
Statewide Essay Contest Winner
Kelsey Wood, Mt. Abram Regional High School, Franklin County

Social Justice: Protecting Those Who Deserve the Most

James Baldwin once said, “If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you go.” With this wise quote in mind, it is obvious why children are taught in their youth to respect their elders. These are the people who mold the clay of the youths’ minds, and thus society itself. As one ages, they become less able to care for themselves, and more vulnerable to those with less good in their hearts.

Abuse can happen in a multitude of ways. Each category is egregious in its own right and leaves exigent and enduring wounds. It’s a false conviction that abuse is only physical harm. It can range anywhere from constant aspersions to simple neglect. In any form, it is disrespecting the work they have put into the world and needs to be abolished.

Every life has a purpose. An individual has brought light to a multitude of people and situation by the time one has reached their golden years. When mistreatment occurs, the perpetrator is throwing away all the positive contributions the victim has made. They are disregarding basic human decency, and it is not only an irreverence their elders but to themselves.

Elder abuse matters to me personally it is flagrant, yet rarely promulgated in society. The innocent deserve protection. Imagine the horror and fear an elder would go through. They must face the reality of no longer living the life they were accustomed to for a great deal of time and accept assistance that is necessary to well being. This is undiscovered territory, and what few want. The culture shock is enough of an obstacle. Senior citizen should never fear the words or actions of their caregivers.

My grandmother has surpassed eighty, and though we are fortunate that she has remained in good health, what if she weren’t? The mere concept of her regularly wondering if she will be feed today is soul crushing. I know that I would never want her to be mistreated while in the care of someone I have entrusted. No one should fear for their ordinary safety. I know that she would be cared for if she were to ever fall ill, but not everyone is fortunate enough to have a large family capable of taking care of them. This is why elder abuse is such a pressing issue. Far more steps need to be taken to ensure, regardless of circumstances, all precautions are taken to keep these individuals safe.

Our elders are the people that helped create the world that this generation now lives in. They are where we all came from and should be allotted basic human rights. Under any circumstances, harm to our elders is intolerable. The epidemic that is hurting some of the most innocent and deserving members of society is fundamentally depraved. It is critical that progress is made towards halting these occurrences and restoring peace of mind to both those needing care and their loved ones. If we don’t take actions to preserve the soil we sow, how will the plants ever grow?