

Third Place Winner
Division I – 7-9th Grades
Small Acts Can Make a Big Difference
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There she stood, with a gun to her head, fearing for her life, and for the life of the family in her attic. In 1942, the treatment of Jews in Holland rapidly begins to worsen. Otto Frank informs Miep Gies that he and his family are going into hiding. Although Miep knows what the punishments are for hiding a Jewish family, she immediately offers her help. She shows Margot Frank the Secret Annex, which was where the Franks were going to hide. Later in the day, on July 5th, Margot sneaks the rest of the Franks into the annex, and they were later joined the Van Pels.

For two years, Miep brings food and water to the two families as well as news from the outside. Sadly, on August 4th, 1944, Dutch and German officers raid the annex and arrested the hidden families. Miep rushes back to her house, trying to find anything that can help her bribe the officers into releasing her friends. When she returns to the annex with jewelry in her hands, one of the officers grabbed her and placed a gun right next to her temple. Miep pleaded for the officers to let her and the Franks go, but to no avail. Thankfully, one of the officers recognized her Austrian accent and agreed to let her go. The dismal end to this story is that the Franks and the Van Pels were still arrested and sent to the concentration camp called Bergen-Belsen. But we will never forget the courage that Miep Gies showed as she broke the law to save the Franks and the Van Pels.

I admire Miep Gies' courage because that is something that I have never had. I have never stood up to someone or for someone. I regret this deeply because there are so many problems that are in this world. One of the main things that I have never stood up for is hate crimes all around the world. Hate crimes are crimes committed against a person according to their race, religion and/or their disability. Hate crimes are a very sensitive topic for me because it is just horrible what some people will do to achieve supremacy over others. Last year, I had a friend who was African American, but everyone teased her for her skin color and they were calling her a terrorist. Every day at school, my friend would come up to me bawling and talking about what the bullies had done this time. She was always cutting herself and she was so close to suicide. Thankfully, she got the care she needed. I was there to support her but I never stood up to the people who were hurting her. I didn't stand up to the bullies because I was too scared of what they would do to me. I regret this very much. I want to abolish hate crimes, so no one has to go through what my friend did.

I signed a petition to help the abolition of hate crimes. According to Partners Against Hate, 10% of hate crimes happen at different schools, 19% took place on roads, highways, and in the street, 29% in or near residential areas, and another 26% are spread out around different locations. Once I signed this petition, I distributed the link to it throughout social media and I will even distribute it throughout my own neighborhood. I want to take action for the horrible acts that happen in America and other parts of the world. Miep Gies has taught me to always stand up for what is right, even though the consequences may be severe.

Miep Gies didn't even stop to think that taking in these Jewish families would cost her life, but even then, she still hid them from the Nazis. Everyone lives in constant fear of what is to come in the world that we live in. The Holocaust happened because of one big hate crime towards someone's race

and religion. If we help abolish hate crimes everywhere, starting in our schools and community, then we may be able to make the world a better place and stop another Holocaust from happening. Miep Gies has made me become a better person. A person that can stand up for others when they are being bullied, and a person who stands up for what is right. Miep Gies has taught me to always be kind, welcoming, and brave in dire situations.

Miep's bravery to save the Frank family has really had an impact on me not only because she made me want to help others the way she helped the Franks and Van Pels, but her story also made me believe that I can be brave. Miep was very brave when she could have been killed, and she was very strong in those tough moments. I want to be braver and I want to help others even in the face of danger. If someone had the courage to help my friend, things would have turned out very differently. If someone stood up to the bullies and helped her when she was hurting, things would have been better for her. Everyone needs a little moral courage, even if it just doing something small, for even small acts can make a big difference.

Bibliography

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