

Eastern Region Essay Winner

Michelle Graham

*Windsor High School
Isle of Wight County*

If I had the favorable circumstance of holding a leadership position in my community, my nation, my world, the primary focus of my agenda would be centered on the well-being of our educational systems.

It is too often that the school systems of our nation are denied help for the seeming betterment of the rest of the community. Be that as it may, the fact that the state of our children is synonymous with the state of our country's future usually goes unnoticed. Children deserve to be accepted and understood. Without this privilege, they will be denied the future they are capable of having, thus, threatening the state of our future as a nation.

It takes a great deal of patience and perseverance to not only evaluate, but also tend to the needs of a society. However, it takes a pinch more to attain that same application of understanding when dealing with the condition a person's sense of self. Frequently, people are unconcerned with the responsibility of knowing and understanding their own character. As the old cliché states, one cannot help anyone else until he learns to help himself. This means that in order to lead anyone to greatness through charitable acts of kindness, one must look within himself and accept himself for whom he is. One does not simply hand over his last seed to an inexperienced farmer; instead, he plants the seed himself and shares the crop. One cannot give to others what he denies himself. True knowledge and acceptance of others can only be achieved if he has given the same to himself. It is through the comprehension of one's being that he is able to help others.

I believe that through the acceptance of ourselves, we can better help guide our children to a most bright and promising future! Nannie Mae Berger Hairston understood this concept very well, and it is very clearly expressed in her words, "I learned long ago that to make it a better world, it had to begin with me."

These words serve as an often-disregarded guide to leaders everywhere; they have the potential to conduct the leaders of societies alike in the universal song of knowledge. Although, it is up to the leader whether or not he chooses to follow in its footsteps, or simply let them be washed away by the tide of neglect.