

2024 Elie Wiesel Competition

2nd Place Junior Essay

William McBride, 7th Grade

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Our Recipe Book

An artifact that has significant importance to me, and my family, is our cherished recipe book. This book has many recipes that have been passed down from my Great Grandparents to my parents. We use this every day to find a meal we want to make for dinner or for a special dessert like my Great Grandmother's scrumptious chocolate chip cookies. Her cookies are the best and it feels like a warm hug from her when you are enjoying them with a glass of cold milk.

If our recipe book was stolen and returned to my family and I, we would be incredibly grateful and thank the person who returned it. We would be able to make important meals that unite us as a family. But, if the recipe book were never returned, our family could never recover every recipe since it has been passed down and added to for generations by both my parents. We would have to try to piece together some of the recipes from other family members. All these recipes have many substantial memories attached to them. From nightly dinners where we sit down and discuss our day, to special occasions like birthdays and Christmas. When we make the various recipes it reminds us of our family members, many who are sadly no longer here. This artifact helps us feel close to them again.

Often when cooking, all of us supply a talent since we all enjoy the fruits of our labor. We make many of our meals on certain occasions. For example, my mom always cooks Chili on Halloween and both of my grandmothers have contributed to the tradition. One has the recipe that has won many awards, and the other passed down her Chili pot. She used to love cooking it on snowfall, wintery days. My favorite distinct memory is eating a warm bowl of chili after trick or treating and watching *Its The Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown*.

During the summer we eat a lot of dishes with tomatoes, vegetables, and herbs grown in our garden. My most beloved recipe is marinara sauce by my dad. My Great Grandad grew up on a farm in Georgia and always planted tomatoes every Summer; they were his favorite. He brought that tradition to Virginia when he moved here as a young man. When he fed my Granny those tomatoes, she loved them as well. She taught my dad how to grow them, which is when he produced a sauce recipe because heirloom tomatoes are his absolute favorite too. His tomatoes are renowned! I never had the chance to meet my great-granddad because he passed away when my dad was a teenager; this makes me feel close to him, though. The garden tomatoes pair perfectly with Italian dishes that are in our family recipe book. I always help my dad plant our garden and make meals with our harvest; it is like taking a bite out of the sun.

The recipe collection is so vast I cannot even begin to write about them all and the special memories that are attributed to each one. When it is someone's birthday, we usually make Derby Pie which was my Great Grandmother's recipe she would make for my grandfather. They are from Louisville, KY and this is a special pie that makes us reminisce about Louisville and my GG who I greatly miss. Every recipe has a story of its own written in our family history. From Irish stew to my Great Aunt Della's baked goods, the weathered pages in this book go on and on.

Cooking always brings us together as a family no matter what the day brings. We delight in spending time together and we all supply a different talent when we cook. For instance, we like to talk about football and watch it while we cook on a Sunday night. My family loves it when relatives come over and cook with us while we visit one another. From cooking together to having a meal together, this makes us inseparable as a family. If I lost this treasured book, I would feel incredibly distressed. I would feel like I lost my family. This reminds me of my Great grandparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and parents. While being together is what matters above all; it would still hurt if we lost this irreplaceable book.