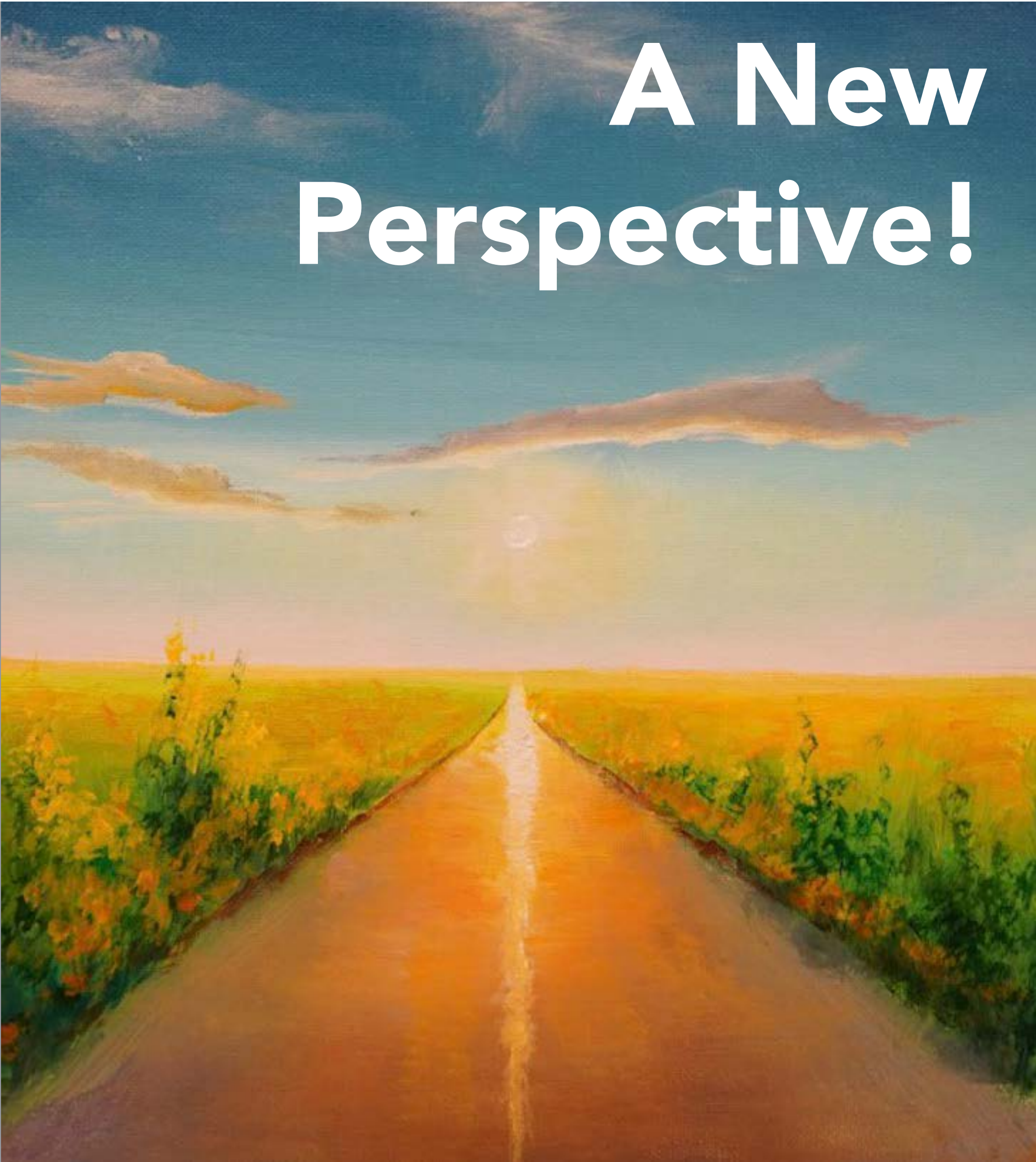


iWRITER

January 2024 | Issue 15

By Kids, For Kids Magazine

A New Perspective!



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

As I write this letter, I sit amid towering red rock structures in Sedona, Arizona, on a two-day vacation I realized I desperately needed. I felt some amount of resetting, relaxing, and, yes, celebration was in order as I reached the halfway point of my senior year. The vibrations from the spiritual vortexes in Sedona did the trick.

I dislike resolutions; they vanish into thin air as days progress in the new year. So, each year, I make a few promises to myself. I'll share my top four for 2024 here so you can hold me accountable; accountability, after all, is the key to progress.

So here. Hold me to these promises. Pretty please. In 2024, I'll:

1. take life as it comes — no expectations, just open arms. It's cliché but key for someone with an affinity for certainty and control like me.

2. continue being unapologetic, whether it be about my dorky-wired headphones or the dramatic Bollywood films I binge.

3. continue diving deep into topics that fascinate me and swinging for the fences in all my pursuits.

4. strive to become a better listener.

I hope the pieces in this issue of the iWRITER will resonate with you and perhaps motivate you to create your own list, whether mentally or in writing, of promises that you'll work to keep in the new year. The evocative poems and articles certainly entertained and engaged our team, sparking alternate perspectives as we pieced together issue 15 of the iWRITER magazine. Wishing you a very happy New Year.

Warmest wishes,

Eshaan Mani

Editorial Director

I WRITE for the rush of adrenaline I feel when my pen touches the paper. It is that exhilarating experience and the opportunity to not only get my voice out to the public but also be able to be the voice of inspiring people and organizations that inspires me to write.



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My Generation's Legacy with AI

Artificial Intelligence is an intensely debated topic as it's becoming important in our daily activities. As it evolves, people should use it virtuously to solve complex obstacles in today's world. Let's not let AI's negative possibilities overtake the good it may do. After all, the voices of my generation will drive AI's future. How can students, from grade schools to universities, positively direct the path of this powerful tool?

The Evolution of AI

AI is becoming more precise in how it summarizes and delivers information from the internet. I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Mumtaz Vauhkonen, a Lead Distinguished Scientist in AI with a Ph.D. in Machine Learning. "AI will evolve much like humans have evolved because as we learn more, we become more efficient. Likewise, as AI has access to more models, it will have an increased capacity to compute and become smarter."-Dr. Mumtaz Vauhkonen.

As Dr. Vauhkonen explains, many mundane tasks, such as harvesting strawberries, will be performed quicker with AI. It may even help people like basketball coaches. To illustrate, AI can detect how basketball players shoot hoops from various angles and find the reason why they miss shots. AI is capable of doing truly marvelous things because of the evolution of human ingenuity behind it.

Creativity and AI

As AI takes over tedious work, humans may focus on creating and designing better models. "AI began by turning images into computations. Because the computer processors which run it are

becoming less expensive, we can now use it as a powerful tool that analyzes and designs better solutions."-Dr. Vauhkonen

Dr. Vauhkonen explains that AI provides solutions for decisions and dilemmas by gathering information from the internet, but it still lacks human creativity. It easily summarizes vast amounts of information but does not create new information. Only humans are able to think, create, and design new ideas at this point in time.

Benefits of AI in the Future

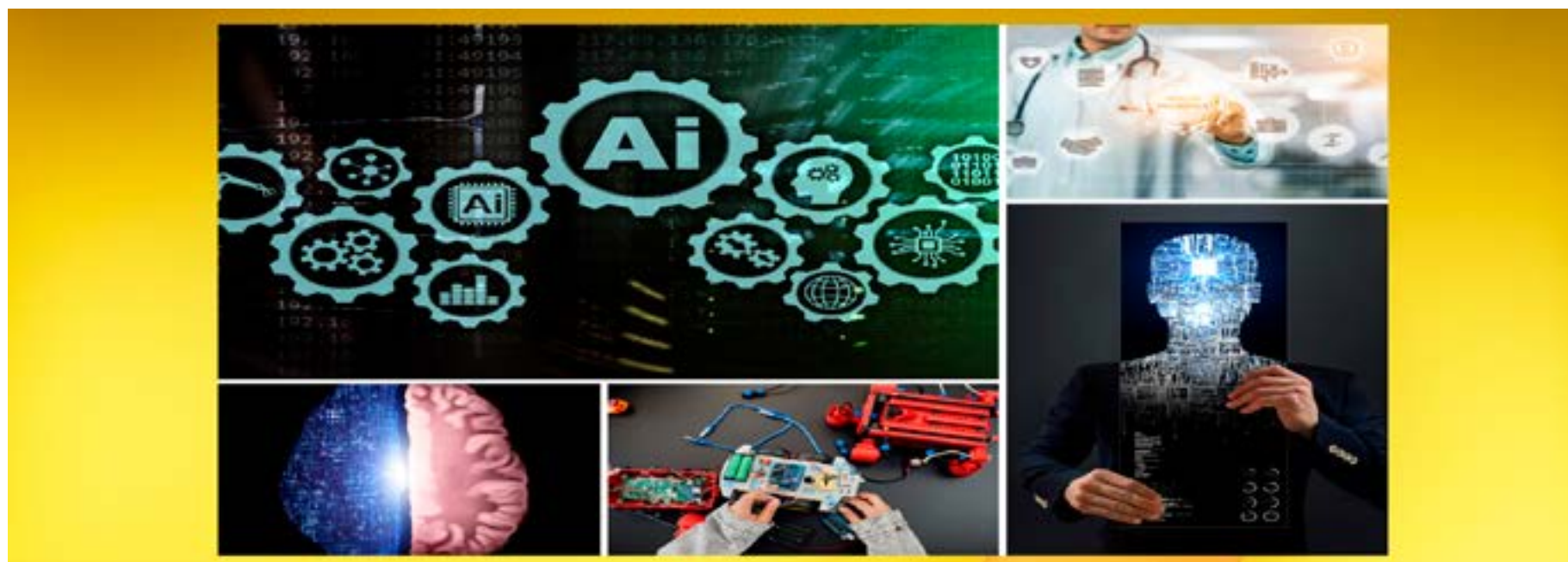
Dr. Vauhkonen developed Level 3 AI, which assists human automobile drivers. It is used to design a safety feature that analyzes whether a human driver is alert. In the future, humans will benefit from automobile computer models that determine safe and unsafe driving conditions. When AI technology is built with human privacy "guardrails" in place, it helps humans feel safe. Many AI machines may assist disabled or blind people with challenging activities.

Conclusion

The future of AI will be determined by students who are currently in school and may be the AI scientists of tomorrow. How will we direct the path of AI's evolution to enhance and assist with human creativity as we make it beneficial for humans?

BY Tanvi Padala

I WRITE because words are the sound of my thoughts and let me be creative. Through writing, I can escape to impossible worlds, experience magic, and create imaginative characters. Writing brings a tremendous amount of joy and relaxes me.



5 Tips for Embracing Change

Life is a dynamic journey filled with many ups and downs. Adjusting to new challenges can be difficult, but having the right mindset can help those transitions go smoother. Here are five tips to help you embrace change in your life and ultimately bring new perspectives.

Cultivate a Positive Mindset

Embracing change begins with embracing a positive mindset. Understand that change is a natural part of life, so looking at it optimistically will make the process easier. Instead of focusing on the past, look to the future and see what it offers.

Practicing gratitude is another great way to embrace change by looking for the positives and benefits in a situation.

Embrace Learning and Growth

View the change in your lifestyle as an opportunity instead of a hurdle. Approach this new challenge with curiosity and willingness to learn. Embracing a growth mindset allows you to become resilient as you tackle the challenges that come with change.

Change can become an opportunity for personal growth and allow you to learn more about yourself.

Maintain Family and Friend Relationships

You might have heard someone say humans are social creatures. This is very true, and during times of difficult change, it is important to maintain your support system.

Reach out to friends or family that might have had experiences similar to what you're going through. They can provide valuable advice and insight. Sharing your thoughts or feelings with others can make the adjustment period of change less stressful and make you feel like you're not alone.

Establish a Routine

Creating a daily schedule can reduce the stress and anxiety that comes with change. Prioritizing self-care and taking care of your mental health when experiencing challenges is important. Important things to maintain are exercise, sleep, healthy eating habits, and relaxation.

Change can bring feelings of instability, so maintaining a routine

can remove some of that tension.

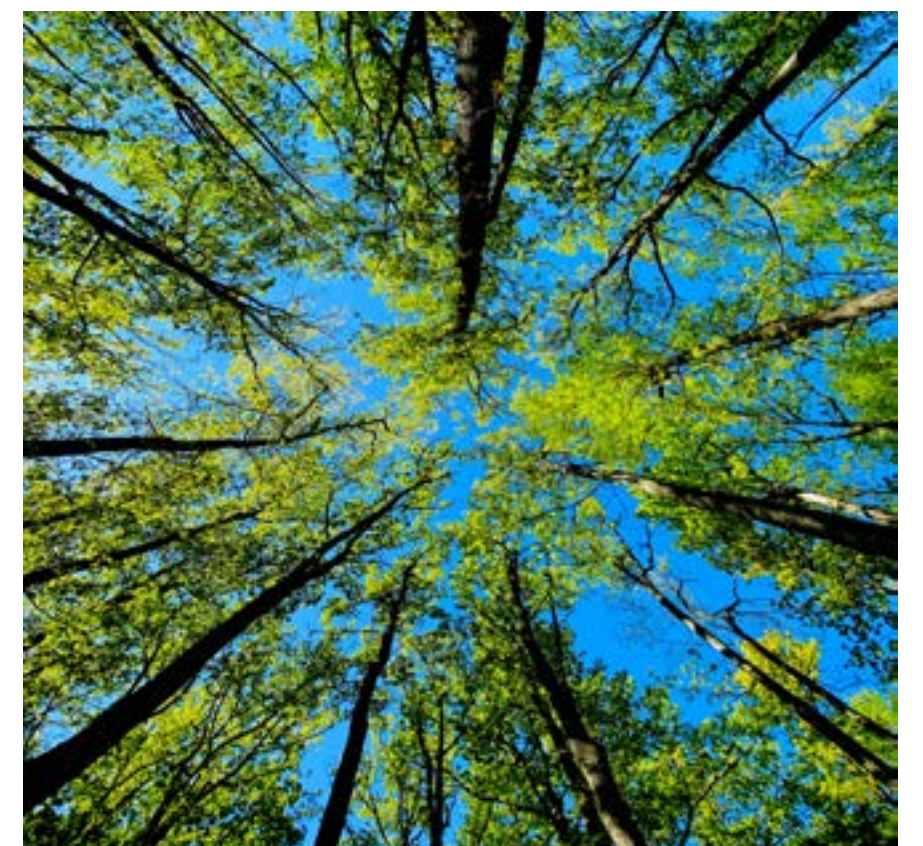
Set Realistic Goals

View the change in your lifestyle as an opportunity instead of a setting achievable goals is extremely important during times of change. Creating these smaller, realistic goals can make the adjustment process less overwhelming and more manageable. Achieving these small goals along the way allows you to progress and gain confidence. Creating these goals lets you find purpose and motivation as you focus on the positive aspects of change.

Altogether, change is an inevitable part of life, so it's important to navigate it with the right mindset. By cultivating a positive mindset, embracing learning and growth, maintaining relationships, establishing a routine, and setting realistic goals, adjusting to change becomes more manageable. Remember that coping with change can be challenging, but it also poses an opportunity to grow and become a better version of yourself.

BY Shaiwi Moparthy

I WRITE because writing is a way for me to express myself and it helps me connect to my artistic side. I enjoy writing because it allows me to reflect on experiences that I have encountered. Writing is something that I truly enjoy, and it has always been one of my greatest passions.



The Power of Pivoting Perspectives

Now, it's increasingly easy to find ourselves stuck in echo chambers. Especially with the ever-climbing rise of social networks and media sites, even worse, we unknowingly are trapped in filter bubbles. When you are surrounded by people not only going along with your idea but backing it aggressively, it can be hard to conceive the feasibility of opposing ideas; which is understandable. It is, however, important to recognize the repercussions of the same idea bouncing throughout multiple brains without any nuanced thoughts or differing opinions. As the pithy saying goes, "The first step is admitting you have a problem."

Echo chambers themselves aren't necessarily a problem, but not going beyond our respective mental comfort zones and entertaining contrasting viewpoints is.

When you're in an echo chamber, it's hard to notice because of the rose-tinted glasses worn when everyone agrees with us. If everyone agrees, how could it be a bad thing? Surely, nothing incorrect would have this many subscribers, right?

I too have fallen victim to the echo chamber mentality.

My personal favorite defense is "I'm right, that's why everyone agrees with me."

Whereas a healthier first reaction might be: "This is strange, why can't I find any opposing viewpoints." But that stance would force me to take off my aforementioned rose-tinted glasses, and who wants to do that? Realistically, however, it's important to get as many sides of an argument as possible to avoid ending up on a side of which you don't truly align.

The court of public opinion often appoints a harsh jury. Unfortunately, ignorance is typically not viewed as an acceptable plea.

When we hear about people pleading "I didn't know that [insert opposing side here] felt that way!," it can be hard to believe because, on the outside looking in, we see both sides and assume that the defendant must either live under a rock or on a different planet.

The respondent was tragically a victim of an echo chamber. They had been told too frequently that their position was the only correct option. Due to their failure to venture outside of their bubble, they were denied

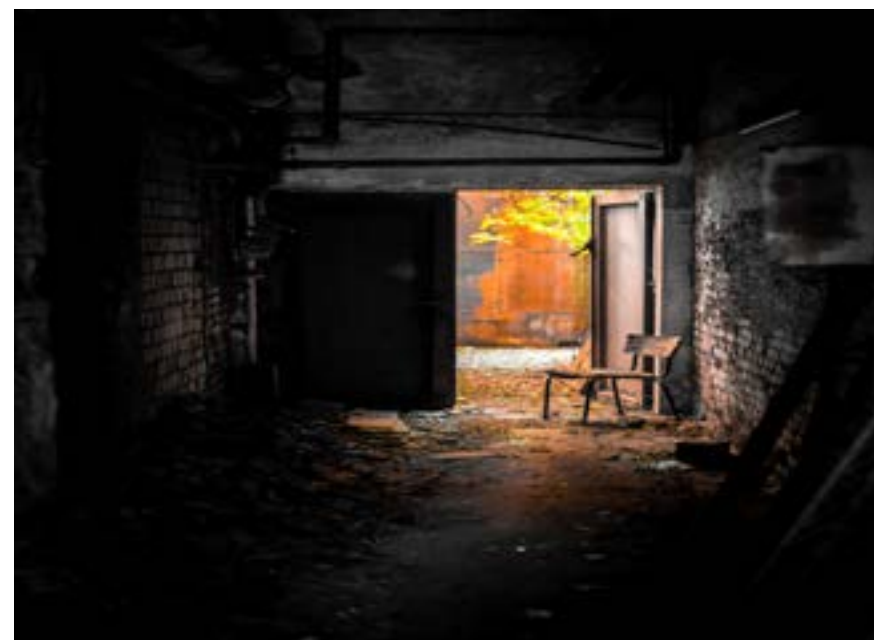
the opportunity to see other outlooks and expand their vantage point.

Without knowing all parts of the equation, how is one supposed to arrive at a well-thought and genuine answer?

Most things in life aren't black and white. Most of our opinions lie in the gray.

Commonly, we won't have a stance with no exceptions, addendums, or alterations. When we are trapped in echo chambers, however, it can seem that there is only black and white. But when you gather points you consider valid from the black side and mix them with your pre-existing points on the white side (or vice versa), you get gray. No one can solve the equation $2 + x + y + z = ?$ without first being given x , y , and z . So, how could we arrive at conclusions without having different perspectives on the given subject matter?

So, as you ring in the New Year, open the door to a new outlook. You don't have to change your perspective; you don't even have to take any of my advice. Regardless, just try to be open to hearing out opposing views. Eventually, perhaps you'll notice your perspective lends more similarities to a pendulum than fixed.



BY Lexi Bumah

I WRITE because writing for me is a mental massage and an authentic way to express myself. In-person I'm shy. When I have the opportunity to write, I find it exhilarating. I love having the ability to convey my feelings, without feeling uncomfortable.

Helen Zhang Poetry

By using the objects around her, the culture that defines her, and the creativity that brews inside her, Kinkaid School junior Helen Zhang writes poems to express herself and find her place in the world.

This past year, Zhang composed her poetry collection for publication, *Passion: (The Sweetest Fruit of All)*. When approaching the challenge of self-publishing, Zhang had to think of her poems in a new way: her work was no longer singular pieces but one cohesive collection.

Zhang frequently looked into the works of other poets, drawing inspiration on how to create her work. She was tasked with pulling works she had created years previously and renovating them to the quality of her current poems. Though it was a complex revision process, it allowed Zhang to reflect on her growth and the values present across her work.

"It's a daunting task, but the most important part is to believe in yourself and your poetry. With enough determination, publishing a book isn't as impossible as many think," Zhang said.

Zhang's work can be purchased on Amazon in paperback.

In addition to her successful publication, Zhang was awarded the title of Kinkaid Poet Laureate. Ms. Angelique Jamail, a creative writing teacher at The Kinkaid School, has been working to enhance the creative writing program at Kinkaid, particularly by showcasing students' writing.

Students applied for the position of Poet Laureate by submitting their poetry alongside essays describing their interest in the opportunity and the role of Kinkaid and poetry in their lives. Ms. Jamail and Mr. Scott Lambert, head of Fine Arts at Kinkaid, were in charge of selecting the first-ever Kinkaid Poet Laureate.

Due to her excellent poetry, including unique meter and imagery, Zhang was selected for Poet Laureate.

The Laureate role is not exclusive to writing poems but also presenting them aloud. Zhang had experienced this in creative writing readings, but with her new title, she was tasked with presenting her

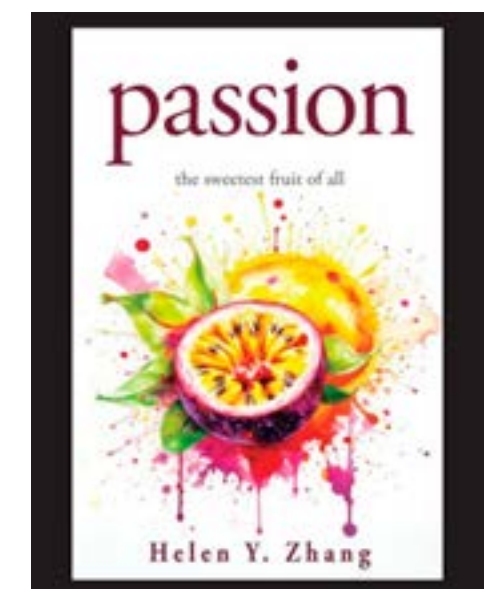
work to the entire school. Her first presentation as Poet Laureate was at the Margaret Kinkaid performance.

"I was extremely nervous at the prospect of presenting my poetry to the entire audience, but I'm grateful for the opportunity and enjoyed it," Zhang said.

Since the age of eight, writing has always been something special to Zhang—an outlet for discovery and reflection.

For example, one of Zhang's favorite poems that she wrote was entitled "Mortal Goddess." Deriving inspiration from the ocean of her parents' hometown, Dalian, Zhang wrote vividly about loss and experimented with different structures and line breaks within the piece.

"From being able to express my emotions to finding my own identity and place in the world, poetry has been a powerful factor in my life, both at school and at home," Zhang said.



BY Cami Culbertson

I WRITE because it makes me feel powerful. Normally in my everyday life, I feel small or insignificant in the grand scheme of things. When I write and have the ability to publish, I feel like I am making my mark. Even if what I am writing about seems small, the fact I can share my voice in works like magazines where I am alongside talented writers, makes all the work I do feel significant to me. I enjoy keeping what I write, no matter how old, so I can reflect back on the work I have done and feel confident. Writing is the articulation of everything I cannot express otherwise.

Pause That Thought Podcast

In a world filled with constant noise and distractions, finding a moment to pause, reflect, and gain new perspectives is a rare and valuable commodity. With 2023 behind us, and a New Year arising, it's a powerful time for new perspectives.

It's a topic that's always fascinated me- the idea of drawing and reframing new ideas. I held that thought in mind when I launched the "Pause that Thought" podcast, a unique philosophy podcast that explores the realms of movies, life advice, and books.

As in the name, this podcast is mainly about stopping a moment or scene of a particular media and exploring and analyzing it from all angles.

Pause That Thought delves into the profound connections between philosophy, popular culture, and real life, bridging the gap between seemingly unrelated topics, such as movies and books, to successful mentalities, philosophical thought experiments, and more. The episodes weave connections between fictional narratives and real-world scenarios, encouraging listeners to contemplate the implications of the stories they encounter in various forms of media. By

dissecting the narratives and characters, the podcast guides listeners to view literature as more than just entertainment, but as inspiration.

The Life Advice segment of the podcast also provides a platform for experts such as authors, life coaches, and more to share their wisdom and perspectives. From career guidance to personal development, the Pause for Thought podcast offers a fresh outlook on the world. For those interested, you can listen on Spotify or Apple Music or go directly to the website <https://pausethatthought.wixsite.com/official>.

It's important to be able to use creative media for real life, practical purposes- stimulating the mind in a way that other methods can't. As we embark on a new year, the Pause That Thought podcast serves as a reminder to pause, reflect, and consider alternative perspectives through the books we read and the movies we watch.

BY Matthew Jeong

I WRITE because I want to share the stories of myself and others out into my community, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration. Whether it be inspirational experiences, learning opportunities, or simply just fun and quirky events, I like to add to my community's culture and bond.

A Place for Poetry

Featured Poems From the iWRITER Staff

NUMERAL BEGINNINGS

There are 8 billion people in the world,
8 billion different sunsets,

8 billion different shades of lilac and pastel blue bleeding into
glows of bronze and crimson,

8 billion different night skies,
8 billion renditions of constellations, diamonds embedded in
warm indigo flesh,

8 billion views of the moon.

There are 140 million lives born every year.
140 million cries, their tears bleed silver and gold into the hearts
of their mothers,

140 million souls unleashed, each a unique timbre, together
they splash color into the indistinguishable chorus of the world.

140 million new beginnings.

There are 700 people in my high school.
700 perfect smiles on picture day, eyes arranged into constellations
that shine bright with a unique hope,

700 dreams, so strong they are almost tangible, we chase their
mist and vapor trails straight into the sun.

700 people become the world I now associate with home,
700 people look into the sunset and see a myriad of shifting
textures,
700 people were once nothing more than new beginnings.

BY Helen Zhang

I WRITE because, in a world where so much is uncertain, my imagination is always reliably creative and available. I know that, in times of stress, poetry and literature are always ways to find release and consistency in my life.



THE GLASS

In life's vast realm where thoughts roam,
New choices arise, to claim or disown.
The decision you make, is it wrong or right?
Is the glass half full, or half empty in sight?

Some see the world through lenses of despair,
Where shadows cast their sadness, dull and bare.
Is the glass half empty? This is where their minds dwell.
But their minds are imprisoned in a confining cell.

Others will find a different point of view,
Where the glass is half full, fresh, and new.
This point of view can bring you out of the dark.
This is where hope begins to spark.

New perspectives are like windows to the soul,
They shape our lives and make us whole.

The way you see the world can change your view.
It can collapse your life or make it anew.

BY Sanvi Pandit
I WRITE because writing is my way to share what I think and feel. Composing stories and poems helps me tell the world about myself without feeling scared.



ECHOES OF RENEWAL

new
hearts, minds, opportunities
we're not leaving ourselves behind
instead stepping into a new reality

a reset, not a restart
the power lies within our hands
to stay in control not change

“new year, new you” rings through our mind
but reflect, don't remove-let your core bind you
for growth is a journey, gaining sparkles, small and bright,
until you shine as a diamond emerging from the night

new beginnings unfold,
hearts and minds aglow,
as we embrace what's true,
the metamorphosis of life, as you evolve, bold and tough.

BY Nia Shetty
I WRITE because of the joy I feel when I put a new idea down on paper. To be able to bring feelings and emotions to the reader, through ideas that I get to express.



LEARNING TO FLOAT

In a small corner shop, they sell names.
Mama drags me over,
points a bony finger to recite:

If you find your name, luck is with you.

And so we dive into the pool of sweaty bodies,
an elbow swings past my left eye—

marbles clack against the splintered wood
separating your fate from mine,

something glistening in the snow
wild-maned and rolling like the tide—
its forever hum in a periwinkle

I am fishing through the pearly beads for
a character.

I am eight, flying
in a tube of my own saliva.
A vent slips air into the crack beneath
my goggles. Teary-eyed, toothy smile.

top!

I like this blue plastic suit. Fly me to the
My asthmatic breath wheezes out
the neon-striped birthday candles.

The iFLY staff watch me, ask me if I'm okay.
It hurts to breathe so I say,

Can I go again?

Dull, dead sand dollar.
Lies in the center of my palm. I never knew
something like this could be once alive. Scuttling
at the sea floor with velvety tube feet.

I bury the lotus root in sand and say
goodbye. Soon, it'll be scrubbed and sifted
by the waves into a kind of remembrance.

Hard calcium disk
caps itself on detritus.

Crossed chopsticks pick up
a slippery dumpling. Steam rises

like silk. I dip the broth-filled pocket
into garlic vinegar. Fish meatball.

It rhymes with fish meatball. Mama tsks,
taps her chopstick against her ceramic bowl.

Eat.

I am swinging mulch from
the bottom of my stained converses. The rusty chain bites
the inside of a blistered knuckle.

For a moment, my fingertips touch
a cloud.



BY Sophie Yu
I WRITE to let my thoughts, feelings, and ideas spread across the paper. To form and create a story that can be told in any perspective, described with any words. Writing can create a whole new world.

Youth Club Recommendations

Food and celebration cannot help but go hand-in-hand during the holiday season, creating unforgettable memories for families around the world. In the spirit of recent holiday festivities, here are some tasty recommendations from our very own iWRITE Youth Club, as well as a link to each recipe. May each sweet treat and succulent snack fill you with a wave of joy and inspiration as we say hello to 2024!

Recommendation: Peppermint Bark

By: Eshaan Mani - Youth Club President

Why:
Eshaan and his family enjoy making this crunchy delicacy every year at home. You can't go wrong with peppermint bark to bring loved ones together during the holiday season!

Link: [Peppermint Bark Recipe](#)



Recommendation: Gulab Jamun

By: Shaivi Moparthy - Youth Club VP

Why:
Gulab jamun is one of Shaivi's favorite holiday foods. Her grandma usually makes gulab jamun for the family on Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights. Shaivi writes, "This food is special to me, not only for its delicious sweet flavor, but also because it symbolizes the joy of Diwali for me and my family."

Link: [Gulab Jamun](#)



Recommendation: Gingerbread Cookies

By: Cami Culbertson - Outreach Officer

Why:
Every year, Cami loves meeting with friends to decorate little gingerbread "people." Cami writes that though the designs are simple, the blank canvas of the cookie allows her and her friends to creatively make their gingerbread people however they like.

Link: [Gingerbread Cookie Recipe](#)

BY Sanjna Pandit

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Youth Club Recommendations

Recommendation: Double Ka Meetha

By: Tanvi Padala - Marketing & Social Media Officer

Why:
Double Ka Meetha is a sweet and tasty Indian dessert that Tanvi's grandmother makes around the holidays with Tanvi's assistance.

Tanvi says, "The aroma of the ghee-soaked bread and flavors of cardamom and saffron captivate all my senses and add a touch of joy and festivity to the surrounding atmosphere.

As my family works together in the kitchen to prepare Double Ka Meetha, we make memories that will last forever."

Link: [Double Ka Meetha Recipe](#)

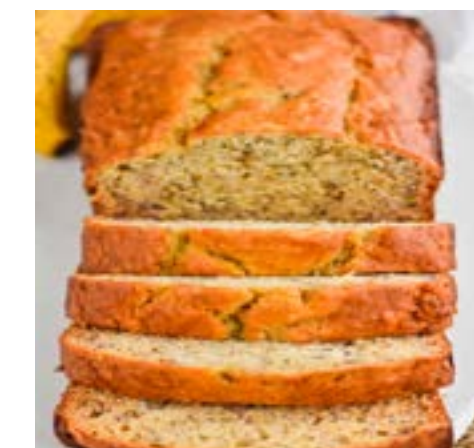


Recommendation: Banana Bread (Christmas Edition)

By: Nia Shetty - Treasurer

Why:
Nia's family bakes banana bread throughout the year; during the holiday season, they add nutmeg, cinnamon, and occasionally gingerbread flavoring. Nia can tell you firsthand, "It tastes delicious, and everyone should give it a try!"

Link: [Banana Bread Recipe](#)



Recommendation: Black-Eyed Peas

By: Sanvi Pandit- One of our Copy Editors

Why:
Sanvi and her family eat black-eyed peas on the first day of the new year. According to Southern traditions, eating black-eyed peas will give you a year of good luck and prosperity.

Link: [Black-Eyed Pea Stew Recipe](#)
(one of the many ways you can cook with black-eyed peas!)

BY Sanjna Pandit

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