

Second Place Winner
Division II – 10-12th Grades
Daylight
by Kimberly O.
Monte del Sol Charter School, Sante Fe, NM

Death, do we truly understand its meaning? Is it just a human life that leaves our world or is it something else? All human beings are the same underneath, but some ignorant people do not comprehend this. Our bodies are built to adapt to distinct circumstances that sometimes are put in our paths. We live in a community of diversity where differences sustain us. Scott Warren has seen what death is through a humanitarian organization called “No Mas Muertes”(No More Deaths.) Warren indeed has moral courage, where he takes decisions from his heart.

Scott Warren is a geographer who works for an organization called “No Mas Muertes ” which involves humanitarian aid support. This organization mainly lies in Ajo, Arizona, a tiny border town. Arizona is completely desert; therefore many immigrants cross through there. Warren helped develop a network that provides water and medical aid for immigrants. Therefore, they leave this aid support in certain areas of the desert for immigrants.

People immigrate for different reasons either because of persecution or improving their living conditions. Everyone has a story to tell. We all deserve to share our stories because it is destined for a life to leave something behind. Every life lives different experiences that affect them in distinct ways. The experience of immigration changes people. Immigrants begin to value their life more since there are many risks when they take the decision of emigrating to another country. Some of these risks are leaving behind their families and entering to a completely different country where they don’t know what to expect.

Warren is one of the many people who go out into the desert and search for corpses of human beings. Many of these bodies die of dehydration and exposure to the desert. These human bodies acknowledge humanity and open Warren's eyes to take action on borderlands. Why are people dying? Why hasn’t the government done anything? Well, there is a policy that the U.S. government called “Prevention Through Deterrence” which is a strategy used by the Border Patrol to disorient groups of people crossing. This policy was declared by President Clinton in the 1990’s phrasing that the country, “must stand firm against illegal immigration and smugglers who exploit and trade in human hopes and dreams”. (Edwards 6) Therefore it increased the USBP and federal immigration agencies budgets and it extended beyond manpower. It weaponized the land by causing people to weaken and eventually die, leaving behind their stories in the daylight. Border Patrol began to destroy thousands of gallons of water and medical aid left for migrants. “No Mas Muertes” had to take action, so they publicized this offense. As a result, Warren faced the consequences by getting arrested and charged with harboring, specifically a criminal complaint about giving water to male undocumented immigrants. This shows how he uses his moral courage to help people he does not know and risks his personal life.

Another unbelievable action is when citizen militias go to the border and hunt immigrants, yes literally hunt them. This makes me feel angry because I cannot believe what

human beings are capable of. Immigrant people are no different from you and me, they are not a distinct species or some sort of prey; they are human beings! The community of Arizona doesn't want more deaths in their land. They support "No Mas Muertes" in what they do and want to prevent deaths.

Some of my relatives are immigrants and have told me unbelievable stories of how they crossed from Mexico to the US. My mom is an immigrant and I cannot imagine her death in this way. I have seen and lived the struggle with my mom trying to adapt to a new place and language. As she phrases, "al no saber el idioma, ni siquiera saber contar el dinero y tener que vivir con personas que no son tu familia es algo muy duro"(not knowing the language or to even count the money and have to live with people who are not your family is something very hard). There were hard times when we didn't even have food to eat, but we lived every day and reached better times in life. I appreciate everything my mom did to give me a better future and a better life.

In conclusion, do we truly understand existence now? Are we going to understand existence, is it the true meaning of life? The world we live in is something tough to understand because we compose it and make it how we want. We complain about all the disasters happening, not only the social ones but the environmental ones as well, knowing that we play a role in it. Every human being matters no matter where they are from. Strength and moral courage are the sentiments that will walk us through change. True actions like Warren's are the ones with the most value since they create impact and change the world. Make decisions that come from your heart.