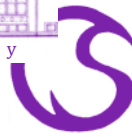




The Community
School

Passages Program



Passages Press

By Students for Students

This is a place for Passages students to share their thoughts and struggles, news, stories, book reviews, poems, recipes, childrearing tips, etc. In other words, basically anything you think other students may like to see in print.

Also, if you'd like to connect socially, have baby things to sell or give away, or you'd like to start a group of some kind with other students, submit your notices and I'll make some space for a "bulletin board."

As I've taken on the job of editor, you can email me (Andrea) your submissions to andrea@2bisbee.net, give them to your one-to-one to pass on to me, or drop them off at the school.

MATH

by Jesse Smith

As some of you are math phobic, these thoughts may interest you...

I used to think of math as an enemy until I dug deep into it and realized that taking it step-by-step and figuring it out can be fun and challenging. I realized that even being a waitress I use math every time I work. At the end of every meal we reset the tables. Depending on how many tables we use, I need to figure out how many utensils and napkins need to be placed at each table. My multiplication skills go to work. I multiply four napkins by how many tables need them and I get the answer. Same for the utensils. It is easier than counting one-by-one.

A yo-yo? That's not math. Yes, it actually is. The string is the yo-yo's plane of incline. If not, the yo-yo would fall to the ground. To figure this out, the inventor had to use math.

Math is everywhere. There is no way of escaping it. Everyone uses math everyday, whether realizing it or not. Life is math, and math is life.

from my Pregnancy Transcript

by Cassie Rolerson

My pregnancy came as quite a surprise. At the same time I was pregnant, my boyfriend and I separated. I got very depressed; I didn't eat well and I barely got out of bed. It has taken a long time to get through this. I was never ready for a child. I couldn't even take care of myself.

Postpartum is the first six weeks after having the baby. It can be very difficult for many women emotionally. In my case I was a mess to begin with and expected to go back to being a normal seventeen-year-old after I gave birth. In twenty minutes my life had changed completely and I wasn't ready.

I learned how to get ready by seeing someone in my same exact position do better than me. I went to visit my friend Candace when her baby was about a week old and I saw that she wanted to be with her baby more than she wanted to be a teenager. I felt until then that I was abnormal for having a baby while I was barely seventeen and felt that I should have been able to pick up where I left off before I got pregnant after I had the baby. She made me want to have a bond with my baby, to become his real mommy, not just his biological mother.

I started wanting to do what I was doing for him, instead of just doing it because it was needed. Instead of laying him down on the floor alone, I got down on the floor and played with him and learned to love him. Now we are bonded. He has separation anxiety; we both cried when I first left him at daycare. He still does. Now he's so happy to see me when I pick him up. I am his mommy.

The Power of Creativity

by Jesse Smith

During high school things were tough. I had no one to turn to. I was dealing with bad rumors about myself, schoolwork, a bad family life, and the effects of changing into a young adult. My life was falling apart. My problem began...

There I was sitting in my bedroom with the razor blade in my hand. Smiling at the shining blade. I would cut. Deep into my body. It didn't matter where just as long as I saw the blood and felt the pain. I was not suicidal. I didn't want to die. Instead of letting myself hurt on the inside I allowed myself to hurt on the outside, physically. The blade cutting my human atoms seemed to make all my troubles go away...

When my friends found out, they saw the purple scars, a few of them began doing the same as if it was "the in thing to do." It wasn't. It was my uncontrollable problem. Why didn't they help me? I turned to my school counselor and she told me I was stupid.

The last time I cut myself I decided to write a poem as my creative writing teacher had instructed me to do. I cried and watched the blood drip upon my paper as I wrote. When I read my poem (my work of art) aloud to myself I had an overwhelming sensation of pleasure, "I can write. I can write well." All my sharp objects went to the trash.

I now write poetry to heal myself. I look at sharp objects as a friend, not an enemy. I have proven to myself that I can deal with problems on my own, and can overcome difficult situations.

Self Mutilation

I want to
I know it
The razor sharp blade
Glistens in my mind
Feel it in my bones
This desire thrills and horrifies me
Am I crazy?
What's wrong with me?
I see the flow of blood
in my mind
I see the incisions

February 2004

The Community School · PO Box 555 · Camden, ME 04843 · 207.236.8814 · www.thecommunityschool.org

Where they should go
Will someone see it?
Will it be my secret?
Tempting me
Just cut
It won't be too deep
Not fatal
Just enough to leave a straight
perfect purple scar

I also write poems to celebrate myself and my child...

Nine Months

Carrying
Nine months
A miracle baby
Inside my body
I feel the movements
Pulsations from his hiccups
My beautiful young body
Changing -
Into something ugly
Yet not so ugly
I am not ashamed
The weight
A souvenir
Saved as a reminder
The glorious experience of
Carrying a human being
Scars—
A reminder of my son
A sign of strength
Nature
Love
Changing
Young woman
Becoming a young mother
Makes me beautiful

Loss by Lacey Beal

As a little girl I never knew how it felt to lose someone you love, simply because I had never lost anyone. The year 2003 changed all that.

On March 10, 2003 I lost my best friend to suicide. I went through a lot for the first few months trying to come to terms that he was gone. It was a hard struggle, but I had my boyfriend, friends, family, and my new daughter on the way to help me through things.

I never thought I'd have to deal with death again for a long while, but on October 10, 2003 I lost both my stepfather and boyfriend to the sea. They went out scalloping on a boat called the *Candy B II* never to return home.

The pain of my daughter Brianna's father not being around is unbelievable, but I am slowly getting through it. Brianna just being here helps me get through a lot of this, but her presence does not always help. I think about old times and memories; sometimes I get upset, but I look to writing to help me get my feelings out, which makes me a little bit happier in the end.

If Only I Knew by Lacey Beal

I would have cherished it forever,
If only I knew it was our last moment together.

I'd tell you how much it would be missed,
If only I knew it was our last kiss.

I wouldn't have let you make that choice,
If only I knew I'd no longer hear your voice.

I'd take a moment to tell you, "I love you,"
If only I knew that chance would be gone, too.

I would have watched it for a little while,
If only I knew it was your last smile.

I'd take forever to say, "So long,"
If only I knew you'd always be gone.

What am I supposed to do?
If only I knew... If only I knew.



Him by Lacey Beal

I look into her eyes:
I can see him.

Listening to her breath
I can hear him.

Watching her smile
I remember him.

Everything about her
reminds me of him...
and it hurts.

White Oleander by Janet Finch

A book review by Kylea Odone

This is one of the best books that I have read in a long time. White Oleander is a book about a young girl named, Astrid. She is placed in foster care after her poet mother is arrested for murder. Astrid is bounced through 7 foster homes. Each home is tragic and abusive in their own way. Astrid's first foster placement is with a woman named Star. Star is 18 months in recovery from her alcohol and cocaine addictions. She's a trashy, born again, former topless dancer. Astrid learns to accept being in the care of someone besides her own mother. Even though Davy, Star's son, is younger than Astrid they bond really well. Davy is 7 and Astrid is 12. Astrid catches lizards with Davy during the day. Astrid also establishes a close relationship with "uncle" Ray, who is Star's pothead, live in boyfriend. The relationship between Astrid and Ray escalates to a dangerous and unhealthy level. When Star learns what's going on in her household, she falls off the wagon. Instead of Star becoming angry with her pedophile boyfriend, she becomes enraged with Astrid and shoots her in the hip. Astrid is hospitalized and placed into her next chapter of foster care hell.

I liked this book, because the author wrote it in a way that you could not put the book down. Every time I turned a page, I was hoping that something good was going to happen in her life. At many times the book made me angry, but I had to remember that all foster care was not like the care that Astrid received. I had to remember that most foster homes are the most positive experience that they can be. It did scare me too, because there are the small percentages of foster homes that are tragic. We see it on the news every once in a while. I guess the only thing that can be done is for more people to be willing to take children into their homes.

Marshall William Sawyer

by Keshia Young

Beneath the swell of my belly,
innocence blossomed
Life's most miraculous wonder,
Even before the first precious breath, connected by nature's bond,
mother and child
Reflection of the purest love
Pieces of me create feelings of familiarity,
yet he's as individual as a shining golden star
Smart alertness in expressions
Gazing through sparkling bright blue eyes
as if he's got a secret to tell
Other times peeking cautiously through a single slit
Fascinated by the complexity of his tongue
Stubbornly dragging everything to his destination
tiny deceiving pink lips,
open wide to endless pools of dripping drool
Underneath fuzzy hair he's chubby and round in all features,
demanding attention and affection
Responding,
inhaling natural sweetness
touching skin soft as petals
Grabbing spontaneously in curious exploration
Breathing excitedly as new sensations awake delightful reactions
Discovery of voice releases joyous squeals, squeaks, and screeches
Communicating through concentrated meaningful babble
Frustration provokes his temper to flare unpredictably,
flailing arms and legs
Nighttime lullabies and "swing-time"
put slowly blinking eyelids to rest,
waking cheerfully with grins and gurgling coos,
Curling broad smiles reveal
one little dimple and pink toothless gums
A picture perfect memory etched in my mind forevermore,
my beautiful baby boy

*Infants and children
need a lot of care. They are
not like a houseplant or a
gold fish. They have needs
that need to be met daily.
Children are work, but they
are also rewarding.*

Email from a former student...

I received the Community School Annual Report the other day, and I almost cried reading it. You and the whole staff have helped out so many people like me. I'm a little ashamed of myself for not finishing... I had so many difficult obstacles thrown my way during the period I was enrolled in the Cschool... with my baby dying and all, I just could do it. But I do want you know that even though I didn't finish, you and your school have changed my life completely. My outlook on life is much more positive, the way I see things these days are so much better I see the good the beautiful things in life rather than the dark ugly things I use to see... I am so thankful for you and your school. I just wanted to let you know that just because I didn't graduate (I did get my GED with great scores!) I wasn't a failure to you, and the school. You all made me a better person and I think that it what matters.

Thanks to all of you,
Wendy Lawrence



Upcoming Workshops:

- February 11th
College Prep/Job Hunting
- March 3rd
Creative Scrapbooking
- March 17th
First Aid