

Julie Pace
Clair E. Gale Jr. High
8th grade
Mrs. Kennedy, Teacher

Diversity

Ever since I was a little girl, I have loved looking at paintings of nature. I always find the tiny brush strokes, which eventually make a breath-taking scene, fascinating. When looking at only a small portion of the picture one stroke can seem insignificant, but without it, once you look at the whole picture, there is a huge difference.

We are all like little strokes on the canvas. We're different colors, sizes, and shapes. However, we are all human beings. Every person adds a bit of splash that others can't contribute. This results in a marvelous mixture of race, personality, and culture. The dictionary definition of diversity is differing from one another or unlike. In our culture being unlike everybody else is bad. So in a world of trying to be the same, it's hard to find yourself.

In my school there is a large variety of students and teachers that come from different backgrounds and cultures. We all have different personalities: some prefer to play sports, others have a knack for art, others can effortlessly be friendly to others, and the list goes on and on. And while we have our differences, we all can get along fairly well.

Diversity is a gift. We weren't made to be alike; we were made to be diverse. Only as I have finally made it in to the junior high school have I realized that who I am is important. Just as who the next person over is important too. If we all can learn from the good diversity around us then we can improve our community a little bit at a time. And just as just as every stroke on a painting is important, we are all needed to make the world beautiful.

Keely Lange
PACE Projects
Period 1

Clair E. Coale Jr. High
Mrs. Kennedy, Teacher

How Diversity Improves Our Community

No matter where in this community, we see the evidence of diversity. Every culture, religion, and ethnic group has added something to our community. Whether it be something small, like having a community garden, or something huge, like maintaining a forest. Everyone has the opportunity to put their mark on this community. And no matter which category that mark falls into, it has an impact on someone.

When I was younger, diversity wasn't as apparent as it is now. I didn't notice that someone looked different, or talked different, or acted different. To a five year old, everyone impacts their life. I wish people still acted like they were five years old. Today, people seem to be much quicker to judge others, myself included. But then we realize, once we get to know these people, they improve our community. Every person we see in a single day impacts our lives.

Diversity improves our community in that when a person shows others what they do or practice in their culture, they're sharing something with everyone around them. When we are exposed to these other things, it improves our lives. Sometimes, when we learn something new about someone else's culture, we also learn what we have in common with that person. And when we see that we are alike someone, the fact that we are so different becomes unimportant. This allows relationships to form and lifelong friendships to be made.

Diversity opens doors to new things. If someone shares their thoughts with someone else, an idea could spark and a discovery could be made. Improvements are made every day, and diversity is what fuels those improvements. If we didn't allow cultures, ethnic groups, and beliefs to mix, we would be separated. Everyone would forever be part of a clique. When diversity is embraced, everyone's life is improved.

Benjamin Black, 8th grade
Clair E. Gale Junior High School
745-0117

Mrs. Kennedy, Teacher

How Diversity Improves our Community

Diversity benefits everyone in the community by helping people appreciate differences in other people. Also, it helps people realize similarities, which can lead to friendships and can stop grudges or unintentional shunning of other people from different places, cultures, ethnic groups, colors, etc.

Shunning people that are different is bad because then you do not make friends. For example, last year at school I completely shunned all girls completely and utterly. I tried to remind myself that I had them for friends before, but for some strange reason I could not help it. That year I did not make nor have any friends at all. This year I do not shun people different from me and now I have friends. I am making friends on the cross-country team, whether they are faster or slower, taller or shorter, 7th or 8th grade, boys or girls.

Diversity in the community also affects other parts of our lives, like the food we eat, the quality of our neighborhood, and the activities we participate in. I love the taco truck's food. It is SSOOOOO good. Diversity makes that possible. If all I could eat were American food, then that would be dull. Where I live is dominated by mostly Mormons. I am not Mormon, yet our Mormon neighbors' values, determination, and how much work they put into making the community a better place has left their mark on me and on the community. They have benefited me multiple times, teaching me piano lessons, leading 4-H and inviting me to many other community activities.

Diversity can create friendships. One of my best friends is black and I am white. We are similar in personality but if it had been one hundred years ago when the country was segregated, we might not have been friends because we would be blinded by segregation and our differences rather than our similarities.

I conclude that diversity makes people learn the better parts of people and incorporate it into their lives. I have many instances of this and I am living a better life because of diversity in my school, my community, my country and my world. What if whites and blacks were still segregated? The world would be a different (and worse) place and I would not have one of my best friends.

How Diversity Improves Our Community

By Elna M. Albano, Grade 8, Idaho Virtual Academy, 208-558-7820

Diversity can improve *anyone's* community if you just let it shine. I live in a small resort town, Island Park, which has over twenty social and economical groups that almost anyone can participate in.

One group is the After-School Program which is held at a local church, and you can attend regardless of your religion. I am involved in this wonderful, free gathering every Tuesday where I take art and dance. The After-School Program has really gotten me involved with other kids, both older and younger than myself. They are all wonderful people I am proud to associate with. We are all alike, yet different. Since I have been home schooled all my life, I don't get that much daily social action, so I value this group and all its differences, hopes, ideas, and dreams. And better yet – they all know what it's like to live here in Island Park, with its freezing cold winters and sporadic summers.

Because of my flexible home schooling schedule, I have been able to go to a lot of gatherings in town where I was the only kid. The adults in Island Park are even more diverse than the children! The ability to go to all-adult gatherings has helped me out with the life skill of calmly talking to people who are different than me. I feel that this is important, along with the fact that I have come to be treated as older than I am, as an equal, all because of my speaking and socializing skills that came from spending time with adults.

The Island Park area is definitely not as diverse as some places, at least, not ethnically. Here there are retired couples, working families, and single people. We are Democrats, Republicans, Christians, Latter-Day Saints, non-denominational, tourists, year-rounders, and cabin owners. There are business owners, workers, anglers, stay-at-home moms, realtors, retirees, seasonals, recreationalists, and the list goes on!

The 'different' diversity of my community has made me aware that even if not everyone agrees with each other, even not everyone is the same religion, even if we do different things for a living, we can all live together in peace – our homes and businesses spread out along our 30-mile main street. If we only see a friend once a year at a gas station, we still remain friends.

Our town is very unified, especially during someone's time of need. Recently an Island Park resident needed help with their medical bills. Our town came together and organized a community garage sale. Anyone who had something they didn't want any more could drop it off before the date of the sale, and it would be added to the mix. The sale was a hit, lots of people came, and they raised a good chunk of money to help this person. Now it has become an annual event. The proceeds from the garage sale go into the community fund, where it will be given to people in need. This just shows that when a member of our community needs help, we will jump right together and help out.

I have seen lots of different people come and go since living here for my entire thirteen-year life, and all are interesting. Experiencing this kind of diversity in my hometown makes me a better person because I've gradually learned to accept people for who they are. My best friend is not of my religion, but that does not stop us from having a ball when we are together.

In conclusion, if diversity and culture are allowed to grow and thrive in your town, everyone will be more 'culturally spiced' and the children who grow up in your community will be more tolerant of people who are not the same as them. They will most likely make friends 'in the real world' who may be black, white, Catholic, Jewish, Irish, etc. Who knows? It may be the best friendship they will ever have. In my opinion, no matter what, diversity can never be a bad thing.

How Diversity Affects Our Community

By Amelia Barnish

Amelia Barnish
Clair E. Gale Jr. Jr.
8th Grade
Mrs. Kennedy
Teacher

Diversity is an extremely important aspect of our community. It can mean the state of being diverse, or different. Or, it can mean a point or respect in which things are different. Diversity is important to our community because it gives a variety of businesses, our culture and lastly it makes us unique. If we didn't have diversity, we wouldn't have all of the variety of businesses that we have now.

A lot of these businesses are the plethora of kinds of restaurants. Many of them are based on different cultures. Chinese food, like the panda express. Mexican food, like Taco Bell. Italian, like Olive garden, and many more. The abundance of cultures here also blend into the back round of Idaho.

According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho>, the biggest reported ancestries in Idaho are: German (18.9%), English (18.1%), Irish (10%), American (8.4%), Norwegian (3.6%), and finally Swedish, which is 3.5%. These are only a few of our state's many different ethnicities. These are all small building blocks of Idaho's culture. Also, diversity makes us all unique.

Finally, Idaho has a lot of different kinds of people, which is one of the things that makes Idaho stand out upon other states. If we didn't have a variety, our community wouldn't be as lively. We have many different things to do, things to eat, and some jobs available that wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the diversity. Over all, it is very important to our community.

In conclusion, diversity gives us a variety of businesses, a lot of our culture, and it makes our community unique. It is just simply good for the community in several ways. I'm so glad we have diversity in Idaho.

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Riley Braase
Mrs. Kennedy-8th grade
10/8/09

Clair E. Gale Jr. High

How Diversity Improves our Community

"Diversity: a variety of something such as opinion, color, style, or culture." This is what you will see if you look up diversity in a dictionary, but it's really so much more than that. A community is like a fine food, and the diversity is the recipe. As with fine foods, the more "ingredients" you add to the dish, the better it will become. Though there isn't a cookbook on "diversity flavored community," there are several basic things a strong and diverse community needs.

Step One: Add four heaping cups of people with different opinions or points of view. This will let the people build upon others opinions, creating revised and differentiated ideas. The opinions should include many subjects, the more the merrier. They should be about politics, local government, and religion. Not to mention the smaller, but certainly no less vital subjects of wildlife and forest conservation, food, recreation, arts of all kinds, and hundreds of other important topics for optimal texture of community.

Step Two: Be sure to include at least one solid cup of different ethnicities. (Hint: add a dash of similar ideas to be sure ethnicities don't blend badly) This will create an excellent flavor in the community, as well as create an equal environment without most prejudices for the future community. (A.K.A. children) Another benefit of a multitude of ethnicities will be an almost guaranteed range of ingredients from many different locations, which will create a first-class aroma to the community.

Step Three: Incorporate a good three cups of mixed culture. Make certain that you have old, new, strange, and imported culture. Not only will this create opportunities for recreational displays of culture that will add further to the texture of the community, but it will also allow for blending of culture, creating a brand new and delicious flavor of community. If you don't complete this step, the recipe will be near useless, for none of the right blending of flavors can occur without a large bit of culture.

Step Four: Blend well, making sure all ingredients come in contact. Use public schools, social events, and recreational events to quicken stirring process. After mix is smooth, bake in oven at low temperature until golden brown. Note: this will take different amounts of time, depending on the immediate compatibility of ingredients. Remember, the extra time is always worth it for a high quality community.

Caleb Child
8th grade
Clair E. Gale Jr. High
Mrs. Kennedy / Teach

"How Diversity Improves Our Community"

By: Caleb Coleman Child

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to accompany my grandparents as they serve residents of an assisted living center. On a few occasions I have also had the opportunity to visit with residents at a care facility in Idaho Falls. It has been a privilege to perform for them and to serve them as well. To help them come to the multi purpose room, or to take them back to their rooms. I love to hear them visit with one another, or light up when family or someone familiar comes to visit. One that stands out in my mind is a sweet "classic" lady that seems to have a magnetic power that makes others want to surround her. She has an accent and it is obvious that she was not born in America, but has a love for her surroundings and those who care and comfort her. It is at locations like these, in our communities, that I have become aware of what a unique and "diverse" people hang out there. To be able to help people that would have helped me just a few years earlier is almost a humbling experience. They have so much to offer us, if we would just listen. To think that people exclude individuals because of race, religion, age or that they just are different from ourselves, teaches me that we might need to look at things differently.

One of my teachers at Clair E. Gale has a poster that instantly drew my eye at the beginning of school. I looked and liked it because I had the opportunity last year to write in this essay contest and it taught me some great things. The poster says, "Diversity creates dimension in our own world". It has a bunch of butterflies all over it. Each butterfly is different. We are just like those butterflies. We have all come from the same place. Yet each of us has landed and been influenced by our environment. Does that make us completely different from different countries? No, this just gives us a better picture of how good we have it, if we would just learn to accept differences and learn from those that may be different. I called the sweet lady a "classic", because to me a classic is something of value. Something you take care of and want to keep. In fact, it is a masterpiece. Thank goodness for a world that has dimension. It adds to our lives and our communities and makes it a better place to live.