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World Studies 3rd/4th Hour

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Although there have been many projects this year, one in particular has stood out.

Whether it was making a website for a museum, promoting nonviolence, or studying our family heritage, human trafficking was the one that had the most importance. The Midland Center for the Arts asked the world studies class to make a website about ancient history. Students had to research ancient civilizations. Promoting Nonviolence helped us communicate with our peers and community members. Several opinions and ideas were expressed at a community nonviolence event held at Meridian High School. The last project of the year was studying family history and genealogy. Some students dated their family back as far as the 1000's. However, *The Chains that Bind Us* not only included serious presentations but also, the human trafficking presentation had a sensitive and emotional side that really stayed with the students. Students can get involved if the work makes them think about ideas they would not normally think about. Activities such as videos/PSAs make projects more enjoyable because multi-media shows the visual and creative sides that students possess. Projects that have a true meaning make students work harder for the final product. The meaning of the human trafficking project had a sense of community which made me realize what exactly I was doing this for. Out of all of the projects our class has done throughout the year, I feel that the human trafficking project has some of the most memorable presentations, emotions, and sense of community.

Teenagers in high school experience a lot of emotions. Many people are sensitive to certain topics, but before this project, I don't think any one of us were as sensitive to human trafficking as we should have been. After finding out what Human Trafficking was the students started researching. I think we all got something different out of it, but all of us wanted it to stop.

When a project such as this one has so many emotional aspects, it makes students that much more interested in learning about it. It makes us work harder to make sure our information is correct while still being cautious about certain ideas. It was very easy to tell how hard we worked when our presentations were seen by many people throughout the community and even the world. Our class has received recognition from senators in Lansing and students from around the world. In May, three other students, including myself, traveled to Lansing to present at the Lattice Club at Michigan State University. Theresa Flores and Senator Judy Emmons are nationally known people who praised our class for studying a topic that was so mature and taboo, yet so prominent in our society.

An important aspect of presentations are the way they are presented. Eye-catching multi-media makes for a better and more enjoyable presentation. Videos and PSAs were a huge part of what drove this project. Making videos that gave the audience information as well as something to think about was a challenge, but also what made this project different from the rest. The PSAs had to be of all original content. This drove students to work harder and make everything rather than getting pictures and videos off of the internet. Public Service Announcement Videos also helped reach out to the community to get their attention about human trafficking.

Community should be important anywhere you go. When the community is involved with projects in school, it makes for an all around better experience. Human trafficking is something that many people do not know much about, so it was our job to let the community know about how dangerous it is. There has been, however, another project this year that involves the community. The non-violence project is something that should be taught everywhere, and our class is lucky to have experienced something like this too. However, promoting awareness to be safe and stop human trafficking also encompasses the idea of nonviolence. I feel that these

two projects could potentially go hand-in-hand because of how similar their ideas were. No matter what the project is, if it doesn't have some sort of meaning, there is no point in doing the project at all.

"A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead paints a very good picture of what this project represents. As a class, we are trying to change the world one step at a time. *This is why The Chains that Bind Us* was such an important project to me. I don't think that any other project has compared to this one. Projects that have emotions, a sense of community, and a meaning truly make a huge difference on whether the project was worth it or not.