

## Believe in yourself

By EMILY BOWEN

Benson Village School, Grade 7  
Set your standards high  
You deserve the best,  
Try for what you want  
And never settle for less.

Believe in yourself no  
Matter what you may choose  
Keep a winning attitude and you  
Can never lose. Think about your  
Destination, but don't worry if  
You stray.

Because the most important  
Thing is what you've learned  
Along the way. Take all that  
You can be. Soar above the  
Clouds and let your dreams  
Set you free.

## Wounded, scarred

By HOLLY BUSHEY

Fair Haven Graded School, Grade 7

The story I will always remember was  
a day I thought would turn out well, but it  
didn't.

I went over to my friend's house to play  
a tag game that we called 'Predator.'  
People sometimes get a scratch or a pulled  
muscle when they play, but what was about  
to happen was so much different.

My friends and I liked to play in a  
graveyard, as well as the rest of the town.  
The graveyard was fenced and had a wired  
gate. I was in the graveyard while a few of  
my friends were outside.

I was it.  
If my friends ran I'd jump the fence to  
tag them, so they huddled there and soon  
had made a plan. One of them shouted,  
"Go!" and three of them ran while one  
stayed and held the gate.

I tried to get it open, and she let go just  
as I forced it open with all my strength and  
ran at it.

The gate flew out, bounced off the  
fence, and came swinging back as I ran full  
force towards it. Part of the gate's frame hit  
my forehead in this collision, leaving a  
gash an inch wide and a half-inch deep in  
my forehead. I hadn't known, until I was  
lying on the ground and one of the girls ran  
over and shouted, "There's so much  
blood!" That triggered two of the three  
girls to run back.

I got stitches that night because if I had-  
n't I could have suffered from losing too  
much blood. And now I'll always remem-  
ber that day. Even though I still play this  
game, I have a flash back when I pass that  
graveyard. I'm now wounded and scarred  
for life.

## Chop! Chop! Chop!

By MOYA CAVANAGH | Mount Mansfield Union High School, Grade 9

In seventh grade,  
I stood still  
in front of my class.  
74 pairs of judging eyes  
watched  
as chop! Chop! Chop!  
Went the scissors,  
my ponytail came away in my hand.  
That day, I showed 74 self-centered thirteen-year-olds.  
Showed them that the world wasn't all about them.  
'Cause somewhere out there,  
I knew there was a little girl with cancer.  
That little girl just wanted to get better,  
she wanted to heal.  
No one knows better than a seventh grade girl  
how important your hair is.  
And so, chop! Chop! Chop!  
Went the scissors.  
If I could share what I had to make someone happy,  
If I could give someone trying to be strong a little more strength  
to help them heal themselves,  
And if I could show that to a class full of seventh graders,  
get them thinking,  
I knew the world would be a better place tomorrow.  
So, chop! Chop! Chop!  
Went the scissors.  
Step through time to yesterday,  
my sister walked through the door,  
ponytail in hand,  
smile on face,  
beautiful gold blond hair cut away.  
And as she proudly showed me what she had done  
to help another person in need,  
I couldn't say a word,  
because chop! Chop! Chop!  
the scissors had taken all her beautiful hair away.  
Vain, selfish, horrible me.  
I only saw the loss.  
Only later did I see the beauty in her choice,  
the beauty in her holding out that ponytail,  
the beauty in her giving what she had so somebody else who needed it.  
as I considered my blindness,  
I ran my hands through my long dark hair  
and chop! Chop! Chop!  
I remembered the glorious feeling of knowing  
That in that moment,  
I was doing something purely good.  
And that was beautiful.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### PODCASTING WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 28, 5-7 p.m.

YWP Offices, Champlain Mill  
advanced sign up required:  
[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

#### VERMONT 2059

Submissions due May 29

Envision your town in 2059 A.D.  
Best submissions win cash prizes  
and potential public presentation.



Young Writers Project is  
an independent nonprofit  
that engages students to  
write. We believe strong  
writing skills are essential  
for success. YWP runs  
[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org),  
a safe online community

for Vermont young writers.

YWP also builds **Digital Writing  
Classrooms** for schools. Early sign  
up ends **May 29**. For more, go to:  
[ywpvt.net](http://ywpvt.net).

## Ballad

By BRADY DUGAN

Benson Village School, Grade 8  
Model T.  
Lake Champlain  
Ferry  
Over board  
Forgot which was break  
Got out safe  
Didn't need help  
Lost control  
Never slowed down.

## Winter similes

By MIKELA ELLIS

Benson Village School, Grade 8  
The wind is like a whisper.  
The snow is like little tear drops.  
The clouds are like a brainstorm.  
The fog is like midnight sky.  
The ice was as thin as a page in a book.

*Editor's note: These pieces were written  
as part of the YWP Ballad Writing  
Residency with musician Pete Sutherland  
that is just finishing up.*

*Mark your calendars: On **May 27**, at  
**Benson Village School at 1 p.m.**, stu-  
dents and Sutherland will present their  
ballad which pays tribute to Benson  
Landing and its connection to Lake  
Champlain over the years.*

*For more: [www.ballad.ywpvt.net](http://www.ballad.ywpvt.net)*

## Little puppy

By OONAGH CAVANAGH

Browns River Middle School, Grade 6

I'll always remember  
those puppy eyes  
opened wide with fear.  
I'll remember why  
and it'll weigh me down.  
Taking him away  
from everything he knew  
his family  
his home.  
His little mouth  
let out a sound  
that could shatter hearts.  
Little puppy,  
mine.  
In a blue recycling bin.  
First grade.  
Or was it yesterday?  
As he moaned  
in the agony of his loss,  
I lay my hand across his head.  
Although  
I was still afraid of him.  
Little puppy,  
don't be worried  
if you only knew the love  
that was coming soon.