



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER NAPLES

THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.
THE **POWER** OF COMMUNITY.

COLLIER EDUCATOR GRANT “STAND UP FOR JUSTICE”

Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples

A monetary grant will be made to the educator whose lesson(s) and/or activity(s) is selected as best meeting the criteria below. The purpose of this grant is to honor Collier County’s elementary, middle, and high school educators who strive to counter the prevailing tendency within today’s popular culture for students to deride or denigrate others based upon difference. The lesson(s) or activity(s) should have as its major objective the purpose of instilling the positive character trait of “respect for others” in students. All applicants must have created lessons and/or activities of their own design or have successfully made adaptations from other programs and show evidence of a positive nature as a result of implementation. All applicants will submit a copy of the lesson(s) or activity(s), a description of its implementation, and evidence of its effectiveness. Applicants may include Collier County elementary, middle, and high school teachers, guidance counselors, supervisors, school librarians, administrators, psychologists, and media specialists. Students, parents, colleagues, and community members are encouraged to nominate an educator. Self-nominations are also encouraged and accepted.

View previous winners and submissions here: <https://jewishnaples.org/outreach/educator-award>

Applicant’s name: Lindsey Simmons

Applicant’s email: simmol@collierschools.com

Number of years teaching: 9 Grade or subject taught: Media Specialist 9-12

School: Lorenzo Walker Technical High School

School Address: 3702 Estey Ave., Naples, FL, 34104

Phone (daytime): (239) 377-4985 Phone (evening): (315) 569-0019

Principal’s name: _____ Principal’s email address: _____ Principal’s Phone: (239) 377-3304

Valerie Hernandez hernav1@collierschools.com

Requirements due by February 11, 2022:

On a separate page(s) with the name of the applicant on each page (BE SURE TO COMPLETE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING):

- Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities.
- Describe the lesson(s) or activity(s); and if adapted from another source please reference.
- Explain how the lesson(s) or activity(s) teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist.
- Explain how it helped them counter bigotry and bullying and prepared them to stand up for justice.
- Please provide evidence/proof of effectiveness such as but not limited to: a questionnaire, interviews, documented anecdotal conversations and/or observations, student writings, and etc.

Please complete the following if you have encouraged someone other than yourself to apply:

Your name: _____ Your email: _____

Phone (daytime): _____ Phone (evening): _____

Your relationship to this applicant: _____

Submit the completed form in writing, by email, or video format no later than February 11, 2022, to:
Beth Povlow, Educator Grant Coordinator, C/o JCRC, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples
2500 Vanderbilt Beach Road, Suite #2201, Naples, FL 34109

Stand Up For Justice Through Our Whole School Reads Program

Precipitating Event

Lorenzo Walker Technical High School (LWTHS) has worked on developing a culture based on belonging and connection among students and staff members. Based on the school's Panorama Student Survey, many students indicated their disconnection with school and results have dropped from the previous year. Students responded that while they feel respected in school, they do not feel understood. With this shift in results from previous years, this became an opportunity for the Whole School Reads program to continue to build relationships and select a book that represents a large portion of the student body.

Lessons and Activities

The Whole School Reads committee selected *We Are Not From Here* by Jenny Torres Sanchez. This was also selected as a Florida Teen Reads novel for the 2021-2022 school year. It is a poignant novel about three desperate teens who escape and survive their journey from Guatemala through the U.S.-Mexican border. The novel is inspired by true events and reflective of many journeys our students and their families have made.

For the Whole School Reads Program at LWTHS, our focus with teaching and interacting with the novel is "your own story." We started off the year with staff members writing six-word memoirs and walked them through the writing process. A few weeks later we passed out the books to staff members. With students, we did a kickoff event using the staff six-word memoirs and a personalized video and a six-word memoir from the author, Jenny Torres Sanchez. Students then went back to their ELA classrooms and created their own.

Many of the activities are run through English Language Arts classes and shared among teachers. Students investigated La Bestia, the treacherous train ride through Mexico. Students have created maps of the journey taken and have truly connected with the characters. Many students have told their teachers they have discussed the book at home and have ask their family members about their journey to arriving in the United States Many of these stories have been shared in classrooms for others to hear.

Students have reflected on their first impressions of the novel, developed personal and outside connections, written obituaries for beloved characters, and made comic strips of their favorite parts. Students have researched their names and the story behind them. They have looked at the origin of their name, the meaning, and reflected on why their names were given. Students have developed symbols for their names and reflected on potential stereotypes. Staff members have gone through the process as well. These are being submitted and displayed in the lobby.

We have been in contact with the author, and she is going to be visiting the school on April 13th. We are developing plans for sidewalk chalk art for different scenes for the book and a bookmark competition. She is going to be doing two assemblies for us and we have partnered with Adult and Community Education to have her meet with the young adults in the Adult Basic Education English course because many of them have arrived in the United States in similar circumstances to the characters in the novel.

Teaching Respect for Others

Through classroom discussions and activities, the theme of “your own story” has allowed students to better understand each other and feel like they are more understood in school. Everyone has their own story, and it is important to respect each other and how we all got to this place together. The characters in the novel are Guatemalan and book explores their treatment in Mexico and in the United States upon arrival because of their nationality. Students have become deeply connected to the characters and have been able to discuss the unfairness they have faced because they escaped a desperate situation. This has led to discussions about respect for other human beings, especially in difficult circumstances. Everyone’s journey is different, but at the end of the day we are all humans.

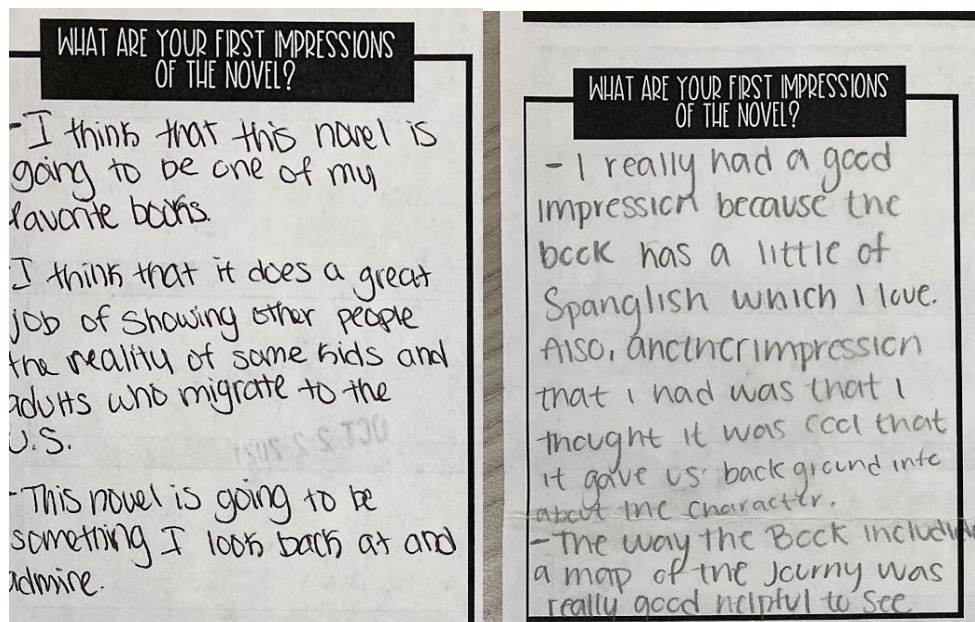
Students have also been focusing on emotional and physical safety. Since this is something that is not guaranteed in the books, students have been reflecting on how characters must change and adapt to survive and work towards their safety. Students have had conversations about what they would do in similar circumstances and how they would adapt. This has built empathy within students because they are able to compare their lives to those of struggling characters.

Countering Bigotry and Bullying

Our students were able to express their creativity as well as talking about respecting each other by participating in activities that build empathy and understanding of others. Students are reading how terribly the characters are being treated and are responding in appropriate ways. They hate certain characters for how they treat the main characters and have been emotionally distraught over character deaths. These deep emotional responses are proof that our students are connecting and learning tolerance and understanding of others who are different.

Student Work:

Student First Impressions and reflections:



<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/1b3d7ae7-a97f-400e-a949-0bcfd1182309>

<https://collierschools.instructuremedia.com/embed/e699656e-d31c-4d0a-9fd8-4a9ae6cdc0b6>

Student Connections to Text:

Independently read and annotate pages 112-163

Self Connection

Page 120: "I try to sound confident but now that we're here, now that this is actually happening, I'm not too sure of anything." "Trying to convince him, trying to convince the both of us."

This part specifically stands out to me because I find myself relating to Pulga a lot here. I never like to be responsible for other people's emotions, especially when I'm not feeling emotionally well myself, but I often find some sort of bond with others if we're both feeling bad. I can calm them down, therefore calming myself down, knowing that we can both be at peace if we're worrying about the same thing. (Elaborate more during discussion) I can also relate to Chico on certain parts of the text, in places where he needs constant reassurance and is always anxious and scared. This appears a lot whenever the three main characters are walking at night or talking about their plan on getting to certain shelters or checkpoints (Pages 155, 156, 131).

Text Connection

There's a book called *The Strange Library* written by Haruki Murakami, it's a short book, but it's about a kid who goes into a library with the intent to buy a book and get back to his home before dinner, but he ends up getting trapped in the library's basement for weeks because a library worker tricked him into leaving the main area of the library. I can't help but connect it because it contains similar themes relating to family and missing home. On pages 113, 115, 119, 123, and so many other pages, the characters in *We Are Not From Here* talk about wanting their family to be happy, not wanting them to suffer or worry, wanting to see them again, stuff along those lines. In *The Strange Library*, the main character worries about his mother becoming anxious, being sent into depression, her worrying for weeks, etc. The main character tries not to think about it, as it makes him feel guilty and upset, just like the main characters in *WANFH*. They are also similar because the characters have such small chances of success while in such dangerous situations. In *TSL* the main character had to memorize every single word in order in

Lindsey Simmons

multiple books to be set free, Pulga has to stay on his feet at all times to get to the right places at the perfect times while also making sure his companions are doing well. I can't help but connect them due to the family themes and the difficult solutions to the difficult situations.

World Connection

Page 121: "I bite down on a warm, salty piece of pork, wrapped in a piece of soft tortilla. It tastes so good that for a moment, everything feels okay." This quote, when we look at it along with family themes in the previous part of the book, we can see a cultural impact that food can bring to people. Food is very important to culture, and it reminds many people of home, their family, the things they enjoy, and Pulga feeling that way in such an intense situation helps to calm him down. Later on in the same paragraph, the text states, "Pequena crunches on some plantain chips and for a moment, it almost feels like an adventure. For a moment, my stomach flutters with anticipation, I think." This can not only connect to the cultural impact of food, but it helps to show how children can have dreams in even the most intense situations. It's not just because Pulga is a dreamer and has an artist's heart, but it shows a nice global theme of children wanting to dream and enjoy themselves no matter what. On page 147, the text states, "I look over at Chico playing cards with the little kids who were watching cartoons. They're laughing as he acts like a clown and makes silly faces at them. And even though somebody might get irritated because I'm saving his place in line, it's worth it." Again, children love to dream, they love to do simple things and laugh and enjoy themselves, and in the most intense and dangerous situations they still find the opportunity.

Character Obituary

We Are Not From Here

PART 3: REST IN POWER, CHICO

Directions: Write your obituary, eulogy, or elegy in the box provided.

Oh dear Brother

Oh mine

Oh dear brother, oh mine, there's a stain on your shirt

Oh dear brother, oh mine, I recall the blood that filled your eyes

Oh dear brother, oh mine, as your heart hit the street beaten, battered, and bruised.

Oh dear brother, oh mine, I recall the hollowness of your body

Oh dear brother, oh mine, as cries of hunger melted your chapped lips

Oh dear brother, oh mine, I recall the eagle that soared above you

Oh dear brother, oh mine, as the vultures picked at your soul

Oh dear brother, oh mine, I recall as your eyes looked to the sky

Oh dear brother, oh mine, as I shook you and painful yells left my mouth

Oh dear brother, oh mine, you better clean it or your mama will be angry when you see it

Oh dear brother, oh mine, I love you and not for the last time

Visual Quote Designs



"I stare at the sky, looking for her in the stars. It seems impossible that a sky can be so full of them .It seems impossible that anything beautiful can exist."(pg. 131)



"Outside the bus window, Barrios rushes by in a blur. The restaurant Mami and I always rode to with Tia and Pulga. The church where Mami and Papi got married. The clinic Mami ran to where the doctor uttered that horrible truth I already knew."(pg.113)

“I’m running from the same guy too do you need me to tell you more than that.”



“Pequena's face turns dark red as she tries to hold back tears and anger” ...“I’m running from the same guy too do you need me to tell you more than that.” If Pequena's words were visible they'd be black, tinged with red and orange burning coals.” (pg. 138)

Student Names:

Bernardino:

- ORIGIN: The origin of my name is of three origin's. Italian, Hispanic or Portuguese
- Where I got my name: I received this name as my dad is also called Bernardino and his dad (my grandfather) is named Bernardino making me Bernardino the third.
- The meaning of my name: The name means “Brave” and also “Bear”
- STEROTYPES: Whenever people hear my name, they immediately think I'm a Hispanic person or that I'm Mexican (I am not) and it doesn't really bother me if I'm being honest. I have also noticed that a lot of people find it difficult to say my name



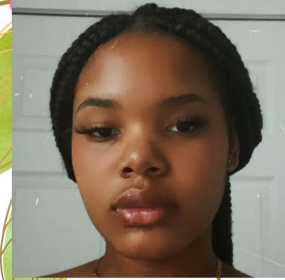
Anne: Hebrew Hannah, which means 'Favour' or 'grace'

Origin: English & French

Stereotypes: Anne is a name that evokes logical reasoning. You are possibly intelligent, intuitive, graceful, and even a psychic. Interest in spirituality and mysticism is a strong possibility in your quest for truth. Sometimes you are not friendly and do not like to spend time with other people.

Fun Fact- in Turkish language Anne means Mom.

Credit: Myfirstname.rocks



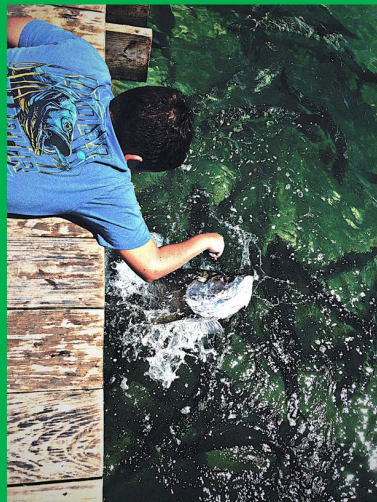
**Where did the name
Gavin originate?**

**What does
Gavin mean?**

A variation on the medieval name Gawain, meaning "white hawk."



Gavin is a male given name originating from Scotland. It is a variation on the medieval name Gawain.



Gavin

My name was just a name my mother found that she liked.

Student Chapter Comic:

We Are Not From Here
Pequeña



By: Ava Potter



Don't forget Pequena that you're really my girl. And you'll have to follow my rules soon.

Rey stops by Pequena's home to see her and the baby during Don Felico's Wake/Funeral. Rey came straight to Pequena's home uninvited.

Peguna waits
until Rey
leaves until she
goes back into

Damn
Basterd.

Remember

Peguna
can't get
Rey's word
out of her
mouth

You are
my girl,
and will
follow
my
RULES

I just want
to forget
about him

I can never
love that child,
for his future
will be

I will never love them. I
just want
to forget this relatit.

Take
me to my
dreams please
my
angel.

What
a
baby?

WAHI!

my angel please
make that thing gone
Ple to never exist.

WAHI!

WAHI!

WAHI!

WAH

WAHI!

That's right there
is no baby. It's just
a rooster, the
rooster that I love
loved the most in
the entire
world.

**CLUCK-
CLUCK!
CLUCK**

He is the son of Don Felice worked at his store. But the night he was killed he was in the middle of the night he was



Gallo.

I remember now said I started crying



He's gone?

I wish he could have said good-bye to us. I wish to

But I was that happy that I got the spot

I see a (drawing)



Yet I have still said for the anguish said for his parent's



Gallo?

gasps sobbing

Peguna?!



I called out to him and offer my hand to him

until I saw a bundle crying on the bed.

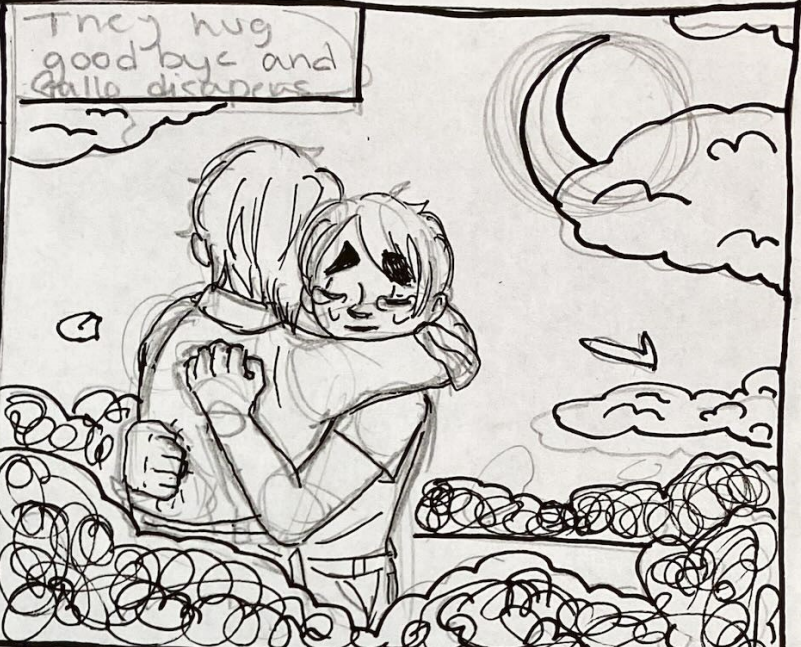


Gallo and don Felicio were saying their good byes

papi

my son the good byes

They hug good bye and Gallo disappears



That just leave me and Don Felicio with marigolds saying nothing to each other.



His corpses -

We are then suddenly transported to Don Felicio's marigold next to...



As we were to look I thought now Don Felicio felt I go to ask about his face hairing etc



Don Felicio are-

AHH!

BWA!

Don Felicio

Don Felicio was panicking, says he started to have trouble breathing





Don Felico
Fell you too
have to
calm down!
you're okay!

bruh!

Peace

Chic
wan

am!

Don Felico
was
trying to
say
something
to
me.
But he
was getting
worse
until
event the
travise.



seeing
now
he
died.



g
Lan
Pura!

I don't
know what
you are
trying to
say! Please
stop,
please!

like a
faucet the blood
kept coming
filling
the room.

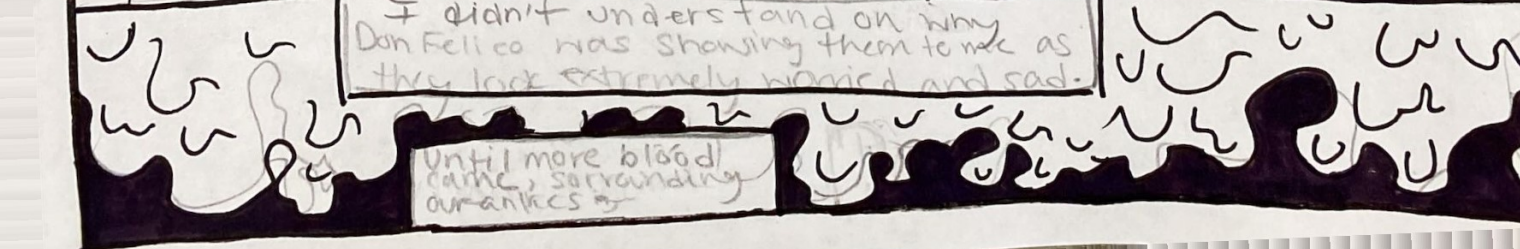


to see
Pulga and
Chico!

I turn
my
head
towards
the direction
he points

What?

But then he takes one of
blood soaked hands and
points.



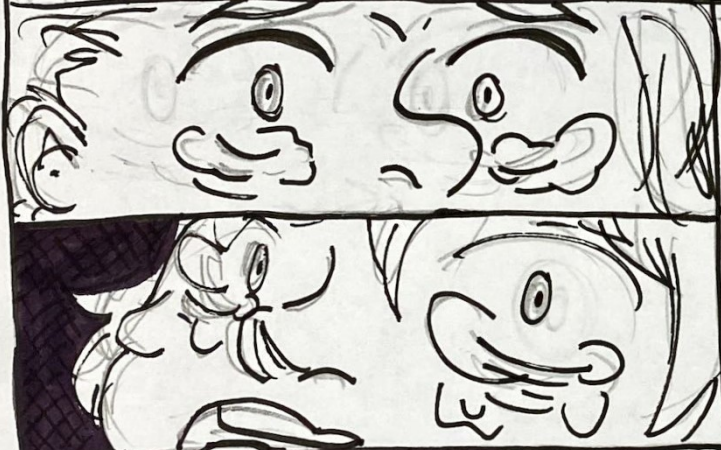
I didn't understand on why
Don Felico was showing them to me as
they look extremely worried and sad.

until more blood
came, surrounding
our ankles

I watch as Don Felico gurgling noises feels my ears even more, as Chico and Pulga start to check and trembling.



The look of Fear across their faces as I see their eyes wide scared & desperate.



Then blood begins gushing from their next mixing with Don Felico's blood surrounding



I turn back to Don Felico yelling at him to stop

I don't want to see this! Stop it please



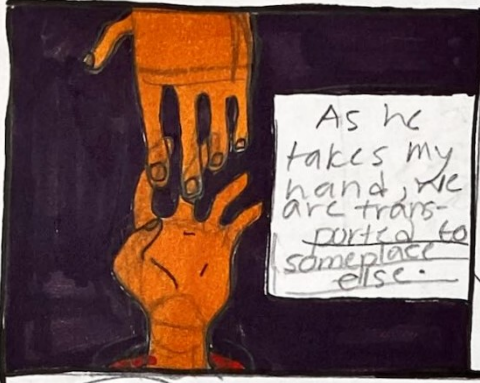
But his eyes were looking at the ceiling. I tried to wake myself up.



Wake up! Wake up!

Dammit! Wake up! Regina!

Yet I couldn't the room feeling with more and more of Don Felico's, Pulga's, & Chico's blood coming to my waist.



As he takes my hand, we are transported to someplace else.



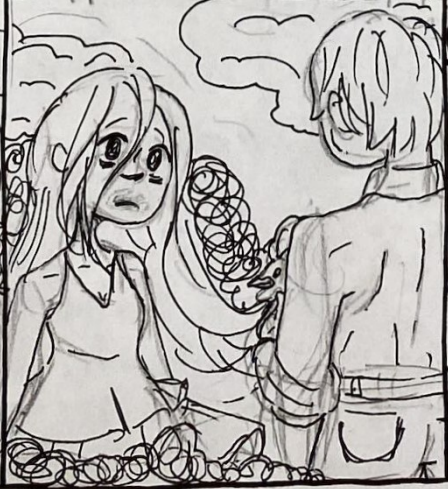
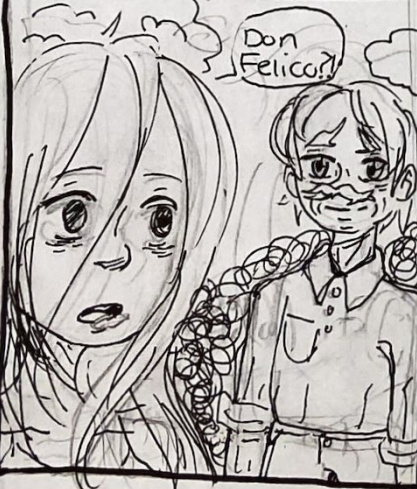
We were transported to garden full of marigolds!



I search for him frantically, till Don Felico suddenly appear.

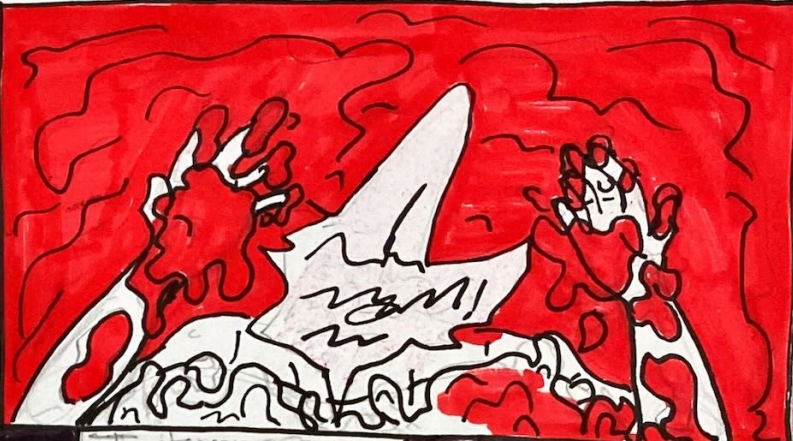
We stand there in silence until a small rooster appears in Don Felico arms.

When I turn to look for Gallo he was gone!



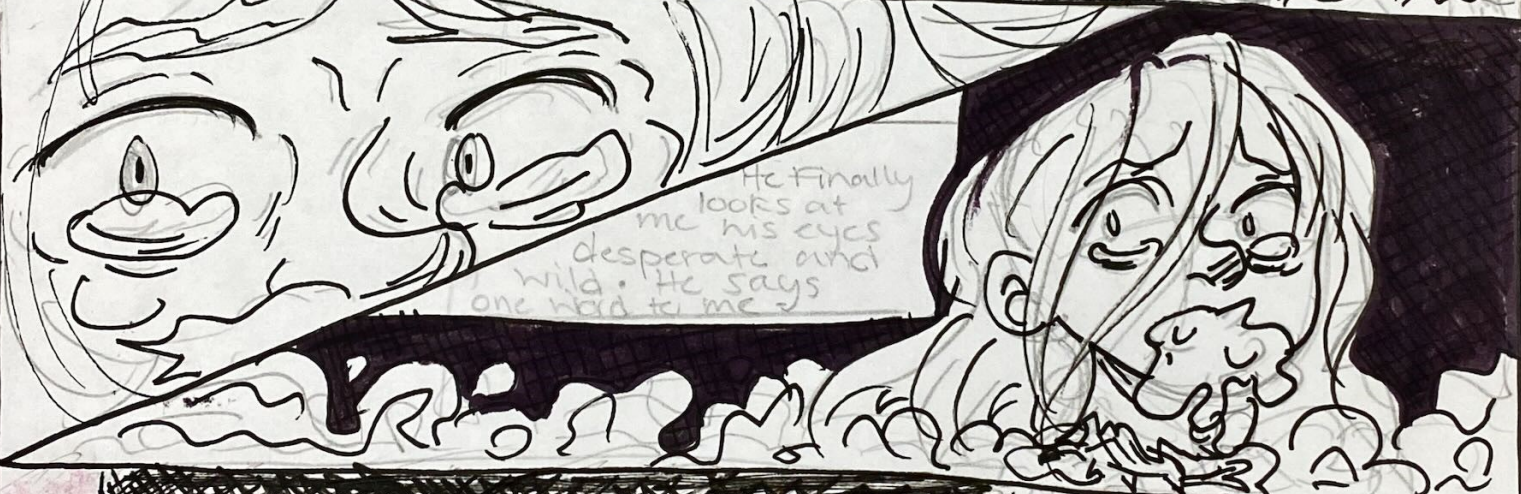


F can't breathe. My throat is swelling up. I put my hands to my neck and it feels hot and warm!



NO!

F turns for help, Don Filico, but he just stands there curling and wheezing.



He finally looks at me with desperate and wild eyes. He says one word to me.



corre.

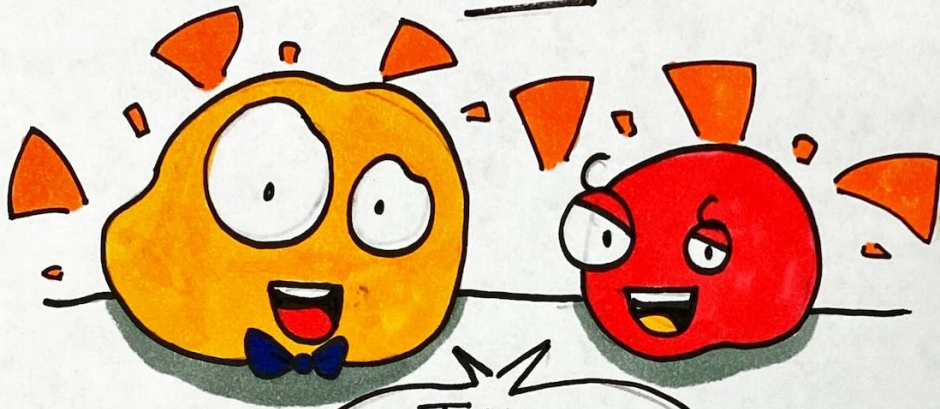


Gasp

WAAH!

Pequena!

To Be Continued



Till
next time
Bye!

Student Exemplar Essay on Emotional Physical Safety:

Unfortunately, people live in violent places that jeopardize their safety. Many individuals end up fighting for their lives to go somewhere safe and better to live. In the novel, *We Are Not from Here*, three teenagers named Pequeña, Chico, and Pulga flee from their harsh and unsafe home country of Guatemala and head towards the United States. The teens advance on a dangerous journey on a train called *La Bestia*, where they fight through unprecedented, risky situations that threaten their safety. In *We Are Not from Here* by Jenny Torres Sanchez, the trio realizes the dangers that arise in their journey that quickly lead to unfortunate situations and outlooks, which expresses the theme that emotional and physical safety is fought for and is never guaranteed.

The theme of emotional and physical safety first appears in *We Are Not from Here* in Part One when Pulga and Chico witness gang violence first-hand and its effects on their lives. Pulga and Chico go inside Don Felicio's store as an unknown gang murders Don Felicio, so they help him from bleeding out before they begin panicking about being blamed for his death. Pulga says, "All I know is we have to run—hard and fast and without looking back. Away as quickly as possible. Away so you're not a witness. So you're not a part of any of it... We run. It's the way you learn to live around here" (Torres Sanchez 33). Their traumatic experience demonstrates the two boys' situation and their decision to run away to avoid getting in trouble with the police or the gang. Their apprehension and discomfort from the incident relate to how dangerous life is in their city, Puerto Barrios, and how Chico and Pulga's physical safety could be at risk since they witnessed the crime. Their physical safety is fought for by getting away from the situation before it worsens. Moreover, after a few weeks, Pulga and Chico get taken to an abandoned building by the gang that murdered Don Felicio and find out that the gang members have been watching over their every move since the incident. Rey, the gang leader, says they have two choices: be his friend or be his enemy, so Pulga logically decides for himself and Chico to become his friend and follow his orders (Torres Sanchez 80). Pulga's understanding of the situation and Rey's threats show the peril Pulga and Chico endure. It is evident that Pulga and Chico's lives revolve around danger and feeling uneasy, even at home. Pulga and Chico fight for their safety by complying with Rey since they ultimately fear him and what he can do to them and their family. The gang violence in Pulga and Chico's hometown affects them negatively, instilling fear and threatening their safety. The need and fight for safety become very real as the characters take daring risks throughout their journey to the United States.

As Pulga, Chico, and Pequeña head towards the United States, they find themselves stuck in unprecedented occurrences and perilous conditions, but they still try to move forward to reach their destination, which shapes the theme. The trio becomes aware of the dangers that come up, especially once they make it onto the train, *La Bestia*. The first incident in which their lives were at risk on *La Bestia* was when they heard, "more and more voices, shouting back to one another. Cars suddenly [appearing], racing alongside the train up ahead. The night [cutting] with the flash of headlights. With screams and yells. With desperation and fear" (Torres Sanchez 188). In this frightening scene, mysterious people appear next to the train, causing panic and confusion in those inside the train. This alarming event relates to the idea of fighting for safety because for them to stay safe, they are trying not to get caught or killed by these unknown individuals. Recognizing the idea that anyone could kill them introduces that anything could happen on their

journey and that their efforts could be stopped abruptly, meaning they would not make it to safety. The journey continues, but their conditions worsen, and they start feeling sluggish while going from one train car to another. Chico starts slowing down and losing his strength way more than Pulga and Pequeña. Pulga keeps pushing him to go on until his final moments where “[He] watches as [Chico] topples, topples, topples over. [Chico watches] as [his] hand, too slow, reaches to grab his shirt and catches nothing. [Pulga watches] him disappear” (Torres Sanchez 226). Pulga watches as his brother falls to his death, ending Chico’s fight for safety, caused by the fatigue and hardships he had endured during the journey. Chico’s death demonstrates how a person’s safety is never guaranteed. People having to fight for safety is proven by Chico since Chico eventually gave up, which is why he did not try saving himself, ending in his demise. Their journey has brought the trio unexpected and unfortunate events that ultimately damaged the state and safety of their lives.

By the end of the novel, Pulga and Pequeña feel a sense of safety after going through a treacherous and soul-crushing journey. Though they never exactly made it to the United States, they have a better sense of well-being. As Pequeña and Pulga make it closer toward the United States, they are caught by the Border Patrol and get escorted into a car, where they will be taken to a detention center. Pulga collapses suddenly, getting the Border Patrol worker’s attention and giving Pequeña a chance to run away: “I look toward Pulga. I have only seconds, no, less than seconds, to decide. He’s safe. He’ll be taken in. He’ll be okay, I tell myself...I run for my life. Or toward my death. I don’t know. But in that moment, it’s all I can do. I run” (Torres Sanchez 316). Pequeña evaluates the situation and runs away before she can get captured. She runs away because she would rather keep fighting for her safety rather than submit to a life she does not want, going along with the theme of fighting for emotional and physical safety. Admittedly, Pequeña ran away to make it to safety, where she would help Pulga reach it; she is fighting for both her and Pulga to reach somewhere where they can finally feel secure. After Pequeña goes off on her own, her body feels incapable of continuing, due to a burning sensation she feels all over her body, then a woman named Marta saves Pequeña and brings her into her house. After Pequeña talks with her mom on the phone for the first time since they left Guatemala, Marta refers to Pequeña as her birth name when talking to Pequeña about helping her. To which, Pequeña says, “‘My name is Flor,’ I tell her. ‘Not Pequeña. I don’t want to be called Pequeña ever again.’ [Marta] nods. ‘Flor.’ And I feel a small bit of relief in my chest, like a long-held breath finally being released” (Torres Sanchez 336). Marta was able to restore Pequeña’s relief and well-being by talking to her about helping her, plus accustoming for Pequeña’s name change. Pequeña is now feeling safe thanks to Marta, whom she would not have found if she did not fight for her safety. Pequeña can now help Pulga with Marta’s assistance so that Pulga can feel safe, which eventually happens when they find a lawyer and get Pulga sent out from the detention center. By using the help of others and undergoing a never-ending journey, Pulga and Pequeña can now feel the sense of reassurance and safety in the world they live in, which they had desired.

Ultimately, Pulga and Pequeña procure emotional and physical safety after battling through their grueling and precarious expedition, while Chico does not, due to the uncertain circumstances and indefinite guarantee of safety. The trio experiences perilous situations in

Guatemala, where the theme emerges. Their well-being is negatively impacted as they are subjected to unforeseen events on their risky journey. Finally reaching their destination, they feel a sense of safety with the aid of others. They persevered through many struggles to reach safety. People should persevere in getting what they want in life; otherwise, they might never get it.