

# Feature Writing

Invitational A Meet • 2018



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School.

From the given information, write a **feature story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. You have **one hour**.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School, located in Texas, has an enrollment of 3,500 students in grades 9-12. After the school dealt with several bullying incidents this year and last, sophomore Theresa Frye started a club called Kind in hopes of changing the atmosphere. The majority of the bullying issues were with females who were attacking other females on various forms of social media. Kind started with about 10 members but quickly grew to 38 members by the end of the semester. The club meets twice a week after school and has one social activity every other weekend. Counselor Judith Hale is the sponsor of the club. Last month, Hale challenged the members, mostly females, to do a service project for the school. After several suggestions were made, the group decided on Theresa's idea: decorate the girls' bathrooms with inspirational quotes and sayings.

For the past three weeks, the club has created various signs and pictures to post throughout the girls' bathrooms. The signs have sayings like "Behind every successful female is a tribe of successful females who have her back;" "When women support each other, incredible things happen;" and "She believed she could, so she did." Hale has been laminating the signs as the group makes them. The group hopes to create 500 signs by the first week of February.

On Saturday, Feb. 10, the club will hang the signs in the female bathrooms and locker rooms across the school as an early Valentine's Day present for all of the female students. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Thursday, Feb. 1.

## ■ THERESA FRYE, sophomore

"I wasn't bullied, but one of my friends was. It was awful. These senior girls trolled her on Instagram and posted nasty, very untrue things about her. Apparently, one of the seniors' boyfriends thought my friend was cute, and that is what sparked all of this mean, horrible stuff. My friend was devastated. She didn't even know the senior girl or the boy. Then, I heard about several other girls who faced similar situations. I was so frustrated and angry, but instead of acting out, my mom talked me into acting up. Or at least that's what she called it — acting above the meanness. I went to Ms. Hale and asked if she would help me start a club. At first I thought about calling the club something like 'No bullies here,' but then I decided I didn't want the word 'bully' in our club name. Ms. Hale suggested 'Kind,' and I loved it.

"Most of the time at the club meetings, we talk and share stories to support each other. We've had a few guest speakers, but for the last month we've been working solely on the bathroom signs. It's been great. Everyone looks for inspirational quotes or sayings at night and then brings them to our meetings. We have repeated some of the quotes, but we have a huge variety. I think we have more than 300 different signs so far. We also have some with cool artwork of power-

ful women, like Wonder Woman and Michelle Obama. We have five guys in the club, and I think they've been the most into the sign project. It's been a great experience for the club, and I can't wait to decorate the bathrooms.

"I got the idea after reading a teen empowerment blog. The author said she was inspired by some cool graffiti in a public restroom. I thought we could inspire, too, but we would do it with permission. What better place to get students to read than in the bathroom?"

"I am not sure why we had so many bullying incidents at the beginning of the year. I love our school and the students. It's been a great place to grow up. I don't know why those girls felt the need to be so mean and hurtful. I guess they weren't comfortable with themselves and had to bring others down so they could feel bigger and better. It's really pretty sad. I hope the signs make them think a little. Women are so much more powerful when they support each other rather than tear each other down."

#### ■ **JUDITH HALE, counselor**

"Theresa and the club members have been working hard, and this project will be positive for the school. When I asked Principal Richtner for permission to hang the signs, she actually teared up. She absolutely loved the idea.

"We have good students here at Leaguetown. They just don't think sometimes. I don't think the girls who were mean realized how damaging their acts could be. Words hurt, and they last a lot longer when they are written all over the internet.

"My favorite quote that the club used was, 'Girls compete with each other. Women empower one another.' It's definite food for thought for our female students."

#### ■ **JUSTINE HELIOS, junior and member of the club**

"I am so excited about this project. I spent most of last weekend searching the internet for inspirational quotes and sayings to empower our female students. I don't know why some girls choose to be mean girls, but I do think these signs are going to make them think. And if we can get them to think, maybe we can get them to change their behavior. My parents own an office supply company, and they donated all of the paper for the quotes. The paper is different neon colors — pink, orange, yellow, blue. The signs are going to stand out in the bathroom, and since Ms. Hale is laminating them, they also should last a long time."

#### ■ **FAITH RICHTNER, principal**

"The club's project blew me away. I went to the last Kind meeting, and the members had signs all over the counselor's conference area. They are beautiful signs with beautiful messages. Maybe next the club will tackle the boys' bathrooms. Every teen needs inspiration."

#### ■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Club members used all different lettering for the signs. Some are hand-written. Some are printed from the computer with all different fonts. A few have artwork. The principal donated the sticky putty to post the signs.

The school has 18 female student restrooms and two female locker rooms.

**DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!**

## INVITATIONAL A • 2018 FEATURE WRITING CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLE STORY

*Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critique/judging. Also, staple one copy of the contest and one copy of the contest tips to each student's returned entry. The purpose of the tips is to provide immediate feedback to students. However, it is not meant to replace written comments from the judge.*

1. Figure out what the story is about and its theme or focus. This story is about a club that is hanging up inspirational quotes in the female bathrooms.

2. The lead of a feature story must grab the reader's attention. It does not have to be a certain length or include the 5Ws and H. It should set a scene and get the reader into the story. Although you have freedom to describe the scene as you think it might have existed, try to stay as close to the copy as you can. Some judges will not want you to wander off the subject too much.

Every female student in the school will receive a Valentine this year — regardless of whether they have a significant other or not.

And this Valentine doesn't contain a lot of calories, nor will it die in a few days.

In fact, it should live quite a long time and possibly leave a legacy of change in its path.

3. Once you get past the lead, make sure you include a nut graph. It tells the reader what the story is going to be about. Follow the nut graph with a direct quote and then go into the transition/quote formula.

### **nut graph**

On Feb. 10, as an early Valentine's Day gift to all female students, the Kind Club will fill the girls' bathrooms and locker rooms with empowering and inspiring quotes and sayings.

### **direct quote**

"I got the idea after reading a teen empowerment blog," sophomore Theresa Frye, the founder of the club, said. "The author said she was inspired by some cool graffiti in a public restroom. I thought, we could inspire, too, but we would do it with permission."

4. After you get past the nut graph, the rest of the story can tell itself through the use of transition/quote formula.

Be sure you attribute after the quote or at least after the first sentence. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution ("Theresa said," not "said Theresa"). Avoid stacking quotes. Try to avoid putting two or more quotes together without placing some kind of transition between them. Also, make sure transitions provide information to help the action of the story and that the quote does not repeat information in the transition.

**transition/story-telling**

This is the Kind Club's first service project. Theresa started the club after several bullying events, specifically those involving females attacking females in the social media realm.

**direct quote**

"I wasn't bullied, but one of my friends was," she said. "It was awful. These senior girls trolled her on Instagram and posted nasty, very untrue things about her. My friend was devastated."

**transition/story-telling**

Because of this, Theresa went to counselor Judith Hale to ask if she could help her start a club.

**direct quote**

"At first I thought calling the club something like 'No bullies here,' but then I decided I didn't want the word 'bully' in our club name," she said. "Ms. Hale suggested 'Kind,' and I loved it."

5. Always use third person. Don't say "our student" or "our own Theresa." Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say "She is so wonderful." These statements are personal opinions and should not be made in a feature story.

6. Always use the verb "said" as the verb of attribution. Don't say "says," "stated," "feels" or any other synonym for "said."

7. Finally, look for a strong quote to use as a closing statement or a statement that will bring the reader back to the beginning of the story. It should give the reader a sense of satisfaction or resolution.

"Women are so much more powerful when they support each other rather than tear them down," she said.

## SAMPLE STORY

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Because of this, Theresa went to counselor Judith Hale to ask if she could help her start a club.

"At first I thought about calling the club something like 'No bullies here,' but then I decided I didn't want the word 'bully' in our club name," she said. "Ms. Hale suggested 'Kind,' and I loved it."

The club grew quickly to 38 members, and last month Hale challenged the members to do a service project for the school.

"When I asked Principal Richtner for permission to hang the signs, she actually teared up," Hale said. "She absolutely loved the idea."

Some quotes for the project include, "Behind every successful female is a tribe of successful females who have her back," "When women support each other, incredible things happen," and "She believed she could, so she did."

"The club's project blew me away," Richtner said. "I went to the last Kind meeting, and the members had signs all over the counselor's conference area. They are beautiful signs with beautiful messages."

The club will hang 500 signs in the 20 female facilities across campus.

"I am so excited about this project," junior Justine Helios said. "I spent most of last weekend searching the internet for inspirational quotes to empower our female students."

Justine and Theresa hope the quotes will get the bullies to think and change their behavior.

"I am not sure why we had so many bullying incidents," Theresa said. "I don't know why those girls felt the need to be so mean and hurtful. I guess they weren't comfortable with themselves and had to bring others down so they could feel bigger and better."

Despite the bullying, Hale said she believes students are inherently good.

"They just don't think sometimes," she said. "I don't think the girls who were mean realized how damaging their acts could be. Words hurt, and they last a lot longer when they are written all over the internet."

Theresa said she hopes the signs make female students think.

"Women are so much more powerful when they support each other rather than tear them down," she said.