

Celebrating Youth

上海市世界外国语中学
2014届学生英语作文集



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Preface

“Age is foolish and forgetful when it underestimates youth.”

J. K. ROWLING,

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

People all over the world, regardless of race, religion or creed all seem to attach great importance to the celebration of youth. In fact, in many countries, over most of the world, Children’s Day or some other similar day of a different name is set aside for the express purpose of showing how much we as a society value and cherish our youth. Elaborate events and festivities are planned, people of all ages participate, and everyone extols the seemingly unquestionable importance of “youth.”

But, what is so important about youth, and why should we celebrate it in the first place?

The most common answer is the one we hear any parent, teacher and even politician exclaim without any hesitation when asked — Young people are our future! Now, while on the surface this seems glaringly obvious, I find myself asking what exactly do we all mean by these words we seem to utter so reflexively!

While I have so many fond memories growing up, I remember back in my school days, I always worried about what other people thought of me, insecure of how I looked, dressed and acted, overwhelmed with homework and rules that seemed to be forced upon me by my parents, my teachers and all the other adults in my life. As I was growing up, I truly couldn’t wait to finish school, become an adult, get a job and get out into the real world — basically, I couldn’t wait to cast off my youth and grow up! And, curiously, I remember most of my friends feeling the same!

Perhaps it’s one of life’s ironies that when we are young many of us can’t wait to leave our youth



behind, yet as adults, most of us end up longing for the days of our long gone youth.

It's funny, but I remember one day back in Canada when I was young. We were in the middle of a huge snowstorm and all the streets were blanketed in several feet of snow. I remember my mum and dad complaining about having to dig the car out of the snow, fearful of driving on the icy slick streets to work, whining about the cold, about the terrible storm they were forced to suffer. Although, I still so clearly till today remember the look my brother and I gave each other at the time; we both couldn't wait to get out there in their "terrible" storm, we couldn't wait to climb that towering mountain of snow left over by the street cleaners on the side of the road, we couldn't wait to lie down and make angel impressions in the powdery white snow, and being boys, we especially couldn't wait to pelt each other with snowballs!

So, now when I think about why we celebrate youth, I realize it's because it's our youth that sees our problems as games, as fun to be had, whereas adults often only see burdens to bear, realities to accept and live with. It's our youth that sees the potential for angels where we adults see only obstacles.

The world today faces some of its greatest challenges, with economies in turmoil all over the world, environmental catastrophe looming, war, poverty, inequality and suffering, this is the world we adults have created and seem unable to change. While it's our youth, who are left to pick up the pieces of the mess we've made. If the youth truly are our future, then it begs the question, what kind of future do we wish to leave them exactly?

We adults tend to so easily dismiss the ideas put forth by our youth as being naïve, innocent and unrealistic. As a teacher, I have at times fallen prey to this "grown up" thinking myself! However, unburdened by experience, unfettered by the realities of the world, and armed with an idealism often only found in innocence, it is in fact our youth that offer us the best chance we have of overcoming the challenges we all face, of creating the "ideal" world we all truly wish to live in.

So, to finish off where I began — Why DO we all believe in celebrating youth?

Well, in the end, I can answer only for myself...



For me, when I am asked why I became a teacher, I realize now that it is because of the unbound potential I see in my kids, the dreams they foster in their hearts, their unbridled youthful spirit, and their unwavering optimism towards life, all of which give me hope, all of which make me too long for the days of my youth!

Put simply, without even realizing it at the time, I became a teacher because I chose to celebrate youth!

Kirk Dane Fernandes



Acknowledgements

Celebrating Youth, with all our anticipation and thrill, is published. Celebrating Youth is a reflection of four years at World Foreign Language Middle School. Beneath all the fancy words, it is a time to be thankful for the help received from this beloved school, the positive attitude established towards the future and it is a time to show the gratitude deeply felt within their hearts.

First and foremost, a deep appreciation for every one of the students who filled these pages with words from the bottom of your hearts. It's a privilege to witness your growth in WFLMS.

Officials at World Foreign Language Middle School provided invaluable support along the way, cooperating with the publishers in the design of the book and sorting out pictures for its publication.

Teachers in the ninth grade English Department, with their sensitive eyes and patient minds, spent nearly the entire semester selecting and revising students' works. The dedication and devotion shall be honored.

Mr. Kirk Fernandes helped a great deal in perfecting Celebrating Youth and writing a preface for this wonderful book. These paragraphs are now of authentic English expressions thanks to him. Our indebtedness to Mr. Kirk Fernandes and the students is beyond words.

There are other people besides those already mentioned here who devoted themselves to the production of Celebrating Youth. The finest acknowledgements are meant to all of them.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery once depicted a little character that is now familiar to lots of people,



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the Little Prince. Here presents an excerpt from The Little Prince, with a few alterations, for every alumnus:

In one of the stars we shall be living.

In one of them we shall be laughing.

And we'll sometimes open Celebrating Youth, so, for that pleasure.

Written by An Qi ,
in the name of the editing team





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