

HONORABLE MENTION

Kendra Lughart

Plymouth Christian High School

12th Grade

Courage is something everybody wants. Everyone wants to be a superhero who swoops in and saves the grateful captive from the evil villain. But sometimes even the littlest action could change the world. People all around the world want to be known as courageous.

Uttering two simple words brings the nation right back to that horrifying day: Sandy Hook. Few teachers go down in history defined as heroes. In one day, six brave teachers gave their lives to protect their students from the gunman who was on a mission. When hearing Adam Lanza blast through the door of the elementary school, Principal Dawn Hochsprung turned on the intercom as a warning, allowing the entire school to hear what was going on, and instead of running away from the gunfire, she ran toward it. Along with many other teachers whose minds that day went into overdrive, the janitor ran through the hallways, checking to see if all the doors were locked, concerned about the lives of others while putting his own at risk. Parents of the students who attend the school could not thank those who died that day enough, knowing that through the disaster, the teachers did not die in vain. Without their faith and courage, the outcome would have been much worse.

Another day full of courage was September 11, 2001. No one will ever forget the courage that the firefighters, policemen, civilians, and workers in the Twin Towers portrayed. Rescue workers knowing they were walking to their death, did not stop to think and persevered to save as many lives as they could. In particular one man's saving lives on today, showing the attitude of courage on Flight 93, "Let's Roll." Todd Beamer illustrated courage not only in his actions, but also in his faith. Before he entered the cockpit, Todd called GTE Airfone to explain what was happening and even in the midst of chaos, he asked to pray the Lord's Prayer. In the time of danger, courage is not courage without faith. Trusting in God to see us through our hardship is what courage is all about; for it is God alone who puts that courage in us.

Many think that in order to have courage, one has to do an extraordinary action to save the lives of many worthy enough to be broadcasted, but that thought is false. One can have courage by standing up for his beliefs on abortion, gay marriage, or religion. One can have courage for standing up to the bully at school, protecting and comforting the child getting picked on. One can have courage by standing up to a friend's parents who are abusive and getting help for that friend. One can have courage by standing up to the popular crowd, going against their notion on drugs and alcohol and not falling into peer pressure. These acts might not be Noble Prize worthy to others but in the eyes of the beholder they are. The action of going against the crowd may be difficult, but that is how courage is defined.

"Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe

your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.” Ralph Waldo Emerson states that everyone in this world needs courage, for there will be many hardships in life which we need to overcome. Whether our courageous acts are loud and noteworthy or small and insignificant, know that what we have done is defined as courage.