

Mrs. Melania Trump,

I want to let you know that I am a normal middle-schooler who wants to see change. I haven't experienced trauma, I have not had a life-changing event, not very many people know my name or have even heard of me. But I do want to see a difference made, and I feel that you should know that everyday people like myself are working to change this amazing country that we share.

I am writing to you today to inform you of the efforts I am taking to advance the quality of my community. I am the Oregon Student State Representative for Be Strong, the nation's largest non-profit, bullying prevention organization. We strive to make a difference in people and places all over our wonderful country.

20.2% of students in grades nine through twelve have been bullied on school property. 29.9% of students felt sad or helpless almost every day, for two or more weeks. 17.7% of students have seriously considered attempting suicide and 8.6% of students have attempted suicide one or more times in the past year. I am not proud of these statistics. They don't even cover all of the United States, much less the world as a whole. My fellow be strong representatives and I are constantly looking for ways to eliminate the some of the hate in this increasingly dark world.

One way I have tried to benefit the places around me is through my school. I work with a committee I have helped organize called the Empowerment Committee. Our goal is to give motivation to those around us who are struggling just to smile every day. It is a student-led way to be involved in our community. We attempt to remind people of the worth of kindness, along with teaching others what hate can do, and how we can be strong when bullying comes our way. We know we cannot get rid of hate completely, as there will always be rude, selfish, and insensitive people in our world, but we can teach people how to be hate-resistant. I hope to continue to develop this group of students by not only keeping it at my middle school, but starting it in my high school and other communities. Kindness should not be something we talk about and acknowledge in just elementary school. It should be something we are constantly reminded of, all throughout our lives.

As a growing activist, I believe anyone has the power to make a change, even those who are small, in rough situation, who have disabilities. Those who blend in with the crowd, people who sit in the corner waiting for life to pass by. People who should be respected but are often not, and those who are often overlooked. Anyone has the ability to change themselves and others. Anyone can be the difference, and anyone can choose to be kind.

The goal of depleting "meanness" as a whole is nearly impossible, but the goal of helping our nation, as well as its citizens, can be conquered one step at a time. I firmly believe that we have the power to make a better tomorrow, a better nation, and a better world.

Thank You For Your Time,

Briona Grover

Be Strong State Rep of Oregon
Empowerment Committee Head
Teen Activist