

# 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Junior Orange Bowl Creative Writing Competition

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner

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Ms. Meghan Davis, teacher

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## **Longing for Peace**

Gunfire. Screams. Cries. The traumatizing sounds constantly ringing in other people's ears. Sounds so malevolent, peace seems like an imponderable concept to those whose lives are scarred by cruelty. To some, peace is the dream of living in a world where violence is nonexistent, where tranquility reigns over anarchy. To me, peace of bearing God in my heart, trusting in His love for His children. An amaranthine love I wish others would cherish.

I am Venezuelan, from a country rich with oil, diamonds, and many other minerals. A country with beautiful landforms such as mountains and waterfalls. Morosely, tremendous violence, starvation, and the nation's appalling economic crisis obscures the luminosity of the country's natural beauty. This horror was caused by the absence of peace. A horror so great that my family members have told me that they are "used to" being held at gunpoint by larcenists. A life of expecting to see a fatal weapon every day is the type of melancholy life many have to trudge through, lives longing for peace. The peace that is my fortress. In Venezuela, protects are held per diem against the government's treacherous actions. Those in La Resistencia, a group of mostly 17-22-year-olds, risk their lives daily, protesting against the dread they frequently witness. "La Resistencia" translates to "The Resistance" in English. The group, La Resistencia, usually protests for approximately 8 hours every day. They don't refrain from protesting until they are in immediate danger of imprisonment by the police and government officials, whom incarcerate anyone who protects against the government. Those who can't escape the protests in

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time and are imprisoned, are often tortured and sometimes executed. The government does not differentiate children or elders from grown men when they imprison someone. A child can be tortured for protesting against the government, just as can a 30-year old man. The peace that shelters me from malice seems like a mere delusion to those confined.

My uncle, Jorge Campos, was part of La Resistencia in Venezuela until he recently moved to Florida. For one year, he would protest every day for up to 10 hours, risking his life with his quest to spread peace. Even after being shot with rubber bullets that penetrated his skin, he continued to fight for his people. My people. Every day he protested, he had to be clad in a gas mask to protect himself from inhaling lethally high concentrations of the awfully pungent lachrymatory gas, a gas that the Venezuelan government constantly immerses protestors in. Every one of those days he longed for peace. Peace that lays in the grasps of many who take it for granted. He taught me to veraciously appreciate the peace I relish in everyday, my shield from dismay. Peace: a sensation of being able to sleep without worry, a state of boundless calmness; the state of your heart filled with nothing but love and tranquility.