

Entry form

Name: Sarah Marie Batchelder

School: Crofton middle school

Grade: 8th grade

Gender: Girl

Word count: 482

The All Important, Next Few Years.

I am an average eighth grader at Crofton middle school. I have seen numerous problems that could have been written about in this particular essay. Things like over crowding, bullying, too much home work, food choices, or just plain immaturity, of the students of course. But here I chose the one that stood out to me. This isn't a topic any other student my age would think about randomly and I admit that it took me some thinking. But I believe that it's an important topic to bring up.

My topic is interactions with high schools, or more specifically information about daily high school life. Teachers and adults always say that our busy and work filled lives are often to prepare us for high school and college, or just because we push ourselves even harder each day to reach our ever-expanding and difficult goals (which aren't always a bad thing).

We've all seen the movies. TV style dramas with the mean girl and the zero that, thru many spectacular and inspiring ways, becomes a star or hero; and we've also heard the overspoken (but necessary) lectures from school. But ask a random, honest, middle schooler and you'll probably get nothing more than guesses and stereotypes.

My solution (or solutions) is a plan for activities of shadowing a high school student for people other than AVID students, letters written about the social experiences of school, talks, and (here's my favorite) activities with the high school clubs; and sure you can squeeze in education in there somewhere.

My favorite idea acutely came from my own experiences. The Arundel High School color guard accepts any student from the middle and high schools who is willing

to put in the effort and now so is the marching band. It takes us a lot of work and dedication but it's really fun, it leaves you with great memories and even greater friends.

From what I hear from my team mates about their own experiences at school has changed my own outlook on my next years of school. It also helps me to get rid of the feeling that I won't be able to get anywhere on my first day. I have friends in there to look forward to seeing and already have a basic idea of where things are.

So that's my idea, take it or leave it. Its reason is to help those unsure or confused about the almighty high school and to put most of us, who don't have any friends or siblings in high school to make it a little bit easier.

I'm not giving anyone a cure to get those butterflies out of your stomach or how to stop the seniors from pulling a well deserved prank, but I believe it sure as well might help.

Contest rules and submission sheet

Essay contest invites thoughts on problems and solutions

Annapolis (September 19, 2008)-County Executive John R. Leopold and Schools Superintendent Dr. Kevin Maxwell today announced an essay contest for all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders that explains issues they face and recommends ways to combat or resolve them.

The winners will be interviewed by the County Executive on "Anne Arundel County's Week in Review."

"Our young people today face many issues," County Executive Leopold said. "This can include peer pressure, feeling like they have too much homework, not enough playtime outdoors, and many other issues that can put pressure on our middle school students. I want to know what the most pressing issues are for them and how they deal with it. This can also help other students that feel the same way but do not know how to cope."

"Our students are clearly our most important priority," Dr. Maxwell said. "I meet with members of a Teen Advisory Group throughout the school year to garner input from students on key issues and that input has a definite impact on decisions we make. This essay contest is another way to get that input, and to provide an opportunity for students to discuss their issues and offer ways to mitigate any problems they face."

There will be six winners in all, with one boy and one girl chosen from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade submissions. The winners will be chosen by a panel that includes county and school officials. The essays should be 300 to 500 words in length. The winning submissions will be featured on the Anne Arundel County Public Schools web site, www.aacps.org, and each winner will be interviewed by the County Executive for future "Week in Review" segments.

Print all info:

Name Jordan Redman
 School- Crofton Middle
 Grade 8

Gender Boy — Girl —

Word count 446

Type or handwrite.

Turn in by 10-15-2008

IF typing, no graphics, double-space, use a plain size 12 font.

Negative Coaches

Often times I will feel like I was horrible at whatever I did in my sport no matter what I did or how good I actually was. Who is mostly to blame for this? My coach, a belittling person who does next to nothing in the form of encouragement. This negative form of coaching is quite common in just about any sport kids and teens participate in.

Corrections done by coaches are usually not done in a calm manner, but often times with the coach yelling and screaming at the athletes to do the action correctly. Insults are hurled directly at the athletes, sometimes using words that I would not be allowed to use in school. Whether it be to completely change a skill or simply catch a ball coaches often tell athletes that they are worthless, hopeless and there is no way they can do what is needed to be done. Many of my peers and I face this issue all the time.

Supposedly, it is easy to assume that this does not always help the athletes or boost their self-esteem. Regardless of age or gender, athletes with this kind of negative coaching, including myself, easily believe these words we're being told. Athletes will begin to feel worthless and believe that they can't succeed. These thoughts are unhealthy and can sometimes lead to depression in the most extreme cases. Other athletes may just want to quit and give up their sport because of feelings of hatred and dislike.

Solutions to this negative coaching problem are few and do not always work. Quitting may seem to be the obvious answer; I know I have thought of quitting my sport of gymnastics many times because of my coach. However, often times, such as in my case, the athletes enjoy their sport immensely and are not willing to quit. Another option is to have a parent speak person to person with the coach and talk about the problem. Counseling is an excellent option and is even available at school through a guidance counselor. A wonderful solution I have found to work is to have the athletes strengthen their minds mentally to not believe the negative words

their coaches are saying. By doing this the athletes will start to feel more upbeat about how well they are doing.

It's a shame that there are coaches out there that can ruin what should otherwise be enjoyable times playing a sport. However, it is important to have faith and know that this problem can't go on forever. Whether it takes a couple months or many years the problem will get better. My advice is to have fun and simply enjoy playing the game.

October 2, 2008

Lexy Butler

Do, Don't, Say!

What I feel is the most important issue Middle School kids face today is bullying.

Many kids have gone home crying because of bullies. We kids have enough distractions already that we don't need anymore. Some children tell their parents that they are scared to go to school, because other kids make fun of, hit, or even peer pressure to an unbelievable limit. That doesn't mean they can do it, but stop at the line that shouldn't be crossed. They will stop right at the breaking point. Some bullies don't care and cross the line time after time, after time.

Then when an adult figure steps in, they look around as if nothing happened, as if they are innocent. I, personally think there's a good and better way for kids to let out their anger, that doesn't involve hurting other kids.

We kids go through too much as a teenager already. We have to go through the stages of life. We're becoming young adults and we don't need extra things going on in our lives.

All this goes in and out of adults minds, but that's not good. Instead of letting it happen we need to take action. I bet more than fifty percent of kids who quit school would come back. Students with scared hearts, the ones who come to school scared every day will start to put foot in the schools and busses feeling safe. They'll be able to say "Mom (or Dad) I love school and I feel perfectly safe now that they've taken action". Isn't what all parents want to hear their child say?

Fewer parents will call the school complaining that their child is being peer pressured or bullied.

Instead of saying you'll stop it, why not truly do it and take action. Be the one to stop it. Be a hero. You'll love the feeling.

7th Grade
Phoenix Center

Shaun Moore

Crofton Middle School

Grade 7

Gender: Boy

Word Count: 497

Middle school students today are faced with many issues that affect them in ways that they are not able to handle. Examples include too much homework, peer pressure, and not enough outdoor playtime. Many students face similar issues but are either afraid or just don't know how to cope with them since they may not have encountered them before.

First, teachers have told me that nightly homework should range from one hour to one hour and thirty minutes. I actually spend about two hours and thirty minutes everyday doing homework. This time includes homework in math, reading for language arts, science, and my core classes every third day. When my parents get home, they assist me with any problems I don't understand. I cope with too much homework by trying to get it done during what my school calls "Eagle Extension".

Second, no matter how a person views peer pressure, it still affects your life. I don't feel peer pressure too much at school. Sometimes other students come up to me and make negative comments on what I wear. I handle this by wearing something that I won't get made fun of. Also, my parents suggest that I ignore these comments since they are just jealous, but I don't actually believe that. Another example involves kids that live in my neighborhood. There are kids that everyone likes and others that are considered outcasts. I am friendly and play nicely with everyone. However, the pressure comes into play when some of the kids say that I can't play with them if I associate with the outcasts. I cope with this by either staying inside or telling the bossy kids to give the outcasts a chance since everyone is different. In addition, when I walk by some kids and say hi, they just stare and don't say a word. What is their problem? Did I say something wrong or out of the ordinary? My parents teach me to act towards people how I would like

people to act towards me.

Third, not enough outdoor playtime concerns me. With the days getting shorter, it becomes difficult to play outdoors with homework every night during the week. Except for soccer practice twice a week where I get exercise and socialize with my teammates, my outdoor playtime is limited to the weekend when the weather is nice. My parents tell me to go outside and play ball, ride my bike, or go visit some friends. In addition, they tell me its healthy to go outside and breath in some fresh air or go for a walk with them.

Finally, I would like to say that some students think I am a dork because I get good grades. Well, let's see what they say when I get an awesome job. Students are faced with many issues early on in their life. With a good foundation learned at home and at school, they are able to cope with issues that may come their way.

Ayanna Randall
10/06/08

What I feel is the most important issue middle school kids are facing today is that the work is getting harder. We're on the next level in middle school and it's getting harder for me. You might realize that it's not like elementary anymore. For example, you have harder work, you have more homework than you had in elementary, you have no recess, and you might be being bullied by older kids in higher grades. You may not know all the things that other kids know. Maybe some of your specials change like for instance in physical education (P.E.) in elementary in P.E we will just play and exercise now we take health classes. Even I realized that you do all the subjects in your homeroom class in elementary but now we have to switch up our classes and we have to be on time and that's the problem for me is being on time. Homework is another problem. Kids have problems doing homework everyday and passing it in. Also being on time for school. A lot of kids miss their bus a lot and are not on time for school. Then you are late for class. You have to make up a lot of work. That's why it's important to go to sleep at about 8:00. Another problem in middle school and up is that kids are getting bullied a lot. Even last year we learned about being bullied or bullying someone else and if you're being bullied maybe the best choice is talk to a caring adult. Now there are kinds of bullying there is cyber bullying, written and physical. Cyber bullying is if you're being threatened online and physical is like when someone is touching you or hurting you and written is when you get a letter or a note about what they're going to do to you. These are all issues that kids are facing today.

6th grade
Phoenix Center

Lesante Simmons
Grade 6
Teacher: Ms. Queene
J. Albert Adams Academy

No Role Models

The greatest problem that middle school aged children face today is not having decent male role models in their lives. This is an on going problem for teenagers. I know first hand because I am a teenager without a positive male role model because my father left me when I was very young.

I have experienced not having a positive male role model in my life, because I have *only* seen my father 10 times in my life. If my father was in my life I believe he would teach me how to play football like a pro, go bowling, go to museums, teach me how to fish, and how to be successful and how to deal with my anger. My family has been telling me stories about my father abusing my mother. These stories create anger in a teenager's life, destroys their mind, keep them thinking of what happened in the past. I use to cry, thinking of what happened years ago.

A good solution for this problem would be to set up teen groups with strong male leaders in all middle schools in Anne Arundel County Public Schools. These teen groups would allow students to come to group sessions, after school or in the morning to express what makes anger build up inside them and solutions/coping skills to calm them back down. Not only would this will be a productive and positive group because teenagers can learn to express their feelings and figure out solutions to their problem. Teenagers will know how to control their problems, communicate appropriately and spend time with positive male role models. Lastly, and most importantly, they wouldn't feel all alone. They could talk with other students just like them.

I hope you will take this suggestion under consideration because teens in Anne Arundel County Public Schools need your help. The world needs more



and better role models. Many teen boys need strong male role models that they can be like. There are single moms and dads that have kids without very good strong and positive role models. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Have a nice day.