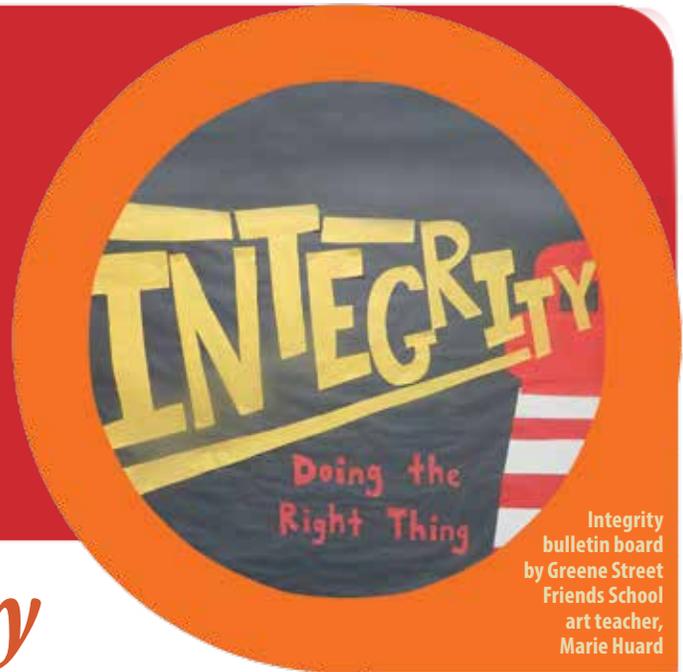


# STUDENT VOICES PROJECT



Integrity bulletin board by Greene Street Friends School art teacher, Marie Huard

## Focus on Integrity

At the start of the 2013-2014 school year, we announced the first annual *Friends Journal* Student Voices Project, a new initiative calling all middle school (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12) students to add their voices to the *Friends Journal* community of readers (more info at [fdsj.nl/StudentVoices2014](http://fdsj.nl/StudentVoices2014)). The prompt for this year encouraged students to think about the testimony of integrity in their own lives: “Integrity is the state of being complete or undivided. Friends use the term to talk about our commitment to honesty and fairness. How does this value challenge or inspire you?” We invite you to take a moment now to consider the prompt for yourself before reading ahead.

The submissions for this year include an honest account of the development of understanding from a self-aware ninth grader and four engaging stories from thoughtful sixth graders. From this unique collection of voices, we’re able to discover some of the many ways integrity slips into our everyday lives: it can surprise us by sprouting out of an unlikely candidate; it can creep in undercover, through the kind wishes of a stranger or the desire to care for animals; and its absence in moments that test a friendship can disappoint us. As one Friends school teacher said, “Integrity doesn’t always look like you expect it to look.”

Without further ado, here are the honorees of the first annual Student Voices Project.



### INTEGRITY, A NOUN

*Emma LeFebvre*

I was ten when I first learned the word, just one of the dozens I had to memorize for a test: Integrity, I-N-T-E-G-R-I-T-Y—“a state of being whole or undivided.” Little did I know that “integrity” is so much more than just a noun.

I was 12 when I first saw the word in action. I heard on the news an incredible story about a homeless man who found a purse and returned it to its owner. He obviously needed the money, yet he gave this up for something more. Only later did I realize that “something” was integrity.

Now I am 14, and I finally understand the word. Integrity cannot simply be given a definition—it’s not something you can learn or obtain by memorizing.

Integrity is when your friend takes double helpings, but you only take one to make sure there is enough for everyone. Integrity is when the person next to you sneaks a candy bar into his pocket for free, but you dutifully pay for yours. Integrity is when you return a lost purse to its owner, even though you desperately need the money. It is the personal decision to take the more challenging yet more rewarding path through life, or, as Robert Frost once said, it is “to take the road less traveled by.” So, as I have learned over the years, integrity is not something that can be simply learned—it must be experienced.

*Emma LeFebvre is a ninth grader at Westtown School near West Chester, Pa. Though she is not Quaker in name, she attends a Quaker school and feels a strong connection with the principles. In her free time, Emma loves to read, write, and play soccer. When she grows up, she would like to be a novelist.*

## WAITING FOR SOMETHING

### Grace Jickling

It was the summer of 2011, and I was at my friend Lily's house. We were playing with our American Girl dolls—brushing their hair, dressing them up, and pretending they were our babies when Lily's mom, Penny, came into the room and said in her British accent, "Lily, sweetie, you really need to clean your room! It looks like a volcano of mess exploded in there!" I giggled at the joke, but it really did look like a volcano of clothes. All the clothes, dirty and clean, were in a giant pile in the corner of her room.

"But Mom," Lily whined, "Grace is here, and we're playing with our dolls!"

"Lily, you can play later, but clean now."

"Fine," Lily said with a sigh.

"Sorry, Grace, but I have to clean." Lily looked at me with a glum expression. I sat on her bed sadly, but then I had an idea that made my frown turn upside down. "Wait, Lily! I could help you clean so it goes two times faster!"

"Great idea, Grace!"

I do not know why I thought this was such an amazing idea, but I was eight, so everything was amazing back then. Lily and I, bubbling with new energy, started to clean. We found things like clothes, stuffed animals, trash, and other odd objects. After about 15 minutes of cleaning, Lily looked up from picking up what looked like a yellow tank top with flowers and said, "Grace, I'll be right back." I nodded, not looking up from my cleaning. She left the room and I heard the door close quietly.

I kept on cleaning, finding a die missing a four. "What?" I asked myself. I put the die on Lily's desk and went back to cleaning. I kept on cleaning for 10 more minutes, wondering most of the time where Lily was, when I heard the door creak open. I looked up and saw Lily standing in the doorway.

"Where were you?" I asked Lily.

"I'm really sorry, Grace, but my stomach was really hurting."

"Are you feeling better?"

"Yes."

"Good, now help me clean."

Lily nodded, looked around, and said, "What is there to clean?" I looked around. All the clothes were in neat piles; there was nothing on the floor, and everything was where it was supposed to be.

"I guess I did do a good job." I said proudly.

We sat on her bed, just waiting for something, who knows what. Suddenly Penny came in and said, "Great job, Lily!" I waited with a smile on my face, ready to be complimented.

"Thanks, Mom."

I stretched to hear more, but nothing happened. I looked at Lily with a shocked expression. She took credit for my work! I was enraged. Penny left the room. I was still staring at Lily.

"What?" Lily asked innocently.

"You know what you did," I stated, acting like this was the biggest deal in the world. Lily gave me her puppy eyes, but they never worked on me.

"Fine," Lily said.

"Mom!" Lily called, "Can you come here?"

I heard Penny's footsteps coming down the hall.

"Yes Lily?" Penny asked.

"It wasn't actually me who cleaned the room—it was Grace. I was in the bathroom."

"Really, Lily?" Penny asked then looked at me for clarification. I nodded, implying that she was stating the truth.

"Lily, it was right of you to tell the truth, but it was wrong of you to take credit for cleaning the room. By the way, good job, Grace!" I beamed, thankful for finally getting my praise.

"Sorry, Mom and Grace," Lily said, looking sad.

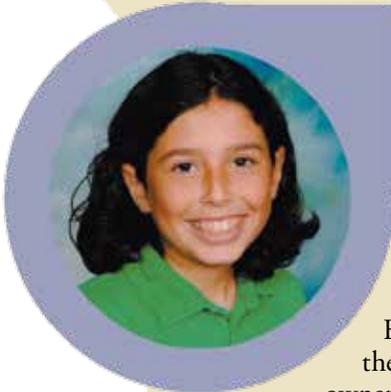
"It's okay, Lily . . . now we can play!" That brought a smile to her face in an instant.

"Yay!" We picked up our dolls and started to play. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Penny leave the room with a smile on her face. Lily and I played like there was never a problem at all in her newly cleaned room.



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*Grace Jickling is 11 years old and a sixth grader at Greene Street Friends School in Philadelphia, Pa. She loves to learn, write, draw, and read. Her pastimes include playing outside with her dog, reading all the Wendy Mass books, and hanging out with her friends. She lives in the East Germantown section of Philadelphia with her sister, mom, dad, one cat, one dog, and four bunnies.*



## SIMBA

*Levi Veleanu*

There once was a lonely, sad dog named Simba—a huge, strong Cane Corso, which is an Italian Molosser. Until he was six months old, he lived outside on a rusty, old chain. He was kept outside because the big, old house where his owners lived had fleas inside. They didn't want Simba to get fleas because they would hurt him. And the owners didn't want that to happen because they loved Simba a lot. Even though they loved him, they were unable to take care of him. Simba had been given to the family as a gift when he was just born, but they did not want a dog or know how to take care of a massive puppy.

One day, a mother and her son drove by the house where Simba lived. They noticed the 70-pound dog out on a chain attached to a cold, rusty pole. A few days later, they drove by the house again. The dog was still there, still outside, still shivering in the cold. Whenever they drove by over the next few weeks, the puppy was outside with a sad, longing look on his face.

One day, the mom decided to ask Simba's owners why he was outside attached to a chain by himself. She told her son to stay in the car; then she got out, walked up to the porch, and rang the doorbell. A teenager opened the door.

"May I help you?" the teenager asked politely.

"Yes," the mother answered. "Is your dad home?"

The teen replied, "No, he'll be home in a few hours."

"Thank you," said the mom. She returned to her car.

Her son asked, "What did he say?"

"He was a teenager. His dad will be home in a couple of hours. I will talk to him about the dog then."

Later that day, the mom and her son came back to the house. This time, they both got out of the car. They walked up the stairs and onto the porch. They rang the doorbell, and this time the teenager's father answered.

"Hello. Can I help you?"

"Yes," the mother replied. "We came to ask you about the dog out on the chain. It's really

not good for him. Dogs don't like being outside by themselves."

"Yes, I know. He was given to us as a gift. We really never wanted a dog, but we love him very much. We take care of him as best we can," the man replied in a nice voice. "Oh, by the way, the puppy's name is Simba. He is six months old," he said.

"Simba. That's a nice name for a dog. Well, what I was saying was if you can't take care of Simba, we could find someone that could," said the mother.

The man said in a surprised voice, "You really think you could find a good home for Simba?"

"Definitely!" the mother replied.

Then, the son said to his mom, "Why can't WE keep Simba??" The son said this in a voice that made his mother know that he really, REALLY wanted to keep the dog.

The man said to this boy, "You want to take care of Simba?" The son, much shorter than the man, nodded with his neck stretched upward.

"I . . . I guess we could keep Simba," the mom said slowly.

Then the man spoke, "If you can take care of Simba . . ." He looked at Simba for a few seconds. "If you can take care of Simba, you can keep 'im."

After that, the teenager, his father, and the mom lifted heavy Simba into the backseat of the car. Then, the teenager looked at Simba and said simply, but lovingly, "Bye, Simba!"

The mother and her son drove home with Simba. When they first got home, the son's dad wasn't too happy that all of the sudden there was a 70-pound, six-month-old puppy in the house, but as you read this story, Simba is in his loving home, where everyone takes good care of him and loves him VERY, VERY, VERY much. Simba's old family showed great integrity because even though they loved Simba a lot, they knew he would have a better life in a loving house than outside on a cold, rusty chain.

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*Levi Veleanu is a sixth grader at Greene Street Friends School. He loves sports (especially tennis), playing piano, and singing with the Keystone State Boychoir. One of Levi's favorite friends in the world is his dog, Simba. His compassion for animals extends beyond those in his own family and therefore, he is a vegan and an animal protection advocate.*

## THAT DAY

### True Lyons

**O**ur big, black Chevy pulled into the lot in front of the Ulta makeup department store on Saturday. My mom needed a new hairbrush because hers was destroyed by our cat. The sky was a bright, watery blue, and the clouds grazed the bottom of the sky.

The sliding doors of the makeup department parted as my family and I walked in. I suddenly found myself trapped in a kingdom of beauty products. I felt sick to my stomach; I have never been a fan of makeup. My sister, Lulu, grinned an elfish grin and took off down one of the aisles.

“Where are the brushes?” Mom muttered. A woman, around the age of 25, maybe, sat behind a counter in the middle of the store. She had a short, tousled, pixie cut that was dyed green. Her lips were doused in blood-red lipstick, and her eyes . . . her eyes were purple. That’s right: they really were purple! She probably put in those weirdly colored contacts.

I walked up to the counter. “Excuse me,” I asked the purple-eyed lady, “where can I find the hairbrushes?”

“Aisle nine,” she said without looking at me—she was dealing with a major hangnail crisis. I walked back to where my mom and sister were. Lulu was now as happy as some candy-loving kid in a candy store, of course, and I had no idea why. She has always been a moody little girl.

We walked down aisle nine. Along all the racks were different colored hair extensions, bottles of hair dye, combs, and at the end of the aisle: hairbrushes. Lulu reached for a striped pink-and-white brush and ran it through her hair. My mom snatched it away from her. “You can NOT do that in a store, Lulu!” my mom bellowed. My sister put on a pouty face, and I knew the waterworks were coming. I, personally, didn’t want to hear Lulu screaming and crying, so I walked away.

We stayed around an hour and a half in the “makeup kingdom.” Most of our time was spent trying to get Lulu to quit crying. My mom ended up buying a large, black brush, the size of my fist. The purple-eyed woman rang us up. What a coincidence?! Apparently, she hadn’t figured out that hangnail crisis because the perfectly painted middle fingernail was hanging off her finger. I noticed Lulu looking at it, too. Then, Lulu reached over and yanked the nail

right off the purple-eyed woman’s finger. “Owww!” the woman screamed and scowled at Lulu. Mom pushed us toward the door.

As we walked out through the doors, the wind slapped my cheek. Once in the car, I got buckled quickly. Lulu, on the other hand, was having quite a lot of trouble.

“Is it that hard?” I asked, rolling my eyes. I reached for her buckle, but then something fell out of Lulu’s hand: two Ulta gift cards, one yellow and one pink. “Where did you get those, Lulu?” She nodded her head towards the store, but stayed silent, heat rising in her face. “Mom didn’t pay for those . . . did she?” I asked. Lulu shook her head slowly.

I turned to my mom, whose face looked dumbfounded. It quickly softened. “Those are not free, Lulu,” Mom said gently. Lulu started to cry. Loudly. Mom got out of the car and opened Lulu’s door. “Get out of the car. We are returning those to the store—I am not going to jail for this.”

We started to walk back to the store, but it turned into a run because Mom was speed walking super-fast. Lulu and I walked back to the counter where the purple-eyed woman still sat.

“Yes?” she asked. I could tell she wasn’t happy to see us again. She thought the evil demon that had ripped her nail off was out of her life forever.

“Um . . . here.” Lulu handed the woman the two gift cards, and she explained what happened.

I admire my sister’s honesty. I love that she did the right thing, even if she didn’t want to. I would have made up some excuse for having the gift cards. But Lulu didn’t, and it surprised me. I naturally expect the worst from her. It’s nice to know that there are people in this world that can tell the truth, even if they don’t want to.

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*True Lyons is a sixth grader at Greene Street Friends School in Philadelphia, Pa. She loves to read and really enjoys writing about all kinds of things. She is currently working on a love story. She aspires to be an author and professional blogger when she grows up. She lives with her mom, cat, and sister in Philadelphia most of the time and with her dad in Brooklyn, N.Y., every other weekend.*





## THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

*Zivia Brown*

“Mew. Mew.”  
What’s that?  
I heard a small  
noise come from up the hill.

It sounded like a . . . a . . .  
“STTOOOPP!!!” I dropped my bike.

My parents stopped biking and looked around. “Do you see that? Right there! In the hill! In that bush!” I scream-whispered.

My mom came over. “Zivia! What is i—oh my!” The little kitten crawled into view. It was no pet cat. It was scrawny and sad. I knew that kitten needed help. Its eyes were scratched like it was in a fight, and tufts of fur were missing. Then, before anyone could stop me, I started climbing the hill.

As I climbed, stickers and vines clawed at my legs. The kitten bolted when it sensed me. I, of course, chased after it. My hands decided on their own to grab it. I nestled it in my shirt. I saw my mom was opening the lunch box to put the kitten inside (I later found out that my father was against the entire thing). We started walking down the hill. Step. Step. Step. The kitten struggled. Then suddenly, without any warning it opened those tiny jaws and chomped down . . . on my finger!

Some hours later I was inside Abington Hospital. The doctor told me I would be getting

rabies shots.

“NNNOOOOOOOO!!!!!! THIS CAN’T BE HAPPENING! PLEASE, NOOOOOO!”

My mom tried to calm me down. “It’s okay, Zivia, everything will be . . .”

“NOOOOOO, IT WON’T!” While we waited, there was a lot of crying and pleading. I was ready to disappear. The suspense was building a skyscraper!

A million years (a.k.a. five hours) later, they brought me into a small room. I sat down. Two nurses came over with two needles. After that, I really can’t explain what happened because I really don’t want to think about it. I can say—those shots hurt like the end of the world! I got four that day. A week later I got another. Next week, another, and another! Every week until I had ten: five in my thighs and five in my arms. They were really, really, really (times a million) painful!

So, dear reader, never pick up a wild cat without a suit of armor. But even though it was a very painful experience, I would do it again in a heartbeat if it meant saving that kitten. That’s just who I am. But maybe next time, I will use the lunchbox to catch the kitten instead of my hands.

*Zivia Brown is a 12-year-old cat lover and sixth grader at Greene Street Friends School in Philadelphia, Pa. Outside of school, she enjoys reading, drawing, doing karate, and playing with her cats. She lives with her mom, pop, and four cats.*



Zivia, Levi, Grace, and True with their teacher, Kiri, in the classroom at Greene Street Friends School.

## Greene Street Friends School Explores Integrity

*Gail Whiffen*

The four Student Voices honorees from Greene Street Friends School (Grace, Levi, True, and Zivia) are all in Kiri Harris’s sixth grade class. When Kiri, who has been teaching at Greene Street for almost 14 years, emailed us her students’ work, she mentioned that the Student Voices prompt offered a great tie-in with the school’s integrity theme this year. Two years ago, the staff at Greene Street decided to incorporate the famous Quaker SPICES into their

curricula by focusing on one of the testimonies (starting with simplicity) as a school-wide theme each year. That the first Student Voices prompt picked by *Friends Journal* matched up with Greene Street's rotation of the testimonies was a happy coincidence. "The integrity theme has really taken off," says Kiri. "It's great to know that integrity is on everybody's mind at the school."

Kiri shared that integrity and other Quaker ideas have risen to the surface in some noticeable ways. For example, there is a Quaker Ways Committee that introduces mini themes throughout the year. These "words of the month" help center the community around key Quaker concepts, such as query, moved to speak, and witness. When a query about integrity was introduced in meeting for worship, a few very talkative (or popcorn) sessions followed, with many students sharing very short messages, such as "be kind" and "listen to your teachers." While the shift toward sharing was wonderful, it also felt like a teachable moment. Kiri's sixth-grade class volunteered to help younger students learn how to infuse a message with a connection or story. The students tried their hands at this question: "If you were to stand up and talk about integrity in meeting for worship, what would you say?" And then they modeled these messages in a short video for the lower school. After this exercise, Kiri decided to expand it into a personal narrative writing assignment for the whole class. She asked them to consider: "How would you tell a story that would teach someone about the value of integrity?"

All of the stories the students wrote are true. "One of the things we noticed is that it's much easier to identify the absence of integrity rather than the presence of it. So many of their stories spoke about when they made the wrong choice," Kiri told us. "It was a great assignment for sixth graders, because they're at the age when they're developing the link between concrete and abstract. So when we throw an abstract concept their way, they just need a little boost to make the connection to a concrete example. It was nice to be able to use the *Friends Journal* assignment as a plug-in assignment for my class."

Honorees of this year's Student Voices Project received a free one-year subscription to *Friends Journal* and an invitation to present their work at a Friends Council on Education conference in June.

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*Gail Whiffen is the associate editor of Friends Journal.*

# SOLSTICE

**It is the winter solstice:  
Trees that took the sun  
for granted  
And with its power spread out,  
Into the earth for food  
and footing,  
Into the sky for light and glory,  
Now drain their vital sap  
And put aside their growth  
To seek some dry toughness  
That can withstand the chill  
And hold together over winter.**

**It is six full months now  
That the sun's been waning.  
Perhaps the trees lose hope.  
Some, at any rate,  
will not respond  
When once more the sun's return  
Calls on them to live again.  
We *know* the solstice has two faces,  
The time of greatest distance  
And the harbinger of spring—  
But, oh! to hold ourselves together  
over winter!**

**And now, friend, you leave us,  
Transposing solar distance  
Into this our human space  
And putting into hibernation  
The touch and song of  
friendly meetings.  
No more than do the trees  
Do we know what will or won't  
Quicken in a future day: —  
Be you our sun, we pray:  
Hold us in your heart over winter.**

*Newton Garver  
East Concord, N.Y.*

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**Frequent Friends Journal contributor  
Newton Garver died on February 8,  
2014. His poem Solstice was  
originally printed in the December  
15, 1978 issue.**