

2006 Third Place Charter School Essays

Elementary Division

Kenwood Edison Charter School

Mari Clanaugh

Age 10

My name is Mari Clanaugh and I'm ten years old. I'm in 5th grade and I go to Kenwood Edison Charter School. This school has changed my life because of Math, Working together and more hands on stuff.

The first reason why it changed my life is math. At other schools I went to, you would just learn how to do a math unit (such as dividing) and never review it again. At Kenwood we learn how to do a unit and review it as part of other units.

The second reason why Kenwood changed my life is working together. I have been to four schools and never work together with my teacher as much as do at Kenwood. My parents also work with my teachers.

The last reason why Kenwood changed my life is more hands on stuff. In science at other schools we would talk about the unit and do a worksheet. But at Kenwood we talk about it and then do experiments on it.

As you can see this school changed my life.

North Shore Community School

Taylor Clement

Are you tired of the school you learn in every day? Do you want a more fun learning experience? Well, now you have read the right piece of paper! North Shore Community School is right for you! I'll tell you a

couple of interesting things that our school has. Trust me, you'll be surprised!

First of all do you like to go outside?

Well, we have many learning things outside. One is a greenhouse with a pond and fans and plant areas for each class. We also have a Nature Trail made by a sixth grade class and our old principal. The Nature Trail has two shelters, benches and a creek. We also have a fully equipped playground with three slides, two swingsets, a tire swing, a tetter-totter and monkey bars.

Alas but not least,
are you far from your school? Do your parents have to drive you from Duluth to Two Harbors or farther? Well this will make you happy. North Shore Community School is between Two Harbors and Duluth and closer to Knife River. Also, it has all of the basic routes to Homestead Road, McQuade Road, Highway 61 and Derquist Road. It's a great spot.

I hope that you are excited to come to our school now. Are you surprised at all? You should be! Our school is the best school that I have ever been to that keeps you safe and has great teachers. You'll have a great learning experience here.

Come Grow and Learn at My Charter School

David McLaughlin

Age 10

I would encourage a friend to attend my charter school because we have opportunities to move up levels in certain subjects for example our math classes are all at the same time throughout the school. So if you need a little help or need to be challenged you can make these changes without it affecting your class schedule. We also mix grades together so if you do need help or you do advance, nobody thinks anything about it and we all just accept it. I like how our school mixes grades because it lets us help kids who are younger and be helped by kids who are older. I know what it feels like to be helped by older kids, so that helps me to remember to be kind and patient with the younger kids.

I like how our school gives character awards for things like honesty, kindness, respect, and trustworthiness. It makes me feel really good about myself when I get one of these.

I love our charter school. It's a great place to grow and learn and I've learned alot about myself too.

Why a Friend Should Come to CPA

Selam Tesfatsion

Age 9

Why

a friend should come to CPA? (Community of Peace Academy). Well I could answer that for. First of all CPA is a big school and it has a matching church called St. Patrick Church so CPA is blessed. I've been in CPA for five years and nothing has changed since then. The best thing about our school is students especially the basketball players because if they don't win they say good job! and they don't walk away mad. Because of CPA I will pass 4th grade and up even college and get a fantastick job! All you kids out there might think school is boring but not CPA! So get your backpacks and books and get ready to learn! Parnets should be happy because in no time your kids will be in college! Thank you for listening! BYE!

Middle School Division

Why Do I Encourage Friends to Attend St. Croix Preparatory

Anne Gutierrez

Age 14

I can remember walking through the vacant building, which in two months would soon become my school. The idea seemed too obscure and unbelievable. Only six months before it had been a thought floating around our kitchen table. But now, in my second year participating as a student in St. Croix Preparatory Academy I find that the once vacant grocery store was where I met an amazing group of friends and outstanding teachers. It is the place where I have had the opportunity to learn new and interesting subjects, and where we as a class have created our memories. There are many reasons I would encourage a friend to attend St. Croix Preparatory Academy. Here at St. Croix Prep it isn't your usual school, which makes students so endeared to it. The experience of walking through our compact little hallways greeting fellow students, kindergarten through eighth grade, allows you to feel the secure feeling of our little community created at St. Croix Prep. It is the perfect way to start out the day. When most students, including myself, were first informed about the dress code of wearing uniforms they were bummed! But the uniforms add another reason why the atmosphere of our little school is great to be in. The equality we are given by wearing uniforms causes you to become a stronger and more confident person. We don't recognize people by their clothing, but by their personality. It allows us to create a healthier and more focused learning environment. There are numerous things that are taught at St.

Croix Prep. Now only is there a lot to learn, but there are an awesome group of teachers. The teachers give you a reason to be excited to learn! The teachers and the atmosphere at St. Croix Preparatory Academy allow students to enjoy their selves, meet and be with many friends, and teach the students the love of learning! St. Croix Preparatory is a school students feel comfortable in and is highly recommended on my behalf.

Northern Lights Community School

Katie Stangel

Age 14

Attending

my charter school has changed my life a lot! I am not the type of person who likes deadlines and having no fun. The teachers here understand that I have many activities going on at home, school, and in the community. So, assigning homework is not a priority. One of my advisors at my charter school, Julie, is the best. She will listen to any problems that I have, or just have a conversation with me. Just about anything I need - except money - she'll try to help me out.

Before

I came to the charter school, I was overwhelmed with too much homework, and was falling behind in most classes. I feel I am learning more now because the teachers have time for me, unlike other schools I've attended. The teachers and advisors understand that kids learn and do schoolwork at different paces. I can still get things done, but I don't feel rushed or put-down.

It is way

easier to get along with other kids here, too. We are mostly like a small town. At any other school, no matter what, I would get in trouble even if someone else started it. With only a little help, I can take care of issues on my own here.

My mom

says that she has never seen me so happy. Everyday I want to go to school and am excited about it! There are surprise speakers with new stuff to do and learn on a lot of the days. Our recreation choices are different everyday. Also, new people are always volunteering their time to come in and work with us. For example, today, two people from a paper making company came in and talked about logging and planting trees. We made recycled paper. Last week there was a puppet-maker who taught us how to make awesome character puppets. Another day, a guy showed us how his car runs on vegetable oil. It was really interesting because his son is in Iraq, and he wants to be done with war - so he saves on gas.

I think this charter

school is great for people who struggle with school-work, like me, and for people who can do schoolwork easily, too. I am almost positive that a charter school could change a person's mind about how fun and interesting school can be - with less deadlines.

High School School Division

New Century Charter School

Brittany Eckstein

Age 17

I have been going to New Century Charter School since the start of my eighth grade year, and I have seen many changes in myself since then. I was first introduced to the Charter School when my cousin told me about project based learning. She told me about the fun atmosphere at the school. I was really interested because I wasn't happy with the school I had been going to, and I wanted to try a new method of learning.

In January 2003, my cousin brought me to the charter school as a visitor, so I could see firsthand if the charter school was really for me. I loved the school. I loved the people. I loved the idea of project based learning. My school is not like a traditional high school although we do have core classes. These classes are like traditional classes that other schools have. We also have "project times" throughout our day. By doing projects, students have the opportunity to learn about anything, and while the process definitely isn't easy, it's always rewarding in the end when we earn project credit.

New Century has brought so many opportunities into my life. Before I came to New Century, I had completely lost interest in school, and I wasn't involved in much of anything, especially anything school related. I was an average student, but it got to the point where the longer I stayed at my old school, the less I wanted to get out of bed in the morning.

My first day at New Century felt like I started a new chapter of my life. The first week I made a lot of new friends, and I liked all my teachers. I was eager to learn new things. When I look back at myself at the days in my old school, and I look at my life now, it's like seeing a completely remodeled person. At my old school my grades were average; at New Century I am doing above average in most of my classes. Also, I am now active in extra-curriculars and clubs at school. I tried out for student council, and I was elected to represent eighth through tenth grade, and I currently serve as Treasurer of the Student Council. I taught two student-led seminars, one about Birthright, and the other one I led was a Debate Team. Forty students joined my Debate Team, and twelve girls joined my Birthright Class. I even planned a field trip for all of the girls in my class to take a trip to Birthright. I bought and donated baby clothes and baby

blankets to Birthright. Also, I started writing for a charter school paper called "The Charter News". I wanted to be heard in a positive way, so when the controversy concerning the life of Terri Schiavo was put in the hands of Congress, I decided to do something about it. I was against Terri's feeding tube being removed, so I went on the internet and found phone numbers and email addresses of the Members of Congress, Jeb Bush and House Majority Leader Tom Delay.

I wanted to speak primarily for those like Terri, who cannot speak up for themselves, and I wanted to be a contender for the right to life.

Since going to the charter school, I have matured into a candid young woman. I have found my true outlet — expressing myself through words. I never realized that I wanted to be a writer, or that I would even be able to express myself to the fullest of detail through writing. I feel like New Century has showed me the best of all that I have to offer.

In 2005, I was nominated by two teachers at my school to become a Student Ambassador through a program called People to People. I was in complete awe and so honored to be nominated for such an outstanding position. After being nominated, I had to go through a process in which Delegation Leaders from the Ambassador Program interviewed anywhere from sixty to two-hundred students, to see how many kids would qualify to be Student Ambassadors. Needless to say, I was chosen out of forty kids, and from there on, I was on my way to becoming a Student Ambassador for the United States. My delegation went to the British Isles in June 2005. It was my first time being on a plane, and I was terrified. But as I sat in my seat on the plane, I kept thinking about all that I have been through, and everything that I have accomplished. I knew that I couldn't turn back. I had to see the world and all it had to offer me. I had to see what I could offer the world through all the experiences New Century has shown me.

Just getting on that plane showed bravery, but about two weeks after my delegation arrived in the British Isles, the London Bombings occurred. It was the scariest thing that has ever happened in my life. Luckily, my group was in Scotland at the time, but it was terrifying to know that just days before the bombing, my delegation had been on the London Underground. It could have been me that day, and I am so thankful I am still here.

All of the proud moments of my life have so far been because of New Century. There are so many positive changes that have surrounded my life in the past two years. I am much more outspoken. I am politically active. I love being involved in student council, and other school activities. I have found my preferred career

choice. I found the best way I can express myself, I have seen parts of the world and at seventeen years old, I can say that I have been a Student Ambassador and a voice for the United States. I've even survived a bombing!

Most recently, I adopted a boy from India through a program called "Compassion International". He is nine years old, and his name is Tapan. I send him \$32.00 a month, it doesn't seem like a lot, but it pays for school supplies, clothing for him and his family, food, and church activities. We have a unique relationship, because I am able to write letters to him, and a translator translates my English into Hindi for him. His teachers in India send me his report cards and tell me how much of an impact I have made in Tapan's life. Currently, I haven't been writing for a local newspaper, and I am hoping to get my column started soon. The reason I adopted a boy in India is because I have learned to be charitable.

I speak for the right to life because I have learned to be appreciative. I found my chosen profession because I was blessed with great teachers. I discovered that words are the outlet to my soul because of experience. I have become politically active because I need to be ready to fight for and understand common law. I learned to become brave by becoming a Student Ambassador. For all of this and more, I have to thank my principal, my teachers, my parents, my advisors and my friends. Thanks to all of the above; New Century has become my outlet.