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Middle School Essay
First Place

I am Janusz Korczak

I am Janusz Korczak. I am a physician, a writer, an educator. I established my first Jewish orphanage in 1912, and from then on began to teach and love children. After many attempts to save the lives of the two hundred children from my orphanage, they are unfortunately on their way to the gas chambers of the death camp of Treblinka; I along with them. I chose my death, and therefore, I have no fear of it. I am not alone. I will die with my children; my children will die with me. If we do not have the choice to go on living, then that is all I could have ever wished for.

I am Brittany Horth. I am a daughter, a student, a friend. Janusz Korczak's bravery amazes me. His story leaves me with a feeling so strong, an emotion so foreign. For the pain and suffering he went through at that time, his courageous attitude leaves me breathless. Janusz Korczak may have thought that he was unsuccessful in saving the lives of the two hundred children from his Jewish orphanage, but he was successful in showing bravery, an amazing bravery that could only grow from the seed of love and the soil of pride. The fact that it took two hundred lives, two hundred and one including Janusz Korczak's, to teach one person, one twelve-year-old girl the bravery that comes from love saddens me. I appreciate being blessed with this wonderful lesson. If Janusz Korczak's story does not teach the people of today to be brave, to be kind, to be caring, then I don't know what will.

Millions of people died in the Holocaust. Millions and yet there were those few who were brave enough to give up their own lives for others. The choices for the Jews were to die or to survive, to have courage or to have fear, to have pride or to run away from who you were. There were only so many options during the Holocaust.

Violence was the new air that the people breathed. Never knowing if it would ever end, Jews either ran or hid. Janusz Korczak's love kept him back, back with his children, back with the love of his life. As I read Korczak's story, I asked myself, and now I ask you, would you run, hide, or stay right where you were?

Faith, hope, pride, love. These emotions motivated the courage that some of the heroic people showed during the Holocaust.

Are these emotions still within the people of today? Over and over again I listen to adults say that it only takes one person to hurt the feelings of many others. I agree with this statement. It only takes one person to ruin everything, but it takes everybody to fix it. I say that the human race should not dwell on our mistakes from the past, but

instead keep them in our minds and in our hearts and use those memories to prevent horrible events like the Holocaust from happening again.

Everyone in my state, in my city, in my household, should work together to improve our efforts towards our community and to remind each other of what love and pride can accomplish.

A young girl once said:

“How noble and good everyone could be if, every evening before falling asleep, they were to recall to their minds the events of the whole day and consider exactly what has been good or bad. Then, without realizing it, you try to improve yourself at the start of each new day; of course, you achieve quite a lot in the course of time. Anyone could do this, it costs nothing and is certainly very helpful.” (p. 256)

Anne Frank lived and died during the Holocaust, but she thought and wrote as if she were alive today.

I now come to the conclusion that every night, I will think about the qualities of the day and try to apply and improve them the next day. I hope others will do the same. If we all work on the same task of improving ourselves and helping others to do so also, the human race will never have to live through another hell like the Holocaust.

Books:

Frank, Anne. The Diary of a Young Girl. New York: Doubleday, 1967.

Web site:

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust—Janusz Korczak. 2001. 10 February 2003.
<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/people/korczak/htm>