



*I'm a
Child of
AppalachiaTM*

Essay Winners

2007



THE FOUNDATION FOR
APPALACHIAN
OHIO 



The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO) is a regional community foundation serving the 29 counties of Appalachian Ohio. FAO exists to enhance quality of life and fulfills this mission by “Fostering Access to Opportunities;” specifically, working to grow and give the funds and leadership our region needs to improve the lives of those who live and work here. As a regional community foundation, we leverage the power of partnership, pooled investment and our voice on regional issues to facilitate funding in the areas of education, conservation, leadership, community & economic development, arts & culture, and health & human services.

FAO recognizes education and opportunity go hand-in-hand and through our *I'm a Child of Appalachia*® campaign, encourage our region's communities and citizens to invest, expect, pursue and succeed in attaining post-secondary education. *I'm a Child of Appalachia*® promotes greater investment in the region to increase student access and success at all levels of education and FAO's annual essay contest helps regional youth reflect on the beauty and benefits to living in Appalachian Ohio.

In her 2006 essay, Katie Lambert of Pike County said it best when she wrote what makes Appalachian Ohio so special is, “the people here who support me...I will succeed because I'm from Appalachia Ohio.” The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio will continue connecting people and leveraging resources to create access to the opportunities our region's families and children need most.

The Foundation would like to thank the sponsors of the 2007 *I'm a Child of Appalachia*® Essay Contest, Edward Jones – Heath, Athens and Lancaster Offices and American Electric Power for their support of access to education for our region's youth.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Recognition and Appreciation

In September, 2006, the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio sponsored the first “I’m A Child of Appalachia Essay Contest” in an effort to encourage Appalachian children to begin considering the strengths of the geographic region which they call “home.” Members of the FAO Board and Staff assisted in the application process and creation of the prompt. Students from the 29 counties of the federally defined area of Appalachia were invited to participate, and 735 individuals, representing 20 counties, responded to the following prompt. In the second year, 2007, 910 students participated, responding to the following prompt:

Who in your life and/or community has been a positive influence, planting seeds of encouragement for you? Please tell us about this special person, and how he/she is (or has been) encouraging you as you grow up..

The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio extends special thanks to Muskingum College for its significant support of the essay contest. English Education majors assisted in the screening of the essays, while faculty members designed the assessment process and identified the finalists.

Special appreciation is extended to:



Muskingum College
New Concord, Ohio

Paul Reichardt, Vice President for Academic Affairs, whose idea it was to honor the student winners with this booklet;
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Muskingum College Faculty

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4th Grade Winner

Benjamin Beaty (Lawrence County)

An Influence on My Life

Aunt Lisa, my dad's sister, is a positive influence in my life for several reasons. Lisa is married with two kids of her own, Zac and Michelle. She still finds time to spend with me. Lucky for me, she lives close by. She is a joy in my life because she is fun, caring, and loves kids.

One of the fun things that we do together is hiking. We hike for one or two miles and she always brings a water bottle for me. She is different than most adults. If I have energy, she will keep going even if she is tired.

Aunt Lisa cares for all of her nieces and nephews. For five days every summer she takes my cousins and me to "Kuzins Kamp." We sleep in tents, study the Bible, make ice cream, and go hiking and biking. She plans the whole week for us, pays for it, and even drives us there and back.

"Leasy" loves kids. I know because she acts like a kid herself. When she is in the pool she goes down the slide with us.

My Aunt Lisa is a wonderful woman that I love and she loves me.

5th Grade Winner

Amy Hill Smith (Jackson County)

Grandpa's Love

My Grandpa Hill is a loving and caring person to me. One of my most memorable moments with him was in the summer working at his restaurant. Grandpa showed me how to work hard to serve customers and the rewards would be tips for my help.

Grandpa Hill had to learn how to work hard to be successful. He was born in a shack in Gallipolis with nine brothers and sisters. Grandpa said he needed to learn how to survive early in life with no money and very little food. He is always encouraging me to help others who are less fortunate because they may have to eat rat or opossum, like he did as a kid.

Grandpa said he encouraged his brothers and sisters to continue with high school and get a job like he did. He worked hard to save his money to have a house, car, and money for good food. He smiles when he talks about the good food.

My grandpa encourages me and helps me with my school work and sports. He watches my games and also yells great things to me no matter how badly I am playing. Grandpa always has a candy bar and a smile at the end of my games.

In conclusion, my grandpa has showed me with hard work, loving guidance and kindness towards others, I can be the best I can be.

6th Grade Winner

Seth Hardman (Belmont County)

The Running Back Story

Our team's running back coach called me over when I was in the 3rd grade. He asked me to try to be a running back. I tried, and I have played it every year since then. He has inspired me to try to be an NFL running back when I get older. I have dedicated this whole season to him. I am going to try to score as many touchdowns for him as I can. He always believed in me and encouraged me to do my best. He was a very nice guy, but he passed away this year, so I am trying to do as well as I can to make him proud. I know he is in heaven watching me at every game. I haven't gotten any touchdowns yet, because I've mainly been playing defense. We have four games left and I will get Coach Joe at least one touchdown. I have been taught by the best how to run the ball. I will run it great for him. I will make the NFL for him and be one of the best running backs there is. He is my inspiration to be a running back.

I hope to become the best running back possible and I owe it all to Coach Joe. I wish that he was here to see me run the ball so that he could see that his faith in me was a good decision. I know that he was proud of me because he always told me so.

7th Grade Winner

Emily Swackhammer (Perry County)

I'm a Child of Appalachia

To start off with, there are a lot of people in my life who have had a positive influence. I like all the teachers I've had, and Grandma Betty comes down to the house to help us get off to school, but the biggest positive influence is my mom because she can keep up with four kids as a single parent.

All four of us girls have taken dance since we were three. Mom says it is so we won't be afraid of large groups when we get older. Dance is also supposed to be a good way to develop coordination, but I don't think it has done much for mine. She also encourages us to do other activities such as, color guard, volleyball, and cheerleading.

Mom also takes us places. She says New Straitsville is a good place to live as long as we know there are other places to live. She says it is pretty safe because our dad works for the town and everyone knows us so they will keep an eye on us if we go to the library, the carry-out, or the post office. Even if it is safe, we still have to check in when she tells us because she worries and says she will never laugh again if something would happen to us. She also says it only takes one weirdo.

One time we went to a family reunion in Missouri and another time we went to Williamsburg. She always goes with my sisters on TAG trips and she is going with Bailey and Blaire on a Girl Scout trip to Canada. They leave on Friday night and get back on Sunday morning. I don't think she is looking forward to this trip.

One year, Mom saved enough money for us to go visit Grandpa Fritz in Las Vegas. He got hurt, so Mom went out to help him. When Mom came home, she brought Grandpa Fritz back so we never got to go to Las Vegas.

Another reason my Mom is so great is that kids at school say she is the most awesome teacher in the whole wide world. They all think she likes them so they like her a lot. She really does like them, for the most part.

She has also taught almost everyone in Perry County. We can be almost anywhere and nearly every time she will see a former student and have to talk. When

7th Grade Winner—Emily Swackhammer—Continued

Mindy can do this because she is a store manager. We love Mindy and pray she is working when we go to *Best Buy*, otherwise we will have to be there for hours and then Mom will leave without buying anything until Mindy is there to tell her that it is OK to buy it. Mindy always gives Mom the best treatment, and we can get out of there in less than an hour.

Mom is always funny when she tells us stories about when we were babies. The stories are so funny, that we have to stop and look for a bathroom. We make her tell the stories to us over and over.

When Mom's mom, Grandma Katie, had a stroke, Mom had her come live with us. She did this because Grandma Katie couldn't live by herself any longer and Mom loved her. She also wanted us to learn to take care of the elderly since America doesn't do a very good job at it. Grandma was a lot of work and she got mean. My sister Bailey would torment Grandma and then stand just outside the reach of her cane. One time, Bailey stole the rubber tip off the cane and threw it out the window. When the babysitter went out to get the rubber tip, we locked him out of the house. We got a strict talking to for that one. Mom got a kick out of it, but she said that even though it is a normal thing to do it doesn't mean we shouldn't get into trouble because it was dangerous.

Mom thinks she can't fix the world, but she works on her corner of it. Just because old people and children get inconvenient, it doesn't mean we should just get rid of them when they aren't fun any longer. Believe me, Grandma Katie wasn't always much fun. She had to wear diapers and Mom had to change them. Sometimes we had to help her. We never had to do the really gross stuff, but it could be pretty awful. Mom said "poop" had been in control of her life for about ten years. Just about the time we girls got out of diapers, Grandma got into them. When Mom gets old, she can come live with me. I hope she stays potty trained, though.

These are some of the reasons my Mom has had such a big influence on my life. She keeps us busy so we don't hang out on the streets and we know about things outside of New Straitsville. Mom can be really funny, although she can be really awful when we don't listen. Mom makes sure we know that she loves us more than anything else by telling us stories and boring us to death by telling us about life. She also makes us behave so we don't grow up to be criminals. She lets us do healthy activities even though we don't have very much money. There are a lot more reasons, but if I had to give one reason, I'd say it's because she loves us so much.

8th Grade Winner

Anne Li (Athens County)

Thankful

I flip open my diary on a beautiful day.

“It feels like something is missing from my life, I’ve written, “And I’m not being over dramatic. I don’t know what, but I think it’s that ...everyone has some passion – dance, sports, etc. I have nothing ...well, I love to write.”

I turn to the year of early seventh grade.

“I don’t know, but writing’s been always kind of private to me”, I read, “Like, I guess more than anything I want someone to read my stories – but I don’t think it could be any one of my friends, because they wouldn’t give me honest feedback. It’s good,” they’d say, but that’s all. At the same time, I definitely don’t want to find out that I’m a horrible writer either.”

I smile and read a future entry.

“Power of the Pen – it’s a statewide writing competition, and I want to make the team – desperately. But I’m not that great.

“The Power of the Pen team coach is Mr. Barrington – he’s the 8th grade Honors English teacher. He’s great – hilarious ...and tactful. Plus, he gives so much feedback on my stories. I can trust him with my writing.”

A few months later, I made the team.

Looking back at these memories, I realize that for me, one teacher changed everything. To finally have someone tell me the truth about my writing has not only improved my stories, but myself.

Life is a story, I’ve learned, and through writing stories and receiving suggestions for, “more detail,” I’ve been more observant and more appreciative for what I have. The beauty of silence, the importance of friendship, the value of a smile. For, “More emotion,” I’ve begun to discover my true self, and found my ideals and values. “Improve vocabulary” had shown me how delicate life is. Through his numerous comments, Mr. Barrington implied, “*Live* your life.” He’s also a life-coach.

I gently shut my diary, and breathe in the crisp autumn air. I gaze out at the dancing shadows, and marvel at the sunlight shining through the still-green leaves. Patches of lovely blue glisten past the trees. I listen to nature’s soft music. Waves of emotion fill my heart. Finally, I *see* instead of simply looking, *listen* instead of only hearing. Because of Mr. Barrington, I’ve discovered a common beauty – so common, it is almost impossible to notice.

And I am thankful.

4th Grade Finalist

Kelsie Byers (Ross County)

I Am a Child of Appalachia

Have you ever loved someone? My report is on someone I love. Her name is Jean Kasler. She was a very nice person. She was very old and had gray hair and always loved to wear yellow. When my sister and I had a problem, she helped. If my dad was in the basement and my mom was gone, she watched us from her window. She loved to work in the garden. When my sister and I wanted to catch a toad, she helped us get one. She was the hardest worker. She was like my third grandma. But she died of cancer. She died in her sleep. Although she is gone I still love her.

4th Grade Finalist

Peter Manchester (Ross County)

I Am A Child of Appalachia

“Well, hi there!” This is how my grandmother greets me whenever we visit her. And she gives me a hug, too. Yes, this is a story about my grandmother and how she has been a positive influence and encouragement for me.

My grandma is 77 years old. She has curly, gray-yellow dull hair. She’s a widow and lives alone on Hesswood Hill in Chillicothe. My dad is the youngest of her five children. She loves her grandchildren like her own kids. She is generous with her money. She has a gentle personality. For my birthday Grandma took me out to Carl’s Townhouse. I was talking to her and she was looking at me hard and seemed like she was trying to put it together in her head. I felt like she was *really* listening to me.

My grandmother is an example to me of how to live in this town and how to be friendly to others. I am glad that I will always be her grandson.

4th Grade Finalist

Mary Weisenberger (Ross County)

My brother Joshua always says, “Hi, Runt! He is 23 years old. He has brown hair and blue eyes. He is in the Air Force and is stationed in Tucson, Arizona. He just came back from Kuwait. He fixes airplanes. He is going to marry a girl named Natalie. She has a little girl named Aamiah. He likes to paint, hike, camp, and play the drums. He has a pet snake name Monte.

Josh has been a positive influence for me all my life. When I was little, he taught me how to tie my shoes. He also taught me to swim and to love art. He taught me how to play soccer and the drums (a little bit). He taught me how important it is to love, trust, and help my family. Josh told me that it is important to go to church every Sunday and on Holy Days. He goes to church with Natalie at Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Tucson. Joshua used to go to Bishop Flaget School like I do. He is smart and wants me to be smart, too. He is visiting here for two weeks. When he leaves, I will miss him calling me “Runt.”

4th Grade Finalist

Rachel Barlage (Ross County)

"I Am a Child of Appalachia"

My Grandma Carolyn has had a big impact on my life. She encourages me to help other people because she is a big help to her family and her church. She helps her grandchildren by sewing clothes for us, watching us, coming to our activities, and even shows us how to cook. Grandma Carolyn works hard with our church's Saint Vincent DePaul Society. She helps people get food, clothes, medicine, and other things they need.

Grandma Carolyn grew up on Happy Hollow Road in Huntington Hills in Southern Ross County. There were eight girls and eight boys in her family. She took care of her younger sister Peggy and shared a bed with her so she would not get picked on at school for sleeping in a crib. Grandma's family did not have lots of money for new clothes. The younger kids got hand-me-downs from their older brothers and sisters. I think the reason my grandma helps so many people now, is because of the way she grew up.

Watching Grandma Carolyn has encouraged me to be a better person.

4th Grade Finalist

Tyler McCune (Tuscarawas County)

"I am a Child of Appalachia"

The special person in my life is my dad. My dad has been a single parent since I was two years old. He was in the Navy and shares stories with us about these experiences. At this time, my dad is a full time college student studying Geology.

He has encouraged me in many ways. He has always taken me to church. Dad helps with Vacation Bible School. Dad was my sponsor while I worked on my Cub Scout badge. He took me to meetings with the pastor where I had to learn verses of the Bible. Dad also sends me to Church Camp every year so that I can have fun while learning about God.

Dad encourages me with school. He served on committees and volunteered when I was in Head Start. He helps me with my homework and was a big help when I was learning to read. Dad spent time with my vocabulary and spelling words. Every summer, he sends me to College for Kids where I studied lots of fun things.

My Dad is also my Scout leader. We go camping, fishing, and he teaches me to do my best and to help others.

5th Grade Finalist

Anna Marie DeGarmo (Ross County)

I am a Child of Appalachia

The person who has influenced me the most in all ten years of my life is Mrs. Fyffe, my kindergarten teacher and my favorite teacher. She is the nicest teacher I have ever had. She is so pretty. She has long, reddish brown hair and glasses that make her eye twinkle. On the first day of kindergarten I was so scared, but by the end of the day I couldn't wait for the next day of school.

My two favorite times of the day in kindergarten were snack time and when Mrs. Fyffe read to us. She always read great books and was very good at reading out loud. One time we even made applesauce. It was so much fun and tasted great.

Every time I pass her now to go to my classes, she says, "Hi! How is fifth grade going?" Her voice is always so comforting and I know I'm going to have a great day. So, as you can see, she not only prepared me for grade school but I had fun doing it. And that's what being a kid is all about: having fun learning and enjoying it!

5th Grade Finalist

Landen Jenkins (Ross County)

I'M A CHILD OF APPALACHIA

Dr. Richard Villarreal, my grandfather, was a big influence on me. He used to always give me hugs and kisses when he saw me. He was a doctor and had a lot of old-fashioned cars. He was a psychiatrist, and he was the first doctor of that kind in southern Ohio.

When he first started working in Portsmouth, Ohio as a psychiatrist, he knew that there were many poor people in southern Ohio that needed his care. The poor towns of southern Ohio didn't have any money to start a clinic, so my grandfather bought a big camper, and he and my grandmother who was his nurse, drove the camper to different small towns and he saw patients right out of the camper! Years later the towns finally started clinics and he didn't have to see patients in his camper anymore.

I like how he went out of his way to help take care of people. Southern Ohio is a lot better place now thanks to my grandfather. This makes me want to do something myself that would help people too.

I only knew him for five years because he died of cancer when I was five. But I remember him well, and the things he did for everybody will always be remembered by me and many other people in southern Ohio.

5th Grade Finalist

Kade Mayle (Morgan County)

My Encourager

Someone who encourages me is my step-grandfather. I call him Pop-pop. He is the only grandfather I have ever known. He accepts me as his grandson even though he is not of family blood. He encourages me in sports, school and Christianity.

He helps me in sports by pointing out my mistakes then showing me how to do it right. We watch games together and talk about what is happening. This helps me be a better player.

In school, he helps with my homework. Before a test, he encourages me to do my best. He tells me he is proud of me whether I do well or not as long as I try my hardest.

The most important way he encourages me is in my faith in God. He shows me how to be a good Christian by what he does. He runs the United Ministries shop which provides food, clothing and other goods to people that can't afford them. He goes on mission trips to help people in hard times. He helps with church projects.

My Pop-pop is special to me. His encouragement helps me become a better person. I am lucky to have a grandpa like him.

5th Grade Finalist

Mackenzie Craycraft (Scioto County)

My Hero

My daddy is my hero. I love him very much. I think he can do anything. He can cook, build things, play sports, survey property, and much more.

Sometimes I don't like something and the next I will love it because he shows me the good things about it, for example, sports. I love sports and my daddy does too. I used to hate sports, but my daddy helped me to like them by teaching me more about them. He showed me how to shoot and dribble a basketball, how to swing a bat, catch a ball and slide into home plate.

My daddy likes to watch ESPN when he is not cleaning the pool, building on the house, fixing something, or spending time with Mason, my mommy or myself. He can do anything except pick out an outfit. My mommy gets mad if our outfits don't match, so he gets in trouble a lot especially when he wears a black belt with brown shoes!

My daddy helps me with my homework if I have trouble with the questions or problems. He took care of me from a few days old until now. If I'm sick, he helps my mommy take care of me. If I fall down, he picks me up. He also tucks me in every night. He's like my security blanket.

What I treasure most about my daddy is that he is a good role model, positive influence, hard worker, and a loving daddy. I hope I'll marry someone just like him when I grow up.

5th Grade Finalist

Gia de Bourbon (Athens County)

I'm a Child of Appalachia

Growing up in Appalachia, one of the most influential and inspiring people I know is my Irish dance teacher, Katie Gerhard. Katie works hard at everything she does. She's always kind, patient and willing to help me. Katie is very knowledgeable and a very skilled teacher.

Irish dancing is fun, but also a very challenging, competitive sport. Often, when practices are tough and I'm tired or discouraged, Katie encourages me to keep practicing and, always, try my best! She's taught me that it's important to give 100% effort, at all times, in everything I do. With her help, I've had great success. Sometimes, however, I don't win. Katie has taught me it's not always winning that's important. Often, it's discipline and hard work that are *really* the best qualities to be learned.

My amazing teacher has shown me that, with hard work, any goal is achievable. She's also taught me to always be kind to others, helping whenever I can. Whether I win or lose, it's the spirit of competition that drives me. I can, graciously, accept victory or defeat. Competition is both work and play but, when it's all said and done, "THIS GIRL JUST WANTS TO HAVE FUN!"

6th Grade Finalist

Hannah Pagano (Belmont County)

The very special person that I chose is my dad, because on Friday if I forgot some of my homework at school, he would drive me back to school on Saturday. My dad works very hard, but he always finds time to have fun with his family and me.

I love my dad because he is the best. He always chooses my mom, brothers, and me over everybody else. I think my dad is the best dad in the world.

My dad is very helpful. Everyday after school my dad always asks me if I need any help with my homework.

My dad teaches me easier ways to do my math if I have trouble with it. He also teaches to love God and my country.

Something that my dad has done to help others is he chose to be a teacher so that he can help children learn. I wish that my dad was my teacher.

My parents live a disciplined life and lead by example. They depend on God and each other, and teach me to do the same. I am glad that my parents are in my life because they encourage and challenge me to reach new heights.

6th Grade Finalist

Tony Juzwiak (Belmont County)

MY DAD

A very special person in my life is my dad. My dad is special to me because he helps me when I am hurt. My dad is very smart, funny, and helpful.

My dad is a mechanic and taught me how to work on a car. He helped me when I broke my collarbone. He helps me with homework and other things.

He helps my grandmother and grandfather when they need help. He also helped my uncle when the flood happened in 2004. He also helped my uncle build his garage. He helped my pap when my pap got his leg cut off. He built a ramp for his wheel chair.

He always tells me to do my best. He always tells me to try all the time. He tells me how to do something when I don't know how to do it. He explains it to me step by step so I understand how to do it and do it in a safe manner.

If someone was not around to help you, you would not be able to be helped. If someone was not around to encourage you, you would not be encouraged by anyone and would not make it in life.

6th Grade Finalist

Mary Van Nostrand (Lawrence County)

Dad, the Most Amazing Father

My Dad has taught me many things in order to prepare me for life as an adult. Dad has good character traits and often feels just like a friend to me. He shows me by example how to model a successful adult.

My Dad is very dependable. When he tells me he will do something with me, he always does. Of course, there are occasions when he might have to change plans, but he always makes it up to me. Dad is showing me that it's important to do things that you say you will do.

I am learning about being responsible when I see my Dad go to work everyday. Even when he might not want to go, he will because people are counting on him.

Dad can do so many cool things. He's like a friend to me sometimes. He plays basketball and video games with me. He listens to me tell about my days at school. Sometimes he gives me advice on how to handle things.

My Dad is the most amazing father because he shows me how to be responsible. He tells me that with determination and some elbow grease I can reach my goals.

6th Grade Finalist

Trevor Hennis (Jefferson County)

I chose to pick my mom, because she is the one who inspires me the most. She helps me do a lot of things like clean my room and with my homework. My mom has numerous health problems that makes her hurt all over, but she still has the strength to do things for and with my sister and I. She helped me a great deal with my 4-H project this past summer and even bought me a horse to take as an additional project. I have been taught a valuable lesson from her not to be mean to people because you never know what they have going on in their lives. I am always encouraged to do my best at everything I do and if I don't finish in the top that's o.k. at least I tried. She makes me laugh all the time and sometimes that's all I need. I would have to say the one thing that my mom has done for me that stands out above the rest is when she was pregnant with me she started having problems with her pregnancy and the doctors told her the only way to keep me tucked in safe was to give her this medicine. The medicine that they needed to give her could stop her heart. She thought more of me than herself and saved my life. I am truly blessed to have my mom.

7th Grade Finalist

Emilie Kemper (Ross County)

Why I look up to my Grandma Snow

When you think of the perfect grandma, you probably picture someone who is loving, caring, fun and exciting. My Grandma Snow fits this description perfectly. We have always lived close to each other and spent lots of quality time together. Since the day I was born she has always been there for me. I can ask her for advice and I know she will show her love and support for me. She always has a positive outlook on life and I know she will guide me in the right direction.

She is very dedicated to our family. My Great Grandpa King, who is 93 year old, became unable to live on his own. My Grandma lent a helping hand and had him move in with her and my Grandpa Snow. She lovingly takes care of him. When we go to my grandparents' house we are always welcomed with a hug and a smile. Sometimes you can smell the snickerdoodle cookies that have just been baked and we always know there will be candy in the candy dish on the counter.

My Grandma Snow is a strong believer in God. She attends church every week and is a Eucharistic Minister. Grandma doesn't just attend church weekly; she lives as an example of how to treat others the way Jesus taught us. It was important to her that my mom and her siblings attend a catholic school. She and my Grandpa Snow made a lot of sacrifices in order to afford to send three children to Bishop Flaget. I am now continuing this tradition by attending Bishop Flaget School myself.

Grandma Snow is also a very active person. She has always been very athletic and enjoys being involved in different sports. She golfs, bowls, plays basketball with me and my family, and helps me improve my volleyball skills. She played on a power volleyball team with my mom and uncle when she was 60 years old. Now she comes and cheers me on as I play volleyball. Recently my Grandma has been struggling with some back problems, but she has tried not to let it get her down. She is a fighter. I look up to her because of the type of person she is. I also know that she will help me become the best person I can be.

7th Grade Finalist

Dalton Bettendorf (Ross County)

INSPIRED

When I was thinking about people in my life who have inspired me, Dr. Cohen came to mind. Recently I have been thinking about my future and I want to be a surgeon and Dr. Cohen has told me that he would mentor me. I think that will be a very nice opportunity for me and that is an example of what a good person Brian is. I am glad to know him and feel very lucky to have him in my life.

My friend Brian, also known as Dr. Cohen has inspired me to be a doctor. He helps people feel better everyday. He is an orthopedic surgeon and there are many people whom he has helped have better quality of life by operating on their knees, hips and shoulders. I would love to be able to make people feel better too.

He has told me about where he went to college and gave me some ideas where to go myself someday. He has told me about colleges in Ohio, New York and other places. He said that I need to do well in school and learn everything I can.

He has also inspired me not only because he is an awesome surgeon, but he is a good person too. Even though I am just a kid, he always takes time to listen to me and talk to me about school, sports and life. I have know Brian since I was six years old and over the years I have grown to have a lot of respect for him.

He has given me small jobs to teach me responsibility. He takes good care of himself by getting exercise and eating healthy foods each day. He is a great guy and he is a lot of fun to be around.

These are all the reasons why I have been inspired by Dr. Cohen. I hope I look back on this report many years from now and I smile because I, too, am a surgeon.

7th Grade Finalist

Mikayla Kovacik (Harrison County)

I'm a Child of Appalachia

I consider living in Appalachia as one of my greatest blessings! People in my community are all like family. I love the fact that everyone knows everyone. I look up to almost everyone in my town. One specific person that I admire and respect is Patti Sabo.

Patti is the kind of person everyone should use as a role model. She is always happy and bubbly. Patti is nice, caring, and kind to everyone she meets.

Patti has been there throughout the seasons of my life.

My Winter Season was when my grandmother died. Patti was there to support me through the entire time. She sent flowers, cards, and talked to me about my feelings. She encouraged me to be strong for my mom. She inspired me to remember the good times and move on.

The Spring Season of my life was when I sprung into a preteen. Patti encouraged me to become my own person. She insisted that I not be swayed by peer pressure. She reminded me to always keep true to my moral teachings and values. Patti has been very instrumental in teaching me these values. She is amazing! She has taught me to be kind, always. Patti encouraged me to always be generous to others, and that other's feelings are just as important as mine. As I journeyed from the Elementary to the Jr. High, a lot has changed. Because of Patti's generous teachings, I am able to hold tight to my beliefs.

My Fall Season is my time of giving. This is the time that I give of myself. I give time to church, MDA, and other causes because of watching Patti make a difference in so many lives around her. The stories of the Bible that Patti has shared with me give me the most valuable instruction for life.

Summer Season is my time of growing. Patti comes into play here. She taught me never to doubt myself. She encourages me to do whatever I set my mind to do. My sports activities allow me to push ahead and be the best I can be.

In conclusion, Patti is one of the greatest influences in my life. I want to be everything I should and can be. I want to make difference in the lives of those around me. As the seasons change, I know one thing that will remain constant in my life if the positive influences that Patti has had on my life!

7th Grade Finalist

Julia Wu (Lawrence County)

My name is Julia Wu, and I have lived in Appalachia for most of my life. I'm a seventh grader at Fairland Middle School.

People come in and out of our lives, but as we grow and mature, it is the people that positively influence us that we remember forever. It is the ones that guide us, support us and protect us.

My dad has always been there for me, and he has had a great impact on my life. One very important thing he helps me with, is building character. He is always willing to go out of his way to lend me a helping hand and I can always rely on him, especially for advice. He encourages me and supports me in whatever I do and pushes me to do my best. He gives me the confidence I need to work toward, and hopefully achieve, my goals. He points me in the right direction and helps me to accept my mistakes and to learn from them. He teaches me about responsibility as well. I know that the things he does, he does for my own good. I am very open with him and I can confide in him. He always makes me feel safe and secure.

My dad has been with me all of my life, and he has helped to make me the person I am today and hopefully he will help me to become an adult as great as he. I learn more and more from him each and every day, and I know that he will continue to inspire and amaze me and I truly admire him. I learn important life lessons from him that will help me in the future. He has, and always will have, a special place in my heart.

In Appalachia, we all respect each other and look out for one another. We all treat each other like family. With such wonderful people to turn to, I can enjoy every minute of my childhood.

The encouraging people around us help to shape our Appalachian heritage. As a child of Appalachia Ohio, I will get to meet and know many remarkable people that will encourage me as I grow and help me to become a well-rounded adult. I feel especially fortunate to always have my dad with me.

8th Grade Finalist

Sarah Beth Sydnor (Gallia County)

I don't know where I'll end up when I'm grown. No one ever really knows where life will take them. One thing is for certain though, I will never forget where I've come from. Growing up in southeastern Ohio has been a positive experience and I should thank my grandpa for giving me a lot of guidance along the way. He has always been very proud of Gallia County and takes every opportunity to introduce me to its rich beauty and history.

I have been involved in 4-H for the past 4 years and my grandpa has helped me raise the pigs the past two. This was a new experience for me but one that I learned to love. It has taught me that hard work really does pay off and that getting dirty is not so bad. Grandpa spent endless hours working with me helping me get the pigs ready for the county fair. I wonder if teenagers in big cities get the chance to have these experiences. I wouldn't trade these memories for the world.

Strong family ties are a common thread in Appalachia. This is also true in our family. Grandpa, along with my uncle, built a cabin for our whole family to enjoy gatherings. Our cabin is nestled in the woods, secluded in the trees. There you will find a rope swing he secured in a big oak tree, a fire pit for cooking, and rocking chairs on the front porch for relaxing. There are trails for hiking, and even an outhouse with a half-moon cut in the door.

Thank you Grandpa for being my number one fan, and for instilling values of hard work. Thank you Grandpa for showing me the beauty of nature and showing me to appreciate the simple things, and that we can have fun on a rope swing, even in today's world of technology. Thank you for giving me an understanding of family.

I appreciate the time and effort Grandpa has taken to help shape my life. I will be a better adult because of the efforts he made while I was a child.

8th Grade Finalist

Alyssa Oates (Ross County)

What does it take to be a good role model? Dedication, being able to show support, and a positive, can do attitude. I believe that Mrs. Amanda Mickey has all of that and more.

Mrs. Mickey is a loving mother and an amazing teacher. She has two daughters and she loves them very much. She has only taught at our school for a year and a half but it is clear that she is dedicated to teaching us and broadening our horizons. She makes learning fun and enjoyable for everyone in my eighth grade class.

Mrs. Mickey has a good personality and a great sense of humor. Her room reflects her personality. As soon as you step into her room you feel happy. It is airy and there are math and science posters on the walls. Everything is helpful and colorful, just like her. She is so nice and understanding that you want to do your best. You feel bad if you disappoint her.

Mrs. Mickey was born and raised here in Chillicothe, Ohio. It is a good influence to see someone who was raised here grow up so nice and caring. I know I can accomplish anything when I see how well she is doing in life.

Another great thing about Mrs. Mickey is that she assigns effort homework so that if we do not understand, we don't get a bad grade but can see what we need to work on. We take notes and we spend a lot of time at the board to practice math examples. Mrs. Mickey also has us do hand on work in science labs. I think that you can learn more when you actually see how something works.

Mrs. Mickey is a great teacher but there is more to being a good role model than that. She helps us with things outside of school. We receive confirmation in eighth grade and it takes a lot of religious studying. Mrs. Mickey helps us at school with it but also comes to our confirmation meetings to help us prepare.

Mrs. Mickey is dedicated to her job, shows us support when we feel down, and has a positive, can do attitude. She also has good morals and is a good influence on us. When I look at Mrs. Mickey, I see what I want to be. A confident woman who is thoughtful and smart. I believe I can achieve anything with her help. When I graduate I will miss her not only as a teacher but as a friend.

8th Grade Finalist

Jessie Kirk (Athens County)

Raymond H. Swartzback My Grandfather

“I really don’t thing anything I do is a mistake. It could be if I didn’t learn from it.” Fiona Apple. These may as well have been the words of my grandfather Raymond H. Swartzback. He left earth December 14, 2002 to go to what I certainly hope is a place wonderful enough for him. Throughout his life he taught me many things.. He taught me things about peace and friendship and he taught me to have a love for just about everything. My Grandfather, Pop Pop as we always called him was such a positive person in my life.

“We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal.” as quoted by Martin Luther King Jr. One of the many positive values that my grandfather instilled in my family and I was that racism was not only wrong, but not an option. He was also a huge advocate for peace, and that was another great thing that he taught me about. Pop Pop also taught me that doing well in school and life was very important, and that if you are going to do anything you should do it with your whole heart.

“It always seems impossible until it is done.” Nelson Mandela. My grandfather encouraged me through everything I did. This quote reminds me of something he would say if I was in need of encouragement. He was always there for dance concerts and plays, and would help me with a school project whenever I needed it. He always helped me to remember I could do anything I put my mind to.

“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall,” Nelson Mandela. Overall my grandfather was an amazing man. In his lifetime he changed so many people, turns out I was lucky enough to be one of these people. My grandpa was an advocate for peace, he was apposed to racism, he was a minister, he was a veteran and the one I am most thankful for he was my grandpa.

8th Grade Finalist

Joseph LeMasters (Jefferson County)

One person who really helped and encouraged me was my mom. She has helped me, even when she really didn't know what to do. My mom has taught me to go and meet people with open arms and never judge a person without getting to know them first. She has also taught me that the only way to beat rude and ignorant people is with kindness.

When I was younger and said I couldn't do something, my mom would tell me to try my best. She also told me that if I did my best, that's all that would matter. Now in eighth grade, my mom still encourages me to be a better person, and to do the best that I can. She also encourages me to go to school, do my work, and get as much education I can.

To me, my mom is not only my mother, but also my best friend. She has helped me become the person I am today, and continues to help be better myself. This is the positive impact and encouragement my mom has had on me. To help and encourage means to show someone the way to success. To encourage someone is like cheerleaders on the sidelines, cheering for the football players. You want the person to do the best they can. If they don't make it, you pick them up, brush them off, and tell them they'll do better next time. When I get discouraged, I just go and listen to this song, and I know everything will be ok. The following words always let me know that all I have to do is try harder, and I'll do better next time:

“When push comes to shove you taste what your
made of, you may bend till you break cause it's all
you can take, on your knees you look up, decide
you've had enough, you get mad, you get strong,
wipe your hand, shake it off, then you stand”

“Stand” by Rascal Flatts

Besides my mom, I think that is one of the most encouraging things I've ever heard. It's really saying instead of quitting, just keep on trying, because you end up getting it.

4th Grade Honorable Mention

Danny Pagan (Athens County)

My dad has encouraged me a lot in my life. He helps me with my favorite sport that is football. He taught me everything I know about football. He taught me how to throw and catch the ball. I think it is very cool that he taught me plays.

He also helps me in school subjects such as math. He is an awesome helper when it comes to math! For example, for hard questions I ask him to help me and he explains what I am supposed to do and then I do it.

He really helps when it comes to skateboarding. I like the trick he taught me. It is really hard to do. You have to jump off your skateboard and then fling it in the air. Then you have to land on the skateboard. As you can see, my dad really helps me with a lot of stuff!

4th Grade Honorable Mention

Miranda Minor (Athens County)

Encouraging Me

My brother, Logan P. Cull always encourages me to do things. I am going to tell you a little bit about him and some of the things he encourages me to do. First, Logan is healthy and is 21 years of age. One nice thing he does for me is take me out for ice cream and believe me I get something really delicious. I would love to do the same thing for my children when I grow up. My brother always has positive words to say to everyone. He always asks me how my day is when I come home from school. He helps me with my homework and helps other people too! My brother and I tell each other just about every thing. He is a really good brother. He's like my best friend in the big blue world. He does lots and lots of things for me and the rest of my family. He is also polite and has good manners too! All in all I love my brother and I love him a lot.

4th Grade Honorable Mention

Kate Dispenza (Athens County)

I have had many problems and my dad has helped me with a lot of them. Most of these have been friendship problems. My dad encourages me to stand up for myself and others. This is like practice for when I am older. He also gives me good ideas. But some of these problems are about what's best for our planet. For example, I think that the school cafeteria should use reusable trays instead of disposable ones. He tells me to not to tell this just to him, but to tell this also to friends so we can say what's right! He encourages me to put my ideas into action. He also encourages me to do important jobs such as student council. To conclude, these problems and solutions will be a type of practice for when I have bigger problems in the future.

4th Grade Honorable Mention

David Gentil (Perry County)

A Certain Someone

Hi, my name is David Gentil. I received a kidney from my dad.

My certain someone is Peggy Frey from *The National Kidney Foundation of Ohio*.

Peggy Frey has encouraged me to fundraise. When I was nine she invited me to a kidney walk. Ever since, I have worked a lot with them.

In April of 2007 Peggy made me honorary chair of *The National Kidney Foundation*. She has always sent me a reward sheet with different things on it. The first year I picked a set of walkie-talkies. The second year a surround sound.

Peggy Frey is the *Ohio Gala Director*. Peggy is a really good friend she has helped me a lot.

On February 24, 2008 there will be a *National Kidney Foundation Walk* and Peggy Frey will be there to sign everybody in. Again I will be there in line, waiting to sign in for the walk even though she let me be a volunteer.

Thank you Peggy Frey.

4th Grade Honorable Mention

Megan Sessor (Scioto County)

My Dad

My dad is the best dad in the world. He helps me do everything. He's been my coach for almost everything. That encourages me more. It really helps me out.

I love him so much. Sometimes he'll yell at me and I'll get mad but it encourages me more. He takes me almost everywhere with him.

We are like best friends. We do almost everything together. I watch the ways of him and follow what he does.

We love each other so much. He's the best person in the world. To most people that's an opinion but to me that's a fact. Well, that's how he encourages me.

The end.

5th Grade Honorable Mention

David Stryffeler (Columbiana County)

I'm a Child of Appalachia Essay Entry—2007

The person in my life who has been most influential is my Mom. She has been a constant source of positive reinforcement ever since I can remember. My Mother's grandparents migrated from the Alps of Switzerland to Ohio as dairy farmers, and she very closely identifies with the Appalachian terrain. She loves nature and encourages us to respect the environment.

Our family motto is: work hard—play hard, and my Mom exemplifies this. We approach the farm chores as a team. Problem solving is accomplished by considering everyone's input. My siblings and I are encouraged to be independent, contributing thinkers. This will help us to become well adjusted grownups.

It is tremendously fun to be able to spend the majority of our time outside throughout the seasons. My Mom joins in playing: baseball, biking, swimming, horseback riding, sledding and swimming. She takes time to attend my soccer games cheering me on, which makes me feel important.

During the school year, Mom helps me with homework that is difficult. She makes sure I follow a routine and get enough sleep. This enables me to do well, participate in sports and is preparing me for college. My Appalachian Mom rates an A+.

5th Grade Honorable Mention

Taylor Ramsey (Scioto County)

My name is Taylor Ramsey, I am ten years old and I have two great friends their names are Kaelyn Hornikel and Brittany Adams.

They have been a great influence and encourage me to do my best and make the right decisions. They are a great influence by telling me that I shouldn't do drugs or smoke so I will be a drug-free young adult.

My parents and I think they are a great influence and great friends. Kaelyn and Brittany are like sisters to me. Especially Kaelyn we have been friends for nine or ten years.

Kaelyn and Brittany have been encouraging me for a long time and I love that! They pick me up when I fall down and always will forever!

The End!!

5th Grade Honorable Mention

Katie Rose Pittman (Athens County)

I Am A Child of Appalachia

Like my mother and her mother before her, I am a proud child of Appalachia. And like my mother, who feels her mother was her greatest role model, I, too, would choose my mother as mine. My mother has the biggest influence on my life. She has helped me be the person I am today. My mother is overall outgoing and supportive. She supports me completely in everything I try to do.

My mother is a caring person, and she teaches me by her example that it is important for me to be kind and caring toward others. She is also funny, and we have lots of fun together, my mom and I. My mother has inspired me to be the person I am today. She has taught me to follow my dreams and to not give up when the going gets tough. I get to pick what kind of person I want to be. Nobody else can make me be somebody I don't want to be.

I am stronger because of my mother. She has taught me to be brave during divorce. I think more. I care more. I appreciate more. I love more.

5th Grade Honorable Mention

Olivia Hoon (Athens County)

Everyone who knows Grandma (Ann Hoon) loves her. She helps me when I need help. When I was playing a softball game, I broke my thumb. She could feel my pain because I was crying so much. She's always bragging about me being pretty, I start to blush. I don't think that there is one thing on Earth that would make us stop loving each other. If my grandma ever stopped loving me, I would be the saddest person on Earth!!!!

My grandma does a lot of things for me. She also teaches me to knit, sew and cook. She has a Gator, and when she's with me, I'm allowed to drive it. One night she called me right after band fitting and I told her that I was playing the trombone. She told me that the trombone was her favorite instrument. Another thing that I love about my grandma is that when she gets mad, she never raises her voice. As you can see, my grandma does many things for me.

My grandma never discourages me, so I never feel like I have to hide anything from her. Whenever I'm with her, I always feel loved. I always love going to her house, so that I can cook, knit and all the other good stuff that my grandmother does with me. I don't mean to brag or anything, but I think Ann Hoon is the best grandma on earth! I also feel proud to say that Ann Hood is my grandma.

5th Grade Honorable Mention

Julia LaComb (Athens County)

I Am A Child of Appalachia

As a child of Appalachia I have found my parents to be great role models. They were children of Appalachia too. My mom is an advisor at O.U. and my dad is a Well tender for Blausser Well Service. Both of my parents are good cooks and they like to can salsa and tomatoes to eat in the winter. They also love sports and animals. We have a cat, dog, hamster, and a pygmy goat! They have taught me to love and respect animals by having all those pets! And last, they both like to help people by doing things like the Walk for the Homeless, donate to those in need whenever possible, and help friends and family with projects.

My parents provide me with a great home. Also, they give me healthy food and supply me with clothing. And to my delight, they even buy me some Hannah Montana dresses! They help me with my homework too! Last summer my parents took me to Niagara Falls and we had a blast. Also, the year before last my parents took me to St. Augustine, Florida and we went to the beach! My parents support me, too. Going places and having support helps me build social skills. But what means the most to me is that my parents love me.

My parents keep me protected from all the things that are bad for me. They keep me healthy by giving me good food and letting me get plenty of exercise to stay active and strong. This is to avoid health problems like heart attack and diabetes, which my grandparents had. My parents help me get good grades. This builds my confidence. They also take me to church and let me get to know God. Their parents did this for them, too. All in all, they give me love to give back.

6th Grade Honorable Mention

Stacey Lapurga (Ross County)

Julie Preston is an encouraging, comforting, and a hard working person. She is very encouraging because she wants us to always do our best in anything we do and not give up. How is she comforting? She makes me feel safer knowing that she is looking out for our safety as a police officer, and to me this feels soothing. She is also a hard worker. She is a D.A.R.E. officer as well as a police officer, which is one of the most difficult and dangerous jobs. We are all thankful for that.

As the Chillicothe D.A.R.E. officer, she warns us about the dangers of smoking, drinking, both peer and personal pressure, and about what we should and should not do in certain situations. She tells us helpful advice about the pressures we will face and decisions we will make as we grow up and become adults. She tells and shows us what will happen if we take drugs and do other things we should not do.

I have learned very important things from her, and hope to continue learning even though I have already graduated from the D.A.R.E. class and moved on to sixth grade. Julie Preston is a role model for a healthy life, for the right decision making, and for becoming a responsible adult. She has taught and inspired me through the D.A.R.E. program. I will always be grateful for that.

6th Grade Honorable Mention

Samantha Goings (Muskingum County)

"I'm a Child of Appalachia" Essay

My parents are those in my life that have a great influence on me. They have encouraged me to go after my hopes and dreams. They are kind and help me to achieve my goals.

They try to help with my homework and other schoolwork. They encourage me to do my best always and to push to get good grades. They say that the better my grades, the better job that I will have someday. I've always wanted to be a horse trainer. I want to be my very own veterinarian and farrier. They say I'll need good grades to achieve those goals.

At horse shows my dad and mom give me advice that will help me to compete. They say I did a great job training my three horses. On the side of the barn my mom painted "The Sky Is The Limit". I believe that is true. My parents have tried to help me through my life. They will keep on helping me to reach the sky. That is why I picked them!

6th Grade Honorable Mention

Steven Dayton (Lawrence County)

My Dad

My dad (Rick Dayton) has been very influential in my life. Here are some of the ways he's helped me.

One thing dad helps me with is sports. Over the years he has given me tips and pointers on many different sports particularly baseball and basketball. He also has helped me understand other sports I don't play.

Throughout my life dad has helped me comprehend especially difficult homework assignments. Since he is a news anchor, he is particularly helpful on writing and practicing speeches. My dad is also very good in math. This may be part of the reason I'm a good math student.

My dad is also a good mentor when it comes to church. Anytime I have a question about what the pastor said or what we talked about in Sunday school I don't hesitate to ask him. He always helps me understand. My father teaches high school and adult Sunday school at our church. Perhaps that is why he knows so much about God.

It's wonderful to have such a caring person who can help me with so many aspects of life, my father.

6th Grade Honorable Mention

Sora Yu (Belmont County)

My Inspiration

My inspiration is my own mother, Hyeran Lee Yu. I love her with all my heart. And there isn't a day that goes by without me thinking of her and how much I'm grateful for having her. She has helped me bloom into a young gal, Sora Yu. She helps me make the right choices and also helps me get through hard times either if it's medical problems or if it's just the blues. If she sees me in pain in any way she'll be there for me, I know because she always has been.

She's gone through some hard times like the sorrow of her father being paralyzed and dying in her senior year. My mother has been close to her mother and I just really hope I'll be as close to her as well. I truly love her with all my heart and more and I know it's the same way with her as well.

I know I'll get through life as long as she'll be right beside me. It's as if I'm invincible with her. Some people would go to the ends of the Earth to just find someone who'll connect with them as well as my mother and I connect. I am truly immeasurably grateful of my grand mother.

6th Grade Honorable Mention

Jordan Large (Clermont County)

Special Little Boy

I believe the littlest things can inspire a person. In my case it's a little boy named Conner. Conner has down syndrome so he's a little different than everyone else. He stands out to me because no matter his disability, he lives his life with confidence, strength, and love. The most unique thing about Conner is his smile. A smile is a gift given to a person when they are truly happy and not only does Conner have it, he gives it. Even though he is small, he's my age and has the biggest heart I've ever seen. He accepts himself for who he is and that's a quality I admire that most people don't have. Conner encourages me because he shows me that no matter how many times the mirror tells me I'm too fat, too skinny or too tall, I'm here for a reason. I hope I can do the same thing for someone else. Conner does not live his life to the expectations of this world but the expectations of his heart. This is a gift, like his smile, I hope I can make myself receive.

7th Grade Honorable Mention

Kayla Carey (Ross County)

I'm a child of Appalachia

Michael Kemper, my grandfather and a great person, who is a big influence in my life. My grandpa has always been one of my biggest role-models. No matter what, he is always there to pick me up when I am down. He is a wonderful person to look up to. He is very trustworthy and patient.

My grandfather is a really honest person. If I have a question he will be honest about it instead of trying to say it how I want to hear it like a lot of people would.

He is very understanding and knows what to say to just about everything. When I do something wrong he helps me out and doesn't get mad, but he tries to teach me a lesson. He never yelled or gotten terribly mad at me because he usually understands when I do something wrong.

Every time I go to my grandparents' house, my grandpa is usually in the garage working or relaxing. He is a really good example of a hard worker. You can rely on him to get the work done that he has to do. He is very reliable.

My grandfather has always been a caring person. Whenever I need to talk to him or need his help he usually stops what he is doing and tries to help me. I think that is important because everyone needs someone in their life that can sit and listen to you when nobody else will. And when I have no one else to talk to my grandpa is there.

My grandfather is also a role-model because he is funny. I go to him if I am having a bad day or just need to laugh. He makes me smile no matter what.

One way my grandpa has encouraged me is by helping me to try my best in everything I do. He doesn't get mad when I don't do something right. He just helps me try again. He is always helping me with sports like basketball. He demonstrates how to get better and better. All these things I have said are very good examples of a role-model/influence in my life. And that's my grandpa.

7th Grade Honorable Mention

Halie Sparks (Lawrence County)

I'm a Child of Appalachia

As a child of Appalachia I'm used to the country style of life. People here in Appalachia make me feel like I am a good person and they respect me, especially my mom, dad, and all my friends here. To grow up in Appalachia is a wonderful thing, because of all the beautiful farms and fields that are here. I love being able to go outside and see hills covered with green grass, and the fields of corn everywhere. It is nice to see all the lovely trees that surround me.

The land where my house is has been in my family for many of years. My mom talks about how much she loves it, and about her childhood here. She is the reason it means so much to me. I hope one day to be as good of a mom as her, because she is such a great influence on me.

My mom has told me to try hard to achieve my goals so I can feel good about myself. When she told me this I listened, and she was right. She really believes in me and that is why I am the person I am today. If she didn't tell me all the things she told me, it would be hard to tell what kind of person I'd be!

My mom helped me learn that if I treat others the way I want to be treated then I will have lots of friends. She tells me all the things I need to know to succeed in my life. I try to do well to make her happy and so far I am. Her advice to me helped me to get through a lot of things. I'm very lucky to have her as a mom and I plan to continue to use her good advice throughout my life. I hope to be at least half the person she is, and maybe raise my family here too. I love my mom so much and I'm glad she is raising me in the wonderful place called Appalachia.

7th Grade Honorable Mention

Faith Berry (Muskingum County)

I'm a Child of Appalachia Essay Contest

The person that has been a positive influence and encouragement in helping me become an adult is always in my heart. I'm in the 7th grade at East Muskingum Middle School (EMMS). When I was in the 3rd grade at Pike Elementary School, I started having anxiety attacks over tests at school. Some of my teachers could tell I was "on the edge". My mom had a talk with Sandy Scholl, the principal, whom took the reigns and led me to someone who was of much help.

This person took me under her wing, watching and checking into the classroom on me. She gave me an encouragement rock to carry in my pocket. Whenever I felt the anxiety coming on I rubbed my rock and felt secure. She would always come up to me at lunchtime and even offer me to have lunch with her. I remember when she gave me a wooden nickel with her "home" phone number on it. She said she didn't care what time of the day or night it was, I could call anytime! With all the little meetings we had together, she taught me how to conquer my fears, instead of letting my fears conquer me. I even saw her a few years later as she came over to the middle school. I never did get to thank her for all of her encouraging words and deeds. I hope this letter will somehow compensate as I do treasure her compassion in children as well as my memories of her. She will always be remembered and greatly missed. Mrs. Vicki Dysinger was killed in an automobile accident last year.

7th Grade Honorable Mention

Claire Hinshaw (Lawrence County)

My Hero

My name is Claire Hinshaw and I am a seventh grader at Fairland Middle School. A hero to me is someone who helps me, inspires me, cares for me and makes my life special. My hero is my mother and this is why.

“Claire, get up!” yells my mom from the kitchen as she packs my lunch for school. I force myself to get out of bed and look out my window. The bright light pours over the beautiful mountains and into my room as the sun rises. I walk out of my room and see our lunches sitting by the door. I think to myself how organized she is and sit down in front of my breakfast. Yummy, strawberries, grown from our own garden, on top of a waffle smothered in whip cream. I take my plate over to the sink and load the dishwasher knowing my mom needs the help for she cleans up after three children. I spot her calendar and see all the writing on it. How does she do it all?

My mother is my hero because I love her and she inspires me. She takes me places I need to go but protects from places that I want to go that are too dangerous. She does everything, anywhere, and wherever needed. She also gives help to whoever needs it. She sparkles in my mind like the dew on the grass in the morning. She means the world to me and she is the greatest hero of all time. I can only hope to accomplish the amazing things that she has.

7th Grade Honorable Mention

Jeremiah Wood (Harrison County)

“I can’t do it! I just can’t do it!” I told my mom as I got out of my grandpa’s van.

“Do what?” my mom asked.

“I just can’t sell that trailer load of vegetables. Grandpa sure got auction fever. You’d swear his hand was glued to the sky. He got corn, peppers, apples, watermelon and cantaloupe too.”

My grandpa was born in 1943 as the oldest of nine. Their house was very crowded and they didn’t have electricity or running water. My grandpa’s name is Elden Doane; his nickname is Tex. He went to a one-room schoolhouse for grade school. He learned to weld when he was in the army and he served in Korea after the war.

My grandpa took me to a hunter safety course two years ago so that he could take me turkey hunting with him that spring. I passed. Then we got all my gear ready, got the gun sight in, got my license, and we went hunting. I didn’t get a worthless turkey that year, but at least I got to go.

That fall my grandpa took me deer hunting. I went with my grandpa to his stand. After about two hours I saw a buck and boom!! About another two hours later we found him. My grandpa gutted him and I had the pleasure of helping him drag him out. My grandpa helped me skin him and cut him up.

My grandpa also helped me with my leaf project and taught me the different types of leaves.

My grandpa takes me fishing. He took me fishing in New York in a canoe for Northern Pike and bass. He also takes me fishing in the creek near where we live. My grandpa takes me to Mt. Hope to buy produce for me to sell at my own stand. One time, he bought me \$300 worth of produce and I had to pay him back before I could make a profit. I actually sold it and made \$80 profit.

The most special thing about my relationship with my grandpa is that my parents adopted me when I was 7 and my grandpa loves me just the way I am. I love my grandpa!

8th Grade Honorable Mention

Sam Meade (Ross County)

Tim Colburn

Have you ever wondered if there was a person who respected you for who you are? What about someone who would help you with anything? The first person to come to my mind is Tim Colburn, my Little League baseball coach. He has inspired me to become a good person ever since I met him when I was only 9 years old. He is a great baseball coach and also a great influence on others.

When I met him, I was very shy because it was a new baseball team and a new coach, but he was very nice and helping me to become less shy. Throughout the years I've known him, I have gotten to know him better as a coach and as a friend. One very important thing that he has taught me about life is that family and school come before all privileges. One time that his advice applied to was when his mother died, and I had baseball practice during his mother's calling hours. My mom said, "Sam, you don't want to be late for Flaget baseball practice," when we were at the calling hours. And I told her, "Mom, Tim said that 'family before all privileges', so I don't care if I'm late for practice because I want to stay here with Tim in his time of need." That advice will probably stick with me all through my life.

Tim has always helped me whenever I needed help with anything, especially in my time of need as I helped him. Every year after baseball season, we have a team banquet. It's always fun. We cook out, play football, and also get season trophies. This year was different. This year I was moving out of Little League and onto a higher age group and off Tim's team. This made everybody sad, especially I and the other team members moving up. But I will still keep in touch with Tim, because he will be my friend and guidance forever, no matter what happens. He is such a great person and I will use his advice forever.

8th Grade Honorable Mention

Patricia Coen (Tuscarawas County)

Respect

I have a very special person in my life who has guided me into becoming an adult, this person is my father. My father has always told me that if I wanted to do something all I had to do is put my mind to it. I have followed this throughout my life in many situations. During times when we moved, I had to leave my old friends and make new ones. It was difficult, but I would put my mind to it and everything would work out. He makes me do chores like laundry, dishes, dusting, and taking care of my brother. All of these things have taught me responsibility. It takes a lot of responsibility to take care of children, run a house, and keep a job, so my father is helping me by leading by example.

My father has taught me responsibility by teaching me the value of money. He has taught me how to manage money by giving me a weekly allowance for doing my chores. That allowance is five dollars a week. I save this money because I have learned how hard my dad works to earn his money. I do not like to ask him for money. If I save my money, then I have my own money to buy special things I may need. The last purchase I saved for was a new purse. This purse means a lot to me because I bought it with my own money.

My father taught me to respect other people's opinions. When I get angry and say mean things I do not mean, he has taught me the value of learning to accept differences. I have learned to accept the differences we may have. My father has told me it is better to be compassionate and try to talk over our differences. I have found that this works better than arguing about our differences. This is a much better way to solve problems and differences.

My father is the one person in my life that encourages me to be the best person I can be at all times. With his help, I will be a loving, caring, and responsible adult. Yes, there have been other people encouraging me too, but my father is the one person that has always been there for me in a positive way.

8th Grade Honorable Mention

Savanah McElroy (Harrison County)

Special Person

The person that most influenced my life had to be Tom Copanhagan. He was like a granddad to me. We would do many things together. Sitting in the woods watching birds and animals was one of his favorite things to do. He taught me many things before he left this world to go on to the next. The most memorable things were his vast knowledge and stories. He told old war stories and ones of his childhood. He taught me different types of animals and plants. Most the time we would sit and just watch the world pass, unfazed by the things going on around us. We were just glad to be in each other's company.

To begin we must start with the beginning I met Mr. Copanhagan when I was four going on five. We had just moved to a house about one mile away from our old one. It was especially larger. It was two stories tall. Three bedrooms, one bath, kitchen, living room, dining room, full attic, basement, and a computer room. Mr. Copanhagan lived next door. He was an old man in his seventies or eighties. I didn't start to get to know him until I was about seven or eight. Normally I would sit on the front porch and watch him sit there without noticing.

Later on, as I got older I started to go and just sit there with him not saying anything to him just enjoying his presence. After awhile we asked each other questions. Simple ones like, "How are you?", "How's school?" and things like that. Then we started to talk about my family and his family, animals, friends, and other things. We both loved being outdoors a lot. Normally we would sit there after we ate dinner. Also, we would sit on weekends normally in the afternoon.

My mom really liked what I was doing for Mr. Copanhagan. Normally his family didn't visit him much. Over the years we had talked and I had grown to respect this man of his age and wisdom. I loved him like a grandpa. Than one summer day Mr. Copanhagan's house caught fire. Thankfully he wasn't there; although, he had to move in with his real granddaughter. A year later he died. I will surely miss him. He was a great influence and a great man, too.

8th Grade Honorable Mention

Kendra Lee (Athens County)

My Life's Role Model: My Grandma

When I think about the person that's been a positive influence on me and has been encouraging me, there is no doubt about who the first person that come to mind is. This special person's name is Donna Lee, my grandma and my dad's mother. There are three main reasons why my grandma means the world to me. She supports me in my sports and academics, she would give anything to my family, and my grandmother has even battled breast cancer. I think the people that know my grandma in my community would agree that she is an incredible woman.

First of all, my grandma is a huge encouragement to me because she supports me in my sports and academics. I play volleyball on a team for my school, and have two games a week. Even though my grandma lives in Meigs County, she drives to Athens County to watch me play and support me. It's so great to see her smiling face in the stands, which always tells me to try my hardest. As far as my academics, I usually get on the honor-roll, which Grandma always congratulates me on. She reminds me, though, there's always room for improvement, which I appreciate her saying. I know my grandma will always be there for me.

Another way my grandma influences me is she would give anything to my family. It seems like she is constantly giving, with no end in mind, and expecting nothing in return. Besides me, my grandmother has four other grandchildren, which is a lot of kids to shop for during the holiday season. Even so, every Christmas is held at Grandma's house, each of the children's many gifts are individually wrapped, and plenty of food is prepared. It's unbelievable how hard my grandma works.

Last but not least, my grandma is truly a special individual because she's battled breast cancer. I always knew she was strong, but during this disaster she never gave in and didn't show any fear. Instead of her supporting me, I supported her, but she still helped me with any of my problems. I will never underestimate her will-power.

To conclude, my grandma is an inspiring person. She supports my every decision, she is constantly giving, and she is a breast cancer survivor. She's such a kind, hard-working person; I honestly don't know how she does it. She's the type of grandma I want to be when I grow up.

8th Grade Honorable Mention

Kristen Powell (Athens County)

Denise Powell: My Mother

Some people don't always have a special and positive person in their life. I on the other hand have an amazing mother who has always been there for me. My mom always helps me with my problems, believes in me, and is always at all of my sports games. I could never ask for a more special person in my life.

To begin with, I love my mother so much because she always helps me with my problems. If I ever have a problem with my friends, or something at school, she is always there for me. She will talk to me about it and somehow she can always help me get rid of the problem. My Mother is so wonderful and whenever there is something wrong, I'm never afraid to talk to her.

Secondly, my Mom believes in me so much and is so encouraging. She always expects good grades on report cards because she believes that I can do anything I set my mind to. Even if someone else thinks that I'm not capable of doing something, my mom will think otherwise. This is so important and special to me to have someone there who truly believes in me.

Finally, no matter what, my Mom is always at my volleyball and basketball games. Every time I look in to the stands she's always there and just gives me a big smile. This helps me work extra hard because my Mom really wants to see me do well. Also if I'm having a bad game, I can hear her up in the stands cheering me on. It makes me feel great knowing someone is there for me.

In conclusion, my Mom is the most encouraging, and positive influence in my life. I would never trade her for anything that I could have in this world, because she knows me more than anyone else does. I know that she would go to the ends of the earth and beyond for me, and for anyone else she cares dearly about. My Mom is an amazing person who is always, and will always be there for me whenever I need her.