

Diversity is the strength of america

Life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The words “ Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” are written on the base of the Statue of Liberty. The Statue of Liberty is an iconic symbol of the United States of America. However, people often lose sight on what the Statue of Liberty really stands for. America is a place, but more importantly it's an idea; an idea that all people have the right to freedom and equality. Diversity is the strength of America. This I believe.

Earlier this year I went to my cousins wedding in New York. His name is Michael and he married his best friend and partner, David. I was so excited for their wedding and I thought everyone else would be too. However, David's parents were so uncomfortable with the fact that their son was gay that they almost refused to go. Throughout most of Michael and David's relationship, David's parents did not even know Michael let alone approve of the relationship or be happy for their son. David's parents ended up going to their wedding. Even though David's parents barely talked to Michael they finally accepted Michael and David's decisions. Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender, and Straight people are all alike in that they want to love and be loved.

Americans are also diverse in their religious beliefs. Although the United States was founded on a principle of religious freedom, many people are intolerant and fearful of those who have a different belief system than them. I have an aunt by marriage who is Muslim. Her name is Tammy. One day Tammy was standing in the checkout line at the local Macys in the mall. She was wearing a headscarf that she wears every day when she goes out in public. While Tammy was in line, she was holding her three-year-old

daughter, Bindie. She noticed a man that was standing in front of her in line. He was staring her down. Curious as to why the man was staring at her, she looked at him and saw that he had lifted his shirt slightly to make a point of showing her that he had a concealed weapon. It was a gun. When Tammy saw that he was making a point of intentionally showing her his gun, she was absolutely terrified for the safety of herself and her daughter. Immediately she thought of where the nearest exits were, how fast she could take off her headscarf to show that she was British and not Middle Eastern, or where in the store she and her daughter could hide from the man with the gun. Bindie could sense how terrified her mother was and started shaking. Tammy could not do anything to help Bindie because she was afraid that if she moved the man might take the gun out. The reason why the man with the gun targeted Tammy is purely because she is Muslim. Some people believe that because some terrorists are Middle Eastern Muslims, all Middle Eastern people or Muslims are bad people. This is just one personal story of a family member of mine, but this is a national problem. Some leaders today are encouraging discrimination, suspicion, and fear towards Muslims, even suggesting that the United States should increase police presence and monitoring in neighborhoods of American born Muslims. This is similar to our country's past history with how the United States discriminated against Americans of Japanese ancestry after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

My family believes that diversity creates different ways of looking at the world that allows people to see things in a way that they usually would not consider. Over the years our family has grown in ways that my white, southern, protestant grandparents never would have imagined when they

were younger. Every year for Thanksgiving my dad's side of the family gets together and has a big dinner. It is always one of my favorite times of the year. In my family there are Catholics, Methodists, Muslims, Atheists, Agnostics, Jews, and deists. Some of my family members have ancestors from Britain, Jordan, Germany, Africa, and Ireland. My family members are straight, gay, or lesbian. My family is amazing because even though we have all these different backgrounds and beliefs, we all love each other and treat each other as if we are all the exact same. Because we are.

In 1963, a revolutionary thinker said, " I have a dream, a dream deeply rooted in the American dream, that one day this nation will rise up and live up to its creed, ' We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal' ... I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character". Forty-three years after Martin Luther King Jr. spoke those words, more and more people in our nation value diversity. An increasing number of people accept others regardless of the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, or their sexuality. People are judged by their character, making Martin Luther King's dream come true. I believe that diversity is the strength of America.