

THE IMAGINE SOCIETY

DECEMBER 23, 2021



SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING *Empathy*
KIDS DECEMBER EDITION VOLUME 28!



"We are all individuals; we are all
human beings; *we are all connected together.*"
- Sylvia Mendez

Empathy

by Elle Ferretti-Gray

Empathy is a human virtue, perhaps the most important one. It allows us to understand and support each other, which is the foundation for human connection. It nourishes us, and seeing the omicron numbers, we could all use some nourishment. We could all try and show our understanding this holiday season. That's what empathy is all about, understanding the perils of others and showing them that no matter what they are going through, you're there for them. Empathy is understanding that what might be joyous to you is painful for others, and vice versa. Empathy and the subtle support of a friend is invaluable.



"Empathy" by Shelby Fenton (14)
"This is a girl huddling in blanket with
her friend who is hurt." - Shelby

...continued from page 1

These past couple years have taught me that I need people around me, I need someone to turn to. I need someone to listen to me and make me feel understood. I need someone to listen to, to share a bond of mutual love and support with. I needed someone to empathize with me. No matter what I turned to, there was a void within me, as an inanimate object can only have so much understanding, whereas a person, one who knows and loves every facade you have ever constructed and every cracked, crumbling brick beneath you that you desperately try to hide, can understand. Someone who realizes and tells you that you have been conflating a feeling of confusion with brokenness.

We offer empathy to people we don't know, to far off places we don't quite understand. Empathy is to us as music is to dance. It is our guiding light, to be able to say to someone that you don't understand their situation but you're there for them is truly divine. We look to the plights of others, and help as best we can no matter our own situations. It is how we humanize and personify things and assign meaning to them. I would like to leave you with the last two verses of Adrienne Rich's "For the Conjunction of Two Planets."

Whatever register or law,
Is drawn in digits for these two,
Venus and Jupiter keep their awe,
Wardens of brilliance, as they do
The dual circuit of the west –
The brightest planet and her guest.

Is any light so proudly thrust
From darkness on our lifter faces.
A sign of something we can trust,
Or is it that in starry places
We see the things we long to see
In fiery iconography?

I hope this snippet inspires you to look up to the sky and empathize with those near and far. The holiday season is rough for some, reach out and let a friend or family member know they've got you in their corner. Happy holidays and happy new year!!



Dear Elle, Thank **YOU** for closing out 2021 with such a touching and meaningful essay! Thank you for being such an integral part of The Imagine Newsletter!

Elle Ferretti-Gray (17) is a Junior at Avenues School. Elle is also on the Editorial Staff for The Imagine Newsletter!

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Sylvia Mendez: *Unsung Hero of Education*

by Sofia Corsico-Sánchez

Sylvia Mendez (December's Cover Quote) is a civil rights activist who played a crucial role in her parents' historic California Federal Court win. In 1944, when she was eight years old, Sylvia wanted to attend a white-only school, as Mexican schools at the time were severely underfunded. At these schools, students were taught how to knit and crochet, rather than receive a comprehensive education that could benefit their adult lives. Her parents Gonzalo and Felicitas fought not only for her right for equal education, but for the equitable education of all students of color. Many might not know that their case, **Mendez v. Westminster**, ended the desegregation of California schools in 1946 and was the precursor to the landmark **Brown v. Board of Education** Supreme Court case. Now, Sylvia shares her parent's story after a career as a pediatric nurse. In 2011, Mendez was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her advocacy for education opportunities for children, regardless of their background.

One of **Sylvia Mendez's** most famous quotes is **"We are all individuals; we are all human beings; we are all connected together and we all have the same rights, the same freedom."** In the context of education, this quote justifies equitable and unconditional education for all. However, it can go far beyond that: being educated is a basic human right. Lack of resources is currently a global issue that many have decided they have no role in. In the past few years, we have learned that everyone has a role in ensuring equitable treatment. We must amplify stories like Sylvia's to continue our fight into the future, and ensure that her and her parents' legacy lives on.



Sylvia (age 9) in 1947, just after her parents court victory!



Sylvia getting her Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011!



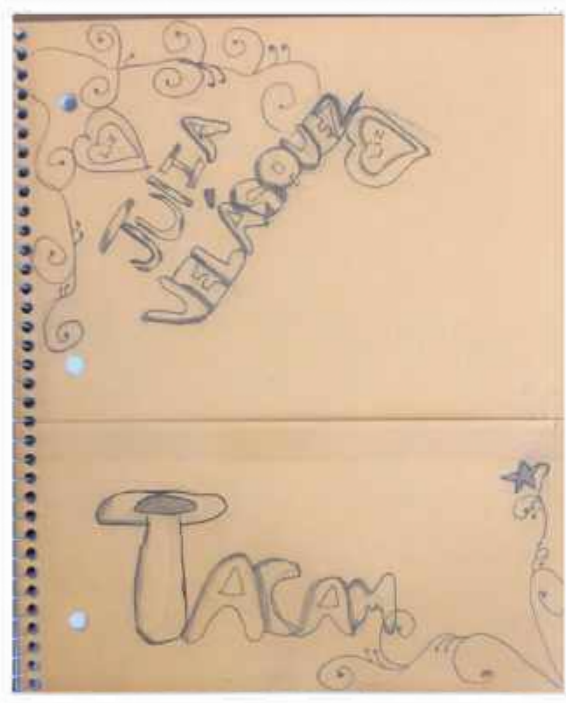
In 2021, Westminster High School dedicated their new learning pavilion to Sylvia Mendez!

Sofia Corsico-Sánchez (17) is a Senior at Notre Dame High School. Thank you Sofia for your essay!

Imagine Artwork Corner!

by Julia Elizabeth Velásquez

"Me gusta también dibujar las florea porque son muy hermosas tiene un olor muy bonito, también dibuje lo de Ana me gusta como se ve es una película muy bonito."



¡Gracias Julia por
compartir tu hermosa
obra de arte!

Julia Elizabeth Velásquez (13) is in 8th grade a at Christopher Columbus Middle School in Canoga Park, CA

Sidewalk Buddies

by Louis A. Craco III



My Grandfather reminded me the other day about a homeless man I met a few years ago, when I used to take the subway from Bergen Street to Borough Hall to see my speech therapist. This man would be sitting on a blanket on the sidewalk as Grandma and I passed by him. He held a cup in his hand of coins and dollar bills inside of it, so people might help him get something to eat. The first time I met him, I said, "Hi. My name is Louis, the same name as my father," and I shook his hand. Then he said, "Hi, Louis, my name is John." "Well, can I treat you to a cup of coffee or a bagel?" "Well sure, Louis. Thank you."

So from then on each week, when John saw me coming, he would smile and say, "Hi, Louis, my friend," and I would shake his hand and put a dollar in his cup. We were like buddies. One time when I only had enough money to buy my bagel, I said, "John, today I only have enough money for my bagel." And John said, "That's alright, my friend. I want you to have your bagel." And that is what empathy is all about. Merry Christmas, Imagine Society readers!

Louis A. Craco III
Grade 8, Cooke School
Self-advocate for Down syndrome

p.s. John, if you see this, I've switched to gluten-free bagels. O'Doughs is the best!

Thank you Louis for your profound story
about the true meaning of empathy!





Making Gingerbread Houses with our friends at GiGi's Playhouse NYC!



"I am thankful for people in my life like my friends and family. We spend time together having fun and listening to music. I love Usher." - Sable



"I am thankful for my Mom and Dad. I like to eat food with them at restaurants. I am thankful for my best friend William. We like to go to GiGi's together. Art class is my favorite." - Jonathan



"I am thankful for new opportunities and challenges in life." - Safia



Thank you GiGi's NYC for sharing your amazing gingerbread houses and holiday thankfulness with us!



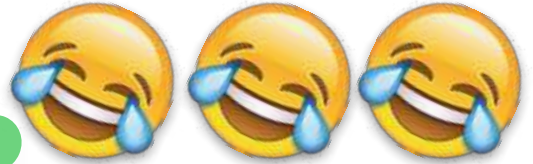
Wrapping up 2021 with a December full of compassion, empathy, and service!



The Imagine Society closed out 2021 with an extraordinary month of service, and were honored to continue to expand our community of compassionate Youth Leaders - ***we are so proud of you all!*** December services included an Advent Drive for our family shelter led by The Warriors Youth Group with contributions from the St. Ignatius Girl Scouts, and 4 NYC girls crafting homemade ornaments. We were also a part of a very special December Pantry Service at The Ascension Food Pantry led by The Spirit Squad Youth Group, joined by Imagine Youth Leaders, our new friends at Scout Troop 662 and volunteers from the NYPD Transit Department! Don't forget our 2 special Imagine Baby Showers for Baby Phoenix and Baby Nyemah at our favorite family shelter! A very special **THANK YOU** for the incredible generosity of our donors who help make these services all possible!



FUN PAGES



Edited by
Junior Member
Katie Gaffigan
(12)



Katie's
Fave
Memes
:)

Lol!



WHAT DO CALL A
BIKE TRAIL THAT
SHOWS NO
EMPATHY?



A CYCLE PATH.



WORD PLAY

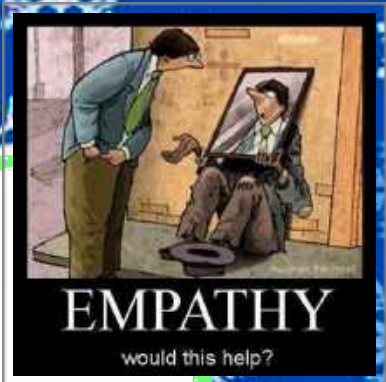
EMPATHY

Empathy
I understand and feel your pain.

Sympathy
I feel sorry you have pain.



Edited
by Junior
Member Katie
Gaffigan
(12)



EMPATHY

(n.) the ability to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives; and to use that understanding to guide our actions.

• Use the power of empathy today... You may be surprised at what you find.



Empathy Word Scramble

- NINADEDGRSNUT _____
- IOPSSONCMA _____
- IFYAFTIN _____
- PAINATCPROEI _____
- OMCOATIMNIESR _____
- NCNIIFTDIOIAEI _____
- ONRTEIOIGNC _____
- IONCUNMMO _____
- SECSIOSCUOSNN _____
- GINSHIT _____
- CIROPNTPEE _____
- EEEVNSPOSSRNIS _____
- AESANWSRE _____
- SENENPIMOORCH _____
- RNECNOC _____
- SDSUNMNFILE _____
- SGTUTHNULSFOHE _____
- TNHEGNNMEEITL _____
- ILOTNNUIT _____



ANSWER KEY

Empathy Word Scramble

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| INTUITION | LIOTNNUIT |
| ENLIGHTENMENT | TNHEGNMEEITL |
| THOUGHTFULNESS | SGTUTHNULSFOHE |
| MINDFULNESS | SDSUNMNFIE |
| CONCERN | RNECNOC |
| COMPREHENSION | SENEPNIMOORCH |
| AWARENESS | AESANWSRE |
| RESPONSIVENESS | EEEVNSPOSSRNIS |
| PERCEPTION | CIROPNTPPE |
| INSIGHT | GINSHIT |
| CONSCIOUSNESS | SECISOSCUSNN |
| COMMUNION | IONCUNMMO |
| RECOGNITION | ONRTEIOIGNC |
| IDENTIFICATION | NCNIIFTDIOAEI |
| COMMISERATION | OMCOATIMNIESR |
| APPRECIATION | PAINATCPROEI |
| AFFINITY | IFYAFTIN |
| COMPASSION | IOPSSONCMA |
| UNDERSTANDING | NINADEDGRSNU |