



Passages Press

What Passages Means to Me

by Dakota Sprague

presented at the Farm to Sea Auction held in Brunswick on October 3rd

When I first found out I was pregnant I feared what I had ahead of me, I refused to be a fifteen-year-old dropout. My boyfriend at the time and his family weren't giving me any support and told me having this child was a bad idea because of how young I was. I had a lot to think about. One thing that really worried me was my education. I always loved school and learning and the thought of me having to do it while raising a child scared me. I knew I would be up a lot during the night nursing, pumping breast milk at school, worrying about who would watch her on a day-to-day basis with both my parents working, and trying to keep my homework caught up from times I missed. Being a parent - between doctor's appointments, the care Emma needed when she was sick, and just being plain exhausted from the sleepless nights of a newborn, plus missing school - would be overwhelming. I knew from being a student in regular school that missing a day was like missing a week of school. I would get bombarded with tons of makeup work.

A close friend who was also pregnant told me about the Community School in

Camden. Considering I didn't find out I was pregnant until six months, I didn't have much time to make a plan. I called immediately and applied, had my meeting with the director, did my transcripts, and then waited for the phone call. A few months later I was told I was accepted and was on a waiting list. I continued to go to school pregnant, uncomfortable and in pain, until the day I gave birth. At 12:59 p.m, on February 29th, 2012, I had my daughter Emma Elizabeth Elwell at 5 pounds and 19 inches. A week went by. I was nursing and got a phone call - it was Erica. She called me to tell me I was going to start classes the next week. I was exhilarated and started to cry tears of joy!

As Emma got older and more active - running around, climbing things, and getting into everything - homework became harder because she always wants to be doing what I'm doing. When I use my computer she wants to press buttons and write; when I'm writing she'll take my pencil and draw all over everything. Having a child is very stressful, as is being a teenager. When Passages plans the Music Together workshops and all the other

events children are able to go to, Emma gets to go and play with other children, which gives me a break mentally and physically. It's nice to talk with other teenagers, and knowing you are not alone is a great feeling.

On top of everything else, in 2012 my stepdad, who I considered to be my father, fell down the stairs, leaving him with a severe head injury and serious problems. During this time I was determined not to let this set me back. It was hard studying in a hospital waiting room with a baby who nursed and needed constant attention. As my dad continued to get a little better, he came home, but he was not the same person he was before. He needed 24/7 care. My sister and I were very scared at what happened to him. We pretty much lost our mother, because her attention was with him all the time. My mom finally decided we couldn't live like that anymore, so he went to Massachusetts with his parents. After he left, my mom had no job and no money to afford our house. We were going to be homeless and that really scared us. Thankfully, a close friend took us in. Between being mentally and emotionally drained with everything going on, I was stressed and sad. I was close to giving up on everything, but my teacher continued to push me and give me strength to finish what I started. As she continues to push me, I fight what problems life gives me with a smile and confidence.

Passages is not like sitting in a classroom full of students with a bunch of distractions, trying to talk to the teacher with twenty other students competing with you. I have a teacher who considers me her priority. She pushes me and helps me reach my goals. The teachers not only care about me school-wise, but mentally, socially and emotionally, as well. My teacher and I created a special bond and I couldn't have asked for a better one. She really goes above and beyond. It's like having an adult best friend. She truly has done so much for me, and I couldn't begin to thank her enough.

I wasn't just given a second chance at an education but a second chance at life. I have learned a lot through this program - not only what you learn in school, but life. One

example would be: even though times are hard, if you can find strength within yourself and surround yourself with positivity, you can do it. Never give up. Without a diploma I wouldn't be able to go to college and pursue my dreams. Thanks to the wonderful staff, I will be graduating and heading off to college to work with the Drug Enforcement Agency. I want to thank every single person at Passages for making such an amazing school and providing a second chance for teen parents.

Our Name Change

by Martha Kempe, Passages Director

It has been two years since the merger of our schools, and we are now serving over seventy students throughout Maine. As we continue to grow beyond our two campus locations, we've been working on renaming our school and doing so in a way that will carry us into the future, while honoring the long and impressive histories of Opportunity Farm in New Gloucester and The Community School in Camden.

Our goal has always been to help students reach their full potential, while learning about themselves, building on their strengths and attaining a State of Maine high school diploma. Faced with adversity and hardships, our students keep their goals in sight and travel toward their destination.

Our students are *wayfinding*. *Wayfinding* is a navigational tool and a wonderful symbol for the work our students do alongside their teachers, who help them to find their own way forward. With this in mind, we are pleased to announce that beginning in October 2013, The Community Schools at Opportunity Farm and Camden will become: **Wayfinder Schools**. The **Passages** program will remain the same for Passages students everywhere.



From Somalia to America

by Amina Yunis

My father died when I was young. My mother raised us without my father. We had no money. My mother used to farm for us. I thank my mom for all the hunger she has been through.

In Somalia we went through dangerous events, like hearing gunshots. We had no place to rest. My mother used to cook for us. We were all young, so she took care of us. The house was not built perfectly; it was built with plants and wood. It was not covered well so sometimes bullets came through or creatures came inside the house.

My brother was older than us so he used to do all the other things that my mother couldn't do, like clean the house. Sometimes my mother was very tired from farming, so my brother took our clothes and washed them. We love our brother and we thank him for raising us.

We used to play in the dark and we got used to the place and we didn't get scared at all when we were playing in the dark. In America we can't go outside at night. If you do, you might get killed or kidnapped, so we stay inside.

In Somalia we can't talk back to our parents. We have to listen to our parents. Whichever guy they want us to marry, we have to marry. If you refuse to marry, they will beat you. In America we refuse to obey our parents even after all the painful moments we have been through with them.

In Somalia we didn't have cars; only rich people used to drive cars. The poor people walk or ride bicycles. I wanted to impress my mother by getting educated, but it didn't happen at all there.

Since I am in America, I don't have to worry about my kids not getting an education. I am glad that I have my mother near me and my beautiful daughter. I have nothing missing in my life. I just want to be a wonderful mother that takes care of her children. I want to have a great and happy life and great

opportunities. I have always wanted to finish high school and go to college so I can get a great job, but I have noticed that God rules everything. All the things we are going to go through were written down when we were in the belly of our mother.

One thing I wish is for my children to get an education and have a better future. After I dropped out of high school I still didn't give up. I want to put a smile on my mother's face and start a great future. My mother always told us to finish school, but none of us listened and we all regret it. Always listen to your parents because they only want you to get a better life, not to end up with a bad life.



Sign Language with Addysen

by Lindsey Hinkley

Addysen and I started doing sign language when I saw how to on a cereal box. She has learned to say/do: more, milk, please and thank you. It makes me feel good that I have been able to teach her. If she's anything like me, she will need it in school, because it is important to have a second language. The reason I wish I had known sign language earlier in school is because I had friends with autism and other issues that prevented them from speaking.

More



Milk



please



thank you



Music for my Daughter

by Niomi Johnson

I made my daughter a CD because she loves music. Music soothes her so much; she can feel what the artist is saying. When she hears the music, if she likes it, she will dance. All of the songs on the CD are her favorites.

The first song I put on her CD is called "With Arms Wide Open" by Creed. I put that song on the CD for her because I used to sing that song to her a lot; it reminds me of her. In the song it says, "Well I don't know if I'm ready to be the man I have to be," and I didn't know at the time after she was born if I was ready to be a parent. I didn't know if I was ready to grow up and take on this huge responsibility. I didn't realize how real this was until she was born and I was holding her in my arms.

Then the song says, "With arms wide open, under the sunlight, welcome to this place. I'll show you everything with arms wide open. Now everything has changed. I'll show you love. I'll show you everything." It is explaining the truth. I opened my arms wide open trying to welcome her to this new place - her new home. I promised to show her love and to show her the good in life.

The last part of the song really hits me because I want to show her a different life to live than the different ones I have known. "If I had just one wish, only one demand, I hope she's not like me; I hope she understands that she can take this life and hold it by the hand and she can greet the world with arms wide open." Every word is true. I really hope she isn't like me in some ways. I used to hate the world for what I went through, but I want her to know that she can make the best of this world and the life she is given. I want my daughter to know she can take anything and turn it into beauty.

Disturbing News

by Lindsey Hinkley

I feel as if Miley Cyrus has disturbed me the most, because she is in all the magazines in the grocery store aisles. If you listen to music like I do, her pictures are plastered on YouTube. It's like you can't go anywhere without seeing her picture "twerking" and the video showing it.

I think it upsets me because I used to watch her show "Hannah Montana" and she was this child actress that I enjoyed watching. She has changed her image so much. I think about the kids that were watching her on the music awards while she was doing some pretty sexually explicit stuff. If I had brought Addysen there we would have gone straight home. I would not want her to see that performance.

Now that I am a mom, I don't want Addysen to see that behavior because I want her to respect her body and to have a positive self-image. Seeing Miley Cyrus on stage portraying herself as a sex object made me think that she doesn't respect herself. I want to teach Addysen to be a leader, not a follower. I will be her teacher so that she will feel strong as an individual. If I model good behavior, that is a good start and foundation for her.

Laney's Song

by Kent Little

Since day one I knew being a dad
wouldn't be easy
singing this song I may come off as cheesy
I'm just trying to get my point across
kids get expensive
did I mention
my budget is hurtin'
buying diapers, wipes, and extra laundry
detergent
Listen when I say it's worth it
a baby is no mistake
amazingly Laney helped me find my place
just in case I couldn't do it on my own
Two years almost over

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still all I hear is her mother's tone
yelling at me
but I'm trying
I guess she's dwelling in denial
At least I know I love Laney
You're my mini me on the front cover
on my first album for people to see
They wonder how I had such a good outcome
how come? Because, I believed
There were times my stress about her
brought me to my knees.

Go to sleep little baby please don't cry,
Laney she is mine
I'll walk a thousand miles
to relieve her from crime
Tell her she is safe no one will ever find us
They can back up
We are without a trace.

Here I go now
starting off with verse two
willing to throw down
with anyone who hurts you
I'm glad we have worked
through all these tough times
I guess it's true
when they say
patience is a
virtue
Just gotta give it time
live the rhyme
Laney's mine
no one else's
Didn't choose adoption
because that could mean
bouncing through houses
by the time she's ten
she would have slept
on about 1000
different couches
She needs her parents
born two months early
thought she wouldn't be
coherent
it was scary
They shipped her to
Portland
inside my heart was hurting
time passed
as she got a little bigger

each day
sometimes I swore
she's the one to teach me
I'm just happy
she's healthy
17 months later
she's laughing
and mouthy
Hard to believe
she's almost two
don't tell me different because
I know our love
is true.

Go to sleep little baby please don't cry
Laney she is mine
I'll walk a thousand miles
to relieve her from crime
Tell her she is safe
no one will ever track us
They can back up
We are without a trace.

I'm so glad you exist
you're a fighter
can tell you're gifted
You were born
then my heart it was lifted
like a spark
that just hit me
I knew what to do
then and there
stick by you
it was my choice
People say why didn't you
just leave
because I can't
you can rant
but she's my daughter
Forever
I will stand
as one man
to keep her safe
even if
it's the Lord
I have to praise
Love her so much
every day
every touch creates
a higher level
of rush

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She could never be
a mistake
even though
at six in the morning
I'm hearing
daddy
please be awake
Here I come
to make you
some pancakes
Word around is
I'm a bad father
well let Laney
be the judge of that
she knows I'm above all that
She is my life
I'm not even lying
but 18 years later
she's leaving and flying
Staring out the window
as my eyes start crying

Go to sleep little baby please don't cry
Laney she is mine
I'll walk a thousand miles
to relieve her from crime
Tell her she is safe
no one will ever track us
They can back up
We are without a trace.

Please Don't Judge

by Kiera Satele

I feel strongly about people who judge young mothers or pregnant teens. I honestly think there is no age limit to being a good mother. Everybody has something to say about young mothers, but half those people saying something about it had mothers who were young when they had them. I salute all the young mothers who had their children instead of going the easy way out and having an abortion.

I read that teen girls who have mothers with little education are much more likely to become a mother at a young age than girls

with better educated mothers. To me, that seems a little bit judgmental. I don't believe there's a link between an uneducated mother and a daughter becoming a young mother. No parent in their right mind wants their young daughter having a child, especially while still being in high school and living in her parent's house.

Most people who comment on teen parents have no experience of and very little understanding about teen parenting. I think people should mind their own business. How does someone else being pregnant affect them? It's not their life, so why do they have so much to say? I go on Facebook and I see a bunch of people slamming teen mothers. I think it's hurtful because a lot of teen mothers have been through a lot and try so hard. It's easy for them to judge, but what people might not understand is it's hard going from having a lot of friends, going out when you want, and doing dumb things to doing none of that. I think it's healthy for young moms to get a little time to themselves and shouldn't be judged for it.

I think people judge teen parents because they don't think we're responsible enough to take care of another human being just because we got pregnant at a young age. Yes, we made the mistake of having intercourse without using protection, but we should get credit for making a wonderful decision to keep the baby instead of getting an abortion or giving it up for adoption. Nobody is perfect, so judging somebody due to a mistake they made is awful. Most teen mothers change for the better once having their child. It makes them realize a lot and mature a lot more.

I'm a young mother. I got pregnant at fifteen and when I found out I was pregnant, I was scared - I was scared of what everybody would think and say. My whole outlook has changed now that I've accepted that I'm a young mother, and my love and bond with my son has grown. Being a mother has changed me in a completely good way. My life actually has meaning. Instead of going out and doing the dumb things I used to do, I do something meaningful with my time. I spend it with my

son, creating more of a bond with him. My life isn't over like everybody tries to make everybody believe. I know I'm young, but I also know my son and I will have a great life and such a bright future. I'm a strong and determined female. I go to school, and I'm looking for a job to better myself and my son's life. I'm working on getting my high school diploma. Our future is bright; I push the negativity out of my life and stay positive. I know one day my son will be proud of me, of the woman I become, and of all the struggles I went through to make it to the top. I hope my son knows that I did it all for him and how much he has made me into a better person.

My Experience at Family Planning

by McKayla Olsen

On February 3rd, 2013, I took my pregnancy test, and it was positive. My mom and I went to Family Planning the next day to see if the test was right. It was, and the woman told me I was about four and a half weeks along! It was a scary experience, but I knew that I wanted to keep the baby. The woman told me lots of things to do with pregnancy, told me foods to avoid, and told me that I should make an appointment with a midwife soon. She continued to go over other options, such as adoption and abortion.

I was extremely shocked to see how the woman kept going back to the option of abortion. She asked how old I was and I told her fifteen. She asked me where I see myself in four years. I told her that I want to be a hairdresser. Her words were, "Do you want to be a twenty-year old with a successful job, or do you want to be twenty with a four-year old?" I had told her earlier in the appointment that I was definitely keeping the baby, and it was upsetting that I had to keep repeating myself.

I don't think having a child will ruin my life, and being pregnant has not ruined my life. In my opinion, everything happens for a reason, and you can still be successful with a child; sometimes it just takes a little longer. I know

that keeping my child was a good choice, and I don't regret it. In four years I see myself as a successful hairdresser with a beautiful four-year-old little girl.

Lilly at 7 Months

by Kayla Jordan Crowley as told to Fern Hilyard

As Lilly grows up I am learning about different stages of childhood development. Her facial features change and she looks older. Her face shape is different now and she has a bottom tooth coming in. She can actually see things now – at 7 months old. She definitely recognizes me, even though I change my hair color all the time. She recognizes her toys and her books. She likes the animals on her Exersaucer. She likes my friend Evan a lot, too. For a two-month premature baby she's up to her age level already.

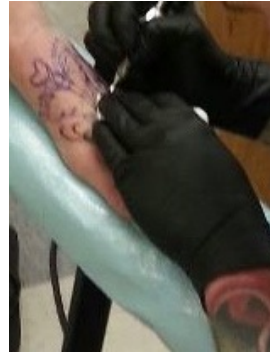
I think Lilly will grow up to be a good girl. She'll have everything she wants and needs. I think she'll grow up to be clean. I'll teach her how not to be a slob and how to cook and clean. She likes country music, because that's what she listened to when she was in my belly.

I wash Lilly's clothes and feed her and keep her clean and bring her to doctors' appointments. I read books to her, even though she doesn't pay attention right now, but she will eventually. I encourage her to jump in her jumper. I let her watch me work on the car. I think she likes to watch me work. She'll be going to daycare in Harrington soon and that will be good for her to socialize and learn new things. I talk to her all the time, but last time I sang to her she cried. I rock her and sing to her when she goes to sleep.

Bonding with Lilly makes me happy. I like it when she eats. I like feeding her. I let her suck her food into her mouth off the spoon. She is a big fan of food. Her favorite foods right now are sweet potato and applesauce and sweet squash. I'd rather carry her than put her in the stroller. That's what I have a hip for! In the morning sometimes I bring her in bed with me and she talks to me and then eventually pukes.

Interview with Tracy: Tattoo Artist

by Niomi Johnson



Why are you a tattoo artist?

I have been painting and drawing for over 30 years, and living in a small town, I found it difficult to support my family. Because we live in such a small area, generally people in Washington County are not able to or have no interest in paying very much for artwork such as painting or drawings.

What got you interested into it?

My husband is actually the one that drove me to do it. He loves tattoos and thought it would be something that I would enjoy and be very good at, so he continuously pushed me to teach myself, and as it turned out, he is the biggest baby ever - he likes them, but doesn't enjoy the process of getting them.

Is it your passion?

Art is my passion, but even bigger than that are my children. Doing this type of art gives me the best of both worlds. I get to do what I love every day, and in turn, it also allows me to support those that I love most.

How many years have you been doing tattoos?

I have been tattooing for seven years now.

Who taught you?

As previously mentioned, I live in a small area. Most people that make the decision to get into tattooing will go to a shop and have to do an apprenticeship. I, however, did not have that

option, as we do not have tattoo shops in my area. I am a self-taught tattooist.

What were you doing before you decided to be a tattoo artist?

I also own and run a nail salon. Have been a nail technician for fourteen years. Still currently do this, as well.

How does your family react to you being a tattoo artist?

I have three sons, who are very much into tattoos. They love that I am a tattooist and also enjoy the free tattoos.

What is your biggest frustration?

One my biggest pet peeves is how easy they make it look on television. It makes them think that they can walk in at any given time, get an entire back piece drawn for them in ten minutes and that the tattoo can be done in an hour. It is not like that. I have had some tattoos take three hours just to draw, as I prefer to do unique pieces instead of the person just picking something from a book.

Are you going to keep doing this for the rest of your life?

I am forty-six years old, and the rest of my life could be another thirty years or could end in a week. All I can say is that I enjoy it very much. I have the opportunity to do something I love and will continue to do it until I don't enjoy it anymore.

What is the best part of being a tattoo artist?

Best part of tattooing is that someone trusts you to put something on their body that will be there for their entire life. Many times I will ask them how they want a specific piece done or what color they want, and they tell me to just go for it and do what I think is best, because they trust me and I am the artist. That amazes me every time that someone has that much trust in me and my work.

The Effects of Clearcutting

by Niomi Johnson

I think that more consumers should become aware of the dangers that come with clearcutting. Clearcutting includes a lot of different negative results. Clearcutting is a logging practice, which involves completely clearing an area of trees regardless of their size and usability. All that is leftover is stumps and brush that are most of the time burnt in large burn piles that can cast a smoky haze over the area for several days. A clearcut area could be small or may go on for miles and is often seen clearly from the air. When they clearcut there is loss of habitat because of an elevation change in stream temperatures, which can cause fish to die off. If logging comes close to the banks of the river it eliminates the shady shield of trees, which can cause the temperature of the river to elevate. Even a few degrees can make a huge difference to native plants, fish and amphibians. That can cause a huge population decrease. Multiple organizations watch global rivers and have warned that clearcutting could result in the extinction of some fish species. They are driven out of their habitats. Clearcutting also softens the banks of the river by causing erosion. When that happens it can cause them to collapse into the water. Clearcutting changes the water cycle in general. While trees are growing they help to trap and retain water and topsoil. Topsoil is the top layer of the ground. When trees are cut down water runs over the top of the earth instead of filtering into the right places. The water runoff can cause flooding and take the topsoil with it. As the water runs downhill, it takes the topsoil into the river and turns it brown and muddy and then carries the useful nutrients out to sea. When this happens in the marine environment it can be harmful to marine plants and animals and cause more population damage. It can sometimes effect the environment multiple miles away from the shore.

Clearcutting destroys habitat for a bunch of different animals including many endangered species. Birds, reptiles and



mammals all suffer from clearcutting. Many of these animals have a difficult time finding new habitats because the surrounding

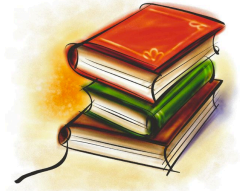
areas may be clearcut. Some animals cannot adapt and quietly die off.

Clearcutting also has an impact on the quality of the atmosphere. Trees help to filter pollutants from the air and are also an important part of the carbon cycle. Cutting down trees has a huge impact on the environment especially when slash-and-burn happens at the same time. When that happens it scorches the earth and causes a serious increase of environmental pollutants.

Because of the multiple negative effects of clearcutting many people are concerned about the environment. They are trying to tell people and get the word out to consumers about clearcutting. It is possible to buy lumber by buying harvested lumber. Consumers send a message to logging companies that they want healthy wood from healthy trees and an environment which will be healthy in the end.

In my personal opinion, clearcutting needs to come to a stop or decrease a little. Clearcutting makes animals, fish and other species die off. The most important effect of clearcutting is we lose more oxygen! We need oxygen to breathe and people are taking this for granted! If we keep killing the trees without planting them back into the ground we won't have any eventually. Then the next area won't have any and so on and so on. What happens if we have no trees? We don't breathe! People think animals, fish and other species are no big deal - there are plenty more. If people keep thinking this way the animals will die off slowly and we will, as well. Clearcutting is something I wish would slow down. We need to give back to the earth that we are blessed to live on and not take things for granted.

Book Corner



The Diary of Anne Frank

reviewed by Monique Hope Morin

The Diary of Anne Frank is about a young girl who went through a lot. In this book she has to deal with living with her whole family in somebody else's attic, being completely shut out of the world because she was a Jew. She was cared because she didn't want to be found and forced into a concentration camp; she did schoolwork on a couch and not a classroom because she was Jewish. There were many other things she had to deal with on an everyday basis. It was crazy to think while I was reading this book that all those things that were happening weren't just little rumors. They were the truth and some of the things were breathtaking.

The diary starts off on her 13th birthday - that is when she got it as a present. It tells us about her day and how she was so excited to open her presents. She woke up at six am and got to open them at seven and it also tells you about coming home from school and she tells us about a couple of her friends. Then it starts to tell us a little about her past and why they moved from where they were living to where they moved to. She wrote that, "Paper is more patient than people." The reason that she says this is because she does have a lot of friends and a great family, but Anne feels like she can't really tell anyone any of her deepest, darkest secrets. She feels as if her thoughts are going to be safer on paper. So she keeps a diary.

Once getting into the book it starts to tell us about why they had to live in the attic. Her parents told her the Germans were sending all the Jews to concentration camps. Concentration camps were not pleasant at all. Just because these people were Jews, they didn't feed them, they didn't let them take

baths, they beat them and killed them. Obviously, the Frank family didn't want to go there. So, Anne Frank and her family, plus another family, all hid in an attic so that they wouldn't have to go, which was very hard. If someone came over to the house, they had to be quiet and not move around. When there were no visitors they were able to walk around and listen to the radio to find out what was going on in the outside world.

Things got rough: because they had to live in the attic they couldn't go out to get food, and because they weren't working they didn't have money to spend on food and clothes and things to clean themselves with, and they had to deal with each other 24-7, which could be very irritating, also. Needless to say, things were not easy by any means.

After a while, Anne starts to slip into a little bit of depression and starts analyzing everything. She states things that she misses in the "real world". She tells us about her mother's new hobbies and how she really feels about them; she tells us about her new shoes that she gets and how her pen got melted in the fire. Anne also tells us how she asks the father of the other family for a book that is banned, which stirs up a lot of trouble.

Towards the end of the book she begins to tell us about some little things, like how her romance with Peter helped her during her depression. Things were going well, then after telling her father about the relationship between Peter and herself, it started to go really bad; she felt as if she let her father down. She also tells us about how bad the war is and about the raid.

The end of the book is very surprising; it doesn't really end like a normal book would. The book doesn't really end at all. The book actually ends in an entry like every other day, but then when you turn the page, it ends. There are no more entries.

This was an amazing book to read. It was heartbreaking and nerve wracking to read about a thirteen-year-old girl growing up and dealing with all those things at once, just because she was being picked out of a crowd because of her Jewish religion. The things that they went through at the camps and the

things that they had to do to stay alive and out of sight were insane. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves reading about struggles and love. To think about even half of these things happening made me want to keep turning the pages.

Perfect

by Ellen Hopkins

reviewed by Shauna Tinker

I connected to this book in a personal way because I have experienced the grief of losing someone to suicide, as the characters in the book did when they lost their friend, brother, boyfriend, and son - Connor Sykes. This book was exciting for me because it is written in a way that kept me turning every page, hungry for answers. Perfect is written from five different characters' points of view - Cara, Kendra, Sean, Jenna and Andre's. Each character is fighting a different battle of their own and the author connects their lives in exciting and interesting ways that keep your attention throughout the whole book.

Perfect helped me to better understand the reality and severity of eating disorders in young women and the effects of serious pressure and high standards from family on some children. This story focuses on real problems with teens and explores the minds of five very misled young people, creating a circle of insanity. There are many sad and happy moments in this book, I thought it was extremely sad when Jenna ended up getting beaten and raped. A time in the book that was happy for me is when Cara and Dani fall in love.

The character I could relate to the most would be Kendra. I feel this way because I have experienced some of the same things that she did in the book, such as losing a boy I really cared for and dealing with alcoholism in my family.

I would recommend Perfect to others if they are prepared to read about some tough subjects. It is a great book filled with amazing detail and cruel reality.