
UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO
Do the Write Thing

Student Writings
2010

Utah Board of Juvenile Justice



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UTAH'S TENTH ANNUAL CHALLENGE TO
Do the Write Thing

The Importance of the Do the Write Thing Challenge

Do the Write Thing is not about winning a prize. It is an essential part of a long-term strategy to help students and adults better understand each other and work together to prevent youth violence.

The *Do the Write Thing* Challenge is a program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence, which motivates students to make a personal, written commitment to resist and combat youth violence in their communities. Young people around the country are encouraged to voice their solutions for reducing violence that destroys so many young lives. The program works because it recognizes that the best solutions come from communities where violence takes place.

Utah's *Do the Write Thing Challenge* is sponsored locally by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. The Board monitors Utah's compliance with the core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) as reauthorized in 2002. The Board is also responsible for administering federal funds appropriated through the JJDP, to fill gaps in the continuum of juvenile justice services, from prevention to treatment. Members are appointed by Utah's Governor.

How the Campaign Works

The Utah Board of Juvenile Justice sent information to all Utah school district superintendents and middle school principals encouraging them to involve their teachers and 7th and 8th grade students in the Challenge. Teachers were given suggestions about how to tie the Challenge into course work. Students could research youth violence as part of a history class, write a poem as part of an English class, or even consider youth violence from a social science perspective. Following a classroom discussion about youth violence, students were asked to write answers to three questions:

How has youth violence affected my life?

What are the causes of youth violence?

What can my community and I do to reduce youth violence?

School districts reported that more than 1,500 students participated in classroom discussions about youth violence. More than 790 chose to submit essays for review. Students from the University of Utah and Weber State University participated in the first round of judging, selecting the top ninety writings. The Utah Board of Juvenile Justice then selected the top twelve finalists, whose work was forwarded to Utah's VIP Judges. The VIP Judges had the difficult task of selecting a boy and girl national finalist along with runners up.

Utah's National Finalists will participate with other National Finalists at the *Do the Write Thing* National Recognition Ceremony in Washington DC this July. Finalists will meet with members of Utah's Congressional delegation to discuss the problem of youth violence. They will also attend a reception hosted by the Ambassador to the United States for the State of Kuwait. A book containing the student's writings will be placed in the Library of Congress.

Congratulations to all students that took the Challenge to do something about youth violence!

UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO
Do the Write Thing

National Finalists

Shania Jensen

8th Grade, Desert Hills Middle School
Teacher, Whitney Lee

Korey Rush

8th Grade, Treasure Mountain International School
Teacher, Iris J. Durfee

Shania Jensen - 8th Grade
Desert Hills Middle School - Teacher, Whitney Lee
Nightmares.

Ghostly traces haunt where his hands enthralled around her fragile neck. Her legs reaching for the ground, her kicking and screaming grew weaker. Her tiny fingers slowly surrendered to his arms. Her insignificant body means nothing to him. Flashing lights emerged from the fog. He dropped her to the snow, wound in a ball. Nowhere to run. Looking up from the car, I saw my brother in hand cuffs. Little did he know it was me, I was the one that made the call. I couldn't stand to see someone I love, my brother, my blood, my best friend. Become a monster; a man I had no respect for, my dad.

Expression. Anger. Hurt. Violence is a lot of things. No matter how you see it it's not okay. Violence has a natural setting, for instance a lion attacking it's pray. He seeks out the weak, the vulnerable, something that won't fight back. It's how he survives. But is it natural for one person to hurt another verbally, physically, or emotionally? Is that how we survive? Do we feed of other peoples hurt to make us feel on top of the food chain, make us feel...inevitable? When I see violence I think of one thing, I think of a human hitting a dog. The dog will keep coming back because he loves his owner. He wants to be with his best friend. It's funny to think how he can love someone who could hurt him most. The human. Violence isn't one hundred percent preventable. Its lurking in the shadows. Waiting to strike its jaws of destruction. It doesn't care who it hurts. It feeds on the fear, hurt, and tears of the human. Like a ripple effect it is unstoppable.

I would never wish the feeling of sadness, worthlessness, lonesness, or regret the way I felt at only age seven on anyone. Domestic violence filled my house. I didn't live with my mom; I lived with my dad and brother in a house the size of a typical persons two car garage. I would come home from school to my brother and my dad screaming, and, punching. I would sit in the laundry room and wait for my brother to tell me everything was all right. I was emotionally scarred. My dad told me I was a mistake. A disappointment. He told me he wished I was never his daughter. He told me I was fat. Ugly. I never let him show how much it hurt me inside. I grew stronger with every word he said kept telling myself that I was going to get him back. I was going to make him regret every single word he said to me. I played it in my mind over, and over, and over. I was going to make sure he couldn't live with the guilt. All this anger was turning me into something I promised myself I never would be. I wasn't going to be like my dad, but that is exactly what I would be doing would be stooping down to his level. I wasn't being the big person. My brother was my best friend. He played games with me, made my food. My brother was pretty much my dad. My dad was never around. I would see him when he came home from work and that was it. Well that was his big mistake . My brother became out of

control with drugs. I begged for him to stop. He told me it made him go away, it made him happy. It made him forget about home. So I stopped trying. Now I wish I wouldn't have. Its been years and it still hasn't stopped. Now I love with my mother and her husband. I will never forget what they put me through, it will stay with me forever. My brother who used to be my best friend, was now the man I had no regret for. He treated his girlfriend the same way my dad treated my mom. My brother hit, yelled and abused his girlfriend. She would come to me crying begging for help. I couldn't do anything until the day he had the nerve to put his hands on her in a public movie theater with only me around. He pushed her in the snow. She tried to get up, but he was chocking her. That was the day I lost all respect for my brother, and because of his actions I am scared when any guy comes around me that I will be put in a bad position. I'm scared that they will treat me like my brother treated his girlfriend. That fear will fallow me like a shadow never leaving my side. A never ending nightmare.

"Some people blame our generation, but have they ever stopped to think who raised us". (Unknown). So many kids are neglected. Humans are kind-of like monkeys in away. If we don't have love we will eventually die. Everyone just wants to be loved. they want to feel like they are apart of a family kids get caught up in their parents addictions. Research shows that children of addicts are twice as likely to become addicts and develop emotional or behavioral problems as other children. People are spending so much time at their jobs. Making money, thinking it will benefit their family. Little do they see the kids starting new addictions. Not all cases are this way for instance maybe the parent has no other choice but to work all day. Kid's need someone too look up to when they are young. When the parents aren't there to give them so kind of guidance, care, or some kind of structure that's when they get into trouble. There is no one to tell them that they are wrong. No one is trying to stop the children because there is no one there to help them.

looking at everyone around me they have their own story. I am who I am because of my story. Who am I to judge? I am no better than they are they are no better than I am. I will not stand for violence. If I am not as cool as someone else because I stood up for someone that was hurt I don't care. Like marlin Monroe said" when it comes down to it I let them think what they want, if they care enough to bother me with what I do, I am already better than them". I know I am just one person, but maybe if people see one little change it will be contagious. Its up to you .Do you want change?

Korey Rush- 8th Grade
Treasure Mountain International School – Teacher, Iris J. Durfee

MISUNDERSTOOD

The football players, there all the same you know dumb, big, mean get all the girls. They don't care about anything other than how hard they hit a kid, or how many touchdowns they scored. All they love to do is harass kids and poke at their insecurities to cover up all of their own insecurities. What's funny about that is not all of us big bad football players are like that, but yet we all get treated like it. I guess you're guilty by association. Yes myself and most of my good friends have done in some way or form bullied a kid, but so has the four foot eleven violin player. That doesn't make all four foot eleven violin players bullies does it? Saying that doesn't make bullying right, or should it make bullying the norm But judging someone by how they look, or who they hang out with before actually getting to know them shouldn't be right or the norm either. Bullying shouldn't ever be tolerated and bullies shouldn't be let off the hook. But people have to understand that bullies come in all shapes, sizes, races and social groups. when I walk down the halls and get looks from kids I don't know as if there scared of me makes me feel terrible inside. As if I'm not accepted by my classmates. Bullying is an issue that needs to be taken care of but stereotyping a person and thinking there mean and cruel or just not a good kid before actually getting to know them is also an issue that needs change. I don't think bullying the issue of bullying will ever be completely resolved or gone but every victim of bullying is hurt in some way. That is why it's so important that we hear every voice and make sure kids are all heard before they harm themselves or others. When I realized that football players we're the stereotypical bully I wanted to make sure that I tried my best not to bully or tease kids. I've also tried to make sure that my friends and teammates resisted to make a cruel joke or tease a kid smaller than them just for a laugh. Not saying that I am bully free but if try not to be a bully it will make everything a lot better than they are now. I really want to see bullying happen at a lower rate in schools, especially my school because I feel that it happens here more than it does at other schools. Because it happens to anyone and everyone at my school. If bullying stops only good could come out of it grades would probably go up, kids would be happier and not afraid to come to school, and it would be a better environment over all. That's why I'll do what I can to make sure bullying doesn't go on at such high rate at my school, because it is important that every voice is heard.

Bullied

I remember the first time I was ever bullied and the first time I ever bullied someone else. I was in 8th grade. I never had been bullied. Never. I also thought that I would never bully someone else either. Me and my friends were sitting in the forum eating lunch. Before we all sat down, I noticed that the "8th grade Mean Girl group" was sitting out there too. I thought it was kind of weird that they out there because they usually sat in the lunch room at "Their Table." We sat down thinking nothing of it and started eating. Suddenly food was being thrown towards us. Hard. A big slobbery apple core flew through the air and landed straight on my friends brand new jacket. We all knew that that delightful present had come from "Them." I never liked it when people were mad at me.

I always wanted everyone to like me. So to hide my madness, I started to laugh. I only laughed because I didn't want them to know that I was bothered by what they did. Now I still feel bad about laughing. My Teacher told me a story about when she was in middle school, there was a nerdy red head boy with huge thick round glasses and buck teeth. All the students at the school called him carrots. She said that he was picked on every single day. She said that she also joined in with the name calling and talking behind his back about how weird he was.

The school was next to a river. Every day, when the river was not frozen, the football players would take 'carrots' and throw him into it. My teacher knew that it was wrong, but she came with her friends and watched anyway. Every time he was thrown, she felt very guilty. She thought about what she was going to do for a long long time. The next time 'carrots' was about to be thrown, she stepped up in front of everyone, and said that what they were doing was wrong. Then she said that she took 'carrots' by the arm and dragged him away with her. Because she had saved 'carrots' none of her friends would talk to her anymore. They didn't want to be friends with the girl that had stood up to the cool kids just to save some nerd.

Every day, my teacher walked in and out of school with 'carrots' by her side. She then told us that at the end of the year, he wrote her a note saying that he was so thankful for what she did. He told her that if what was happening didn't stop, he was going to kill himself. When I heard that I thought, wow, that was a really brave thing to do. In my perspective, she saved a life by telling people that what they were doing was wrong. I now know that by laughing along, I was sort of bullying my friend.

Bullying has affected my life in a way that makes me feel guilty. I now know to look for it and put a stop to it. I know that it can be stopped with just a few simple words. Even though it might cost some friendships.

Some causes of bullying are: Using mean or hurtful words, nicknames, over looking someone, hitting, kicking, pulling hair, telling lies, spreading false rumors, sending mean notes, trying to get students to not like other students. Bullying is a very serious thing. If people are picking on a person, they really don't know what impression they will leave. If the bullying gets to be so serious, the victim might decide to become suicidal. Or in other mild cases, become depressed. If you are being bullied and you can't get it to stop, talk to someone. Either a parent, teacher, counselor, friend. Any one who you think will help you get your problem solved.

UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO
Do the Write Thing

Runners Up

Blake Betts

*8th Grade, Desert Hills Middle School
Teacher, Whitney Lee*

Cozy Huggins

*8th Grade, Treasure Mountain International School
Teacher, Michelle Stratton*

Blake Betts - 8th Grade
Desert Hills Middle School - Teacher, Whitney Lee

Do the "Write" Thing

"There was never a good war or a bad peace." (Benjamin Franklin American journalist and inventor) Violence, everyone has different views of this act but we can all agree that it hurts. The sight of blood, fire, tears and anger, and the sounds of crying, yelling, and fighting are all familiar to us. These awful sights and sounds cause some people physical and mental permanent damage that can ruin their lives and others around them. This damage can result in injury, and in some cases fatality. Drunken driving, homicide, suicide all comes back to violence. It changes your life.

In my case I was not the bully or the bullied. I was the observer who decided to take a stand. I was in the fifth grade and it was nearing the end of the school year. A kid in my grade decided to pick on some girls in the 2nd grade. Sadly one of them was my best friend's sister. We decided to stop this cruel act of violence.

We approached the kid and told him how we felt about the situation. Obviously the kid did not appreciate us trying to stop his rampage, so he decided to hit me in the side of the head. My first thought was to hit him back but I knew that I had to be the better person in this situation. Some spectators saw this act and told an adult as soon as they could.

The kid was suspended for the rest of the year and was forced to attend summer school. The principal said that he was glad that I did not hit him because I would have been dealt the same punishment. My parents were proud that I decided to be the better person in this situation. After this happened the girls came up to me and thanked my friend and me for what we did. It gave my friend and me a great feeling.

"I object to violence because when it appears to be good, the good is temporary; the evil it does is permanent." (Mahatma Gandhi Indian Philosopher)

Like everything in the world violence has a cause and an effect. The most common cause of violence is violence itself. Most bullies were bullied as kids. For example the school shooting at Columbine High School; two senior students by the names of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris were victims of bullies in Columbine High. On April 20, 1999 the two embarked on a mass shooting of 12 students and one teacher. 21 one were injured by gunshots and 3 were injured trying to escape. After they had gotten what they wanted the two committed suicide which put the death total at 15. 15 lives were taken that day because violence had occurred.

With this story it is obvious that violence needs to be put to a halt. So what can we do to stop it? Some ways are not resulting in violence in a heated discussion, or saying no to drugs,

alcohol, and other harmful toxins. You can even join anti- violence groups. Whatever you do we need your help to stop this harmful act.

Remember the sights, sounds, scents and even if you have been bullied, how you felt when you were bullied. So with this paper I encourage you to do anything you can to stop or even limit the amount of violence in your community. If you do this you can change the world. "We can bomb the world to pieces but we can't bomb the world to peace. Power to the peaceful."(Michael Franti American singer/songwriter)

Cozy Huggins - 8th Grade

Treasure Mountain International School - Teacher, Michelle Stratton

Sullen faces and sorrowful expressions. Avoiding people and places everyone knows somebody like that, maybe it's the 'weird' kid or the one who has no friends. Youth Violence hurts everyone and everyone can do things to help stop it.

My mom is a teacher, so she has always told me to treat everyone as you wish to be treated, so when a friend of mine was bullied via text messages I was horrified. The same friend has always been a little awkward in social situations and has been teased for awhile now, starting in the 4th grade. She has had marriage proposals, notes telling her "you are the ugliest girl I know" and "god your so stupid." She would go home and sob, the bullies thought they were just teasing and joking. The look on her face said otherwise. We can stop teen violence from occurring if people are more willing to open up to other people. The hate and ashamed look on her face will haunt me till the day I die. Forever a reminder to me that gossip can scar the nicest of our population. Teen Violence can make you feel, like a bird who fell out of the nest, you feel helpless and alone in the world. I have a friend who is in special education, she has been teased through our time in school. It absolutely makes me want to vomit, what kids say to and about her because she is "slow" or "not like us". Every human being is a person! When someone is hurts another person they are slashing their confidence slowly until it deteriorates like a snail without a shell, half of the person is gone and in a way they are never coming back.

I read a story about a kid who was walking home with his books and the "popular crowd" came by and knocked his books over, another kid ran over to help him and ended up walking home with him and they became friends. Turns out the reason he was taking his books home was to kill himself. The kid who picked up his books saved him. This makes me realize if all over the world someone helped another person in just a small way, the world would be a happier place to live.

Bullying has now expanded to face Face book pages or harassing in chartrooms, if a person is harassed to an extent this extreme it can make life utterly inhabitable. Teen Violence can be caused by not liking someone's hair, a funny accent, the need to fit in socially and for being "different. If the world could only focus on things we have in common instead of the ones that tear us apart we could make a difference in solving the problem of teen violence.

Teen violence can have drastic consequences. Remember the Virginia Tech massacre? The Columbine massacre? It can drive kids past the point of a low self confidence and lead to deadly revenge. Being harassed to the point of no return can only make's someone want revenge on tormentors. Bullying can isolate you from society and make you feel alone. When you are bullied and isolated there is no one to talk to. It is the feeling of beyond helplessness. In a sense death seems an escape.

If I see someone being bullied or teased I will inter fear on their behalf. No one deserves that kind of torture and I will help fix teen violence. It doesn't matter if someone is black, white or purple they have the emotions of anybody and can be

equally hurt. I can help by inviting someone who is sitting alone to eat with my friends and myself. I can help by trying to be friends with more kids. Never again will I spread gossip. Never again will I stand by and watch. I will be the one voice in the crowd. It does not matter if a change 1 life or a billion lives. I will do my part to stop teen violence, bullying and harassment. Who knows? I could save a life

UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO
Do the Write Thing

State Finalists

Jessica Braithwaite

**8th Grade, Fort Herriman Middle School
Teacher, Brandee Davis**

Savannah Escobar

**8th Grade, Highland Junior High School
Teacher, Kim Irvine**

Austin Floisand

**8th Grade, Northwest Middle School
Teacher, Linda L. Lujan**

Marlie Meacham

**7th Grade, Ephraim Middle School
Teacher, Barbara Wintch**

Christopher Nolasco

**8th Grade, Northwest Middle School
Teacher, Linda L. Lujan**

Blake Penrod

**7th Grade, Juab Junior High School
Teacher, Sharon L. Kay**

Fallon Peterson

**8th Grade, Juab Junior High School
Teacher, Denise W. Park**

Tanner Smith

**8th Grade, Highland Junior High School
Teacher, Kim Irvine**

Jessica Braithwaite - 8th Grade
Fort Herriman Middle School - Teacher, Brandee Davis

WILL YOU STAND?

It seems imposable to stop youth violence and it pretty much is if you're fighting alone. I've been hurt in my life and it changed me. It affected the way I look at life. The person I am today is from those hard times. In fifth grade the person I thought was my best friend told me I was "so uncool, lame, ugly and that trash is worth more then me." The thing that hurt the most was that she was embarrassed by me. She had to say this to me in front of all my other, so called, friends and her new popular friends. This changed everything my friends, grades, home life and the way I look at myself. I sat alone at school and after school I would run home crying. After a few days of this I hated life and especially school. One day though I saw a girl sitting on the hill all alone just like me. We started talking a found out that we were going through the same thing. She made me a better person, but best of all she made me happy and got me out of my depression.

I think there are a lot of reasons for youth violence. Theirs Stuff like revenge and anger, but I think your attitude has a lot to do with it. Maybe even bad family life or hurtful friends are causes. The thing that I think has the most causes for youth violence is computer games, video games, even television and movies have bad influences. They may thing its cool or even fun to bully. Theirs self inflicted pain that comes from things like magazines and posters which leads to anorexia and bulimia. Girls are always trying to look like the models, actors and singers they see. Guys even try looking like the buff football players they watch on TV. Drugs can play there part to. All a bully needs is a good honest friend.

This happens every day every where it's not something you can run from or hide from. This is something that can change though. We can stop being the bully. We can stop calling people names and taking them down. You don't know how it makes them feel or what there thinking. We need to reach out and be friends not enemies. We need to uplift and compliment not scream and throw punches. We should be friends with those that are alone or even look the lest bet sad, like the girl on the hill did for me.

I'm going to stop being the bully. I'm going to help those that are hurting and stand up for those being shoved in the hall and being sworn at for no reason. I 'm going to stand! I hope from my example that others will stand. I hope that if we stand up against youth violence that our future generation can have a happy self life that many of us feel we don't have. I don't want any one to go through what I did if theirs not going to be an angel on a hill willing to save you. We all need to work together. This is important because with out team work its only going to get worse. There wouldn't be an enjoy and safe future unless we fight now.

Savannah Escobar - 8th Grade
Highland Junior High School - Teacher, Kim Irvine

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase

-Martin Luther King Jr.

My eyes were opened wide. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. There was blood all over the place. She had scars all over her body. A teardrop ran down my eye onto my cheek. She was crying in the corner and telling me she doesn't know why she does it but it helps her relieve the pain. I didn't expect someone who I loved to have so much pain inside her. That day had made me see the other side of my best friend. I never expected someone who I love to have to hurt herself to make her life feel better.

She had been missing for a week and I got worried about her. So one day she came and she pulled me to the bathroom. I followed. I asked her why she was gone for so long. There was No response. She looked pale and sweaty. So I asked her if she was feeling sick. No response. I helped her take off her sweater. When she took it off I saw many scars all over her. I was shocked I was terrified of what had happened. She said she never wanted me to see what was on her arms. All over her arms were scars bleeding, and cuts, and bruises. I was scared for her. I had no clue why she had so many scars, cuts, and bruises. She told me I couldn't tell anyone no one not even my parents.

So, days went on and on. Every time I would see her I had to turn away. I felt sad for her, but I also felt disappointment. I couldn't believe that she wouldn't even tell me, her best friend. I also felt guilt because I had no one to tell. Many days went on and I was getting guiltier and guiltier by the day. I couldn't take it. It was like the guilt was eating me up. So, I went to go tell the counselor. I told him what was going on with her and what she did to herself. The counselor was worried for her, but I told him that she didn't want anyone to know, and that I felt guilty. He told me it was the right thing to do. But I knew a part of me was right to tell and a part of me was wrong.

It was seventh period the last class before school was over. When the counselor came in and asked to see my best friend. I knew exactly what it was about. I felt my stomach turn, and I knew she was going to hate me forever. The bell rang it was time to go home. Luckily I wasn't going to see her, but I knew that I was going to have to deal with it sometime. The next day in the morning. I was waiting at the bus stop when I saw my best friend. I knew that she was going to come up to me and tell me why I told. She didn't, instead she glared at me and walked right pass me. Many people asked me why I wasn't talking to my best friend, but all I could say was I don't know. The day was going on good until lunch time. I was going to get my lunch when all of a sudden people started looking at me and saying comments about me. No One talked to me the whole day until I got on the bus. Some girl with a happy smile on her face sat next to me. She asked me how I could have hurt someone's feelings so bad. I had no idea what she was talking about. She said there was this rumor that I had made my best friend cry by telling her mean things. I told her it wasn't true, and she said, "Well no one is going to believe you."

The next day, I was made fun of, called names, and stuff was being thrown at me. Instead of people calling me by my name they called me the "Bully". I felt like nothing I did could ever change the fact. No one believed me when I said I didn't say that. So I decided one day to figure out who had started this rumor. I had found out it was my best friend. So I went to go confront her telling her why did she start this rumor? She said that she did it because of what I went to go tell the counselor. I told her that I only did it because I was worried about her and I couldn't take it anymore. She started to cry and gave me a hug. She said, "I understand if one of my best friends was in that situation I would try to help that person." The next day she had told everyone that it was an error and she didn't say that. She told everyone why she did it. In the beginning everyone looked at her weird. But I stood up for her and said, "Everyone has a problem in their life no one is perfect. So why should you judge her." Even though it didn't go as planned. She had one person there for her, me. I was there to stand with her till the end.

Violence is everywhere. It doesn't matter how old you are or how strong you are. We all have struggles in our life. When you feel like life is bringing you down, don't feel sad because there are other people who feel the same way. Violence needs to be stopped. It's like a battle you can either loose or win. But remember you're not the only one who has problems. Everyone is here to help. So don't lose faith in yourself. Stand tall and strong because no matter what your story is.

There will always be someone to be there right by your side.

Austin Floisand - 8th Grade
Northwest Middle School - Teacher, Linda L. Lujan

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Youth violence is starting to become a bigger problem in our world today. The kids are following peers, siblings and sometimes even parents. When following these people in their life they feel it is ok and that it is acceptable to do violence. They are learning by example. They start out small by bullying someone, tagging our schools, neighborhood and even local churches. This no longer is satisfying to them; they turn to bigger things such as stealing, tagging more, drugs, alcohol and violence. Some of these kids want to be accepted by others or like the attention they get from it.

A boy name Kevin said when he joined his gang he had to do violence and hurt someone, steal, drink a lot of alcohol, do drugs and he was beat up pretty bad by all his gang friends. This was just to be apart of the gang. I couldn't believe he would allow someone to physically hurt him that bad just to fit in. Kevin was only 14 years old when he started getting involved with violence. Even at church & family parties he was beating people up just for looking at him wrong. He is now 25 and trying to change and get out of gang activity. While in gang activity he was shot at, and his friend was shot and killed. He became very addicted to drugs and alcohol and could not keep a job. He was arrested many times and has many friends that are in jail. He beat someone up pretty bad for looking at his girl friend. It was his family that helped him starts to change and get out of gangs. He is still trying to change and stop doing gang activity.

Another boy named Nate started acting out in school in 4th grade and liked the attention. Soon he was getting into drugs, alcohol, tagging and had a lot of attention from girls. He was

arrested many times for beating a lot of kids up, stabbing someone, tagging, and many times for stealing or Possession of drugs. He found tagging to be his biggest problem. He couldn't stop; he says it's hard to pass by something without writing his name on it. He has been arrested more times for tagging than anything else. He is only 17 right now and is going to be a dad within the Next couple of weeks. Because of the violence, drugs, and tagging that he does he was not told About the baby until 3 weeks ago. Nate stops by our house because he used to be my brothers friend. When he came to our house my brother and I talked to him about his tagging and using his art on something else that wouldn't get him into trouble. My brother gave him a pair of his shoes and asked him to tag his initials and his favorite number on the shoes. I don't know if this will help but we tried to show him how to change his talent into something he could use and not get into trouble with.

My older brother use to have a friend who went to school and played sports with him. This boy was one of the fastest boys and he could play baseball, basketball and even football better than anyone. He grew up in a home where his dad had killed himself and he had walked in and seen him after. This made him look up to his older brother and followed everything he did. He got into violence because of example. He should have kept playing sports but instead he turned to sloughing school, drugs, drinking and then violence. In 6th grade he was writing his brothers gang signs on his folder. He looked up to him and wanted to be like him. He was always in trouble. He was kicked out of school in 6th grade because he shot a pencil with a sling shot at another boy in his class. He ended up dropping out of school. He started to do drugs and drink and a lot of violence. He followed everything his brother did. He was Utah's youngest most wanted at the age of 17. He is in prison for shooting someone because of youth violence and the example of his brother.

I feel youth violence is bad and something we need to get rid of. There are many types of violence like calling names, Sling shot, beating someone up, stabbing, shooting and many other acts of violence that the youth do. Violence starts by example from friends or family and becomes a habit before they can change it. They feel it is ok because their friends and family do it.

We need to make sure kids are caught when they first start doing violence so they see it is not fun to be locked up or be hand cuffed in the back of a cop car. Nate told me if he would have been caught tagging when he first started and had to go clean and take care of it the first time he probably wouldn't have kept doing it and it wouldn't have become a habit and tagging wouldn't have turned into violence.

I think it would be nice not to be in a world of violence.

Most of the kids that get bullied are the kids that can't defend themselves. We need to stand up for our friends or classmates and not let this happen. If we show by example how not to do violence that could be one way to help reduce violence.

Don't do it, stand up for it, keep it far away, punish those who do it and never let it become a part of your life. Violence in youth today is not something we should stand for. John Walsh from one of my favorite TV shows America's Most Wanted says "you can make a difference."

Marlie Meacham - 7th Grade
Ephraim Middle School - Teacher, Barbara Wintch

Doing the Write Thing, Helping to End Violence

One day in third grade, my brother and I were riding our bikes home from school. A boy in my grade came over and started bullying me. My little brother, who was in first grade, tried to stop him. The boy hurt my brother. This incident made me start thinking about violence in our community; if I could do the right thing and try to stop violence, it would not be so much of a problem to me, my family, friends, and other people in my community. We can all take a part in ending violence. Violence is a big problem. I probably can't stop the violence, but I can try my best. One way that I can help end violence is by trying to find the good in people. Another way is not to watch, play or listen to violent media. Making an effort to control my temper will also reduce violence. I think that these are all great ways for me to help end violence.

I can try to stop violence by finding the good in other people. If I am optimistic and find the good in other people, then I won't have negative thoughts which can lead to violence. If everyone can be optimistic and be tolerant and respectful to each other's differences, then violence will probably end. We would all be thinking about the good in others and fighting could stop. If we all stop gossiping, then we could stop making others look bad. When we think of the good in others, we won't gossip and make rumors up about them. Rumors make people angry and defensive. I can stop rumors by telling people something I like about the person they're gossiping about, it will hopefully get them thinking of the good in everyone!

There are so many violent video games, computer games, television shows, and songs that kids my age listen to. These are all bad things that encourage violence. Kids buy the video games and computer games and think it is fun to kill the characters or at least hurt them badly. Kids think this is a great way to spend their time. Songs can really influence us too. Sometimes we just listen to the music and not the lyrics; eventually we will listen to the lyrics that can sometimes make us think of violent things. Movies that have violence in them are not helping to end violence either. Movies are something everyone likes, but they aren't always appropriate for us to watch. I think that if I listen to my parents' advice and don't play, listen to, or watch violent things, I can discourage my friends from doing so too. Media is a great way to lure kids into violence.

So many people start to be violent just because they can't control their temper. Just one little thing makes them mad, and then the fighting starts. If I can control my temper when my brothers make me angry by annoying me,

not listening to me, etcetera, then by my example, they could control their tempers too. This can stop the fighting just in my house. If everyone in my family controls their tempers, then they can show others that it is possible to do it. If everyone follows that example, then there will hopefully be less violence. I know that we all lose our tempers once and a while, but we can try our best to fight off the urge to lose it too badly, badly enough to hurt someone else.

Just by doing small, little things by myself, I can set an example to my family and friends. The boy that was bullying me, and hurt my brother is still in my grade at school. He also still has problems with fighting and bullying. If I can set a good example to him, then I think that I could set a good example to everyone else too. Just by thinking of the good in people can lift everyone's spirits up and help them think better of everyone else. Also, by not giving in to the violent media and by controlling my temper, I can do the right thing to stop violence!

Christopher Nolasco – 8th Grade
Northwest Middle School - Teacher, Linda L. Lujan

Let's Reduce Youth Violence

For me youth violence means when someone uses physical or verbal language against each other or it's self in an aggressive or inappropriate way. There are many ways of using violence like fights, bullying, cyber bullying, black mail, gossip and more. People always think that violence is fist fights or any physical damage but that is false. Violence can be used in any ways as a result for someone to get hurt especially physically, emotionally, and mentally.

As I was growing up I noticed that there was a lot of violence not jus in school but in friend's houses as well. There was a kid that went to our school he was always getting in fights and disobeying teacher's orders. One day this kid came to school with burses on his face. The teacher asked him what had happened. He said he had got in a fight with his big brother. One year passed and the kid grew more aggressive he started to bully a lot of kids. Then one mourning at breakfast he looked very upset. So I went up to him to tell him what was wrong, he was my friend when we were kids so I wasn't really scared of him. He didn't want to tell me anything, but finally he told me that his family had some economic trouble, and as a result his family was very violent to him. Then I told him that there were many things he could to get help. He told me no my parents are really nice folks just that right now were going through very hard times. Then I said slowly is that why you bully so many kids. He looked at me for a while then put his head down and sighed. Tears were pouring down his eyes as he was speaking. He said "I don't mean to hurt people it just happens, people just make a big deal out of it but. I guess it seems okay to me because I feel like my parents do the same thing to me when they abuse me. I told him still that doesn't give you a right to hurt others just because someone does it to you.

Then I told him if your dad kills someone is it okay for you to get a gun kill someone as well. He said no, after a while he recognized that he needed help as well as his parents. Time went by and he grew as a better child no more bullying or fights and what was more important his family was back to normal and non violent.

There are many causes for youth violence usually the person who is bullying or fighting is sad, depressed, jealous, resist, bad childhood, or maybe video games. I think there are three major causes for youth violence. the first cause is what a lot of people like to call "the cycle" which means when some one was bullied or treated poorly so they others the same way. Another is a major struggle for youth violence which is violent video games or TV shows with weapons and violence. This is a serious problem a lot of kids think it's okay to use violence because there is violence in games and TV. But the real world is not a game at all. The last reason is when someone is uncomfortable with them self's and use violence as a way to solve there problems.

Youth violence has affected me in many ways after you could walk around the streets with no problem or worries. Now in days you have to be careful and watch out for any gangbangers that could harm you. But youth violence doesn't just affect me but it also affects the people using violence and the victim and also the families that are related to the teenagers. Families never want to see there children suffer and that cause them pain as well.

I think there is many ways to reduce youth violence. Teenagers going to school can do many things like when they see someone being bullied or people fighting stop it. If you think that you have a problem with drugs or violence get help, there are many programs out there that could help you. What parents could do is not use violence in their home and especially in front of children. Another thing that parents could do is if you think your child can't handle video games

that are rated violent or TV shows that are rated r don't let them watch or play. What schools and the community could do is get help programs for drugs or violence. Another thing that schools could do is when people are getting bullied have more serious consequences and raise money for activities that teach teens not to use violence in their lives. Youth violence will never end but we sure could reduce youth violence so let's start now.

Blake Penrod - 7th Grade
Juab Junior High School - Teacher, Sharon L. Kay

Violence Essay

Violence is when people fight and hurt others. They worry about, in my view, dumb things. Teens can get aggressive over many things. Violence can happen in schools, homes, and almost anywhere. People can get violent because of religion, relationships, attitude, racism, and others differences. Violence is when someone gets hurt, when someone is bullying and scares others, and when it affects others.

An effect of a different religion can escalate to violence. People may fight over a different belief in the other's religion. Teens could fight about that and become violent and start a fight. A teen may have had a relationship with another teen that didn't last long. They may have disagreed about something and broke up. They may fight and yell at each other if they meet at school. Attitudes can start violence pretty quick. Someone may be a drama queen and act all stuck up. That teen could fight over not getting what they want or not want to do something they have to do. That teen could get violent with screaming, whining, or hitting someone they don't like. Racism is a big reason why teens get mad. A teen may be Hispanic and be left out of other groups. She or he may fight with the other groups. Recently, violence has happened. A sheriff in Millard County had been shot. This was an act of violence. They thought the killer had traveled to Nephi, where I live. This scared me, but they caught him. It affected my life and others because our school was in lockdown. I'm glad that it didn't get out of hand, thanks to the police.

Some solutions for teen violence could be seeing a school counselor, talking it out with friends, accept people for their differences, and being who you are. You need to be yourself during your teen years. People will remember you for who you were. A teen may get violent because someone said that they're a bad kid. They could hold a grudge later on, and hurt people because of his or her anger. Everyone needs to except everyone and help others fit in. Violence leads to more violence. Apologize if you made someone uncomfortable and made him or her mad. We should make friends and not be violent.

To me violence can stop, or at least be controlled. People need to accept each other. To me we need to forgive and forget. Violence can affect an amount of people. In some cases it affects me. People could do stupid things and others get affected. Violence is a stupid act that can hurt people, scares people, and affects a lot of people. If you come close to violence try to get things under control, but not get involved in the fight either. If

you are the one causing violence you should knock it off. Violence can get out of hand and can get someone hurt. All I'm trying to say is violence is a problem and people can help each other overcome violence.

Fallon Peterson – 8th Grade
Juab Junior High School - Teacher, Denise W. Park

Teen Violence

Kidnapping, marriage problems, and parents abusing their children this sounds familiar because it's happening everywhere you turn, and all of the time. Teen violence is affecting lives every day. There are so many causes and so many ways to resolve each one of them. I believe we need to especially help those being abused. We need to not only prevent this from happening, but help those that are suffering through it.

Teen violence has affected my life mainly by hearing about it on the news and having it happen to people in the community. This has made it so I am definitely trying to be more careful about where I walk and go outside. I try to be with a buddy every time that I am outside! My friend has told me a story about one time when she was walking home with her friends. A car drove up to them and they told them all to get inside of the car. I can't imagine being in a situation like that, I would be absolutely terrified. Of course my friends were scared so they all ran as fast as they could! Who knows what the strangers could've done to them. This has taught me I need to be careful, and especially at night. Plus, I'm sure it has taught my friends never to walk alone in the dark like this again!

Imagine if a boy or girl walked into your school looking miserable and beaten. Everyone can tell by their actions they have been hurt physically and emotionally. Would you try to talk to this person and help them, or just turn around and walk away? He or she has probably been being abused, most likely by their parents or guardians. The reason for this is probably from drugs or alcohol. No one wants this to happen to them, so this is why we need to help.

The breakup of traditional family is probably one of the biggest causes for teen violence. Picture this; if the parents of a teen talk about and fight with the other in nasty ways, the teen will probably soon think this is okay. Constantly they start viewing and listening to violent video games and music. This can only make it worse. The next thing happening is this person could be abusing their own family. Another cause of teen violence can be from teens abusing animals and their pets. When they practice this action often, it can become very easy for them to do the same to other people. They can soon be doing these actions to teens their age. This is definitely not okay.

Abusive actions that cause teen violence not only come from parents abusing their teens, but also from teens that could be abusing their parents. Say teens get messing around with the wrong group of friends. They begin to not care about what their parents are saying or telling them what is best for them. Before you know it, the teen could be cursing and hitting their parents. To me, this is just something very sad to have happen as well. We NEED to prevent these things from happening.

What we can do to prevent this is tasks such as asking the girl or boy at your school everyone knows has been hurt, what is wrong and what is happening. This can help so much if you do so little. Some other ways is to make sure the teens in your community are being with the people they should be, and doing what they should be doing. Keep them on track. The most important prevention to teen violence is to be a good example.

With all of these different tasks we can do to prevent and help those who need it, we NEED to do it. Why not? We need to do the right thing. We can help many people and make the world a better place.

Tanner Smith - 8th Grade
Highland Junior High School - Teacher, Kim Irvine

Youth Violence

What is youth violence? Youth violence is the crying of a child for his mother, his cries fall on deaf ears, all except his mother, her crying in the wake of the violent storm, wanting to sooth his pain, however unable. Her beating delivered by his father, the alcohol in his blood fortifying his rage and his voracious hunger for violence, The cries of the child fell from my mouth I was that child, and the turbulence I experienced during those years is described in the following report, my story of youth violence. When you are a child of four you don't always understand watt is happening around you, whether you see the happiness that engulfs you, or you choose to see the hatred that is shrouded in fake happiness,. My father had a drinking problem but a larger one with drugs, meth mainly, and an obsession with taking his problems and anger out on my currently defenseless mother. I was often wakened by screams of pain in the night, but the most horrible day was yet to come. The day my father was drunk enough to nearly kill my mother, I left my room to see my mother on the ground with my father standing over her I ran at him ready to fight but the look in his eyes told me" I don't want you here, just leave". My heart shattered like the hundred other times it has happened during those years. I ran to my room crying my eyes out, my tears a river in which I would surely drown if this didn't stop. Mi rage subsided, I knew I couldn't fight him back, so I me and my mother left, forever. I cannot fight him, for those years have passed. But I can fight it now, in our schools, in our homes, we all see it happening yet we chose to sit idly by and let those who cannot fight back suffer? I see kid have their books and binders thrown to the ground, and no one stops to help? I see kids get beat up for no reason other than self confidence that they are invincible, yet we still do nothing? I have a way to stop it, use your ability to help to do something about it all. I can stop youth violence, and so can you. All we have to do is open your hearts to those that don't have any one to care for them. So why don't we do something? Its because were either too afraid for our selves, or we don't care and laugh along. But to preserve the well being of the youth of America, we must end youth violence. This is my story.

"Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent" Isaac Asimov 1920-1992

"Victory attained by violence is tantamount to defeat, they are both momentary"

Mahatma Gandhi 1846-1948

Witness the hatred from the violent storm
Turn away from the father that wishes you were never born
The family torn
The child forever forlorn
The beating for the child that didn't listen
Pumping the pistons of his heart
The love is for his mother
This day,
There really is no other

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