



AWARD WINNING ESSAYS 2020

Foreword

Life has many turning points – the events and experiences that lead to or stimulate a significant change and have a demonstrable impact on a person. These turning points often stem from struggle. Making it through the challenge requires courage, forgiveness, generosity, love, patience, perseverance and resiliency. The struggle also offers a gift: an opportunity for self-reflection, learning and growth.

We are pleased to present the 2020 collection of award-winning essays from this year's Turning Points program. This year represented new challenges posed by COVID-19 and the new realities that so many of us face. Students and teachers have met these challenges with courage and creativity.

The pages of this anthology are filled with stories written by students highlighting a turning point that has changed the direction of their lives. Through our program, student authors were guided on a journey of reflection and discovery. Their stories are moving, funny, tragic, honest, real and celebratory. Although each journey is different and each one personal, every student's experience has taught them something. The authors share their innermost thoughts and experiences leading them and us, as readers, to the most important question we can ask ourselves, "Who am I becoming and what matters most to me?"

At The Learning Partnership, our work prepares students to thrive in learning and in life. We are extremely fortunate to have partners who believe in the power of our program and the impact it has on preparing students for their future. It is the generosity of our partners that makes it possible for us to run the Turning Points program and we are so grateful for their support. We also deeply appreciate the encouragement and support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development NL, Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, the teachers who facilitated the writing process, the judges who took time to review the essays, and all of the students who participated.

We applaud these young authors who have shared their compelling stories of what matters most in their lives. Their honest voices give us all hope for the future.

Debra D. Kerby
President & CEO
The Learning Partnership

Ross Elliott
Program Manager, Turning Points
The Learning Partnership

Table of Contents

GRADE 7

AN APPLE A DAY	6
MAKING A DIFFERENCE	7
FINDING MY VOICE	8
MY “NEW NORMAL”	9
LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST	10
THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T.....	11
STAR GAZING	12
FRENCH IMMERSION	13
THE SWITCH	14
MAKING A DIFFERENCE	15
EXPECTATIONS	16
A SPECIAL BOND	17
GOLDEN ANGEL	18
THE HIDDEN WALLS.....	19
COVID-19	20
THE DAY I GOT TO RING THE BELL.....	21

GRADE 11

INTERTWINED	23
ICE IN THE SUMMER HEAT.....	25
MEETING THE WRONG PERSON.....	27

Overview for Judging

The writers recount a single personal event, experience, or challenge, that signifies a “turning point” in their lives and make connections to explain the impact that this turning point had on the development of their personal values and growth.

The writing is clear and concise and includes all of the elements of a personal narrative.

The writers skillfully employ a range of literary devices, vocabulary and language structures to engage/inform the audience throughout the essay from beginning to end.

Grade 7

Noah Hepditch

First Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

AN APPLE A DAY

HEART ATTACK, two words I didn't want to hear on a regular Saturday morning in April. I can still remember the tears rolling down my mom's face when she told me that my Poppy Jim had been taken to the hospital. As soon as those words came out of her mouth, my entire body filled with dread. I felt like my life was going to be changed forever. My Poppy was such an important part of my life...he had to be okay.

I can still feel the tears rolling down my face and splattering onto my pants as I tried to get ready to go to the hospital. That nervous feeling in my stomach on the drive there was like nothing I had ever experienced. It was turning inside out, like turning around in your bed all night and not being able to find that perfect spot. I was imagining all kinds of awful things as I wondered what my Poppy would look like, how he was feeling. We weren't allowed into the ER that morning and I remember thinking hospital rules SUCK! I just wanted to give him a hug. Later he was transferred to ICU to await open heart surgery to fix the seven blockages in his heart. I knew this was serious. I was scared, but my Poppy was a fighter and he survived this very major surgery just like I prayed he would. He was one of the lucky ones. I realized then that not everyone is so lucky. Not everyone gets a second chance.

As my Poppy recovered from his surgery, he began to make changes in his life. He talked to me about the importance of taking care of my body. Unfortunately, my Poppy smoked and this was a major contributor to his heart attack. I'm proud to say he never smoked since and I made a promise to myself to never put that toxin in my body. He began eating healthier and I realized I too could take better care of my heart – by reducing my takeout and junk food. That was huge for me because I do love a daily bag of chips and a chocolate bar. I also developed a love of running from this ordeal and I hope this will protect me from heart disease later on. I don't want to take the path my Poppy took. I realized that to live my best life I had to take care of my heart now.

So for me, this experience has shown me how truly precious life is and how it can all change in the blink of an eye. Maybe an apple a day really does keep the doctor away! I do know that the choices I make today matter and will affect my health as I age. So I will continue to enjoy my Poppy's jokes and I'll grab that apple -instead of a bag of Cheetos – and keep on running!

Noah Hepditch lives in St. Philip's, NL with his parents and younger brother. Noah loves to learn and strives for academic excellence. While his school year ended early due to COVID-19, he was successful in obtaining a 99.9% overall average. Noah also loves to play sports, especially basketball, and his school team brought home the gold medal in the February 2020 provincial tournament. Noah also loves all animals, especially his dog and hamster. His long term goal is to become a doctor to help people and change the world.

Sophia Lewis

Second Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“If you can dream it , you can do it.” – Walt Disney. I learned that I can accomplish my dreams when I was ten years old.

When I was five I loved going to see my nan at Hoyles Escasoni Home. My nan had been diagnosed with Huntington’s disease (HD). The home was cozy and, although I was only five at the time, I enjoyed talking to the other residents. I remember it smelled like old lady lotion and soap. I enjoyed taking a stroll out in the beautiful garden. I also loved going upstairs to see the fish swimming around in their tank.

My nan died on October 15, 2012. After she died it was sad but we stayed strong. I believe that when I see a butterfly, it is a sign that my nan is watching over me. Then we started doing the Huntington’s Run each year to honour her memory. We raised money for nan and the others that were impacted by the disease in my family. Each year I would raise about \$200. However, when I was about ten, my pop and my aunt messaged me and told me they had an idea. They had some cedar wood that they shaped into BBQ scrapers, and told me that I could burn designs into them and sell them. I thought their idea was great because around that time fewer people used bristles on their BBQs, so she shipped them in from Coachmans Cove. Then, I had an idea! I could sell them to raise money for Huntington’s disease research. So my mom and I did up ten and posted them on Facebook and sold them for \$10 each. Sales skyrocketed! My pop had to ship in another 100. Everyone wanted them; I did custom ones, camping ones, and I remember once I had to do a car symbol! In the end I think I raised approximately \$800 for Huntington’s that year. Then the Huntington’s Society of Canada called and interviewed me about it and asked me to send some scrapers to Toronto! I remember last year my teachers were even buying them. And that year I had raised over \$1800 for Huntington’s disease research.

This turning point has shaped me to be more determined in things I believe in and can change. This also made me realize that one simple thing that I am doing can make a big difference to someone else. When I first started making the BBQ scrapers, I never thought I would come this far! When someone orders a scraper, it makes me feel happy, it shows how supportive family and friends are.

I dreamed it and I did it! That means you can too! You can achieve any goal! So far I have raised over \$1800. I will keep on raising money until they find a cure!

Sophia Lewis lives in Conception Bay South, NL. Sophia enjoys doing art and playing volleyball in her spare time. She also enjoys spending time outdoors at her cabin. One of her biggest joys in her life is her dog, Koda.

Madison Anstey
Third Place – Grade 7
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

FINDING MY VOICE

I was different from the average kid. Most kids could have normal conversations with people but I couldn't. Normal kids didn't need someone to translate what they were saying, I did. As much as people told me they could understand me, I knew on the inside that they really couldn't. I, Madison, am different and I know I am.

When I was young, I was diagnosed with a speech delay. A speech delay is when you have trouble pronouncing words and letters. It doesn't sound like a big deal, but it was. No one could understand me except my family because they live with me, but even they had to ask my brother, Caleb, what I was saying sometimes. My brother could actually understand everything I was saying. It was like we had telepathy. He was my personal translator.

My parents signed me up for speech lessons. I was really nervous at first, but I got used to it. I would go to the Janeway, the local children's hospital, for these lessons. The speech instructor was really nice! She helped me by teaching me how to pronounce words and letters properly. I loved going to speech lessons! I was slowly beginning to pronounce words properly! People were finally starting to understand me!

When I was five years old, I had my first day of school. I was nervous, scared, and a bit excited. I was scared that no one was going to understand me. My parents said that it was going to be okay, but I didn't believe them. I got on the bus and left for school. It turned out to be fine. I met a lot of new friends and the best part was that they could understand me! I was so happy! I started to do speech lessons in school. I no longer had to go to the Janeway to do it. I wasn't really happy about that, but it was okay. I kept telling myself that soon I wouldn't need to go to these lessons anymore, soon people would fully understand me.

I didn't need my brother as a translator anymore! I was making a lot of progress and, by grade four, my speech teacher told me that I didn't need to do lessons anymore. I was thrilled! I said thank you for all her help and said goodbye. I was so happy with the news that I had just heard! My parents congratulated me and so did my brothers. It was one of the best days of my life!

Now, people can fully understand me. I have a little trouble pronouncing stuff sometimes but my family and friends tell me how to say it properly. I've gained a lot of confidence from this whole experience and I'm not afraid to talk to people anymore! I feel like I'm on top of the world! It turns out that hard work pays off and it did!

Madison Anstey is on the Principal's List at her school and was awarded the Kindness Award in grade six. She plays the violin and is working on the final gold badge in recreational gymnastics. She is also a member of the competitive dance team at her dance studio and loves to dance and compete with her teammates. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends and teaching tricks to her dog, Bella. Her future goal is to become a veterinarian.

Kailey Bouzane
Honourable Mention – Grade 7
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

MY “NEW NORMAL”

Coronavirus. This word means different things for different people. For some, this potentially fatal virus is just one big joke. Maybe for a couple of families, it is the very thing that tore their family apart. Perhaps some people think that if you get this virus, it is more like a death sentence. For me, this virus signifies change. I need to adjust to a “New Normal.”

Some people might not understand what I mean when I use the term “New Normal”. To me it means having to always wear a mask, whether I want to or not. It means having to say “No!” when my friends ask me to have a sleepover. It means having to do schoolwork and spending the weekdays at my home instead of school. It means being terrified when my parents have to go to a grocery store to get just our basic needs, because some people think it’s fun to walk around like normal when they’re sick. It means not being able to hug, high five or touch anyone. It means not being able to play basketball or volleyball with anybody. It means always longing for something. It means being stuck at home, lying on my bed, just staring into space.

Some days during this hard time I feel ecstatic because I think this could be like an early summer break. Some days I feel frustrated because I’m trying to get in contact with my teachers, but I can’t. Some days I feel like crying because the reality of this world pandemic hits me. Some days I feel like I could conquer the world because we get no new cases of this virus. Most days I don’t know how I feel because it is a mixture of all of these with a sense of emptiness because I miss everything I used to take for granted. I miss my “Old Normal.”

This unsure time has taught me so many things that I will never forget and will cherish later in life. It has taught me how to be grateful about the things I have and how to distinguish the difference between things I need and the things I want. It has shown me the beauty of family, especially in times like these. It has made me more in touch with my emotions, as they show themselves during this tough time. The most important thing this situation has taught me, and the one I will cherish the most, is how to see light in even the darkest of places. I will now remain optimistic and positive about anything that I may face in life. I have changed as a person.

Kailey was born in St. John’s, NL, 8 minutes before her sister, Kiana. She speaks English and is learning how to speak French. Kailey plays trombone in her school band, and plays on the volleyball and basketball team. She was in The Telegram Spelling Bee on two occasions. She aspires to make a change in the world.

Kiana Bouzane

Honourable Mention – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

One evening almost two years ago, my family and I were coming home from our camper. It was a warm and perfect day and we were all admiring the red sun setting. We were pulling over to take pictures, when I had this odd sensation come over me and felt as though the car had weirdly malfunctioned. When the feeling was gone, I was breathless and dazed and had cuts and bruises. I heard my mom say that she smelled gas and to get out of the car, but then realized that the seat belt buckle had sunk into the seat like it was made of quicksand. I couldn't unbuckle myself and my dad had to come around the car and pull it out. The warm weather from earlier that day had suddenly turned cold.

Everything was a bit of a blur after that. I remember looking at the bits of broken pieces of our car lying on the road and sitting on a metal rail. Then, I remember being put inside a stranger's blue truck with my sister and a firefighter asking us questions from outside the car door to make sure we retained consciousness. I remember stressing about my parents who were still outside on the rail and feeling terrified when I found out what had happened, and when I tried to look at the car, a first responder telling me not to. It felt like a nightmare and I thought that soon I would wake up in our intact car, on our way home. "This can't actually be happening," I told myself. "It can't be".

Two ambulances came, one for our mom and one for Dad, Kailey and I. My Aunt Tavis met us there to bring our puppies, who rode in the ambulance with us, home while we got checked out. I was so scared to get any tests done, since I had this growing pain in my side and thought there was something wrong with me. When we were proclaimed okay, my Aunt Tavis came to pick me and Kailey up, while my dad went to see my mom. I was feeling exhausted from all of my worrying and stressing and was nervous to be in a car again. I stayed up all night when I got home, waiting for my parents to come home and when they finally did, past midnight, we all stayed up just talking and enjoying each other's company as we cuddled our puppies.

If things went a little differently, that night could have gone a completely different way and I could have lost someone I loved. I learned that night that things can change in a second and to show people I love them. I always believed, when I looked in the news or read stories and saw tragic things happening, that nothing like that could happen to me. I know different now and that I need to live life to the fullest every single day.

Kiana Bouzane attends Beaconsfield Junior High and lives in St. John's, NL with her identical twin sister, parents and dogs. She is in French Immersion at her school and is a straight A plus student. She plays basketball, volleyball and trumpet in her school band. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, cooking, gardening, spending time with family and friends and doing track and field. She aspires to help others and be kind.

Katie Spurrell

First Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Central Region

THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T

Turning points, life changing moments, for some it's a major event in their life or a significant irrevocable moment. But for me it was something less, something much smaller, just a few words in passing, "you can do it."

My story began a year before on an early July morning. I was in awe watching my parents pull out of our driveway. Sixteen kilometers was so far – it would take an eternity to run. My parents were competing in a local running race, the Tely 10. I've always enjoyed running. The feeling of your heart beating inside your chest, the steady rhythm of your feet pounding the ground, your lungs filling with air, it feels as though you're flying.

When my parents returned home I was very proud of them. I met them with great enthusiasm and plenty of questions. "How was it?", I asked. My dad replied, "Awesome, you should run it next year". "What?", I thought, "That's impossible". "You can do it", he said. At the time those four little words just flew over my head, but little did I know they would forever change me.

I accepted the challenge and decided I would do it. Over the next year I did a lot of training. Sometimes, it was difficult to find the motivation to run. But I persevered. Eventually, I got faster and stronger and began to run longer distances.

It was the eve of the race. I laid out my running clothes, my race bib and sneakers near my bed. I could barely sleep. I was so nervous. What if I couldn't run that far? What if I got halfway and had to quit? I woke up in the morning, to my pop yelling "rise and shine, it's Tely time!" All the nervousness flooded back to me. I tied my sneakers tightly and put my hair in a ponytail. I felt butterflies fluttering in my stomach. It was unbearable!

The starting area was more than I imagined. I started to doubt myself, but then those four words came flooding back to me. The announcer's voice boomed out, "five minutes to start." I felt like I was going to crumble into a million different pieces. Then the gun went off. The adrenaline started rushing. All my nervousness was gone, it felt like the world fell silent. All I heard was the steady beat of the runners' feet pounding against the pavement. With every step my legs became tired, but the training paid off. An hour later I was almost there! My mind was swirling with thoughts of excitement, accomplishment, and pride as I crossed the finish line. "I did it! I completed the Tely 10!"

Those four words changed my confidence and self image. It taught me that I could do anything I set my mind to. Since that moment I've continued to strive for the unattainable. I not only ran the Tely but I accomplished many other feats. I climbed Gros Morne mountain, completed a 100km bike tour, and medaled at the Fogo 10k run. Never doubt yourself because your goals are achievable – you can do it!

Katie Spurrell lives in Shoal Harbour with her Mom, Dad, and Brother. Katie enjoys participating in many sports and is very active in music, dance and art. Katie is a very active member of her school and community. She is a member of the Student Council, volunteers at the S.P.C.A and teaches skiing at the Clarenville Nordic Jack Rabbit Program.

Cheyenne Jennings

Second Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Central Region

STAR GAZING

Ever since I was a young child, I was known as the shy kid. I didn't enjoy socializing with people and didn't even enjoy going to parties with my friends. I was an introvert. If I were to go out into a public place with a large number of people, I would freeze in fear. You may be wondering, "What is there to worry about?" Well, I fear judgment. Or, even being laughed at. It would make me feel as if I wasn't good enough. When I am in school things get much worse. All of the assignments, tests, and homework get to my head. I feel exhausted. I began to feel like nobody understood how I felt. Going to school became hard and very tiring. Sadness sort of took over.

One summer night in seventh grade, my parents thought it would be a good idea for me to relax by watching the stars. I was excited because learning about space and astronomy has to be one of my favorite activities. We wanted to go try and see the Aurora Borealis because on the news that night, they said the chances of seeing it were really high. Over time, we decided to go to the beach instead because we had been waiting for around one hour, but we saw nothing. We went to about three different beaches, but I remember one specific spot that was absolutely amazing.

The sky was dark, and the stars were twinkling so brightly. I took off my shoes, and walked across the beach. The water was freezing. With my headphones in my ears, I listened to my favorite songs because somehow, it made me feel better. A humongous smile formed across my face. It was the first time in a while that I had a genuine, bright smile across my face. It was like the pain, and the stress I was feeling at the time had lifted off my shoulders. A euphoric feeling had come over me. On the ride home, I peered my head outside of the window. The wind blew across my face as I gazed at the stars. I saw the Little Dipper, Big Dipper, and the Milky Way. It was breathtaking.

This day has taught me to appreciate the happy moments I have, and to keep fighting. It gave me hope. I will never forget this day, and the euphoric feeling I had while I was there. Recently, I have been feeling a lot better. I try to push through my anxiety by going outside of my comfort zone, but sometimes it's still extremely hard. I even gained a new hobby! Star gazing. I love the feeling of looking through my telescope and looking at space. It gives me joy. I go stargazing whenever I am feeling upset or anxious, because somehow it always manages to calm me down. I will never forget that day.

Cheyenne Jennings was born in Newfoundland and Labrador, and grew up in her hometown Glovertown. She has many interests, but her favourite thing to do is learn about space. She often watches videos about space, and even has multiple books all about the planets. Her dream job is to become an Astronomer. She is currently learning multiple new languages, including French, Korean, and German.

Tristan Spurrell

Third Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Central Region

FRENCH IMMERSION

Transitioning from my elementary school to middle school was not a drastic turning point. However, doing the French Immersion program was an adjustment. Before coming to Clarenville Middle School I thought it was going to be a rocky road. Boy, was I right! During the summer I was preparing for Immersion by using French apps and reviewing my Intensive Core French notes from grade six. I thought I was off to a great start because on my first few quizzes I did awesome. I was learning a new language and I was cruising along. But as the year went on things started to get more difficult and the pace began to pick up.

Work. Work. Work. Every night I had to study to keep my grades up. After a few lower marks before Christmas I began to realize it was going to be a rough year. I would be frequently reviewing my notes after school and before I went to sleep and always be preparing for tests. Doing this helped but it was hard keeping track of all the homework, with not a lot of free time on my hands mainly because I would be studying, in school or playing hockey. The hardest part was watching my friends who were in the English program go to movies and hang out after school without me because I always had a test to study for. Sometimes I felt like using the term “the dog ate my homework” because we had that much work, but I don’t even have a dog.

French Immersion changed my point of view for school. In grade six everything was to the point where I didn’t really need to study. Now it’s much harder and much more work. The week before Christmas we had three tests and two projects due. I thought my teachers must have been crazy for giving us all this homework. We went through material so fast and there was always a big test afterwards. I am usually organized but with all the notes that we had it was hard not to lose something. I had to get a planner so I could keep track of everything. Doing all of this has helped me study properly and more often. It made me look at studying differently when I realized how important it was.

Being a student in French Immersion is difficult; however, it helped in several ways. I have learned many new studying strategies that will prepare me for senior high and post secondary school. I am glad that I had stuck with the program because I am hoping for more job opportunities. Sticking with this program has made me more resilient because I have learned to overcome obstacles and be a better student. Hard work always pays off, no matter what you do it will get you further in life. Never take the easy way out. I’m glad that I joined the program. I don’t regret my decision and I hope this will help me better my future.

Tristan Spurrell is very active and plays hockey on a regular basis. Tristan also enjoys running, reading and riding bike with his friends. Last year Tristan won the Most Sportsmanlike award at hockey and this year he was Most Improved. He is a hard worker and hopes to attend post secondary school when he graduates from high school.

Margaret Beyere

First Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Labrador Region

THE SWITCH

I watch a lot of movies, and they all say that change is good. I never thought that was true. I thought “ If you stick with what you got, nothing can go wrong”. But it turned out I was wrong.

I’ve always attended the same school, École Boréale. Same teachers, same classroom, same everything. They knew me and I knew them. They knew me so well, they could tell when I was excited or angry, or what games I wanted to play, we were basically family, and I felt like myself around them. We were a small class, so I could do things at my own pace. It was great. But, at the end of second grade, my dad announced some horrible news. He was taking me out of my school and putting me in Peacock Primary School. I felt sick. Like the world around me was getting smaller and smaller, and was going to crush me. A tiny puddle of salt water started forming itself on the floor in front of me, I was sobbing. Weeks later I still had not gotten over the fact that I was switching schools. I couldn’t do anything about the horrible mistake my parents were making. Finally they decided that since I was so down, they would let me stay at École Boréale. It felt like I was floating! I was staying at my school next year.

Near the end of May, my dad wrote a letter for me to pass along to my teacher. She read the note to me, and I almost fell apart right there in class. I started breathing heavily as tears rolled down my cheeks. He was doing it! How could he? I went home demanding an explanation. He said “ It’s the first year of middle school for everyone, so this is the perfect time for you to switch”. He thought ahead this time though and contacted the school. I was really stuck. I was starting fourth grade at Queen of Peace Middle School.

September 7, 2016, the first day of my new life. New school, teachers, everything was new. I clutched the straps of my new backpack, and headed toward the entrance. I was right, no friends and everyone avoided me like I was some sort of plague. If they touched me or came near me, they would fall terribly ill. Class started and we all introduced ourselves. By week’s end, I still had no friends. One morning, a girl sat by me, and that was it. We talked and helped each other in class. I figured that since I had an empathetic friend, school wouldn’t be so bad. We sat together at lunch, and found out we had a lot of things in common.

Through this experience, I realized that change isn’t so bad, especially when you’re not alone. Everyone goes through change at some point in their lives, sometimes it’s good. Maybe, I should listen to what people say in the movies. Thanks!

Margaret Beyere has won many academic awards, such as French Language Arts and perfect attendance. Margaret can speak French and English, and likes cooking as a hobby. She is involved in several sports such as dance and soccer. When she grows up, Margaret wants to be a psychologist.

Landon deVries
Second Place – Grade 7
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Labrador Region

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

My parents started doing foster care in July of 2016 and this has definitely been a big turning point for me. When my parents told me they were going to foster children in our home, I wasn't sure what they meant. I had never really heard that word before and wasn't sure what that would mean for my family and me. They said that we were going to have kids come into our home to live with us for a little while who needed a place to stay. I was surprised at the thought that there would be other kids living in my house and why they would even need another place to stay. I was an only child so it was a little exciting to think that I would have the experience of having a brother or sister to talk to and play with.

When my mom and dad got a call that there were two girls who were coming to stay with us, I got a little nervous. I immediately started to wonder if they were going to like me or if they were okay staying with us. When the social workers brought the girls to our house, I could tell they were scared and sad. I offered to show them around the house so they wouldn't be as scared. The first place I showed them was the play room. I looked over at them and saw a smile on their faces when they saw all the toys.

After a couple of days having them in my house, we started to get along and have fun together. They loved having me play with them and I loved it too. I wanted to obey my parents and be kind so I could be a good example for them to follow. I wanted to be the best big brother I could be.

The girls stayed with us for a little over a year when we got the news that they would be going back to their home. I was really sad and so were they. When we got to the airport they were sad to leave us but happy to see their family again. I could tell my parents were sad too. The girls were a part of our family. The drive back home was really quiet and we all cried. It was a really sad day when they left but we have a lot of good memories of our time with them.

My parents are still fostering to this day and we all love it. We love how big of a difference we can make in someone's life. When children come into my house they feel loved and safe. Not everyone is able to foster, but we should all be looking for ways to help those around us. That is what I have learned from my parents doing foster care and that is why it has been my turning point.

Landon deVries was born in Moncton, New Brunswick but has since lived many other places in Canada. He lives at home with his parents and his dog, Peaches. He enjoys playing outdoors, sports and spending time with his friends and family.

Isaiah Burden

Third Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Labrador Region

EXPECTATIONS

“Worrying gets you nowhere. If you turn up worrying about how you’re going to perform, you’ve already lost. Train hard, turn up, run your best and the rest will take care of itself.” – Usain Bolt

Ever since January 7, 2007, I was one of those kids that wanted to get out there on my feet and be the best at anything. From sports, to video games, I’ve been competitive and on top. But of all the things I did, running came natural to me. It ran in the family and it looked like I was the next one to carry that on.

Most kids thought running one kilometer was as boring as watching an apple rot. I was different; I had to be in front of the pack. Almost everyone there thought I was the best and didn’t know how such diminutive legs could go so fast, but it just came naturally. Just like how a cheetah is the fastest animal and a giraffe is the tallest. It’s natural and runs in their blood.

After about two months of training, it was finally time for my first ever race. The whole forty-minute drive over felt like there were hundreds of butterflies fluttering around in my stomach, it made me queasy. Once my feet hit the ground, it hit me, the vomit was rising in my throat like a volcano about to erupt. But I forced myself to keep it down.

My dad and I went over the route and where to pick up speed. After all the walkthroughs were done, it was time for the race. Everyone was already lined up. I tried to squeeze in but I ended up being on the far side, on unlevelled gravel.

Three...Two.... One.... GO!!! The race started and all the runners sprinted off the line. At the 300-meter mark I was ahead of everyone but three. I really wanted to get a medal, so at the turnaround point I picked up my speed. On the way back, you could hear the other runners’ steps as if there was a flock of dinosaurs. Third was about 10 meters ahead so I decided to pick it up. The sprint was now real, I was going the speed of Usain Bolt. I blasted past and never stopped. There was about twelve meters between me and second, so I gave it my all to the end. When I finished, I fell over and was filled with joy with the realization that I would get a third place medal in my first ever race.

After the races were done, everyone gathered up in the town hall. The first announcement was the elementary awards. The manager said there were only medals for first place boy and girl. My heart shattered. I was so disappointed. But this only made me train harder for next year! I was determined to feel the weight of the gold medal around my neck!

As Usain Bolt said, “I don’t like losing anyways”.

Isaiah Burden has 3 sisters and 1 brother and is in grade seven. He enjoys sports of all kinds but especially loves floor hockey and running.

Claire Ellsworth

First Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Western Region

A SPECIAL BOND

At such a young age, I didn't understand the tears forming in my dad's eyes as he attempted something so easy like walking up a flight of stairs. The sun beamed on my face and I wanted so desperately to run free, away from my dad's sickness, away from the loneliness of my room, away from the terrifying moans of pain.

I felt lonely, sitting in my room staring at the ceiling like a prisoner watching paint dry. Watching the ceiling was like being locked in my own room with no knowledge of the outside world; no idea of the sweet smell of fresh spring air or the sight of blooming dandelions while the man I spent mostly everyday with was trying to bear the pain and get sleep before another grueling twelve hour shift.

My dad's arthritis changed my perspective on life, his condition showed me how valuable the time with your loved ones was. But his condition was also like a black hole that came into our lives uninvited and took my best friend away from me. My dad's arthritis was my turning point.

I was always a daddy's girl. I spent any time I could see him doing a new project with him in the garage or teaching me how to ride a bike, my relationship with my dad was the one thing in life I felt I could always turn to.

Like those nights you had as a child when the whole world feels against you and you spent the night grasping onto your blankets and the soft tears rolling down your cheeks, those were the loneliest experiences for most. But the nights I spent crying he would be at my bedside, holding my hand until I fell asleep.

I was so naive that I didn't realize how much pain he was in. Every time I sat on his lap, his knee would get weaker, and soon empty, because I didn't want to hurt him. The condition didn't only frustrate him but it did me too. I was confused about why the times we visited family he had a smile on his face and seemed like his old self but the moment we stepped back in the door, he didn't want to talk.

But I later learned it was all an act. The laughs that they shared and the interest he showed in the conversation was a lie because every conversation that happened, no matter how much he wanted to listen, the condition was behind him, waiting to pounce.

I started to understand my dad's disease a bit more as I became more wise beyond my years and dad was doing research, prescribed with different medicines until he finally started to have more control over his arthritis.

Years later, he still battles with this but the arthritis has taught us both a lesson, how important we are to each other and to never take life or the time you have with others for granted.

Claire Ellsworth enjoys subjects such as English and Art. She likes to spend time with family and friends, play sports, play instruments (piano) and write stories. Her goals are to continue with writing in the future and to study hard to get her dream job as an environmental lawyer.

Hannah Grace Park
Second Place – Grade 7
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Western Region

GOLDEN ANGEL

It's funny how in life you can be carefree and happy then all of a sudden it seems as if the weight of the world has been placed on your shoulders. Life is like an ocean, waves of emotion pull in and out leaving numb wet patches in the sand of life, an event is like wind agitating the water and making it crash onto the sand. Here is the story of how the waves came crashing down on me.

January 16, 2019. I was getting ready to go to school and realized that Mom wasn't home. So I asked my Dad where Mom was and he said she wasn't home from work yet (Mom is a Nurse) and she would be back later. As if on cue the phone rang, it was Mom. Mom and Dad talked for a while, Dad seemed to be tired as if he hadn't slept. I could tell something was wrong from how Dad was talking, my stomach was doing cartwheels. Dad stopped talking and told us that Mom wanted to talk to me and Emma. I remember that I was scared of what mom was going to say.

Nan was in the hospital, I was confused. I knew that Nan had been sick with cancer for a while but I had seen her a few days before and she had seemed fine, better than she had in a long time. Mom said that we should not go to school and that we should stay home with Nan Park. I thought that this was unnecessary. I could tell from how mom spoke that Nan may not make it and I wanted to make sure that I got to say goodbye. My sister wanted to go with our Nan Park instead. I loved my nan and that was all I could think about when we were on the way to the hospital. All the Christmases, sleepovers, and the good times I spent with her. When we got to the hospital and went up to the palliative unit, the nurses were rushing in and out of Nan's room. The curtain was drawn. When we walked in and saw Nan, she was breathing heavily and agitated. Mom saw me there and said I should wait. I walked closer anyway, Mom told Nan that I was there, Nan became calm. Nan looked at me as I walked to her side, she didn't talk, she lifted off her mask and kissed me on the cheek. It was the last time she opened her eyes.

After the hospital visit, I went to Nan Park's house and spent the rest of the day. Emma was sure that Nan was going to be okay. At 9pm Mom arrived, Nan had passed. I was crushed. Sometimes I wake up and forget she is gone, but now I have a Guardian Angel who cares for me. If this has taught me anything it has taught me to love and appreciate every moment.

Hannah Grace Park lives on the west coast of the island of Newfoundland. She is an avid reader and active drawer. She enjoys fishing and soccer and is a member of the 4H club. She loves science and aspires to be a marine biologist when she graduates from school. She wishes to travel when she grows up.

Madison Parsons

Third Place – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Western Region

THE HIDDEN WALLS

People are all around you. To them, you look fine, like all of the other kids. What they don't know is that the true you is being hidden. Your wonderful self is being blocked by invisible walls. The hidden walls won't let people in and they won't let your personality out. They're hard to puncture and ever harder to break. This is my story about breaking down my own hidden walls.

Even at three years old, I was incredibly shy. My hidden walls were already built. If my family would come to visit, I would escape to my bedroom, not wanting to see anyone. If we went shopping and stopped to talk to someone, I would hide behind my dad's leg, using him as my own protective shield. I was blocking myself from the world.

By the time I had started kindergarten, I had gotten a little braver. I would speak if spoken to, even if it was just mumbling. Still, I knew that I couldn't be me. Even five and six year olds can say some mean things about each other. I didn't want to be the kid they were talking about behind their backs.

My parents thought differently though. They knew I needed to gain some confidence before my walls were impossible to break. So, they signed me up for swimming lessons. Little did I know that it would change my life.

I remember the first day that I walked into the Grenfell Campus swimming pool. I was absolutely terrified. There were screaming children, adults I didn't know and of course water, which I had been scared of for as long as I could remember. I regretted agreeing to go there. When I walked to the side of the pool, I could feel my heart in my throat. All I could think was "Oh no, I have to swim with all of those people...what if I mess up?" As you can imagine, those first lessons didn't go well. I spent most of them clinging to the swimming instructor for dear life. I failed that first semester but my parents signed me up again. That time I passed. It was the best feeling in the world as they handed me my level one badge. I felt like I could soar with the amount of pride I had for my accomplishment. That day I chipped a part of my wall. I caught a glimpse of what it's like to be me.

From that day on my walls began to crumble, becoming weaker at each step. I signed up for dance classes and performed on stage with a group. I also started to play the piano and had my first solo on stage. When the audience claps at the end, it feels amazing.

Now I perform, speak in public and openly give my ideas in class. I've learned that it doesn't matter what others think...if you are yourself, you'll find people who truly love you, for you.

Madison Parsons enjoys school, she is always eager to learn something new and loves hanging out with her friends. Madison has many passions, such as playing the piano, dancing, singing, reading, writing and drawing. In the future, Madison hopes to become a doctor.

Dawson Harris
Honourable Mention – Grade 7
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Western Region

COVID-19

When the first word of COVID-19 came on NTV I immediately became suspicious. Honestly I wasn't worried too much because I thought either it would be properly contained or it was just a hoax. Now I certainly realize it is very real and to slow the spread we must all do our part and stay home, wash our hands, and practice physical distancing.

The impact COVID-19 brought upon my family wasn't very different from the impact I think it brought upon most other families, but we are thinking about getting some laying hens or even other farm animals. By doing this we increase the amount of food we have, increasing the amount of time between trips to retail stores and supermarkets, further slowing the spread of COVID-19. We also began growing our own vegetables and fruits. If everyone were to take part in this activity, we would not have to interact with people as much as we are and slow the spread of this disease.

Now that that COVID-19 is spreading throughout the globe, people need to stay home and find different ways to entertain yourself while remaining on your own property. Although there might not be a lot of people or friends around you, there are ways to keep yourself occupied during these times like sports, puzzles, video games, books, painting and more.

Some people may not realize it but everything has a purpose, so make whatever you are thinking about do its purpose, whether it be for entertainment or building – all that matters is that you are occupied and not bored.

Being in quarantine doesn't mean that you can't go outside your house. As long as you remain on your land and are keeping your distance from others you won't be forced to go stir crazy.

This coronavirus won't be here forever but that doesn't mean we can just waltz around in 2021.

Until a vaccine is released we have to do our parts. The small things are more important than people think they are, so stay inside, keep your distance from other people, and we will get through this together.

Dawson Harris enjoys hobbies and activities like biking, painting, marksmanship, drone flying, hunting, swimming, softball, and competitive weapon based gaming. Dawson was the only person in Grade 7 to play on the 7-12 softball team. Dawson plays guitar, trumpet, and the drums. He hopes to one day become a pilot or a dentist.

Stella Heppleston

Honourable Mention – Grade 7

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Western Region

THE DAY I GOT TO RING THE BELL

I was six years old when I found out that I had a cancerous tumour in my brain. It was obviously a big deal, but that is not the turning point I want to write about. The turning point in this story is my last MRI, which happened in December. I got to ring a big bell. This was a turning point because before I rang the bell, I knew I was cancer-free but ringing the bell meant I was cancer-free for 5 years.

I was really sick and I had to get a lot of treatments. I had to get a feeding tube up my nose because I couldn't chew solid food. I did physiotherapy because I had to learn to walk again; I had speech-language therapy to learn how to talk again. I also did music therapy because it just made me happy even when I was sick and helped with my hand strength. Later on, I had to get botox treatment and casts to strengthen my legs.

I was sick for a few years and then I started to get better. I had to go through all of these awful treatments but they made me stronger. My life has changed because of being sick but that is not where my story ends. I am learning small but important things like doing up buttons, playing the xylophone, and getting up in my bed without having to call mom and dad each time to help me. I am becoming more independent.

When I rang the Bell of Hope at the Janeway, I rang it because it was something big and important to me: I kicked cancer's butt. My dad recorded a video of me ringing the bell. It's funny. Someone wanted to do a countdown, but as soon as they said '10' I rang the bell. I wasn't waiting (I had waited 5 years, after all). Some of my family and friends came to watch me ring the bell, including my parents, grandparents, sister, the Barrett-Brinsons, and the Chubbs. Some of the nurses who took care of me when I was an inpatient were there and the oncology nurses too (they gave me my chemotherapy medicine). Dr. Moorehead, one of the oncology doctors, was also there. Afterward, we went to East Side Marios to celebrate, and my best friend Evan was there too, by coincidence.

In conclusion, this was a big deal to me because it meant I only had to worry about rehab, not cancer treatments and follow up. I still have to go back there for more rehab check-ups, but not as often, and now I like going back. Since I don't have to worry about cancer stuff anymore, I can focus on getting stronger and walking again.

Stella Heppleston lives with her sister, Charlotte, between their mom's house and their dad's house. She also has a little dog named Winn Dixie. She enjoys arts and crafts, writing stories, and most of all, baking. Stella loves to perform. In her first year of junior high, she is learning how to play the xylophone and became involved with the drama club. Recently she was awarded Student of the Month. Her future plans include a career in the arts in Newfoundland to stay close to her family.

Grade II

Erin Meaney

First Place – Grade 11

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

INTERTWINED

Death. That one little word causes a lot of people discomfort. I used to be among those people. I can understand why people do not want to discuss the idea of death, as many can not even imagine losing someone whom they love dearly. Even after I lost someone very close and dear to me, death was an uncomfortable topic. I preferred to not talk about my loved one and risk losing precious memories because death made me sad. It wasn't until I had to comfort one little boy in a time of trouble that I understood how not only death changes someone's life.

I grew up in a very loving family. It was, and still is, the type of family who always says "I love you" before leaving the house. Because of this habit, those words were the last words I said to my mom. My mom died on the 14th of September, 2017, of a sudden cardiac arrest. I can still remember every detail of that night. It will forever be engraved in my memory. After that night, I hated talking about my mom's passing, or even her in general. It would mean that I would have to acknowledge that she was truly gone.

I continued like this for almost two years. Even though I remembered my mom as she was, a caring nurse, an amazing baker, an even more amazing and gentle woman, I did not want to speak of her death. I barely even wanted to talk about her in general. It made me too uncomfortable and sad. It wasn't until I helped a little boy through a tough time that I changed my views.

Last summer I counseled at a Summer Camp. The first week that I counseled, a medical emergency occurred. The kids were confused and scared. Six counselors, including myself, took a group of kids up to the campfire area. We played a game, a spur of the moment thing to distract the kids. The only problem with the game was when kids got 'out', they had nothing to do. When kids have nothing to do, they begin to ask questions. Most kids would ask something and I would dismiss them and tell them to go play. It worked for most kids, but there was one little boy who was scared and wanted answers. I knew that I had to help him.

When he asked if his friend was okay for the third time, I knew I had to do something. As someone who has been slapped in the face by death at a young age, I could not assure him that everything would be okay. Instead, I told him what I knew. I told him that I did not know what had happened to his friend. I said that he was safe, and that his friend was in good hands. Though I answered his question, he was still extremely upset. Realizing that I could not reassure him with words, I decided to distract him. I taught him how to braid hair. I sat with him and explained how to intertwine the three strands of hair together. I showed him how to do it on my hair, and then I let him attempt it himself. Brave, I know, letting a nine-year-old tie knots in my hair, but it was for a good cause.

After everything was resolved, I completely forgot about this event. For me, it was a silly distraction. I went home at the end of the week. What I didn't know was the impact that that moment had on that child.

Three weeks later, I returned to camp. When I showed up, the boy was there. He ran up to me and told me that he had been practicing his braiding and asked me to come to his room after supper. I was so surprised that I just stopped and stared. I couldn't believe that this small gesture that I made to this kid meant so much that he went home and practiced how to braid for weeks. I was so amazed that I had done something that had impacted him.

After I went to his room, I headed to my room and reflected. Like most times I reflect on events in my life, my mind landed on my mom. I realized that growing up, my mom would do silly little things that meant so much to me. As I sat there, I thought that I was able to shine in that moment with the boy because of the way I was raised. Reflecting on all this, I realized that I needed to talk about my mom. I needed to talk about the person she was. If I did not talk about her, the valuable life lessons she taught me would be forgotten. I also needed to talk about her death, as that has also changed the person that I am.

Just like the three strands of a braid, the many aspects of my mom have made me who I am. One strand is her life, teaching me how to be kind and compassionate. Another strand is her death, showing me to treasure those who love me and I love. The last strand is how I choose to react to her passing. I have to accept what has happened, and therefore accept everything she has taught me. These three things intertwined aided me to help a child. As I helped him, he helped me to realize that I can't be uncomfortable with death. He showed me that I can not simply forget my mom because of the pain and sadness I feel when I think about her. There is also immense happiness. I have learned that her life has changed me even more than her death has. I no longer feel uncomfortable talking about the life and death of the amazing person that was my mom. All it took was one braid and one boy to change my perspective.

Erin Meaney is hoping to be accepted into Nuraing School after she graduates high school and follow in her late mom's footsteps and work in the NICU. In her free time, Erin loves to play volleyball. She is on her high school volleyball team and enjoys spending time with her team. Erin also attends a summer camp in the summer months, where she has learned many skills that include playing guitar.

Victoria Bennett

Second Place – Grade 11

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

ICE IN THE SUMMER HEAT

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Long car rides, late nights spent laughing, countless hours spent with each other, who knew it all could just end? We were the perfect pair, and nobody ever came between us — until the fall of 2019. This is the fall that broke me, that changed me, that opened my eyes.

We met in the year 2019 at a hockey party for our team at the time. She came up to me and asked me if I lived in St. John's. I told her I did and we quickly realized that we lived a couple of minutes away from each other. As the year went on, we became closer and, as she was having difficulties with friends, we shared rides to practice and hung out during the weekend.

The year 2018, our first year of high school together. Everyone knew at this point we were practically inseparable and our friendship was so strong we figured it could never be lost. We hung out practically every day and we went to our first field parties together. Nobody knew what we had besides us.

The summer of 2019 was one of the best summers of my life. I went away for French camp and ball hockey nationals. Upon my return from my month-long vacation, my best friend was not my best friend anymore. I had no idea who she was. She became this distant, boy obsessed girl who had another best friend and shut me out. The silence between us started to put a weight on my shoulders. I began bringing up my concerns about the situation in late August when I saw her less and less each week. However, each time I just heard the same sappy “I’m sorry” story and there was never any change. I knew I had to let go before it broke me.

“An apology without change is just manipulation.” — Sierra Monae
This was my turning point.

My world changed after our time together ran out in the early fall of 2019. I attempted heartfelt conversations trying to repair a friendship that was broken that she simply did not want to fix anymore. I was exhausted; I had no strength in me to fight for something that was one sided.

Nobody could ever compare to our friendship. I was left hopeless wondering where I went wrong, what these other people she had in her life had that I did not, why she was okay and I was shattered sitting on my bathroom floor wondering if life was even worth living without her. My feet were locked in concrete and I did not know how to move forward with my life. She was my person, the one I relied on for everything, and now I am here all alone, what was I supposed to do now?

I fell into a great state of depression during Christmas, and did not do much besides sleep. I slept because in my dreams she was still there and everything felt okay, until I woke

up — each time with a huge weight pushing me to stay in bed. I was not ready to let her go, because letting her go meant I had to accept our fate as strangers and I was not ready to do that.

My mom had become curious about what was going on and why I had not mentioned her in awhile. I explained what had happened and how I had been feeling. I felt her heart break into ten thousand pieces over that text message. A parent never wants their child to feel down on themselves; however when your child tells you that they no longer see a point in living, you break inside. For a long time, my mother blamed herself for how I was feeling but I always reminded her that it was not her fault for what happened.

We both came to realize that the only way for me to heal, was to reach out and get help. This is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do, but it has been the best thing I have ever done for myself.

You and I had a unique friendship and it will never be replaced.

We went to pick up my new puppy together — now she does not remember your name.

You loved my green Quebec sweater — now I can barely wear it anymore.

We had so many songs we blasted together — now I can not listen to them anymore.

If you ever read this, I want you to know that I will always be thankful for the time we spent together. You have changed me in so many ways and I will never forget you. You were my best friend for two years, and I had a connection with you that will never be replaced. I miss you each and every day, and I really hope that you are happy. You deserve the world and I hope someone can give you what I could not.

Victoria Bennett was born in Happy Valley - Goose Bay and is fully bilingual in French and English. Victoria enjoys playing hockey, soccer, singing in her school choir, and spending time with her friends and family. She has been an honours student for the past 10 years and wishes to pursue a career in law. Victoria also enjoys public speaking and competes in the French speak-off hosted by the district.

Anonymous

Third Place – Grade 11

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District,
Avalon Region

MEETING THE WRONG PERSON

My teacher told my class to write about a pivotal moment in our lives where we changed. For a 16 year old, that is a daunting task. We were also asked to be our authentic selves, opening up to a person you know almost nothing about can be challenging. I mean, I know personally I don't want my deepest darkest secrets to be released or for a person I know relatively very little about to know. However, I am here, exposing my turning point in my life and how I have become the person that I am today.

In the summer of 2018, I went to a three week summer camp in Quebec to learn French. While I was there, I met some of my best friends but I also met this boy _____. We were friends at first, when we left camp and nothing really came of it. However, as September approached we began talking more and more. We both discovered we had mutual feelings for each other and decided to go on a date. We went on more dates throughout September and October. By the end of October, we were officially dating, boyfriend and girlfriend. We were your typical teenage couple who spent every second we could together and fondness for each other was only growing. After New Years, there was a shift in our so-called "perfect relationship". This led to me feeling trapped, scared, confused on how to move forward with my life. I was sinking as if our love was quicksand on a stormy beach. If I talked to a certain friend, I would be in trouble. If I said the wrong thing, I would spend the rest of the day in the dog house with him.

I thought to myself, no, this could never happen to me, right? He is in love with me, he is only doing this because he loves me.

By February things were really going south. _____ began hitting me when I did something that did not meet his standards. Eventually he hit me just for the sake of it, but I thought it was okay. I was convinced that this is love, that this is what they do not show you in the movies, that this is reality. In March, he took advantage of me in my most vulnerable position. _____ raped me for the first time, little did I know, this would not be the last time. The physical abuse was only getting worse as the days went by. Everytime we would spend time together, I would be covered in these black and blue marks all across my body, convinced it was love.

My friends and peers realized that I was not myself, I was not your happy outgoing girl, I was broken by this horrifying brute that I thought was my soulmate. They begged me to leave the storm I was in but I was not ready for that. I believed in my heart that it was the love I thought I deserved, because that is what he convinced me of.

Through March to June my mental health was deteriorating. Every weekend was spent being thrown around like a used dishcloth. He would leave my house with the biggest smile on his face, while I sat on my bathroom floor covered in these black marks wondering where I went wrong. My body had become numb as every time he would take advantage of it for his own pleasure. No matter how bad I was feeling, there was a pain of guilt every time I thought about breaking up with him, because I thought that this, this feeling of suffocation,

was love. As time went on, this crazy rollercoaster I was on seemed to have more downs than ups. Every time I was down, I felt lost and alone, with no escape.

When May 2019 rolled around, things were worse than I could ever imagine. He would ask me to hang out and I began to feel the blade of his words push through my chest and stab my crumbling heart. I cried but it remained bottled up inside me, because this was love.

One night after a fight, I finally stood up for myself. When one in the morning rolled around and my body began to shut down, I said goodnight; however, that was not good enough for _____. He decided to attack my friends, he told them if they wanted to talk to me they needed to go through him. He said he would go as far to hurt them if he needed to. I was 15 and trapped in this cycle, this ideology was love, I felt stuck and hopeless.

After he threatened my friends, I felt my body come around the corner of the room I had been trapped in for months, I had reached my turning point.

Today it breaks my heart that my reason to leave was my friends and not myself. However if it were not for them, I would have not made the right choice. After several attempts throughout May and June, I finally cut my ties with someone who did not deserve me. He came to my house drowning in tears, begging me not to leave him. I had to bite my tongue and stick with my choice even though it felt like my tongue was gushing with blood.

It has been almost a year since then, and I have changed so much. Although I still struggle standing up for myself, I know that it could not be worse than what _____ put me through. This is my authentic self where I was my weakest which has taught me how to become my strongest.

My teacher told my class to write about a pivotal moment in our lives where we changed. For a 16 year old, that is a daunting task. We were also asked to be our authentic selves, opening up to a person you know almost nothing about can be challenging. I mean, I know personally I don't want my deepest darkest secrets to be released or for a person I know relatively very little about to know. However, I am here, exposing my turning point in my life and how I have become the person that I am today.

Participating Schools

We would like to recognize the involvement of the following schools in the Turning Points program:

NL English School District – Avalon

Admiral's Academy
 Amalgamated Academy
 Baccalieu Collegiate
 Baltimore School
 Beaconsfield Junior High
 Brookside Intermediate
 Brother Rice Junior High
 Cowan Heights Elementary
 Crescent Collegiate
 Dunne Memorial Academy
 Fatima Academy
 Frank Roberts Junior High
 Gonzaga High School
 Holy Redeemer Elementary
 Holy Trinity High School
 Juniper Ridge Intermediate
 Laval High School
 Learys Brook Junior High
 Macdonald Drive Junior High
 Mount Pearl Intermediate
 Roncalli Central High
 St. Catherine's Academy
 St. John Bosco
 St. Kevins Junior High
 St. Matthew's School
 St. Michaels Regional High
 St. Paul's Junior High
 St. Peters Elementary (UIC)
 Villanova Junior High

NL English School District – Central

Bishop White School
 Botwood Collegiate
 Clarenville Middle School
 Donald C. Jamieson Academy
 Gill Memorial Academy
 Glovertown Academy
 Heritage Collegiate
 Lakewood Academy
 Southwest Arm Academy
 St. Paul's Intermediate School
 Tricentia Academy

NL English School District – Labrador

Bayside Academy (DC Young)
 Eric G. Lambert All-Grade
 Henry Gordon Academy
 J.R. Smallwood Middle School
 Jens Haven Memorial School
 Mealy Mountain Collegiate
 Northern Lights Academy
 Queen of Peace Middle School
 Raymond Ward Memorial
 St. Lewis Academy
 St. Mary's All Grade

NL English School District – Western

Bayview Academy
 Belanger Memorial School
 Bonne Bay Academy
 Burgeo Academy
 Cape John Collegiate
 Cloud River Academy
 Copper Ridge Academy
 Corner Brook Intermediate
 Dorset Collegiate
 Douglas Academy
 E.A. Butler All Grade
 French Shore Academy
 Grandy's River Collegiate
 Gros Morne Academy
 H. G. Fillier Academy
 Hampden Academy
 Indian River High School
 Long Range Academy
 Lourdes Elementary
 Mary Simms All Grade
 Our Lady of the Cape School
 Pasadena Academy
 St. Boniface All Grade
 St. James All Grade
 St. James Regional High
 St. Michael's Elementary
 St. Peter's Academy
 St. Thomas Aquinas
 Templeton Academy
 Viking Trail Academy
 White Hills Academy
 Xavier Junior High

In Appreciation

The Learning Partnership would like to thank:

- The teachers and school administrators who encourage their students to share their stories through the Turning Points program
- The students who write their compelling stories
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- Ross Elliott, Program Manager – Newfoundland & Labrador, The Learning Partnership

Author Index

Anonymous	27	Hepditch, Noah.....	6
Anstey, Madison	8	Heppleston, Stella	21
Bennett, Victoria	25	Jennings, Cheyanne	12
Beyere, Margaret	14	Lewis, Sophia.....	7
Bouzane, Kailey	9	Meaney, Erin	23
Bouzane, Kiana.....	10	Park, Hannah Grace	18
Burden, Isaiah	16	Parsons, Madison.....	19
deVries, Landon	15	Spurrell, Katie	11
Ellsworth, Claire.....	17	Spurrell, Tristan	13
Harris, Dawson	20		



The Learning Partnership is a registered Canadian charity that brings together business, educators and strategic partners to design and deliver innovation education programs focused on early learners in schools across Canada

Our programs build the essential skills and competencies needed in tomorrow's leaders, innovators and problem solvers. They enhance provincial curricula, are aligned with Canada's innovation agenda, and are made available to students, parents and educators through the generous support of our education sector partners and funding from corporate, government, foundation and private donors.

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