

First Place

7-8

Moral Courage in an
"Unsung" Hero

Marief Sokolov
Phoenix Country Day School

Moral Courage and an “Unsung” Hero

Courage is strength in the face of pain or grief, or the ability to do something that frightens you. Moral courage is doing something that one knows in the root of one’s being to be right, even when faced with major opposition and horrific consequences if not everyone agrees.

The difference between the two? Courage gives you the strength to push yourself out of your comfort zone. Moral courage gives you the strength to stand up for what you believe in, even if it means putting your own life on the line, or pushing yourself to the very limits of human emotion and physical endurance to make it through a tough situation and remain a moral person in the process.

. Compared to properly acknowledged heroes like Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, Woody

Guthrie may seem like an unlikely candidate to be epitome of moral courage. Throughout his life, he faced many catastrophic hardships. At age 7, he witnessed the accidental death of his



beloved older sister, Clara, by way of a kerosene lamp explosion. He also made it through his family's financial ruin (due to the Depression), a fire that leveled his entire house, and the institutionalization of his mother when Guthrie was 15. Later in his life, a short circuit of a newly repaired radio killed his daughter, Cathy Anne, in her crib. Yet through all this, Woody retained a positive attitude and never even wondered if he had the strength to carry on--he just did. He showed moral courage by standing up with groups of people he had no affiliation with to sing about things he felt were not just. His political views cost him more than one job at a time when jobs were scarce.

Even though his most famous song is probably, "This Land is Your Land", many of his songs represented his views on current events. One of these songs, "Ilsa Koch" was



about the Holocaust. Ilsa Koch was the wife of Karl Koch, Buchenwald's commandant. She was known for making lampshades and purses out of the skin of the Jews in her

husband's concentration camp. Even though the song was written in 1948, it was never released. However, it was made available to the public after Woody's death through the Woody Guthrie Archives. In the song, Woody spares no detail about his interpretation of the horrors of the Holocaust.

He swings that furnace door.

He slides their corpses in.

I see the chimney smoke.

I see their ashes hauled.

I see their bones in piles.

Lampshades are made from skins

I admire Woody Guthrie because he stood up for what he believed in by way of a nonviolent medium that resonated with the general public. Like Woody, I am a musician, and aspire to someday stand up for what I believe in and, hopefully, even change the world by way of my music.

Some will say I've already begun to do just that, but on a smaller scale. A little more than a year ago, I joined a band that practices and



performs nursery rhymes and children's songs for the children at Crisis Nursery. Crisis Nursery is a place where children can stay and be cared for until their parents can provide a safe and healthy home for them to grow up in. Over the past year, our band has nearly doubled in size, our repertoire has grown from just a few children's songs to include some kid-friendly band arrangements, and we have given many children exposure and knowledge to our instruments that they could not get anywhere else. Recently, we also advertised and operated a diaper drive for the Nursery. The drive raised over 5,000 diapers. Some of my classmates don't understand why we spend our time this way and even make fun of us. Yet, we continue to be proud of our work and strive to change the world with our music, one child at a time.

My experience at Crisis Nursery may pale in comparison with the brave souls who, out of the goodness of their hearts, risked their own lives to stand up for the Jews in their time of need. However, courageous people like Woody Guthrie inspire me to continue to do what I feel passionate about, to help others,

and to persevere, even if obstacles are put in my way.

Second Place

7-8

A Teacher Jeopardizes Life
To Save Children

Larissa Gorman
Chandler Traditional Junior High
Chandler Unified School District

A Teacher Jeopardizes Life to Save Children

When accepting her title as “Righteous Among the Nations” Andrée Geulen stated, “Disobeying the laws of the time was just the normal thing to do” (“Geulen’s List”). This award was given to her for the lives she rescued. A person who shows moral courage doesn’t always go along with what the majority believes but what is morally correct. Also, their beliefs are more important than their safety. During the Holocaust many people showed moral courage. Andrée Geulen, a young woman living in Belgium displayed moral courage when she was saving the lives of one thousand Jewish children.

During the Holocaust, Nazis invaded Belgium on May 10, 1940, and in three weeks Belgium was defeated. In the first two years of Nazi occupation Jews lost everything: money, jobs, and property. They were given curfew and forced to wear Jewish stars. That was just the beginning; actions quickly escalated. Beginning in July 1942, Jews were deported to concentration camps. In August 1942, transportation from Belgium to Auschwitz began. At the end of the Holocaust, 29,000 Jews had been executed in Belgium (“The Virtual Jewish History Tour”).

Andrée Geulen, an eighteen-year old woman, helped aide young children during the time of the Nazi’s occupation. In 1942, she saw her students come in with the yellow starts sewn on their jackets and fewer children coming to school. Soon Andrée met Ida Sterno, a Jewish woman and member of the Jewish Defense Committee. Ida and Andrée became friends and Andrée joined the committee as her partner to aide Jewish children. Andrée’s name was changed to Claude Fournier, she moved out of her parent’s home, and moved to Gaty de Garmont. In 1943, Gestapo police raided the school grounds on a Christian holiday when the Jewish students were

at school. The sleepy children were dragged out of their beds as the Gestapo checked their identities and arrested them that night. Andrée was outraged. She shouted at the Gestapo, "Aren't you ashamed to make war on Jewish children?" (Geulen's List). She could have been killed for standing up for Jews. The next day she warned all the children not to return to school. After this event Andrée's work escalated. Andrée moved out of the school and started to hide children as young as two years old in monasteries and non-Jewish families. Jewish families would make requests for her to hide their children. She kept a mental note of the child's birth name and information of the child's birth parent, until it became too much information to mentally keep track of. She then wrote their records in a secret journal. This was risky because if the journal was found she would be killed. She continued this work for more than two years. After the war Andrée changed her objective to reuniting the children with their birth parents or surviving relatives; however, sadly many were never reunited with their parents again. Andrée was later rewarded because of her great bravery ("Geulen's List"). She thought the lives of innocent children were more important than her own safety.

Andrée's story is an inspiration to me for many reasons. Andrée was just an ordinary woman who did not have riches but saw her students being treated differently because of their religion and decided to do something. She inspires me because she makes me want to help. I always felt discouraged since I didn't have any power to make a difference. I now believe I can help impact our society in many ways. Although, we are not living in a country where genocide occurs we can help with smaller issues. Everyday students are bullied both verbally and physically, and I can help. Genocide and bullying may not appear to be related, but Hitler manipulated the youth in his youth group to hate Jews ("Sharing the Future: Indoctrinating"). Many of the youth in the youth groups went on to become SS officers and committed horrible

acts against humanity. When I see a student being bullied I should stand up for them. Andrée Geulen and others have inspired me to put my sense of morality before what others think. I hope that if I face moral decisions I will make the right ones.

Andrée put her life in grave danger to save thousands of children. She demonstrated great acts of both bravery and courage and for this received the title of “Righteous Among the Nations.” She demonstrates that under certain circumstances breaking the law is correct.

Third Place
7-8

Oscar Schindler-
Ein Guter Mensch

Breslin Sibley
Madison # 1 Middle School
Madison School District

Oskar Schindler – Ein Guter Mensch

Plaszow, Auschwitz, Budzyn, and Golezow were words that meant death, disease, and starvation for millions in Europe during the reign of Hitler. Nazism assured suffering to the Jewish population and put many in hiding, and countless others to death. In the midst of terror, pain and insignificance, the Jews had little to look forward to and few to look up to. However, there was a factory owner in Krakow, Poland who became the savior and last hope of over a thousand Jews. Oskar Schindler displayed moral courage by saving the lives of many Jews, while keeping a high status among many of Adolf Hitler's SS officers. Risking his life, fortune and reputation, Oskar Schindler did what he thought was right by employing hundreds of Jews that would otherwise have been killed in death camps.

Moral courage means countless things to different people, but to me moral courage is the power to do the right thing with confidence, no matter the cost. Schindler obtained a factory business previously owned by Jews before the German occupation in Poland. Schindler appeared to be a greedy businessman, a war profiteer, but in fact he saved the lives of over a thousand Jews by employing them in his factory. Hardly qualified Jews became "essential workers" to Schindler and were saved from sure death in the harsh Nazi death camps. Schindler was the only barrier between over 1200 Jews and death at the hands of German soldiers. While defying the Nazi Regime, Oskar Schindler remained popular with high ranking SS officers. The most improbable savior, an alcoholic war profiteer and womanizer, would give hope to otherwise doomed Jews.

Oskar Schindler used his authority and charm to protect his "children". Schindler used bribery and his friendship with Amon Goeth, the leader of Plaszow, near Krakow,

Poland, and other officers to take Jews from Plazow to his factory to work. He spent much of his own money on food and medicine for his workers, as well as bribes for German officers. Schindler once rescued 120 Jews that were abandoned on a train and left to die. Another instance of Schindler's courage was when 300 Schindler women were mistakenly shipped to Auschwitz death camp. As they were herded into showers, likely to be gassed, they heard, "What are you doing with these people? These are my people," ("Rake and Savior"). Schindler bribed the Nazis to bring back the women. These women were the only shipment out of Auschwitz during the war. "Now you are finally with me, you are safe now. Don't be afraid of anything. You don't have to worry anymore," ("Rake and Savior"). Oskar Schindler was arrested twice and died penniless. He sacrificed his fortune and devoted his life to saving the lives of over 1,200 Jews.

Oskar Schindler is an inspiration and role model for me. Schindler had what many people dream of, but he sacrificed it for a cause he believed in. I appreciate how he offered hope to people who had little chance of survival under the Nazis. Schindler's selfless acts and moral courage are a constant reminder that even though I am young and inexperienced, I can still help a cause. Schindler outsmarting the Nazis to help Jews relays to me that it is always possible to do the right thing. I have a desire to be as selfless and to give as much as Schindler. His legacy makes me think community service is more effective and that change is more attainable. Oskar Schindler's inspiring nature continues to affect many people. He is nothing less than a hero for more than 7,000 descendants of Schindler's Jews living in the United States, Europe, and Israel. Schindler's impact on the world shows me even the small things I do right make a big difference and that a small impact now can be greater in the future.

Oskar Schindler exhibits great moral courage and inspires many to work toward righteousness. Steven Spielberg's film, "Schindler's List," describes an accurate account of Oskar Schindler's deeds, and the anguish of Holocaust victims. In 1967, on July 18, Schindler was recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among Nations." Oskar Schindler's selfless acts of moral courage continue to inspire and awe many who hear his story and stories of the Jews he saved from likely death or experiments. Schindler is a perfect example of moral courage, proving that making a difference is possible, even under the nose of something as horrible as Hitler's Third Reich.

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1 Jan 2011.

First Place Place
9-10

What Happens to an Honest Cop?

Danny Cotter
Sunnyslope High School
Glendale Union High School District

What Happens to an Honest Cop?

During World War II, Mefodiy Logatzky helped the Jewish citizens of his town by hiding them in his home because he did not believe in what the Nazi's were doing to them. Eventually, his house was searched, and upon the discovery of the refugees, Mefodiy was taken to be interrogated. When he was asked if he knew that the punishment for his crime was death, he answered, "You can take my body, but not my soul" ("You). Mefodiy's devotion to helping Jews showed how some people can stand up for what they believe. Mefodiy's actions demonstrated moral courage, and they were similar to the actions of Frank Serpico. When Frank Serpico stood up against the New York Police Department's corruption, he showed an abundance of moral courage, and it is my goal to live up to his high standards of honesty and respect for the law.

Frank Serpico joined the NYPD in 1959, but as soon as he got there, he witnessed many cases of corruption and blackmail. When Frank Serpico joined the police department, he was astounded at how his fellow officers abused their position of authority. He witnessed his fellow officers taking bribes from drug dealers and taking evidence from crime scenes ("Serpico). Frank was disheartened by this, and his emotion was evident when he said, "The problem is that the atmosphere does not yet exist in which honest police officers can act without fear of ridicule or reprisal from fellow officers" ("Serpico). Later, Frank tried to stop the corruption within the police force, for he detested the entire idea. He reported the dishonesty to his supervisors; however, they did not take any actions to stop it ("Biography). Many of Frank's coworkers were involved in the mass corruption, and he feared their reactions if he reported them. Eventually, Serpico decided to act. In 1971 he testified to a reporter for the New York Times (Biography). This newspaper published Frank's testament in a front-page story, and many people became angry with him. Meanwhile, Mayor John Lindsay read the article, and created the Knapp

Commission to investigate the police corruption (“Biography). Frank continued working, but in February when he was on a drug raid, he was shot, and nobody called for help. This caused Frank to believe he was set up (“Serpico). After he recovered, Serpico testified in front of the Knapp Commission and told them everything (“Serpico). It is clear that Frank Serpico illustrated extraordinary moral courage, for he stood up against his peers and fought for what he believed was right.

Frank Serpico’s actions were in support of the principles of honesty and respect for the law. His testament against the NYPD helped shed light on the corruption within its ranks. Frank wanted to change the lack of honesty in his workplace, and he wanted law enforcers to respect the laws that they were supposed to be protecting. The values of honesty and respect must always be upheld. Honesty is not agreeing with something that is morally wrong just because you have been told to do it; similarly, respect for the law is doing the right thing even when nobody is looking. As Frank once said, “The fight for justice against corruption is never easy. It never has been and never will be. It exacts a toll on our self, our families, our friends, and especially our children. In the end, I believe, as in my case, the price we pay is well worth holding on to our dignity” (ThinkExist.com). Frank means that he wants justice and honesty in his workplace, and that he has enough self-respect to not participate in the corruption of his peers. Obviously, honesty and respect are two very important values to live by, and everyone should strive to follow the examples set forth by Frank Serpico.

Frank Serpico has inspired me by showing a great deal of moral courage throughout his lifetime. He has inspired me by standing up to his friends in order to do what is right. He testified to the New York Times even though he faced risk of retaliation. This simple act of moral courage has shown me that anyone is capable of standing up for what is right. I live my life in

constant fear of what my friends will think of me, and I look up to this man because he does not care what his friends think. The example that Frank Serpico set inspires me to live my life in a similar fashion. Frank Serpico's story has moved me to live my life with honesty and a constant respect for the rules. I will live my life with these principles and I will try to care less about other people's opinions. Frank Serpico's actions have also influenced me to make conscious decisions about moral courage in everyday life. At any moment I could be put in a similar situation; as an example, when I am older and have a job, I could be put in charge of human resources. If my boss came up to me and told me we needed to fire an employee based on his age, I would have to make a choice. I could fire that person and do what my boss has asked, or I could protect that person from unnecessary discrimination. I would live like Frank Serpico and do the morally courageous deed, and I would try to help protect everyone from discrimination. Ultimately, Frank Serpico's actions have inspired me greatly, and I feel that everyone must live to be morally courageous.

Clearly, the tremendous moral courage that Frank Serpico committed against the NYPD's corruption has given me reason to live up to his values of honesty and respect. Just like Mefodiy Logatzky protecting the Jews from discrimination, Frank Serpico showed immense moral courage. His morals have inspired me to live with respect and honesty. It is my belief that we all must attempt to live in the most morally courageous way that we possibly can.

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Second Place

9-10

Moral Courage

Lindsay Taylor
Tanque Verde High School
Tanque Verde Unified School District

Moral Courage

What really is moral courage? Moral courage is something that people in today's society do not often try to define. When it comes down to it, there are many different interpretations and meanings from different people. I think that moral courage is the willpower to keep going past a fear to achieve a goal. Moral courage is to take a stand for what you believe in, no matter what other people think. One often believes that he must overcome "big" fears if his life is to count, but in reality, the biggest impact that a person can make in his or her own world is to overcome a series of small fears, one by one. When all of these small fears have been strung together, they amount to so much more than overcoming just one fear.

Jane Haining was a Scottish woman who was deeply committed to her faith. Haining was a teacher at a girl's Jewish school in Hungary instructing 400 girls, ages six-16 years old. Haining liked Hungary and soon became fluent in the language. She spent the last 12 years of her life with these Jewish girls. In 1940 a law was passed that all Scottish missionaries must leave any position that involved working with Jews. However, Haining did not leave. She believed that her students needed her then more than ever. Her girls were scared and did not know what to expect and they needed her comfort. Even though the Nazis had power over Hungary, it was not their main target. Haining was able to stay four more years, until on April 25, 1944 when she was found by two Gestapo men. They searched her office and then gave her 15 minutes to get her things before taking her to a concentration camp. Haining was sent to Auschwitz where she became prisoner 79467. Her death was probably on July 17 1944; she was 47 years old. Her last years were spent serving others even though she knew it would result in being found and killed. Haining's last connection to the rest of the world was through a postcard. It was a postcard asking for food. Haining starved to death in the concentration camp. Her last words she wrote were, "There's not much to report on the way to heaven." Her never-ending moral courage to keep going even knowing the consequences inspired countless people. She was willing to die serving to make an impact. In the book of John chapter 15:13, it says this: "There is no greater love

than to lay down one's life for one's friend." (The Bible, New Living Translation) Haining lives this moral teaching to its fullest extent. This is the greatest kind of moral courage. ("Jane Haining - Righteous Among the Nations." *"There Is Not Much to Report on the Way to Heaven"* Web. 06 Mar. 2011. <<http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/haining.asp>>.)

Rosa Parks was another courageous woman whose actions lead to the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. Parks had the moral courage to stand for what she believed in because she was tired of being pushed around. On her bus ride home from work one day the bus soon became full. When a middle-aged white man got on the bus, Parks was asked to stand so he could have a seat. On a spur-of-the-moment idea, Parks said no. "I would have to know for once and for all what rights I had as a human being and a citizen of Montgomery, Alabama." (Rosa Parks) Parks was arrested on the spot, and pressed with charges. She was found guilty and had a fine to pay. However, because of her actions, Martin Luther King started the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. Her actions inspired 40,000 African Americans to also stand up for what they believed in. African American men, women, and children refused to ride the bus for 382 days. They walked everywhere they went, sometimes as far as 20 miles to work everyday. Without her actions, 40,000 African Americans might have never been inspired to push back on the bigotry that was constantly metered out to them and the way to civil rights would have been immensely slower. It was not a huge act - it was actually very small. She was just one person who refused to stand on the bus on another day going home from work. Rosa Parks proves that even the smallest thing can make the biggest impact. Her moral courage to do something that was unheard of was astonishing. She was not quite sure exactly what the consequential outcome would be, but she did know that she was ready for it. ("Rosa Parks Biography." *Biography.com*. Web. 06 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.biography.com/articles/Rosa-Parks-9433715>>.) "I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear." (Rosa Parks)

Moral courage is a "trade-off" for fear. Once a person overcomes fear, they have moral courage.

I have gained moral courage through theater. Theater is not moral courage in itself, but it has given me the skills that I need to gain moral courage. I am a quiet and shy person who does not typically stand up for what I believe in. Being shy also means that I am very quiet during class and rarely participate. Since I have been in theater, I have been pushed to be louder, and more outgoing. Stepping on a stage means letting go of any insecurities or shyness and being outrageous. After having done this for almost two years, I have used these skills to gain the moral courage that I need to stand up for myself and what I believe in.

Even though my moral courage has not lead to civil rights, and it has not impacted 400 Jewish children, it can be big in its own way. Now that I have overcome this fear, I can not only be a better actress, but I can also be a better person. I can make up my mind to grow up and be a role model for others. Making an impact on the world is possible and once I decide to, nothing can stop me. Once a person pushes past fear, they can do anything; all they need is moral courage.

Third Place
9-10

"The Oskar Schindler
of Africa"

Ethan Lenick
Sunnyslope High School
Glendale Union High School District

“ The Oskar Schildler of Africa”

Not so long ago, in Rwanda, there were mass killings going on between the Tutsi people and the Hutu people. This one hundred day slaughter had a death toll of about eight hundred thousand people (Paul). Much like the Holocaust, people all over the world just watched innocent people die. That is when Paul Rusesabagina decided enough was enough. Instead of just standing idly by, he let them seek shelter at the luxury hotel he managed. Paul risked many things by showing this moral courage, which is what makes him such a courageous and inspirational person.

Rusesabagina was a brave man in an extraordinarily petrifying time. As I mentioned before, living in Rwanda, a small East African nation, in 1994 was like being sentenced to death (Rwanda). The Tutsi people, who were a minority but had been in power for centuries, went to war with the Hutu people, who were the majority who had come to power in the 1959 rebellion and overthrew the Tutsi monarchy (Rwanda). Since Rusesabagina was born, he had always wanted to do the right thing. As a child he wanted to be a pastor. In 1992 he became the general manager of the Hotel des Mille Collines. Just two years later, he was struck with the ultimate decision; Let people enter or not. As I mentioned earlier, he did allow the people into the hotel. What Rusesabagina did took immense amounts of audacity and boldness. By standing up for what he believed in, Rusesabagina displayed moral courage. Not only that but he risked just about every thing from his life to his job. By standing up for what he believed was right he was able to inspire millions of people. While everyone around was being killed, he put his life on the line. By opening the hotel up for shelter he saved about one thousand two hundred lives (Paul). That is why many people view Rusesabagina as the “ Oskar Schildler of Africa”, and rightfully

so (Paul Rusesabagina, No). By standing up for what he believed in, Rusesabagina saved many lives of innocent people.

Paul Rusesabagina displayed many courageous principles by standing up when no one else did, displaying courage and showing bravery. Rusesabagina had every thing to lose. He had a wonderful wife, a solid job, and most important of all, his life. The definition of courage is the ability to do something that frightens one, and that's exactly what he did. Here is a quote from Rusesabagina that I absolutely loved, " If people see this footage, they'll say, 'Oh my God, that's terrible,' and they'll go on eating their dinners." I feel this quote showed how the people of Rwanda felt at this point of time. All they wanted was help but they were just ignored by the whole world. He believed in helping everyone out. That is why since a young age he would go out of his way for other people. Now a Seventh-day Adventist, Rusesabagina is a religious man who believes strongly in doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. That is a superb way of looking at life in my opinion, because you can never go wrong. Rusesabagina is an inspirational man to everyone who knows who he is and that includes me.

Rusesabagina is a man that I would like to model my self after if need be. He is such an inspiration to me mostly because of my religion. I am Jewish. Not to long ago, all of Europe was being taken over by the Nazis. Luckily for my family, everyone was able to escape this terrible situation. But if I was alive back then and had not escaped, I would have been brutally murdered or close to it. It was people like Rusesabagina the helped the Jews stay strong. Many people let Jews hide in their homes, risking literally everything. Rusesabagina was much like those people who went out of their way to help. If I am ever faced with a situation like Rusesabagina's or any of the nameless people who saved Jews in the Holocaust I hope that I would have the courage that they did. I know most people think that doing something like this would not be a hard

decision to make. But that is because they have never been face with the decision. I realize exactly how hard it would be to step up against the crowd, which is why I can never make promises for it especially if every thing was on the line. Rusesabagina's actions saved many peoples life and he stepped up when he was needed most. That is why he will go down in history as an inspiration to all.

Much like the Holocaust, the Genocide in Rwanda left countless numbers of innocent people dead. The one hundred day blood fest left over eight hundred thousand people dead. As the whole world closed their eyes to the massive genocide, Paul Rusesabagina looked straight into its eyes. He opened up the luxury hotel he managed for shelter, and in doing so save over one thousand two hundred lives. His massive amounts of bravery and boldness will never be forgotten and by standing up for what he believed in Rusesabagina was able to inspirer millions. He was a model citizen who I strive to represent. I feel that everyone should try to model himself or herself after him.

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First Place
11-12

Daughters of God

Ivan Gilman
Dobson High School
Mesa Unified School District

Daughters of God

Throughout World War II (1939-1945), the armies of Nazi Germany swept through Europe in an attempt to rule Europe and eradicate the Jewish community. Many people did not resist this onslaught, known as the Holocaust, not wanting to risk their own lives. There were, however, a number of people who defied Hitler's ideas of Aryan superiority and his so-called Third Reich. One family in Haarlem, Holland, the ten Booms, played a key role in ensuring many Jewish people's security in their city.

The ten Booms were a watchmaker family who lived in the Beje (bay-yay), their house and watch shop, in the center of town. The members of this Protestant Christian family included Corrie, the youngest daughter, Betsie, the oldest daughter, and Casper, their father. There were also Willem, their brother, and Nollie, another sister, however these two did not live in the Beje and had families of their own. On May 10, 1940, Holland had fallen to Nazi Germany and Haarlem was under German occupation. It took a while, but slowly and progressively life became more difficult, especially for Jewish families. Anti-Semitic ideals began to influence people, Jewish shops would be shut down without justified reasons, Jews were mistreated in public, and occasionally a whole Jewish family would disappear. One night, Mrs. Kleermaker, a Jewish woman, knocked on the door of the Beje and asked if she could hide there for the night (ten Boom 78). Later on that evening, a young Jewish couple came looking for a place to stay. The penalty for assisting Jews to this degree was imprisonment. Despite this, the ten Booms "opened their door to anyone in need who knocked" (Casper ten Boom, 138). This is when the ten Booms first became a part of the Dutch Underground.

The ten Booms and many of their friends and family members aided in the smuggling and security of Jews. One night, a friend of Corrie ten Boom took her to an apartment where she unexpectedly met the leaders of the Dutch resistance. They needed a temporary hiding place and a conduit for Jewish people, and the Beje was the perfect building for this need. It was right in the center of Haarlem and one side of Corrie ten Boom's room was perfect to build a false wall. For fear of their land lines being tapped by the Gestapo, the Nazis' secret police, the ten Boom devised a clever system in which they would talk about delivering and receiving watches to be fixed or returned. Each type of watch was a code referring to either young, old, male, or female Jews. As more people got involved, however, the risks increased due to the greater chances of someone betraying them. After almost two years of hiding Jews, an associate of the Underground betrayed the ten Booms and revealed the location of the Beje. On February 28, 1944 (Corrie), the Gestapo raided the home and arrested the ten Booms and some of their relatives and friends, thirty people total. The Gestapo was not able to find the hidden wall or the four Jews and two underground workers who were hiding in it. The ten Booms were first taken to Scheveningen Prison. Most of the arrestees were released in a matter of days, but Mr. ten Boom died only ten days after arriving in prison, Corrie ten Boom did not learn of this until May. Corrie and Betsie ten Boom were still imprisoned at this time. In June, Scheveningen was evacuated and the two sisters along with the rest of the prisoners were shoved onto cattle cars and taken to Vught, a concentration camp created specifically for political prisoners. There they stayed working in factories building equipment for the German forces until September 1. They were evacuated from that camp because the Allied Forces' counter-invasion had

begun, and the Germans were not willing for their prisoners to be liberated. Traveling in cramped cattle cars for four days, they entered Germany and reached Ravensbruck, a women's extermination camp where every day the sisters fought to stay alive and spread the gospel to their inmates. Their main priority was not survival but living to share the hope of Jesus. Around mid-November Betsie ten Boom caught a fever and was sent to the camp's hospital for four days to recover a bit. Even this did not hinder their faith. In December, Betsie ten Boom died of a terrible cough, and very shortly following, Corrie ten Boom was discharged from Ravensbruck. Holland was still under German occupation when she returned, but she was able to reunite with her brother Willem and her sister Nollie back in Haarlem. Soon after Holland was liberated by the Allied Forces, Corrie ten Boom opened a recovery home in Bloemendaal, just outside of Haarlem. Here was a home for the prisoners recovering from the horrors of the death camps, a place for them to heal and learn how to live life again. Betsie ten Boom had a vision of this while in Ravensbruck, and Corrie ten Boom carried out what God had shown her sister. Until the day she died, Corrie ten Boom told her and her sister's story in the camps, and how the love of God never failed them.

The ten Booms' story exemplifies living with with the conviction that every human life has the greatest value of all creation in the eyes of God. The ten Booms knew this and lived it. They loved and served the people of Haarlem because Jesus loves them. When the German occupation began, they knew that they should do something to save their neighboring Jews. They needed to smuggle people from one place to another, bringing them to places of safety. This was dangerous and risky on multiple levels and was illegal. They broke the law to save people without hurting anyone. Here in

Phoenix, Arizona, the horrid and illegal business of slave and sex trade is increasing. The prostitutes who are involved in this are slaves held against their will to live a life of no hope, freedom, or a reason to live. Not only is there prostitution but also slavery in general. There are approximately 27 million people enslaved worldwide today (Slavery). Many people do not know this, and those who do are trying to raise awareness and there are other groups who are trying to do more such as seeking and liberating slaves and prostitutes. Realistically, all the actions needed for ordinary people to *successfully* find and rescue these victims is not going to be legal, but it doesn't require killing either. Getting a group organized to do this will be very difficult and dangerous. I have no idea how, but I am willing to either rally people and figure out how to create an organization that prevents sex trafficking or join one, such as one being started at my church right now. I am willing to take the risks of this honor.

The ten Booms' story is an inspiring example of how doing what God says can be extremely difficult at times, but in the end it always works out for the better. They and their friends obeyed God and through this managed to save about eight hundred Jews in the two years they were part of the Dutch Underground. Their sacrifice not only saved many lives but has continued to encourage people to do the same: stand for justice in the face of persecution and oppression.

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Second Place
11-12

Salvaging Life

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Salvaging Life

Rescuers inspire, motivate, and cause admiration. During the Holocaust many rescuers existed. Some were recognized, while most probably went unrecognized. They all helped in different ways and they inspire people in different ways. Anyone who demonstrates moral courage and goes against prevailing wrongdoings is a rescuer. No matter how small or large the task accomplished, an act that assist human life in any form is astounding. Irene Gut Opdyke, a Polish woman is my newly found inspiration.

Irene Gut Opdyke experienced terrible things during the German and Soviet occupation of Poland. She was captured, beaten, raped and forced to work by Soviet soldiers. She had been separated from her family and was nearly incarcerated twice. After having escaped the Soviets, she was captured by the Germans. The Germans arrested her at a church in a round-up of Polish citizens. The people were taken out into the streets, and Opdyke was taken to work in a munitions factory. She fell ill and, "A German officer, Major Edward Rugemor, felt pity for her and gave her a position in the kitchen of a hotel for Nazis," (Urness, Curtis). At this hotel, she observed how the Nazis treated the Jews in the nearby ghetto. She witnessed soldiers shooting unarmed people. This was Opdyke's cue to begin helping the Jews.

Even though the Nazis threatened that anyone helping a Jew would be killed, Irene Gut Opdyke was determined to help. She would take leftovers from the kitchen she worked in and slip food under the ghetto fence. Despite her efforts, the ghetto was liquidated and Major Rugemor's unit was moved. In the new German village she witnessed a "German officer tossing an infant into the air like a clay pigeon and shooting the child," (Urness). She continued to help the Jews by providing them with extra food

and blankets. Soon she began smuggling people out into the forest. When the liquidation of the ghetto came near she was determined to rescue as many people as she could. Her ultimate hiding spot was Rugemor's own house. The home was perfect, "It had a large basement where Irene hid twelve Jews who were due for deportation to the gas chambers. They helped her with her duties and came out of the cellar each day," (Jensen, Joyce). The busy general would never wander down into the basement. However, one day Rugemor came home unexpectedly early to find Opdyke and her friends upstairs. After discovering what Opdyke was doing, Rugemor promised to keep quiet if Opdyke became his mistress. She agreed and decided the lives of others were more important than her religious and moral teachings.

Being a female, sometimes you are told you can't. Women couldn't vote until many years after men. They also aren't allowed to fight in combat alongside men. Opdyke inspired me to be a strong woman. As a young and abused woman who was separated from her family and virtually alone in the world, Opdyke set her mind to help people and accomplished just that. Like Opdyke, I want to be a great and inspirational woman. I plan to become a pilot. Aviation is male-dominated and women pilots are limited. The women who do make it and receive their wings are very dedicated to their dreams. Like these women, Opdyke never gave up and always was persistent in doing the right thing. She didn't let obstacles stop her from doing what her heart told her. My heart tells me to be a pilot. Since the first day I laid my hands on the yoke and flew by myself, I knew it. No matter how difficult or how long it takes for me to become the person I desire to be, I know I can do it. Life truly is what you make of it, you either struggle to get what you want or you live a life poorly. Even though taking an easier route is sometimes tempting,

I think about courageous and valiant women like Opdyke and conclude that following my dreams is the only way to go.

Heroes come in all shapes and forms. Inspiration is found in likely and unlikely figures. When someone risks their life's to save others they are worthy of admiration. Opdyke's noble actions encourage me to be a grand person. Not in the form of attaining riches or fame, but to getting to a point in life where spiritually I am content with myself. Even if others do not see it and admire me, as long as I am a person worthy of self-admiration and satisfaction my goal will be fulfilled. It really is a relish to be able to be influenced by such a valiant person.

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Third Place
11-12

Conscience of Compassion

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Conscience of Compassion

It is easy to ignore your morals and turn your head away from injustice. It is also easier to ignore suffering, starvation, and genocide in the world. The world's dilemmas seem like mere trifles in our everyday lives, especially if you are on the opposite side of the globe. Sometimes the doing the right thing is not always popular or uplifting; sometimes it means enduring hardships; sometimes it is met with harsh criticism. That is why I believe it takes true determination and courage to take action, no matter what the form. Feng Shan Ho is the paragon of this idea; he stood true to his human morals. This was a difficult task when considering his situation in a foreign land. He did not succumb to the pressure and the heartless orders of his superiors – to leave the Jews to perish. Instead, he took action to save the Jews from their warranted destruction. He is apart of the less than one percent of Chinese people – of 400 million people – to act on his beliefs to save the Jews.

Feng Shan Ho had absolutely no incentive for helping the Jews. In contrast, Feng Shan Ho had multiple reasons not to. The Chinese Consulate and his superiors enjoyed their friendly terms with Germany. This brought up many adversities for him when he aided the Jews. He even relates his faltering decision to help the Jews in a poem to his wife, "The conviction of heroes not lightly formed." (Feng Shan Ho). Despite the warnings and tremendous discouragement, though, Feng Shan Ho still chose to help the Jews from persecution. He knew that it was the right choice. As the horrors of the Holocaust continued, he began to fight it.

The only way for Jews to escape the slaughter was to leave Europe, which was no simple task. Among hundreds of thousands of Jews, only a few could successfully obtain a visa that could insure their safety. Many Jews crowded the entries to the different Consulates, hoping for their pass of freedom to other countries. This is where Feng Shan Ho's good deeds lie. He issued visas to any Jew to arrive at his consulate. With his position of Consul-General, Feng Shan Ho allowed thousands of Jews to escape their genocide via passports to travel to other countries.

Feng Shan Ho sought no recognition for his actions. He thought it was "only natural to feel compassion and to want to help. From the standpoint of humanity, that is the way it should be." (Feng Shan Ho). He also took risks upon himself during this time. He went directly to help Jews close to him. During the war, he often escorted his Jewish companions and stayed at their homes. With his presence, the Gestapo did not dare approach the families that he accompanied. In addition, with the visas he issued, Ho Feng saved many souls from desolation. In the first week three months alone, more than one thousand visas were issued by Feng Shan Ho. They allowed Jews to leave the hellish rule of the Germans in Austria, many of which who left for Hong Kong and Australia. He continued his work until ordered to return to the Republic of China. On October 27, 1938, the one thousand nine hundred and sixth visa was issued. Nearly two thousand visas were issued in the first year of his position alone. It took decades later, after his death, for his deeds to become finally noticed. This is a testament for his motives; he did not seek glory, he was doing what he believed was right.

In my life, there are many things in a gridlock. I like to believe that things will solve themselves – sadly they never do.

I am hesitant to leave the familiar; my family, my home, and my friends. Everything feels so surreal in my senior year of high school. I am still numb to the fact that I will begin my life soon. In truth, I am hugely afraid of going into college. I have tremendous worries of my graduation into the adolescent world and its hardships. Unlike the great Robert Frost, I am scared to take the path less traveled. As a result, my scholarship essays are left unsent, my tuitions are unpaid, and my class choices are unknown. I want to become a pediatrician, but at the pace I am going I would probably be too frightened to even search for information. I admire Feng Shan Ho for taking action when it needed to be done. He did not stand idle and wait. If he waited and hoped that everything would solve itself, thousands of lives would have been lost. My future hope is to save lives, but before I can even start that I must follow Feng Shan Ho's example. He taught me that there is no excuse to sit around waiting.

Doing the right thing is not always easy. It can take a person down a rigorous and unstable path. Against all opposition and danger, Feng Shan Ho followed a path like this for a reason. He wanted to save an innocent race and culture from forever being extinguished. His conscience of compassion for the Jews shines as a model of human kindness. He retained the attitude and the beliefs that Europe lost in the face of the Holocaust.

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