

# What it feels like to win

By SIERRA RAKES  
Twin Valley Middle School, Grade 7

Long ago, at my school I saw a poster. It had bright letters that said “DRAWING CONTEST.” Although I wasn’t the best artist in the class I really wanted to win. I worked hard all day and night, thinking of how my picture was to be. Then the picture in my mind hit me and I was only halfway done. I worked for days to make my masterpiece complete!

Finally it was done. I handed it in and won first prize. My picture was made into a brand new mascot for my school. I felt great and to reach what I had hoped for was the biggest success I had ever had. I’m proud!

# I’m a writer

By CHRISTINE REILLY  
Twin Valley Middle School, Grade 8

I write  
I write about loves I have never experienced  
I write about people I have never met in real life  
I write about places I have only imagined, read about or see in the movies.  
Although I somehow twist and weave some of the truth into the tapestries that are my writings...  
I write about the love I wish I had  
I write about made-up characters, and put bits of myself into each and every one of them.  
I write about the imagined sanctuaries that reside in the recesses of my mind  
I don’t know why  
Sometimes, I don’t know how  
I just write

# Game on

By HAILEY WARD  
Browns River Middle School, Grade 7

Game on  
Heart pounding  
Intensity building  
Breath shaking  
I scream  
The crowd gasps  
Another letdown  
More time to pass  
My mind absorbs  
What’s going on  
While my brain  
Only wonders  
“What’s happening  
A whistle blows  
My breath catches  
A cheer sounds  
I smile  
We won.



## THIS WEEK: ‘Success’ & general writing

Each week Young Writers Project selects best work from Vermont students in response to a prompt or as general work. This week, students wrote about success and shared their general writing. A team of students helps select work for publication in this and eight other newspapers. For more: [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), a civil community of young writers.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences.

YWP runs [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) and **The Schools Project**, a comprehensive online classroom and training solution for teachers to integrate digital technology into their curriculum. **Teachers interested in signing up or renewing**, go to [ywpschools.net](http://ywpschools.net) or contact YWP at 802-324-9537.

## YWP NEWS

Sign-up underway for **2010/2011 Schools Project writing program**: Digital training, classroom Web site, ongoing mentoring, lesson plans. Spaces limited. Contact Geoffrey Gevalt, 324-9537.

**Summer Master’s Course**: YWP and National Writing Project offering a digital writing course in late June.

**YWP Master’s Practicum**: Yearlong Digital Learning course (St. Michael’s credits).

See [digitalteachers.net](http://digitalteachers.net) for both.

# What happened?

By SAGE E. BALLENTINE  
Putney Central School, Grade 8

Life’s full of crime and hate.  
People always seem to discriminate.  
What happened to those happy days  
where everything seemed  
to be OK?  
If you ain’t this or if you ain’t that,  
then you best be ready for  
an attack.  
Something always has to belong to  
someone.  
What happened to sharing with  
everyone?  
It’s getting harder for parents to control  
their kids these days,  
things have changed since the 1950s  
in every way.  
There are new ways of running this  
town.  
You better be careful or you’ll be  
run down!  
Watch yourself  
or you’ll end up in a  
box on a shelf.

# Triumph

By ALEXI KIM  
Frances C. Richmond Middle School, Grade 7

My sweaty hands  
slide down my shorts  
the quarter-sized blisters popping  
repeatedly I tell myself I can do it  
Unraveling the ropes  
I connect them to my harness  
Telling myself I can do it  
Clapping my hands, chalk flies  
and rushes through the air like  
snow in a blizzard  
I tell myself I can do it  
Like a spider I ascend  
up the rocky wall  
the bell above tells me  
“You can do it”  
I feel the blood rushing to my head  
as I battle gravity  
the copper bell is closer  
I am doing it  
With one hand I stretch  
and hold the prize  
the ring echoes, and I smile  
I have done it.

# A beautiful day

By JULIANNA BATTIG | Home School, Grade 5

Oh, the blueness of the sky,  
Today is a beautiful day.  
I look up from the place I lie,  
A wonderful stack of hay.  
I see a meadow far and wide,  
Filled with emerald, windblown grass.

Reaching far to every side,  
Swaying when I pass.  
The sun’s rays pierce me,  
The wind nudges me as it blows.  
I hardly ever feel this free,  
My heart jumps with joy and glows.

# Finally

By Mere Mackall  
Frances C. Richmond Middle School, Grade 7

“Next, the 13-14 Girls 50-meter Freestyle.” My event. The poor girl stuck with a 100-meter butterfly looked worn out; she hung onto the gutter of the pool, faced flushed, breathing heavily, too tired to even take off her goggles.

Thankfully, I wasn’t first in my event. I was heat three. That is, I would be going third. Third was totally average. With third, you’re not fast enough to be heat seven, but not slow enough to be stuck in heat one. I didn’t know which I preferred; all I knew was that I was watching girl after girl go in front of me and kill herself trying in vain to break her original time. It’s not always about beating the girl beside you in swimming. Your greatest opponent is yourself; you’re always trying to beat yourself.

I shook out the tremors racing up my body. I was nervous—nervous and desperate to beat my time. I had been 35 seconds — much too long. It was time to get into those last few digits now. Stretch, I told myself. I pulled my arm across my body and jumped up and down. I had too much nervous energy; I felt like I needed to get rid of it. Then someone nudged my back.

“Hey, kid,” the timer said, “you’re up.”

I pulled on my goggles and jumped one last time. I leaned into the block, waiting for the woman in front to let us know when to get up.

“Swimmers up.” I clambered onto the block breathing heavily, staring at the water below, at my feet.

“Take your mark.” I bent down, one foot way back, the other’s toes curled around the edge of the block. I tensed, my fingers curling around the block, my head down, waiting for the beep.

“Beep.” I shot off, pushing through the air. I strained to remember what my coach had told me. *Just a 50, that means kill yourself going as fast as you could go.*

I tightened my body and streamlined the first few yards through the water, letting my mind go blank and my body take over. Butterfly kicks, come up for air.

I exploded out of the water and gulped down air. Already my arms were going, one after the other, my feet kicking as they never had before. It’s a great feeling, really, going as fast as you can go. I stroked for as long as I could, until my lungs were begging me for air. I breathed, and was back down.

The wall was ahead now. I could see the “T” at the bottom of the pool, and steeled myself for the flipturn. Here was the wall now. Butterfly kick, and get myself over the flip, my hands pinned to my sides, yet ready to turn into a streamline immediately. So streamline I did again, but nearly as long as the first time.

I was going a little slower now. I could see the lanes beginning to change color; I was nearing the end. Come on, I told myself. Kick harder. The flags are here now, no breathing. So, I held my breath as I kicked with all my might and finally, stretched onto my side, my fingers hit the touchpad. I looked up at the board.

32.83 seconds. 1st place. Finally.