

IN OUR OWN WRITE

A Collection of Essays, Stories and Poems by The Students of
9B, Vanguard

December 2010

This zine was produced at Vanguard Intercultural School as part of Writers in the Community, a program run jointly by the Quebec Writers' Federation and The Centre for Literacy of Quebec.

Thanks to writer-facilitator Ian McGillis and teacher Rita Langer.

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested \$20.1 million in writing and publishing throughout Canada.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

If I could accomplish one thing it would be to be famous. I have made it my goal since I was a little kid. I feel that some people are just destined for greatness, and that I am one of them.

I've narrowed it down to two things: a boxer or an actor. I've been told for years to be a performer because I am funny, expressive and a good actor. Boxing is something that I have always wanted to do because everyone's always told me that I am stubborn and never give up no matter how many times I get knocked down in a fight. I have trained for about three years to prepare for it physically, and I have always had the mental mindset. I am also positive, easygoing and athletic, which helps for both.

For years now I have been experimenting with different things such as dance, acting, and writing, as well as sports. For now I am doing acting and boxing because those are the ones I enjoy the most and find the most challenging.

I find a lot of inspiration in stuff from my childhood as well as stuff now. My childhood made a big impact because that was when I found and practiced my interests. Now I find inspiration in what people have done with their lives and how they did it, because I tell myself that if they can, so can I. It's things like that that make me live life with hope, to know that I can make my dreams come true if I really try.

Desrick

The Montreal Canadiens are the best team in the Northeast Division, with a 16-8-1 record. They have 31 points, making them fourth in the Eastern Conference. That is amazing because last year they barely made it to the playoffs, but had a great run in the playoffs. They beat two of the best teams in the league. That was their best run in 17 years. If they had played against the Boston Bruins, who choked against the Philadelphia Flyers, they would have gone to the Stanley Cup final. They would have lost to the Chicago Blackhawks, who were too good a team to beat. The Blackhawks are not as good this year because of the salary cap. Marian Hossa, who was part of the Blackhawks' Cup victory, was part of the Pittsburgh Penguins when they lost to the Detroit Red Wings in 2008. The following year he went to the Red Wings and they lost to the Penguins. He finally went to the Blackhawks and won the Stanley Cup last year.

The P. K. Subban situation with Montreal (he was a healthy scratch because he played horribly against the Edmonton Oilers) is good and bad. Good because he is a rookie and needs to learn his lesson and work harder. I think Jacques Martin should bring him back once the defense starts breaking down and they are not helping Carey Price anymore.

Sam

Animals are awesome because they help the environment. People don't know enough about animals and why they are good. They just think animals are useless, and kill them and eat them and lock them up in cages. It's horrible. We should study them and learn how they live in the wild instead of just killing them. Animals are more afraid of us than we are of them. People are just afraid because they don't understand why animals would attack them, but they should think about the reasons, like maybe they're too close to the animals' babies, or they are in the animals' territory.

Matthew

My biggest dream would be to play in the NHL, to make lots of money playing a sport that I love so much and have been playing since I was little. My other dream is to be in the army and help protect Canada.

Getting to play hockey every day and getting paid lots of money for it would be just amazing. So would all the girls you get being a professional athlete, and having all the fans watching you every game and looking up to you like I do to my favorite players, and people buying my jersey and screaming my name. I really hope this dream comes true so I don't have to dream anymore.

I look up to soldiers and give them lots of respect because they deserve it, and I would like to follow in their footsteps and help protect the country that I love. My uncle is in the army and always told me to think about it before I join, because you never know what could happen when you're in a war zone. My mom really doesn't want me to join the army, but she also didn't want me playing hockey at first because she didn't want me to get hurt. So I don't always listen to her when it comes to this stuff.

Hockey is a dream I really want to come true, because it is a big part of my life and I want it to be my job so I don't have to think about anything but hockey. Being in the army is a dream I still have to think about before I do anything I might regret.

Joseph

My first goal is to graduate high school. Like everyone else I want to get a good education so I can go on to college. My second goal would be to get into a good college program. I would choose biology and science as my major, so I could get into the medical field. After college I would apply to medical school and become a doctor. That would be a great job because it pays well, and it's nice to know that in your lifetime you have helped a person who was sick become healthy. I would want a job as an endocrinologist, because that benefits children's health.

Another accomplishment I would like to have is to get married and raise a family. I want to know how hard it is to raise children and be part of a family. I would like to watch my children grow and do things on their own, like have a family of their own to take care of. It is every mother's dream to see her kids do things like that.

With every hardworking thing a person does in life there comes a reward. My reward would be that in my older years I would retire knowing I did something to help the people who need it most. I realize I can't succeed without being willing to fail, and I can't fail without trying. A lesson I have recently learned is that all the people who are successful had to say to themselves once, "I'll try."

Rachel

The best place I've ever been to is Orlando, Florida. My family and I went there for twelve days two summers ago. Almost all the time we spent there was sunny and hot.

The first place we went to was Sea World. We went on a tour through a long glass tunnel and saw groups of tropical fish swimming around us. A scuba diver fed the fish and all the fish rushed to the window to get their food. That was the best part of the tour.

We also went to Universal Studios Plaza. There are two theme parks, there, The Islands of Adventure and Universal's City Walk. That was my sister's favourite part of the trip because she got a really big ice cream sundae at the snack bar. The ice cream had miniature chocolate bars in it, and was covered in M& M's.

My favourite part was going to the Central Florida Zoo. The whole zoo is transformed into a jungle, with a waterfall, tall rainforest trees, and a reptile house with a lot of different types of lizards in a cave lit with little torches. We also got to see two African elephants, but they were sleeping.

Eric

Shak is always there when I need him.

You know, sometimes when I feel like eating cookies, Shak will be right there baking me home-made ones. There's nothing better than a 325-pound, 7-foot tall black man making home-made cookies. He always knows the best things to do to make me happy, like tucking me into bed and reading me a bedtime story.

Man, I don't know what I would do without Shak by my side. He's like one of those people that you wish you could be friends with but never can, unless you're me. Some people think that he's a monster, but underneath that big dark meat is a nice sweetheart. He's just misunderstood, and should not be judged on his appearance. I don't know if life would be the same without Shak.

Joshua

If I could accomplish one thing, it would be becoming a pilot.

I love airplanes. Every time I see one I say to myself, “I want to be in that plane flying.” I always want to go to the cockpit and see what’s in it. Flying a plane around the world, I would feel free. That’s the positive side of being a pilot. But being a pilot is also stressful, because you have to deal with extremely stressful situations. You have to think of the safety of your passengers. If there’s a problem with a plane, you need to figure out how to solve it in a limited amount of time. But if I could accomplish one thing, I’d be a pilot.

Luca

If I were to become Prime Minister I would do my best to change some laws. I would take all the bad laws that are damaging the country and the ones that people don't agree with, and I would see if it's reasonable and worthwhile to change them. I would change the one about getting your driver's license. I'd lower the price because every year it gets more expensive.

My main goal on being Prime Minister would be to try to keep the country calm, to keep everything nice and settled. I would hold a very big meeting and ask people which laws they agree with and which ones they don't. I would get all their answers and look through them, which would help me set my main goal to have the country happy. I would try to end all war and make sure that we can all live and die in peace.

Alex

I think probably the happiest moment of my life was around my last birthday. I say this because on that day I received an awesome and surprising gift: tickets to two concerts. One was for my favourite singer of all time, David Cook, and the other was for U2. I was so happy and surprised that I started to cry.

The U2 concert hasn't happened yet. It's this summer at the Bell Centre. However the David Cook concert has passed, and it was awesome. I saw him in downtown Montreal, in a place called Metropolis. In case you don't know, David Cook is the winner of American Idol 2008. He is so cute, I find, and has a great voice. I love all his music.

I'm a fan of U2 also. They rock and are good looking (I guess) and talented and their music is really moving. Bono, their singer, has a great voice and is just a great true person. He is very inspiring and cares about the world. He does a lot of good things. My favourite U2 songs are Beautiful Day, All That You Can't Leave Behind, Elevation, and Stuck In a Moment.

Chloe

The things that scare me the most are spiders and heights.

Other insects are very unpleasant, but the most unpleasant, I find, are spiders. The biggest I know are tarantulas. I hate how they have hairy legs and are huge and have sharp teeth. I get afraid that they'll bite me and give me their venom. One time my class went on a field trip to the insectarium. We saw lots of bugs, but I saw with my own eyes how big and hairy tarantulas are, and their teeth and sharp nails, and I got frightened. I ran away and said to myself, "I'll look at other bugs like butterflies." If spiders are small I don't mind, as long as they don't go on me. The thing I hate most about spiders is when they sneak up on me. I hate it when you see the spider and turn around for a second and it's gone. I would think the spider is hunting me.

Heights are also a fear for me. When I'm on a Ferris wheel I get scared because I think maybe a bolt is loose and the seats will come off and drop to the ground. I hate how when you're so high off the ground you feel nervous and scared. I would want to feel calm and happy, like I'm flying.

Alexa

A day in my life

Get up in the morning
5:30 am
Try to catch the bus
But I'll be late once again
Run to the car with my bag on my
back
Hoping to get a ride
That'll get me on track
Get to school, I'm late for class
Get the orange slip
And new rips in my bag
Second period I'm back upstairs
Do work
Draw pics
Can't help feeling this is unfair
Suddenly it's over
The day's finally through
The best part is I sleepwalked
Past periods four, six, and two
Walk to the metro and then catch
the bus
Unfortunately this ride isn't easy
enough
Almost home
Not at peace
With cold wind on my neck
But it's quiet
That's why I like it
There's no yelling
Nothing wrecked
Step inside
Nice and warm

Hear my sister isn't calm
To my room
It's a mess
I don't care
It's just a place
Fall asleep on my chair
Once again,
It isn't rare
Now that I've told you of one day
Throw in some problems and
you're on your way
But if you have something to say
Along the lines of "Why
complain?"
Then I dare you to walk in my
shoes
Then come back and let me know
Is it as easy as it seems?

Forever Friends

For a day or a season
Just to help or for a reason
Say they're there forever
But do they mean never?
Who knows what time decides
With all the hurting and the lies
The good times and the cries
How long will we last
Before we die
Hating or holding hands
Forever friends?

Maria

Being a nurse is what I want to do. Nurses help people get better and I love helping people. I've been like that since I was a little child. So for my future I'm preparing to be a nurse. It's quite hard when you think about it, but when you like learning science and the human body and how it works, it really is fun. Whenever I tell people that I would like to be a nurse they get all happy and say "Well that's a good career choice, I'm very proud of you." I've heard that so many times.

Some people might say being a nurse is really gross, and I can understand why, because there is a lot of blood involved, and a few other things that might be gross to other people. But I think that I would be perfect for this job. Let's say my baby sister throws up. My mom would start to gag, but me? I'm all right with it. I do agree that it smells bad and also looks bad, but I really don't mind it.

To tell you the truth, I'm very excited to go to university and learn how to use all the instruments. I find it very interesting and feel that I'm ready. Being a nurse is what I want to do. Being a nurse is what I need to do. Being a nurse is what I'm going to do.

Rebecca

If I were Prime Minister there would be three things I would like to change.

One is taxes. I think it would be better if taxes were included in the prices shown, so when you go to the store to buy something you won't have to go back home and get the money for the tax.

The second thing I would change is animal rights. I find that a lot of people have no respect for animals and pets. People who own a barn should have to have a veterinarian. People who own horses should have a proper stable and a warm barn for the horses to sleep in and the proper tools to take care of them, like a hoof pick and brushes.

The third thing is the law about staying in school. I think kids should have to finish high school, then be allowed to stop if they want to. A lot of kids drop out when they're 16 and can't find a job, and then they end up on the street. If there were a law to finish high school, they wouldn't be on the street.

Jeremy

The Love That Wasn't Supposed to Happen (An excerpt)

Ring. Ring. Ring. The bell rang and I put my things in my bag and went to my locker to get my things for my next class. I picked up my money for lunch, \$25 out of my money pot. (Yes, I have a money pot in my locker. So what, I'm special, you're not, ha ha.) I put the money in my pocket. I checked what class I had next and it was chemistry. I loved chemistry because we were playing with chemicals and this week we were doing a project so we needed to pick partners. I wanted a good partner this time. Last time I was stuck with Thumbelina and she hates chemistry and she made a mess at my house. I'd had my dad make me a science and photography lab. I told Thumbelina to go get specific chemicals and pour them in the pot by the sink, and she got the ones that looked pretty instead. She didn't even read what it said on the bottle. She poured the pink one with the baby blue one so that it would be a nice colour, and it made a big boom. It took my Dad and I two weeks to repair that. Never again will I pick her.

As I got up to close my locker I saw someone standing beside me. I turned to see who it was and jumped when I saw.

"God, do you have to scare me like that?"

"Well yeah, it's kind of my thing. You know, to scare people. It's my hobby."

"Well go hobby somewhere else, please."

"What's wrong with you, honey?"

"It's my birthday today and no one wished me a happy birthday."

"Oh, sorry, honey, I didn't know. I have an idea. Do you want to come with me? We'll ditch school and go out for a treat."

I thought about it.

"Sure, why not. But it's not a date."

"Okay, whatever you say, honey."

"Stop calling me that. And we're taking my car," I said, running out of the building.

Rosamina

I want to finish high school with high marks and get accepted to McGill and become something like a stockbroker, car dealer, or computer engineer. A stockbroker sells and buys and invests and I think I'd like that because you can do it anywhere you want, even if you are traveling, and I want to travel a lot. A car dealer because I like cars and when you are a dealer you can drive any car you want. A good car dealer is a manipulator, someone who knows how to speak persuasively. For example, someone walks into a car dealership and he wants to buy a nice sports car. He decides to buy a Mazda 6 (\$40,000) and he leaves the dealership with an AUDI R8 (\$150,000). That is called a good car dealer because he made this guy buy a \$150,000 car instead of a \$40,000 car. Maybe one day I will be a car dealer. I will buy an AUDI R8 and show you guys!

Abraham

On my perfect day I would like to have 100% on every end of year test. After that I would go to the depanneur to check my lottery ticket and find out that I won 44 million dollars. After that I would go and buy myself a new Audi R8 2010 car. Then I would go get my girlfriend to tell her that I won 44 million and that she could stop working. I would also go and buy my dad a big camper and buy my parents a house in the United States and would give them seven million dollars. When I'm done doing that I would go see my brother and give him seven million too. After that I would go buy myself a private jet so I could go anywhere in the world. Then I would go see my family and give them a million dollars each and I would sleep and relax because I had a busy and awesome day.

Cedric