

## Breaking Down the Walls:

A Dialogue between

Bernard Zell Students and Students in Macedonia and Berlin



**BERNARD ZELL**

**ANSHE EMET DAY SCHOOL**

בית ספר אנשי אמת ע"ש ברנרד זל

**THE CLASS OF 2016**

## Preface:

Last summer while attending a Centropa conference in Poland, I met two extraordinary teachers, Martina Dethloff from Germany, and Branka Dimevska from Macedonia. For a solid week we attended study sessions and walked the streets of Krakow and Warsaw. But in between those sessions, the three of us stole moments during breaks, breakfasts, and dinners to discuss the possibility of a creating a cross boundary project in the virtual world which would involve all our students. To give up class time, we felt that the project needed to be meaningful and relevant, especially because Martina and Branka teach at public schools with highly prescribed curricula. After considering a variety of topics, we decided upon a topic that has global implications, namely, the treatment of minorities within our respective countries. We wanted our students to break down walls and recognize that those things that unite us far outweigh those things that divide us. I want to thank the ninth-grade students from the Walter Rathenau Gymnasium in Berlin and the eighth- and ninth-grade students from Kocho Racin and Johan Hajnrich schools in Skopje for their participation in the project. We hope you enjoy reading the fruits of our labor.

Dr. Jeffrey Ellison

Eighth-Grade History Teacher

Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School



Students from Bernard Zell  
Anshe Emet Day School



Students from the  
Walter Rathenau School



Students from Kado Racin



Students from Pestalozzi

***Cover Design: Rachel Dunn***

***8th-grade student, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School***

“To become a true global citizen, one must abandon all notions of ‘otherness’ and instead embrace ‘togetherness’. The world is no longer white, black, yellow and brown. Through love, tribes have been intermixing colors to reveal a new rainbow world. And as more time passes, this racial and cultural blending will make it harder for humans to side with one race, nation or religion over another. Therefore, practical wisdom should be used to abandon any cultural, social, religious, tribal, and national beliefs of Otherness altogether. This is the only way mankind will truly evolve. Segregation is a word of the past. Unity is the key to a peaceful future.”

— **Suzy Kassem, *Rise Up and Salute the Sun: The Writings of Suzy Kassem***

# Introduction

By Dr. Jeffrey Ellison

Humans have always categorized and judged other humans. Early hominids who saw another group on the African savannah undoubtedly said to themselves: I know who I am, but who is this other group? Are they the same or different? What do I call them? Are they a friend or an enemy? Answering these questions could mean the difference between life and death. However, beginning in the 15th century, with increasing population density, social complexity, and more sophisticated technology, particularly transoceanic travel, interaction between groups, who had rarely come into contact with one another, increased. Complex societies were faced with the same set of questions as our ancestors: I know who I am, but who is this other group? Are they the same or different? What do I call them? Are they a friend or an enemy? Categorization of the Other allowed them to create “order out of chaos.”

The intellectual climate of the times, namely the Enlightenment, shaped how societies created the categories. Reason and science had replaced religion. A key Enlightenment idea, as proclaimed by Thomas Jefferson, was that “all men are created equal,” which should have meant that all peoples, everywhere, were created equal and therefore deserved the same rights. However, Enlightenment thinkers could never make the enormous leap across the chasm: they could not allow themselves to extend a notion of equality to all people. Surely, they believed certain groups, including women, blacks, Jews, indeed all non Europeans, could not be viewed as equals. Thus the idea of equality needed further clarification, reason, and evidence to exclude certain categories.

They needed the help of scientists. Utilizing the theories of Charles Darwin, scientists found the answer to the problems associated with equality, namely eugenics. Eugenics set out to measure, label and create taxonomies of humans, just as Linnaeus had first done with animals, to demonstrate that particular groups deviated from the European norm and could therefore be deemed inferior. The science of eugenics became the religion of modernity and helped create the rationale for mass murder in the 20th century on a scale never before seen in the history of mankind during the Holocaust.

Today in a postmodern world skeptical of both reason and science, rather than viewing humans as members of a single species, Homo Sapiens, too often, we continue to view minorities as the Other. Schools from three different countries and cities, the USA (Chicago), Germany (Berlin), Macedonia (Skopje) were tasked with exploring the concept of the Other within their respective societies: 1) who has been targeted, 2) how does this discrimination manifest itself, 3) what is the impact of this discrimination upon the people themselves, and finally 4) how might we help to change it? For American students the focus was on the discrimination towards African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans; for German students, the focus was discrimination towards Muslim Turks and Jews; and for Macedonian students, the focus was discrimination towards Muslim Turks and Albanians.

## Definitions

In formulating this project, we realized that to even find a word that describes groups who are different is problematic. To call someone a member of a 'minority,' might be interpreted differently. For some, the term minority is purely arithmetic: a minority is a group with fewer members than the dominant population. But for others, the term minority has negative connotations, implying that members of a particular group are 'minor,' i.e. less important, than the majority. We struggled to find a less offensive word. All the terms mentioned in discussions such as "subgroup," "faction," or "component" also carry connotations of objectification and depersonalization. Therefore, the term 'minority' will be used in this booklet. However, the term always should be understood in a positive sense, a group of people who help make the sum of a society greater than the number of its parts. Diversity adds, not diminishes.

The term Other refers to a person or group of people that does not belong. The Other differs from an outsider. An outsider has a chance to fit in, but the Other has no chance of acceptance. Every group creates the Other, irrespective of time or place. Perhaps it is built into our DNA. The Other can be found within families, schools, churches, synagogues, local communities, and nations at large. The Other can be distinguished by skin color, religion, culture, language, dress, and/or behavior. Even minor differences between people can have a major impact. As a result of working with materials from *Facing History and Ourselves*, a difficult question was raised in class: is it differences that cause hate, or does hate cause the differences? In part, the answer might lie in perspective. To a complete outsider, all differences between humans would seem minor and trivial, however, to someone who is a part of and immersed in a particular culture, even small differences can be magnified. Thus for a teacher of an eighth-grade class the differences between students though real might appear to be small when compared to the similarities between them. However, to an eighth-grade student immersed in the culture, how people dress, how they talk, and how they wear their hair, might be enough to differentiate who is out and who is in. In times of crisis, even the smallest differences between people can create fear of the Other and that fear has the potential of turning to hate. The shift begins rather innocuously with a label, a stereotype, but it has the potential to move on to symbolism, isolation, and in its most pernicious form, annihilation. Simply an acknowledgement that it is human nature to find differences and thus have a degree of fear might serve as the cornerstone for preventing that fear from turning to hate.

## Methodology

The project began with students from the U.S., Germany, and Macedonia describing themselves and their families, through a platform called Edmodo in the virtual world, and then students predicted what student lives would be like in other countries. Oftentimes they based their predictions upon stereotypes derived from television and movies. In general, students in the United States, Germany and Macedonia believed that they enjoyed similar things like 'hanging with friends,' watching television, playing sports, and going to the movies. They believed that schools, classes, teachers, and the amount of homework also would be similar. While some accurately assessed life in the Chicago, others had major misperceptions. One student from Macedonia said about Chicago: "The streets are full of Break dancers and Skaters, because many famous Break dancers and Skaters came from there." Students created short video films about their schools. Then they provided short historical narratives explaining how minorities came to their countries and the particular problems they faced. Finally, they conducted interviews with members of the minorities in order to break down the categorizes and stereotypes, for it is only through engagement that the Other becomes Another. The following pages represent but a glimpse of the dialogue that took place among the students.

## Historical background of Minorities:

### In Germany: Muslims

*According to Emilija V., a student from Germany:*

The first Muslims came to Germany as prisoners of war from the Siege of Vienna by the Ottomans (1683). During the course of Russo-Ottoman relations a permanent Ottoman community was established in Berlin in 1763. After the First World War, some 90 Muslim exiles and students remained in Berlin, where they managed to establish a semblance of community life. The "Islamhische Gemeinde in Berlin" [Islamic Community in Berlin] was thus created in 1922, which united some 1,800 members of diverse nationalities and ethnic origin as the "Deutsch-Moslemische Gesellschaft" [German Muslim Society] in 1930.

Muslims came to Germany in greater numbers with the signing of recruitment agreements with Muslim states, such as Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). A stop was put on recruitment during the economic crisis of 1973. As the economic situation in their countries of origin was correspondingly uncertain at the same time, many migrants chose to stay in Germany permanently. Over the course of time they brought their families. Religious and cultural needs, which had been managed on a temporary basis, had to be properly served. As a result, Mosque associations and organizations were set up on a larger scale for this purpose from the mid 1970s.

From the mid 1970s until today, the labor migrants have been joined by Muslims who have come to Germany as refugees and asylum seekers mainly from Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Iraq. Between 3.8 and 4.3 million Muslims from a migrant background live in Germany. Immigrants of Turkish origin constitute the largest group of Muslims in Germany by far. Altogether around 2.5 million Muslims of Turkish background live here. They outstrip by a clear distance 550,000 Muslims from southeast Europe and 330,000 Muslims from the Near East. Altogether, around 1.8 million Muslim migrants with German citizenship and around 2.2 million Muslims with foreign citizenship live in Germany. The vast majority of Muslims live in the old federal states, with not even 2 percent in the new ones.

Since the 1990s an increasing number of Muslim women started to wear headscarves. This fact raised a public discussion. Is it allowed for women who work for the government to wear a headscarf? In March 2015 Germany's top court said in a ruling, that overturned an earlier ban, that Muslim women teachers can wear headscarves as long as it does not cause disruption in school. Interviews with Muslim women show that they feel excluded from the job market by wearing a headscarf (see interviews).

Discrimination and intolerance against Muslims in Germany and the EU has increased since the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. For many Germans the word "Islam" is associated to "terrorism" and "oppression of women." Violence and hostile incidents targeting Muslims and mosques are taking place in Germany on a daily basis, according to the chairman of Germany's Central Council of Muslims, Aiman Mazyek.

For Mazyek part of the blame for the increase in violence is on the rightwing group PEGIDA, which for months has been organizing weekly rallies in the eastern city of Dresden against what it calls the "Islamization" of Europe. The name Pegida stands for "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West," Mazyek said that PEGIDA's influence had nonetheless led directly to the lowering of many people's inhibitions about discriminating against and attacking Muslims.

## Jews

*According to Annshaumia S., a student from Germany:*

Jews lived in Germany since the 4th century. They lived in Cologne, Trier, Mainz and Worms. With the beginning of the First Crusade, 1100, an era of persecution began. Entire communities were murdered by the Crusaders. For many Christians, Jews were held responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. Another accusation was that they murdered young Christian children to take their blood for preparing the Pesach matzah. They also were held responsible for illnesses like pestilence. People said the Jews put germs into the public fountains to spoil them. Throughout the Middle Ages this led to pogroms against Jewish people. They did not have the same rights as ordinary people. They had to wear a yellow round spot on their clothes and had to pay higher taxes than the other citizens. They were not allowed to own land or to work as craftsmen.

In the 19th century the situation slowly improved. Jews got equal rights and they assimilated into German society. Despite that, antisemitism as an ideology developed. When Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the Republic, 550 000 Jewish people lived in Germany. He started a propaganda war against the Jewish people. Jewish students were not allowed to attend public schools. Jews were not allowed to marry a non- Jewish person. They were not allowed to visit theatres and cinemas. Some Jews managed to emigrate to the United States or Great Britain.

With the beginning of World War II in 1939, Jews could not emigrate any more. From all over Germany they were brought to concentration camps and murdered in the gas chambers. Six million European Jews were murdered by the Nazis. After the war, in 1945, only a few Jewish people came back to Germany or had survived in the underground. From 500,000 Jewish people before the war, only 15,000 survived.

Towards the end of 1980, Jews from the Soviet Union were allowed to immigrate to Germany. In the last years there is an increasing number of young Israelis that choose to live in Germany, especially in Berlin. Today, 200,000 Jews live in Germany. Fifty percent of them are members of Jewish congregations.

But there is still anti-Semitism in the German society. Synagogues and Jewish schools need to be protected by police. Jewish gravestones are painted with graffiti. Jewish men who wear a kippot are attacked. Since 2009, there was a decline in anti-Semitic crimes. Most often attacks come from right wing groups. But groups with an Arabic migration background encouraged antisemitism. Many Jewish people prefer not to be visible as a Jew in German public life.

## In Macedonia

*According to Tadej H., a student from Macedonia:*

Macedonia came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in 1392, staying that way for over 500 years up until the Balkan Wars in 1912. During this time, there were obviously many Turks in Macedonia (Editor Note: the majority of citizens in Macedonia are members of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church), although after the fall of the Ottoman Empire the number of Turkish inhabitants drastically fell. It fell even more after WWII. In 1913, around 19 percent of Macedonia's population was Turkish, as opposed to the 3.9 percent of today. Today, Turkish people are accepted and treated equally, both foreign, and those who were born and raised here, but with strong Turkish roots. The 21st of December is the national day of education in Turkish language; they get a holiday leave from work. The first ever Turkish school in Macedonia was built in 1944, from then onward, there have been over sixty schools to offer lessons in Turkish. Also, Turkish soap operas are widely spread throughout the country, but are dubbed in Macedonian. Both Turkish and "Macedonian Turkish" have the same holidays, although those born here also celebrate Macedonian traditions, some have adopted our religion and beliefs, it really depends on how far back their roots go.

Albanians have been in Macedonia for centuries. Their ancestors are the Iliri tribes. For the past century, maybe more, there has been increased migration, and most of them migrated to Macedonia from Albania and Kosovo. The Albanians tend to have a greater number of children compared to the Macedonians who have a growing mortality rate. Today, Albanians comprise about 20 percent of Macedonia's population. The problems between Albanians and Macedonians have both religious and national components

## In America: African Americans

*According to a group of students from Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School:*

Beginning in the late 1600s, Africans were kidnapped, sold, and transported by ship to America. Sold at auctions, they were treated as possessions by their owners. Oftentimes, their living and working conditions were brutal and their African heritage, language, traditions, religion, as well as their families were ripped away. In the early 1800s, some people in the Northern states began to understand how this treatment of the African-Americans violated the very principles upon which the country was founded. One by one, the Northern states abolished slavery but the Southern states refused to follow suit as slavery had become so integral to their way of life. The controversy and debate simmered between the North and the South until on April 12, 1861, when it erupted into a brutal Civil War. Led by Abraham Lincoln, the president at the time, the North won the War and slavery was abolished on April 9, 1865. But abolition did not solve the problem of racial inequality. In 1868, when the 14th Amendment was passed, making African Americans full citizens, 373 freed slaves were killed by whites. Beginning in 1877, Jim Crow laws were passed in many Southern states. These laws forced African Americans to use separate facilities from white Americans, and those facilities were always worse. Separate was not equal.

In 1954, in a landmark case entitled *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court (the highest ranking court) ruled that public school segregation was illegal, leading to the integration of races in America's public schools and the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, when Rosa Parks

refused to sit at the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, the African American community, led by Martin Luther King, organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Peaceful protests reverberated throughout the South, but in many cases, these protests were met with violence as whites refused to grant them equality. The culmination of this phase of the Civil Rights Movement occurred in 1961 with the famous March on Washington, and one of the most inspirational speeches ever made in American history, Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech.

In 1964, the United States government passed the Civil Rights Act, which banned discrimination against the races. Sadly, King was assassinated on April 4 1968, but this murder did not bring an end to the Civil Rights Movement. Instead, it sparked a new phase calling for Black Power. Though much has changed in America over time, as demonstrated by the election of our first African American president, the struggle for equality continues. The life span of African Americans is shorter, their unemployment rate is higher, and their level of poverty far outpace those of white Americans. In the past year, shootings of African Americans by white policemen has sparked violent protests and riots in Ferguson, Missouri, Baltimore, Maryland, and Chicago, Il., demonstrating that full equality is still a dream yet to be realized.

## Asian Americans

*According to a group of students from the Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School:*

Asians have been migrating to the United States for centuries. The first instance of Asian immigration was in the 1580s with the immigration of a group of Filipinos, known as the Luzonians, to what is now California. These people later established their own settlement near New Orleans, Louisiana. Asians emigrated in large numbers from their homelands with the news of gold in California, which was referred to by immigrants as *gam saan* (gold mountain). Later, during the 1870s, large numbers of Asian immigrants, mostly originating from China, Korea, Japan and the Philippines, migrated into Hawaii as private contract laborers for sugar plantations as a result of Japanese imperialism, and growing famine and poverty in Korea. By the 1900s, tens of thousands of private laborers had emigrated from Asia to the United States.

Soon after the first major wave of immigration of Asians, the Pacific Coast race riots started. The riots were the result of tension between Asians and existing European settlers, and resulted in violence against the increasing Asian population during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1917, The Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917 was passed, which prohibited all immigration into the United States and its territories from a zone that encompassed Southeast Asia, South Asia (British India), and the Middle East. The bill marked the beginning of a period known as the Exclusion Era, which would end in 1943 with the Magnuson Act, as China became an ally against Japan during WWII. A low point in American history occurred when Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Asian Americans today still face many challenges in America, such as racism. In a recent poll, 31 percent of Asian Americans surveyed reported incidents of employment discrimination, the largest of any group. Nearly 20 percent of Asian American students is classified as Limited English Proficient, and or lives in a linguistically isolated household where parents have limited English proficiency. Twenty percent of Asian Americans experience discrimination in the rental and home buying process.

## Hispanic Americans

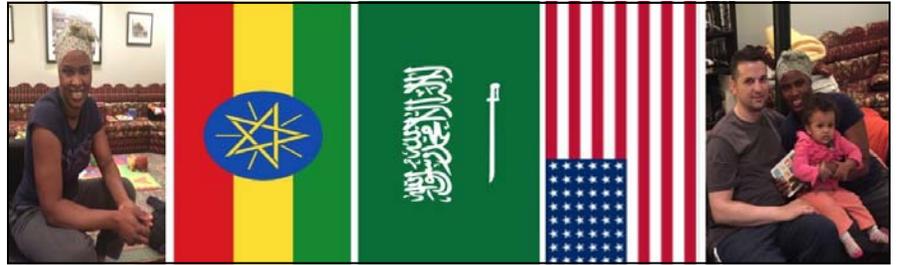
*According to a group of students from Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School:*

Hispanic American refers to people who come from a variety of Spanish speaking countries. The ten largest populations by origin are: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Columbians, Hondurans, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians. They comprise roughly 92 percent of the total American Hispanic population. The largest population, 65 percent of all Hispanics, trace their origins to Mexico. Mexican Americans are among the oldest and newest inhabitants of the nation. Mexicans were already living in the Southern and Western regions of the North American continent centuries before the United States existed. Not until the Mexican American War, 1846-1848, did the United States annex states that today comprise Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Today, 33 million Americans identify themselves as having Mexican origin and in recent years, they have become one of the most influential social, cultural, and political groups in the country. Their influence can be felt in every aspect of culture: including language, politics, food, music, dance, art, and media. Their influence will only continue to increase in the years to come. When compared to other foreign-born populations Hispanic Americans are more likely to have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), less education, lower incomes, and higher rates of unemployment.

## Student Interviews of Minorities:

### USA

Nadiya Usman is someone who is very close to me and has been a friend since I was an infant. She is an amazing, loving person with so much energy. She is someone who went through so much to get to the point she is at now. She was born and raised in Ethiopia, Africa, with her mother and father. When she was in her late teens she was forced to move to Saudi Arabia because of tension building in her country and her parents' political views. She hated living in Saudi Arabia because 'everyone treats you terribly and discriminates



against you.' After one year she moved to America with only the change in her pocket. She did not speak any English or know any people. She was so ignorant of snow that she purchased a jean jacket thinking that it would be adequate for a Chicago winter. She loved it so much more in the U.S. because 'everyone is willing to help you out and is friendly.' She got a job at an Ethiopian restaurant and was able to buy an apartment and meet her best friend and future husband.

She began babysitting which is how I met her. She is now a U.S. citizen living with her husband and daughter.

— Josh M.



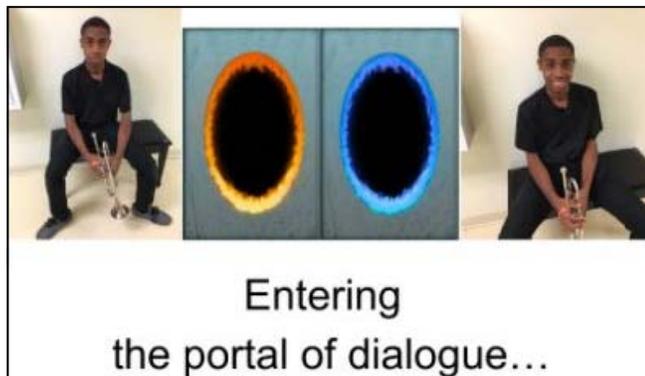
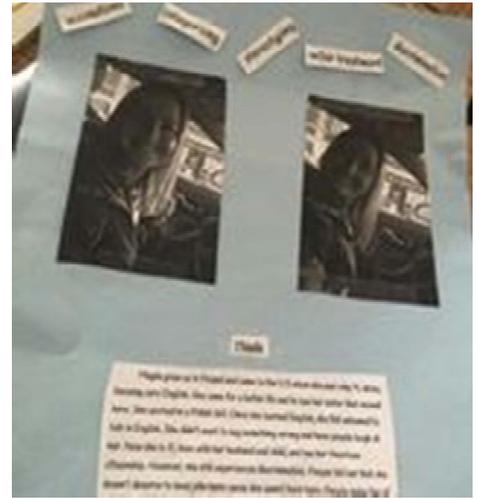
I interviewed my babysitter Laura or as we call her Baba. Baba is a Jew from the Soviet Union, which today is called Russia. She moved from Russia to America in the 1970s. During the period of time that Baba was living in Russia, she faced an enormous amount of anti-Semitism. In the interview, Baba talked about how moving to America was a positive experience because America is a place where she was "equal and free." Although moving to America was good for her, she experienced difficulty getting used to American society and culture. Baba had a

difficult time learning English and finding a paying job. Baba also explained that, in trying to fit into American culture, she had to leave some of her own culture behind.

— Nati L.

Magda grew up in Poland and came to the U.S. when she was only nineteen. She was alone and knew 'zero' English. She came for a better life and to live with her sister who had previously moved here. She worked in a Polish deli. Once she learned a little English, she felt ashamed to speak in English. She did not want to say something wrong and have people laugh at her. Now she is thirty-one, lives with her husband and child, and has her American citizenship. However, she still experiences discrimination. People tell her that she does not deserve to have a job here because she was not born here. People make fun of her accent. People 'shame her roots.'

— Lily L.



Chris is one of my friends at Merit School Of Music (where I go to play music every Saturday). I never really had a deep conversation with him until this interview. Chris and I had a very interesting conversation, but what really stood out to me was his feelings about social injustice and how it feels to live as an African American in America. What we learn in school is very different from the ideas he expressed. We learn that black children grow up

living in fear from the white man and police. What my friend said was that there will always be hate in the world, and in the U.S., a little more towards blacks, but he says you can not let that fear take over, or else you are giving into the hatred.

— Nathan A.

This is Willie. He grew up in Guatemala. His wife moved to America with their 4-year-old daughter and he rode in a bus and crossed a river to get to America to be with them. I created a drawing that depicts some images from his life. There is a Guatemalan and American flag and a Guatemalan saying: 'A full stomach feels no pain.' There is a picture of a tree because in Guatemala, he cared for trees and a picture of a stove because in Guatemala he loved to cook. In the middle of the drawing, there is a heart because he has love for both countries and because he loves his wife and daughter. In the American flag, I included a screw and wrench because he is a building engineer, a baseball, because he went to his first baseball game in America, and a medical kit because he was hurt doing his job. He is now a U.S. citizen and he has faced discrimination throughout his life but did not want to discuss it.

— Sadie A.



I interviewed my babysitter's daughter's husband who is from Guatemala. He moved to America to receive a better education. When he immigrated, the hardest part was learning English. Fortunately, the school he attended had a highly diverse population so he experienced little discrimination.

— *George A.*

Byron moved to to America in 2005 because in Guatemala they did not have a good school Music producing.




Alfredo Ayala works as a doorman in my apartment building. He is 28-years-old, and was born in Chicago. He is the youngest child in his family and has three sisters who were born in Michoacan, Mexico but who all live in Chicago now. One sister is a nurse and another is a housewife. His father works in a restaurant as a chef. He is a student at Coyne Trade School, studying electronics. When his parents were children in Mexico, they did not receive a strong education, so he is glad to have the opportunity to learn a vocation he loves. Alfredo said that he has faced discrimination throughout his life.

— *Sammy Z.*

The person I interviewed, Zahid Yaqub, is an American Muslim who lives in the suburbs of Chicago. His parents lived in India, but moved to Pakistan out of a concern for their safety. They moved to America when he was one-week-old for a better life. Zahid's home was very unstable in past generations, but his religion has always stayed strong in his heart.

"I will always be Muslim no matter where I am."

— *Missing Student Name*




The person I interviewed, Zahid Yaqub, was an American Muslim who lived the Suburbs of Chicago. His grandparents lived in India, but moved to Pakistan because of their safety. Zahid Yaqub parents lived in Pakistan and moved to America when he was a week old for a better life. Zahid Yaqub home has been very unstable in the past generations, but his religion has always stayed strong in his heart.

**"I will always be Muslim no matter where I am"- Zahid Yaqub**

Karla cleans houses for a living. She grew up in Guatemala. Most of her family still lives in Guatemala including her son. She said 'it's really hard not to see her son everyday.' Her first day in Chicago was

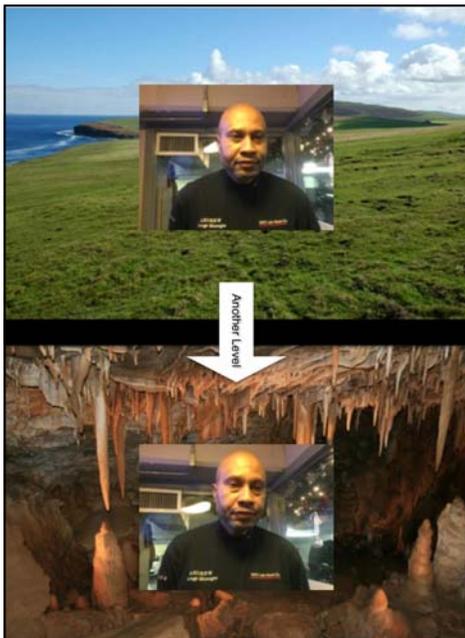
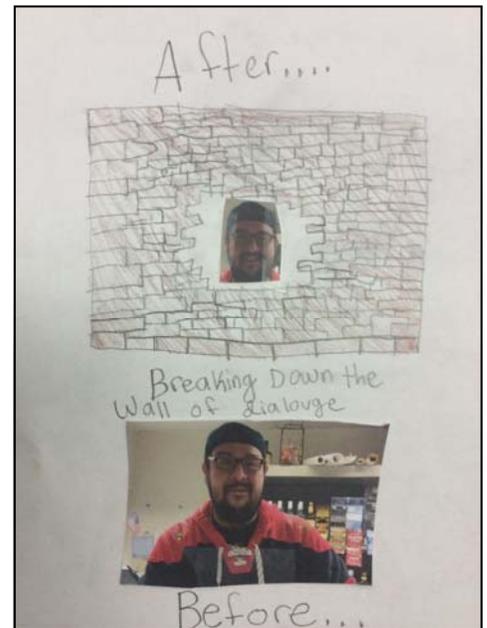


difficult because she was alone without family or friends. Her neighborhood mostly consisted of African Americans and she was frightened. Now, she has lived in Chicago for 6 years. As much as she loves and misses Guatemala, she likes Chicago more because she feels safer. My picture shows that she was happy in Guatemala and a picture of her not smiling because she was so nervous on the first day arriving to Chicago. The arrow represents her transition from Guatemala to America.

— Jordana K.

I interviewed a Mexican American man who works at a little corner store near my house. He goes by Big E but his real name is Everotocoss. He grew up in the Jefferson Park area of Chicago and has lived here for his entire life. He began working at the store which is called Clarendon Grocery when he was thirteen. He has worked there, on and off, for 25 years. He experienced discrimination as a student in public school. He said it was like a race war where one group would fight with another group just because of their ethnicity. He said that 'this was very wrong.'

— Jacob R.



This is Andrew. He was born in Louisiana and moved to Chicago when he was one-year-old. Today, he works as a garage manager in my apartment building. Before I interviewed him, I knew him very well but I did not know his life story. We have grown much closer because of my interview. It was amazing to hear about his life.

— Michael M.

Hong is an immigrant from China who came to the U.S. in search of a better education, and to escape violence that arose as a result Chinese political reform in the 80's and 90's. Because she was well educated, and knew the English language well, she fared well in American society. However, faring well never comes without its costs. Because cold war tensions were still in the air at the time she came to the U.S., it wasn't uncommon for her to be looked on with suspicion as a Communist sympathizer.

— *Will B.*



Camelia Patron is an acquaintance who I met at a test tutoring session. I had only seen her a couple of times, but we exchanged phone numbers and got together to see the movie “The Martian.” The movie was sold out, so instead, we headed to Potbelly, where we talked for a long time. I learned that she originally lived in Texas and moved here with her father and stepmother. She was 14. Eventually, her parents divorced so she travelled back and forth from Texas to Chicago. When she got older and school became more serious, her mother enrolled her in an all girls school

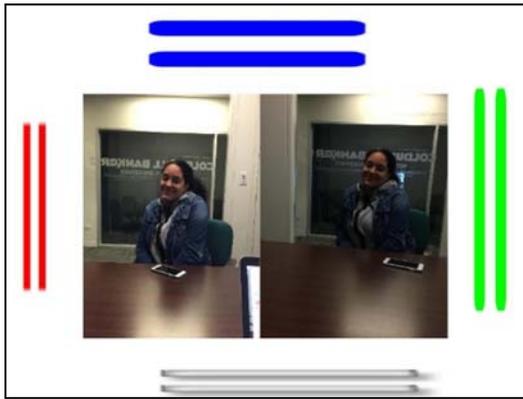
so she would not be distracted by boys. She had a problem with that, so, she decided to live in Chicago with her father. Camelia will enter Jones College Preparatory School next year and will graduate in 2020.

— *Max Last Name Initial?*

Palesha Taylor is a thirteen-year-old girl who attends a mostly white school in River Forest. She is the oldest of four children in her family. Palesha has faced discrimination at her school because of her race. Being a young teenager, acts of discrimination affected her a great deal. It made her feel ‘uncomfortable.’ Currently, Palesha has found friends who accept her for who she is. She has not been faced with discrimination since then, but it changed the way she views people. She is more conscious of race, culture, and ethnicity.

— *Olivia H.*





Deanna "Dee" Nogueras recently started working with my father. Her mother was born in Puerto Rico. Dee was born in Chicago and went to school at Welles High School. Dee has not faced any obvious discrimination in America although her father has. Dee believes everybody should be treated equally because 'race is a false concept.'

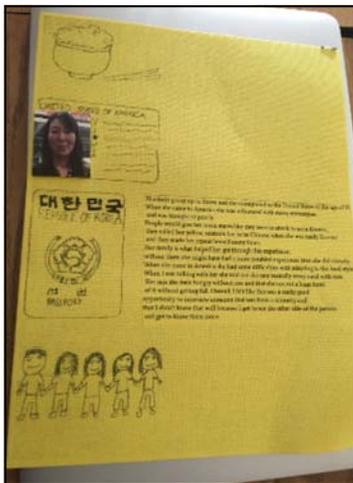
— Justin S.



Rosalina's family is from Puerto Rico, but she has lived in Chicago her whole life. Her favorite holiday is Three Kings Day, or El Dia De Los Reyes in Spanish. In Puerto Rico, they celebrate Three Kings Day, not Christmas. It is on January 6th. The Three Kings come and give the children presents under the tree. Rosalina's family has many different depictions of the three kings in their home and each is different. They are very proud of their culture and they love to share their traditions.

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— Sara G.



My family takes their dry cleaning to Elizabeth's store. She grew up in Korea and immigrated to the United States at the age of 14. When she came to America people viewed her stereotypically. People would give her mean stares like they were in shock to see an Asian, they called her 'yellow,' and mistook her for Chinese when she is really Korean. They made her repeat herself many times because they could not understand her accent. When she came to America she had trouble adapting to the food. 'She can't eat a meal without rice.' She believes, 'without her family, she could not have made the transition.'

— Brooke K.

I interviewed a Jewish woman named Bertha Kalman who fled Touchen, Poland because of the Holocaust. She fled to Italy where her family found refuge in an army camp. After the war she moved to Argentina where she met her late husband Adam Kalman. She was very young when the war started, but from that experience, she learned to always cherish her family.

— Adina K.



Marlon Gallimore was born in Jamaica in 1967 and moved to Toronto, Canada when he was 8. At age twelve, he moved to Chicago where he met my father and they became best friends. He had to overcome the challenge of fitting into a completely different society. In my interview with him he described the challenge of overcoming stereotypes based upon the color of his skin. He was able to overcome these stereotypes by making sure he did the best he could in everything.

— *Jake H.*



The art piece I have created is about an entrance into the realm of dialogue. I was able to enter this realm because of an interview I had with my friend Billy. Billy is half Filipino, he is 14 years old. Everyday he is discriminated against, it may be in small ways but it still hurts.

— *Jack T.*

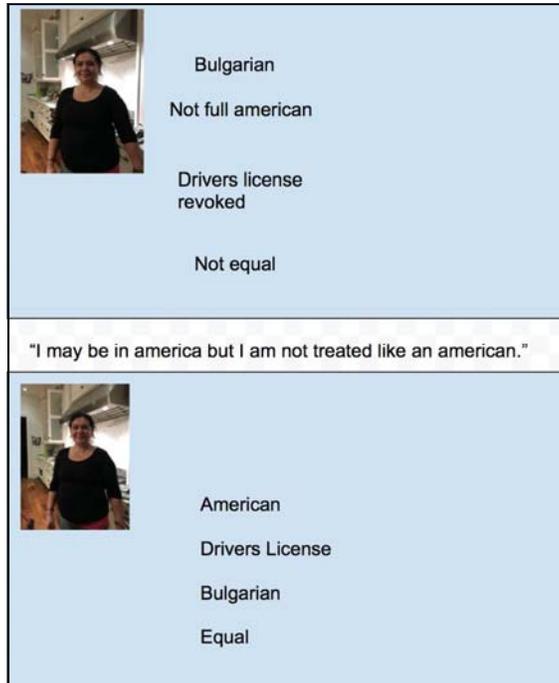
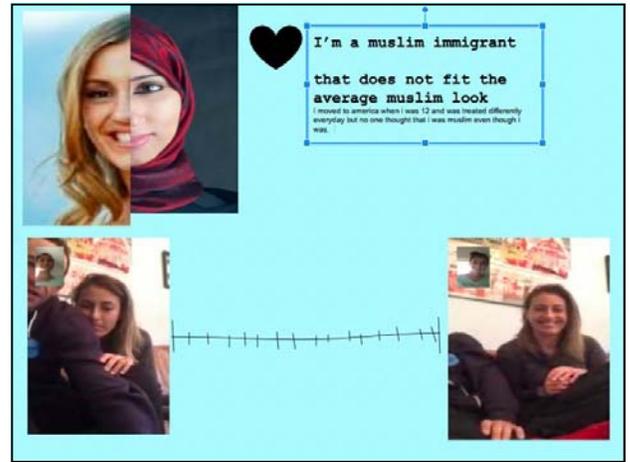
Ruby is a thirteen-year-old adopted African American girl. She does not know much about her background. She was adopted by two mothers, one of whom is Jewish, while the other is Christian. Ruby has a picture of her birth mother, but not of her birth father. She has not met either of them and does not know where they live or why they gave her up for adoption. In my artwork, I depicted the importance of our interview, which was held in Ruby's house. Before Ruby and I engaged in dialogue, she was 'in space' and in her own world, her background was unknown. As we talked, she seemed more comfortable with herself and more comfortable talking with me. After Ruby and I talked, she figuratively entered my world. The glasses in this art piece represent the dialogue and Ruby herself coming into focus. Although Ruby does not know much about her background, at least she has dialogue to connect herself with the world.

— *Hannah R.*



I interviewed my aunt from Bosnia who had a hard life after coming to America. She was treated very poorly in her youth and that stayed with her even as an adult. She feels like a full American now but it took lots of time.

— *Andie B.*

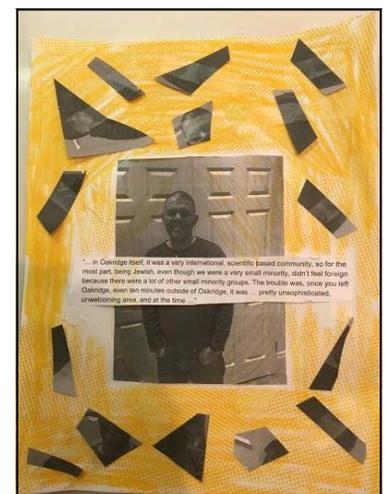


My babysitter is Geri. The two drivers' licenses represent how she is not treated equally or fairly. One license is American, the other is Bulgarian. She is happy as a Bulgarian but is hiding her sadness as an American.

— *Elliot S.*

Ilan Huberman-Shlaes is a 47-year-old Jewish American. He grew up in Israel and moved to the United States when he was eight years old. I chose to interview him because as a Jew who lived in the South, and I wanted to know what it was like to live there. He told me how he faced prejudice whenever he left the city. He also told me a story about how the Ku Klux Klan came to his synagogue (place of worship of Jews) and burned a cross. The Ku Klux Klan is a hate group that spread prejudice throughout the South. In this picture, we see Ilan smiling in the center of the page. The center of the page represents safety, as you can see him smiling. However, as you get further and further away from the center, the page starts, slowly, to fill up with orange. This symbolizes two things. First of all, it represents the fire that burned outside of Ilan's synagogue. Secondly, the orange symbolizes the hate and prejudice that he felt every time he stepped outside of his city.

— *Judah H.*





Jasmine works at my father's office. She is Puerto Rican. Above the pictures is an important quote she said to me. She said "people did not know if I was black or white." I thought about that and realized that you cannot always tell who someone is by what they look like. She said that some people where she is from look lighter and some people look darker so sometimes it's hard to tell. In the end, it really should not make a difference.

— *David O.*

Mario is from Mexico and has lived in America for fifteen years now. He works as a Spanish tutor—he tutored my brother in Spanish. He also records data in a technology department. He feels that being around people of other cultural backgrounds is a time to learn about different cultures. Although he does enjoy learning about other cultures, he lives in a Mexican neighborhood. As much as people want to immerse themselves in learning about other countries, he believes that people seem to surround themselves with people like them, "birds of a feather flock together." While people may like to be around people of different cultures, they feel most included or welcomed when they are with people of a similar background.



— *Hannah J.*



This is Ramiro. He was born in Ecuador. He has lived in Chicago for fifteen years now. He continues many traditions that his family started when he was young. One of his favorites is eating guinea pig. In Ecuador, guinea pig is considered a delicacy and is eaten by many people. Surprisingly, Ramiro has faced discrimination a few times. One time he was working as a busboy at a restaurant. He was new to the English language. He was told many offensive things that he was not able to understand. Eventually, his friend told him what had been said to him. He was very hurt and sad that people could treat him so terribly. Now, he works as a contractor and handyman. He enjoys his work and the freedom that America provides to him. However, he still misses Ecuador and the traditions that he grew up with.

— *Claire I.*

Yaheed is an African American teenager from Saint Louis, Missouri. He sometimes encounters difficulties because of his race. In his interview, he noted that his brother was once beaten in the back of a police car, because he was *accused* of stealing computers from a school. When I think of how white people are treated compared to African Americans, I realize that it is really hard for them and it is not fair.

— Noah L.



I interviewed Edith Keme, a 21-years-old African immigrant who came to America when she was just six years old from Togo, a small country in West Africa. She graduated from a Chicago high school in 2012 and then went on to Denison University in Granville, Ohio. This year, however, she returned to her hometown of Chicago to figure out what she wants to do with her life. In our interview, I found her answer to my question about challenges minorities face in the United States particularly interesting.

"Someone once in my life told me you have two options: choose a job that you really love to do, and have that be

your life. Work all the time, and love your job while you're doing it and feel fulfilled. Or, do a job that you don't really care about and live your life outside of your job. [Unfortunately,] lots of minorities are forced to do the latter because they don't really have the resources to do what they want to do and fulfill their own hearts and live their lives."

— Jared S.

Marirose is a Filipino woman, who moved to America in 1994. As I interviewed her, I learned about her struggles in coming to America. Getting American citizenship was not easy and it took her a long time. I asked her how long it took: She said it took 6 years. "There's a lot of stuff you have to go through." There are multiple tests you have to take and lots of papers that need to be filed. On the top left of my picture, I drew a Filipino flag on her face, and on the bottom right I drew an American flag on her face to represent the transition from being a Filipino citizen to an American citizen. I was inspired by her story.



— Rachel D.

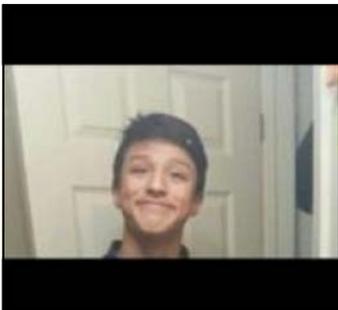


Jon is a Filipino man who worked as a bellboy at my hotel in Hawaii. When I first saw him, he looked kind and compassionate, so I approached him. Jon talked about his experience of being an immigrant child and said that children discriminate against immigrants because they do not understand difference.

— *Max L.*

'I am 46 years old and I am from Guatemala. I came to the U.S. when I was 14 years old. My name is Lorena but I go by my middle name, Isabel, because I came to the U.S. legally but overstayed my visit. I experienced discrimination right in front of my daughter. I was in line first but another woman was treated first, only because of my ethnicity. It felt terrible. It still feels terrible.'

— *Jordan R.*



This is Santiago. He is a 13-year-old Mexican American. Both of his parents were born in Mexico but he was born in the U.S. He shared stories of discrimination. During a basketball game he was called a "wetback" which is a derogatory term towards Mexicans. He also described a time when he was not allowed to play football in a park with a group of children because he is Mexican. Currently, Santiago plays on a soccer team where he is one of two Mexicans on an otherwise white team. Santiago is regularly dealing with being different from everyone else because he is Mexican. Santiago

says his family stays connected to their heritage by speaking Spanish, celebrating holidays like Day of the Dead, and Mexican Independence Day. He also says his family eats a lot of Mexican food. For example, he eats tortillas: Mexican flatbread, with most meals. Santiago is proud of his roots and his family. He integrates Mexican traditions into American ones.

— *Jack L.*

### Carina's Story

Carina is a kind woman from Argentina who moved to the United States. The following are quotes from Carina about her feelings about coming to the U.S.:

"Of course people treat me differently here in the United States. I understand why...I am different from the majority of everyone else. I just try not to let it affect me."

"When I arrived in America, I didn't speak any English. So when I would go to the grocery store and other public places, people would scream words at me thinking it would help me understand when really it just made me feel even more uncomfortable. The change of cultures was pretty hard for me in this way."

— *Marisa K.*



This is Dee Dee, she was my babysitter when I was a child. Dee Dee was born in Chicago and went to school at Lincoln Park High School. A big major part of Dee Dee's life revolves around Church and being with her family every Sunday morning. Singing and the idea of togetherness are important to her. When Dee Dee was a child she was faced with discrimination and it impacted her by making her a stronger person. She embraces her culture and who she is and she still feels she is discriminated against because of the color of her skin.

— *Dani C.*

Olga Gordia is a 56 year old woman who was born in Guatemala. She was raised by her grandparents and became a teacher. When she was 25 years old, she came to the U.S. as a political refugee. Almost immediately she experienced discrimination. The immigration people let others go first because she was Latino. To this day, though it may be more discreet, she still feels that she is discriminated against because of her ethnicity.

— *Micah D.*

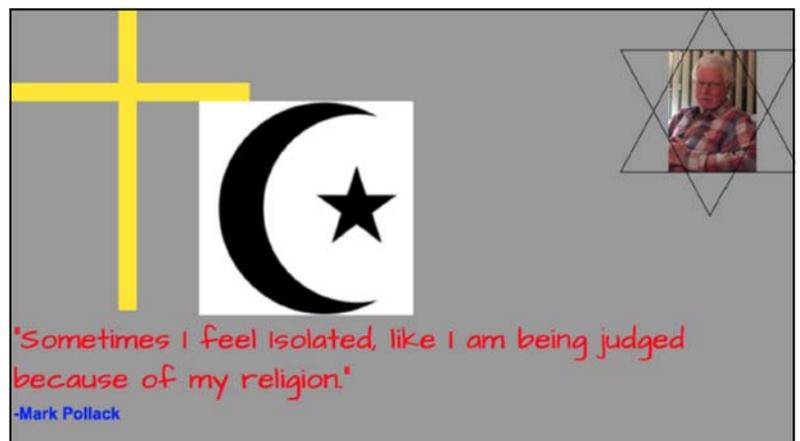




Hagit is a Jew who immigrated from Israel. She came to America when she was in her 20s. She had a difficult time adjusting to America because she did not look or sound like everyone else, as she spoke mostly Hebrew. She is now an American citizen. My picture represents the transition between how she felt at the beginning of her journey to America and how she feels now.

— Abby S.

This image represents my grandfather's feeling of isolation because of his Judaism. This feeling began when he was a young boy, and the first time he heard an anti-Semitic joke. Now throughout his life he feels that he is being judged because he is Jewish. The cross and the Islamic crescent represent the majority of the world. The Jewish star with him in the middle of it depicts his feeling of isolation. My grandpa, Mark Pollack is 75 years old and now lives in Milwaukee.



— Jeremy S.



Linda has been a friend of my mother's since college. Her family arrived from Thailand when she was young. She told me a story about how difficult life was in America when they first arrived. Her family bought dog food and made stew with it because they could not read label which was in English. Also, she told a story about her father's difficulty in renting an apartment because he was Chinese.

— Nate H.

## Kareem (K.W.O.E) Wells

This is Kareem (K.W.O.E) Wells. He is a DJ, activist for rights of all races, and rapper. He writes all his own music and all of it has to do with peace. He regularly goes to the South Side and speaks to children and tells them his story. He does not want them to end up on the path that he followed, where he was in a gang but then left and started his own company, FLOW Entertainment. His company is very successful and he is now going back to college to get his GED. Kids ask him why he is going back to school after he made enough money to last many years.



## Kareem (K.W.O.E) Wells

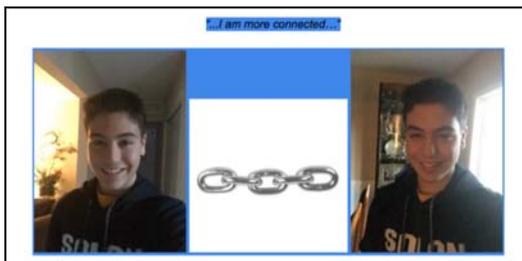
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“Have you ever been discriminated against as kid or adult living in Chicago?”

“Yes I have, for instance, I had just finished a Bar Mitzvah, I was coming home, I had on my sneakers, and I had on a Hugo Boss suit. I got on the elevator and there was an old lady in the elevator, she was white. When I got in, she clenched her purse. I said ‘You don’t have enough money in your purse for me to snatch it, so you are perfectly fine.’ I said ‘I live here, I really do. I really live in this building, in fact I have a penthouse in this building.’

“It happens all the time. I was in Highland Park, coming home from a meeting for a Bar Mitzvah and I was driving a nice BMW at the time. I’m on my way coming back to the city and I get stopped by the cops. I wasn’t going fast or over the limit or nothing like that. I got pulled over because I was driving a pretty sick BMW at the time. They pulled me over with nothing on me and asked ‘Can I search your car?’ I don’t mind entertaining him so I said ‘sure no problem, go ahead.’”

— Max



I interviewed Scott Ravida. He is 14 years old and lives in Cleveland, Ohio. Scott goes to my camp but we did not talk very much. Scott is Jewish and does not go to synagogue often. One of his favorite hobbies is playing basketball and he is a fan of the Cavaliers. Even though Scott usually does not have a strong connection to Judaism, after he had his Bar Mitzvah, he felt more connected with his roots. Fortunately,

Scott has not experienced discrimination, but does think it is wrong and should never happen because we are all human beings.

— Adam P.

## Germany

### Jews

Unfortunately a planned meeting between students from the Walter Rathenau School and a Jewish school in Berlin did not come to pass. However, students had the opportunity to hear and speak with Leon Schwarzbaum, a survivor of Auschwitz who lives in Berlin, close to the Walter Ratheanu Gymnasium.

*Leon Schwarzbaum told them:*

Now I am 95 years old. When I was young, I wanted to play music in a band and make sports. But after my high school diploma in 1939, I have to live with my parents in the ghetto of Bendzin. I could not go to the university. I was born in Hamburg. When I was a small child we moved to Bendzin because we had many relatives there. In 1943 I was deported to Auschwitz, a few weeks later my parents followed and were murdered in the gas chambers. In 1945 I was sent on a death march to Gleiwitz, Buchenwald, Berlin, and Sachsenhausen. I was freed in May near Schwerin by the U.S. army. After the war, I went back to Poland to find some of my relatives, but they were all killed. So I came back to Berlin and started together with my wife a new life. We ran a shop with antique furniture near Kadewe. The years after the war I was not discriminated against because I was Jewish. But nowadays I feel that antisemitism is increasing again. Be happy that you had not to experience what I experienced. I tell you democracy is the best system that exists. Fight and stand up for the democratic values. Practice sports so that you stay healthy. Sports helped me to survive.



**Editor Note:** Leon Schwarzbaum is currently involved in a trial of Reinhold Hanning, a guard at the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Schwartzbaum is one of the plaintiff in the case. Hanning is accused of being an accessory to the murder of at least 170,000 in the camp. A verdict is expected sometime this month. Further information about this trial can be found at the [bbc.com](http://bbc.com).

## Muslims

Some of the students from Berlin went to a Turkish mosque (Sehitlik) to interview young Muslims. Most of the Muslims did not want to be photographed which probably reveals their concern about safety in today's Germany.



Emily and Louie with interview partners Sena and Aziz

*This is one of the interviews with a young man whose name is Aziz. He is 27 years old. This is what he told me:*

I was born in Germany and I have the German citizenship. My everyday life is like the everyday life of everybody else, apart from the fact that I have my obligations in Islamic religion. The one and only difference is that I/we pray five times a day. Additionally I pay much attention to what I eat, that means I don't eat pork and don't drink alcohol.

I started studying engineering but I stopped because I am a little bit lazy about learning. While studying I applied at BVG (the Berlin transport company) and work at the commercial department in the headquarter of BVG. I really like it.

I try to hold on the five pillars of Islamic religion. I go to the mosque every Wednesday and also try to go there on Friday. Friday is a very religious day in Islamic religion. Because of my work I can't always go to the mosque on Fridays. I try to pray five times a day. It's difficult to pray in the morning because often it's very early. I try to get up, but sometimes I fall asleep again. Then I pray later. I have not been on the pilgrimage yet, but want to do this definitely, when I have the financial conditions to do that.

In my opinion wearing a headscarf is important. If society accepts and tolerates women wearing a headscarf, if everything works harmoniously, I support wearing a headscarf.

I was raised by my parents, who are also Muslims. This is the reason why I am Muslim. As I got older I decided to agree to Islamic religion. I have many Muslim friends, but also German friends. The relationship with my Muslim friends is more intense.

I think there are prejudices against Muslims in Germany. I understand that, because we are strongly influenced by the media. There is mainly negative information about the Islam, for example terrorism. If somebody has a beard and carries a bag, people are scared and keep a distance, because they think there is a bomb inside my bag.

I have never been insulted. I wish that we will be tolerated. Here in Berlin there live people with different origins and religions, this makes Berlin different.

It's terrible that ISIS kills people. Muslims in Berlin also keep a distance to ISIS. In the Koran it is written that mankind was created by Allah. Why should religious Muslims destroy the creations of Allah?

The Islamic religion bans the causeless killing of innocent people.

I understand people who are against refugees. Parents in Germany bring their children to school. They should have PE there in gyms, but it is not possible, because refugees are accommodated there. Although I don't understand why we shouldn't take the refugees. We all live on the same planet and are supposed to help each other.

*Translated from German to English by me, Emilija **Last Name Initial?***

### *Rabi, 21 years*

I was born and grew up in Berlin. I am a German citizen. I'm very busy. In the morning I go to university. I study Turkish language and culture in the third semester. As well I am working as a shop assistant at the Fossil Company. I have four siblings and a big family. It's always busy. I am not a person who prays five times a day, but I'm religious. I have never thought about wearing a headscarf, but this might also change. My parents have two different Muslim religions, which is sometimes really difficult. Sometimes it isn't easy because there is a conflict between these two religions in Turkey. My mother started to wear a headscarf after she married with my father. Sometimes I don't care about religion. The family of my father want me to be more religious. I used to go to the Koran school, but this is no fun. Because of the pressure I finished that. But here in the Sehelikmoshee it's really nice. Most of my friends are Muslims. I really think that there is a hostility against Muslims. There is an hostility against women, who wear headscarves. What is different, when I wear a headscarf? I am always a human being. Some people think that women with headscarves don't understand German. After the 11th September 2001 people think all Muslims are the same. Especially after the latest attacks in Paris. My motto in life is "live with love." I wish that people would live with each other without prejudices. Everyone should live without prejudices. In German we are very serious society. To just be friendly sometimes is important, I think just help somebody. For example offer the seat in the underground to an older person. I think humor is important. I love to make fun about everything and everyone. I also laugh about jokes about the Islam. I mean you also laugh about jokes about being Jewish or Christian.

### *Sercan, 27*

I have always lived in Germany and I work in a transport company. I go to the mosque as often as possible and I try to do it regularly. In my opinion, women should wear headscarves to not get insulted by other men. But it's their own decision. I chose my religion by myself. Most of my friends are Muslims. I feel a little bit discriminated, but it's not that bad. I wish, that you won't think of all Muslims as terrorists. I think ISIS doesn't live by the rules of the Koran.

### *Sena, 18*

I was born and grew up in Germany. I lived in "Wedding" but moved to "Tiergarten" because of the better education. There I am a German-Turkish citizen. Now I am go to university and study Biotechnology at the TU (Technical University), but I will change to FU (Free University) and study Biochemistry. I have a part-time job in "dm." I work there two or three days a week.

I spend most time in the mosque. In the past, I never went to the mosque. For one year, I have gone to the mosque now, three or four times a week. Since I am 15 years old, I have prayed regularly. When I was 15 years old, I made a pilgrimage to Mecca with my mother. There, I understood, the meaning of praying. I do everything as I like. I think that prayer brings different people together. It doesn't matter which social status you have all people are equal. There I found my passion in my life.

For half a year I have been wearing a headscarf. I do wear the headscarf voluntarily. There are prejudices against women wearing headscarves. People think they are forced to do so. If I had been forced, I would have done the opposite. I think that I needed some time to encourage myself. I was afraid that I could be excluded from the community. I couldn't find a job too. My mother, who works at a dentist's office, cannot wear a headscarf. I think it is right to cover up my body, for my character sets into the foreground. I like to be noticed through my character. I think it is difficult to pray, if you don't believe in it. My parents taught me to pray, but I had to convince myself. It is difficult to pray, without any conviction. My friends are mixed. I have Turkish friends, who aren't religious. They have a problem with my way of life. I don't like friendships like that. My best friend is Christian our friendship is good, because we respect each other with our religions. She doesn't have prejudices towards me and my religion. The Media show a wrong image about the Islam. There are thoughts that the Islam might be terrorist. But the reality is different. More than 90% Muslims are peaceful.

In my neighborhood, where I have been living for 13 years, my neighbor has decided to call me "Mummy," because I now wear a headscarf. My Aunt told me that the woman often made negative remarks against immigrants. I don't know the woman, but I can't accept it!

I hope that people are friendly to each other. It doesn't matter which religion or which origin you have.

### *Burak, 26*

I have lived my whole life in Germany and studied business sciences. I think there is no weak or strict, either you are religious or not. I go to the mosque three or four times a week. I have never been on a pilgrimage, but in the course of time I really want to do it. I think that women have to wear headscarves, because they hide their beauty and are not insulted. There is some discrimination against Muslims for example, when wearing headscarves then they get some weird attention. They are stared at and people get out of their way.

When you wear traditional clothes and some people see you with those clothes and a long beard, they think you are a terrorist because this is what they see on TV. I wish everybody would inform themselves and would not believe what somebody else tells them. The Muslims who are members of the ISIS do not understand the Koran properly.

I also think that we should still welcome the immigrants, because many Germans also were immigrants long time ago. We should still try to imagine and understand their situation. Those, that are against record immigrants, can at least fight the war in Syria, that is responsible for their emigration.

## Macedonia

The students from J. H. Pestalozzi organized a one day trip to the primary school Lirija, which is an Albanian primary school in Skopje.

Every child from Pestalozzi interviewed one from Lirija. I had the honor to have fun with the fourteen year old Elmedina Chupe. She lives with her mother Gemile, her father Zekirija, her sisters Zerina and Amra and her brother Metin. Elmedina goes to the primary school Lirija where she gets educated. The classes there are about the Albanian language.

Every day she gets up at 7:30 am and gets ready for school. Her classes start at 8:00 am and end at 1:30 pm. After school she goes home and does her homework. When she is done, she relaxes listening with headphones to her favorite music. She listens to POP and Rock & Roll.

She said that she really likes to travel but it's hard with a little brother. In fact she has only been to some travel destinations in Albania and those are Drach and Velipoja.

Elmedina as well, told me that her favorite pets are dogs and cats. She is Muslim and she celebrates different holidays from us. She celebrates Ramadan, Bajram, Kurban Bajram and other... Then I asked if she has ever felt discriminated. She said that she's never felt it. I'm glad for that answer. I'm glad for her. Just because we have a different religion doesn't mean that we are all that different, we are all kids, we are all people, we are all human beings and we should be grateful and respect that.



We, the students of the primary school Kocho Racin, together with our teacher went to visit a mixed Roma and Albanian school. We talked with some of the students there, about how they live and feel about living as a minority group. I had a conversation with Redzep. He is 14 years old and he is a student in the school "26 July." In the beginning of the conversation he told me things about his life. He lives in a place where the Roma (Editor Note: Roma and Sinti is the proper name for Gypsies, a term which Gypsies consider to be derogatory) are his neighbors. The Roma and the Albanians are not on good terms. That's the reason why Redzep's parents had to pick him up

from school every day after the classes were over, just because they were afraid that there might be some sort of a conflict. They did this until Redzep was in sixth grade. Redzep was very sad because he didn't want to live this way, opposite, he wanted to be friends with the other students which were not his religion and nationality. He didn't have any problems with the kids that were his religion but sadly, he had a lot of problems with the Macedonian students.

Redzep has played football since he was 5 years old and has been very good and successful at it, so he decided to join the football team "Vardar" where he has been training for the past 3 years and he has a lot of friends from different minority groups. But, one day Redzep's team had a match and an accident happened. The other team that played against Redzep's team was jealous of Redzep because he scored most of the goals which led his team to win, so they decided to attack him physically and verbally. After what happened, Redzep felt really sad and offended. He was hurt by what the kids said more than what they did to him. They were attacking him because they thought that by being an Albanian, Redzep had no right to play in a "Macedonian" team. When the physical fight started, the referees and parents stopped it before it got worse. In that moment, the only thing that helped Redzep to get through the attacks was the support from his teammates and his parents. His loved ones were next to him and were supporting him which was enough to keep him going.



### *Indira, 14*

This is my new friend Indira, she is a part of a minority group here in Macedonia. As a part of a minority group I wanted to ask her if she ever felt discriminated because of her skin colour, what she believes in, the language she speaks in or because she is different from the majority. I expected for her answer to be positive, because I see people being discriminated every day (sure, I try to stop it but not everyone listens) but she surprised me when she said that she never felt discriminated so far. I was very happy to hear that and I felt like there is still hope for discrimination to stop.

She said that she would never judge anyone by their appearance, by the colour of their skin, or because they are not like her. We both wish that everyone is equal or even if someone is different we need to treat them the way we want to be treated. If you treat someone the way you don't want to be treated one day someone will treat you the same you did. So do everything you can to stop discrimination and always remember we are all under the same sun and we are all people despite the differences we may or may not have.

### *Medin, 14*

Medin Ahmeti is a 14 years old boy who belongs to the Albanian minority in Macedonia. For our project against discrimination I interviewed him in order to find out more about him and his life. The first thing I asked him was if he ever felt differently or discriminated. His answer was negative and I was very pleased to hear it. He has two siblings, Harbi and Jetmi. Medin lives in a house with his brothers and parents. He is also very sporty. He plays a lot of sports, but his main one is kick boxing, which he trains every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. He has three best friends from school, Bonjam, Hadziu and Zamiera. His favorite places for going out are the center of the city, the cinema and Skopje City Mall

and he should be back at home by 10 pm. Medin's favorite subject is English and he also takes extra classes because he wants to learn more. His favorite color is red and his favorite food is lasagna. Medin listens to musicrap, Hip-hop and pop and his favorite singers are Eminem, Jay Z and Adele. He likes to spend his spare time going out with friends, talking on his phone or with his family. So, as you can see, he leads a normal teenage life, like everyone else in Macedonia, no matter the nationality or religion he belongs to.

### *Anesa*

I had the chance to interview a really smart girl, named Anesa Ramadan. Anesa is not that different than me. We realized that we have the same taste of music, sports and food. Her favorite school subjects are Biology, English and Albanian language. Also, she likes going to the zoo and wants to visit the world, especially Paris. She loves wearing jeans, sneakers and shirts. She is an excellent and dedicated student, but sadly, when it comes to her treatment in the city, she feels discriminated against because she is a part of a small ethnic group, Anesa is Albanian. This makes her sad and she often cries because of her situation. We all need to do something to stop the discrimination all over the world because we are all people and we are all the same.

### *Selver Iseni, 14*

I am Selver Iseni and I belong to the Albanian minority in Macedonia. I was born on 31. 05 and I am fourteen years old. My favorite subject is biology. I love good music, football, basketball, social media and breathtaking books. I love learning languages because I think that with every language that we learn, we are smarter. Also I want to visit other countries and cities (like Istanbul). My ambition is to be a doctor, and my favorite food is lasagna. Because I am Muslim I celebrate two holidays Curban Bairam and Ramazan Bairam. We have long tradition when we celebrate this holidays. We eat sweet things, like baklava - which is traditional food for Muslims. Also, we go to the mosque and like spending time with our family. As a member of the Albanian minority in Macedonia I have never felt different or discriminated against and I hope I never will. Because the most important thing is to respect each other no matter the cultural differences.

## Reflections

Whether in the United States, Germany, or Macedonia, some members of minorities face discrimination and prejudice. In Germany today, a major issue confronting Muslim women is wearing of headscarves. In Macedonia, tensions exist between two minorities-Albanian Muslims and the Roma and tensions exist between both of these groups and the larger Eastern Orthodox community. In the United States, a major issue confronting the African-American community is their treatment by local police forces, not to mention issues related to equality in terms of jobs, education, housing, income, and health care. Hispanic Americans, the fastest growing minority in the United States, is a category which has no real meaning, in that Spanish speaking people can originate from completely different countries. Many Latinos face discrimination in the workplace and even standing in line (see interview with Isabel). Nearly 25 percent of Asian American students is classified as Limited English Proficient, and or lives in a linguistically isolated household where parents have limited English proficiency. One in five Asian Americans experience discrimination in the rental and home buying process.

Across time and space humans find a way to create The Other. If a group cannot be discriminated against because of skin color, the society will find another way, whether it be on the basis of religion or ethnicity or some difference that is imagined. In their Edmodo posts, students wrote that the creation of the Other could be related to fitting in, or the desire to feel superior, or the need to have a scapegoat when something goes wrong, or the desire to have everyone be just like us. Some students suggested it was learned behavior from parents and schools. Vera L., from Macedonia, metaphorically threw up her hands, when she, “At first I didn’t know how to answer this question and to be honest I still don’t.”

Students had different ideas about how to address the problem of the Other. Some felt that no matter what we do, the situation will never change because human nature can never change. Another group of students believed that society cannot be changed (the problem is simply too large), and the change has to take place within the individual. We can only control ourselves. There was, however, another group of students that believed that education might provide the key to change, education at the earliest ages. One suggestion was to show students at the youngest grade levels a video, entitled “Love has no labels: Diversity and Inclusion” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGhHs>. This video reveals how the skeletal structures among people is the same. It is only when we add layers of flesh that humans become different. Another suggestion was to have students speak to each behind walls or in the virtual world without knowledge about the other person’s race, ethnicity, or religion, only to reveal these differences at the end, to demonstrate how people are more alike than they are different. Dialogue, engagement, just hearing the Others story changes everything. Perhaps the most important idea was raised by one of the teachers. To fix the problem, educators first must be made aware that it exists.





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