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## The best of Jefferson Middle School

Posted in CULTURE by [Smile Politely Editors](#) on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 9:00 am



Every year Jefferson Middle School participates in National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID), a nationwide event aimed at openly engaging the parents of African American students. But this year's NAAPID event coordinator, 7th grade English Language Arts teacher, Mallory Morris, sees the event as an opportunity to reach a much broader constituency.

"NAAPID officially stands for National African American Involvement Day," Morris told Smile Politely earlier this week, "however I think that with that understanding, Jefferson is

continually striving to create a school climate where all parents feel equally welcomed. The only way we can be most effective as educators is if we put forth the effort to engage all of our parents in order to meet the needs of every student."

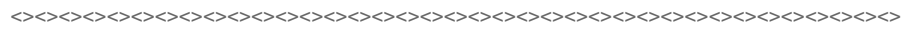
In an effort to achieve this goal, Morris decided to hold an essay contest this year as a way to showcase the broad interests and the fiery passions of JMS's student body. The contest was structured so that students from each grade level responded to the question: *What aspect of your community would you like to change and what will you do to change it?*

Winners were given a gift certificate, an opportunity to read their essay at a school luncheon and publication in Smile Politely.

After reviewing a great deal of entries from all three grade levels, the judges ultimately decided on four winners: Zach Jeffers won in the sixth grade's pool, Jade Shackelford won in the seventh grade pool while Jaelyne Noelle McDowell and Cheyenne Andel tied for the eighth grade prize.

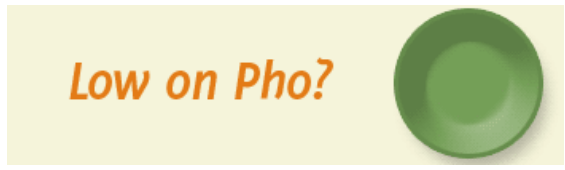
There were also two honorable mentions: Alec Shedelbower, a seventh grader, and Ashler Uebele, an eighth grader.

The following essays represent only a fraction of the drive and the potential possessed by Jefferson Middle School's very talented student body.



Sixth Grade Winner: Zach Jeffers

My community has robberies, gangs and drugs. I know this because my friend who lives right down the street had his bicycle stolen from his garage. The bike was stolen in the amount of time it took him to walk down to my house. The drugs, I rarely see them but it still shocks me



### Most Recent Culture Comments



Two Updates: Same Sex Sunday podcast is up and ready to go. Nekromancy: The Reunion at Chester Street Bar (Monday night) See above for info.

Posted by Tracy Nectoux to the entry 'The Rainbow Connection: January 11-17 on 01/16/11.



UPDATE: David Howie at Emerald City Lounge, tonight. See above for info.

Posted by Tracy Nectoux to the entry 'The Rainbow Connection: January 11-17 on 01/13/11.



Let me just say that we have the most amazing customers! Love you all, seriously. The cloth diapering community is full of cool people. Unfortunately, there are still too many people that have never heard of us. I would love to get the word to spread. With

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to see them. I have found them laying different places. If I find them I will break the bottles or get the cigarettes wet. Also the gangs have taken over my favorite place to go in the summer. Gangs have destroyed the beautiful place that my friends and me love. We see graffiti and trash along with other stuff. There used to be frogs, snakes, fish and other animals there. But since the gangs have been coming there we haven't seen any animals yet. I would like to see the gangs leave this area and quit being so selfish about our place and think of others.

One aspect I would change would be the gang meeting place. The reasons are that the burglaries will stop happening in our community. Also, people will feel safer in their homes at night. This might also keep kids from getting in with the wrong crowd and help them fix their lives. Lastly, this would help keep our special place cleaner.

What I will do to change the gang meeting place is pick up all the garbage and wash off the graffiti. I could also walk down there with an adult. I'd try to bring some wildlife to release back to the area. Also I could try to find someone to get these criminals on film when they are vandalizing and doing drugs or drinking. I could save up and plant new trees and fix up things with the help of my friends.

In conclusion I want the gangs gone and all the natural scenery back. Also, I'd like to see all the things they have destroyed fixed. I still think there is hope for my friends and I special place, but it is going to take some effort and time. I am willing to help do things to get my special place back.



Seventh Grade Winner: Jade Shackelford

I think that the world now is way different than the world we've always dreamt it would be. In the world today, all I see is little boys with their pants falling on the ground and smoking because they think its cool. And then you see girls with no clothes on trying to look cute and prostituting all over the place. There's perverted little boys that act the way they do in part because girls let them. All I see is not so popular boys and girls getting made fun of because they have problems that no one will address and all I'm wondering is, what happened to the love? What happened to our community?

I know, as well as everyone else that these children know how to act. They know that they shouldn't be doing what they are doing. And I now that they were taught better than this. The world in my eyes was clearly not meant to be this way. The reason why, to me, that children think that its okay is because of the peer pressure and the idea that other kids put into their heads. It is common that other kids have problems at home, but shouldn't that give them a bigger chance to better themselves?

I really do think that I could change the behavior of these children because I am a child. I want my voice to be heard, I want to change the way that children act by addressing their situations and not ignoring them. I know this will take time and I'm willing to work however long it takes to get this community back on its feet.

Another big problem today is seeing little black boys acting up in class and I wonder if they realize how much worse it looks compared to a white boy acting up. We have to try to prove that we are just as great. There are still many prejudiced people in the world and the first thing that they notice is your skin color. The second you mess up they can hold that against you. We need to turn around our behavior to the point where it doesn't matter if we are black or white, because we are all equal.

I want little boys and girls to know that they've got someone on their side and I'm here to stay. They need to know that they don't have to be scared or feel like they have to do what other kids do. One by one we will let them know that they don't have to do bad things to be heard. I'm going to change this community. I'm going to be heard — not just for me, but for us



Eight Grade Co-Winner: Cheyenne Andel

As a citizen of the Champaign-Urbana community I would personally like to change the way we think about poverty. If you asked any student at Jefferson Middle School whether they've ever helped out at a soup kitchen or started a clothing drive, chances are they'd answer "no." And the reason for this? Not enough time in the day, sports and homework taking up too much scheduling space, and some would even say they're too cool to help out. These things are no excuse - or at least they shouldn't be. This is true, not only of the kids at JMS, but also of many people in our neighborhoods, workplaces and even random people on the street. I

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2009	<a href="#">Jan</a>	<a href="#">Feb</a>	<a href="#">Mar</a>	<a href="#">Apr</a>	<a href="#">May</a>	<a href="#">Jun</a>
	<a href="#">Jul</a>	<a href="#">Aug</a>	<a href="#">Sep</a>	<a href="#">Oct</a>	<a href="#">Nov</a>	<a href="#">Dec</a>
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2007	<a href="#">Nov</a>	<a href="#">Dec</a>				

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Another "genius" synthesis of the MSU/Illini game. Good analysis, Rob. I depend on your opinion over any other journalist around here. I have to say that the foul-calling was pretty spotty and inconsistent, but at least it wasn't lopsided—except for that egregious miss on Bill Cole's 3...

By Mel F. to the entry 'The butterfly on 01/20/11.



I'd be interested in hearing stories from victims of drive-by artwork.

By Rob McColley to the entry 'Paradox leaves his mark on the town on 01/20/11.



Young and Alone just hit Hendricks House last night... DI has pictures that match up to the

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