**Violence In A Single Speech**

What is violence? Why do people revert to violence? Can someone be violent because they are angry or sad? Why do people want to hurt animals or other humans? To be honest, I don't know. I can't tell why someone decides to hurt another person or why. I'm just like you, a normal human being. I might be younger or older than you, but we are different. I am Raquel Acevedo and I am 11 years old. I might be young but I have experienced a lot of things in my life. Down the street I live on there is violence. You may be thinking “Well of course there is violence on your street. Violence is everywhere.” Well violence is everywhere but on my street people are shot. Boom Pow Pop. Gunshots flying in the sky. People falling to the hard ground almost twice a month. I fear walking outside my door and falling down the stairway as darkness swallows me up like it did to the others. Can violence go this far? Can violence become so powerful it can take over the world? If people keep this behavior up thousands of people can die in a day.

Everyday someone dies and it is broadcasted on the news. You see violence everyday. You don't think it is a big deal anymore. You learned not to care. You really think it will never happen to you so you don't pay attention to it. I want you to feel the pain these people did. Imagine that your walking down a street on a normal day. You see familiar faces around the area you are walking. You see beautiful building. Bang Boom Pow Pop! You then fall to the ground. Imagine a sharp pain in your shoulder, chest, leg and hand. Your body is trembling as the pain becomes fiercer. Your life flashes before your eyes. Then imagine this scary black hole swallowing you up. You can't escape. You can't move. You can't do anything. What you are feeling right now isn't nearly as bad as it would feel if it really happened. Do you want to feel that pain in reality? Do you want your life to end at short notice? Do you want to be checked off the list of living people on Earth? Well if you don't, join the movement to end violence. Help us end violence. We can stop all the gunshots. We can stop people from being murdered. We can stop violence together.

You may think you are too small to make a difference. You aren't. Here's how you can make a difference and stop violence in your neighborhood and school. If you see something suspicious, report it. This action can lead to an investigation or a little talk that can stop something bad. Don't be afraid of the people you report. The name title you receive is not bad. A tattletail is a name that people told on call the people who reported them. Be happy you helped someone, maybe doing this can lead to better results. We could save lives just by reporting something. Another thing you can do is spread peace. Make people feel happy. It can be continuous. Always tell people to pass on love. This can result to a peaceful area, making it safe. Always remember that you are never to small to make a difference. Nothing is impossible. Thank you!
"How I Would Like to Stop Youth Violence"

I have a couple of ideas to stop youth violence. First, I want to start on how youth violence has affected me. When I was in 2nd grade I was bullied. The two same guys (whose name I am not going to say) kept messing around with me. One day I had enough and told them to stop. The next day they stopped. The day after, they started again. So, I told the principal, and nothing happened.

The next school year I transferred to the school I am currently at now, and I haven’t been bullied once. The fact that I was bullied stuck with me for a while. Now I wouldn’t like that to happen to other kids/students because it’s not a very pleasant thing to experience. That is why I want to create a group that can help me change what bullies and people think. That is why I think we should take matters into this and the past generations hands. We need to guide younger kids/students onto the right path. These kids are our future. We need to shine light on our future, or our future will have no light. (Basically, saying everything will probably be messed up, more violent, and pretty much just wrong.) Here’s a good quote by John Fox that adds up what I’m trying to say. “Fail to prepare, prepare to fail” - John Fox

So, I think that we should take this opportunity now while we have it. Parents already know this (along with most other adults), but we need to protect these kids. This is how we can shape our future for the better and hopefully not the worst. I worry about the future. I believe that things can get worse. Actually, I think things can get much worse than out-of-hand worse. I know that there are psychos out on the street, and I get worried about the kids that can’t protect themselves. Some things can stick with them for a while longer than you can think. They could have nightmares about these incidents. Here’s another quote by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, or some of you know him as President JFK.

“Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind.”- JFK

This is a really good quote of you think about it. Though I see it differently in this case. I see it as “We must stop youth violence, before youth violence puts an end to our future.”

Backtracking to how youth violence can start. There are many reasons for this. Though the first thing to pop up in my head is, maybe they got bullied before. (Something else may have happened I’m just using bullying as an example) I think people need to get rid of stress. The only thing is is that they think the only way of getting rid of it is bullying somebody else. (There’s another option that they may think of that I will not be talking about). I would know this because I have been in this exact place before. Those were also the only options I saw to. That was until I met my friends that have been there for me when I really needed them most. I think those people may need friends like mine, really good ones. Kids need to stop being fake “friends” and be real nice people to their friend or buddy may need them. People need to be there for other people or people will no longer be there. That’s where I want to start to stop youth violence.
Unfortunately, violence affects people and children all over the world. It has even affected a very close friend of mine. We as children have to spread the word of youth violence to help those suffer and try to put a stop to it.

Youth violence usually comes from the child’s background, normally at home. A lot of the time it has to do with parents’ problems such as drugs or alcohol. A parent is someone who a child looks up to as a role model. If someone is taking drugs or drinking a lot of alcohol or abusing them, that could make a difference in the way the child behaves. Everything that happens at home can have a huge impact on a child’s future.

Youth violence has actually had an impact on my life. One of my old classmates and friends came from a troubled background. His parents were divorced, his mom was remarried and had another child, his dad was an alcoholic, and his mom suffered from drug use and alcoholism. His mom ended up leaving and he was living with his dad. He was abused. He was depressed and lost interest in everything he used to love. He would say stuff about how the world would be better without him. He would sometimes cut himself. I didn’t know how to handle it. He lost everything important to him. His grades dropped, he lost friends, and didn’t come back to eighth grade. I haven’t seen him since.

I am not yet sure how I can make a difference about youth violence. I see people all of the time preaching about it. I also see stories in the news that highlight major events of youth violence. I see protests with people and posters screaming. I want there to be peace. I feel like right now, all I can do is write this essay to show people how I feel. Later on in my future, I think that I might want to start an essay contest of my own. I also want set up a fundraiser where all of the money will go to people who have been affected by youth violence. As children, we also have to worry about our safety. We must be able to understand the impact that it has on our society, because it affects people our age. We have to spread the word of youth violence in a safe way such as posters, contests like these, and speeches.

Youth violence happens to frequently to children like us everywhere and it isn’t fair that children and parents have to suffer. I live in a safe place and it even affects my friends. Youth violence ruins lives and must be stopped.
This city is where I live
In this city there is fear
Fear of going outside
Fear of being the next one to die
Everyday my life is on the line
There’s pain and suffering
Buried deep inside
You see the pain in the mother’s eyes
While her baby says lifeless by her side
Lie taken in the blink of an eye
One shot
BANG
That’s another life taken today
And for what?
Was it the color of their skin?
Was it the time or the place they were in?
They say violence comes from a broken home.
   Kids left alone.
   Parents never home.
   Children in the street
   Thinking that they’re grown.
   Saying they want to be left alone
   But the truth is they’re scared.
   Scared of what their friends will think
   Trying to be like their “homies” in the streets
   I’ll ask you again.
   WHY?
Why must this city be a place of guns and drugs?
   Where is the love?
   Why must we hide behind guns?
   Why can’t we just stop the violence?
   Why not do the (write) right thing?
Normal... Death... Normal.

All I see is Roses on the ground and no one around.

Roses, Crosses, Roses, Crosses.

It becomes normal. Normal I think to myself in horror.

Is Chicago Normal? Is seeing people dying each day in your face, immortal?

I think thats how me and many people define Normal.

We lose family but don't do nothing.

Run away from home. Some people would think.

But people don't know that is not that easy.

If only I knew what the real definition of Normal is.

Hearing shots every night. Normal.

Seeing people falling to the ground. Normal.

Cant sleep no more thanks to the loudness. Normal.

Im one of many person that define Normal like this.

What should I do what should I do. I think.

All me and other kids and adults can do is wait.

But wait for what?
LIMITED

I ignore everything that troubles me.
Everyday I'm reminded of my flaws,
Everyday I ignore what I see.
I don't fix problems - I've been taught to stall.

Go to school and don't know what I learn,
Keep asking myself how my future will turn,
Still don't know what I wanna earn.
Respect, Money, Fame.
Anything before I die.
An actual achievement for anything to show I was alive.

Of course can't do anything if you never try.
I'm scared of failure, don't wanna lie,
Counter that with never full effort in anything,
I'm having problems with everything.
Doing stuff carelessly,
Scared of what my future brings,
Walking forward recklessly.

Breaking my back over stuff that comes to mind,
What am I supposed to do with such limited time?
People say they're trying to help me I guess I don't see the signs.
Just someone to listen would be sublime.
World's so messed up, wake up to the news another kid like me has died,
We're so close to our own ends it's real hard not to cry.
Writing this, look down, whose tears are those - yours or mine?

World is too dark to see what's right from wrong.
We're fighting ourselves -- what is going on?
Hate words back and forth like ping pong.
So many reasons to be discouraged I stopped trying to be strong,
I've already put too much in it now it's so much more than a song.
Of course I'm faced with the same problems, but a brave face I'm forced to don,
People don't face problems right,
Barely dodging repercussions,
the alleyway of backlash getting tight,
I'm suffocating from all the injustice, and all the lies.

No more Black and white, all we are is grey.
They don’t care where we end up and everyone’s not okay,
With the ignorance and the insistence that I’m wrong in every way.
Of course, because I’m a kid, I never get a say.
Really needing someone to make a change.
Still no one here has come to save.

I understand change starts with me,
but I’m so anti-afraid.
Double negatives currently my life,
See myself under a microscope where everyone sees my biggest vice.
Really I should reap what I sow, still I fall in the same worlds' faults
I run and run away from frailty but it comes up on me fast
Running out of energy and motivation to keep up the pace,
Always thought I would have time and opportunity against it, guess I’m losing the race.

The world limits me,
maybe it’s worry,
maybe they can’t see.
Or believe that we can still do the right thing.
We Will Not
(This is Fiction)

His dad comes home, face flushed, beet red and hot.  
He knows what’s coming, so he begins to brace, his dreams crushed and scattered and left in distraught.  
Sometimes too afraid to explore, in hopes that if he did, he would get caught.  
The moment his dad catches him, he grabs him, and smacks him down for trying if he even gave it another thought.

Tears well up in his eyes, his stomach tied in a knot,  
Hoping for someone’s heeding.  
But no one hears his silent suffering and pleading.

Too afraid to come home the next day,  
Hoping he wouldn’t be thrown away like yesterday.  
But still, he comes home, where the same pattern repeats, and more fear is brought.  
Too helpless to fight back, sitting still in a corner and not leaving the spot.

Everyday, his heart and mind endures it, punches blown like powerful shots.  
Hoping this problem could be easy to hide, like a blemish he could blot.  
He sees his reflection of himself in the mirror with bruises showing scourging painful blends of purple and green on his ribs, and whispers to himself “It’ll be okay.”  
He knows he’s alive, but his body’s beginning to rot.

Following morning, friends question him, “How are you? Are you alright?”  
Anger builds up in his mind, comes too fast he can’t rewind,  
Agitated, rage consumes him, his mind pushing him to “F I G H T”.  
Like how his dad pummels him down, he slams them just the same.  
Holding them down in place, punching and punching with all his might.  
His innocence and feeling of safety taken away, and he no longer sees the distant light.

Though knowing his struggle, how he’s given it everything he’s got,  
I don’t judge.

Instead, we search for the problem, have it be sought,  
Knowing how much he’s struggled and fought,
We’ll keep everyone together, and hope he’s never forgot,
That the world will have other people to love him.
And though it seems like the people he loves would leave,

We will not.
A Normal Day
(this is fiction)

I woke up. I ate. Pretty normal. I got dressed. I feel good. Today, my mom made me a lunch. So sweet. I walked to school happy, finally get to see my best friend.

Now I’m in my 5th period. The most boring period ever. I hear noises.

BOOM!

BANG! BANG!

I jump.

A kid runs by yelling, “school shooter...” but before he finishes his sentence he is shot. Twice.

Everyone screams. We run to the side of the classroom. Lock the doors and turn the lights off, just like we practiced so many times. Too many times. A girl I never liked started crying and screaming. A total of 17 shots were fired. He walked in. It was all quiet. A tear fell down my face as I was texting my mom. “I love you. I’ll miss you.”

Another shot was fired.

Then another.

Then another.

I turned around and she was gone. The girl I didn’t like was gone now. I’m covered in her blood, faking dead, laying on the floor as he walked over my body. My soul felt as if it left my body. Now 5 of my classmates are gone. My best friend, a girl I didn’t like, the boy I borrowed a pencil from.

Now I’m alone. I’m thinking, “Wow! Today was supposed to be a normal day.” I’d never thought that today would be my last.
Violence is terrible especially in my city, it has affected the way I socialize and play, I can't go outside to play with my friends. Everyday someone one has been shot, robbed, or killed; it’s heartbreaking. I have a broken heart due to the violence in chicago, I feel like I'll always be in danger. While riding in a car with my mother we saw two people beating up on another person, near a school, it was terrifying to see. This pass New Years Eve, I was riding down 47th street between King drive and Cottage Grove and saw a young woman lying on the ground with blood in her hands. My mother stopped and asked can she help by calling the police. The young woman's friends surrounding her stated “someone was on the way”. The young lady was hit by a car, that car kept going. The way I see it, these days you could be doing anything positive and become a victim of violence; going to the park, playing on your block, or walking out of a store. Violence has affected my life because I hear about it and see it too often.

Some causes of youth violence is the lack of role models among young men and women. If young people don’t have positive people to look up to, they will look up to negative role models, that demonstrate violence. Youth that participate in violence have no one to teach them a better way to live. Furthermore, lack of money and resources often makes young people feel like they have to kill, and sell drugs in order to make money. Teens join gangs and kill people because it makes them feel like they belong, and have a real family. Violence and the people who commit violent acts doesn't no any better, so they have to be taught. Additionally, some
youth don't like going to school because of the violence they endure by going. Violence really takes a toll on education because students can't concentrate due to the constant fear of violence, it prohibits learning.

I would like to step up and become a leader, an role model that will teach the youth right paths and positivity. I would like to form a group of young positive people that are willing to visit different neighborhoods to engage with other youth that maybe surrounded by violence. I would talk to leaders of this state to get their advice and expertise of what would help decrease violence in Chicago. Then, I would want to help with the homeless problems of or no families not having a place to live. The group I would form would give out food or raise money for nice homes. Although, it's very sad for me to see kids on the street doing wrong, I believe knowledge would help them to become something in life. Lastly, I would advocate for good police in our city, that will actual help the city of Chicago. Role models can try to connect kids to solutions for their problems. They may become motivated to do something that inspire a positive change. Teens that demonstrate violence can change and start doing good in school.

We need to more positive about our communities, I would be willing to demonstrate that to the youth, so they wouldn't be mad all the time and find reasons to be happy
The Streets

Authors Purpose: These are some lyrics I wrote in the form of rap. In these lyrics I will be using this style, which is often misinterpreted as senseless violence, to find a way to stop these deaths, pain, and warfare on the streets.

(Verse 1)

As the killings increase
Some looking for war
Others looking for peace
Kids becoming deceased
Grandpas, Uncles, and niece
They’re all stuck in these streets
Keep the kids out the street
No, why don’t we just keep violence out
All of this pain makes me want to scream and shout
All these guns shot up my adolescents
Mama getting gray hairs from all this stressing
I’ve been learning a lesson
Once you’re in the streets you can’t make it out
Different gangs in each neighborhood
But maybe they’re misunderstood
They’re trapped in trapping
If they stop selling drugs
How will they feed their child?
Get a job where the salary’s mild?
Going to the interview with a suit
They can’t even buy
No dispute, with all these charges the boss will deny
Your money begins to slow
As your family’s hunger begins to grow
Without intention the boss just tossed you back to the streets
(Verse 2)
Back to robbery and selling drugs
Your peers being kilt
Nightmares being felt
As vendettas begin to form
Your soul begins to deform
Murder rates coming like a storm
Gangsters becoming sick of this life
Trying to protect their kids and wife
Gangsters start rapping
They pour their heart and soul
Because of the road they took with an expensive toll
By telling their pain and trouble
The views begin to double
As they start rapping
The money start stacking
They leave their hometown
To find a home, safe and sound
They left the streets
Violence nowhere to be found
Rap can be confused as evil
People think rap is nothing but violence
But in silence
Rap is telling a story
(Verse 3)
The street is a cycle
We need to take a leap
Like Michael J
We need more gang recovery centers
That recovers gangster everyday
All victims of the streets can enter
Helping with their mental
(Verse 4)
But those same innocent kids with pencils
End up joining gangs and crimes that are detrimental
Kids begin to think gangbanging is cool
Little kids carrying machine guns
Enough to create a blood pool
The streets are out of control
Boys and girls dying
Moms needing some console
Deaths because of petty fights
They’ve lost sight of what’s right
Once they experience jail
They will be “Beyond Scared Straight”
Seeing manic inmates
Their values will change
Many people would say Chicago is “segregated”
By the way races are separated
Minority neighborhoods looking abandoned
Abandon houses boarded up
No funds to sort it up
If kids grow up to fill like their lives don’t matter
Why would they think other lives matter
Their mentality is scattered
They’ll see brain splatter
And act it was nothing
We need to do something
Run up some funds for these neighborhoods
Make sure their families are good
Create more jobs
Funding for some new schools
Maybe playing by some new rules
Instead of fighting, use hands for new tools