and one red.

"Pick one," she said kindly. I pointed to the red. The woman put the red heart in my leopard, then sewed it up. Once she was finished Daddy and I walked over to the accessories. I picked out a purple shirt that said "Besties Forever," a glittery rainbow skirt, rainbow shoes, and pink glasses.

Next, we walked over to the naming station. I thought, it is rainbow, and it's fuzzy. Of course! Rainbow Fuzzy! I typed her name into the computer, and we walked to the register.

While Daddy paid, the cashier handed me a box with Rainbow Fuzzy and all of her clothes in it. He also handed me her birth certificate. Daddy paid and we left the store. Once we were out of the store he stopped abruptly and turned towards me. "Trini, I have to tell you something," he said.

"What?" I asked.

"I have to go away for three months. With the National Guard," he replied.

"When?"

"In two days." I could feel the tears streaming down my cheeks, like a river's water rushing down. Daddy wiped my tears.

"It's gonna be ok. That's why I took you here today, so we could have a moment together, alright?" Daddy asked. "Alright," I answered.

"I love you, Daddy," I whispered.

"I love you too, Trini."