

2017 Human Rights Creative Expression Contest

Official Entry Form

DEADLINE FOR THE 2017 CONTEST IS 5PM ON TUESDAY 28, FEB. 28, 2017
at the Beaverton City Hall (Bytn Bldg at The Round) Human Resources Department.

Student Name: NANDINI NAIDU

(Please note that each participant must fill out a form. Please attach all forms to the entry being submitted.)

Parent/Guardian Name: Rama Naidu

Address: ~~12386 SW Corvallis~~ 4275 SW 148th Ave.
Beaverton, OR 97078

Phone: 503-803-2666

Email: nandin.t.naidu@gmail.com

School: VALLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Teacher name and email: MARTY KARLIN, mkarlin@valleycatholic.org

Grade Level: 11

Name or Title of Entry: The Subway Man

Where did you hear about this Contest? TEACHER

Did you use the QR (smart) code on a flyer to reach the CEC webpage? NO

My signature indicates that I understand that all entries will be displayed publicly for up to one year. I also agree that if I am a winner/runner-up, my name, school's name, winning entry and photo may be published in local newspapers and other media, and on the City of Beaverton website.

Entries can be picked up from the Human Resources Dept. at City Hall in June 2017.

Nandini T. Naidu 3/1/17 Marty Karlin for 3/1/17

Student signature Date Parent/Guardian signature Date

Please attach this completed form *securely* to your Human Rights Essay Contest entry. Thanks!

The Subway Man

It is a bright sunny afternoon. The Manhattan streets bustle with lunch goers rushing back to work. I am walking out of the M&M store with a bag of green M&Ms and at least a dozen melting in my mouth. My sister and I float down the sidewalk and the smell of pretzels and hot dogs make my mouth water. We walk through a flurry of shiny metal scaffolding before walking down the subway station steps.

The clear warm summer air turns into stuffy hot air that hugs me tightly as I walk towards the turnstiles. The F train is fast approaching. My sister pulls her MetroCard out, swipes it through the scanner, and glides through the turnstiles in one swift motion. I fumble through my pockets searching for my MetroCard. "I told you to bring a purse" my sister says. "Hurry up!" I swipe my bent MetroCard through the scanner and it blinks in small red letters -- low balance. The F train stops and my sister is waving her hands like a maniac. I look to the left and then the right scanning for a bright orange vest. Seeing no one in the vicinity I hurdle over the bars and run towards the closing doors of the F train as the announcement THE DOORS ARE CLOSING start blaring. I sit down next to my sister and heave a sigh of relief.

Across from us sits a man in his fifties. His hair is matted in the back and his body is littered with piercings. He smells faintly of whiskey. He is muttering something to himself, but I can't quite understand. I don't look directly at him, but I can feel his eyes trained on me and my sister. He starts to say something a little louder to himself and the man sitting next to him scoots away. I almost think I hear him garble ISIS under his breath. I can feel the intensity of his stare increasing. His glare is emanating heat. He stares us down and raises his voice " You people are the reason this country is being ruined. Why don't you go back to where you came from?". The air turns into a hot suffocating straitjacket. I can see the other people in the subway car staring at

us. My sister grabs my hand and squeezes it tight. A snarky comeback pops up in my head -- *Why don't you go back to where you come from? Germany, Britain, or France maybe?* -- but I am paralyzed, my throat is stuffed with cotton balls, and I say nothing. I finally break free from the paralysis -- Flushing, NY THE DOORS TO MY LEFT ARE OPENING.

My sister grabs my hand and her bag and we rush out of the subway. We spend the next 20 minutes on our bus ride in silence -- we're still holding hands. A million thoughts are running through my head. *Why didn't I stand up for myself. I could have said something. I'm not even Middle Eastern or Muslim, I'm Indian and a Hindu. Do people even know the difference? Why am I being targeted? Do people really see me like this: as one of "them". Should my parents have stayed in India?*

I always knew that people see my skin tone first before the rest of me, but I didn't understand what that perception attached to a person looks like. I didn't think that all it takes for someone to target me is a glance at my brownness and the whisper of my name -- Nandini.