

2018 Girl Power Winning Entries

Adult First Place Winner: Ruth M. Hunt

Watch Me

I was told I couldn't shoot a rifle because I was a girl. *[I placed 2nd in the National Junior Olympics at the age of 15 after only one year of training].*

I was told I shouldn't be a Soldier because I am a daughter. *[I'm currently still serving; over 17 years; at the second to highest enlisted rank that can be achieved].*

I was told I shouldn't marry a Soldier unless I wanted to live in heartbreak. *[We have been happily married over 15 years and still going strong].*

I was told I shouldn't be a mother because I am a Soldier. *[I have three beautiful, loved, thriving children with the understanding they can be whatever they want when they grow up].*

I was told I couldn't run that fast, climb that wall, or lift that person because I am a short female. *[I did it all and still can].*

I was told I shouldn't be a leader because being a female doesn't prepare me to make the difficult, quick, and decisive decisions. *[I was awarded a bronze star for running 24/7 operations covering six different regions in Afghanistan while coordinating over 1,800 safe air and ground movements of troops and equipment].*

I was told I'd never complete school while being a full time working mother. *[I completed Associate's, Bachelor's, and finishing up my Master's just in time for retirement].*

I was told my writing was a nice hobby, but I'd never get published. *[First publication was February 9, 2015].*

Now I'm being told the U.S. still isn't ready for a female president. *[I make it my personal goal to demonstrate to my daughters that no one can hold them back].*

All I have left to say is:

“Watch me.”

Adult Honorable Mention: Katie Oakes

Emily's Chinese name means tranquil moon,
and she twinkles like a star.

There are a million things that make her special:
The sound of her giggles when her cat plops down
unexpectedly
in her lap.

The way she still sucks her thumb
through the gap in her front teeth
when her dad reads a story.

Her proclivity for late nights and outdoor adventures.

Her love of the color blue
and the taste of Werther's Originals
and the smell of her mom.

And Emily's killer guacamole recipe.

But what makes her presidential is her character,
the person she is
whether people are watching or not.

Her kindness.

Emily agonizes over which friend to share rewards with
because she takes her greatest pleasure
in making others
feel special.

She reads emotions like others read books,
and her empathy is deep
and warm
and sincere.

She even shares her egg rolls with her big brother.

Her bravery.

Adopted from China at three and a half,
Emily moved across the world
and learned to trust and love
a new family.

Diagnosed with scoliosis,
she has endured spinal surgery and casts and
has confidently embraced
the curvy road
to a straighter back.

Her optimism.

Emily has 365 good days a year.

She sees the world as an endless stream of possibilities
without limitations.

She plays piano proudly, her little feet dangling a foot above the floor.

She loves cheetahs and identifies with The Flash

and refuses to be slowed down by a back brace.
Her favorite way to spend an afternoon is holding her stuffed animals
one at a time
and telling us what she likes best about each of them.

Because for Emily, there is something to love
about everyone.
There is always something to be happy about.
Bravery always trumps fear.
And there is always, always time for kindness.

And despite her age
And her country of birth
I can think of no one who better exemplifies
what the Office of the Presidency should embody.
So, I will wait until she is 35
and until a constitutional amendment is passed
and I will cast a vote for
my daughter.
She promised I could come with her to the White House.



High School First Place Winner: Keira DiGaetano

Constitution

The first female president treasures her voice, holding it close to her like the spare change that makes the difference between a train ticket and a chocolate milkshake. She chose the rally.

The first female president has felt the sticky ache of censorship, taped ears to shield her from fear, taped eyes to keep her in darkness, a mouth sealed shut by layers of doubt.

She remembers that the pain of a band-aid is a reminder of the choice to heal. The first female president builds herself a garden of books.

Look here, the archway of the curious old fairy tale, the swing held up by too many ripped textbooks.

The first female president respects history enough to tell her own story.

She is waiting in the wings to stretch herself out into a human that understands the pain of first impressions.

The first female president lets her tongue build picket signs, each syllable a decree of cracked marble and melting seals.

The first female president cranes her neck to hear the back row.

She hushes in the library, keeps track of robins' cries in the wind.

The first female president knows the value of silence because she could scream all day if she wanted to. She has earned her voice, but knows when not to use it.

High School Honorable Mention: Lancia Faith Kear

She Is Change

Dreams dreamt are made her reality,

never deterred when exposed to many tragedies

She is her push and shoves when times are rough,

No defined by her color, not defined by her gender,

she becomes her own label

To the world and her country she brings power to the people facing struggles for today,

taking pain away and healing the problems of yesterday

They don't want her powerful but to be powerless

Afraid of change they tell her "know your place and play your role",

but she stands even when she has to stand alone

Shifting gears she takes hold of the opportunities and sets her expectations high,

showing others she expects nothing less but the very best

When given the chance she steps out of her comfort zone and she sets the tone to make the

impossible possible

She makes dreams come true helping other see the world in a different point of view

She can be anybody, even the President when given the chance to make change happen

Middle School Winner: Daviana Marcus

We have made a name for ourselves

we are the land where all are equal,

the land where wrongs are righted

and everyone is represented.

We have lived for 200 years

Power passing peacefully

Each president sets a precedent

for the next president. 45 on that list now,

Voted in and sworn in.

Some look at the list and see nothing wrong

Others see a need to protest, to stand up and fight

But all I can ask is why and how

Why have we never had any Hispanic presidents?

Or Jewish presidents?

Or Muslim presidents?

Or Asian presidents?

Or Native American presidents?

Or LGBTQ+ presidents?

But most of all, why Have we not had any women presidents?

How do we pledge each day?

For "liberty and justice for all"

It isn't just that

our presidents don't represent that "all"

they only represent men.

How do we let this happen?

When the very foundation of our country

is built off of equality.

How does it still find a way to happen?

Why do we need to picket

just to vote,

And protest some more

for even a running chance to win.

So many questions come to my mind

But the real one we should be asking is:

What can we do about it?

How can we change it?

I'm not sure I know the answer

But maybe I can find someone who does

And if they don't know either,

I'll keep looking

and wondering

Because we all have a voice

And if all of us look

and notice

and wonder

and speak,

Whether it be writing an essay or a poem

drawing it

singing it

saying it,

To ourselves and to the world;

If even one person speaks

It will ripple like a stone thrown into a quiet pond

Change will happen—

But we can't stop

We can't stop looking

And we can't stop questioning

We must be strong

And show the world what we see

Middle School Honorable Mention: Obse Abebe

A Puzzle of White, Red, and Blue

A piece of a game.
A token of time.
Two differences made the same.

She curled her lip,
a frown of distaste,
and put hands on her hips.

Piecing it together,
she couldn't understand,
why it was no longer tethered.

She sighed once more,
frustration throbbing in her bones,
and willed her mind to explore.

Eyes raking over the colors,
each one another hue,
she began to discover.

The white bore the purity of a nation.
The people it has liberated.
A democracy of its own creation.

The color of a strong civilization.
Wars fought to protect rights.
Lives lost in honor to create salvation.

Her frown deepened,
skepticism tumbled through,
she knew it had weakened.

Shifting to the red,
continuing her search,
her mind began to spread.

The red held truth.
Honest and cruel.
A rough past yet to be smooth.

It held the pain of refugees denied,
the pain of a violated female,
the pain of one's skin color determining how they died.

She blinked tears away,
the ire of her ancestors seething within,
and kept her agony at bay.

From the corner of her eye she saw something new,
turning toward its direction,
she studied the blue.

The blue contained a promise to be reckoned with,
to both the past and the future,
it was no longer a myth.

A color portraying the change that needs to occur,
lives that need to be saved,
a brighter future starting with her.

Hands quivering she began to understand,
and fell into a rhythm of movement,
connecting historical pieces both forgotten and grand.

The pieces were more than parts of a game,
each represented the puzzle of society,
and the last one bore her name.

It was a dark shard of wood,
holding position at the center of the puzzle,
connecting with other pieces as it proudly stood.

She could hear it purring to her,
whispering the true power words held,
pleading her inner female to stir.

She knew what slumbered within her soul,
knew the oppression and submission it endured,
and knew her spirit could make a broken people whole.

Feeling no fear,
only waves of adrenaline coursing within,
an empowerment urged her to steer.

Glancing again at the unethical truths she was back on her feet,
her brothers and sisters dead from hateful prejudice,
she knew the atrocities she must beat.

Mind cleaving through bitter politics,
her heart reached for justice,
and her words advocated against society's tricks.

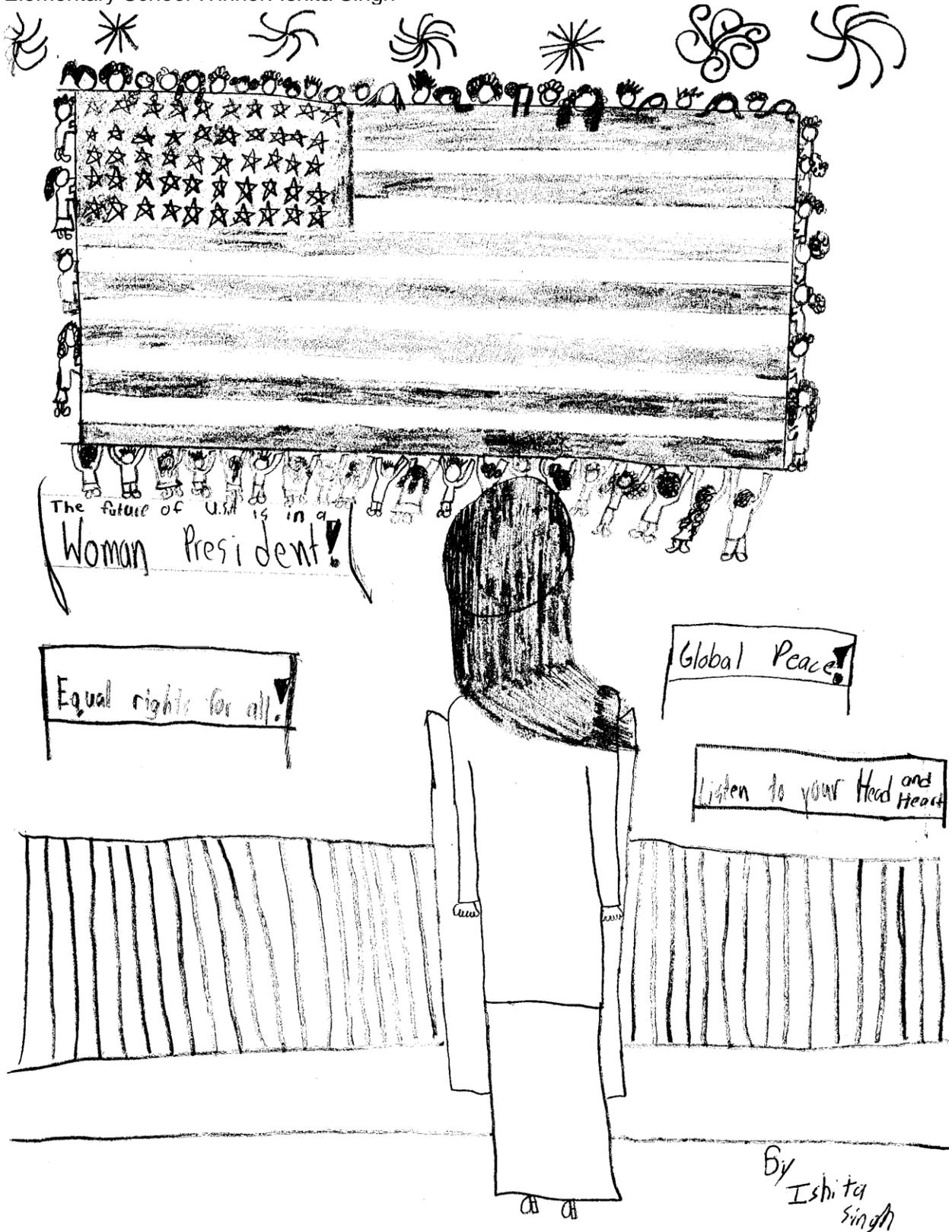
Compared to previous leaders her anatomy may be different,
and her skin sun-kissed to reflect diversity,
but her motives were not indifferent.

She would fight for women and men alike,
for races and religions of difference,

and she would push for change with the determination to strike.

The naive girl who started this game as a U.S. resident,
now knew the worth of our human race,
for she pushed in the last wooden shard fighting to become the female U.S. President.

Elementary School Winner: Ishita Singh



If I am the president

I want to be the president of U.S.A.

My parents say I can be president only when I am 35 years old. I have to be responsible and do social work.

I tell my mom that I am very responsible.

This picture describes me as the U.S.A president. I have all the character traits of a good president and to represent the people of U.S.A. Besides

I'm also caring, helpful, intelligent, and confident.

I have the ability to speak up for others.

Like Martin Luther king, I have a dream to help others.

The flag of U.S.A will be held high by everyone as there will be one country. There will be fair laws, equality, good schools, and no shooting anywhere.

If I am president, I will work like Malala for education and global peace. I will do work to make our Earth clean. When I was in first grade, I never play in recess time but I

picked up trash from our school field. Then, my

recess teacher saw me and appreciate me.
Soon other kids started helping me. It
was fun!

The president is like a super person and can
do anything. When I become president, there
will be happiness everywhere with colorful fireworks
in the bright sky. I will be super girl
hero president of U.S.A helping everyone
and solving problems.

Elementary Honorable Mention: Jemmie Pollack

Woman for President
By Jemmie Pollack

Susan B. Anthony could have been the first,
For knowledge she did thirst.

Is gender inequality to blame?
Woman and men don't get paid the same.

Only twenty percent of Congress is women,
But Margaret Thatcher was prime minister in England.

Hilary Clinton got the popular vote,
But the other candidate got to gloat.

There are only female governors in six states,
Longer and longer a female waits.

Susan B. Anthony fought for social equality and against slavery,
Women stand up for themselves which shows real bravery!

A woman president would change the county.
We need justice and fairness, how elementary.