

Lions Clubs International Essay Contest
MD-A Winner 2012-13 — *IMAGINE PEACE*

by Alyssa F. Burton, age 11

PEACE THROUGH EYES THAT CAN'T SEE

Being a child who is blind, it is sometimes hard to picture things I can't touch, like a rainbow, clouds and stars. Sometimes it's hard to imagine peace because peace is different in everybody's mind and when people describe it to me they describe different things.

For my Mom, peace is watching a really good movie with no interruptions and relaxing and drinking her diet coke. For my Dad peace is fishing for cod in Newfoundland and getting lots of big fish. For many kids who are being bullied at school, peace would be a day when no one makes fun of them or excludes them from doing things with everyone else.

When I looked up the word 'Peace' in my Braille dictionary it gave me meanings of "Calm and Quiet" and "No War or Violence". When most people talk about peace they probably mean no war or violence. In Canada we don't have to worry so much about war but sometimes I think about kids my own age who have no idea what will happen to them each day when they step outside their house. Peace for them would be no violence, having a place to live, clean water, food, clothes and someone to protect them.

Peace can be possible all across the world if every person did a little to help. One person can influence a lot of people. At school we talked about how it only takes one person to start a big change in the world. Imagine I'm in an extra small box by myself but that box can fit into a little bigger box with my Cross zones group and leader, then that box can fit into the bigger box which is my church. My church box can then fit into my community of Whitby box, which fits into my Province of Ontario box. My Province box can then go into my Country box and then it goes into the biggest box, which is the World Box. So if I start by influencing others in my first box and they also influence others in their boxes we can make anything happen - including peace for the world.

We can create our own Peace by doing things with people you know won't argue with you, or we could try to understand why the others who argue with you are acting differently compared to your other friends.

Peace for me, as a child with no vision, means having no-one exclude me because of my disability. It also means not having people being overprotective of me or bubble wrapping as I call it, and thinking I can't do things just because I can't see.

If we all start influencing people in our own boxes we will no longer have to imagine peace but we will be able to see what peace means to everybody.