

Carson Taylor 3rd place winner

#HateFreeOC Speech

Over the course of history, humans have accomplished the impossible, progressing from Early Man in caves to skyscrapers and airplanes. We have improved leaps and bounds, but one primal impulse we have been unable to shake completely since the beginning has been hate. Hate has driven people to do terrible things, but as we look back on their actions with disgust and loathing, we fall into a trap; we fail to address the causes of hatred, relying on reaction instead of prevention. We prefer to think that hate is something born from evil, that it is a force that only moves the evil among us, but hatred stems from a much simpler place within: ignorance. Ignorance drives us to misconceive, misunderstand, and misappropriate what we do know and project our worst thoughts onto those we don't know. From this ignorance comes a vicious cycle, in which people judge others without cause, attributing what we see as wrong to things such as race, gender, and sexual orientation, leading to discrimination, anger, and hate. It is vital that we break the chain of misinformation that fuels hate if we hope to ever stop hate itself. We must start at the roots, giving people the means from the beginning to address their biases. To do this, we must reach out to our youth, and address what hate means to them. If they harbor resentment, ask them why. Lead them towards a train of thought where logic decides the outcome, not where emotion dictates it. Let them learn from their behavior, not hide from it. Instead of demanding their behavior to change, have them analyze it themselves, and give them the tools they will need to determine right from wrong in their everyday lives. If we change the way our youth view hatred, we change the way they address it. The goal we strive for cannot be instant perfection, but rather constant improvement. Parents, schools, everyone must band together to encourage this mindset. This goal is one that must be achieved by everyone in our community. We must bring hatred into the light, and not let it spread in darkness. If we can help our youth enact change themselves, we ensure that change will last. Generation by generation, we will get closer to true equality. Generation by generation, we will get closer to eliminating hatred once and for all.