

and the type of person that I am and that I want to be. I know my journey is only beginning but you helped me to start it.

*Thank you from the bottom of my heart,*  
**Robert Jorgensen**

*Besides reading, I love singing and playing goalkeeper for my all star soccer team. As a singer, I am currently rehearsing for my second opera. I am also working towards becoming an Eagle Scout. One day, I aspire to be a writer of children's and young adult literature.*

L E V E L 2



**Brianna Rodriguez, Grade 8**  
**Serrano Intermediate School**  
**Lake Forest**

*Go Ask Alice*, Anonymous

**Dear Anonymous Writer,**

I never knew how drug addicts felt or how they reacted. Reading your book *Go Ask Alice* made me think how I treated my mom, how I treated homeless drug addicts. When I discovered my mom's problem with drugs, it changed the way I looked and thought about drug addicts.

About a year ago I got separated from my mother by social services. She did drugs, I knew it and so did my family. My mom—my hero and supposed to be my role model; I never knew how she felt. I'd always pressure her, tell her to quit. Once I even told her I hated her—even though I loved her no matter what she did. How could I have treated her like that, she needed me, and I didn't even know it. Loving someone with a problem isn't that easy, it takes courage and a big heart.

I always treated drug addicts like they were animals—desperate and lonely, waiting for a person to love them. Reading this book was like cold water splashing on my face; it woke me up. Realizing addicts could only depend on one person—God and themselves. I realized they also need a supporter, someone to be there—love them, hold them, and tell them everything would be okay. That's what I wanted to do for my mother, but I couldn't. I wanted her to realize what I was going through. I wanted her to know that I need a mother, a supporter, and someone to hold me close and to tell me everything was going to be okay.

Finding a way out from addiction is not only hard, it's hard to admit—admit mistakes that you've done, and I know that part was so hard for my mom. Now I know how to react with mom, what to say, and when to say it. Helping an addict is a new understanding, and a self-reflection.

All these years are only half the journey of my life. I know what I can do to help—help myself of what path to seek ahead.

*Sincerely,*  
**Brianna Rodriguez**

*Well first of all, I am proud of my accomplishments. In my spare time I like to run and practice volleyball. I always like to do my best and exceed beyond the limit. Every day I like to look for a new challenge and set goals for the rest of my day. In the future I plan to attend Chico State or Cal State Long Beach and major in journalism. After that I want to become a news reporter or a journalist.*

L E V E L 2



**Chuli Zeng, Grade 8**  
**Individual Entry**  
**Irvine**

*Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry

**Dear Lois Lowry,**

I have so often spent countless hours sitting criss-cross on the carpet with my mesmerized eyes glued firmly to the TV screen. Watching the bright red capes whizzing before me, I had frequently wished that I could be one of them, one of the superheroes that everyone adores and admires. Perceiving the impossibility of this, I sighed as disappointment washed over me when I told myself over and over again that there is no way I could ever be a hero. But after reading your book, *Number the Stars*, I realized how wrong I was. Before, I never could have imagined that a ten-year-old girl could ever act as brave and courageous as a true hero. You have, without a doubt, opened up my eyes to a brand new way to view the world.

Like Annemarie, I have never considered myself to be brave either. I had always been kind of shy and quiet back in elementary school. I think that's what made me such an easy target for bullies. I had a really good friend though, and whenever my classmates teased me she was by my side the whole time. I'm really thankful to her for always standing up for me and defending me. She was my hero just as Annemarie was Ellen's.

When Annemarie was lying in her bed in the middle of the night, she admitted to herself the same thing I have told myself many times. I have been repeatedly glad to have been born an ordinary person who will never have a need for courage. I think the reason I declared this proclamation to myself was because I had no clear idea what being a hero truly means. I knew that it required bravery; however, I wasn't quite sure what the word bravery actually meant. I had thought that being brave just