

Honors LA 10  
Monday December 9, 2013

### Journal Entry: Newspaper Format

After reading "My Story: A New Beginning," respond to the following questions in your journal.

1. Structural elements: what elements of the design and layout make it clear that this is a newspaper article? Is there anything traditional or necessary to a newspaper article that may be missing? Be detailed.
2. Message/significance: What is the message or theme that this article is offering, and why is it worth preserving and sharing? What makes it interesting, or worth reading, to the audience, even if this person's life is very different from yours? Circle or underline the sentence or two in this article that you think best summarizes the message.
3. Organization: how well did the author organize the timeline and action of this story? Is there a "hook"? How does it flow? How are large or broad statements supported by specific details? How well does the end of the piece summarize the story and message, and reflect on the big picture?
4. Your story: considering as much as you currently know about your interview subject and what they might say, do you think this could be an appropriate format for preserving your oral history? Why or why not?

# My Story: A New Beginning



The Mockingbird Society's newest Network Representative, Kat McCarthy.

I am now a 22 year old Seattleite, born and raised, and I feel so old. There were definitely plenty of times I did not think I'd make it out of my adolescence alive. Now here I am sharing my story for the benefit of other youth trying to navigate their way to adulthood and I've actually grown to love my city, with the help of some awesome homeless young adult services.

For myself there were many bumps in the road that made my journey not such a straight and easy line. I was not really a happy child, and my childhood was not very pristine. I moved out when I was 13 years old, and it was the 1st best thing that had ever happened to me. I lived with family friends, then friends, then friends of friends, or basically anywhere I could, including squats, bridges, benches, and bushes. I would sometimes stay at some youth homes, but nothing consistent or stable, and nowhere for more than 3 months since the age of 13. Consequently, not much else was too stable or consistent either including

school, work, relationships, and pretty much everything else.

However, through all of this I still managed to get through middle school, high school, and Running Start, while homeless and supporting myself. I graduated with my diploma on time from Ingraham High School in 2009 and that is probably the most amazing thing that I've ever done.

When I was underage I learned to avoid the system like the plague. I had horror stories of foster care in my head, and bad experiences with authority on top of that. So I worked hard to avoid being placed in foster care, and avoided case workers running my life, and losing my choice in everything all over again. I was finally out of my parent's house and I was not just going to fall into similar hands, and have the state enforce it. That's why I did it all on my own for so long.

I've attempted to have my own apartment, a job, and go back to college three different times. But none of it ever worked out until I was accepted into YouthCare's Barista Program. Through that program I was hooked up with awesome counselors, advocates, and case managers. They have been an amazing support to me of which I have never experienced before. In November of 2011, I moved into my own one bedroom apartment through a program with the YMCA. This, I can say, is the 2nd best thing that has ever happened to me. I am still in the same program and the same apartment today, both of which I have always only dreamed of.

Now I realize that there are many factors that contribute to what my life has been

like. Many of those factors are not so great; childhood, parents, experiences, and traumas. But now I have come to gain a better perspective on these contributors, and no longer have to blame myself for my past "failures."

I have lived my life through quite a bit of trial and error, I have to say. But, luckily I'm a quick learner and I have come a long way recently. For instance, I learned that I was an addict this fall when I was admitted into an in-patient treatment center for women. Which now I can actually say was the 3rd best thing that has ever happened to me. I am now five

months clean and sober. Through these factors and my housing, I've been able to learn that I am employable as well, and I now work for The Mockingbird Society which could likely end up being the 4th best thing that has ever happened to me.

I am so stoked to be working with The Mockingbird Society because they are doing exactly what I have always dreamed of being able to do with my experiences, observations, reflections, and introspections

someday; so they won't have to have been for nothing. I am so grateful that I can grow and develop here as well, and be empowered by The Mockingbird Society's nurturing philosophies and values towards its Youth Network Representatives. As I plan to make my career in this field and earn my bachelors' of applied behavioral sciences at Seattle Central Community College, I am very excited to have this opportunity. The opportunity to learn more about the child welfare system, to explore positive ways to improve it, and to be a partner in actually creating that change with The Mockingbird Society.

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