

STRONG MEN & WOMEN



IN VIRGINIA HISTORY

2014 STUDENT WRITING CONTEST

Northern Region Essay Winner

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It is well-known that Northern Virginia is home to an affluent and well-educated population. The school districts are among the highest ranking in the country. The families here are sustained by the high-paying jobs that are available to the well educated and qualified. With so much prosperity in this area, how is it that this community is showing signs of a communication deficiency?

We live in a time of unprecedented technological advancement. Our communications have evolved from the Pony Express to texting. We can send words, pictures, videos, and even Skype across the globe in a matter of seconds. It has never been easier to contact others, exchange information, and express our thoughts and opinions. As astounding as this technology is, could it be holding us back from our true potential?

Modern communication, with all its advancements, is also presenting us with undesirable habits. Instead of talking face-to-face or even voice-to-voice, it is preferred to send simplified thoughts in the form of texts or emails. Language has become insipid and dull. People fill their time “posting,” “tweeting,” “snap-chatting,” and “instagramming” disingenuous and contrived fragments of their lives and then await the instant gratification of the impending “comments.”

Real communication skills are under attack and the casualties are handwriting, cursive, spelling, complete sentences, and thoughtful expression. Discernibly, this is an issue that is not likely to disappear, but it can be minimized. I feel that it is important that our youth be taught the value of all forms of communication. They need to be taught how to think and express in complete sentences with proper spelling and grammar without relying on spell check and grammar underscores. They should learn to put pen to paper and write in cursive and likewise be able to read cursive to appreciate our heritage and history chronicled in handwritten documents. Students should learn to engage in thoughtful conversation that promotes depth of language beyond “LOL” and “YOLO.”

We need to prepare the rising generation to face one another without the use of a screen or device. Communication of the modern age is a marvel. However, it can cause our society to become dim and for our ingenuity to become obstructed. Schools need to continue to build a strong foundation for our youth and instill the importance of true, intelligent expression through the spoken and written word and thereby prevent it from being considered “outdated.”

