

First Place Winner
Division II– 10-12th Grades
Change in Society
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“Black people deserve to live with dignity. That we were (and still are) sick and tired of being gunned down in the streets by police and vigilantes at the rate of once every 28 hours, simply because we’re black.” stated Alicia Garza. She is an American civil rights activist and writer who is the co- founder of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Garza fought and is still fighting for black people. She set a great example toward equality. Everyone should be treated with respect and no one should be miss treated due to the color of one's skin. Alicia shows moral courage by starting the Black Lives Matter movement and by talking about what a typical African American human goes through daily while living in the United States. The lesson I have learned by her actions is to always stand up for people.

Alicia Garza helped get the Black Lives Matter movement out there by sharing a Facebook post. In the article “Black Lives Matter ‘Leadership Today Doesn't Look Like Martin Luther King’” it states that Alicia said “Black people. I love you. I love us. We matter.” After, her friend Patrisse Cullors shared the post with the hashtag BlackLivesMatter. Another friend by the name of Opal Tometi was one to design the “blacklivesmatter.com” website. Opal also promoted the campaign on multiple platforms. Garza’s Facebook post is where it all began. After Garza posted her movement people started to use the hashtag “BLM” even though people were fighting over whether or not the phrase should even be said out loud. It’s crazy what Alicia and her friends were able to accomplish. Before they knew it their hashtag was a trend on Instagram. Their intention was not to create a trending hashtag it was to create a movement that provided change. Alicia was the first to spark everything and is the reason why people now use #BLM all over social media.

Black people get treated differently than others do on a daily basis. This to me isn't right or fair. I believe everyone should be treated equally because we are all human beings. In the article “Black love- Resistance and Liberation” by Alicia Garza she states “Black people get messages every day that we are not enough, that we are somehow deficient or dysfunctional. We are told that we are criminals, that our rightful is somehow violent.” I don’t understand why people treat others this way. I often ask myself why people have to be so heartless towards each other. I am aware that black people have to deal with racism almost every day of their lives because there are crewel people in this world that like to bash people for their appearance. People shouldn’t be told that they are criminals, that they are dysfunctional, nor should they be gunned down by police because of their skin color. Here are some of the names of black people that have been killed: George Floyd, Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Amadou Diallo, Aiyana Stanley Jones, Renisha McBride, Sandra Bland, and many more. The sad thing is that the names listed are

people who were killed a few years prior to the most recent and most talked about story on the death of George Floyd. Floyd was murdered by a police officer on May 25th of 2020 and it was all caught on cameras. His death made a lot of people of different races feel a bit of what an African American human being goes through and how police brutality affects their daily lives. People often shared their opinions with Alicia and suggested she change her slogan to “All Lives Matter” or to “Black Lives Matter Too” to get more people involved. Outsiders often complained that “BLM” sounded “threatening.” However, if Alicia would have changed her slogan the Black Lives Matter movement probably wouldn't have gotten known and out there to the public.

Alicia Garza has inspired a lot of people to always stand up for others and with her determination and drive to do so, change will slowly occur. Garza will continue to fight for people no matter what. She fights for her beliefs, and for what she thinks is right. Her purpose in life is to make a change and difference in the world. Garza has inspired me to stand up for people and to fight for them as well. I am Mexican and even though racism towards Latinos is not often talked about it occurs every day. Mexicans get told that we are here in the United States to “steal others' jobs” but in reality, all Mexicans come to the U.S looking for a better lifestyle for their families. I won't hold back, and I will fight for our rights and my people because that is what Alicia Garza has inspired me to do.

Alicia Garza fought and accomplished her goal for the past seven years. Her goal was to get the Black Lives Matter movement known and out there to make change in society and that's exactly what happened. Unfortunately, Alicia stepped away from the movement because she is not interested in being the face of the movement anymore. Being in the spotlight was too much for Garza. Garza just wanted to make a change not bring attention to herself. Alicia Garza has inspired people to speak their beliefs and thoughts to fight for their rights. Do you want to make a change like Alicia Garza? Act now to make even a bigger change!!