"I guess the only time most people think about justice is when it happens to them." - Charles Bukowski

To be in a state of loneliness and despair is natural for a creature with an ability to think for itself. Waves crash from left to right; flames dance in a synchronized chaotic manner; the wind whistles and roars - composing a sullen but charming melody - light is scarce, but we feel safe in commonality. Our worlds, so drastically different, but somehow the seven billion of us have to discover common ground and unite. It is only instinctive to perceive the world through one lens - shaped by home life or culture. But for a child raised amidst crashing waves to readily immerse themselves into the realm of flames is uncommon. This seclusion of the thought process, also known as close-mindedness, is the hearth and breeding ground of injustice. Injustice is "the lack of fairness and justice" and will ultimately be the downfall of humanity.

I was raised in a world of white while my neighbors were raised in a world of black. But, in reality, the world is entirely gray. As I grow older and see more of the world around me, the two worlds are slowly melding together. It's different. The culture that I was raised with consists of mainly one demographic: The West African Fulbe tribe. In 2008, My parents immigrated from Mauritania to the U.S. with my older sister and I. We have maintained several aspects of our culture in our day-to-day life but, growing up, I've had to view the world through the lens of a Fulani immigrant and through the lens of the average American girl. My perception of the world has been shaped by several factors: my parents’ morals and beliefs and the world that I've seen through social media. My parents' perception of the world could've clouded my entire mind, giving me no space to move forward or backward. I could've been blind to the possibilities of the world around me. Constrained to one perception. Falling...falling... into the endless abyss of close-mindedness. But, with this new ability to look at the world through all lenses, the child of fire realizes that his world is not the only one to exist. Injustices exist everywhere.

The power to view the world from all angles allowed me to truly understand how large the world really is. I've realized that being ostracized for speaking a certain language or having to study harder than my peers because of my socioeconomic status aren't the only forms of injustice that exist. Outside of this small bubble of mine, young children in nations such as South Sudan and Afghanistan do not have access to educational programs; patriarchal roles are still enforced in Southeast Asian countries; all across the world people are discriminated against for who they love, the gender they identify with, or for just simply being themselves; hunger and destruction rage across Yemen and Haiti. Everywhere you look, there is injustice but, I had the audacity to believe that my world was the only world; that was all I knew existed. Oppression and injustices will always exist as long as humans remain diverse; but just as Dr. King once said, "oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself." This change can only occur if we look beyond these injustices and deeper into the authenticity that lies within. The child of wind weeps and wallows in sorrow as he realizes that all realms contain hardships and inequalities. Despite this, he's ready to open his eyes and widen his perception of the world.

I've realized that differences are inevitable. Otherwise, we would not be humans, just dull, soulless clones of one another. I've learned that the injustices that I've experienced in the sixteen years of my life on Earth aren't the only ones to exist. Suffering and anger occur simultaneously. Injustices are amorphous - molding into undefined shapes or forms - but at the same time, they are as clear and apparent as daylight. That old man next door who lived his entire life unhappy because he couldn't marry the love of his life or the young children and poor families in my home country who won't be able to live a happy life due to destitution and a corrupt government system. All around, seeds of injustice emerge when we refuse to acknowledge the breadth of possibilities our world has to hold. To view our differences with curiosity rather than blatant disrespect is what we must strive for. Everyday I try to look at the world from a perspective different from my own because I believe that open-mindedness will slowly cut to the root of injustice and tear the seed to shreds of eventual nothingness. I encourage the rest of the world to do the same. The child of flames learns to appreciate all the other realms no matter how different they may be from his own. Alas, injustice will become a thing of the past.

Aissata Diallo
11th Grade Essay Winner
Colerain High School, Cincinnati
Emily Richey, Teacher
Erin Davis, Principal

Fighting Against Injustice