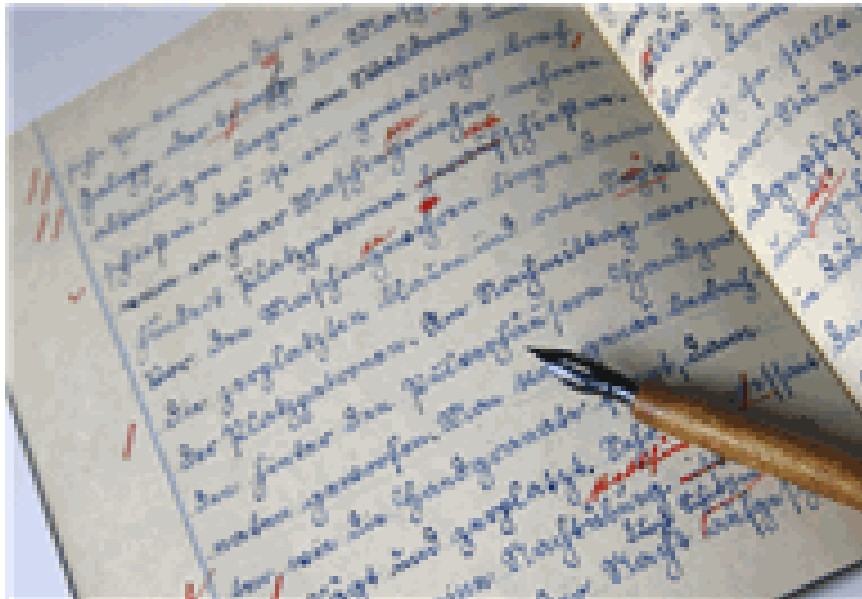


A Chance for Change

Inspired by "The Freedom Writer Diaries"



The Diaries of 20 children from



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF LAKE AND SUMTER COUNTIES

Northeast Lake Unit

Eustis, FL

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Summer 2009

Acknowledgement

An enormous amount of effort went towards making this all possible. First, the original idea to offer the Freedom Writer's camp at the Boys & Girls Club belongs to Holly Taylor. Holly continuously presents ideas that will enhance the experience of the children at the club and leave them with memories and lessons they will never forget. Secondly, I would like to thank Melissa Blount for volunteering so much time into working with the kids everyday of camp and for all her hard work planning activities that will engage the children and teach them life lessons. Finally, I would like to thank the 20 children who participated in the camp and agreed to share with you their thoughts and feelings as they learned even kids have a voice.

Preface

A select group of kids had the chance to participate in a camp using the movie “Freedom Writers” as the theme. This camp was a writing camp that introduced the kids to journal writing as a way of creatively expressing their thoughts and feelings. The kids had the chance to discuss the many stereotypes placed on preteens and teenagers. They experienced thought provoking stories and activities. The camp used the movie “Freedom Writers” and the book “The Freedom Writer Diaries” to compare the lives of the children in the movie to their own lives. They obtained skills that will help them to succeed in school and in their life. They studied new vocabulary words each day and went over words that they had difficulty spelling. They learned how to use a word processor to type their entries and they learned the basics of editing. We had a “Toast for Change” ceremony where each student chose to put past mistakes behind them and move forward with a clean slate. During this ceremony, they also chose to exceed other people’s expectations for their lives. We celebrated the unique qualities of each individual using the quote, “When diverse worlds come together, beauty is inevitable.” These diaries are an expression of the beauty within each student.

Destiny Branum

Education Coordinator

Diary #1

Boy, Age 11

Dear Diary,

I went to my sister's soccer practice. When I got there I fell and hit my head. It hurt all day. My sister's team won 21-16. During practice it started to rain. We left practice and went to Oakwood. I saw a big catfish. It was 10 feet.

Dear Diary,

Five years ago I got my cat and it was small. Now, it is very fat and it bites. It likes people. It does not have claws. They were taken out. My cat can open doors and beat up dogs. My cat is 6 years old. He has long whiskers. His face is fat. He has long teeth.

Dear Diary,

I think "Freedom Writers" was a great movie. I liked it because it had a lot of events. I did not like it because it had a lot of boring parts. I would like to have Ms. G as a teacher. I learned during the movie to never give up on something you like or do.

Dear Diary,

This is a poem I wrote in Freedom Writers.

They Say, I Say

They say I'm dumb

I say

I am funny

They say I'm weird

I say

I know how to be cool

So

Don't judge me by

How I am

They say I'm stupid

I say

I am a good artist

They say I'm not helpful

I say

I'm gonna be a artist

Diary #2

Boy, Age 9

Dear Diary,

If I could take three people around the world with me it would be Sam, Dustin and a grown-up in case we need to pay for something or we need a grown-up to do something. I would bring my friends because I would have fun with them. We could do stuff we never did before. It would be very fun. We could go to Mt. Everest, the Coliseum, Stonehenge, and Africa to see the animals. That would be nice. And we could go to the beach any time we want. We could try any food we like during our trip. I bet most of the food we try is very good. I would try to find a good place to sleep. It would have a pool in it. So when we are doing nothing we can swim and relax. When we get home I would tell everyone about my vacation.

Dear Diary

I hardly did anything six days ago. Yep, hardly. I ate, watched TV, and slept. I ate ribs, stuffing, and corn. I watched ICARLY and Malcolm in the middle. I slept good. I woke-up got my pants on. I went to the bathroom, ate my breakfast, brushed my teeth, let my dogs out, and came here.

Dear Diary,

I can not wait for "Toast for Change." It looked fun. I wonder if we are going to play the line game.

Dear Diary,

When I go to meet my teacher I hope it's Mr. Skinner. Why? Because he seems nice. I might be a little shy. I hope I get straight A's all year.

Dear Diary,

My friend Sam's paper was very funny. The part I liked most was when he wrote "They say I'm talky I say not a jockey." That was my favorite part. I liked his story a lot.

Diary #3

Boy, Age 10

Dear Diary,

If I could only take 3 people with me on a trip around the world, I would take Billy, Bob, and Casey because they all are my main friends and they are also my trusted friends. Trusted friends are my best friends. I would want to go with them to the Pokémon Company and New York City. I would take Billy and Bob because we are trying to make video games so the Pokémon Company can help us. I would bring Casey because he likes Pokémon but his parents do not let him have any thing about it.

Dear Diary,

When I am a grown up I think the world will look gross and the only thing that looks nice is the items humans own. There is a possibility of the world being clean if people stop polluting. If we stop polluting our world it will be a lot cleaner and cleaner is better. Also if we do not keep it clean later generations will have a bad life too and nobody wants to live a life that is gross. This is what I think the future will be like.

Dear Diary,

When I went to Stone Mountain with my friend Bob, we went to obstacle courses that you walk on rope and wood. Bob and I went to stage 1, 2, and 3. After we went to the car to get blankets to sit on, we brought the blankets to the laser show. Once we left we got a Coke Zero. When we were on the road Bob and I drank the Cokes. We had trouble finding a hotel that was not booked but we found one. Bob and I stay up late but Bob stayed up longer. Bob stayed up until 6am or 7am and I only stayed up until 3 or 3:30am.

Dear Diary,

I went to the Coca-Cola Company with my friend Bob. When we were there we watch a movie about what is inside a Coke dispenser and it was unreal. After that we learned how a coke was put together. Then we tasted a lot of different types of coke products, even from different countries. After that we went to a 4-D movie, which was called the secret of the coke. We then tried more cokes. After that we left but when we left we got a coke. We then looked in the souvenir shop and bought a coke that was designed.

Diary #4

Girl, Age 9

Dear Diary,

On Saturday I went to a Hawaiian party. They had a pool. I had ice cream. We had games, broke three piñatas, had prizes, popped balloons, open presents, and got necklaces and grass skirts. Then we went to another party on Sunday. They had a pool, a trampoline and they had puppies. I played with them. One was a Yorkie and one was a k9 and they had two mutts and a Chihuahua. The sun was hot so I got a nice cold drink. I ate because I was hungry. I had to carry my baby niece on the slide and on a trampoline.

Dear Diary,

I saw a cute little puppy. I wanted to keep it but my mom didn't want to keep it because we are going to move. I am getting a newborn puppy. Our new house has a park. I have a mutt and my brother has a pit bull. We are going to move August 30th. I can not believe I live next by a police. I love k9's. I hope he has a son I can play with. My dad said I can have a jumper and a big giant pool with stairs. I am going to have a lot of pets. I may get some Chinese fish. They are colorful.

Dear Diary,

When I went to my aunt's house we ate chicken, hotdogs, meat, corn, beans, cheesecake, fries, and drinks. When I was done eating I played with my aunt's dog. It was a bulldog/Chihuahua mutt. I get to have the mutt's puppies. I want a girl puppy. The mom's name is Lola. She had a brother name Casper. He was mine but he ran away. I was sad.

Diary #5

Girl, Age 10

Dear Diary,

In the month of June me, my mom, my dog, and brother went to Virginia. When we got to my nanas house we were locked out of the house. Then Dorothy unlocked the door so that we could enter the house. When we got inside we went to go say hi. After about four weeks we went to Aunt Alidas farm. She has four dogs, five goats, a lot of chickens, and eight horses. The names for the horses are Chief, Poncho, Sysco, Niles, Mare, Cloud, Navajo, and.....Hobo. A few years ago Hobo was almost KILLED. His old owners wanted to sell him for meat. My aunt saved his life. She almost went to court because they wonted him back and this is what they said "we want him back because he is healthy now". My aunt fought for his life because he is just a lot happier with my aunt then he ever was before. A few days have gone by and now it is time to go back to nanas house. After a month it is time to go home. We loaded up the car that includes me, my mom, the dog, my brother, and my Maria. When we got to my moms house we got greeted by Rusty the Jack Russell.

Dear Diary,

A few weeks ago me, Carla, and my brother went to a baseball game. We saw the Washington Nationals vs. the Atlanta Braves. The Nationals won seven to five. We got the family fun pack. The fun pack is where the family gets free food and drinks. When the game started Atlanta was up to bat first. The game ended a little after four o clock. We got ice-cream in the middle of the game. When the game was over we went to an ice-cream shop. Then we went to Carla's office. She is a lawyer and she marries people. Carla is so cool. She camps, fish's, and loves baseball. She has a dog named Tank. He is a Jack Russell.

Dear Diary,

This is a poem I wrote.

They say, I say

They say I am tall.

I say

I am happy.

They say I act stupid.

I say

I know how to saddle up a horse.

So

Don't judge me by the way I work.

They say I can't ride.

I say

I am better at riding than you.

They say I am not a good kid.

I say

Stop riding a horse.

Instead I'm using my animal smarts.

To help animals in need of help.

Diary #6

Boy, Age 12

Dear Diary,

I think the movie FREEDOM WRITERS was a great movie.

In the movie it had mentioned something about today from the author of the story of Anne Frank's life but in a different year. It was sad when the police took Eva's dad away from her. My favorite character from the movie is Tito because he is so very funny and could inspire me to become an author of a book about my very own life I had to go through in my childhood. I learned not to join a gang because if I join a gang and I am still in school you can get in lots of trouble. I would love to have Mrs. Gruwell as a teacher in high school from freshman to graduation and all the way through college.

Dear Diary,

It is better to ride a motorcycle than drive a car.

Just last year my great grandma Gertrude died. My grandparents, my mom, my brother and I all rode in 1 car and drove all the way from Leesburg to Morristown, New Jersey. It was very sad because I can not see her anymore in my entire life. I just can't wait for my birthday because I am going to ask my grandma Kathy to give me 13 dollars. My mom might get me Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince Video game for PC. I can't wait for Christmas because I want to go to New York so I can see my grandpa. I just yesterday asked him if he could build me a motorcycle kid size. My mom said that she may get my brother and me a Wii gaming system.

P.S. The motorcycle will actually run. As soon as my family and I got home yesterday we invited some friends to come over to have a piece of my brother's birthday cake. It was so delicious. It was a vanilla cake with whipped cream icing. It was so good I could just jump all over the house.

P.S. It was so delicious I just felt like so hyper I could just eat 6 pieces of cake in 1 day.

Dear Diary,

Yesterday, my family and I went to Bob Evans for my brother's birthday dinner because we didn't have enough money to do it on his birthday. When we stopped at Office Depot on the way home my brother bought a plug in TV game controller with 5 star wars classic battles from star wars episode 3 revenge of the sith.

Dear Diary,

On Saturday, I went to my grandma's house. I watched T.V., played the computer, went for a swim in my grandma's hot tub, and I went to help with her yard sale. Then, at 1pm I left to go to boy scouts. Yesterday, I played my brother's game. My neighbor had dinner with my family. Then, we went to the new park in Umatilla. Then, I went to my friend's house down the street from me and I watched Icarly, Ifight, and Shelby Marx. That was a great show because Sam, Carly, and Shelby all make Neville scream. Now Shelby is friends with Sam, Carly, and Freddy.

Dear Diary,

I thought the poem we heard was awesome. The diary entry we heard was probably the best one yet. I would take Tom, Sean, and Tim because they are truly ever so truly my best male friends forever.

Dear Diary,

I am planning on having a STAR WARS and HARRY POTTER movie marathons. I am inviting Tom, Sean, Bill, and Brian, my friend that lives across the street from me, and maybe Jessica. I am not inviting Tim to it because he is having his own HARRY POTTER marathon at his own house. It is going to be a great time we will all have there.

Dear Diary,

I wrote this poem in FREEDOM WRITERS class yesterday.

They say, I say

They say I am white.

I say

I am better.

They say I only know how to play games.

I say

I know how to do other things

So

Don't judge me by what I do

They say I am white.

I say

I am better.

They say I'm not smart enough to go to college.

I say

Stop being such a jerk.

Instead

I'm gonna use my education to help people all the time.

Diary #7

Girl, Age 11

Dear Diary,

On Monday, I went to Venice Beach. My sister and niece went with my mom and me.

Day 1: What a day! The small waves washed up small slug-like creatures in shells. The shells were shaped like irregular triangles with rounded corners. When the water left them beached, they dug into the sand. The next wave either brought sand up or brought sand back out to deeper water, leaving sand behind, covering them up either way.

Day 2: So many bait fish! I saw small bait fish wash up and down with the salt water waves. I grabbed my mom's big shark tooth sifter. I ran up to the ocean, put the open end into the water where I knew they would end up, and caught 4 in 1 try! I showed my mom and she said not to go too far into the ocean.

Day 3: Goodbye beach! What a bad beach day! Not even a foot into the water, waves could reach my thighs! When we left, the wind blew so hard, sand dug into our legs! OUCH!

Dear Diary,

On Friday, The Boys and Girls Club had a party at the new park where my mom works. When we got there, we had to wait for the staff to get there. Then, when all of the staff was there, we were free to go. I went straight to "The Black Hole". Someone from the club was chasing me. I found out he is in love with me! GROSS! All of my closest friends (at the club or at the club that day) helped me hide and stay away from him. When he wasn't close, I played. Before we left we had nachos, hotdogs, pink lemonade, fruit punch, cotton candy, and cookies. After that, we all left. What a fun day!

Dear Diary,

Yesterday, we went skating. I told Casey I would teach her how to skate. When she first tried to skate, she nearly fell. We had to get her lock skates. She did pretty well after that. I got a small root beer and a pickle. I had the pickle cut in half so Natalie and I could share it. After that, we played air hockey. While I was skating, I fell and hurt my knee. That was fun. But not hurting my knee. This morning, Casey almost took my Littlest Pet Shop dog back. But I can give her a Pokémon card to keep it. YAH!

Diary #8

Girl, Age 12

Dear Diary,

Last night, my mom, my sister, my brother and I went to my Cousin's house. We went and picked him up and took him to the park with us. When were going down a slide, my cousin, my sister and I were taking pictures. My cousin was sitting on the middle of the slide, my sister was sitting on the left side of my cousin and I was sitting on the right side of my cousin. My cousin was screaming like a little girl, just like he does to annoy me here at the club.

Dear Diary,

We were reading a story about this 13 years old girl, who was on her MySpace page and got a friend invite from this boy that she thought was really cute, she asked her mom if she could add him as a friend, she added him and she was getting all these really mean messages from him. She had gotten really sad. Well, also got really mad. She could not take it any more and she went into her room and hung herself in the closet. I felt really sad because I have ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), just like the girl in the story. One day I got really mad just like the girl and I wanted to kill myself. I almost did till I realized that life is too good to die for and I would have told the girl "that life is too good to die for and I would not want her to kill herself". The mom of the kid that was involved in the fake MySpace profile should be put in jail.

Dear Diary,

My Change Poem

I was a girl that got in trouble a lot.

I remember when I was being questioned by the police.

I heard myself cussing out kids and teachers.

I saw kids like me going to jail.

I worried that I might go to jail if I don't change.

I thought that life was not for me.

But, I want to change.

I am not getting into much trouble.

I think that life was meant for me.

I need to stop getting into trouble.

I try to behave well.

I feel good about my self now.

I forgave my friend Dakota.

Now I can change.

I will not get in to trouble.

I choose to behave better.

I dream to not get in to trouble.

I hope to be a good daughter and sister.

I predict that I will change.

I know that I will be a bettered person.

Diary #9

Girl, Age 11

Dear Diary,

I thought that the movie freedom writers was very inspiring and thought that anybody can be anything they want to be. I liked how Mrs. G taught the kids that they have a lot in common. What I didn't like was how a bunch of people were getting killed and very badly hurt. I would have screamed at the top of my lungs if my friend had just been shot. If Mrs. G was my teacher I would be so happy because she really tries to relate to her students. My favorite character was Mrs. G because she really helped the students with there life by talking to them and most importantly she listened to the students. I learned that life can be hard when you have the risk of being shot every time you walk out your door. Mrs. G was a very brave person. She stayed at a school with a lot of fighting, shooting, killing, and gangs. I admire Mrs. G because she stayed because she believed that she could teach them not only about English but about life. She taught them that life is hard but you have to keep believing that one day everything will be better and you won't have to run from anybody because everyone is friends and I bet you think that I'm just writing this because I have to but I really do believe what I'm talking about I believe that Mrs. G

really changed those kids lives and the ones that she had long after that and I bet that they all kept believing and Mrs. G was right if you keep believing things will change.

Dear Diary,

A couple days ago I went to vacation bible school and we had bible study, cosmic crafts, snacks, and galactic games. My favorite was cosmic crafts. In the class we made glow in the dark crosses, robots, and a poster about VBS. Every day we could win prizes. All we had to do was dance to one of the songs really good and then which ever group had the most votes got their names put in a bag to be pulled from and there were three prizes so the pulled out three names. I didn't win but all week they were telling us that if we came on Sunday we could win a wii. I told my mom the very first day and she said to remind her Saturday night. So, Saturday night I reminded her and in the morning I got up and got ready for church. When we got there we had to fill out a card and put it in the hat. When we went in the music was playing and people were singing so we went in and found a seat. We had a short ceremony and then it was time for the drawing. When he pulled out the name it was folded up so I thought that I didn't win the wii but then he called out my name. I was surprised. I went up and got the wii. After the tour that they had set up there were goodies and during which time everybody was congratulating me and we have been going to that church ever since then.

Dear Diary,

This morning we had our freedom writers class. I'm glad I signed up for it. I like the games were playing like we played bingo this morning but it was not the bingo you're used to playing. Instead, it was a bunch of questions in rectangles and we had to go around the room and find someone that answers that question. On Friday we have our "Toast for Change" ceremony and I'm very excited. Also, we have our coat of arms which is really cool.

Dear Diary,

Last Thursday, Crystal and I went to a baby sitting class. In the class we learned how to do CPR on an infant, child, and adult. We also learned how to do the Heimlich remover and how to do it on all ages. My favorite instructor was Chuck he was really funny. We learned how to get a job and all about baby sitting. I think that the class helped me because when I grow up I want to be a pediatrician when I grow up. I want to be a pediatrician when I grow up.

Dear Diary,

Yesterday I earned 85 power points. I only got 65 though because one teacher said that we can only get 20 at I time so that teacher gave me 20, another teacher gave me 20, and another teacher gave me 25. Today were supposed to spend them but I'm supposed to spend them tomorrow but I think I will save them.

Diary #10

Boy, Age 10

Dear Diary,

I am not happy that we are going back to school but I'm ready. I've already been on a book this summer so in 5th grade I won't be bored.

This summer when I was with Joe in Georgia we were having so much fun. At first it wasn't so fun. We went to two hotels until we got to our three story cabin in Blue ridge, Georgia. We went to most of the attractions including Stone Mountain. In Stone Mountain we rock climbed and watched a light show.

Diary #11

Girl, Age 10

Dear Diary,

Last Thursday it was my dad's Birthday and we went to the movies and saw g-force. But my dad could not come. He had to work. We went and got my dad a new shower head. Then we went to wal-mart and got school stuff. Then we got him a call of duty world of war game for the wii. When we got home my mom, made him a cake and he loved it. Later my nana and papa and papa Jim came over for my dad's Birthday.

Dear Diary,

Friday morning my mom came in my room and said "Get up we are going to the beach." So I got out of bed and packed my bags and we were off. It took us one hour to get there and we were going to stay a night so we still had to find a room. Then my mom found a hotel called the Sun and Surf. The cool thing is that when my mom was a kid she came to this hotel. So we stopped and got a room. Then we went swimming and my mom would go swimming for five min. and then she would go out and tan. Then every now and then I would go out to the ocean and get hit by waves. Later, we went to the store and got a mood ring. Then, I went swimming. Next, we went to the pizza place but pizza was bad. Then we went bowling but I sucked. Then we went to pizza hut. Then we went back to the hotel and went to bed. But the bed was hard so we did not sleep good. Then my dad came and we went the beach for the rest of the day and we went home.

Diary #12

Girl, Age 9

Dear Diary,

I really liked the movie "Freedom Writers."

It was a good movie. There's a really good part in the movie when Ms. G said to her class that she is going to be with them during junior and senior year. But there was part I did not like. It was when this man was trying to catch this girl from Mrs. G class. It seemed like they wanted to hurt her bad. But they did not hurt her at all. Ms. G was nice. I would like her like as a teacher because she is nice. She let them write what happened in there lives and about their time with Ms. G. I can relate to Ms. G, well, almost relate to her because she nice, she asks questions, and she fights sometime. I learned about friendship and honesty.

Dear Diary,

It makes me feel bad because someone did a bad thing. I think the person should go to jail because they are mean. The mom should go live with some one because her daughter died. She killed herself because someone was mean.

Dear Diary,

I had a great day yesterday we went to the new park in Umatilla. It was fun. When I got to my house my hands and feet hurt so bad and all. But I will tell the beginning of the story. My mom went to get me from the Boys and Girls Club. We were going to our house, but my mom said "No, let go to the new park in Umatilla. They said it was a beautiful place." We did not go to the park. We went to buy pizza and we had to wait in the car. Then, we went to McDonald to buy a drink but I wanted the toy so my mom asked how much for a toy. It was \$1.99 plus tax \$2.00. So my mom bought me a happy meal then we went to the park and first I ate then I played.

Dear Diary,

They Say, I say

They say, I say

They say I am too nice.

I say

I am proud
They say not at much
I say
I know how to write and read and now how to do math
So
Don't judge me by the way I am.
They say I am too nice.
I say
Am proud
They say I'm not as much as a future
I say
Stop bossing me around.
Instead I'm gonna be artist
To be proud what I am.

Diary #13

Girl, Age 10

Dear Diary,

I thought the movie "Freedom Writers" was very interesting. I would like to have Mrs. G as a teacher because what she does with her class sounds like fun. They went on field trips that were interesting. They learned about kids who died at 5 years old. Her class was brave. They wanted to be like the Freedom Riders. They wanted to ride on a bus even though they could get shot at or hit by a bomb. They would fight for there life. If that was me lord help me because I would surrender. My favorite character was Eva. She was a very brave student. She would fight for her life so no one would hurt her. If that was me I would have started kicking and punching, kicking, slapping people everything but that is just me. Another thing, I learned about this movie was that it was not all about your skin color or if you are from a different country or about your religion, it is about who you are from the inside and out.

Dear Diary,

Today is a regular normal day. I went to the Boys and Girls Club. Then I went to go play pool, air hockey, and mancala. Then, I came to Freedom Writers. Now, I am writing in this journal. I can't wait for 6th grade Middle School but I am so scared. I only know a few kids there but whatever. I am like fresh meat. Thrown into trashcans, beaten up, locked in lockers, everything. I can't wait until I see my friend Kasey. She is the bomb. I met her in third grade and we have been in the same class since. But I call her and she never answers most of the time. Well one thing. Do any of you have a pet Chihuahua that has been ran over? Well I have. Her name was cricket. She was the best dog ever. I was on my way home from school. My mom was outside sitting while my dad was mowing the lawn. While cricket was running around she went to the road on accident and a lady was driving fast then BOOM!!! Poor cricket was gone. My mom told me. I was sad and mad. Man I miss her so much. But another dog came along. I named him Scooby-Doo. Well my sister and I were outside. My mom just came out to give Scooby-Doo something to eat. I went to go pet him on his forehead. But he thought I was trying to take his food away and pushed me down to the ground. He bit me right on the corner of my right eye. I was so scared but I was tough.

Dear Diary

Today is the best day ever. Lisa is here and we are having a lot of fun. Our pool is almost finished. We just have to put a little more water in the pool. Then put sand around it and put the ladder up. I am so excited. We are having a pool party maybe. We did poems on Monday and my poem was ok I have 2 poems to share with you my first poem is called

They Say, I Say

They say I am ugly

I say I am pretty

They say you can't read

I say I can read

So don't judge me by what I can do

They say you are dirty

I say I am clean

They say I am not able to change this world

I say stop bugging me so I can change this world

I am going to go to college to get some knowledge.

Another poem I made is called

Change

I was a mean person.

I remember hurting people.

I heard people crying.

I saw people moving away from me.

I worried I was a hurtful person to everyone.

I thought my life was going to be bad.

But I want to change.

I am a sports person.

I think I can change this world.

I need to recycle more.

I try to stay active.

I feel excited.

I forgive my sister for what she did

Now I want to change.

I will become a softball player.

I choose to read the bible.

I dream to have a good life.

I hope I stay this way.

I predict to be this way forever.

I know I will be this way.

I will change.

Those were my two poems I hope you liked them.

Diary #14

Girl, Age 9

Dear Diary,

I would like to have Miss G. as a teacher because she can give you books to read and give you writing lessons. My favorite character was Ellen because she had the main part in the movie. She helps others learn to read and write. I liked when Miss G. put the book together. I learned about kids that learned how to read and write.

Dear Diary,

Last Friday, I went to the Mount Dora pool with my family and cousin. Then we went to the store to get water and food for the house so we can eat dinner. The next day we went shopping for school and then we went to the grocery store. Then we went to go to the park and play basketball and tennis. It was two on two. Then, we played baseball. The bases were 1st, 2nd, 3rd and home run. It was a tie and we had a race. Whoever got to the house first won. Everyone got there. It was a tie. Then, we took a shower one by one. Then, we ate lunch.

Diary # 15

Boy, Age 11

Dear Diary,

I remember when I was in 2nd grade. I was a bully. I used to pick on little kids. I also was mean to the older kids, until an older kid showed up. He was meaner than me and did way worse things than what I used to do to the kids. I still remember how I use to be scared of him. The kid's name was Kenith. He was 9 years old. I was only 7 years old. He also bullied me. Then, I felt the same way the kids felt whenever I bullied them. After Kenith left, I stopped being a bully. After that, I had more friends than what I had before. I learned that someone older, bigger and badder than you will come around.

Dear Diary,

Right now I feel like going outside and playing a game of basketball but I have to wait after this. I have to go and get lunch and then I can go and play a game of b-ball. I hope I can get

the ball and score a few shots. Then, go inside and chill out in the game room and play pool with O. Then, I will go home and practice my shooting and have dinner and then take a shower.

Dear Diary,

I'm not really that excited about going back to school because it's my first year in middle school. I have a few friends in 8th grade 6th and 7th grade. I am still not that excited about going back to school because I won't be able to play all day with my friends all day like I do in the summer time. So, I wish they would give us more time out. Let's say two more months. That would be enough time for me to play with all my friends and I could get better at basketball. I still think we shouldn't go to school and spend more time with our parents. If school was only three days a week that would be okay for me.

Diary # 16

Girl, Age 10

Dear Diary,

When I get to high school I want to have Miss G. I really liked how they did so many projects in class. I thought that the kids doing the fundraiser to get the author of Anne Frank to come was a very good idea. I thought how they took the girls innocent dad was not fair because even I know he was not guilty. I know that if my dad was tackled and taken to jail I would be scared to. I know my dad is my hero. Okay, back to the story. I related to the end of the story because I have had a teacher I wanted to stay with my whole life. Her name is Mrs. Meredith. My favorite character is Miss G. She is very pretty, nice, smart. She is kind to her kids. Her job is very cool and she is good at it.

Dear Diary,

MILITARY CAMP

The summer before my dad went to war I went to military camp. It was not as bad as you think. Actually, it was very fun. I got the top bunk. At night there was a lizard staring at me. Early one morning there were two scorpions on the floor. All the girls screamed. We woke the counselors and they swept them out of the cabin. We got up and dressed so we could go eat breakfast. I went to the cereal bar. After breakfast we went canoeing. Then, we went to play in the cabin. The next word you heard was "lunchtime." I went to the salad bar. We all went on what is called the blob.

It's a big balloon that's red, yellow, and blue. You jump on the blue then crawl to the end. Then the next person jumps and sends you flying in the air. After we were done we would go to the cabin and eat our snack. I would get M&M's and Dr. Pepper. Then, while the others were sleeping, reading, and coloring I was writing my letter. I had one letter per day. So, six total because I was there for six days. Then, we would all get up and hangout at the cabin. When we ate dinner we got our mail. If you got a package you had to kiss the gator. Lucky me, I only got letters. But if you got letters you had to sing a song. I got a letter every single day. That means I had a lot of reading to do. I loved how we stayed up late telling secrets. Military camp lasted six days.

Diary # 17

Girl, Age 9

Dear Diary

On Thursday, my grandpa, my brother, my step dad, my three sisters and I were watching the news. And they had said that Michael Jackson had died. But they were not sure if he was dead. Two days later the news had came on and said that he was dead. So, we were like "Wow, man that is crazy that he had died." So I started to cry. Because Michal Jackson was a legend and not only that, he was the king of pop. He could dance, sing, and he was creative. He had a lot of albums. He had 91 albums. He had Billie Jean, Thriller, Blood on the dance floor, In the closet, Dirty Diana, You rock my world, Bad, Who loving you now, Beat it, You are not alone, Boogie, Scream, Smooth Criminal, Criminal 2, ABC, All be there, Don't stop till you get enough, Remember the time , And Black or White.

Dear Diary,

If I could go around the world I would bring Sally, Abby and Sam, because we could spend more time together. We could go shopping and go to the beach. We could go rent a hotel, stay up late watch scary movie's and have a sleepover.

Diary #18

Girl, Age 11

Dear Diary,

Friendship has to do with agreeing on different subjects. Like agreeing on what game to play or what place to go hang-out at like after school. But when friends get into a fight it might make other people fight into there friendships, but also it will make your friendship weaker and weaker. But sometimes you need to just take your time and agree on something that you can both do. I have gotten into a couple of situations like this and it was not fun to me at all. When you fight, you can loose very nice people that you might have not wanted to loose. I have learned my lesson and you should have too if you have been in a fight with someone. When you tell your friend that you will meet them somewhere or you will call them and you don't then that could lead you to another argument which is something that you do not want to happen. So, when you decide to make a very dumb decision, then you will have an effect, just like what you learn at school for every cause there is an effect. You will always need to think about what you do before you do it and then after you think about it, you need to try to think what will happen afterward. So, if you want to keep your friendship strong then do the right thing and you will gain strength.

Dear Diary,

My favorite sport is softball. In my opinion I think that softball takes a lot of energy and most important you will need the items to play it. First, you will need a helmet to keep your head and face covered for protection at all times. Then, you will need a baseball bat, a glove to catch the ball with, and a bag to carry all of your things with. And you will always need to bring a drink to keep yourself hydrated. Usually, at Eustis Little League ages 5-18 is about \$150.00 per player that is attending. You have to be willing to play all season and not give up or all that money was just a waste. In softball you need to be alert and ready to play. There are nine positions in softball. There is catcher, pitcher, shortstop, first base, second base, third base, right field, left field and center field.

Dear Diary,

If I could take three people with me around the world I would take my three best friends, Daisy, Courtney, and Lindsey. I chose these three people because I know they would enjoy going to see different places around the world. And this would probably be a good opportunity to learn more about each other. And if we really did travel around the world then when it comes back to arriving back at home then we could tell people what it was like and how we felt about traveling around the world.

Diary #19

Girl, Age 12

Dear Diary,

I had so much fun on Saturday! I was working the Safety Fair at Lake Square Mall. I woke up at 6am and got my pink polo on with my new blue jeans. I got there at 6:30am and nobody was there. So, since my sister and I were thirsty. We went to the closest gas station to get a drink and dummy me got in such a hurry I got a diet root beer instead of a regular. So I had to go back into the store and get the right kind. Then, we got back to the mall and there were finally people there. So, I got out of the car and went to some chairs inside and sat till the people in charge opened up our room of the mall. I got kind of bored so, I started walking around to the different stations/booths and started picking up the things that they give out free. But there was a problem the cheap plastic bag that they gave me was full of the pencils, bottles, and miscellaneous items that the people gave me. So, I was on a mission to find a bag that carried more. So, I went to this one particular booth and got an eco friendly zip up bag that you could get at Wal-mart for about \$3.00. What is funny is that the one I got for free was bigger. So I dumped out the stuff in the plastic bag and put it in the big eco friendly bag. Then I continued what I called shopping for free until I had to go to work. I went to get ready for the people to come, but we had a problem. We didn't have enough computers for the job. So we had to call the tech guy and tell him to bring some more computers, but he was on vacation so we had to use what we had which was one computer instead of three. Then, we hooked up the computer and ran into another problem. The new problem was that the finger print scanning system wouldn't work with the laptop. So, we had to do it the old fashion way, paper and ink. The thing is that we didn't have a pad of ink so luckily we were right next to office max. We sent one of the other workers to go and get 15 pads of ink. When they came back we were ready to start. Identikid was open! What we did was someone sat at the computer while a kid sat down. Then the kid looked at the camera that was connected to the laptop and smiled. After that the child goes into next room and put there right and left thumb in ink and pressed it down on paper. Then, we gave the child a lollipop for doing the process. We added another step. After all that the clown brought in a helium tank and balloons. May I remind you I am terrified of clowns! Anyways we started blowing up balloons with helium. But a problem approached. The workers including me were sucking the helium out of the balloons and talking. Then, I went on my lunch break not long after that and went to Steak and Shake with my grandma. When I came back there was a new clown. I asked what happened to the old clown and they said he got kicked out for bringing in the helium tank. So, then I worked some more and finally about 2 hours later I went on my break and got my face painted. Well to sum it all up I had a lots fun with some problems involved but I did not let those problems ruin my day.

Dear Diary,

When I grow up I think the world will be a better place. It will probably be more eco-friendly. Also, I think there won't be as many gangs, alcohol and drugs. I think they might have already found a cure for cancer. I hope less people will smoke and I hope the smokers will realize the risk they are taking. I think that kids will quit watching TV and start to go outside and get active. I also think there will not be as many gasoline powered cars and that there will be solar charged cars instead.

Dear Diary,

This is my Change poem.

Change

I was selfish and greedy

I remember when my dad used to never be around

I heard the sound of my mom and dad fighting

I saw my mom and dad fighting

I worried that my dad would hurt my mom and never get caught

I thought I was going to grow up and be just like my dad, in jail

But, I want to change

I am free in spirit, heart and soul

I think you should never put someone down for the way they are

I need my dad to come out of jail and apologize to us

I try to put the things in my past away and look up to the future

I feel neglected by my dad

I try to forgive my dad

Now I can change

I will strive to be the best I can be

I choose to not be a worry wart

I dream of seeing my dad again

I hope to be the opposite of my dad

I predict I will be a leader not a follower

I know I will never let my dad put me down

I will change

Diary #20

Girl, Age 11

Dear Diary,

If one day I woke up in a different country, I would try to find someone who spoke English. I would search the whole country just to find answers. I would try day after day to find a way to get home. Then one day I would sadly find out that no one can speak English in this country so I would think and think of way to get home. This would take a lot of thought then one day I would see that I had come up with a plan to return home. I would first call a translator to come to the country and translate and help me live there for the time being. Then I would call a navigator to take me home to see my family and hopefully never have this strange dream again.

Dear Diary,

Many good things have taken place in my life but bad things have also played a role and it all started at birth.

The day before I was born my great-grandfather's funeral took place and my mom cried so much that I was born the next day.

At birth I had a hole in my right lung. I was blue. The doctor told my mom that I would stop breathing in a matter of time so I was rushed to Arnold Palmer where they would cure me.

When I got to Arnold Palmer they put me in an incubator to keep me warm. Unlike the other babies they kept my umbilical cord on me so they could feed me through it because I couldn't swallow yet.

After being in the hospital for about 6 months, I got to go home to my family. It wasn't the first time I had seen my family but I was home.

