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“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, quality and freedom for their spirit. I believe that what self-centered [persons] have torn down, other-centered [persons] can build up.”  
– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I believe that what Dr. King was saying in his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech was that every person deserves to have an education. All people should be looked at and treated the same as everyone else and should get the chance to experience freedom.

The last line in his speech means a lot to me because my sister has cerebral palsy. Because of this, I have been raised to accept everyone for who he or she is. I know that God created everyone in His image and to be unique; so when I see someone who looks different than me, rather than staring like most do, I just smile and continue on my way. Showing respect is one way I can help change the view of the world.

When people meet my sister for the first time, they usually ask me what’s wrong with her. I answer with, “There’s nothing wrong with her.” I think our schools should better educate us about different disabilities and things people might have. If it is better understood, people would be more accepted amongst others and everyone would have a better quality of life.

This past summer I volunteered at a local school that focuses on children with mental and/or physical disabilities. There, an education is provided to those students who might otherwise not be able to experience a public school setting. Everyone is treated with dignity and respect, if only the rest of the world was like that. I got to help in feeding them as well as helping with their specific activities. By having the opportunity to work with these kids I learned that nothing is impossible; change can happen, an effort just needs to be given. I believe society can be changed if an effort is truly made.

I also volunteer with Challenger baseball; this is a baseball league in which kids with disabilities play. The thing I most enjoy about this is that it gives everyone a chance to have fun; it gives them a freedom they don’t get anywhere else. Everyone gets a turn to bat, there are no strikes or outs; everyone always runs, or wheels home. No score is kept; it is played just for the love of the game. By playing baseball the lesson teamwork is learned and they know that to get something done, you have to work together.

I believe that if everyone works together we can make this a more tolerating society. I would love to be a part in making Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream come true.

