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STUART
COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL OF THE SACRED HEART

The Hyacinth

The third and fourth grade literary journal

Personal Narratives

Vol. 1 • Issue 1 • FALL 2016

The Hyacinth

Picture by Isabella

Inspiration at Work

Dear readers,

This magazine features personal narratives written by students at the beginning of their third- and fourth-grade years. These writing samples serve as a benchmark and as an opportunity for growth in their written communication skills.

Based on these writings, students will receive feedback designed to help them with self-editing, sentence construction, spelling, word choice, and titling, as well as grammar, punctuation, typography, and capitalization rules. They are also gaining experience in typing and computer use. Each subsequent magazine this year will have increasingly higher expectations for student excellence in writing.

We hope that you will enjoy this magazine full of wonderful stories the girls have authored about the memories and challenges that are important to them.

Sincerely,
The Hyacinth faculty advisors

About the journal

The Hyacinth is published a minimum of twice per academic year.

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AMUSEMENT PARKS

The Great Race

by Bella

We were sweating when I saw something I thought I wouldn't see. I saw a fair ahead, with big Ferris wheels and roller coasters and merry-go-rounds! Who knew at the end of a huge bike race there was a fair? My family went into the fair and got off our bikes. Of course I needed help with getting down because I was only about six. I had a really big smile on. We entered the fair and chose three rides to go on but I only remember one and that one was the Ferris wheel. I don't know how, but my cousins were there, too. We went on the Ferris wheel together and talked about a lot of things. It had been pouring rain all day but we still had finished the race and enjoyed a surprising time at the fair.

My First Roller Coaster Ride!

by Allison

On summer vacation I went to Disneyland in California. It was a hot day and my mom, my dad, my sister, and I were waiting to go on a roller coaster ride. The line was extremely long, but it was worth it. When we finally got on the ride, I was surprised that there were no seatbelts. I was super afraid. The bottom, where my feet went, was muddy, because people had dirt on their feet and water splashed in. When the ride started, I had butterflies in my stomach because this was my first time on a roller coaster. The ride was in the water so the water sprayed here and there. When the ride was finished, there was a big drop and it went straight down. It it was super fast and scary! When it was the end, my shorts were soaked but they soon dried off in the warm sun. It was super fun and very wet!

California Screamin' *by Maya*

I was waiting in line with Joey and Matt and my stomach had butterflies in it. I was just about to ride my first roller coaster and it was one of the best in the world (at least that's what I had heard). Finally the car pulled in. I was sitting with Joey, and Matt sat alone. I grabbed Joey's hand and we sped off. I was screaming, "Ahhhhhh!"

Matt was screaming, "Uhhhhhhhh!" and Joey was laughing, "Ahahahahahahuahau!"

It was awkward because it felt like it went on forever! When the ride stopped, I got out and guess what?! I had absolutely no idea they were going to take pictures!

I looked at our picture. I looked like I was going to pee my pants, but my face wasn't the worst in the picture. Matt looked like he was constipated.

When I saw Matt's face, I practically died of laughter! When I finally remembered how to breathe, Joey asked me how I liked the ride and I screamed, "Are you kidding me, that was awesome!" After we met up with my Mom and Sammy, Matt said, "Let's go to Tower Of Terror."

I said, "Okay!" and we went to continue our day of adventure.

My Fear of Heights *by Brigitte*

We went slowly up then ... suddenly we rushed back down to the ground super fast. At first I was screaming and I had butterflies, but when we got off the ride, I somehow wanted to go on it again, so I did. It got more fun and more fun each time I went up and slammed down. Although it was fun, it wasn't that high, so I'm still afraid of heights. I know I'm still afraid because I couldn't go on the bigger version. Yes, I went on the mini.

There is something called the Rocking Boat and it's a really fun ride. It went really high by rocking back and forth and back and forth and each time it rocked, it got higher and higher. Each time it rocked, I got more butterflies. When I got off, I was actually dizzy. I was also happy it was over because it was kind of scary and high, but it was fun (well, sort of).

When I'm at a great height, I get butterflies and while it's slamming down, I scream so loud I can not hear myself think.

My Adventure at Long Beach Island

by Lucia

One day when my sister, my mom, and my dad and I were in the car, I asked my mom where we were going. My mom said that we were going to my sister's teacher's beach house at Long Beach Island. When we got there, we got out of the car and went into the house. We went to the top part of the house. The next day, we went to a water park. It was amazing! My sister and I went on the lazy river. The lazy river is something that goes in a circle. You take a little floaty and go in the water. When I was in the middle of the circle, there was a big storm. Water poured down from a big bucket and I swam away after the storm. At the end of the day, we went to a park and there were so many rides. I went on a train ride and a bumper car ride. The next day we left Long Beach Island and drove back home.

FEARS

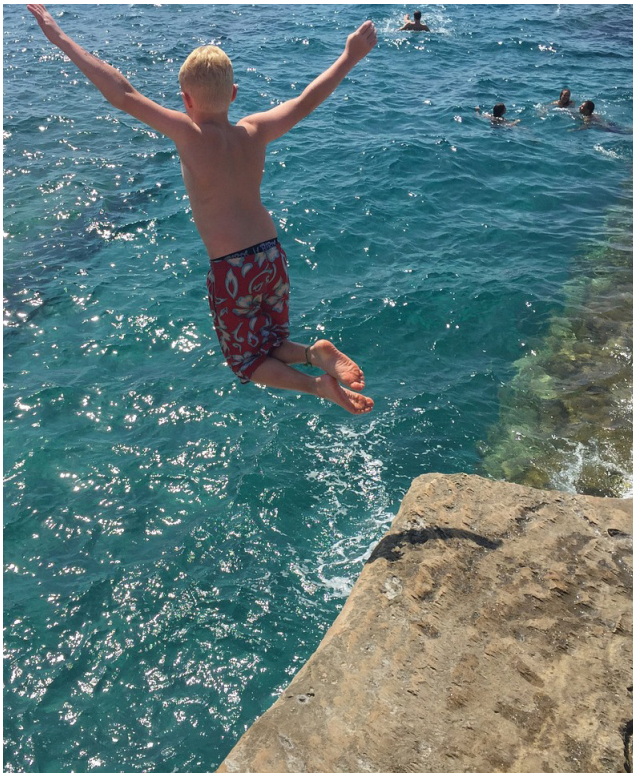
My Biggest Fear *by Ava*

Creak! I was jumping onto the swingset at recess. I started to swing back and forth. I was chatting with my friends Gianna and Chloe. I started to swing high. The lunch aide blew the whistle, meaning that it was time to go in.

My friends started to yell, "Jump, jump, jump, jump!" So, I went too high and jumped. I felt the gravity pulling down on me, and suddenly I was on the mulch with my arm bent backwards. I cried and cried and cried. The lunch aide sent me into the nurse's office. My dad brought me into the car while my mom had a worried look on her face.

They drove me to RWJ Hospital and they put me in a wheelchair. I felt so fatigued. I started to feel the horrible pain pumping through my veins. When the nurse brought me in, I was given a teddy bear and foam dough. The nurse put a shot in my "unfractured" arm. The doctor was trying to figure out what was wrong. She told us that I had a minor fracture. My mom and dad both agreed that they wanted me to go to CHOP (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia). So, they took me in an ambulance and I got to read magazines. When we arrived, my dad insisted that I was in a single room. That night, I had pizza and juice. It was delicious! That night, they put me in a personal room with a shower and a HUGE window. My parents stayed in the hospital with me for three days. I had a pink cast that I wanted my friends to sign.

A few months later I got my cast off. They used a safe saw to cut it off and Dr. Baldwin pulled out the pins from surgery. My arm was skinny and itchy and I had to keep it in a sling. So, this is my biggest fear: the swingset.



My Summer Snapshot

by Kelsey

Jump! Jump! Jump! The words pounded inside my head. I could feel the hard, muddy rock. I was afraid to go, but yet I had to. Forty-five feet in the air, I could still smell the salty, salty lake. I could see the people staring at me and I could taste the pressure of the people yelling, "jump. " I got ready, I steadied my feet, and I looked down at the water and then, whoosh!! Finally I jumped! When I came up from under the water, I could hear everyone screaming, clapping, and yelling "you did it!" When I got back to the boat, my mom gave me a towel. As I was walking to the front of the boat, everyone was patting me on the back and saying "great job" and "you did it!" I sat down and took a deep breath. Then I looked down at the water. I am so glad that I jumped!

The Person, the Broom, and the Fridge

by Mykaela

One night in 2014, I was in my house. On the wall by the stairs there was a person's shadow, and it looked like it had very skinny arms, a jacket, and a hat. I ran upstairs and saw that my mom was asleep. I grabbed a broom, went downstairs and then into the kitchen, where I started whacking the figure with the broom. I kept on whacking for about 12 seconds in the dark. I was whacking and I realized that the shadow was where my fridge was. I had been whacking the fridge the whole time, thinking it was a person!

I turned on the lights and snuck upstairs and saw that my mom was sound asleep and I said, "Whew! That was close! She could have gotten me!" I went back downstairs and got a few snacks and went back upstairs to eat.

Then in 2016 (this year), I was in my mom's bed and I heard footsteps. I grabbed another broom and went downstairs slowly to the basement, turned out all of the lights, and ran back upstairs and went to bed. Ever since then, I haven't gone downstairs at night by myself.

Clowns *by Jillian*

The red noses, the big shoes, the crazy clothes, the clown wigs, and the crazy flowers that spray water at your face ... it's all so scary. I just hate clowns, but if you want to know how this fear started, then here's the story:

One day when I was watching T.V., there was a movie while I was gliding through the shows. It was a scary clown movie and I was in fear because the clown was coming after people with a chainsaw and a knife. Now when I see a clown, I get so scared I almost pee my pants.

Last year we went to the circus and there were two clowns doing a funny show. It was still scary because even when clowns are funny, I just flash back to when I saw the scary clown movie. Lately in the news there have been people dressing up as clowns and jumping out and scaring people. The good thing is that they weren't hurting anyone, but it was still really scary because, like I said before: I HATE CLOWNS!!! I HATE CLOWNS!!! I HATE CLOWNS!!!

My Fear *by Nina*

One of my fears is being mean. I know I am a nice person, but what if I wasn't? Life would be so lonely with no friends. You need them. Without being a nice person, it would be like I was on Earth with only bad people ... or like I was living in a black and white TV show. Maybe I would pay people to be my friend. Can you imagine that? Well if I were a bully, that would be too hard to imagine. I think being nice is good for you and others. Think of it: no one is lonely and everybody is friends with everybody.

But for some reason, that's not real. I guess not everybody can be friends. You get the idea of how scary that is for me. I worry about a life with no friends. That is my fear.

The Bees *by Grace*

One day at my old school it was recess, and a boy named Nathan was on the slide.

He was in first grade and so was I. He got off the slide and got stung by a bee. He had to go to the hospital because he is allergic to bees, so he fainted when it happened. The next week he was back, but he was not the same.

A year later, I was at camp and we were playing belt tag. There was a boy named Jake. He was running by the flowers, because if you run on the side of the flowers, it is harder for other people to tag you. He kept on running next to the flowers for a long time, and then he fell flat on his face. A bunch of bees came and stung him. Jake had stingers all over his hands. It hurt him so much.

One day my cousins were playing outside in the burning heat. Isaiah was sitting on the hammock with a baseball bat in his hands. He was just laying on the hammock, because he was so hot in the sun. His brother and sister were running around, playing on the swings and going in the hot tub. Isaiah was so tired from running around all day. He was also tired because they went on a hiking trail that day, and went on the waterslide. They were jumping from the top of the stairs into the water. Isaiah's brother had to go inside, because when they were playing, Hudson, Isaiah's brother, jumped very close to Noel and kicked her in the face. When Isaiah was laying on the hammock he got very bored so he got up. When he got up, he hit the ground with his baseball bat, and hit a bee hive. All the bees came and stung him. He had seven red spots all over his body. It hurt for a long time.

Because of all my experiences of seeing friends and family getting badly stung by bees, I am now afraid of bees.

FUN ACTIVITIES

Sleeping Over at the Museum *by Candace*

Have you ever wondered what goes on at a museum at night? Well, I can tell you that it's really fun. You know why? Because I've done it!

My mom and I were driving to the Liberty Science Center to meet my Girl Scout troop. When we got there, it took a while to find them, since there were so many people. When we finally found them, the fun started.

We went to the welcoming assembly where they told us somebody stole the golden orb. They gave us a list of suspects and we went all over the museum looking for clues of the crook. We even got to check for fingerprints! You'll never believe who stole the orb … a piece of bacon named "The Baconnier." After we found the culprit, we got to have some fun!

First, we went to the touch tunnel that was pitch black. My friend Noelle talked a lot so we all made up a song and sang, "Noelle keep talking!" Next we went to an exhibit about a liquid that you're not supposed to touch! The man gave me a balloon and told me to break it into a million pieces by stepping on it. I did, but it did not work, so he dumped the balloon in the liquid and it hardened. Then when I stepped on it, it broke! We also went to the climbing maze. In there, we played tag and hide and hop. Next, we got to take a photo on a fake *Titanic*. Then we went on a fake train with TVs explaining diseases. Then we went to our sleeping spot, but the fun wasn't over.

My mom took my friend, Alyssa, and I to the snack station. I took some "Cheez- Itz" and a bottle of sweet tea. When we got back down, we started telling scary stories. Soon enough, everyone fell asleep. We had fun, mystery, and adventure. I loved it and I can't wait to go back!

My Fourth Grade Trip

by Mizan

Beep, beep, beep! Aghhhh! I woke up ... nose stuffy, eyes puffy. Yawn! I put on jeans that felt warm ... aaaahhhh. I put on a very soft shirt and sweatshirt. Just thinking about it makes me feel warm. I brushed my teeth and went downstairs. My sister was eating breakfast. I did not eat mine that day, maybe from nervousness or maybe I was not hungry. This is still a mystery to me. I got into my car, then my grandma came in and drove me to the pit. We waited and waited, then a car arrived. My homeroom teacher Mrs. Brougham got out. At this point in the story, more cars were driving in the parking lot. Then the Star Bus came. We went inside and I sat with my friend Candace. We were the closest to the T.V. We all asked the teachers to start the movie. They said that they brought movies about a tree's life. We said that we did not care and that we wanted to watch it anyway. I believed them a minute or two (or five ... okay, I admit I was kind of gullible!). Then they put the movie on and the movie was *Zootopia*. The drive was very long, and when we got there it was rainy.

We started with a game called "Broken Telephone," then the people that worked there came and we were divided by class. In my group we started with a hike where we saw bear fur and a number of newts. When we got back ,we waited for the other classes. When all the classes came, they taught us a game where there were predators, prey, and omnivores. We could eat each other and get life lines. I was a predator and

I got some life lines. Next I was an omnivore, which means something that eats plants and other animals. When we got out, I got way more life lines than before, but I was wiped out by a natural disaster. When we were done with that it was lunch. YUMMY! After that they said that we could not go canoeing because of the rain, so we had to make a play or song that taught others about a certain kind of animal. We were assigned the Red Fox. Our group got into a fight and we did not have time to rehearse! I was very scared but my friends and I made it look like we had rehearsed it, even though we did not.

After we left we got pizza, the best pizza ever! I sat with my friends Mykaela, Lucia, Annarose, Kadance, and Candace. Then we left and went to the frozen yogurt place and I was so happy. I got my favorite kind: cake batter. "YUM," I thought as I shoveled a spoonful in my mouth. Then we left for home. When we got to school, I got out of the bus and looked for my dad. He was not there. I was worried, so I tried to swallow a lump in my throat. Then I saw my dad and my tired-looking sister. I got into my car and drove home. I slept until 11:00 in the morning the day after.

CECELIA

Tarpon Tales

by Sienna

I was in the middle of the ocean sitting on the boat and then I saw it: Áine's fishing line zapped out. It flew out into the ocean. The fish Áine got bent her rod. Our fishing guide was yelling, and I was yelling too. The boat was tipping according to which side Áine's fish was swimming on. Then my dad took Áine's rod and started to pull it up. My sister's fish was a tarpon. It was orange with scales, but we could only see the side of the fish. While dad was dragging it, the fishing guide was yelling, "that's like a 60- to 70-pound tarpon." Then just like that, the line snapped and the fish swam away. My sister was smiling. When the fish was still on the line I was really scared and I was yelling like crazy. I was happy the fish was gone, but worried that the fish was still under the boat. My mom looked a bit scared and happy, and so did my brother. My younger sister was saying "that was so cool." The whole day Áine was pulling up fish left and right. I have never seen a fish so big!

The Time I Went Fishing

by Cecelia

One afternoon in the summer, I went fishing with my friend Monica. She is 12 years old. We went on a fantastic boat. It was a yacht that had a bathroom, a couch, a kitchen, and so much more. We went with Monica's mom, my mom and dad, my grandfather from China, and the people that owned the yacht. It was docked in New Jersey. While the yacht was moving, it was fast and it was slow. There were lots of barrels that said, "SLOW NO WAKE!" Then we caught six gigantic fish. The fish were blue and huge ... they were each about 19 pounds!!.

We all went back to my house, except for the people who owned the yacht. Monica and I went outside to play while mom and the others cooked the biggest fish. Grandpa cleaned the fish by putting the fish in a bucket. Next he sprayed a hose on the fish to get the blood out. By the time he was finished cleaning it, there was red water all over the fish. Then grandpa weighed the fish. Then mom cooked the fish and we had it for dinner outside on the outside dining table. What a feast!

My First Day On Stage

by Kadance

It was the big day. I was in my costume backstage. I was really excited to go on in my duckie costume, but I had to wait until it was my turn to go on stage. A few minutes before we were supposed to go on stage, the teachers gathered us up. As soon as the teachers gathered us up, they took us on stage, put us in our spots, and we were ready. Then the curtain opened, we did our dance, then I went to see my family. They were very proud of me and they said I did a very good job on my dance. Then we went home.

My Tradition with My Dad

by Reshem

As my dad and I walked in through the door, I could smell the freshly made cones. There were so many flavors like chocolate, vanilla, and mango. I couldn't choose. But I had to make a decision. So I told the worker I wanted a coffee milkshake with rainbow sprinkles in it. She did as I told her. As she was blending it in, I could practically taste it from the scent in the air. When she was done, I took the first sip and I could see colors in my imagination: blue, yellow, green, red. The sprinkles made it even tastier. I thanked my dad and we sat outside as he put his arm around me.

As my dad and I sat there, we could hear the stars talking to each other. The warmth of his arm warmed me up and made me feel safe. We always talk about friends and family, but this time, it was silent. As the air got colder I asked if we could go. He said "sure, sweetpea." We drove home talking about sports ... mostly about the Boston teams and who was winning their games. Now to this day, my coffee milkshakes with my dad are a tradition.

Movie Theater

by Issy

Every year for Thanksgiving, my family and I go to Indiana. It takes 12 hours in my mom's massive Infinity. When we get there it's usually 9 o'clock. I say hello to my cousins. Charli and Eloise never want to give me a hug. I walk out in the dark night to get my turquoise bag. Then we have grandma's delicious spaghetti drowned in tomato sauce with bread sticks. Then after dinner, we clean up the dirty plates. It takes one hour for 18 people to take showers. By that time it's 11 o'clock. I go downstairs with a big, blue fluffy sleeping bag. I see all my cousins getting ready to sleep. The next morning I yawn very loud. I almost woke up Cora, my cousin. I thought to myself I better not wake anyone up. I run up the stairs looking back three or four times. Then I hear a big roar, I just hope it wasn't my stomach. Then I see grandma in the kitchen with the coffee machine. I say in my head, "thank goodness." I say good morning to Grandma with a soft voice. I ask, "where's Grandpa?" "Going to McDonalds to get breakfast," Grandma said. I put my head on the table like I'm going to fall asleep. The table is very cold. Aunt Kim and Aunt Amber walk into the kitchen. Eloise starts to cry. "Ugg," Aunt Amber said. "I'll get her," I said with a sigh. I see my mom walking out of her bedroom. "Make her be quiet," my mom said. "I'm on it," I said in reply. I walk in, I saw her face ... it's all red. I picked her her up and carried her to the kitchen. Slam went the door! "I'm home!" Grandpa yelled, waking everyone up. I heard a loud noise like a stampede. It was just my cousins.

ISSY

We all had some pancakes, then we cleaned the dirty plates. My cousins and I rushed downstairs and got in line from smallest to tallest. "Cora!" yelled my older brother, Alex, "You're on popcorn. Porter and Spencer, you two are on blankets. Issy and Ollie, you two are on drinks, and take Avery with you. Charli and Eloise, you two are on cups. Go, go, go!" Five minutes later, "I have the pop," I yell. I take the big blue mat and set it on its side so it stands up near the little kitchen. "I need some help!" Cora yells. "I'll help," I reply one hour later. The homemade movie theater is finally finished.

My cousins and I had so much fun. I worked in the little kitchen. We watched all of the *Goose Bump* episodes ... it took seven hours. It takes so long to clean up the movie theater. I can't wait to do it again this year.

PETS

My Dog Sarah

by Selina

I was so excited! I was getting a dog. It was a Golden Retriever from my mom's friend's big pet shop! We drove there and my mom said, "We can pick one pet. You will pick one, and your brother will see if he wants it." I wanted a small dog, but they were all big dogs. They all looked cute. I thought and thought and decided we wanted the Golden Retriever. We talked to my mom and we got her! She was very cute and we named her Sarah.

We played together, went to parks together, ate together, we did everything together, but then I had to leave her to come to America. I was sad, but I had to do it! Whenever I am very mad, Sarah's bark makes me laugh, so I wouldn't leave home until she barked. My mom said, "Honey, we have to go now," so I went on the plane and flew all the way here and started my life here at Stuart. Even though we are so far apart, she will always be my dog and I will never forget her.

Kidney Failure

by Riley

My five-year-old dog has kidney failure. His name is Danny Boy. He is the sweetest, most loveable dog ever! The day my family found out my dog has kidney failure, we were just silent. I came to school the next day crying my eyes out.

My mom said Danny might die soon. Writing this is so hard, because I am trying not to cry. My favorite memory with Danny is having him sleep next to me in my bed. I love playing tug of war with him. Danny is so sweet!! He has never bitten any kid, but once he bit the plumber! It was really funny!

Danny is doing pretty well now. The vet said when he dies, bring him to the vet, but my mom said no. When Danny dies, she will bury him in my backyard so he will always be near us.

Tipper *by Margaux*

Two years ago we had a dog; her name was Tipper. But Tipper was an old dog ... a very old dog.

One day Tipper stopped eating and drinking, so we took her to the vet. It turns out she was in pain because she was a little too old. So we had to put her down. My sister Stella and I cried for a long time. I still have a picture of Tipper and on top of it is a stuffed animal of my other dog Martha. That's when we got Sadie ... a different dog ... but that`s a different story.

THIS IS THE END OF A SAD STORY AND THIS IS HOW THE DOGS GOT THEIR NAMES: Tipper got her name from when she was younger. she would tip everything over. Sadie got her name from the Beatles song *Sexy Sadie*. Martha got her name from the Beatles song *Martha My Dear.* Sadie was named after an evil song, Martha was named after a sweet song, and Tipper was named after an evil deed.

MARGAUX

Getting My Dog

by Charlotte

In the morning my brother, mom, and dad were having breakfast. I got up and I had breakfast, then we got in the car and drove somewhere. My dad said we were going somewhere special. We got there and we saw lots of dogs. They were so cute. We went up to a black dog and my dad said, "This is your dog. " It was little and I asked the person who owned the dog before us if I would get to keep the dog forever. The person said "yes. " I said "yay" and I sat on the floor, then the dog started licking me. The dog was a girl, so when we got in the car I named her Lovey. My brother did not know she was a girl so he called her Max. I said "No, that's a girl." We drove to the pet store to get some things, then we walked on the path by the Delaware River. But there was a problem. We did not get a dog bed, so we had to let the dog sleep on a bean bag!

SCHOOL

My First Year of Preschool!!!

by Amelie

AMALIE

I don't quite remember the first day of school after all the years I have been in school. But I might remember some parts. The first memory I had in mind was one boy ... I had no idea what he was doing ... who went to his cubby and got his extra clothes box. He took out his extra underwear and put it on his head. It was so, so, so, so, so funny because he couldn't get the underwear off! I loved preschool because we could also have snack whenever we possibly wanted. Wait ... I'm going way too far. On the first day of school I was scared, but when I saw the smile on my teacher's face I said to myself, "This is going to be the best year of my life" and it sure was! Hold on, this is not the end. I looked outside and I saw the playground and guess what, it was so big, it was like three playgrounds put together. And then I said to myself again "this is going to be literally the best year of my life. " As you can hear, that was one good thing that happened in preschool. Another memory is about my mom, she technically worked at the school. She was given the name the school clown because she was in charge of all the field trips, she helped with the auction, and some times she helped with the teaching. I really enjoyed that my sister Sienna's classroom was right across from my classroom. One day I was feeling sad because I missed my mom. I started crying and the teachers said I could go to Siennas' classroom. I did and it was so fun because we got to do a Volcano Explosion!!! Preschool was the best! !!!!

ANA CRISTINA

How to Scare Mrs. McGovern

by Madeline

In second grade I learned how to scare my teacher. One way is to bring a hermit crab to school. Once I brought my hermit crab, Hermuges, to school. Mrs. McGovern was getting my homework from my cubby. (I never bring my homework to school and Mrs. McGovern was getting my homework folder.) So she looked up and saw Hermuges, and looked up and screamed and jumped 10 feet back. It was funny! (P. S. Mrs. McGovern is a Scardy Cat!) Another day, I brought my guinea pigs, Oreo and S'mores, to school. We were at Friday Fun Day and we made a maze kind of a house out of math manipulatives. Than Oreo and S'mores came to the classroom. They are so cute and I love them. When they came, Mrs. McGovern was scared. We sat in a circle and held Oreo and S'mores. Mrs. McGovern didn't hold them because she was frightened.

The First Day Of School

by Ana Cristina

On the first day of school, I could barely speak English because I moved from Venezuela to the United States! When I got to Stuart, it was a green tall building. It was hard to find my way to my Kindergarten classroom, and when I did, I was late ! Everybody looked at me oddly while I was sitting down on the green fuzzy rug. It was gouter and Leah was playing on the green hard bars next to me, and she asked me if I wanted to play with her. I said, "yes" and that's how I made my first friend. When gouter was over, I noticed that there were two classes: Ms. Echternacht's and Mrs. O'Shea's class. I ended up in Mrs O'Shea's class, and she made my first year at school the best year ever!

CATHERINE

How I Learned to Read

by Catherine

Near the end of the school year this year, I picked out a purple cheer chapter book. I read the first page in the cheer book. I started to read more of the book. I asked my mom if I could bring it to school so I could read it at "mindful morning" and at library. Once I finished it, I read *Ivy and Bean*. I started to read other chapter books. When the summer started, my mom said how about you read ten chapter books? If I do read ten chapter books, can I get to go to Build-a-Bear? I read and read and read until I read ten chapter books. I read one more book so I could get an extra thing. I got pajamas for me and my bear and my bear got a robe. When I got home, I wanted to put on my pajamas, but I couldn't because we had to do something. After dinner, I put on my pajamas and went to sleep. ZZZZZzzzzz.

On My First Day: Preschool 3

by Isabella

On my first day of preschool 3, I had no idea where I was going because it was my first year at GNA (Gray Nun Academy). The color of my school was brick red. My friends were so nice and my teachers were kind. My teachers help me with my words. Preschool 3 was super fun. It was play all day: math, snack, art, gym, and music. I don't remember any other fun things, but my favorite was rest time. We rested 10 to 20 minutes. After rest time, we got apple juice and cookies. They tasted amazing! Each day we got something different. Then it was time to go home. But now I'm in third grade and things are different. No rest time, no extra recesses, and no two playgrounds that you can play on at the same time! But the good part is we get homework and homework is fun!

ISABELLA

SYDNEY W.

When I got to Stuart

by Mira

When I got to Stuart last year I was scared. I was also down that I left my old school and all my friends. But soon I made a lot of friends. All of my friends were nice to me. But sometimes I had problems with them. I love Gouter. I like playing with my friends. I hear the birds when we go outside. All of my friends helped me when I was sad. Having a kind teacher and nice friends made me feel good. I loved learning with my classmates. I missed my friends from my old school. But I was glad I made new friends. When I got home, I said to my mom, "I love school." Every Friday we have Friday Fun Day. Friday Fun Day is when we get to have candy and play games on Friday. I tasted the sweet candy during Friday Fun Day. I loved the Halloween concert. Everyone looked great in their costumes. I loved all of my friends' costumes. One of my friends was a gargoyle. Her costume was very fluffy. After the year went by, I knew all of my friends perfectly!!

On My First Day of School

by Sydney W.

On my first day of kindergarten at Stuart, I did not know anyone. Then I noticed a girl in the classroom and she said, "hi." She asked me what my name was I said, "Sydney." I asked her what her name was she said, "Reagan." And after, we started talking and we liked a lot of the same stuff, then the kindergarten went outside. Reagan and I started playing on the playground. Reagan and I were going down the slide.

We have been best friends ever since. But we do not get put in the same class any more. We would talk too much. We were in the same class for two years: Kindergarten and first grade, and the other two years we were not in the same class, so yep, I have been at Stuart four years.

SELF & FAMILY

The Baby *by Reagan*

One day after camp, I heard my big sister Ashley was going to have a baby girl! I was excited! My sister did not tell anyone her name. She didn't even tell her dad the name.

Then one day in September, she had Grace Elizabeth Boman! My dad went to see her in the hospital. I too young to go. So he said one day I can go too, but I had to miss the fashion show at camp. I was a little sad but I knew it will be better if I went to see Grace. So I went to see Grace. She was so elegant because of her sparkling eyes. After we went for ice cream. I got cookie dough. It was creamy as milk. After, we went home and ate dinner, then went to bed. I was so happy I got to see my sister.

REAGAN

ANNA B.

My Cousin's Wedding

by Anna B.

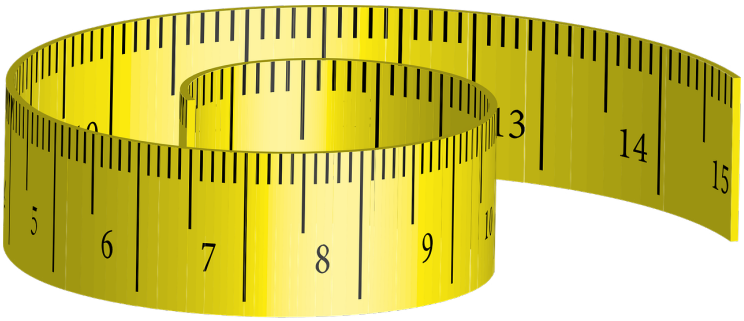
In the begnning of the sultry summer days, once school was over, my cousin Cristina was getting married to a man named Carten. Once I got to know him, I liked him. Alice, my sister, and a four-year-old girl I didn't know, and I were the flower girls. We all were shy. After our practice we were like best friends. That night we had rehearsal dinner. We sat together, we talked and we had Texas food. There were chips with salsa and guacamole. The next day, it was the big day. We got our beautiful puffy white dresses with lace straps on, then put on flower crowns. We held our white baskets with petals. Finally, it was show time. We walked down the aisle, threw the petals, sat down, and watched the rest of the wedding. Then it was time for dinner. While we waited for them to set up, every one talked outside. Me, Alice and—oh, I forgot, the four-year-old girl's name is Ileona—we played outside. Then it was dinner time. There was a delicious buffet and there was a table filled with candy. After we ate dinner, we had candy and cake. After everyone was done it was time: DANCE PARTY!!!!!! I danced the whole night. I danced with Ileana, Ramey, Brook, Michel, Deven, Christana, Carten and Amda and much, much more. It was about 10:30 so I had to go to the hotel. The next day was the wedding brunch. It was also a gift shop: me, Alice and Ileana were trading chips. We had another cake with Minnie Mouse and Mickey Mouse because Carten works at Disney World. He has a free pass every day with anyone, even if he wants to see all the Disney characters.

The Day a Grasshopper Got Into My House

by Sophie

One Sunday afternoon when I came home from Chinese school, I put my Chinese paintings on the kitchen counter. A while later, while I was eating supper, my mom shrieked. A bright green grasshopper was sitting on top of my painting! She thought the dragonfly on my painting came alive, but that would be weird, because I drew dragonflies, not grasshoppers. I giggled while I watched my mom struggle to get the grasshopper into a cup. Finally, she gave up and put him on the plants. He stayed there the whole time, even when I was playing violin! I thought he was going to jump off and land on my violin, and that is not gonna have a happy ending, but he stayed where he was. Me and my mom wondered how he could have got in the house. I said that he might've came in from the chimney. My mom thought that the grasshopper came in from the door. I think she's wrong, because grasshoppers don't know how to knock, so that would totally be impossible. Even when I slept, I thought about my new pet grasshopper. That day, I learned that having a pet can be really fun and annoying ... also to never leave your door open for too long in case you want a zoo of grasshoppers and other bugs inside your house.

SOPHE



The Height of My Hardship

by Lily

A challenge that I have to overcome is being too tall. I am 5 feet and 3 inches tall. This summer I had to buy new swimsuits because I had grown out of them, even though I had only gotten them last year. This year we bought nice new clothes for the new year, but some of the ones that I really liked we had to send back. They were too small, but they were the biggest size. This Halloween the same thing happened. We had to get a different Warrior Girl costume because it was the biggest size, but it was too small. At school on Halloween, the zipper on my new Warrior Girl costume broke because I made too drastic of a movement. Soon I'm going to have to wear adult size clothes. I like being tall, but not too tall. It makes me even more sad that I'm still growing. Everybody says I'll realize that it's great to be tall in the future, but I don't understand that yet. I know that people will have their growth spurts, but right now I have my reasons to be sad. I used to be as tall as everyone else. Now I just feel like I'm not normal. I'm trying to live life normally, but being tall is getting in the way. Who cares if I can reach the top shelf! I wish I was just back to 4 feet and 11 and a half inches.

About Me

by Sydney A.

I have two houses: my mom's and dad's. They are cool because one is wavy like slanted steps. The other one is white like the White House with bricks. I also have a brother Kendall. He goes to Princeton Academy. He taps me multiple times and bothers me a lot in the car after school. I get him back every time. I also have something that means so much to me: it is a sparkly necklace that's silver with a ballerina on it. I got it for my birthday and I love it.

When I go to my dad's house, we sometimes play a game called 3-2-1. What you do in the game is you get a ball. Then you throw the ball. You and your sibling or friend will say 3-2-1. Then you go and other people go and tackle you and pull on your shirt. Who ever gets the ball first is the winner.

At my mom's house, Kendall and I like to rollerblade around the table and climb on chairs.

My mom lets us play on our electronics before dinner.

I love living in my two houses.

VICTORIA

My Chores are Fun!

by Victoria

I help my Mom bring up the laundry. I make my bed. When I'm done eating, I put my bowl by the sink so that helps Marguerite, my sister, clean the bowl faster. I clean the basement. I clean my room. I clean my closet. Sometimes I make my Mom's bed for fun! I clean the crayons in my living room, I clean up my crayon kit in the living room, too. I have an Elsa and Anna kit. My chores are done, now let's have some fun!

SPORTS

My First 5K Ever

by Tori

My first 5K was last year when I started my running career. It was at Stuart and I ran with Sienna. I was really nervous, and when I say that ... I mean really nervous. I got there early so I looked for my Girls on the Run group and first I saw Mrs. Ravling who was one of my coaches. After I found Sienna, we went to the starting line and started the race! For most of the race, we stuck together, but we split up because I stopped for water but Sienna didn't. On the way back, I got a side stitch but I still didn't walk. When I came in, it turned out that I ran it in 30 minutes and 29 seconds. It felt so good I couldn't believe it. I even came in before all of my coaches. Sienna came in about one minute before me. I think that was one of my best 5Ks I have ever run. My best 5K, I came in at 27 minutes. I was really proud and so was my mom. I had refreshments and then I left really happy and proud of myself!!

My Summer Snapshot

by Isabelle

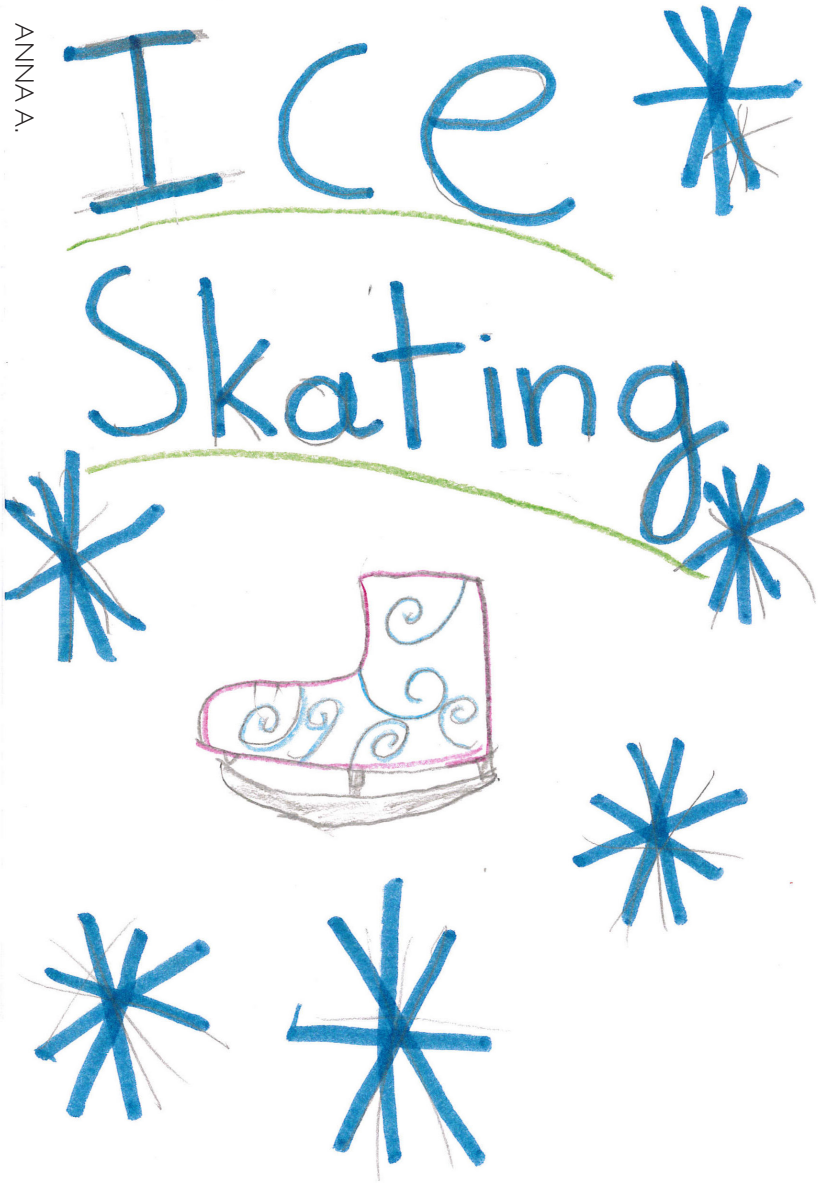
My favorite part of summer was ice skating. It felt a little bit weird to be cold in the summer time. I went to Princeton Day School for lessons. I basically went there for six weeks of ice skating camp. There were some nice teachers. There was Claire, Allison, Marian, Mindy, Gabby, and one more person. Skating was hard at first because you're on ice on tiny little metal pieces. It finally got easier and I learned how to skate on one foot.

Ice Skating

by Anna A.

One day I went to an ice skating rink with my parents in New Jersey where they teach kids how to ice skate. I was only three years old when I went to this ice skating rink. Once I got my gear, I went in to the rink. A cold chilly air blew in my face and I was cold. I had not brought gloves, so my fingers were freezing, but I was so excited I just ignored the cold that I just went right on the wet ice rink. Once I got on the rink, I wobbled and fell. I did that over and over again, so my parents called a girl to come to help me skate. When we were waiting for her to come I suddenly heard someone's ice skates coming toward me and it was the girl who was going to help me. I was finally going to learn how to ice skate, but all my hopes went down because when she was only a foot away from me I fell, and she ice skated right over my finger. My dad ran to get bandaids and my mom stayed to cheer me up. I stopped crying, but it hurt a lot. My finger was red. My dad came back with a lady, and guess who she was? She was the lady who had brought me into the world ... she was the women who had help my mom have birth. Once she bandaged my finger, we went home and I went to my bed and took a little nap. Once I woke up, I ate and my mom told me that I was never able to take off my gloves on the rink. My mom still doesn't let me take off my gloves, but I am good at ice skating.

ANNA A.



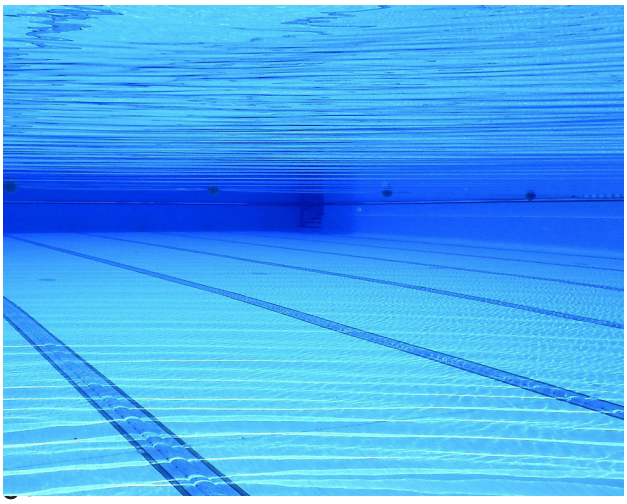
Skiing In Vermont

by Emily

It was a cold and stormy day crossing New Jersey to Vermont, driving in a car. When we got there we headed straight to the lobby because we didn't have the right gear for such cold weather at that time. That's why when we got to the room, we unpacked everything that would be good for layers, then went to dinner.

The next day we woke up, put on layers of heavy snow gear with skiing pants, went to get our skis, then started skiing. One of the ski slopes I went on had a thing that you stand on with your skis and it takes you to the top of the mountain. It was called the Caterpillar and it took me really high. When I went down the mountain, it felt like it was pretty far down. I saw a girl going down the slope and instead of stopping she hugged her dad like he was her stop. So I went back on the Caterpillar and when I got up the mountain I tried to do what she did. It did NOT turn out well, so when we got back to the hotel I felt like a garbage truck was filled with snow and got dumped on me!

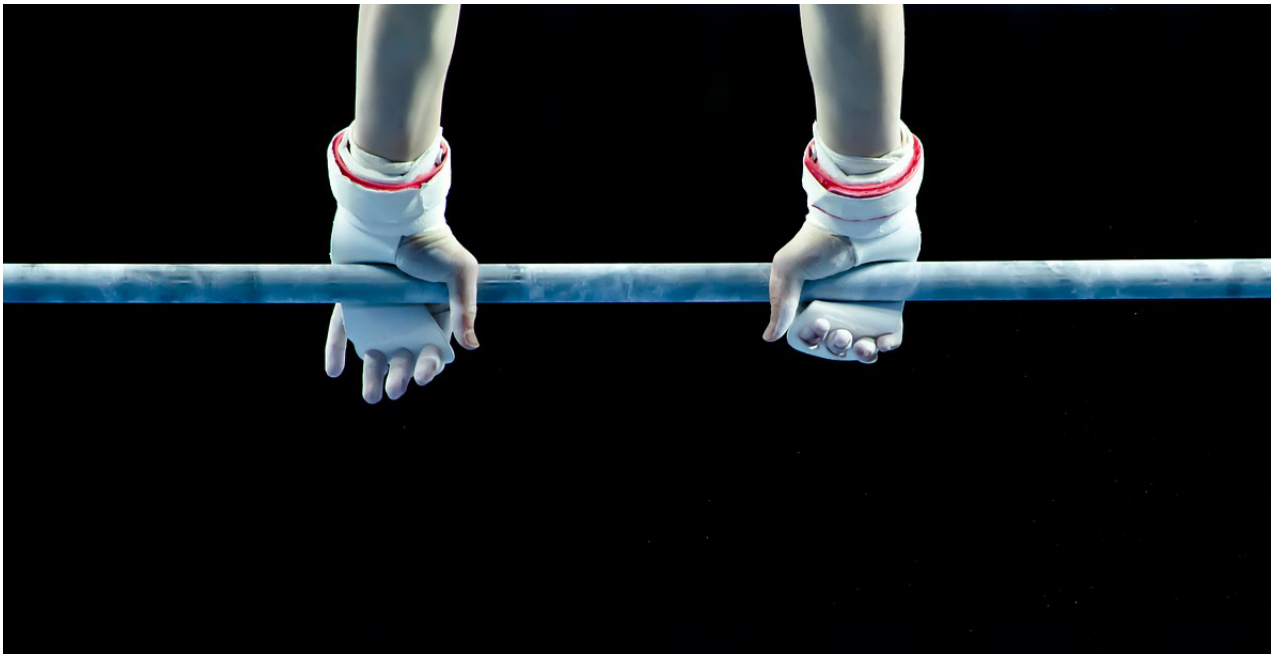
Even though it felt that COLD, I still want to go back again. For my first time skiing, it was a huge adventure.



Swimming

by Sahara

On Saturday, October 15, 2016, I went to Isabella and Victoria's birthday party. It was so fun! It was in a big place called Newtown Sports Center. It was in Newtown, Pennsylvania. We went swimming inside. It was fun because there was a obstacle course on the water. My friends Anna Androulakis and Anna Burke were there. We also had cheesy pizza and yummy cake. The party was awesome!



The Front Tucks

by Annarose

For almost two years, I was scared of doing front tucks at gymnastics. One day while doing one into a pit, I landed wrong and my kneecap slammed into my nose. That bloody nose made me scared. When I did a front tuck, I would put my hands on the ground and fall on my back or stomach. Sometimes I had to do one on the floor and I fell on my face. I used to also jump on the edge of the floor because I was fearful of doing the front tuck. I would sometimes do a flying squirrel thing instead of a front tuck. I always had a tangle in my stomach and wanted to go at the end of the line. I was scared of doing a front layout too because it was the same thing but straight. I still think of my fear of doing a front tuck sometimes, but I don't jump on the edge of the floor anymore. I would sometimes forget to jump, but now none of that happens anymore. I kept on practicing and practicing until I was better.

Don't Fall

by Carolina

In Spain I went paddle boarding in a pool and we played a game. The game we played was a number game. Each number would mean you do something different on the paddleboard. You would do it with a partner or two on it. I sometimes did it with my cousin Sofia. Also, I did it with other people too. Number two was jump off and number three was stand up. You could get out by not doing the right number or if you fell off. Sometimes when lots of people were out, they would say lots of numbers and you would have to do all of them. You got out if you were the last one to finish the numbers. When you were out, you would have to wait until the next round. I had lots of fun.

SUMMER CAMP

My Challenge I've Overcome! *by Nyla*

My challenge I've overcome all started at sleepover camp. We had to sign up for activities like crafts, rock climbing (if your mom signed you up before camp), and horseback riding lessons. You could only sign up for three periods. I signed up for crafts, swimming in the pool, and rock climbing. At rock climbing I was scared because it was really high up, but I still thought that I could do it. I did the first one and it was easy. I couldn't really reach the bell, but I finally managed to ring it. The second one was fine, and before the last one I had a feeling that this one was going to be hard and it was. I followed all the directions and took a deep breath. I struggled to the top but only got halfway there. I was scared to go down so somebody had to come and get me. I tried the next day and was still scared but ... I made it! I was so happy that I was successful at rock climbing!

Sleepover Camp *by Sasha*

I went to New Hampshire for sleepover camp for one week! It was so fun. We did this thing where you could choose your activities for the week and I chose rock climbing, kayaking, yoga, friendship bracelet making, dream catcher making, and archery.

I also liked dinner and breakfast. I liked dinner because during it, we had a sing-off. How it worked was one cabin would stand up and they would challenge another cabin to sing a song. All the cabins challenged us, so we would do the same song over and over and over again. It was so fun!

I liked breakfast because they had the best pancakes ever. Also they would give us very good oatmeal (way better than my mom's). Oh my gosh, I forgot to tell you that my counselor was in the first One Direction but when he quit, Zayn came in and they became famous, then Zayn quit.

On the third day, we want on a hike to the highest mountain on camp grounds. We were so excited, but before we left we had to pack our lunch. I had a sandwich, an apple, and water…. basically everybody had the same thing. We left and on the way up we sang the same song over and over again. It was so much fun. When we got to the top we saw a really pretty sight and we could see the lake and all the farmland. On the top we ate Oreos and our lunch, then we went back down. It was a lot faster on the way down. We got to our cabin around 2:30.

On the fourth day of camp, early in the morning, we had Gogetters (when you choose an activity like swimming, running, or jazz to do before breakfast). I chose running! For running, you have to do three laps around the whole camp!!!

In the middle of the day we had to clean our cabins. It took over 30 minutes. Then I had archery. There were seven people there, five boys and two girls, and I was one of those girls. Apparently I'm really good at archery, even better than the boys. The way back to my cabin was very long but my friend Mika, who was in the same cabin as me, was there to walk all the way back to our cabin. She was coming from kayaking. She told me that she fell out of her kayak two times, which explains why she was soaking.

The last day my activity was rock climbing. I almost got lost on the way there but then I found the path. I was nervous at first but in the middle it was exciting because I did the hardest one and I was one of the five people that actually did it. After that we did activities as a cabin. It was so fun. At the last activity, I lost my tooth! I was so happy. Then my counselor told us that we were going to watch the *Hannah Montana* movie. Even though I watched that movie before, it was fun to watch with my cabin mates. We watched the movie with another cabin a year older than us. I could not sleep that night.

The next morning everybody took a shower because it was very hot. For breakfast we had pancakes, which were so good. I told my mom that next year I am going for two weeks!

The Sleepaway Camp Adventure *by Tess*

The third day I was so excited. In the morning after breakfast there were activities. I was happy because I had canoeing, then there was a ten-minute break until soccer, and I headed straight to woodworking. At woodworking, we were painting what we had made before. Luckily, next we were having cabin down time. I made special friendship bracelets. Also, we had a big game called capture the flag at the end of the day. I really didn't understand the game so our counselor pulled Sasha and me over to tell us the directions better. But still it wasn't the best game ever.

Finally, I thought the day was over. We were heading on over to our cabins our when our counselor told us that we were going to watch a movie, *Hannah Montana*. Some people were screaming because they were excited, some were whining because they already watched it or because it was just weird for them. I was excited about it. We went to our cabin and we did lots of stuff to get ready. We brushed our teeth, put on our pajamas, and took showers. I was so excited. After I did all that, I went back to my cabin to get my sleeping bag.

I got my sleeping bag and started heading up to where we were watching the movie. Surprisingly Tri-pi was there, another cabin. The TV screen wasn't working and some people wanted to get some food. My sister Sasha, Mika (a friend in my cabin), and I all went to the dining room to get apples, which we were allowed to do. Only a couple friends in my cabin asked for some, but when we came back with the apples more people wanted them. Nine from my cabin and ten in the other, so we got more apples and came back with overflowing arms.

Then finally, the counselors came with a new screen. The movie was so good, and guess what? No one talked! It was 10:45 PM when we had to go back to our cabins. When we arrived we saw that they were moth-invaded because my counselors left the lights on since it would be dark when we came back. Since moths are attracted to the light, there were so many. All of us went right on up to our bunk beds. I think I went straight to bed.

Summer camp was one of my greatest adventures. Did you know that this year I'm going again for two weeks? I hope this time it will be even better.

TRAVEL

My Greatest Adventure *by Lilly*

One morning in Santa Fe we decided to visit the cliff dwellings, where the Pueblos used to live a very long time ago. It was a long car ride to the Bandelier National Park, and from there we would take a bus to the cliff where the dwellings were. The bus ride was fun and scary, because the bus rocked and the road was on the side of a cliff so I felt like I was going to fall off the cliff. When we finally got to the cliff dwelling site I was very excited and happy.

On the path to the cliff we learned about underground rooms called kivas. They have a hole in the ceiling where a ladder was put to climb in and out of the room. Kivas were used for meeting rooms and houses. We also saw the ruins of a huge structure where people lived and met and on the lowest floor people lived in kivas. It was huge when the Pueblos were alive. When we finally got to the cliff I saw how high the cliffs went up. I muttered "wow" under my breath.

When we got to the first dwelling, I climbed up the ladder that was rested on the big hole on the cliff where you climb through. Once you walked far into the dwelling you could see drawings all over the walls. We saw a lot of drawings and when we got back to the hole, we climbed out. On our way to the next dwelling we saw three rocks that were lined up in biggest to smallest order. It was very cool that something that nature created could look so neat.

After we saw all the cliff dwellings we went to go see the Longhouse. It was about three times the size of the cliff dwellings and it had even more drawings on the walls. It had pictures of animals that people hunt. This trip was my greatest adventure!

My Greatest Adventure

by Orlagh

ORLAGH

I woke up early in the morning ready to go. My dad said I had to be over the age of eight to go, but I reminded him that I turned nine five months ago. I begged and pleaded, and finally he told me I could go. I got changed and we went down for breakfast. We ate so much, it made Thanksgiving look like a snack.

An hour later, we went to the hall of the hotel and then outside, where we saw a beautiful view. We went past the Hudson River and toward the rocks. The previous day we had a guide take us on a trail, and we learned to have four points of contact almost every time we moved. Finally, we got to the rocks (or cave). We had to move through the cave like mountain goats or else we would fall. On one part we acted like jumping spiders, on another, like monkeys. And all through that time, we knew there was no going back.

Finally, we made to the end, but it wasn't over. The last obstacle was climbing a huge crevice. "We are NOT going up that," said my dad. "Actually, we are," said Aisling.

Luckily, it wasn't jumping from rock to rock. Instead, there was a ladder going straight up. Once there was a ledge that had a beautiful view, better than the other one we saw before. We took a lot of pictures.

We climbed more ladders and we came to a tight wedge. There was a rock wedged in the walls. That's how tight it was. We had no idea of what to do. I crouched under it and crawled to the other side. Nothing was there. We had almost given up hope when Aisling said, "Let's climb it!"

I was the first one up. It was like the view on the ledge, except we saw further.

It was amazing. When Aisling came up all she could say was, "wow." We looked back and saw that dad was stuck. It was too tight. Aisling and I pulled him out. It wasn't easy. We took so many pictures, it probably took up half the storage in my dad's phone.

That was the best adventure I can remember, and that's saying something.

(If you want to go to this place, please visit Mohonk Mountain House for details.)

The Beautiful Pocono Mountains

by Loukya

One Saturday, I went to the beautiful Pocono Mountains. I could hear the birds chirping. It smelled like nature. The drive was one hour and a half. It was pretty long. But when we got there it was amazing. The food there was very delicious. When we arrived at the house we rented, I felt like I was at home. After that, I went to sleep with my sister. In the morning, I had a donut and some hash browns. Then we went to the animals in the back. The goats were adorable. They were on their hind legs! Then, after we went ziplining and tree climbing. Then we went to our friends' house. We played spy. It was so much fun. My mom said, "good night." And I said, "good night" too.

Then me and my sister drifted off to sleep, through the dark peaceful night. It was the best trip I ever had.

My Trip to the San Diego Zoo

by Milla

When I went to the San Diego Zoo I had the time of my life! I saw lions, cheetahs, rhinos, and more. We (Logan, Mom, Dad, and I) went and saw all sorts of animals. First, we looked for the big cats, but ended up at the birds by mistake! I saw toucans, quail, parakeets, and a weird bird with a mohawk. There might have even been some monkeys! I don't know why. Next I went to the big cats, and saw tigers, leopards, and a white leopard! On another trail, I saw pandas, and bears too! Then we went to see cheetahs and elephants and flamingos. One flamingo was so close! Then I saw koalas. They were adorable! After that, I got a souvenir, went on a tour bus around the zoo, went on a gondola and left. I had so much fun! One of my favorite parts was seeing the cats. They are my favorite type of animal, so seeing them made me very happy.

CLAIRE

A Trip to Acadia

by Claire

Over the super duper long summer, I went to Acadia, Maine. We stayed there for three days. Me and my sister climbed a big mountain in a national park with our parents. My dad made me run on a gigantic rock, so high that I got hurt. There was a boo-boo on my left hand. After I got hurt, we had to go to our inn. It was called Hampton Inn. For dinner, we had delicious salty noodles with big lobsters. The lobsters had big red claws that almost scared my sister away. The next day, me and my mom went birdwatching. We saw colorful birds that we never saw in New Jersey! I saw a nuthatch, a hummingbird, a goldfinch (you might see that in NJ), a waxwing, and a woodpecker. (you might see that in NJ, too.) My mom barely saw anything. After that, me, my mom, my dad, and my sister went to the beach. I tried to make a sandcastle but it broke. Then we had lunch. We had the same thing for lunch as dinner from yesterday. We stayed at our hotel for a super long time before we had dinner. For dinner, we went to an old Italian restaurant. We ordered delicious pepperoni pizza. The pizza looked like a pastry with pepperoni on it. Yumm!!

The next day we had to leave. What a wonderful time we spent there!!

M. I. T. **by Carolyn**

It was amazing! The walls were such a pretty yellow! The floor was such a shiny red! The floor and walls were like a smooth ocean. There were lots of benches with different shapes. Triangles, squares, and swirls everywhere. There were restaurants and shops everywhere! Clothes, toys, and magnets in shops. Subway, Starbucks, and pizza shops.

I was so happy. I was running, walking, and skipping around! I went outside and I saw so many buildings. They were square, rectangle, and they even looked like Zs. They were blue, green, and yellow.

We went back inside and got a combo pizza for dinner. Inside smelled like cheese melting in a furnace. We went to an M. I. T. shop where my sister got a shirt and I got a magnet that said things to represent M. I. T.

We went on a tour and my favorite section was the sports section. You could get a sports "license" for a fencer, pirate, and many more. Before I knew it, we were going home. I was sad to leave but happy to go back to my warm home.

In the Cayman Islands *by Alexandra*

On a Sunday, we went to the airport (we as in my Mom, my Dad, my two brothers, and I). We waited a while and finally got a plane. I was so excited because I love airplanes and I was so excited to see Maya. Maya had arrived on Saturday so we would meet her there. When we were on the plane, I of course needed gum so I could pop my ears, but my Mom had to get the pomegranate-flavored gum instead of the pink lemonade-flavored, so it was horrid! Now to the entertainment: My mom and I watched the new *Muppets Movie*. At least I think that's what we watched. I don't remember much on the airplane. Then we got off the airplane and got on a bus to go to the hotel where we were all staying.

Once we got there Maya, Matt, Sam, Joey, Aunty, and J2 were standing smiling at us waiting to start our fun. Maya's friend who lives in the Caymans was standing there, too. They had their bathing suits on, so I knew what we were going to do first. Next we got to our room and we changed into our bathing suits, put on some sunblock, and went downstairs to the warm pool where we met Maya and Natalie. I got to the pool and we started swimming.

A few times while we were swimming, Natalie grabbed Maya and kept having private conversations and I felt a little bit lonely and left out. She was only having private conversations with Maya because I was getting a lot of attention since it was my first time in the Caymans. The private conversations didn't ruin all of the fun adventures I had. We did so many fun things, like going snorkeling, which was awesome! I got to see so many cool fish and a stingray. I had a great time with my family, Maya and her family, and new friends. We only stayed there for a week, so time flew by and a week was over and we had to leave. I was super sad, but when I got home I could FaceTime Maya in the Caymans since she stayed there a bit longer and didn't come home with us.

The Canyon Trail *by Emma*

We were down to our last water bottle. Everyone was tired and thirsty, sweating in the mid-afternoon heat as we made our way down the rocky canyon trail. I grabbed a piece of rock jutting out from the wall to steady myself. The railing ended here, leaving the edge of the canyon only inches away from the edge of my foot. Six thousand feet away from the bottom I could still hear the pounding of the river below.

My mouth suddenly felt dry. I reached for the water bottle, then remembered it was gone. I plodded down the trail to catch up with my parents and my brother, Eddy. They weren't scared of the height at all. Eddy was stampeding down the trail as fast as he could, my parents close behind him.

"Come on!" they yelled, turning around and motioning for me to follow them. My brother came back up the footpath and grabbed my arm. "We'll never get to the end of this trail if you don't hurry up and move!" he muttered, tugging me down the path. I pulled away and clutched the rock wall again. My skin felt tight and itchy, like all of a sudden it was one size too small for me. I watched my brother run back down the path, carefully and slowly following him.

Before long, we were nearing the end of the trail. With tired feet and parched mouths we turned the last corner. I was thinking that we could actually survive this trip, until I saw the last obstacle.

Between us and the lookout point was a long steep road sloping at about thirty degrees. Perfect for a water slide, but not so much for careful stepping. There was no rail, and the entire path was covered in slippery dust. I stopped in my tracks. Eddy didn't even hesitate, he just barreled down the slope merrily, without any sign of fear. I considered getting down and sliding down like it was an actual slide, but that would look crazy and would hold up everyone behind me. I decided I would just have to walk. Carefully. If that was even possible.

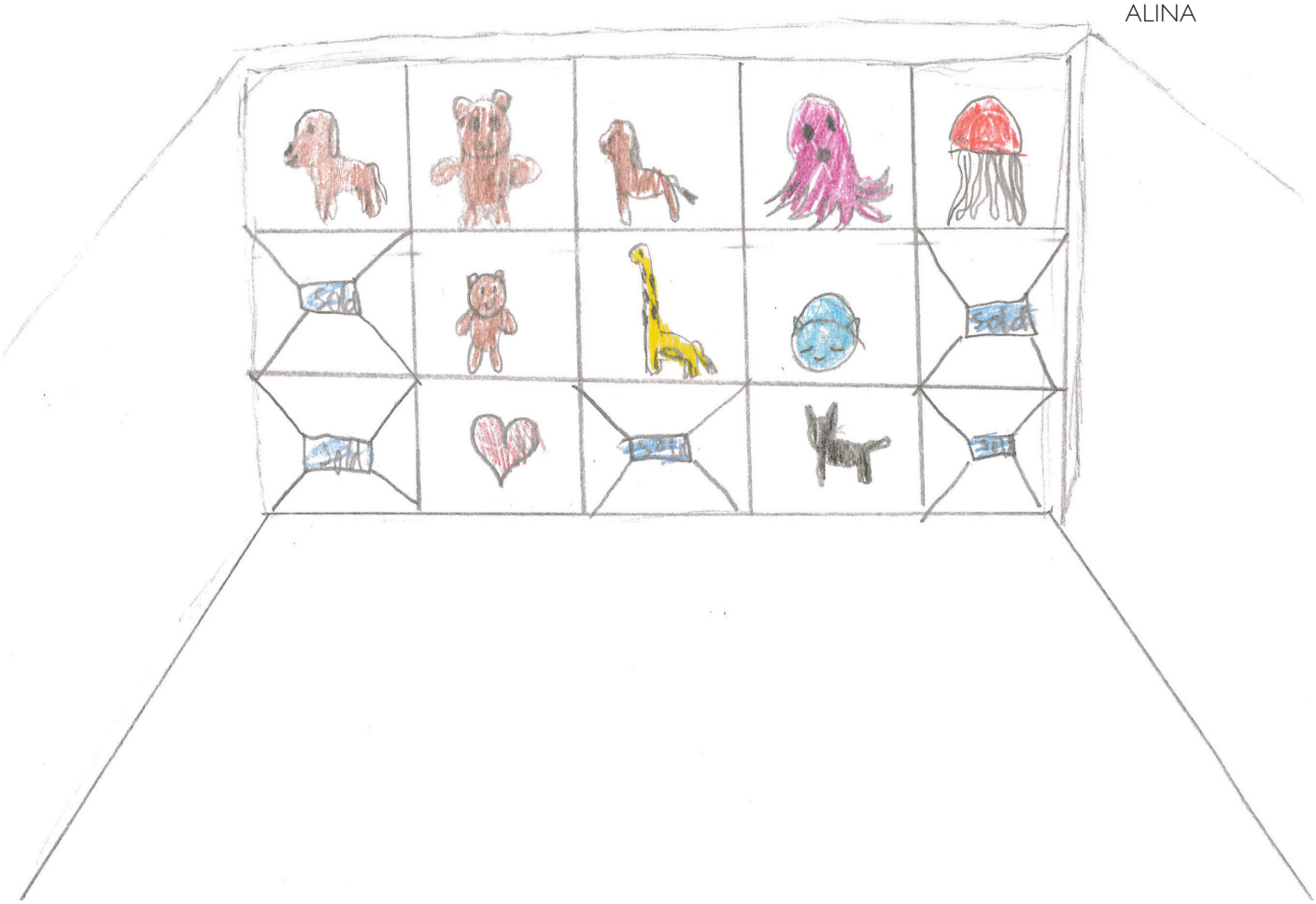
My knuckles turned pale as I gripped the rock wall and turned sideways, sliding an inch further. I slid another inch, and grabbed another piece of rock. Finally I guess my brother got tired of waiting, so he came back up the slope and yanked me down after him. I stood still, but then I realized my arm was going to be pulled out of its socket if I didn't move. I stepped forward and yelled out as I collided with Eddy and we tumbled down the slope. "Help!" My brother was laughing as we climbed into a bench on the lookout point. I was scared out of my wits and almost crying. No one said a word as we squeezed in beside our parents to see the view. I slowly opened my eyes.

The canyon was there in full glory, sunlight beaming down on the rock, trees dotting the hills like little lawn ornaments, the river rushing past, hissing and gurgling. And when I finally turned away from the view and remembered all it took to get there, the tired feet, the hot sun, the thirstiness, and the fear, I could still see in my mind's eye the ending picture that was truly worth it.

China *by Alina*

One sultry summer day I went to China to meet my dad because he works at China. We went to a MASSIVE hotel. Each room was about as big as 1½ of the third grade classroom. The bed was as big as five giant tables. The smooth white pillow was softer than a bird's blue feather.

There were two big T.V. s each T.V. was as big as ½ of a big table. The best part was that they gave free 6-inch pandas that were so fluffy, and the view was gorgeous. When I go to bed, I look out the window and its beautiful ... it's like watching fireworks in a relaxing peacful night. The bathroom was as big as ½ of a third grade classroom. The bathtub even has a T.V. in it.

After I explored the massive hotel, we went to a shop that sold hair clips. At the back were stuffed animals. My sister showed me a blue penguin that was really smooth and soft. I begged my mom to buy it. I held my breath and finally she said "okay. " I felt like I was going to turn into a rainbow. When we got back I thought that it was the best day ever.

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