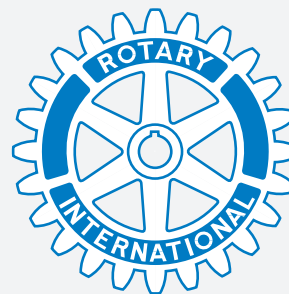
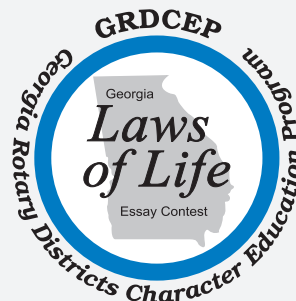
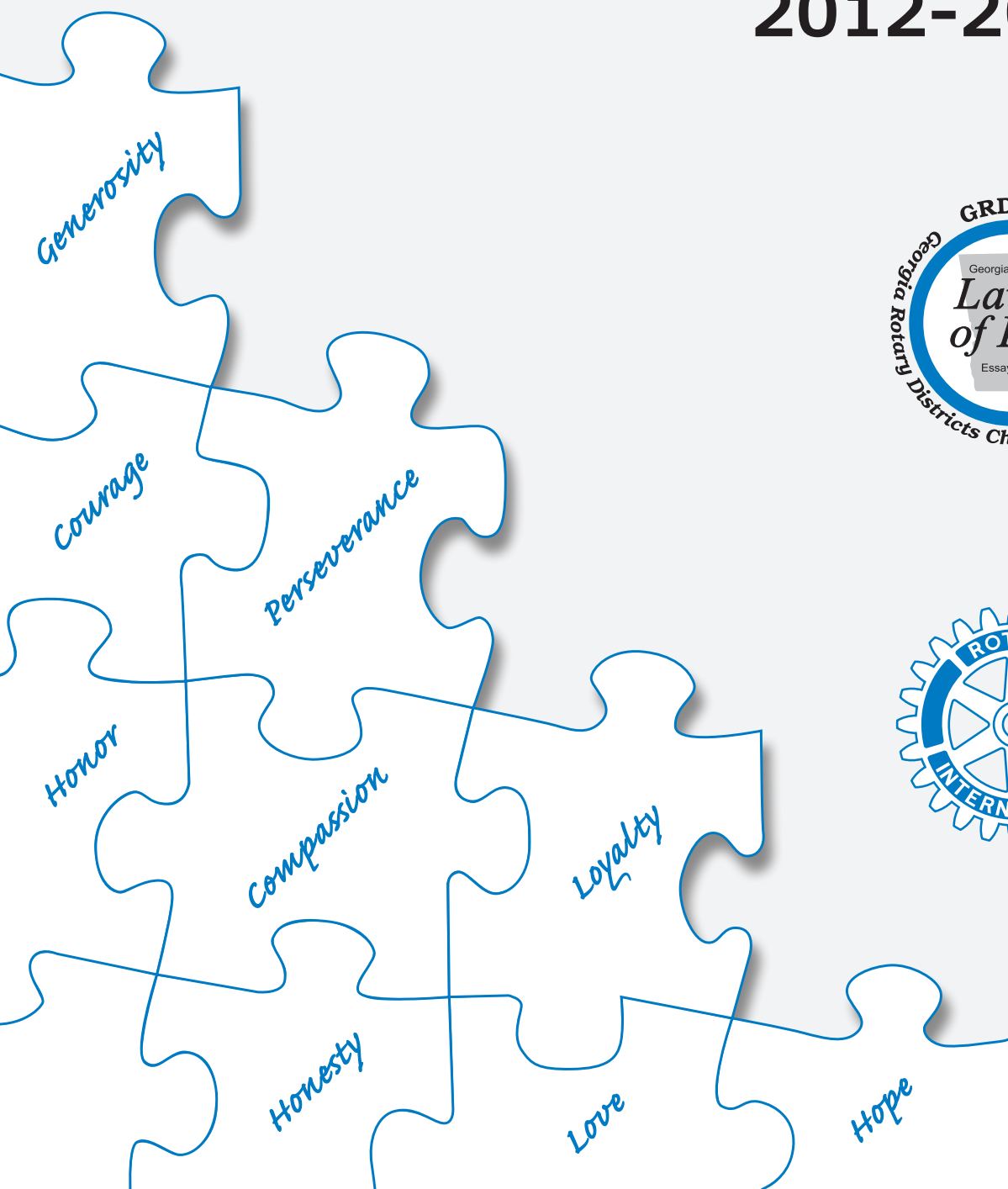


GEORGIA ROTARY DISTRICTS
CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM, INC.

GEORGIA

LAWS OF LIFE

ESSAY CONTEST
2012-2013



Intelligence + Character

Perhaps Martin Luther King, Jr., said it best: **"Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."** The Georgia *Laws of Life* Essay Contest recognizes the need for such "true education," and since its inception 14 years ago the contest has been in the vanguard of providing character education for Georgia high school students.

The contest asks students to select a saying that is a "*Law of Life*" (for example, "Slow and steady wins the race" or "Kind words conquer") and to use that saying to reflect upon and write about key life lessons and core character values such as perseverance, generosity, honesty, courage, and compassion.

Through their writings, students often discover meaning in simple everyday acts, find the proverbial silver lining in a cloud, recognize their own inner strengths, or learn to value relationships they once took for granted. The contest allows students to see themselves and others more clearly and to feel confidence in their potential.

The Georgia *Laws of Life* Essay Contest thanks the thousands of students and teachers who embraced this year's contest, and the sponsors and Rotarians who made the contest possible. We particularly thank the seven state winners for sharing their essays, which we showcase in this publication. We hope you are inspired, as we are, by the life lessons the students impart.

Sincerely,



Dr. Don Robinson
Chair, Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP)



Susan G. Mason
Executive Director, Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP)
and Georgia *Laws of Life* Essay Contest

GEORGIA

LAWS OF LIFE

ESSAY CONTEST
2012-2013

Facts and Benefits

- Nearly 40,000 students wrote essays for the 2012-2013 Georgia *Laws of Life* Essay Contest.
- The Contest named 152 school-level winners and seven state winners, and it presented more than \$17,000 in cash awards to students and teachers.
- Fifty high schools across the state participated in this year's contest.
- The Georgia contest is the largest *Laws of Life* contest in North America, and the second largest in the world. More than 406,600 *Laws of Life* essays have been written by Georgia students since the contest began in 1999.
- The contest is a character values competition based on a model created by the late Sir John Templeton, who was a pioneer in global investments and the founder of The John Templeton Foundation.
- The contest is made possible by our sponsors, including this year's Presenting Sponsors: the John Templeton Foundation, the Georgia Power Foundation, the John and Mary Franklin Foundation, the Sara Giles Moore Foundation, The Devereaux F. and Martha M. McClatchey Foundation, and Outlaw Consulting, Inc., as well as 42 sponsoring Rotary clubs from across the state, and dozens of additional corporate and individual sponsors who believe in the importance of character and integrity.

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is a program of the Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

www.georgialawsoflife.org



Tania Canel

12th Grade
Roswell High School



*I*t's a sunny Saturday afternoon. My mind races as we approach the parking lot of the mall, anticipating the thoughts and looks we will get from the people inside. It's hard not being able to tell everyone how I feel and not being able to tell them what my life is really like. These are oblivious strangers and I can't expect them to not judge me.

LAW OF LIFE:

"Loving someone deeply gives you strength."

- Lao Tzu

I slide open the door and help my younger sister get my brother's wheelchair out of the trunk while my mom starts getting his seatbelt off. I can feel it already: eyes watching as we get him ready. I can't do anything about it. After my mom gets him in his wheelchair, I hook him up to his feeding tube. It's time. We start for the door and I wonder if I am the only one who can feel the tension lingering in the air.

As soon as we step through the doors, I can feel all eyes on us, people turning and staring. My brother, Deandrei, doesn't know what's running through the strangers' minds, but I do. They may be thinking of how sad our situation must be. These strangers don't know how hard it is. They don't know that the hospital is like a second home to my family. That we've spent holidays and birthdays in cold hospital rooms wondering if my brother was going to survive the visit. That I have spent many days waking up at 4 in the morning getting ready for school in cramped hospital bathrooms because I spent the night on a stiff sofa next to him. Each reason to visit was different from the one before: lung collapse, not eating, surgery, not breathing, lung collapse again, 45 minute seizure, not waking up, surgery, throwing up blood, seizure, pneumonia, surgery, tests, pancreatitis...

After Deandrei was born, maintaining his health became like a game of whack-a-mole: once we got past one obstacle, a new one came. Right when we thought the game was over, a new "mole" rose up. As he grew up, his conditions went from bad to worse. He was put in a wheelchair at 2 years old, he couldn't and still can't communicate, and he had to eat through a tube. The latter was probably the worst; for almost a year after his surgery he let out excruciating shrieks of pain that were also reflected in his eyes.

Now, as we walk through the mall, Deandrei is ten years old. All aspects of life are not what I thought they would be before my brother was born. I was forced to grow up much faster than anyone leading a "normal life" would have to. I have experienced a spectrum of emotions—such as sorrow, confusion, panic and happiness—that I didn't know existed at such extremes. Though I have missed out on joining clubs and sports, hanging out with my friends, and vacations due to the amount of effort that it takes to even pack all of the things Deandrei needs for a simple car ride, I now know that you have to make sacrifices because "loving someone deeply gives you strength."

As my brother and I grew older, he helped me develop into a more mature, understanding, and nonjudgmental person who I don't think I would be if he wasn't here. Deandrei has helped me realize that people face all kinds of problems. And despite the growing hardships and health problems, he has always had a smile on his face. I try to do the same every day and try my best at everything I do because I have the ability, potential, and privilege to, unlike my brother.

I continue through the mall with a new perspective. Although these people think our situation is sad, I think it's blessing. Their looks remind me of how lucky I am and that's the magic in moments like these. When I watch pitying strangers, I realize how my brother has shaped my life into something wonderful.

Lal Hu Luai

12th Grade
Forsyth Central High School



The situation in my country was dire. I had spent the last three nights in jail, arrested and held as ransom for the crimes of my brother. My family and I realized that in order for me to live, I had to flee. My father's departing words to me were, "In life, there are no gains without pains. God will lead you on your journey, and no matter what happens, never give up." I had never been out of Burma, much less my town. I was so scared. I had no passport and was traveling illegally to Malaysia. I was a fugitive.

LAW OF LIFE:

"No Gains Without Pains"

My escape began on a boat traveling through the sea in the dead of night. Sometimes we had to turn off the engine in order to have a safe trip. The silent night made me, a fifteen year old boy, fearful. I tried to wake up, but it was not a dream. The night was extremely long and the boat moved like a turtle. We passed through the sea and arrived in Thailand at dawn.

One day, in a small camp, where we were taking a rest from our journey, the police came to check our status. They saw some of us did not have IDs. They told every single one who did not have a permit to leave. When it came my turn, I was afraid, and my muscles started shaking. Just then, the agent showed up and explained to them that I was a younger brother who just wanted to experience his elder brother's trip with different people. Then they asked for money from those people who did not have permission to leave, and then they left.

After a few days, we traveled through the farmland by foot. We could not bring any food or clothes. We had to walk for over thirty minutes as fast as we could go. It was summertime and very hot. We were exhausted and dehydrated, especially some of the older people. I wanted to walk faster, but I had to wait for the other people. We couldn't risk separating from each other. That made me tired and angry, but the only thing that I could do was to maintain the same speed as everyone else.

My escape ended with a tarp being thrown over my head and seeing a foreign police officer on a bike, holding a gun. I was in the truck. The sound of the engine from the bike was getting louder and louder. People were yelling in a foreign language that I did not understand. Then, I heard a shot coming from the bike. Everyone in the truck stayed quiet. Then I heard the second shot, and next the driver from our truck shot back at him. It was a gun fight. I felt like I was in a war. The truck moved faster and faster like a little mouse running away from a cat. After ten minutes of shooting, the bike got away from us. It seemed like he gave up on us. After that, my journey was smooth, and we were able to get Malaysia.

In Malaysia, we were still illegal people. We were trying to get help from the United Nations to accept us as refugees. Some police from Malaysia asked me for some money even though I had a UN Card showing that I was a refugee. They also put some people in jail if they did not pay money. I lived there about three years.

I had a dream to live freely, not as a fugitive, and to have religious freedom. Today my dreams are coming true after passing through the pains from my journey. I did not overcome those difficulties by myself; God was there to help me through them. I now remember my father's words, "In life, there are no gains without pains. God will lead you on your journey, and no matter what happens, never give up." These words became true for me when I started my new life here in the United States. I have gained a lot through the pains I have endured.

Raleigh Conerly

11th Grade
Central High School (Carrollton)



In our lives, there will always be people who come and go—friends, enemies, teachers, family, and everything in between. Or at least that is what I thought until I met Mrs. Ivey, my eighth grade math teacher. I have always been a pretty quick learner; I rarely come across something that puzzles me, especially in math. However, my eighth grade year, I met the toughest math teacher ever and I began to really understand what it means to challenge yourself.

I still remember my first day in Mrs. Ivey's class. I took my customary back row seat and settled in for what I thought would be an extremely easy class. However, I soon realized that Mrs. Ivey—a tall, skinny woman with shoulder-length grey hair and blue eyes—was not as innocent as she seemed. The work in her class was not challenging at all; I finished all of my work early, usually with twenty minutes to spare. One day, after completing our classwork, I was bored out of my mind when Mrs. Ivey approached my desk and asked me if I was finished, silently checking my work over my shoulder. "I think you're ready to move on," she said with a smile. I frowned, replying, "But our test isn't 'til Friday." She smiled again, her blue eyes flashing. "Exactly," she said, and quickly edited my worksheet, changing a couple of signs, numbers, and variables, increasing the difficulty of the work tenfold.

"I don't understand why I have to do extra work; the class is four days behind me, at least. Why can't I just learn it later, when you teach it?" I asked a few days later, while I was struggling to work through the edited worksheet. She smiled and her blue eyes laughed. "Someday you'll realize that you're special, you don't need to be taught how to do the work, you need to be taught to challenge yourself when there isn't a challenge to be had." She walked away from my desk and I quickly finished and had them checked. Other than a few miniscule errors, my work was perfect. We continued this cycle until the last few weeks of eighth grade when Mrs. Ivey was diagnosed with breast cancer.

She was unable to finish out that year and she passed away the summer before my junior year of high school. Words will never be able to explain how I felt when my father sat me down and told me that she had passed. I had never truly known grief until that time, for I had never had anyone close to me die. I have never known a better teacher and person, and to this day, I miss the feisty sparkle in her eyes, the box of Reduced Fat Cheez-Its that were always on her desk, and the desk in front of mine where she liked to sit and talk to me.

Whenever someone asks me who has influenced me the most, I smile to myself because the answer is so easy, so readily available, and because that question always brings to mind those sparkling blue eyes and that radiant smile that I miss so very much. Mrs. Ivey was only in my life for a very short time. The quantity of time we spent together was not much, but Mrs. Ivey completely changed the way I look at everything—math, problem solving, and life. It is very true that life will never give you the people you want, like an easy math teacher, rather life will give you the people that you need—someone who will love you, challenge you, teach you, and then when they have done all that they can, they will leave you as well. Mrs. Ivey was that special person for me, and she was exactly what I needed, and someone I could never possibly forget.

LAW OF LIFE:

"Life doesn't give you the people you want. It gives you the people you need; to help you, to hurt you, to love you, to leave you, and to make you into the person you were meant to be."

– Anonymous

Seba Saeb

9th Grade
Alpharetta High School



It was a hot summer's day in Saudi Arabia. My cousins, siblings, and I were playing Black Ops, a video game, in the small bedroom and listening to the blast of gunshots and the boom of the grenades. Coincidentally, in the living room just about thirty feet away, our parents were watching the same exact thing happen to innocent people in Syria. It wasn't until we heard our mothers' cries of sadness and horror that we left the room to find out what was happening. Hesitating, we walked down the narrow hallway leading us into the living room. I automatically searched around the large room for any signs of danger; I let out a relieved sigh when I found none. I turned to my mother and was surprised to see her and my aunt's face drenched in tears and terrified expressions on their faces. Turning towards the television, I stared in shock, my mouth hung open in shock of what was before me. Everything around me ceased to exist, except the images and terrified screams on the television.

LAW OF LIFE:

"Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

All of a sudden, my throat closed up and my vision blurred. The images on the screen astonished me. I stared in silence as I watched my home country, Syria, and its civilians running around the crowded street like squirming puppies. The blast of the gunshot made me flinch and the drop of women, men, and children made me cry. The sound was like a clap of thunder, the nearing missiles like broken glass against a metal floor. As I watched the news, I could hear the gunfire and the shrieking sound of a baby's cry. I tried to convince myself that it was a nightmare or a movie, but I knew it wasn't and that these innocent people were dying. I felt as if I could smell the stench of death and hear the cries of the grief stricken, innocent people. I was outraged; all they did was protest against the government that was holding them hostage in their tyranny.

The video moved to a little girl who was in front of a ruined building. Ruined doesn't do it justice: destructed, shattered, and destroyed fit the description of the rubble on the screen. Returning my attention back to the girl, I noticed that she had no life in her eyes, no innocence left, but was reliving the fact that her own government broke down her door, killed her parents, and raped her sisters. I listened as she yelled in Arabic about how she wished she died rather than witness these heinous crimes committed by her government. The girl's small frame curled into a fetal position as she explained that one of the soldiers turned to her and said in a low and menacing tone that if she wanted freedom, she would get freedom. She cried as she said, "The freedom he gave me was letting me live, but I don't want to live! I want to see my parents!"

Her cries made my heart clench in anger that someone actually had the capability to do that to a little girl. I had silent tears streaming down my face. I remembered the humid summers we spent in Syria, the pictures of the president Bashar Al Assad on every wall in the country. We were always told to never say a word about the government and were shushed for asking any questions. I never thought anything of it, but I believe that deep inside I knew that something was wrong.

Since the revolution, the news would show us the bodies being tortured, buildings destroyed, and killing of innocent people who only want their natural right of freedom. I spent time thinking, history isn't supposed to repeat itself, isn't that the very reason we learn it in school? You always hear that ignorance is bliss, but the true law of life is that, *"Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance."* We must educate ourselves so we can prevent tragedy from happening around us. Just minutes ago I was killing people in a video game, being ignorant; however, I learned that to some people, this is reality.

Sydney Mohr

12th Grade
Lambert High School



Every action you make has an impact on the people around you. No matter how small the compliment or the gesture of gratitude, people remember it. It is hard to forget when an old friend texts you to ask how you are doing or someone compliments you or says hello to you on your first day in a new school. Not until my recent volunteer experience at a local hospital did I realize sometimes the small things, at certain moments, are the only things that count.

LAW OF LIFE:

"The small things count."

Last summer I became a VolunTEEN at Emory John's Creek Hospital on one of the medical floors. My job description read like a boring instruction manual: change needle boxes, discard hazardous materials, deliver water to the patients, support the nurses and lab technicians, and so on and so forth. Honestly, I thought, "Is that it? Is that all I will be doing?" It did not take long to realize that the most important role I would play that summer was not listed in that boring instruction manual. In fact, it was not explained, taught or even talked about. I would have to give a part of myself that did not involve my physical ability or my mental prowess, but instead it would involve my heart, my kindness, and my empathy.

Most of the 36 rooms on third floor of EJC Hospital were full all the time. However, only about one-third of the patients had consistent family support around as they battled to regain their health. As I delivered water to the rooms, no matter how sick the patients were, they thanked me. They were not only grateful for the glass of water, but equally excited to have human contact other than someone coming in to poke and prod them. Most of the patients were lonely, some scared, some bored, and some both. They wanted to believe that the volunteers cared about them and consequently their appreciation seemed unending.

One morning, as I was doing my rounds on the third floor, I walked into a room to deliver the routine morning water and asked the elderly patient if he needed anything else. He responded, "Your beautiful smile." I giggled and reflected on the fact that my friendly, smiling face could actually make a difference in that man's life on that day. Would it be an earth shattering difference? No, but a difference nonetheless. I responded, "Of course you can have my smile anytime!"

Before I knew it, this man had engaged me with his life story. I learned he is from Columbia and has three sons. One works for the United Nations in New York, another works with him in Atlanta and his youngest son is a successful business man. I learned about his grandkids and how much he misses them. He imparted his words of wisdom to me. He encouraged me to travel the world, to stay focused, to work hard in school and to wait, no matter how long, for the right guy.

After an hour of mesmerizing dialogue, to which I added very little, he was no longer a stranger. He had shared so much of his life, his family, his experiences, and his feelings that he was no longer just the man in room 308. He needed someone to talk to, someone to listen, to help him survive his hospital stay while he healed. I longed to have another talk with him, but thankfully for him he was discharged the following day. I will never forget him. Even though I was in his life ever so briefly, I am thankful for being a help to him and even more thankful for the wisdom I gained during our brief encounter.

After that day, I understood that delivering the water was not about the water, but about the personal contact. By giving my Columbian friend my full attention during the early morning hour on what was just another volunteer day for me, I gave him a diversion from being sick and from missing his family. That is all he needed, ever so small, a little bit of kindness, a friendly smile, and an hour of my time. At that moment, on that day, the small things really did count.

Luke Vines

10th Grade
Bremen High School



There was a chair at my grandparents' house that my Grandfather, whom I called Pop, always sat in, and it mirrored him perfectly. The chair, like him, was faded, worn, and creaked when it moved. Like him, it had been there my whole life. It had many memories attached to it, so in turn I was attached to it. Havelock Ellis once remarked that, "All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of holding on and letting go." Like all objects, I eventually had to let go of the chair, but I had to learn that I could let go of the chair and hold on to the memories it seemed to harbor.

I can remember sitting in Pop's lap while he was in the chair doing word finds and watching cartoons for hours at a time. One day, the chair wasn't there anymore. It had been replaced by a hospice bed. Lou Gehrig's had eaten away at Pop's body and left him unable to walk, eat (he was fed through a hole in his stomach), or speak clearly.

I knew Lou Gehrig's disease was fatal, but I couldn't imagine a world without Pop. Out of the blur that was the last few days of his life, I can still remember the last thing I said to him. I leaned over the edge of the hospital bed, kissed his forehead, and whispered, "I love you," into his ear. Pop died the next night in his sleep.

The hospice bed was rolled away and replaced by Pop's old chair, but for the first time ever, Pop wouldn't be sitting in it. My uncle pointed out how empty it looked, and I thought of all the time I had spent in the chair with Pop crying with skinned knees, playing with stuffed animals, or reading Bible stories. Neither I nor anyone else would make another memory of Pop and his chair.

Months passed as my family's grieving hearts numbed and we tried to fill the holes left in our lives by Pop's death. My grandmother filled the hole with a new husband, and along with the new husband, came a new chair. There wasn't any extra room, so Pop's chair was thrown away. The new chair was upholstered with cold dark leather—a stark contrast to the soft worn fabric of the old chair. The chair replacement made me madder than the grandfather replacement. Pop was gone for good, but I felt that by holding onto the chair, I was holding on to him.

With time, I realized holding onto the chair wasn't the same as holding on to Pop. Since "all the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on," I knew that I had to let go of the chair. To tether the whole life of a person to an object was not responsible. By letting go, I opened myself up to a world of new possibilities. To be quite honest, the new chair looked better anyway.

LAW OF LIFE:

***"All the art of living
lies in a fine mingling
of holding on and
letting go."***

- Havelock Ellis

Ben Long

10th Grade
Cass High School



The orange leaves rustle across the dying grass as a light gust of wind sweeps through the cool air. I look around—yes, fall’s here, no doubt about it. It feels like it could stay like this forever, but I know that soon the rest of the leaves will fall and winter will set in. It’ll be a hard one this year; goosebumps are already rising from my skin from laying out here. As I turn my head, my eyes focus on an old red-painted picnic table sitting peacefully in the front yard. Only months ago my grandfather, who now lies on a hospital bed, sat in that very bench.

I never really knew my grandfather that well; he spoke Chinese while I was raised in an English-speaking home, so communication was always limited to short “hellos” and “thank-yous,” plus a couple of generic Chinese phrases taught to me by my mother. I guess that’s the worst part of it, though. I always thought I would have time later to get to know him—that I would learn Chinese and one day be able to look into his deep brown eyes and wrinkled face and listen to him paint stories of China, Malaysia, and of my ancestors. Yet, now he lies on a hospital bed. He is beginning to have trouble remembering my little sister’s name.

I guess what it is all trying to tell me—the falling leaves, the gusting wind, my dying grandfather—is that it’s time for change, and change is nature. You can look at something one moment, blink, and it is gone. The only certain thing in life is that life is uncertain, and if you can’t accept that well, . . . you’re like a leaf that refuses to fall.

It’s colder now, the goosebumps on my skin have been replaced by shivering; I should probably head inside. The wind has grown harsher, too; not many leaves are left on the trees. The ones that remain cling desperately to the dying branches.

He smiled at me. During my visit at the hospital, my grandfather looked at me and gave me a wrinkled smile. I don’t know why, or if it was even directed at me, but that small smile somehow comforted me; I could feel the deep, sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach fading until it was finally replaced by a sense of almost freedom, maybe even a little joy. Life may have the ability to change from good to bad in an instant, but just as suddenly can it change in the opposite direction.

Now I walk back inside, brushing off the cold, and I see my family sitting in the living room, talking and staying warm by the heater. My little sister must have said something funny: there’s still a hint of chuckling in their voices. Only hours ago, they left the hospital with solemn faces and heavy hearts. I realize, now, life will go on, and that’s probably what my grandfather truly wishes for us. Seasons change constantly just as life does; leaves die and fall as autumn changes to winter, but just as inevitably winter slips into spring and new green leaves break out of their buds. We have the choice to accept this fact and flow with the changes, but there are still a few straggling brown leaves that clutch painfully to their dead branches. Just remember: if you dwell too long lamenting over the cold, hard winter, you might end up missing your spring.

LAW OF LIFE:

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

- John F. Kennedy

GEORGIA LAWS OF LIFE

ESSAY CONTEST 2012-2013

**Alpharetta High School**

Seba Saeb

Bainbridge High School

Searcy Smith

Berkmar High School

Lizabeth Pena

Bremen High School

Luke Vines

Brookwood High School

Nicholas Na

Brunswick High School

Kaitlin M. Martin

Cambridge High School

A.J. Campbell

Campbell High School

Kyler Pruitt

Cass High School

Ben Long

Central High School (Carrollton)

Raleigh Conerly

Chamblee Charter High School

Sarayu Narayan

Cherokee High School

Kaitlyn Leftwich

Columbus High School

Tommy Boyd

Dawson County High School

Michaela Brauda

Deerfield-Windsor High School

Jennifer Mason

Eagle's Landing High School

Joseph L. Campbell

East Paulding High School

Brook Sparks

Evans High School

Daniel Oliver

Forsyth Central High School

Lal Hu Luai

Grady High School

Jessica Hume

G. W. Carver High School

Jasmine Page

Georgia Cyber Academy

Abigail Mount

Griffin High School

John E. Chapman, III

Hardaway High School

Will Johnson

Heritage High School

Sumer Norton

Independence High School

Chloe Cyr

KIPP Atlanta Collegiate

Jalyn Gordon

Lakeside High School

Katherine Jester

**Lamar County Comprehensive
High School**

Amanda Kendrick

Lambert High School

Sydney Mohr

McIntosh High School

Daniel Dehan

Mary Persons High School

Lindsey Kinsella

Milton High School

Georgina Blewett

North Gwinnett High School

Horace Buckley

**North Springs Charter
High School**

Grayson Cannon

Northside High School (Columbus)

Cassidy Hare

Ola High School

Madelyn Beacham

Peachtree Ridge High School

Jessica Palencia

Rome High School

Stephen McConkey

Roswell High School

Tania Canel

Shaw High School

Ian Pybus

Shiloh High School

J'Markus George

South Forsyth High School

John Austin McCandlish

Thomson High School

Michelle Araiga

**Thomas County Central
High School**

Isabel Medellin

**Thomasville High School
Scholars Academy**

Paxton Stephens

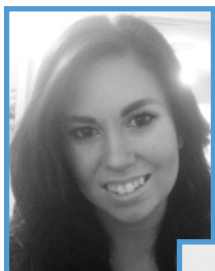
West Hall High School

Kelsi Jones

**White County
Ninth Grade Academy**

Emma Blair

What People Are Saying...



"I wouldn't have come this far in my life adventure if it weren't for the Laws of Life essay contest and Rotary. I thank you and those in the Rotary for the opportunities that you've given me."

Kayla Johnson, 2008 Georgia Laws of Life State Finalist,
University of Adelaide (AU) student



"I discovered, while writing my Laws of Life essay, that writing has an inherent worth, and that discovery was the most valuable prize any contest could ever offer."

Godfrey Ilonzo, 2008 Laws of Life essayist,
Harvard University graduate



"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my story with others. Without this contest, many students' inspirational tales would not be heard. Every one of the essays selected made me reflect and appreciate many things in life."

Jessica Rodriguez, 2011 State Finalist,
Oglethorpe University student



"The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest has truly helped my students to learn about who they are, and to understand that their 'life lessons' are a foundation for the future."

Terri Williams, Ph.D., Teacher



"The Laws of Life Essay Contest offers students the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and to think deeply about the principles that guide their lives."

Joel D. McElvaney, Teacher



"This contest encourages young people from all walks of life to reflect on a character-building life experience. It allows students of all academic abilities—from C students to valedictorians—to be recognized together in front of their peers, parents, and community."

Mark Ellis, Vice President of S.M. Ellis Company, Inc.



"As a Rotarian I have always been proud of the good work that Rotary does around the globe. It is especially meaningful when local Rotary clubs reach out to support a program as important as the Georgia Laws of Life essay contest. . . As a recognition professional, I know how a single moment of recognition can change lives."

Sam Varn, President, Awards4U;
Georgia Laws of Life Contest Sponsor

GEORGIA
LAWS OF LIFE
ESSAY CONTEST
2012-2013



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