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“JUNETEENTH ESSAY CONTEST”

RUNNER-UP

SOUTH PLAINFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

“ELLA KLOBY”

7TH GRADE

Human Relations Committee Juneteenth Essay

America's democratic society has a plethora of cultures and races, but our richly diverse population has led to a humanity prone to the struggle of communication between races.

In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery, but the slaves of Texas were not informed of their newly introduced liberation due to barriers in communication. As a result of obstacles created by the local and free citizens of Texas, the information confirming their freedom was not received by them until 1865. One theory states that Texas was the last to encounter the conclusion of the Civil War and suppression of slavery through word of mouth. Other theories suggest that slave owners and local political leaders of Texas hid the information from the slaves until Union troops arrived and enforced their freedom.

Currently, in the 21st century, modern society continues to experience communication barriers between citizens of various races and cultural identities. Everyone approaches life differently depending on their cultural background, beliefs, values, language, and customs. As a result, our ability to understand people of different cultural backgrounds and races can sometimes be limited. This can lead to discrimination, uncomfortable work and social environments, and conflict.

India's first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru stated that, "If we seek to understand a people, we have to try to put ourselves, as far as we can, in that particular historical and cultural background". We can all embrace this concept by developing an understanding of others' lifestyles and a willingness to explore new ideas and customs. In addition, we can overcome communication barriers through abstaining from

stereotypes and cultural based assumptions. As Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru additionally stated, "If we wish to convince them, we have to use their language as far as we can, not language in the narrow sense of the word, but the language of the mind". It is not enough to just understand a different culture or race, we must also put ourselves in their perspective.

As a white adolescent, I admit that I found writing about this essential theme difficult, which is inexcusable. I need to improve my understanding of communication barriers and the impact on my peers past and present. Confronted with the fear of everlasting communication barriers, I acknowledge that efforts on my part to support the end of discrimination need to be further established in my daily life. I pledge to educate myself further on this historical issue and become better oriented and improve my understanding of all cultures, heritages, and values. This can be accomplished through expanding my friendships and relationships. Furthermore, I can encourage my peers of all cultures and races to unite in this effort and contribute to the movement to end disparity.

Together we can create a society with a fair understanding of all cultures and races and once and for all end communication divides.