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2C **JUST FOR KIDS** Wisconsin State Journal, Tuesday, April 5, 1994

Eighth-graders relate brushes with prejudice

By Ann Harris
For the State Journal

XE YANG

I've been treated differently just because I'm a Hmong girl. When I first came to Cherokee, people kept pulling my hair. I don't know why, but I think it was because I am Asian. Another time I experienced racism was when I got on a bus and some girls let me sit with them. On my way off the bus, the same people pulled my hair and tried to hit me.

As it goes for my religion, no one understands it. Just because I have long black hair, that does not mean I am Chinese. Many people call me "ching-chong girl" or "Chinese girl."

I feel kind of dumb coming to this country because it's not my country. Other times, I feel this is the right place for me because I don't really have a country. But deep inside, I just want to cry because I don't tease anyone about their race or religion, so why do they have to tease me? Is it because this is not my country and they don't want me here? Or is it because I am Asian? I can never answer these questions for myself.

EUGENE GATLIN-BROWN

Being an African-American youth growing up in Madison, I am faced with a lot of racism — be it in school, my neighborhood or in public. Imagine yourself going to the store and being stared at by whites or other races as if you had just landed from another planet, or their being afraid that you might do something to them, or steal something.

Anyone of any color can hurt you or take from you. Sometimes when stop for my sake and the future's sake. Without a fair chance, how will the world come to know us African Americans as people, not a painted negative image?

Stop racism. It's killing my generation.

JOHANNA GOLDEN

Being Jewish, I have witnessed many things that most people haven't. So far in my life I haven't experienced any cruel comments about my religion. Most of the comments are said because people are ignorant of my culture.

Some comments, such as "are you 'Hanukkah'?" have become almost humorous to me. I think that in this time with the fragile clash of cultures — religion, sexism, racism etc. — we need to focus much more on the education part of religion, culture, sexism, racism. From knowledge comes sensitivity.

ADRIANNE THOMAS


I have friends of a lot of assorted races. I do not think of race, but personality when I pick my friends. ... When you have a friend of a different race you become less ignorant of that race and so does your friend become less ignorant of your race.

The main point in order to stop racism is to free your mind and open it to new things.

ERIC SHIELDS

I am a 14-year-old at Cherokee Heights Middle School. I am writing to you about the dealings of racism, sexism and religious prejudice. I have never been caught up in any of these acts but I have witnessed a few cases in person and on television. It greatly disturbs me — especially because I'm a Mexican American — to see people judged differently because they are a different sex or a different race. When I see this I feel uncontrollable anger mixed up with a heavy hit of sadness.

We need to stop looking at people as different and be one together. These problems should not be here today and one day I hope they will not.



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