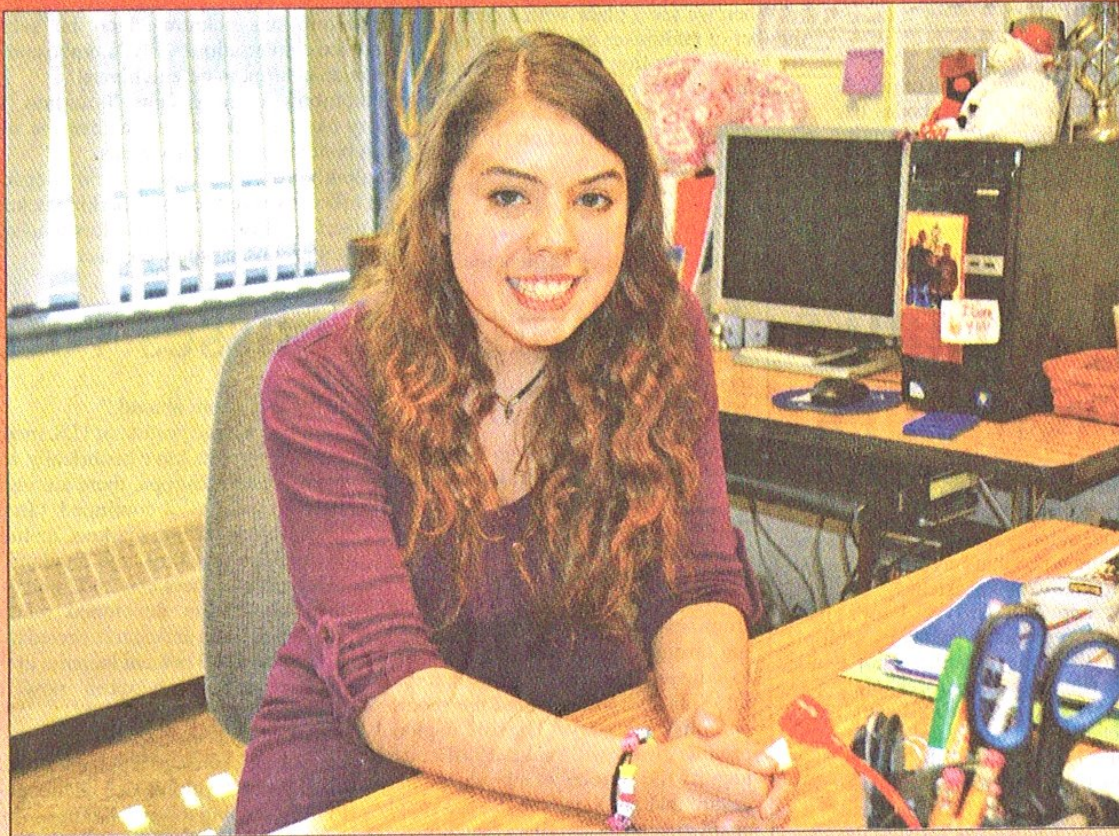


Walking the Walk



Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School student Rita Stubbs was recently awarded a certificate for her outstanding essay for bringing Mahatma Gandhi's message to life.

Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

Middle school student takes Gandhi's message to heart

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COVENTRY — An eighth grade student from the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School was recently recognized by the University of Rhode Island's Center for Non Violence as part of the 2014 Gandhi Essay Contest.

Rita Stubbs responded to Gandhi's quote, "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony," and focused her essay on starting ways to create peace in ourselves and then branching out to family

and friends.

"I took each aspect of life; home life, school and friends and applied it to his quote," she said. "We can start with ourselves and have better communication in our homes with our family members and when everyone in a home can voice their opinions then it's easier to do what is right."

Stubbs said this carries right into school life, where there's been an increase recently in gun violence.

She believes that if the same philosophy were applied, then that violence could decrease.

"The way we live our lives is so busy, so parents can't focus on children and it's a detriment to living a better life," she said.

Stubbs said she felt sad after she wrote her essay entitled "Walking to walk to harmony," "Everyone can talk as much as they want but I'm not sure we can win the fight," she said. "The people who understand and can truly see the hurt in the world are the ones who are feeling the hurt the most because they can see it without ignorance," said the eighth grader.

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Student earns praise for Gandhi essay

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"You can change within yourself but changing others is a whole different thing."

Stubbs wasn't aware of the essay contest, which was open to all eighth-graders in the state, until she saw a poster in her teacher's door.

"I actually didn't really know all that much about Gandhi until I began to do research for the essay," she admitted. "I wanted to get as much information as I could and try to experience him without him being here. I felt I really needed to be in his mind as much as I could be."

She also looked within herself.

"I wanted to really think about why I wanted something or how I could get something without hurting someone else in the process," she said.

The process was a lengthy one but in the end, she was glad she wrote it.

"I like to make myself a better per-

son to help others," Stubbs said. "Seeing what he went through, in some cases, makes whatever we're concerned about not look so scary. We sometimes have more petty complaints instead of complaining about problems, but we don't do things to fix them and violence is not the answer."

The timing for her to write this essay was also perfect because Stubbs was recently adopted.

She admits that before she was adopted, she wasn't always as motivated as she is now.

"I know if I hadn't been adopted, I wouldn't have written the essay," she said. "My adoption changed me a lot. I was headed for being one of the students the principal has to take out of class. I see there was someone watching over me and whether it's God or whatever a person believes, there's someone who wants to make right decisions and I know Gandhi believed that too."