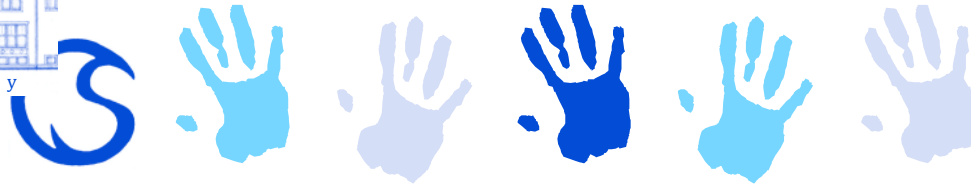




The Community
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Passages Program



Passages Press

I'm Wondering

from my child's point of view...

by Naomi Marr

I like to run, jump, and play a lot. I really like my dolls and blocks; I have so much energy sometimes I can't even sit and play; I run around in circles with Duke - my dog. He chases me. I can't talk much. I can say about 12 words, some days are better than others, but you don't have to know how to talk to know how someone is feeling. I can feel vibes. I can feel happy, sad, angry, confused and upset.

There's been a couple of times now I get my doll and put it on Mamma's lap, but she doesn't move. She just stares straight ahead, so I go back to my toy chest and grab another doll, thinking maybe Mamma doesn't like that one. I bring my second doll over and still nothing. If it doesn't work the second time, I always grab something noisy the third time... that should get Mamma's attention. Well, it never does, but I try it anyways. I don't play with my toys much any more; they're kind of boring when you play by yourself. My favorite toy is called the phone. I can almost say the name. I'm trying. This thing is cool. It makes noise and has blue lights on it. Oh, and it has Dada's picture on it, too. Mamma likes to take it away, though. She says something about some Internet. I don't know what it is, but it can't be bad because it doesn't hurt me and it doesn't get hot, either. Mamma's always

playing with it, so why can't I? I think Mamma just doesn't like to share.

There's been sometimes lately when I don't like to be around Mamma. I think she is mad at me or upset. I can't tell though, because she doesn't talk to me at all. She's very quiet. I don't hear one word come out of her mouth. If she does say something, she doesn't sound happy. Mamma will sigh a lot, and say things like... "It hurts." Mamma walks with her head down and moves really slow; sometimes it seems like we are not going to make it up the stairs when it's my naptime. I keep my distance because I don't want to hurt Mamma any more than she already is.

Me and Mamma used to play with dolls and blocks, we used to finger paint all the time and hang it on the walls, but we don't do those things any more. We don't dance or sing, or even go to the park. I go to Mamma's friend's houses. There's toys but I rarely ever see any kids. Mamma goes outside and leaves me inside; she can see me and I can see her, but I get scared because I don't know where I am and I don't know who the big people are.

Mamma, if I could talk to you, I would tell you I love you and everything will be all right. If I knew more, I would do more for you, because I can see that you are stressed; I can feel your pain. I don't know why you feel this way, but if I knew the right

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words to find that question out, I would ask you. I feel like you're mad at me, or you're just bored of me. I have many things that run through my head on what could be the matter with you, and when I think about it.... Is it my fault, Mamma? When you're home I feel like you're not here. In other words, you're not here for me. Sometimes I feel like you don't love me. Do you Mamma? Mamma, I can change if it's what you want, if it's what you need? I miss the Mamma I used to know and I will do anything to get her back.

Mamma, I love you and I need you more than anything at this time in my life. You know so much more than me. I need you to teach me the things you know; make me smart and as strong as you. I look up to you, Mamma, and I never ever want to look down to you. I will always be here Mamma. I may get on your nerves at times, but I do that when I get bored and really, it's the only way I can get your attention. Mamma, just know I am only this age once in my lifetime and I want to make it the best of times and I need you there with me laughing and smiling by my side. You're my angel and I'm your angel. Hang in there Mamma...I love you.

My Light

by Misha Taylor

Like countless other parents, my child is the light of my life. There are many things I love about my son. The fact that he says what he is feeling whenever, wherever. How he genuinely cares for others and not just himself. He isn't afraid to ask questions. He smiles, laughs and talks loud. His smile is always real, never forced. He loves to make others laugh, even if he knows it's at an inappropriate time. Treeth loves to play and is outgoing. His fears are shown, not hidden, and with a little encouragement, he will face them. He is goofy and a pleasure to watch. He can make his own choices with confidence. He loves all of his family the same. If you ask him to pick a favorite, his answer will always be, "Everyone."

One of my favorite things to do is look up at the sky at night with him. It is probably the most relaxing time we spend together. I can be corny and

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lovable to him any time, anywhere and I don't care what others may think. Even though he is five, he still wants me to hold him when he is feeling a little scared. He still kisses me on the lips and sits on my lap without any embarrassment.

A memory I hope to hold forever is - one day we found a little ladybug. Treeth named him Crispy. And like Treeth, Crispy was, in Treeth's mind, a young child. I asked Treeth if he would like to put Crispy in his bug dome for the night and let him go later. He, of course, was excited and said yes. After we had looked at him and talked about Crispy, and the excitement of having him was fading, Treeth comes out of the blue and says with a quivering lip and tears in his eyes, "Momma, I want to let Crispy go outside."

I asked, "Why?"

He replied, "Crispy misses his momma and he should be with her."

I still get teary-eyed when thinking about this. Not tears of sadness, but prideful tears. You see, Treeth wanted so bad for Crispy to stay with him, but instead of his own happiness, he put that little ladybug's well being first. I told him how sweet a heart he had and I hoped he would always keep that.

My son is special to me because he is my son and I can see myself in him. He shines a thousand times brighter than I have ever seen myself. I believe he can be and will be something strong and wise. Whatever he wants to be he will achieve. I just hope that when he grows up he has a few stories of me in his heart.

The Truth about Autism

by Ashley Mellor

Some people think of autism as the worst case scenario that can be possible for their child because of what they see on TV and how it's described sometimes. The children who have severe tantrums, throw themselves around, smack their heads against the wall and are always screaming, are the ones who are always shown as having autism. However, there are three different levels of severity of autism.

There is the extreme level, which is the level always

shown. Then there is a moderate level where the child shows some of these symptoms, and then there is a mild form of autism spectrum disorder. If worked with early in a child's development, the child may grow out of or learn to control many of the more extreme behaviors.

Some children with autism have mental retardation along with autism, some may have ADHD, as well, so their symptoms appear more extreme because they're complicated with the other problems.

Since my daughter Hailey started going to Woodfords, she has started talking more and is more sociable. She has learned colors, body parts, numbers, ABC's and all kinds of songs. They are working on potty training, too. The teachers are teaching her to deal with people, because it doesn't come naturally to a child with autism.

If they're going to show autism on TV, they should show more realistic cases of children with autism. It's important that they show that they're not all the same. I know my daughter is unique.

Good Morning Moon. Good Night Sun.

by Misha Taylor

He is the moon and I the sun. When one arrives, the other turns his back, leaving his love lonely.

Once upon a very long time ago when the sun just shined and the moon only glowed, love sprouted between the two and created a romantic moment many have participated in.



Every morning as the sun arrived, she would say, "Good morning, Moon." But he was already on his way home. The sight of him made Sun smile. This created what we know as the sunrise. When the

moon arrived at the first sign of darkness, he would

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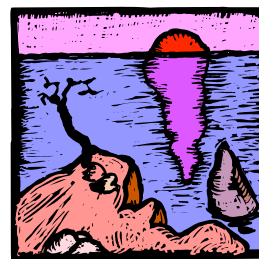
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say, "Good night Sun," as she was already on her own way home.

Sun loved Moon with all of her sunshiny heart but never knew quite how to tell him. She tried to tell him so many times how her heart would flutter and her heat would get hotter when she thought of him. Every day they had to rise and fall at given times. The clouds and rain would cover one another. All of these things got in the way. It just never seemed to be the right time. The only thing she could say was, "Good morning Moon," and she didn't even know if he had even heard her.

She thought long and hard on how to express herself...

Then it hit her. Every night as I am leaving, beautiful colors in the sky will surround me. There will be pinks, purples, yellows and blues. So no



matter how long it takes for me to gain the courage or time to tell him how special he is to me, he can just look at the colors I leave behind. And he will know that my heart shines for him.

That night as moon was arriving, he saw what she had created. He smiled and said, "Good night Sun." Beautiful shining stars appeared throughout the night sky.

And that is why the sunrise and sunset is romantic because it was made out of love for her love. When you are watching the sunrise or sunset you are sharing in the sun's beauty and affection she has for the moon. Just like momma and papa penguins. Like two birds flying through stormy weather. The sun and moon belong together.

Upcoming Workshop:

Playing with your Child

@ Peopleplace
Union St., Camden
Wednesday,
May 13th
2-4 pm



Shopping with Tamra

by Tamra Pulk

When I go shopping I know that it's not all about the name brands. Almost always you can get the same thing in an off brand or even a store brand for a much lower price. With certain things like food products you should at least try the off brand, but sometimes they will have a very different taste than the name brand products do, so you want to try them before you rule them out completely for their price. You might not like the bargain that you do get.

I have learned ways to shop more efficiently; one way is by using coupons. When you use coupons it can save you money, but in doing this you need to pay careful attention to the product you wish to buy vs. the same product in an off brand, because you can usually get the off brand product for less than you could buying the name brand *even with a coupon*.

Using unit pricing can help you figure out and realize the true or better value by figuring out the price per ounce (example for cereal). To find out how much you are really paying, use the example from <http://www.jlyne.com> below.

| Amount | Price | Equation of price /oz |
|----------------|--------|-----------------------------|
| 14 oz box | \$2.52 | $\$2.52/14 = .18$ per oz |
| 20 oz box | \$3.00 | $\$3.00/20 = .15$ per oz |
| 2lb (32oz) box | \$5.12 | $\$5.12/32 = .16$ per oz |

Now by doing this you can see that the 20 oz box for \$3.00 is the better buy at only .15 per ounce.

Some people also spend money on cosmetics or even plastic surgery to make themselves feel better. These are some of the psychological needs that shopping can fulfill for some people. Most of the big cosmetics companies try to target tweens and teens. They do that because most of these kids look up to the models on TV, the covers of magazines

and even the Internet, thinking that they are supposed to look like that. They also target girls and women that feel insecure about what they look like, saying that by wearing all this make up and using all these different hair care products they will look better and in turn will feel better about themselves.

When the Mary-Kate and Ashley cosmetic and clothing line was made the girls were still very young and that is how they got so much revenue, because it was very easy for young girls to relate to them. This line alone earned the girls 28 million dollars in 2004, according to *Forbes* that they each earned 137 million dollars in the fall of 2004 (Hopkins). Plastic surgery is a permanent option, but still an option for wanting to look better, skinnier, and prettier. In China alone, cosmetic surgery is a \$2.4 billion dollar industry and is still increasing by an astounding 20% each year! (Haworth)



With all of this increasing pressure being put on girls and women to be skinny, pretty and whatever else, it can make you feel like you do need to put on make up or use certain products to make yourself look better so you can feel good about yourself. I do like to put make up on if I'm going somewhere, but I know I don't *need* to have it on to feel okay about myself.

You can start to establish your credit by first getting small loans, like for \$1,000 to buy a computer. Then you could get a bigger one for say, a car. Also if you need one, you could get a home loan. There are good things about getting a credit card, like the fact that you can buy something without having to pay for it right then. Using credit cards responsibly helps you establish good credit so you can get car loans, home mortgage, etc. Also, there are some things that aren't so great about having credit cards. When you do have to pay it back it could be quite a bit more because of interest.

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This could add up quickly which could cause you to go into debt.

I feel like when I have to go shopping now I am definitely able to use the skills that I have learned, like unit pricing, to figure out the real “deals.” I know if I should use a coupon on a name brand product or just get it cheaper in the off brand without one. I also know that I shouldn’t buy something just because it’s cute, but only if I really need it. Also, I don’t think I would want to get a credit card anytime soon, if at all. I think I would get a debit card if I got either because it’s money I know that I already have and I wouldn’t have to worry about paying it back while the interest rate keeps adding up or changing with the state of the economy.

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How I am Going to Teach Timothy about Sexuality

by Jane Tarbox

When you hear the word sexuality what is the first thought that comes to your mind? SEX! Well that isn’t just what the word sexuality means, it has to do with a lot more than just that. Actually, sexuality plays a big role in a child’s development from birth to being an adult. I did some research on the topic of sexuality so I am going to tell you some facts and ways to help talk to your children about sexuality.

It is very important to be able to teach and talk to your child about sexuality. You want to be the one to teach them everything - from sex, unwanted pregnancies, HIV and how to be safe. You should always talk openly about sexuality. If you do this, there is more of a chance of them coming to you to talk about sexuality instead of them learning it on the streets.

Sexuality also has a part in how they feel about themselves. If their self-esteem is low they are more likely to have unwanted sex, which could easily lead to unwanted pregnancies or an HIV. They will have unwanted sex just for the attention, whether it is good or bad attention.

What should you do to prevent this? You should always praise your child, whether it is for them getting a good score on a test, cleaning their room or finishing supper. This will build their self-esteem so they won’t feel like they need attention. There is a lot to teach about sexuality; the list goes on and on, from what age to talk to them about sexuality to what to expect at what age. So now I am going to go over some of the ages and what to expect and also what you should teach your child.

Birth to eighteen months:

- When your child is born they have a sexual response
- Your child learns what love is from you and the people around them.
- Your child will learn their body parts including their private parts. They will also touch their private parts, so don’t freak out.
- Your child will learn what gender they are and what makes them different from the other sex.

Eighteen months to three years

- Your child will need a lot of attention and good people around them.
- Your child will copy everything he/she sees.
- Your child will start potty training. This will show them how to control their bodies
- Your child will probably start touching their private parts a lot more, so really try not to freak out.

Three to Four years

- Your child will understand public and private places
- You will notice they will copy everything they see and hear.
- They might be attracted to the parent of the opposite sex.

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Five to six Years old

- Your child will want to know more about how they are different from the opposite sex.
- Your child will want to know how babies are made.
- They might touch their privates to comfort themselves.
- You should give easy to understand answers to their questions about sexuality.

Seven to Eight years old

- Your child will want more privacy.
- They will want to know even more about sexuality.
- Your child's age group will hang out with the same sex and there will be more than likely a lot more teasing from the opposite sex.

Nine to Ten Years old

- Your child may start to have mood swings.
- Your child will want to fit in with people his age.
- They will go through a stage where they change friends and they will start liking the opposite sex. They will get hurt feelings a lot more.

The best thing you can do to prevent your child from having unwanted sex, pregnancies and an STD or HIV is to always talk about it. Make sure they can come to you whenever they want to without you getting mad or upset. You have to set the example and the mood. Something I keep in mind is that it only takes one time to change everything. Which means it can be your first time having sex and you could get pregnant or get an STD, so make sure your child knows this.

Help Feed the World

I just discovered a website where you can learn different things while contributing food to the hungry. It's called Free Rice <http://freerice.com>. When you get to the website you'll see that there are many subjects and levels to choose from. Once you answer a question, (if you get it right) 10 grains of rice are automatically donated through the UN World Food program to help end hunger. Try it!

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Conflict Resolution

By Sarah Troxel

Conflict resolution is a process aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. This is something that new parents should always keep in mind. I say this because if the parents alone can not resolve a problem by themselves, then how are they going to be able to teach their child? Believe it or not, there are "strategies" that help break down what your conflict is and how to resolve it.

I will start with the first strategy called negotiation. Now, negotiation is where a person will bargain with another for individual or collective advantage. Negotiation occurs in business, non-profit organizations, and government branches, legal proceedings, among nations and in personal situations such as marriage, divorce, parenting, and everyday life. In other words, when Devan and I get into an argument about...oh, let's say, the laundry. Devan says that he is sick of being the only one that does it, and he does not like the fact that no one helps him with it. I then sit there and listen to what Devan has to say. This way when it comes time for my input, he will want to listen to what I have to say. We both talk about different ways to resolve this specific conflict; in this case we would use negotiation. I would tell Devan that I will do the laundry 3 days out of the week along with folding my own laundry, so he does not have to, and he would do the same the other 3 days out of the week. This way we have figured out that our conflict is that we do not equally do the same amount of work around the house. Our resolution is that we made a chart that shows the days that we are both supposed to do something, such as the laundry, and negotiated on when we were going to do the laundry. Devan and I came to this conclusion in a calm and collective way because we both listened to what each other had to say and let each other have their time to speak.

Moving on to the next strategy called mediation. Mediation is when two people are in a dispute and they call on a third party to help them reach an agreement. The third party is called the mediator. The mediator may or may not set out a formal

agreement for the parties to accept or reject; most mediators prefer to help guide the parties towards developing their own agreement. Say that Devan and I have problems at home, so we decided to go see a couple's therapist to help us with our differences. The therapist is there to help us find what it is that is making us unable to communicate calmly. She also gives us advice on what we should and could do to help us through our differences. Clearly, she is also helping us because she has a specific interest in helping couples resolve differences, but in the end it is up to Devan and me to listen to what the therapist has told the both of us and use that information to help us.

Arbitration is a settlement technique in which a third party reviews the case and imposes a decision that is legally binding for both sides. Now, I have not dealt with this specific technique in resolving a conflict, but Devan has. When he got into trouble with the law they made it so he had to pay restitution to the company that he stole from. He was taken to the court and was ordered to pay for the damage that he did, and along with that they made him do community service. This was all decided by a third party - the judge. Thankfully, we are not dealing with this conflict anymore, but that is the process that Devan had to go through.

This brings me to the end. With all of this said, let me just add that with all of these strategies to resolve conflicts, people need to keep one thing in mind; they need to be *willing* to resolve the conflict. If just one person does not want to resolve it, then there will never be an end to the conflict. Be willing to talk and take in what others are saying and use that information to help you. Remember, taking the first step may seem like nothing, but it will bring you closer to the end than you were before you took that step.

Fun with Math

Many of you have stated clearly how much you "hate math". Here's a website that allows you to just play. So have fun!

<http://www.mathplayground.com/games.html>



Book Corner

Bowery girl

by Kim Taylor

reviewed by Renee Grey

Bowery girl is about two Bowery girls named Annabelle Lee and Mollie Flynn. Mollie is a pickpocket and Annabelle is a prostitute. The book starts out with Annabelle just getting out of jail. They go to the bathhouse and that is when Mollie notices Annabelle is pregnant. When leaving the bathhouse the girls run into Miss Emmeline DuPre. She is the head of the settlement house and encourages Annabelle and Mollie to attend school.

Annabelle starts going to the school to learn how to read and write. Mollie is against it and feels she does not need an education. When falling behind on rent and unable to pay Tommy, the local gang leader, back the money she owes him, he sets up a job for her. When the job goes wrong and the guy is killed, Mollie starts to lose her mind. She starts school with Annabelle.

The girls begin to change their life around until Annabelle is thrown out of the settlement house. She goes back to being a prostitute and hanging out with Tommy. When Mollie's birthday comes along, Annabelle tells Mollie to meet her at the house for a nice dinner. When Mollie got there she noticed some things were not right. When she got to the room she saw Annabelle bleeding. She had fallen on the stairs. Annabelle did not make it. Within the next couple of days the Brooklyn Bridge was finished, and because it was a dream of Annabelle and Mollie's, Mollie decided to go to Brooklyn.

I enjoyed this book very much. I liked how it showed that because someone may not be like others, it does not mean that they are bad people. I recommend this book to anyone that likes reading

about the late 1800's. This book kept me interested and the end was left for the reader to imagine what happens next.

Stop Pretending what happened when my big sister went crazy

by Sonya Somes

reviewed by Renee Grey

This book is very different than what I usually read. I felt it was a very easy read, in fact, I read it in only one night. I did not like it because I felt the author repeated a lot of her poems just in a different form. I like poems a lot. This book I felt could have been better if written like a story instead of in poems.

In the book, Cookie's older sister is sent to a hospital because she was going insane. It tells how Cookie is mad at her sister for being insane, and also how scared she is to tell her friends. She goes and visits her sister at the hospital once a week. Her parents fight a lot now. Pretty much since her sister lost her mind, Cookie's life has been turned upside down. I did feel bad for her, because when her friends find out, they start making fun of her. Towards the end of the book she did make new friends, in fact, she even got a boyfriend. The end of her book it looks like her sister is going to get well soon.

I do not think I would read this book again. Nor would I recommend this book to anyone. I did find one poem I did like a lot because I think it is true, so here it is:

My Guidance Counselor

On Monday
I told Mr. G
how depressed and lonely I was.
He told me
No one wants to make friends
With someone who looks miserable.

He said I ought to try
putting a smile on my face.
Even a pretend one
would do.

I thought this was idiotic,
but I was desperate.

All week long,
I forced a grin onto my lips.
It felt painted on,
tight, frozen.
I was sure everyone knew
it was an act,
but then
someone smiled back.
They hadn't noticed
my smile was a lie.
Somebody else
said hello.

I couldn't believe
how easily I fooled them
and even fooled myself,
because I found that
the more I smiled,
the more I really felt like smiling.

On Friday,
Sarah invited me
to her slumber party.
So I guess Mr. G
isn't such an idiot
after all.

Beyond Dreams

by Marilyn Reynolds

Reviewed by Amber Chaisty

Beyond Dreams is a book of six short stories. The stories are true; they deal with high school students who are facing difficult times and decisions. The book was put together and written by Marilyn Reynolds. The first story I read was called "Only If You Think So". This short story is about a seventeen-year-old named Jason who is struggling with school. He thinks his life has gone down hill since the 8th grade. Jason was kicked out of Hamilton High School and had to be sent to

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Sojourner High, which is an alternative school. He also got kicked off his baseball team at Hamilton High because he couldn't keep his grades up. Jason is really good at playing baseball. He has a dream that someday he will play on the Los Angeles Dodgers. Jason doesn't really get along with his dad much. His dad used to be a cop but he broke some guy's arm and lost his job. Now all his dad does is sit around in his lazyboy chair and drink and eat and watch TV. Jason's little sister Katie and his mother left them to go live with Jason's grandmother. He does talk to his mother every week on the phone. Jason's dad also says that the school Jason goes to now is for losers. Jason thinks the school he goes to now is way different from his old one. As much as Jason hates going to his new school, if he doesn't go every day his dad will take his car away. Jason knows one kid in his English class; his name is Mark Carlson. After school Jason goes to work at his job at McDonald's. At school Jason finds out from his principal that the Lions Little League team needs a new coach because the old one had a heart attack. Jason will start getting extra credit if he helps to coach the team. If Jason also gets caught up with his schoolwork and his credits, he can also go back to Hamilton High in time for baseball second semester. Jason's dad finally decides to get another job. Jason's life is starting to come back together slowly.

The next short story I read was called "Baby Help". This story is about a woman named Melissa Fisher who is abused by her boyfriend Rudy who drinks a lot. They have a baby named Cheyenne. They live with Rudy's mother Irma. Melissa is 18 and still in school. She hopes that when she and Rudy get married things will be different and he won't hit her and lose his temper. Melissa never really thought about abuse. Melissa thought that Rudy just got mad and lost his temper. She went to these counseling classes at school where they talked about abuse. One night Rudy was drunk and hit Melissa and lost his temper with baby Cheyenne so they packed their bags and left Rudy for good.

Another short story I read was called "What If". It's about a kid named Paul who had gotten in a very bad accident with a drunk driver. Paul's friend Gab

was with him during the accident. Gab died. Paul was in the hospital with a head injury for a while. He doesn't remember much of the accident. Paul thinks if he hadn't had the one beer, maybe Gab wouldn't have died.

"For Ethan and Me" is a story about Christina who is 17 and has a 2-year-old son named Ethan. Christina has plans to go to college, but she's not sure yet. Christina's days are very busy trying to balance out school and work and also trying to take care of Ethan at the same time. Things were going pretty well for Christina until she found out she was pregnant again. She is not happy to be pregnant with another kid at all. She can barely take care of Ethan. Christina works at Gap with her sister Maria and she also works with her best friend Tiffany. She lives with her parents. She is trying to decide whether to get an abortion or not. After a week of thinking about it she decides to get the abortion, although she is embarrassed to get it done.

"Beyond Dreams" is about a Vietnamese girl whose name is Tammy at school and Trin at home. She feels her life is divided between being Vietnamese at home and American at school. Her father had died on their way to America. She struggles with issues of racism.

The last short story I read is called "Uncle Tweetie". It's about two brothers, Josh and Rick, who live in San Luis with their Aunt Vickie. Rick is moving out to go to college, which makes Josh really happy that he'll have his own room. Unfortunately, Josh finds out that his Aunt Chikee from Arkansas has died and his Uncle Tweetie has to come down for a little while and stay in his room, too. Josh has a girlfriend named Tracy; he's embarrassed to bring her to his house because of his Uncle Tweetie who leaves his spit cans everywhere.

Each of these stories is a true-life event from the fictional Hamilton High. I think the author wrote this book because she wanted high school students to read each story and maybe learn a little from each one. For example, you shouldn't drink and drive and you should definitely wear your seatbelt. You should also be more careful and wear protection when it comes to sex, especially when you're young and already have one kid.