



What Matters to Me In the Hearts and Minds of Elementary Students



**Personal Essays and Self- Portraits by Fourth Grade Students
Mary O. Pottenger School
Springfield, Massachusetts**

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Carlos

My self portrait shows the fun that I have with my family.

Carlos

My Parents

My family is what matters the most to me. I don't know how old they are, but my sister is eleven. They are all good to me, but I cherish my mom like there is no tomorrow! My grandparents are cool, but my cousin is even cooler. They all make me happy and that's what is important. Everyone loves me!

My mom is the most fun person to be with. She plays games with me and that can be fun. It makes me smile to be playing games with my mom. We play board games together like Sorry, Chutes and Ladders, and Monopoly. My favorite game is Monopoly. My mom always makes fun of the guy with the beard. She says he has a scruffy looking beard. She also says that he must be older than a hundred years old. That always makes me laugh.

My family is the thing that matters the most to me. My grandma is a valuable diamond. She is the most helpful person. She even used to teach me things I didn't understand before. One time when I felt really close to her was when she helped with my division homework. When I was at school I was embarrassed and I tried to hide my tears because I was so frustrated. My grandma always tried to make me feel better. She helped me by writing problems down and I answered them. Most of the time I got them wrong, but she believed in me even when no one else did. That's why my family matters to me.

My family is the thing that matters the most to me. I love to spend time with my granddad. When I am with him, it is like Christmas every day. I know that he likes to spend time with me. He is a funny guy. When he takes his fake teeth out, he looks like a vampire. He would put two straws on his two teeth. (It was funnier in person.) He knows how to do card tricks. He can slide a deck of cards across the table, and then make them all fall down like a pile of Dominos. I feel proud because that is the only person I know that can do that. I really love my granddad and he is a role model for me.

My family is the thing that matters the most to me. My mom takes care of me all the time. She puts a roof over my head which is awesome. I am proud of my mom for that she does for me. She is the best mom in the world.

My family is the thing that matters the most to me. They do everything for me, even if I don't want it sometimes. They are all so good and awesome and good to me. It's like I'm in heaven with my family. I love them and I know that



Dominic

My picture represents how lucky I am to have parents that love and care about me.

Dominic

Family Love

What matters to me the most are my parents. They matter to me because they love and care for me. My parents help me when I am sick, when I am sad, or when something is bothering me. I can always count on them to be there for me. They pay for every single thing that involves money. A big way they matter to me is that they help me to get a better education. My mom and dad always make sure I am having fun, and if I'm not they help me. Something else that makes my dad and mom matter to me is that they provide the things that I need. They let me play three sports at a time. My parents really matter to me because they love and care for me.

My parents provide things I need. They make sure I eat and don't starve to death. I know I'm loved and special when my mom makes me a delicious chocolate birthday cake that makes my taste buds explode. She makes me breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They even make me snacks when I am hungry.

My parents buy me clothes so that I either look presentable or I fit in like the other kids. The big thing they provide for me is a house. It is a big house. If I didn't have a house, I probably wouldn't be here right now, right here. In the house my parents provide heat. It is important so I don't get sick from the cold. That is why my parents matter to me.

My parents matter to me. My mom and dad always make sure they have an enjoyable time with me. They take me geocaching with me for example. Geocaching is a hiking adventure where you can find toys or other objects that someone has hidden. That is important because it keeps us together as a family. It makes me feel loved that we can just go outdoors, start hiking and searching for toys just for fun. That's why my parents are important to me.

My parents are what matters to me. My dad and mom let me play sports. Hockey costs a lot of money. If making a sacrifice and spending that kind of money on me isn't real love, then I don't know what is. Another sport I like to play is soccer. I like to play soccer because it keeps my dad and I together. My dad is the best role model a kid can hope for. I hope to be like him when I grow up.

The most important reason why my parents matter to me is they make sure I get a good education. When I get stuck in math, my dad will help me. If I struggle in Language Arts, then I can count on my mom for help. I am so grateful that I have parents like I do to teach me right from wrong. Even when I don't really feel like listening to them. That's why my parents matter to me.



Megan

My artwork shows how important trees are to me.

Megan

Trees

The one thing that matters to me most are the trees. They do a lot for us. And I am proud of that. We should never hurt them because they never hurt us. Trees can be fun and grow beautiful things that make us happy. Trees are like air. They give us peace. Trees matter to me especially when helping us live our lives. What matters to me most are trees.

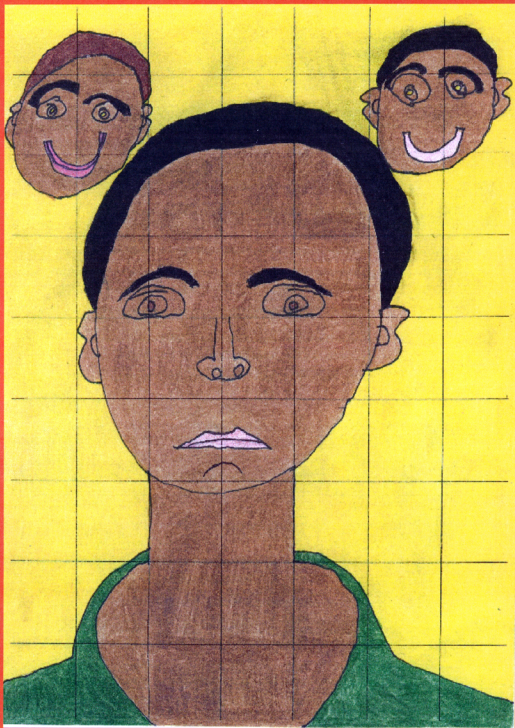
The trees help us to breath through our lungs. For example, two trees can make a person live because they provide us with the necessary oxygen we need. People are cutting down trees. This is taking away all the air for us. Which means less air for our lungs. You will know when air runs out. That is one reason we should not pollute the air.

The trees give us a lot of nutritious food. God created the tees with food for us. It's very healthy for us, so we should eat it so it won't go to waste. This is one thing that we should be proud of.

A lot of animals need homes right? So a tree is a place to go. For example, tree animals such as birds need a tree to live. Birds pick up sticks and twigs and make a nest on a branch. It's a good thing they store food in the trees, otherwise they would starve. What matters to me most are trees.

What I'm about to tell you is very, very sad. A lot of people think carving trees is good, but it's hurting our land and our nature. When people cut them down, you are killing yourself, because you are taking away the air that we breath. Don't think that this is funny because it's not. People carve stupid notes on them. How would you like it if someone carved notes on you if were a tree. This is why you should never hurt a tree. What matters most to me is trees.

What matters to me most are trees. Right now we can make the changes for our future. Let's agree not to cut down trees or carve into them. In the future there will be no trees left and we will all die. But if we make the changes now, we have the chance of living a longer, happier life. Let's not hurt the trees. They do so much for us, Let's appreciate the trees. That's why trees matter the most to me.



D'aven

My picture shows how happy my parents make me.

D'aven

My Family

The one thing that matters to me is my parents. They help me calm down when I am talking about my parents. Let me tell you why my mom and dad matter to me. My mom is thirty years old, and my dad is thirty one years old. I am pleased that I have them besides me all the way to the end. That's why my parents matter to me.

My parents matter to me. My mom and dad keep me safe. My parents don't let me go anywhere bad. I like going to the store by myself, but my parents don't let me. My parents don't let me do anything bad like stealing. That's why my parents matter to me.

My parents matter to me because they love me. They buy me things like games such as monopoly and operation. My mom and dad provide shelter for me. They love me because I am a good kid. One time I cleaned the entire house. That's why my parents matter to me.

My parents matter to me because they feed me, so I don't get skinny. As you know, if I get to skinny I will die. My parents always make sure that I have enough food to eat and I don't starve.

My parents matter to me because they help me with my homework. If my parents don't help me I will not get the right answers. I chose my parents to write about because they matter to me. They care about me. That's why my parents matter to me.



Aissatou

My picture reminds me that drugs are bad for you.

Aissatou

Drugs

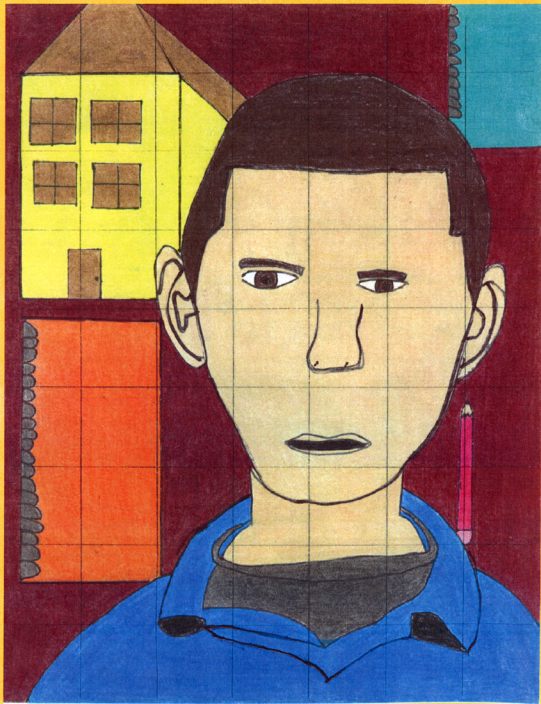
What matters to me is drugs. Drugs matter to me because a lot of people die from them. I feel so bad for people. Sometimes I ask myself why people take drugs. Sometimes when I am watching the news, I hear somebody was arrested for doing drugs. I feel so bad for these people. I ask myself what went wrong in their lives to make that happen to them. Why did they set their lives up for such a horrible future. Maybe they don't know that it makes them die faster. Why do they do drugs in the first place? I often wonder why people need drugs in their lives.

When people do drugs, they become addicted to them, and they can not stop. Being addicted means you can't stop taking them, and often take them three or four times a day. Once you try drugs, you can not wait until you do the next one. I worry for them because it affects their lungs and their lives.

Drugs is what matters to me. Drugs are not good. Once it is in your body it will destroy every part of you. Your lungs, your heart, your brain, all of you. When my mom was young, she helped people who were on drugs. They did not listen to her help and they continued to take drugs. They ended up dying.

What matters to me is drugs. Drugs increase crime. People who are on drugs steal to get money to supply their habit. Eventually they get caught and go to jail. Drugs worry me because if they had help, they would be o.k.

What matters to me is drugs. Drugs destroy families, communities, and lives. I dream of a world where everyone is drug free. I dream that they will be brave enough to get help. One day they will stop and see themselves doing the wrong thing and they will stop. I dream of a world where all people are safe and happy. When they are I will be too. Yes, drugs is what matters to me.



William

My picture shows what I can achieve if I stay in school and get a good education.

William

School Matters

What matters to me is education. A good education makes me excited. It will allow me to go anywhere and do anything. The sky is the limit. What matters to me is education. With a good education I will feel proud. I feel like I can accomplish anything. With a good education my parents will be proud of me. My parents will be prod of me because I did well in school. A good education matters to me. What matters to me is education. A good education can make me feel confident. I feel like I can do anything. With a good education I can believe in myself. I feel like I can get any jobs that I want. This is why education matters to me.

What matters to me is education. With a good education I can get any job I want. When I grow up I want to be a police officer. It's important to keep our cities safe by arresting criminals. Sometimes police officers get to help people. They ask people questions when something goes bad. What matters to me is a good education because I could get a good job. That's what matters to me.

What matters to me is education. With a good education I can earn lots of money. When I have lots of money I will buy nice clothes that are clean and not filthy. I will buy furniture. I will buy a plasma T.V, and a couch that fits five people on it. That's what matters to me because I don't want to be sad and live on the streets. I don't want to be crying when I am poor. That's what matters to me.

What matters to me is education. With a good education I won't be homeless. When I grow up I want to be living on a busy street. I want to live in a big yellow house. I want my mom to live with me. What matters to me is education because I don't want to be homeless when I grow up. That's what matters to me.

What matters to me is education. With a good education I can be smart. When people need help with something I will be able to help them. When I'm in school and do all of my work I can make the honor roll. When I go to school and do excellent in gym or art or science. I can get one of those types of jobs if I want to. What matters to me is education.



Kiera

I drew my picture to show all the things that my parents do for me.

Kiera

A Cool Family

What matters to me are my parents. When I am gloomy they help to make me feel better. I love my parents a lot. My parents are the ones that make me excited about life. They keep me well so I don't get ill. My mom and dad make me laugh, cry, and sometimes angry. But they are just trying to be excellent parents. My mom brought me into the world, and I am so thankful for that. My mom and dad protect me from evil things. My mom loves me very much, and so does my dad. My parents are what matter to me.

My parents matter to me when they get me the food that I need to eat. They do that so that I don't starve to death. They go to Big Y or Stop and Shop every two weeks. When my mom goes shopping, I usually go with her. She buys eggs, milk, chips, soda, sugar, snacks, bread, chicken and mushrooms. When we run out of food, I just eat crackers and peanut butter. I don't really like it that much. I love my parents very much. This is why my parents matter to me.

My parents matter to me when they buy me clothes. They go shopping at Wal-Mart or the mall. My mom is the one that buys me clothes because my dad is not really a shopping person. They buy me clothes so I don't get cold and die. She buys me shirts, shoes, pants, PJ's, hair ties, and hair spray. My parents matter to me because they are my parents.

My parents matter to me because they have jobs. My mom works at Belden jewelers. She gets to work in her car, but the heater is broke. It gets really cold in there. My dad goes to work in his car, to get his trash truck. I don't get to see my mom much, because her boss makes her work so much. Sometimes I wish she knew how sad that makes me. My dad works in the trash. He finds really cool things. He found a bar table for our kitchen and I use it a lot. They both go to work to earn money. My parents matter to me. Wherever I am, I think about them. I am really sad when I am not with them. My parents are what matters to me.

My parents matter to me the most. They make me super happy. My mom and dad will get me almost anything that I want. I can't live without them. They are what makes me happy in life. My parents matter to me so much. We are close like a daughter and parent should be. They are so great! I love them so much. My parents are what matters to me.