



PERSONAL NARRATIVES

**FROM THE SIXTH GRADE
Ms. Uter & Ms. Inzana's ELA Class**

**MARY M. BETHUNE SCHOOL - CLEVELAND, OHIO
2019-2020**

These personal narratives were written and revised by the sixth graders at Mary M. Bethune School. During the 2019-2020 school year, teaching artist, Cynthia Larsen from Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth, taught the sixth grade how to write personal narratives.

She was assisted in this by college students from John Carroll University's Center for Service and Social Action.

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The Great Big Lesson!!!!

Aniyah G.

When I was six years old, I went to my Grandma's house for the weekend. My Grandma's house was an apartment. The color was light blue with green dots. My Grandma said, "Hey Aniyah!!"

I said, "Hey Grandma. What are you watching?"

She said, "I'm watching 'The People's Court.'"

I said, "Oh, where is my dad?"

She said, "He is in his room sleeping."

I said, "Okay." So I went to charge my phone because it was on 10%. I took off my shoes and I went into the kitchen and grabbed some Pepsi. When I got out of the kitchen, I saw my aunt and my three cousins wearing blue and black coats and some butters. I asked my auntie, "Can you take me to the store because I need to buy my dad some pop?"

My auntie said, "Why do you need to go to the store and buy some pop? I thought they already had some pop?"

I said, "No, I drank the last one and it was a Pepsi."

My Aunt said, "Oh."

I went back to my dad's room and talked to him for a little bit. Then when I was done talking to my dad, I asked my grandma if I could play on the trampoline, but she said, "No Aniyah. You just got here."

Then I went to see what percent my phone was on. When I looked it was 19%. So I went into the living room and I put my shoes on. My grandma said, "Why are you putting on your shoes, Aniyah?"

I said, "I'm going to the store."

She said, "When you get back you can get on the trampoline."

I said, "Okay." So I went to the store and got some pop, chips, ice cream, candy, and some popcorn. When I came back I got on the trampoline. I was jumping really high.

My grandma said, "Don't jump too high, Aniyah."

I said, "Okay Grandma, I won't jump that high, and I will go very slow so I won't go that high."

She said, "Okay." So I slowed down a little bit and then I tried to get off, but instead I fell off on the floor and scraped my knee. My grandma said, "Are you okay, Aniyah?"

I said, "Yeah, I'm fine, Grandma." Then I went into my dad's room so I could watch a little bit of TV. Then I went into the kitchen to get some pop for me and my grandma. I asked my grandma, "What type of pop do you want?"

She said, "I want some Pepsi because I like that type of pop because I always drink that type of pop."

I said, "Oh, and do you want some snacks on the side?"

Then she said, "No thank you, Aniyah."

I said, "Okay I'll be right back. I'm about to go into my dad's room right away."

She said, "Okay, Aniyah, I'm about to watch my movie."

I said, "What movie are you about to watch?"

She said, "I'm about to watch *US*, my movie."

Then I went back to my dad's room.

He asked me, "Where are your brothers at?"

I said, "They are sleeping in Grandma's room."

Then I went back to the living room with my grandma. I asked her, "Can I get back on the trampoline?"

She said, "Yes."

I said, "Thank you so much!" I was so happy that she said yes and that she was watching me play on the trampoline because somebody needed to watch me on the trampoline. While I was jumping on the trampoline, I went too high, and then I flew out of the trampoline and onto the couch. I said, "Again, Again!"

She said, "Okay just one more time, and that's it."

I said, "Thanks, Grandma, I love you!"

She said, "I love you too! Aniyah." After that, I went slow for a minute.

I said, "This is slow." So I jumped really high and fell off the trampoline and into a pile of sharp nails by the couch and I was bleeding really bad. I said, "OUCH! It hurts really bad."

Grandma said, "Hold on. Let me go put on some shoes, and we can go to the hospital." So my grandma took me to the hospital, and the nurse and the doctor took me to the emergency room.

The way I reacted is like a sissy. I was nervous, and a cry baby. Another way I reacted is like a drama queen. I went into the emergency room, and I passed out.

The lesson I learned is don't EVER jump too high on the trampoline. It changed me because you should not fall onto the pile of nails, and you can't be jumping too high ON ANY trampoline.

My First Day at Football Practice

Anthony L.

It was June 3rd, my first day at football practice. I was at Glenville High School. My coach asked me what my name was.

I said, "Anthony Littlejohn."

He asked me if he could call me Littlejohn.

I said, "Yes sir."

I asked him, "What is your name?"

He said, "Coach G." He was short and nice. Later I found out he was my uncle.

It was June 3rd. Then, after I got my equipment, my coach said "I want to see how you tackled," but I got run over.

He kept saying, "Keep going!" until I finally tackled. It took me all practice. After practice the dude, who was my cousin, was bragging about how he ran me over.

The next day we tackled each other again. He was like, "This gone be easy." So I was going so hard that I broke his arm. So everybody was jumping all over me talking about, "Oh yea, Littlejohn!"

Then my coach put me at defensive end. My first game was August 2nd. My dad called me after practice and asked me when was my first game. I said tomorrow.

He said, "I gone be there."

I was looking for him, but he did not show up at my first football game. I had 6 tackles and 2 touchdowns. After the game I called him. Then I was like, "Was you there?"

He said no.

Then I went to go tell my mom, and she said to forget him so we went home. I went home. I was watching this youtuber, Funny Mike, and he told his friend Runiktv that his dad went to the corner store, ain't never come back. Then I was thinking, Did he do that, my dad? I asked my mom, and she started laughing. I was like, "That a yes!"

This experience was important to me because football motivated me. When I first went on the field I was scared. After two years, I really started to like it. I want to keep playing football in the future. I was depressed when my dad didn't show up to my game, but I realized I can't worry about everyone else, just focus on myself.

HOW I LOST MY LITTLE SISTER

Areyanna E.

It all started when me and my little sister Tarya were at Cedar Point, and she got lost. It was a hot summer day in July.

I was eleven and my little sister was five years old. We went to get something to eat from the food truck, and we were sitting down talking. My little sister said she was done eating and asked if she could throw her trash away.

I said yes, not thinking that, because she's only five years old and as small as a bug, she could get lost in a crowd of people. But I was happy and said yes. After one minute passed, I got up to look for her. When I went to the trash can, she wasn't there. I called her name three times as loud as I could.

"Tarya, Tarya ,Tarya," I yelled, but no answer. I was so nervous and scared. My heart was pounding out of my chest.

I went to go find her and search for her.

After ten minutes went by, I started to ask people if they had seen her. I described what she was wearing. She was wearing a blue shirt with white shorts and had a big poofy ponytail. Then I went to a bathroom far from where we were eating and playing, and a miracle had come out of nowhere.

It was my dad and my little sister. When I saw them, I was so happy. I instantly gave my little sister a hug. I told my dad how I thought I had lost her, and I was so scared that she was gone.

After a long crazy day, we went home and told my mom about the crazy day and ate nachos. AND THAT'S HOW I LOST MY LITTLE SISTER.

When I Got Stitches

Breyonna M.

I was in the second grade when this happened. I was outside playing with my older sister India, who is light skinned and short, and my older cousin named Jmary who is also light skinned. We were playing with the water hose, making water balloons. When I went in the house to use the restroom, my foot slid under a door with nails and when I pulled it back, my foot was cut open. At first I was just shocked, but then my cousin asked if that was my bone. I started to get scared. I thought I was going to have to get my foot cut off. But then my mom said, "That's not your bone, and you are going to be okay."

"Oh! So that means I don't have to go to the hospital?" I said.

My mom said, "You have to go get stitches."

I asked, "What are stitches?"

She said, "You will see."

I said, "Okay."

So my mom called my dad to tell him the news. He was like, "What were y'all doing?"

My mom told him, "I'm taking her to the hospital."

He said, "Okay, I will meet you there."

When we were on our way to the hospital, I was scared at first because I never remembered going to the hospital. When I got in the hospital bed they gave me a tablet. Then I felt more safe about being at the hospital. When they started to put water in my foot to clean it out, I was like, "That's too cold."

Then the doctors was like, "It's going to be okay."

So, when they put my stitches together, they said, "She can't take off her yellow sock for a week." I was a little mad because I liked to do a lot of things like playing, flipping and stuff like that.

After that when my sisters would go and play, I would have to watch TV. I would really get mad, because it felt like that week went by fast. Then when I took my sock off, my foot was a lighter brown. Then I got scared, but my mom said, "It's fine."

I said, "Okay."

So I learned not to run around the house when the floor is wet, or even when the floor is not wet, but just to watch my step and where I'm going, and to always watch your step everywhere you go.

GETTING LOST IN THE MALL

Channan G.

Once I was three, and I got lost in the mall. The mall was in Beachwood. I was playing hide-and-seek with my mom. My mom was tall with long brown hair.

We were at the mall inside Forever 21. I was hiding in the clothes that were on the rack. I was so happy, and I kept on giggling and thinking she was never going to find me. Then I remembered that I didn't tell my mom that we were playing the game. I felt disappointed in myself. After two minutes, I found out she left. When I found out, I freaked out. The mall was big and I was very uncomfortable. I asked the young cashier lady where my mom was. Her name was Stephanie.

First she said she didn't know. Then she started running after me because I was running. I was a very fast runner. My mom always told me that. Stephanie was really close, and I wasn't feeling good. So I ran in the Gap store and got myself a jacket. The jacket had "GAP" in the middle. It was all pink .

The security guard was totally faster than me. His name was Mike. He caught me, but he didn't hurt me. He was an older man with curly mid width hair and a black baggy suit that said "Mike." He had a gun so I was scared at first, but then I wasn't because I kept on thinking that he would shout at me for stealing, but then he gave me candy and juice. He got it all from his lunchbox. When my mom got there, I didn't notice because I was too busy eating candy. I looked up and there she was crying and thanking the police officer.

She also looked very messy probably because she was looking for me. When she saw me, she hugged me so tight, and I felt so loved. We went home after that.

Now I know: Don't play hide-and-seek in public. Also I know now that I can get separated from my mom. I still have the jacket to this day.

THE FAMILY TRIP TO CALIFORNIA

Da'naria P.

Last year at home on a Thursday night at 8:00 p.m., I was upstairs on my phone chilling. My mom, Brandy, screamed my name with excitement.

I was like "Huh. Oh my goodness." I stomped downstairs and was like, "Yessssssss Mom."

She was like, "Guess what?"

I was like, "What???"

And she said, "WE GOT TICKETS TO CALIFORNIA!!!"

As you know, I was still mad from her interrupting me so I was like, "Yea, yay, awesome, hallelujah," with no excitement.

Then on Friday I was so happy because me and my family were going to California. After school I threw my book bag on the floor and ran to pack my stuff.

My mom said, "Oh, so you would be happy today, but not yesterday?"

We had left my house at 9:00 p.m. on Friday for the airport, and we got to California at 3:00 a.m. Saturday. I was knocked out on the plane. My mom yelled to get up. It was funny. But I got up, and ran off the plane. My little sister Destiny kept screaming when we got off the plane. So was my baby sister Deshauna. I was like, "Oh my goodness."

When we got off the plane we drove to the hotel. At the hotel my Auntie Britt was yelling at Aiden, Jayden, and Aubrey for acting up—those are her kids. They are also my younger cousins.

After that, we went to grab some Chinese food, where I got orange chicken and rice, and my mom got egg rolls. We settled our stomachs; then we went back to sleep.

At 12:30 p.m. when we got up, we ate some pancakes, eggs, sausage, and orange juice and watched Disney channel. Then we waited two hours to go to the pool, where it was super crowded. After we left the pool, we got in the shower and went to the Footlocker and H&M.

While we were at the store we bought some snacks and some popcorn. After we left the store, we walked around to see how it looked in California. It was hot walking around. Two hours later we started to get hungry so we went and found a place to eat at. We ate some burgers and fries, but I can't remember what the place was called. It was the best burger I ever had! After we ate, we went to the mall. It was like 8:30 p.m. when we were at the mall. Then we went home and played a little game. The next thing you know we were knocked out.

On Sunday morning we ate some eggs, bacon, grits, sausage, and cinnamon rolls. Then we packed our stuff back up and drove to the airport and got on the plane and went home. I was tired from the plane ride.

This is how my weekend was in California.

After that weekend, I never thought of anything else but California, school, studies, and other school related stuff. Also, we went to California to get out of the house and go on a trip with the family because we really missed them. I want to go back to California someday soon.

I stop talking to my brother and I got more friends??

Desirae M.

When I was 5 years old, on September 8th, 2012, me and my brother were playing with dolls. The doll I was playing with was light skinned and had black hair, a white blouse, and light blue jean skirt. The doll my brother was playing had muscles, a black shirt, black pants and black shoes, and a shirt had a red skull on it., The doll I was playing with ran for her life. The doll my brother Bryon was playing with had turned into a monster and almost killed her.

It was so much fun playing with my brother when I was little, but now that me and my brother are older we don't play that much anymore because he would annoy me or I would annoy him. But a year after we stopped hanging out, more kids started to enroll into my school.

One of the new kids was light skinned, short and had braids in her hair, and glasses. Her name is Aniyah. The other kid was light skinned and had glasses too, and her name was Zya. And one was tall and had a ponytail and the last one was black and had braids. Her name was Gabby. We always hang out with each other all the time. They made me really happy.

Before them, there was another girl who was my friend. She had brown hair and she was light skinned. Her name was Imiya. They would bully her and call her "roach". It made me really sad and angry. I never stood up for her, but now that I am older I now know to stand up for all my friends, even when I am scared too.

The Eraser

Gabrielle T.

When I was little, I lived in an apartment. I was playing with my sister Cicily in winter. She said, "Let's play tag."

I said, "Okay."

So we were chasing each other a little too much. Cicily was 11 years old, with black hair. I was only 4 or 5 years old, with a bun in my hair. We were playing a little too much in the living room (it was small and had a fluffy floor). I accidentally fell on the big brown couch and choked on a snowflake shaped eraser and ran.

My sister said, "Are you ok?"

I said, "No!!!"

I knew that my sister was sorry, but I was mad and worried. My mom, who had straight hair and a blue robe on, ran like a wild chicken and said, "What happened?" Then Cicily explained.

We were in the very big kitchen that was next to my door and my sister said, "When I choked on a mint, I drank some water and it came out," so we tried that.

My mom said, "Is the eraser almost out?"

I said, "Almost."

I tried really hard while squeezing my eyes. I was in a chair in the living room and Cicily was standing behind me, while my mom was getting the second glass of water. It almost came out, but it was still stuck in my mouth.

I was really worried and thought about lots of things, like what if the eraser never comes out? I thought about all the possible ways to get the eraser out.

Then, my mom panicked because it had been so long, and the eraser had not come out. I tried to tell her to calm down because I had an idea. My idea was to instead of trying to get the eraser out, I thought about trying to get it in. So I swallowed the whole eraser. It was hard and painful and I made a disgusted face, but it finally came out.

After all that happened, I could not sleep with the eraser taste in my mouth. A few days later, I felt better. And after that I was very afraid of erasers, and every time I fall asleep I think of that. I learned to be careful before playing too much, and so did Cicily.

The Lesson I Learned At Boxing

Kyla T. P.

Have you ever thought about being a boxer? I was boxing when I was 11 years old, and the reason I wanted to box was because that was my dream since I was little. You are always supposed to follow your dreams. My first and only coach was short and smart, and he boxed real good. His name was Joseph. He had two daughters I be boxing with and one son who I boxed in the gym.

Before I was going to box, the first thing my coach said was that my hands can't leave my face. He said "The main thing is not to take yo hands down from yo face." My coach gave me a month to practice. I practiced every day. After the month was over, he tested me for two weeks in the gym to not put my hands down when I fight.

A week later I had to box a girl in a match. She had long hair and was my age. She was a little taller than me and she was skinny and dark skin and we was boxing in the gym. The gym was big and inside the colors was red and black. It was my first time here. When we was fighting at first I had her, but then I put my hands down and she got to my face like five times.

Then, my coach was yelling in the background "Keep yo hands up!"

I put them up and I beat her up the first round. Then the second round I put my hands down and I didn't even notice. She got me one good time, right in the face, and I fell to the ground. It was a person who was in the ring that counted down to 10 and I got back up at 5. She started going for my face. Then she kept pushing me and hit me and made my nose bleed. The same guy counted to 10 and I didn't get up, so I lost. After I lost, I felt stupid because I did not follow the directions from my coach. I was thinking, I just made a fool out of my coach and myself. I was supposed to keep my hands up, but I ended up letting them down. The lesson I learned was to follow the directions. If I had I would have won. From then till now, I always keep my hands up when boxing.

The Doctors Always Want You to Turn Eleven

Le'Anna P.

It was a sunny day in Cleveland, and everybody just seemed happy and jolly but me—because I had to go to the doctor's. I was ten at the time. I was so nervous. My head and my hands were sweaty. I was shaking, but a couple of minutes later, I was okay.

Then I walked into the building. The colors inside were so boring—everything was just dark blue, green and brown. Then I sat down and waited till the doctor called my name. She was a short lady with a white coat on that smelled like candy. She told me to go to another floor and sit there.

The floor she sent me to was not so boring like the first floor. Then another doctor called my name. She was tall with a white coat on and smelled like gloves.

Finally, I went into the exam room where they were going to give me a shot. In my head I was hoping somebody would pull a fire alarm so everybody would have to leave the building and then I wouldn't have to get a shot.

Unfortunately, ten minutes later the same doctor came that smelled like gloves. She got everything she needed to give me a shot. Then she washed her hands and laid everything on the table to give me a shot. I was so scared that I started crying. So the doctor made my mom hold me. Then the doctor took the cap off the first needle.

My mom was still holding my arm down because I kept moving and the doctor didn't want to put the needle in the wrong place. My mom finally got me to say still. Then I saw my mom smiling and I was mad.

Next, I got a second shot, but this one didn't hurt so it wasn't so bad. Because it didn't hurt at all, I didn't cry.

After that, me and my mom left the doctor's, and she took me to the store to make it up to me. My mom got me fruit snacks because the store didn't really have anything.

After me and my mom left the store, we went home and the doctor called and said, "Ms. Payne, I forgot to tell you—she has to get another one when she turns 11 years old."

My mom called me downstairs and said, "Round three."

I said, "Round three?"

She said, "You're going to get another one when you turn eleven."

One year later, I went back for my next shot. I had learned how to be calm and control myself. When I was holding my arm out by myself, I was talking to my mom, and I didn't even know. I guess I grew up a little bit. The doctors must have been glad that I was eleven now.

Microwave Problems

Malaia F.

One morning in the summer around 11 a.m., my brother was in the living room and my mom was sleeping in. I think I was like... seven or eight.

My brother was on the couch watching TV or something. From one of the upper cabinets, I got a bright blue plate and put a strawberry Pop-Tart on said plate. My counter top was flooded with soapy water, hot chocolate mix and Kool-Aid. After I put the box of Pop-Tarts back under the lower cabinet, I put my plate in the microwave and pressed the start button twice.

Only after two seconds, I realized that I had made a mistake. I immediately took the Pop-Tart back out. I had not taken the wrapper off the Pop-Tart. The kitchen smelled like smoke, yet there wasn't any. I didn't scream or anything, I was just really chill about the situation. I took the burning wrapper off of the still cold Pop-Tart. I threw the wrapper away and carefully sat the Pop-Tart in the microwave once again.

When my mother woke up later, she asked me why my kitchen smelled like fire. My mother told me never to put Pop-Tarts in the microwave anymore; the only thing I could do that was microwave related was cleaning it. So the next time someone made a mess in the microwave and food exploded all over the inside, I had to clean it.

I was banned from heating stuff up for about two and a half weeks. From then on I wasn't allowed to put a Pop-Tart in the microwave by myself anymore because my mom just stopped buying them.

Obviously I learned to never leave the wrapper on the Pop-Tart, but I also became a lot more careful in the kitchen.

I also have another microwave story. I believe it was a day after Thanksgiving. My mother, my aunt/godmother, Illssa, and my younger brother were home.

I was listening to music on YouTube, and I happened to glance over at the time; it was 1:45. I wanted to eat my lunch so I turned off the music and left my room. Illssa was about to go and leave.

"Alright y'all I'm leaving now," she said as she walked out the front door.

"Bye Lissa!" I said back.

I locked the door behind her and shuffled my way into the kitchen. My brother was on the floor, playing with his toy cars. I think my mom was in her room on her phone or something.

I opened the fridge and made myself a plate of food. I got some ham, with a little mac and cheese. Then I closed the door to the fridge. I sat the plate in the microwave, but didn't start it.

After I closed the microwave door, my mom called me.

"Laia! I need you to do the dishes before 5:00!" she shouted from across the house.

I huffed under my breath and mumbled, "Ok mom..."

I started the microwave and pressed the 'start' button 3 times.

After the first 15 seconds, I heard a loud breaking sound. It sounded like someone threw a glass mug on the ground. I turned back to the microwave and opened the door.

Inside was my food and the culprit of the sound I heard. My plate had broken inside the microwave, it was sitting there in 3 separate pieces.

My mom came speed-walking from her room.

"What was that noise!?" she asked while kinda screaming at the same time

I told her what happened and she only squinted at me, while still making an angry face.

"Oh. You gonna clean alllllll of this up and then maybe use a better plate than my glass ones," she said, pointing at the sink full of dirty dishes. To this day, she probably doesn't remember anything that happened that day.

Point blank, story over. Microwaves in general just don't work around me. I'm just cursed. We'll just go with that TOTALLY possible answer. I don't like any type of microwave. Can't even clean it correctly... But that's a different story for a different day.

The Worst Day Ever!!!!

Michael W.

I was at my friend Cortez's house for the weekend when he said we should make a video. I was skeptical about the idea.

That weekend, my mom had to go to a job interview. I wasn't at a fair age where I could stay in the house. I was ten years old with no dad who cared about me. I was living with my mom. My dad had said he was going to the store and never came back. I remember him saying he would always be there for me, no matter what. But anyway, it was Friday, July 5th, and my mom had a job interview. My mom and Cortez's mom was the best of friends so I went to Ms. Tilly's house for the weekend.

Me and Cortez had to go to Walmart to get our recording equipment. We took our bikes up the street. We had already had 100 dollars apiece. My mom gave me 50, and Cortez already had 52 dollars, so basically it was 102 dollars. When we got to Walmart we got our stuff, and we paid and we left.

When we got back to Ms. Tilly's house, we set up the recording equipment. Next we started recording me popping a wheelie and lifting the front of the bike up off the ground. Then I got too high in the air and fell on my head.

My head was bleeding; it was like I died and came back to life. I told Cortez to get his mom, but he wasn't listening to me. I was scared. Then his mom came out and said, "What's going on?" Cortez told his mom what happened. Then she called 911.

At the hospital the doctors were really nice. They asked me if I needed anything. When I got there they put me in this room with a whole bunch of light. I was really scared now. I had to get stitches in the back of my head.

Then my mom came. She was scared. She was asking to see me, but the doctors said they had to examine the back of my head.

A week later I got out of the hospital. After I got better, me and Cortez was not getting along as well because he posted the video on Instagram, and people were making fun of me. I wasn't talking to him because he was laughing at me, but I could have died.

The life lesson of this is to not do things without parent supervision. Now I pop wheelies sometimes, but I take precautions like using my handbrakes. I don't talk to Cortez anymore, and I still have a scar under my hair.

THE GREAT LESSONS

Mikia T.

I was sitting on my living room couch, thinking about the swimming lessons I signed up for, when suddenly my Mom said, “Come on, it’s the first day of your swim lesson practice.”

I was scared that I couldn’t learn, but I was confident that I was teachable. As we got in the car and pulled out the driveway, I started to nervously sweat.

“What’s wrong, why do you look nervous?” Mom said.

“I’m not nervous at all,” I said with a fake smirk.

As we stopped to get some food, Mom said, “Oh, wait I forget you can’t eat and then get in the pool because you can drown. When you get back we can get some food...sorry love.”

When we finally got there and got out of the car, we were walking into Saint Marshalls Recreation Center. When I walked in I was hiding like a turtle’s skin under its shell.

Mom said, “Come on, sweetie pie,” sarcastically.

My swim teacher walked in and said, “Hi Makia, wait... or is it Mikia?”

“My name is Mikia,?” I said.

I followed her to the pool and she said “By the way, my name is Ms. Corey. It’s so nice to meet you.”

I wasn’t really scared anymore. I was just a little shy. So when we got in, she said, “You have to learn how to swim in large bodies of water.” So we went to the eight feet.

I was like, “Ohhh noo.” I ran out of the water so fast, faster than an Olympic runner.

She said, “Wait, come back. You won’t drown.”

I said, “Yes, I will. I can’t even touch the ground!”

“I know, that’s why I’m teaching you how to be a professional.”

I trusted her so I came back. She held me in the eight feet. When she said, “Just go back and relax and kick your tiny legs,” I chuckled a little, but as I went back I thought I was drowning.

“Ahhhhhh, I’m drowning. Helpppp!”

“You’re not drowning, sweetie,” she said, as she laughed heartily.

“Am I doing it?”

“Yes, you are— without me.”

So she taught me a couple more swim lessons.

When I got home, I plopped on my bed. “Huhhh... I had a very long day!”

“Sister, can you play with me?” said my little sister Kiara.

“Not now, I need some rest, Kiara.”

Then she started to cry loudly, “Wahhhhh!”

“Pretender,” I said.

“That’s not even a word,” she says.

“Uhhh... well, I made it up. You’re not a baby anymore. You’re seven years old.” I said, shouting.

“Keep it down. I’m trying to rest,” Mom said.

As I jumped out of my bed, I said, "Yes, I will play with you." I sighed, running out the door.

"Yayyy!" she said.

As she told me everything we're going to play, all I heard was, "Let's go swim."

But what she was really saying was, "Let's go play."

"Oh wait, I forgot to tell mom, I need swim supplies and a new swimsuit."

So I ran upstairs and tripped. "Boom."

My mom said, "What's all that noise for. I'm doing something!"

So when I told her, we went to the store to get the things. Then we came back and I got some rest and was getting ready for tomorrow's new swimming lessons.

Months later I reached my goal and became a good swimmer. learned a lot more things each practice, such as... the mermaid swim, floating backwards, swimming to the bottom and more. Thanks to my swim coach, I'm very good at swimming, and I accomplished something great that can change my life. After we went on break I was starting to think about those great lessons again.

MY BIKE INCIDENT

Nataiya C.

It was 2013, and I was 5—I think—and I was at my Grandma Ann's house. I was very excited because there was a cookout happening the next day. My cousins Myia and Mari was spending a night over at my Grandma's house with me. My cousin Miya was about four at the time, and my cousin Mari was about six at the time. They were excited with me. Soon me and cousins went upstairs and got ready for bed. We were sleeping with my Grandma Ann because at the time that was the only place we could sleep, because our room wasn't ready. My cousin Mari and I were awake until 1:00 but my cousin Myia fell asleep at 12:00.

In the morning me and my cousins took turns taking a bath and getting ready for the cookout. And I was so excited because my Grandma Ann was cooking her Mac N Cheese which I really liked and ate at every cookout our family had. Then I went downstairs with my cousins and ate some breakfast. Then, when I was done, me and my cousins was watching this TV show called "Jessie" and the TV was an old timey TV, but it was big. And then my cousins said, "Do you wanna go outside with us and play ball?"

I said, "Okay."

Then me and my cousins went outside and we saw a bike in my grandma's yard. Then I picked up the bike and went on the sidewalk and started to ride the bike. But the bike was very loose.

Six seconds later I fell off the bike and scraped my arm. I started to cry, and I felt pain. It was a very painful moment for me. My cousins then went inside the house and told my Grandma Ann that I had scraped my arm.

That's when my parents just came from work. Then my parents put a band-aid on my scraped arm. They were not that worried because they knew that I was going to be fine. They hurried into my Grandma's house and gave me a band-aid.

Then my family arrived for the cookout and then my Grandma Ann was done cooking. She had turkey, greens, mashed potatoes, and more stuff that I forgot, but I ate some Mac N Cheese and some bread, because I was very picky with my food when I was younger. Then I was very happy and was not in pain no more.

The lesson that I learned was to make sure the bike is okay. I also learned that even if I fell and got hurt, I know I can get back up and try again.

The Car Crash

Timothy A.

One Friday, when I was seven years old, I was at my house, and my sisters kept screaming like idiotic morons. They were telling me, “Hurry up and get downstairs! We need to go now!” It was me, my mom, Destiny, Raja, and Jasmine. Destiny was 9, Raja was 8, and Jasmine was 6.

I didn't really like my sisters at all, because they are annoying, and they come into my room and bother me.

We were going to go play violin. We all were working on learning to play a gospel song called “Break Every Chain,” and we were all good at the violin, but our classes were separate—boys first, then the girls.

We got in the car, and we were going to the violin building. When we got there, my mom grabbed the wheel tight and turned the van.

Boom! A car hit us directly on. My nose was bleeding. Jasmine's head and ears were bleeding. She was screaming at the top of her lungs. Destiny hit her head and broke the windshield and had a bloody forehead. Raja's arm was spraint and so was mine. My mom was super scared because she thought we were really hurt. At the time she was sad and screaming. The pain we all felt was like we were getting stabbed with one million needles. The pain also felt like a hammer was bashing against our bones. Jasmine bashed her head and her whole ear was bleeding, and Raja twisted her ankle.

We had a grey Chevy 2011 van. The other driver had a 2014 Jeep. He hit a pole first, and then he hit us when we turned. He was drunk and going 50 mph and was not paying attention to the road. He also hurt his arm. Our cars were destroyed and there were 5 ambulances there.

We were checked out by the EMTs—no life threatening injuries. My cousin's older brothers and sisters, and our aunties, uncles, and my dad showed up. He was in shock. He thought that we were really hurt and had very bad injuries. My dad was saying, “Please God, don't let them be hurt, please.”

The man got arrested for drunk driving, and everybody in the violin building helped us.

We got a new car because our car was totaled. Our new car was a 2014 Dodge Caravan black luxury edition. We are super careful to see if something is coming so we will not get in another crash. They did not take anyone to the hospital because there were no serious injuries. The reason I wrote this story is because it is the first car crash I have ever gotten into.

After this experience, I realized that there were a lot of idiots on the road, so we have to be more careful when we are driving. I was happy because no one got hurt, even though Jasmine had an asthma attack during the crash. I was very relieved that my sisters were okay, even though they are annoying.

Make the Right Choices

Savanna J.

One day I woke up. It was a sunny Monday. We didn't have school. My siblings Najah, Nazir and Nevaeh all left. Najah and Nazir went to their auntie's house. Nevaeh went to her mother's house.

I was by myself, and I was bored. My stepmom was pregnant with my baby brother Calvin Jr. I was at home with just Raja (my stepmom) and my dad. We lived down the street from the hair store, Malik's, the drive thru store, and Family Dollar.

I asked my dad, "Since it's just me here, can we do something or go to the store?"

At that time, I had a phone. Since I had a phone, Raja said I could walk to the store down the street. My dad did not approve until Raja convinced him. I was getting ready to walk, and I used my google map because I didn't really know the way. I was walking on Superior, and my dad was talking to me the whole time until I made it to Family Dollar.

I made it to Family Dollar. I bought some gum, chips, juice, and candy with my \$20. My dad asked me if I needed him to talk to me on the phone while I walked back home.

I said, "No, I can try to do it by myself."

I was walking till I stopped at a street close to Superior because there was a car. The black car had tinted windows. The person's window was down a little bit. The person asked me if I needed a ride home. The person in the car sounded like a man. The man had a deep voice. I didn't answer him. I looked around to make sure that he wasn't talking to me, but he was. I stood in fear, and I had to think about what my parents had been telling me since I was young.

"NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS."

I ran past the car down the street to my home. I was scared. When I got home, I was out of breath, and my heart was thumping fast. I told Raja and my dad what had happened. They asked me what I did when he asked me a question. I told them that I ran past the car and went home. They both told me I did a good job.

I was so glad my house was close. It only took me five minutes to get home.

From this, I learned to be safe when walking by myself. When I walk by myself after what happened, I know now to be aware of my surroundings. I barely walk by myself because of all of the dangerous things that happen in Cleveland nowadays. I walk with my siblings or don't walk at all.

THE FIRST DAY OF MY NEW SCHOOL.

Tay'jashana B.

I was 7 years old and it was my first day of school. So I got up and started getting ready for school and I was very scared, because I didn't have no friends at the school.

So I got in the car. And my mom was like, "You ready for school?" So in my head I was like, no, but I didn't want to say no to my mom because I got to go to school on my first day.

And my mom was like, "Do you want something to eat?"

I replied back to my mom and I was like, "Yeah why not?"

So we went to go get something to eat. And while I was eating my food, in my head I was like, I really don't want to go to school.

After school, I went back home. So I was like, "Mom I made some new friends."

My mom was like, "That's good to hear."

I was like, "It really is so." We went to the store and got some candy.

On my second day I was getting to know some more people. And I got kind of used to the school.

The Stairs...

Ta'Jianna H.

I had to be 6 years old. My mom was mopping and we had wood stairs. Me and my sister were daring each other to do crazy tricks and dares. Once my mom took a break, me and my sister were stuck upstairs because our stairs were wet.

My sister dared me to walk down the stairs, so I did, and when I got to the 5th stair I slipped... And my mom was about to take the trash out. She had told us to stay away from the bag because it had sharp objects in it. When I slipped I hit my left knee on the bag. I looked down and it was blood everywhere! I was so terrified that I couldn't cry. My mom came around the corner and screamed so loud it scared me. She lifted me up because I was bleeding so much, called my dad then began wrapping my leg with a towel..

We rushed to the hospital, where they told me I was bleeding too much for my size and age. They rushed me into surgery.

Then the worst happened! My mom screamed again and asked why they were adding stitches.

When I left the next day, the pain really hit. I cried in my sleep and had crutches for almost 2 months. After I was "all" healed up, it was still a gap in my leg that didn't go away until I was about 10. However, that shows you to never follow anyone, not even your siblings .

My First Basketball Game

Zane S.

When I was eleven years old I was playing basketball in my friend Seire's backyard. It was the middle of summer. And it was sunny outside. His backyard has a basketball hoop and the ground has gravel on it. By the hoop there is concrete.

Then he asked me if I wanted to play basketball on a team.

I said, "Yeah."

The next day we went to the Salvation Army's basketball coach and we asked him if we could sign up.

He said, "Sure," and he let us sign up for basketball.

Coach Bell was bald. He yelled a lot and he was tall. When I got there the next day we had to practice. First we had to do 5 laps. Then we had to practice dribbling and shooting. After we got done practicing, I felt tired.

Our first game was on Saturday. I had to sit out the first quarter of the game until the quarter was over or until someone called for a sub.

My team had to wear blue shirts and blue shorts. They gave us our uniforms at the first game. We won the first game and had a couple more wins, and we lost some games too. I liked that we could practice before every game.

And we practiced every Tuesday and Wednesday. I learned that you should work together to accomplish more. I enjoyed playing basketball. And I got better at dribbling and shooting.

ThE dAy I aLmOsT died

Zya S.

One Monday afternoon, I was walking to my grandma's house on the corner of the street. A small blue car was zooming down the corner of the street. I was scared I would get hit. Then, it turned the corner so hard that the car hit the wire gate and the bumper fell off. I was traumatized. I ran home scared. I called my Mom and told her what had happened. I went home after that. Then, I went to bed and fell asleep...

I found myself in the middle of the street. I turned around and there was a car. I closed my eyes and opened them, and there were five cars. I looked around and there were fifteen more cars. Surrounding me, all the people got out of the cars and started to throw glass bottles at each other. I ran past them, trying not to get hit. I looked back to see if they stopped, but they were gone. Everyone disappeared. I turned back around and there was a car speeding at me! I screamed, and then it went black.

After that, I woke up in my bed terrified. It felt real. I called my Mom on the phone and told her what had happened. "Mommy, I had a nightmare."

My mom said, "What happened?"

I said, "I almost got hit by a car."

My mom said, "Are you ok?"

I said, "Yes I'm ok."

I felt happy that my mom knew that I was ok. Then I went downstairs to watch *Toy Story*

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This experience changed me because now I'm afraid of cars, and I try to stay away from them.