

## Latest news



**VERMONT WRITES DAY**  
**UPDATE:** At least 51 schools — and some 8,000 students — did the seven-minute write. YWP has sent 150+ selected “Dear President Obama”

letters to Washington. We'll let you know if we hear back.

**NEXT VERMONT WRITES DAY**  
**MARCH 17**

Check [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) or [vermontwrites.ywpvt.net](http://vermontwrites.ywpvt.net) for details as the day approaches.

**MORE WEB:** Check [burlington-freepress.com](http://burlington-freepress.com) for more selected student work.

Young Writers Project is an independent nonprofit dedicated to creating generations of confident, passionate Vermont writers. For more: [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

## My opinion

### Loud, so very very loud

**By Taylor Rivard**

*Lake Region High School, Grade 12*

As an editor I am used to the many people around me working on projects silently. This is one reason why I love my job.

I cannot stand people who are loud for no reason: People who talk loudly just so everyone can hear about their business; people who think it impresses everyone who overhears them; and people who walk into the room with the mindset of, “If I talk as loudly as possible without yelling, then everyone will think I’m the most amazingly coolest person ever.”

These people walk into a room and, instead of subtly explaining whatever it is they are talking about, they go off in a spiel that is similar in volume level to a rowdy drunk at a local bar. When this happens I just want to go hide in a hole. I start feeling anxious and restless; I want them to shut up so badly that I lose my train of thought. I have to force myself to block out the nonsense, and I finally find that I can get on with what I am doing while ignoring the obnoxiousness.

I then remember why I love the quiet of my glorious job.

# Students write about FEAR & express OPINIONS

## CHALLENGING FEAR



**By Maggie Sullivan**  
*Milton High School, Grade 10*

I had pictured this moment so many times before in my head, that now that it is actually in front of me, at my fingertips, it almost doesn't seem real.

There is a slight breeze, faintly ruffling my fair hair. It would probably make a good photo op, like the models who have fans put by the camera to make their hair look wind-touched. Nothing in their pictures is ever genuine. Is anything?

It's so high up. I can see everything below me. Tiny specks.

There was that saying, that if you dropped a coin off the top of the Empire State Building and it hit a person walking by, it would kill them. Myth Busters probably did an episode on that, but it's too late to go back and watch it. It's too late to see if it's true or not. Too late for anything.

I take a small step forward.

I have wanted this for so long. Not because I am unhappy, not because I want to die. Because I don't. I don't want to die. I fear death in a way I cannot explain. When I picture this moment, I see faces before my eyes that beg me to back off the ledge. But I just want — need — to know what it's like. Need to know what it's like that very last second. It is a desire that has overpowered my soul

since I can remember, a curiosity that has, quite literally, killed the cat.

This is it.

I take my last step forward, and I am falling ...

falling ...

falling.

The first second is overwhelming. My stomach drops as my body does, but that is the only unenjoyable aspect of what I am doing.

I let go of the rope attached to my harness and swing my legs up, intertwining them for dear life on the rope. Even with my body stretched out like this, perpendicular to the ground, I am nowhere near touching it. I am flying horizontally away from the climbing wall I jumped from.

As my ride on the zip line comes to a slow, I am grabbed by someone and directed to the ladder. “How was it?!”

Too many words rush through my body: amazing, beautiful, breathtaking, stunning...

My hands sweat with adrenaline as I shakily unclip the carabiners.

I want to cry.

Never have I experienced such a thing. Never have I understood what it meant to die. Never have I fulfilled such a strong desire.

Never has abandoning fear left me so breathless.

## Scared

**By Sophie Rippner Donovan**  
*Vergennes Elementary School, Grade 4*

One of my friend's sisters left the door open. Well, the door on the outside doesn't close, so we weren't paying attention, and my dog had JUMPED OUTSIDE!! Mostly, she runs to my neighbor's house, but this time she ran way up the street. We called her name over, and over, and over. Finally, we saw her. She was in front of a car! I was so scared. My dad had a nervous look on his face. But, luckily, the car stopped. She went to a ditch and stayed there. We got her on the leash and took her home.

## Lurking creature

**By Kaitlyn Kaplan**  
*Allen Brook School, Grade 4*

My little sister Jocelyn was playing in her outside, colorful playhouse. Our family was enjoying the summer day. Our backyard used to be forest so we have to watch out for creatures. My sister was carelessly playing in her playhouse and then it happened. A raccoon went under our fence. It was limping and it went right into my sister's playhouse.

Everything went silent. Only my sister didn't seem to notice. We could hear the wind. We were too frightened to scream. If we did, we might upset the raccoon; it might have rabies.

My family watched in fear. But it did not bite my sister. It lurched past her and went toward my mom. It ducked right under her legs and finally went into the woods. What a relief!

## Anxiety

**By Emma Berkowitz**  
*Charlotte Central School, Grade 5*

A swift, cold breeze nuzzles over my cheeks as the performer asks the crowd to give him a hand. My hand shoots up. To my surprise he chooses me. I smile at my friend Emma, and she smiles back. Curious as to what might occur, I see the man pull out a unicycle. He sits on it and then instructs me to sit on his shoulders. All of a sudden fear strikes me, but I don't back out. So I do as he instructs. Little do I know he will start moving. As he peddles rhythmically, I feel it tilt, and I let out a scream of fear. He scolds me kindly. We take a few laps around as the crowd wildly applauds. Deep joy fills my heart. This frightening experience made me braver than ever.

## Terrified

**By Kourtney Stratton**  
*Edmunds Middle School, Grade 7*

Have you ever had that horrible feeling that you were being watched? The feeling that sends your body into a terrible shivering fit and makes your hair stand on end? I have, but it didn't turn out to be my overworked imagination. It was something very different from when I have sensed my best friend sneaking up behind me, or a stranger stealing a quick glance at me before driving or walking away. It was very wrong. So wrong that I had to run, so I definitely ran.

It was the spring of 2008. I was in Oldsmar, Florida heading toward the great saltwater lake that eventually ends up spilling into the Florida Bay. I was taking the railroad tracks which were the quickest and most beautiful way to get to the lake. The tracks were surrounded by woods and a pond that had the prettiest gators you could ever see. I was balancing on the metal rail of the tracks which was a shocker because I'm usually a real klutz. Then I felt as if a shadow had swept over me, but there wasn't anything around me that could have caused the shadow. I got that feeling: shivers were racing up and down my body, leaving the hair on my arms standing straight up. I heard a branch snap and I could swear I heard a muffled cry for help. But I wasn't stupid. Without any warning, my legs started pumping and I shot forward, heading in the direction of my home. ...

(See full story on the Web: [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) or [burlingtonfreepress.com](http://burlingtonfreepress.com))

## The Dark

**By Oonagh Cavanagh**  
*Browns River Middle School, Grade 6*

The light went out, and suddenly fear seized me. It washed over me like a wave on a sunny beach. It was a feeling it couldn't control me in this manner.

My mouth went dry, I gasped a whimper of fright, my hands started to sweat, and a single tear escaped my eye. I'd been taken over by it, I could feel it leaning over my shoulder, watching my every move; it knew exactly when to strike.

I was so exposed, like a mouse in an open field, waiting to be snagged by a hawk. I was alone in the darkness, and, yes, I was afraid of it.