

BODHI

On the first day of shcool I didnt know anyone. I went to recess Bodhi invited me to play kickball. He made sure I was on his team. It was nice of him. I got to make friends becuas of Bodhi. He sat next to me at lunch. He made the first day of shcool fun. Bodhi went to hospital. He was there for 3 days. He died. It was sad. I sang at his funeral. I will always remember him.

This is student work, transcribed as the student presented it.



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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Drew Mangum

**1st Place - Essay Primary
2nd Grade**

Franklin Accelerated Academy Brimhall Campus
Mesa Public Schools

MY FUN GRANDPA

My grandpa loves to help everyone! He helps a lot on my brother's cross country team. He has donated running shoes, team water bottles, and a mer to the team. He has bought my brother a few pairs of really fast shoes! he gave my brother a really nice running watch so he can keep track of his miles and times. My grandpa serves in his church and neighborhood. He volunteers at the temple and feeds missionaries dinner. He likes to visit old people on Sundays too. In his neighborhood he really likes to mow people's yards and take in their trashes. His neighborhood across the street lives herself and he fixes things that are broken for her. My grandpa really loves all his grandkids. He comes to our concerts, dance recitals and sports games. My favorite is when he gets out all the pool toys and we swim all day and play. I really love my grandpa and I'm grateful that he loves to help others.

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Sydney Heaton

**2nd Place - Essay Primary
2nd Grade**

Franklin Accelerated Academy Brimhall Campus
Mesa Public Schools

MY GRANDPA

My grandpa has always been a leader. He grew up in a small town in Iowa and had no money. He worked hard in football to lead his team and got to go to collage to play. Then he broke his neck and then joined the Airforce. He was made a captain quickly because he was a strong and smart person that others wanted to follow. He had eight kids that he taught to be strong and love everyone. He is always serving people in his church and community. When somebody needs somthing he is to get people together to serve and help them. He is even in Iowa now serving and leading people in his old community.

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Londyn Leal

**3rd Place - Essay Primary
2nd Grade**

Franklin Accelerated Academy Brimhall Campus
Mesa Public Schools

MY AUNT HELPS THE COMMUNITY

This is a story of a girl named Sofia, she works at the Arizona Faith Network that helps the homeless .

One day Sofia came from a party and saw a homeless boy. She felt bad so she wanted to buy food for the boy until she realized she did not bring money, and she was far from home, but that didn't stop Sofia from helping the boy. She ran as fast as she could until she got home, then she grabbed her wallet and went back, and gave food , water and other goods .

Soon there was a thunderstorm. She was worried that the homeless got hit by lightning so she went to check until she realized she works at Arizona Faith Network that lets the homeless rest and eat food and also lets their pets in so she sends him to the place where she works. She was happy that he was safe. She went home because it was late but another homeless man was on the sidewalk . She called her workers but they said it was closed. She was worried because there were no places nearby that accept the homeless pets. He had a dog as a pet . She was worried so she took him to a shelter and took the dog home but the homeless man stopped her and said " I can't be without my pet dog ." So she couldn't do that, so she set up a tent in her back ward. Soon her work was open so she took him to the Arizona Faith Network but she forgot to give the homeless boy his pet so the homeless reminded her to give him his pet back.

Sofia is a great leader because she will do anything to help the homeless that are shunned. They need help to get a place to stay and someone to help them. I think we need more people like Sofia because she helps our community with helping the homeless, so they have what they need like food, water and shelter. Sofia will help the homeless no matter what and that is something that more people should do.

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**

Adrian Cruz

**1st Place - Essay Intermediate
4th Grade**

**Riverside Traditional School
Riverside Elementary School District #2**

GRANDMA AND GRANPA

My Grandma and Grandpa are great people, they are also a great team together, here's why.

Sometimes my Grandma goes to a food bank. When she is there she will help sort food by seeing if it is good or bad. After that people whose jobs don't pay enough or who can't afford it can drive through and can get free boxes of food.

On super hot days they invite homeless people to church where they can rest, and play games. My Grandparents also help them make a meal for them. One time they got to play a game with them and socialize with them and have a great time with them.

My Grandpa will sometimes go out to a refugee center and basically what they will do there is they will help them prepare for the drivers test and help them get ready for the citizenship test. They also prepare apartments for them with everything such as a sink, rag, washer, dryer, fridge, bed and other stuff like that.

Afterall I did say they are great people. Thanks for reading my essay.

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Grayson Baldwin

**2nd Place - Essay Intermediate
5th Grade**

Franklin Accelerated Academy Brimhall Campus
Mesa Public Schools

MY NEIGHBOR... MY HERO

My hero is my neighbor, Lori Boggs. She is one of the most sensational people out there. Lori Boggs is a community leader because she saves hundreds of lives by teaching fire safety skills to pre-kindergarten, elementary and middle school students. Lori Boggs does so much for the community.

Lori Boggs is a spokesperson for the Scottsdale Fire Department. She teaches kids how to provide first aid and prevent injuries. She also teaches a class for parents on how to put in car seats properly for little children. She also teaches people to perform CPR. It might not seem like a big deal, but it is very important to keep kids safe. When I was little, she came over to my house and checked our pool fence for security. Her inspirational skills are put on the news each summer to protect kids from drowning.

Now, I hope our community can say Lori Boggs is a great person that helps save lives. If there were not people like Lori Boggs in our community, kids would get injured a lot more often. I believe Lori Boggs is like Martin Luther King, because she is changing lives too. I appreciate Lori Boggs and others like her, who keep people safe in our community.

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Alex McCurdy

**3rd Place - Essay Intermediate
4th Grade**

**Knox Gifted Academy
Chandler Unified School District**

THANK YOU, MS. M.

Two years ago, when I started 4th grade,
I was excited to meet my teacher, though a little afraid.
She was nice from the start, and over time it became clear,
She led through service, an inspiration year after year.

In every task or assignment, large or small,
She helped her students, answering each call.
She assisted us in growing our minds,
And every word she uttered was patient and kind.

When someone needed help, she took the lead,
Encouraging each of us to plant our seed.
Her service was like a shining light,
Guiding us out of worry and fright.

Thank you, Ms. M, for pushing me that year,
For teaching me to always persevere.
Thank you, Ms. M, for your open-mindedness,
For teaching me the true meaning of success.

Thank you for all the games we played,
For the empathy you've displayed.
Thank you, Ms. M, for all that you've done—
Without you, I'd still be back at square one.

Everyday, you've helped me understand,
That being a leader is simply lending a hand.
You showed how small acts can light the way,
And brighten someone's entire day.

So thank you, Ms. M, for stepping ahead,
And not being demanding, but compassionate instead.
Not someone for trophies, rewards, or cheers,
She led us all through an amazing year.

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**

Maria Josanu

**1st Place - Essay Middle
6th Grade**

**Basha Accelerated Middle School
Chandler Unified School District**

COMPASSIONATE CONTRIBUTIONS

Kevin and Toni Salcido have given back to the community through volunteer work with various organizations. They first started their journey with volunteer work in 1987 by donating clothes and time to the child crisis center, after the loss of their young child Lenny. The two have recently gotten involved in volunteering to spread awareness for Alzheimer's after having a family member affected.

Toni volunteers every Tuesday for the Ironwood Cancer Research Center. She spends her time in the hospital's boutique providing wigs, hats, scarfs, blankets, and other necessities to patients in need. She talks to patients being treated, providing comfort and compassion. Toni spends about 200 hours a year volunteering for the organization assisting wherever she is needed.

Another cause Kevin and Toni are passionate about is Alzheimer's. They both volunteer for the Desert Southwest Alzheimer's Association. The two have been in ads to raise awareness for Alzheimer's disease. Kevin volunteers for the Alzheimer's Association, as a member on the board of directors. The board of directors helps oversee how the organization is managed and they make sure there is a good leadership team that is spending the organization's money wisely.

Kevin and Toni say that the reason why they volunteer is because they know what people are going through and want to let others know that they can get through losses, similarly to how they did. Through volunteer work they strive to give others inspiration and hope when they need it the most.

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Aria Minder-MacIntosh

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2nd Place - Essay Middle 6th Grade

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Madison Traditional Academy
Madison Elementary School District

MY DAD

My dad Shiyou Wu is a great leader through service in our community! He has a doctor's degree in Social Work and is the Associate Professor and the Associate Director for Doctoral Education at the School of Social Work at Arizona State University.

He is a great leader because he cares about other people a lot. He helps out the younger generation of social workers, and uses his high position to help the world and others. My father is also the president of the Asian & Pacific Islander Social Work Educators Association (APISWEA), which is a national organization representing Asian and Pacific Islander (API) social work educators. He helps the immigrants from all around the world, especially China. He wants to make our world a better and fair place.

Another example of how he is a leader in our community is that he helps the homeless through many different ways. He specializes in interviewing and studying about homelessness. My dad always serves low income to the homeless and gives them free food and shelter. One time, my dad took me and my siblings to a place where we serve food to homeless people. The people felt very good after getting the food, and that made me feel good too, because I knew that I just helped make someone's day!

My dad Shiyou Wu is an awesome leader through service in our community! He inspires me, and other people too, to take action and help those around us!

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Caroline Wu

**3rd Place - Essay Middle
6th Grade**

Arizona College Prep Middle School
Chandler Unified School District

MY FATHER

A person in my life who exemplifies leadership through service is my father, Jose Luis Castro. An immigrant from Mexico, he recently became a U.S. citizen, but long before that, he was already making a difference in people's lives.

As a construction worker specializing in tile design, my father has traveled to various places for work. While in Hawaii for six months, he noticed many of his elderly clients lived in poor conditions. Moved by their circumstances, he started using his own time and resources to repair their homes at no cost.

When our family relocated from California to Arizona, even though we didn't know anyone, my father continued his acts of service. He built strong relationships with the elderly he had helped, some of whom I've had the pleasure of meeting. Their words of gratitude and admiration for my father fill me with pride. I've even had the chance to join him, sharing in the joy of brightening someone's day, one home at a time.

Though home repairs might seem small, my father's work goes beyond the physical. He brings light and dignity into the lives of those he helps, showing me that true leadership is about making a lasting impact, no matter how big or small the act.

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2025 Arizona State University
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Mercedes Castro

**1st Place - Essay Secondary
12th Grade**

Harvest Preparatory Academy
Harvest Power Community Development Group, Inc.
School District

MY GRANDMA

My grandma, Joan Hubbard, demonstrates leadership through service by making dresses for an organization called Dress a Girl. The Dress a Girl organization originated in Uganda, Africa. Thirty eight states participate in the organization. The organization believes in “every girl should have at least one dress in their life.” and so does my grandma. The organization is made up of only volunteers. They use donated or self-bought fabric to make all the dresses. My grandma buys the fabric, buttons, and thread herself, so that the women who can’t buy it can have the donated fabric at the organization to use for sewing their dresses. She also recruited my mom to help make a couple dresses too. Watching the process of what it takes to make a dress makes me feel amazed how women like my grandma spend hours doing this for girls that they don’t even know.

My grandma also helps out in the Dolls of Hope organization, which makes teddy bears and dolls for kids. The organization is from Utah. She makes teddy bears for kids who are in orphanages, refugee camps, homeless shelters, and hospitals. She buys the fabric to make the bears herself as well. Some volunteers sew the fabric for the bears and dolls, then they turn them into the organization to be stuffed and transported to kids around the world. The teddy bears and dolls create comfort and security to the kids and it gives them something to call their own.

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2025 Arizona State University
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Emmalyne Allen

**2nd Place - Essay Secondary
10th Grade**

Leading Edge Academy--Gilbert Early College
LEAD Charter Schools

Someone in my community who demonstrates leadership through service is my youth leader, Jordan Unterburger. Jordan works hard to care for the individual teenagers in our church community. When I asked Jordan why he serves our community in this way, he told me that he had many influential men in his life when he was a teenager. He said that they made him the man he is today by simply being present, intentional and loving him. As an adult, he wants to be that example for others.

Jordan chooses to be a leader to the youth in our community by showing up every week and choosing to listen. He sets up fun games for us, plans camps and activities, leads small groups and sermons, and helping families in need. He encourages us to help others and be a light to our peers in our school lives.

Jordan was a leader to me personally when I lost my dad. My dad was making very unhealthy and dangerous decisions, and I wasn't able to be around him anymore. Jordan stepped into my pain, and choose to listen to and help me. He brought my family food, and acted as a father figure to me when my own dad couldn't. He gave me a dvice and care. Jordan now has his own daughter, Shaya, with his wife, Annika. I am so excited to see the father he becomes, as I have seen him demonstrate to me.

The passion Jordan Unterburger holds to witness to and serve the lives of children is tremendous, and I am so thankful to have him personally in my life. He serves us by showing up, listening, preaching, and giving us care and encouragement. He truly demonstrates leadership through service in the most loving and beautiful way possible.

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Penelope Carrillo

**3rd Place - Essay Secondary
10th Grade**

**Leading Edge Academy--Gilbert Early College
LEAD Charter Schools**