

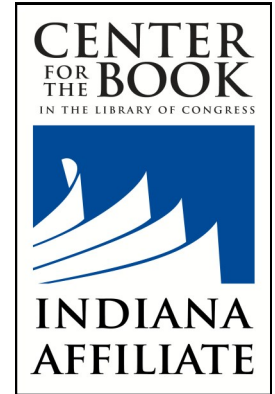


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Celebrating a Diverse Indiana

## First Place - 2020

Mykola Zabarenko  
Shawswick Elementary School  
Bedford, Indiana



### Diversity in Indiana

My English teacher said that people are surprised to hear that we have so many English language learners at my school. She said that people are interested in our stories and would like to hear about our journey.

I am an English language learner and moved to Indiana last school year. I spent the first eight years of my life in Ukraine. My mom moved to Indiana because she said that it would be better in almost all ways. In the schools there, you must wear uniforms. Here, you may wear whatever you wish. There, we did not have Smartboards and Chromebooks. We learned from books and worksheets.

I arrived in Indiana for the third grade and even though I'd been studying English since the first grade, sometimes I didn't understand what my teacher was saying. One year later, I understand much better. My teacher told me to raise my hand if I didn't understand.

My English teacher asked me if I could help her teach English to a virtual student who had just moved here from China. "Easy," I say. When the student first popped on the screen, I said "Nǐ hǎo," and she said "Nǐ hǎo," right back! My teacher smiled and asked how I knew how to say hello in Chinese. "Easy," I said. "Google Translator."

Tell me about diversity in Indiana you say, and I say, "Here you will find a boy from Ukraine teaching a girl from China how to speak English."



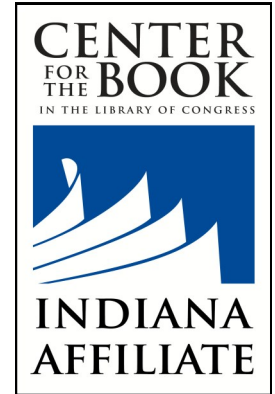


## 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Celebrating a Diverse Indiana

## Second Place - 2020

Alaina Bowman  
St. Thomas More Elementary School  
Munster, Indiana



### Celebrating a Diverse Indiana

It's a good thing that diversity is part of Indiana because there are good things that happen when different ethnic groups come together. If we didn't have diversity, we would have segregation, be divided, and not show unity. It is good to celebrate diversity.

Over 400 years ago, the state of Indiana was not diverse. People of color were taken from their countries and sold as slaves. Slaves were forced to work for no pay. Once I was treated badly because of the color of my skin. A lady at a farmer's market thought that because I'm African American that I would steal her products. This one incident made me upset, but at the time I didn't know that it was racism. My mom sat me down and explained it to me. Race is your background, your skin color, and your culture. For example, Mexicans, Africans, Asians, Europeans, Puerto Ricans, Chinese, Japanese, Bahamians, Native Americans, and Jamaicans, are all examples of different races. Each one of these groups have many strengths and beautiful creations to share with the world.

Plants can be diverse too. I have some plants from Africa. Their colors and odd shapes add a different look to my mom's garden. These plants help our ecosystem by not only producing air but also producing food resources that can help our food chain continue to grow.

Offices, schools, churches, and more, can be diverse too. You attend these places and find different ethnic groups. My local community is made up of African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Polish Americans.

In conclusion, celebrating diversity is a good thing because it helps us grow together as one. We each have our strengths that may be helpful to someone. When we celebrate diversity, we can enjoy each other's creativity.



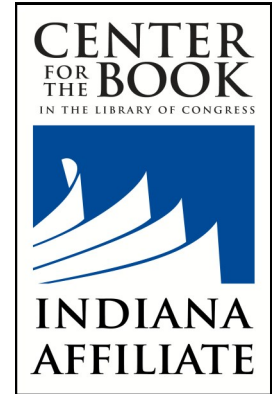


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Celebrating a Diverse Indiana

## Third Place - 2020

Ethan Chenoweth  
St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School  
Fort Wayne, Indiana



### This is a Diverse Indiana!

Indiana is diverse in many ways. Have you ever played or watched a sport? There are many in Indiana, but the favorites among Hoosiers are basketball, football, and baseball. If these aren't your sports then you should attend the largest sporting event in Indiana, the Indy 500. More than 250,000 people attend the Indy 500 each year. The song "Back Home Again in Indiana" is played there every year.

Speaking of music, did you know that the music of Indiana was powerfully influenced by German and Irish immigrants who arrived in the 1830's? Gennett Records was founded in Richmond, Indiana. Some of the first jazz, blues, and county music was from there. Michael Jackson and The Jackson 5 were from Gary, Indiana. Fellow Hoosier John Mellencamp had many famous songs. Bluegrass music is part of Southern Indiana's culture. Bill and Gloria Gaither are Southern Gospel singers from Anderson, Indiana. Hoosier music is as diverse as the people of Indiana.

The Great Lakes Plain was flattened by glaciers and then many small lakes appeared. At the Till Plains there are lots of riverways and rich farmland, not to mention our capital Indianapolis is here too. Southern Plains and Lowlands have many riverways; including the Lost River and the Ohio River. Even a two hour trip across our state shows diversity in the three natural regions of Indiana.

Whether through sports, through music, or through its regions, this is a diverse Indiana.



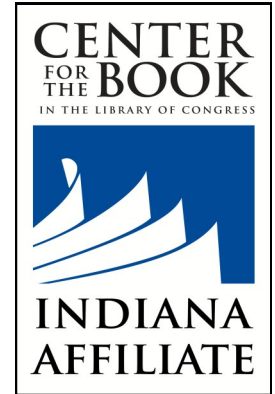


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Celebrating a Diverse Indiana

## Fourth Place - 2020

Addison Ann Carter  
Yorktown Elementary School  
Yorktown, Indiana



### A Taste of Difference

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, diversity is defined as “the condition of having or being of different elements.” Diversity makes each person in Indiana different. It makes everyone unique and special! Without diversity, life would be boring. If you went into an ice cream shop and vanilla was the only flavor, the ice cream would be boring and the customers would not visit.

Have you ever wondered about heroes like police officers, doctors, and even firefighters in Indiana? If we did not have diversity, who would care for us when we are sick? We are currently struggling to fight COVID. I know many different people in Indiana who are working together to fight this disease. We need people with different talents who can help us. If we don't have diversity we cannot help those in need.

We are in a free country which means different beliefs are always welcome, even if you are from a different culture. It's important to have different cultures because they bring different views, religions, and traditions. These ideas help us to govern and to worship freely. At my school in Indiana we don't see people exactly like ourselves. People are from other countries and states, and different cultures with many different beliefs.

Diversity brings creativity to our state. Different people bring different ideas. When we bring different ideas, we discover new cures, medicine, laws, and education. Creativity and discoveries allow our state to grow and change. Each person adds creativity and brings new ideas to Indiana.

Different cultures working together help people in need. People are brought together through creativity and culture. Like with ice cream, new flavors and cultures bring ideas and values that we haven't had before.

