

3rd Annual Essay Contest

“A Letter to a Person with a Developmental Disability”

First Place: Senior High School Division

Chantel Grimmer
Niagara Falls High School
Mark Laurie, Principal

I totally understand that having a developmental disability is tough, and takes a lot of courage. Some questions I would like to ask a person with developmental disability what are some of your toughest challenges you face everyday? How does society treat you? What are some of the things you love to do? What makes you unique?

I think I should be responsible for including people with developmental disabilities in our community because they are still human beings, and no one should be left out of a community. Since I'm young, I can make a difference now, and I can start by including these people in my community, they are no different from us, and shouldn't be treated any less. People with developmental disabilities possess the same thing as everyone, and that's a heart. I love cheerleading, and they are now forming teams for children with disabilities. The heart and dedication those children have is truly amazing to see. It really touches me to see them work together as a team. People with disabilities possess heart, just like everyone else.

I have learned from this experience that people with developmental disabilities shouldn't be left out in our community. Just because they have a disability, doesn't make their hearts any different from ours.

3rd Annual Essay Contest*“A Letter to a Person with a Developmental Disability”***Second Place: Senior High School Division**

Kyle Michael Cizek
Niagara Falls High School
Mark Laurie, Principal

I have had the pleasure of interning at Opportunities Unlimited of Niagara for the past several months and viewing first hand the great work that is being done there with people with developmental disabilities. Our society doesn't do enough to integrate people with developmental disabilities into the community. Simply because they have a developmental disability doesn't mean their potential should be limited in society. They have just as much to contribute as everyone else. Some of the people with developmental disabilities that I have met are more outgoing and friendly than most others in the world. They have the capability to do great things if we give them the chance.

I have the utmost respect for anyone with a developmental disability because of the obstacles and discrimination they have to face in their life. I can only try to put myself into their shoes and wonder if I would have the same positive attitude and perseverance when so much is going against me. Discriminating against people with developmental disabilities and not giving them the same opportunities is completely unfair because they do their work with more passion and pleasure than anyone else in society.

3rd Annual Essay Contest
“A Letter to a Person with a Developmental Disability”

First Place: Middle School Division

Jimmy Renda
North Tonawanda Catholic School
Sister Rosemarie Kutsko, Principal

Dear Sir or Madam,

I understand that you have a Developmental Disability. Because I have never been exposed to someone with developmental disabilities I have several questions that I would like to ask you?

I would like to know how you became disabled. Is it by genetics or did something happen to you in your life when you were born? Can you work a normal occupation or won't people hire you? Do you go to school? And if so, what kind of classes do you take? Who trains you for everyday activities, for example, like brushing your teeth, making the beds, doing your laundry and cooking food? Do people make fun of you and think you are dumb? Do people treat you differently than they would if you were not developmental disabled? Is life difficult for you?

Because I care about people and their feeling I should be responsible enough to include people with developmental disabilities. They are no different from me. They are still human beings even though they were born with an extra chromosome or because they may look and act different. Unfortunately, they may not be able to do everything that I can do but they are still capable of so much more.

People with developmental disabilities have many special talents and abilities. They can be very creative, talented at music, and enjoy competition while participating in adaptive sports. They love humor and attention because they want acceptance. They can be easily persuaded or on the other hand they can be very stubborn.

I learned that developmental disabled people are humans with a brain, heart, and emotions. And they have just as many talents as everyone else they just show it in a different way. Thank you for your time.

3rd Annual Essay Contest*“A Letter to a Person with a Developmental Disability”***Second Place: Middle School Division****Emilie Fose****North Tonawanda Catholic School****Sister Rosemarie Kutsko, Principal**

To Whom It May Concern:

If I knew someone with a developmental disability I would ask them many questions like: is it hard to be judged so quickly by others?, Do you ever feel left out or feel that you are not as good as people without your disability?, Is it hard to communicate with others or express your feelings?, and What motivates you everyday?

I feel that I should be responsible to include people with developmental disabilities in our community because despite their disabilities they have their own unique talents and gifts to offer. They are people, too, who need to be with others and be a part of something. They need to feel like they belong and are loved just like everyone else. Although they may need special attention, they can still show others how to be pure, innocent, and determined. Many people with developmental disabilities are very positive and try to live life to the fullest. They find ways to overcome their obstacles. I think they help others appreciate their health more, and help others to be more positive as well.

I have learned that everyone is special and unique in their own way, and that people with developmental disabilities are like me and everyone else who does not have their disability in many ways.

3rd Annual Essay Contest*“A Letter to a Person with a Developmental Disability”***Third Place: Middle School Division**

**Megan Whetstine
Lewiston-Porter Middle School
Vinny Dell’Oso, Principal**

Dear Friend:

When we were visited by someone with a developmental delay we learned a lot about them. Even though they may look different, they can do everything “normal” people can do. “Are you excluded from different jobs because of your disabilities?” “Are you usually taken seriously by the people around you when you are trying to tell them something serious?” Personally, I know what it feels like to be “left-out”. To know that someone won’t talk to you because you look different from every other person around you. Who cares if you don’t do the same thing everyone else does. Who cares if you are the “Freaky Goth Girl” or the person that needs a little extra help with your math homework? In my opinion if you are “different” you are special and the people that didn’t talk to you are the ones missing out on someone really cool.

To many others’ surprise, people with developmental delays can do much more than everyone else thinks. You can spell, say, and learn things that anyone else can. Don’t listen to people if they say, “You can’t do that.” I know you can, keep on trying until you succeed. I now know more things that I never knew before. Such as, recognizing letters, spelling your name, and much more. If I were to see a person with a developmental delay, I would not be hesitant to walk up to them and talk to them.

Your Friend,
Megan