
STUDENT WRITING CONTEST WINNERS

2017 Saturday Luncheon

Many Cultures, Many Languages
Shape Our Future

Yareni Cruz

4th Grade-S.C. Johnson
Racine Unified School District
Elementary School Winner



How does culture and language shape my future? I believe culture unites people and brings them together. Culture is a treasure to us. We shape it as we love it. Our cultural values and beliefs are different and diverse. We make culture.

I am a proud descendant of the Zapotec culture in Mexico, which means Town of Clouds. This culture arose more than two thousand years ago in the central valley of Oaxaca and the isthmus of Tehuantepec long before Christopher Columbus arrived in America. There is evidence that the Zapotec culture added many things to history. For example, they contribute archeological buildings, jewelry, sporting fields, pottery, language, religion and dances.

The Zapotec language is very different from speaking Spanish or English. When you have a conversation in Zapotec language, it is very respectful and joyful. When people speak Zapotec, the whole body is used in order to express someone's feelings. My parents taught me some Zapotec words, but I mostly speak Spanish and English.

I am ten years old and I am able to see how unfair this world is at this point of life. I can see that language and culture matter. I can see how people from certain cultures, religions or status are not welcome in the United States of America. I am sad to see all the problems and abuse that these people are put through. I will do my best to pursue my goals. In the future I will be able to help my community and change laws so that everyone may have a fair life.

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Bianey Calixto-Domínguez

8th Grade –La Causa Charter School
Milwaukee Public Schools
Middle School Winner



Hello, Hola, こんにちは, مرحبا

In each language we see the face of a different culture whose roots go back in the past, yet are here in the present, poised to stay. Many languages; many cultures. In our past and in our future.

Presently, we are seeing that segregation is slowly creeping back into action. Refugees, immigrants, people of different races are all being pushed away. We believe this will make America Great Again. Will it? America, the melting pot. A place where we see people of any race connecting over the education of our future generations, who might not even speak the same language. A place where you can find that every corner is filled with the living culture from a foreign place whose name you've never heard of. A place whose first amendment grants us the freedom of speech, press, assembly, and protest. A place whose future well-being doesn't just rely on itself. A place whose culture was made by many others.

The Land of the Free, whose cultures come from the world: thank you for letting us call you home. We thrive with the help of one another. Many languages and cultures from kingdoms, nations, countries, states and continents that are here today and tomorrow will help us through our pain and sorrow because they will shape our tomorrow.

We the people shape our tomorrow; through many cultures and many languages.

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Zing Tha

9th Grade-South Division HS
Milwaukee Public Schools
High School Winner



There are many different cultures in the world. Every culture has different languages. Nowadays, most people know English and English is the most used language in the world. After people have higher education and more experiences with other cultures, they understand and respect other cultures. They also know the value of different cultures and also the importance of these cultures.

When I left my own country, to go to Burma that was my first time experiencing other cultures. We lived in Malaysia for 6 years. I didn't know any Malay languages and I was afraid of going out from our house. But my parents wanted me to go to school and they put me at CSO (Chin Students Organization) school. I also went to the restaurant where my mom worked and helped her sometimes. Then, I met many other people from different cultures. I also made friends with Malay, Indian, Indonesian, and also Chinese students. After I started hanging out with them my life changed. I felt like I was like them even though we all were from different cultures. I learned more about their cultures. The more I spent time with them, I learned about their cultures and I thought that they were really interesting. I also realized that learning other's cultures allowed me to move outside of my bubble, and helped me to find new ways of thinking. I also realized that when we learn about others cultures, and see why others do the things they do, it's easier to understand them. You can develop sympathy for others and it's also harder to justify beliefs like hatred and war when you understand where another person comes from. My mom told me that all people are the same, so it's important not to look down on them, but instead try our best to love them and understand them. The more I think about what my mom told me, I learn that there is more than one approach to life when we expose ourselves to other cultures. I have also learned that my approach might not be always the best.

When I started to attend South Division High school, I saw a lot of people from different cultures that spoke different languages. Whenever they spoke something in their language, I thought that they were talking about me. But once I started talking to them and becoming friends with them, I realized that they weren't talking about me and I just misunderstood them. But sometimes it's good that we don't understand their languages, so that we will not know what they are talking about and there will be no hatred between us. Those who live around people from other cultures like me understand the importance of learning about the differences surrounding them. We also understand that being equal and knowing one's own cultures is important. They will also understand the value of their own culture while understanding the value of other cultures. There are many problems between different cultures around the whole world. To be able to stop that problem we have to understand our cultures and observe ourselves first. Sometimes people judge others cultures without knowing anything. If we started to learn about other cultures and understand them like our culture, we will be able to make cultural relationships work.

In order to works with other cultures and built strong relationships around the world, we need to understand other cultures first. This would make a difference in the world. We need many people from different cultures to do that. We also have to understand and respect each other to do that. Many cultures and many languages make us think that there are many lives in the world and each person's life is important. This teaches us that we are not the only ones who are important in the world. Every person is important and it's also important to know and accept their culture in order to work together and love each other.