

New Jersey Literacy Association 2021 Writing Contest



Grade 3 Honorees

Valerie Beatty, Village School, Holmdel

Isha Nair, Village School, Holmdel

Kyah Prater, Oaklyn School, Oaklyn

Shambhavi Raghuvanshi, Oak Tree Road School, Woodbridge

Ayushman Srivastava, Oak Tree Road School, Woodbridge

Winnie Wang, Bartle School, Highland Park

Valerie Beatty

The Equestrian Quest

When I was 6 years-old my passion for horses began. I'd never seen or been on a horse before, but I knew it was my destiny. Due to my persistent personality (Some will call it begging), I was on a horse within a week! I immediately fell in love with riding and longed for more.

As I spent more time at the barn, I was introduced from afar to a very special show pony. Then one day, the words I never expected came from my trainers mouth:
"Valerie, would you like to try Tonka Toy?" My mouth said "YES, OF COURSE!" But my body was frozen in shock. "Are you gonna go get her and tack her up???...." After I caught my breath and rejoined my body I screeched "I'll be right back!"

We rode so well together it was like we were one. Within 5 months, with lots of practice and perseverance, I was in my very first horse show with Tonka! We brought home the championship trophy. It was the BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!!!!!!!

When we ride, I feel so free and everything bad leaves my head. We have created a strong bond and she inspires me to be my best self. She has touched my soul and changed my life forever.

Isha Nair

Coconut Ice Cream

Last winter, my family and I went to Jamaica. I had a great time, and made lots of fun memories. However, the memory that still makes me laugh was the day of coconut ice cream.

It was a bright and sunny day. My family and I finished lunch, and were heading to our room when we saw two girls enjoying mint ice cream with chocolate chips. It looked very delectable and made my mouth water. I asked my parents, "Can we get mint ice cream?"

My mom answered, "After a little, okay?" I nodded gleefully.

Soon, it was time for ice cream! At the ice cream stand, my dad said, "Four mint ice creams, please."

"Sorry," the server said, "we're all out!" My face fell at these words. Seeing this, she said, "We do have coconut ice cream!" My parents and my sister got it. I didn't because I only wanted mint.

I looked at my family, who was happily savoring their ice cream. I turned away, but my sister came around and ate right in front of me. My mom shooed her away and comforted me. "Do you want ice cream?" she asked me. I shook my head and ran forward. I sulked with my shoulders hunched over, again looking in the opposite direction. Then, my dad asked the same thing. My answer was a simple "no". I moved away from them again, unable to face the image of my family eating ice cream without me. Standing by myself, I felt left out. Everyone except me was eating ice cream, which was unfair. I looked back and saw their happy faces. Tears welled up in my eyes, and I ran into my mother's arms.

We were about to leave when I suddenly thought, I really wanted ice cream, and there's only one type. It's still good, so I'll get it! I asked, "Can you guys at least get me some ice cream?" My family stopped in their tracks and burst into laughter. I crossed my arms and frowned, "What's so funny?"

"Nothing," my mom said with a smile, "let's go get you some ice cream."

So, I got the coconut ice cream finally and actually loved it. "Yummy!" I muttered.

I learned that day that I should be open to trying new things and may end up enjoying them. One shouldn't say no without trying.

The Time I Changed My Little Sister's Diaper

By Kyah Prater

On a Tuesday night my mom told me to watch my little sister because my mom was doing her work. My little sister's name is Kaoir. She was one-year-old and she was sitting in a little baby high chair that used to be mine when I was a baby. I had to feed her tiny pieces of pizza. When she was finished eating, she started to make this grunting noise. "Grr, grr." I realized I smelled something stinky. She pooped! I was thinking, "Oh my god, I have to change a stinky baby's diaper?"

I had to pick her up but I didn't want to touch her so I just carefully picked her up under her arms. I didn't want to disturb my mom cause I knew she was doing her work. I put her down so she could walk. And I took her hand and led her to my bedroom. I put on her favorite TV show so she would stay there and I went to go get the diaper and wipes. I helped her up onto my bed and I told her to lay down because I really didn't want to touch her. She was stinking up my room. She made my room smell like wet cheese! I told her to lay down, but she didn't want to so I put a pillow behind her and made her lay down.

I took off her diaper. She was moving around and trying to leave. I was thinking, "Oh my god, Kaoir, lay down and stay still." I opened her diaper, it looked like a chocolate factory. There were mini little brown balls that looked like factory workers. Yuck. I had to take the wipes and wipe her body down. The poop was kinda like chocolate and it was sliding all over the wipes. I put the dirty wipes in her diaper. Then I had to pick up the diaper and take it to the trash bag in the hallway. When I came back into my room, she was off the bed and sitting on the floor. "OMG! I was only in the hallway for only a second, a second! How did she get on the floor?!"

I had to pick her up again and put her on my bed and wipe her butt down. Then, I put the diaper on her. Finally, my mom was finished her work! I had to tell her what happened. She said "Oh my god! You changed the baby's diaper?" I confidently said, "I did it all by myself."

Shambhavi Raghuvanshi
3rd Grade
Oak Tree Road School
Woodbridge, New Jersey

My Trip to Niagara Falls

On July 1st, 2019, me and my family were planning to go to Niagara Falls. My mom and dad heard about it and it's fireworks. July 4th, Independence day was near. They thought it would be cool to see fireworks on independence day. So we planned our trip to Niagara Falls. That day, we started to pack our stuff. We were going tomorrow, July 2nd. I was so excited and couldn't wait! We were going by car. I was most excited about the road trip. I love road trips! The next morning, I and my family woke up early. We had to leave early. Niagara Falls was about 400 miles away. This means it was going to be almost a 10-hour drive. We sat in the car and started the drive. On the way, we went to Watkin Glen State Park. It was so much fun! It was almost like Niagara falls but it was smaller. We continued our drive to our hotel at 7:30 after our Watkin Glen State Park break. We reached our hotel, Hilton Hotel, around 11:00 PM. It was getting pretty late so we checked in our hotel and went to bed. The next morning, we drove to Niagara Falls. We went to take a tour of Niagara Falls up close by the Maid Of The Mist boat at Niagara Falls. It was a super fun day! The next morning we went to an aquarium with lovely sea animals. But the thing I enjoyed the most was the dolphin show. The dolphin show had dolphins performing in the water and doing tricks. On the final day, we went to a museum called Discovery Center. There, we watched a movie about Niagara falls. Then, we went under Niagara falls. We

went to the Cave of the Wind in Goat Island. We even got to watch the fireworks in Niagara falls at night! Niagara falls was even glowing at night! I had the best time ever in Niagara falls!

Ayushman Srivastava

3rd Grade

Oak Tree Road School

Woodbridge, New Jersey

A Phenomenal Trip

It was a sunny December morning, I was eating breakfast. Then, unexpectedly my dad said “We are going on a cruise ship”. He drove up to an enormous ship the size of the titanic or that’s what I thought. Me and my family boarded the enormous ship. Honk! Honk! The huge ship started to move and it sounded like one million steam engines. I ran to the long, twisty water slide which led to a large, blue pool. When I was sliding down the water slide, it felt like I was on a green anaconda. I started swimming in the deep pool. After that, my stomach started to rumble. I was very hungry from the excitement so I went to the lunch station, which smelled delicious. My family ordered a large, cheesy pizza. The pizza was larger than the eye of a colossal squid. I went to the deck and saw gray bottlenose dolphins jumping up and down. While I was looking at the dolphins, our captain announced that “We are going to stop at the Bahamas”. I walked off the ship and sat down on the sand. I loved how the warm sand tickled my feet and the beautiful sound of crashing waves. It was perfect here. I just sat there until my mom called me for a tour through the town. I heard the sounds of shop vendors shouting, the squawking of parrots, and the bells of bicycles. When I looked at the sky, the sun had started to set and the ship had come back for us. We ran onto the ship. When I was in our room my parents told me to follow them. They brought me to a dark area. Then, suddenly the lights turned on and a

lot of blue confetti fell on me. I saw a big, golden sign that said “HAPPY BIRTHDAY”. It was a surprise party for me! On the middle table there was a scrumptious, brown chocolate cake. While I was cutting the cake my family, the waiters and some other people were singing ‘happy birthday to you’. We ate the chocolate cake and vegetable lasagna because it’s my favorite food. My mom said “Do you like it”? I replied “I don’t like it but I love it”. After 5 days of more fun the ship finally dropped us off. This was the best birthday vacation ever.

A Bear in my Mom's Room!?

By Winnie Wang

It was my bedtime. I fall asleep faster if there is light nearby. My mom usually leaves her door open a little when I go to sleep. Since my room is located directly across from my mom's room, I would have some light. That night my mom closed her door completely, it was very dark.

We recently got a danger alert. We did not know what could happen, it was very unspecific. I didn't like the sound of that. I was scared, especially in the dark. I tried to relax, but it was almost impossible. I pulled my covers up to my eyes and stared at my bedroom door for a long time. I tried to bury myself in thought of happy moments. Though it did not work. Slowly I pulled the covers back down to my neck.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, I heard a "CRACK!" I nearly flung the covers off the bed. My heart pounded, I thought it would burst. I started to panic not knowing what would happen next. Was this an omen that something bad would happen?

I didn't know what happened, but I must have fallen asleep. I opened my eyes, it was the middle of the night and I had to go to the bathroom. After I finished, I peeked into my mom's room. What!? A big black bear was sitting beside the window. I was so scared.

“Mommy, I think there is a bear sitting beside your window.” I whispered to my mom.

She glanced at the window and told me, “No, there is not. Please stop talking nonsense and go back to sleep.”

I hurried back to my room and thought for a moment. Yes, it was impossible for a bear to be in mom’s room. I went out again just to check if the bear was still there. Yup, it’s still sitting by the window. I ran back to my room, threw myself under the blanket and tried all my best to fall asleep.

The next morning, my mom took me to her room and I saw some boxes stacked next to a table by her window. It did look like a bear! She cleaned up something and put them into boxes after I went to sleep. That’s why she closed her door. Such a relief! So that’s what it was after all.