

## Impact Statement

Alla Ivantsov, Grade 8.  
***Creating Together***, 2023.  
Digital art, 9 x 14 inches.  
LaVilla School of the Arts, Jacksonville, FL  
Unsung Hero: Pavel Weiner

Initially, I chose a hero in whom I had little interest in. Like a couple of other students, I was lazily browsing through the website, jotting down names of persons on whoever I may or may not base my research, not really paying much thought into their stories. After reviewing my unusually careless thumbnails with my teacher, she was concerned that I wasn't researching these heroes and gaining true inspiration. It wasn't hard for me to admit that she was right. I did feel some guilt about not taking my planning seriously, so my response was as such. Later in the day I found myself scanning around the website looking for yet another person, but this hero genuinely piqued my interest. Pavel Weiner. The words "Children," and "Writing" in the white letters drew my attention. Pavel Weiner was a young boy who created hope in the form of art for others during an extremely difficult time in WWII, where he was kept in a Nazi ghetto camp and slept in a room with about 40 other boys. Despite going through such traumas, Pavel and the other children in the room had the strength to be hopeful, and express their emotion through art. I feel any and all types of art including writing really inspires me. In art created by children who simply want a basic right of freedom, the beautiful emotions really spill out of the pages. I felt touched. These acts of art created by Pavel and the other boys made me think about how children are everyone's beautiful source of hope and happiness. Unlike my previous, (effortless) attempts to create a good thumbnail idea, I began to feel inspired, more importantly, I began to think.

The act of such a young group of boys bringing everyone together. That part of the story stuck with me. Throughout my life, I've overheard children are sometimes described as snotty, stupid, scrawny kids that don't really know what they want or what they're doing, and I strongly disagree. The young hero's actions had shifted my view even more. Pavel showed his bravery by developing and exchanging 10 secret magazines named Neshar throughout the room with the other boys, knowing that he may get into trouble if the authorities found out, just to provide hope and expression for them. Children are born with caring hearts, and I wanted to include that in my artwork. In the piece, you can observe multiple hands of the children uniting and creating one piece of artwork that symbolizes hope in a child's imagination, with rainbows and green grass and a beautiful blue sky. I imagine this is all a child would want, especially considering that they were not allowed to be in school or allowed to leave the room often. Pavel himself created his diary, explaining all the things that were happening to him, all the things that he feared, and all the things he dreamed of. This alone just shows how imaginative a child is, the complete opposite of a snotty, stupid and scrawny description. In my artwork, I wanted to show that children are much more than snotty. I wanted to show that children can create.

My artwork expresses my thoughts of how the children communicated with each other through such an agonizing time. As stated before, and as you can observe in the piece, there are multiple hands of children on one drawing, all putting the pieces together of a picture. A picture

of freedom, and life, things that all children should be exposed to. In my work, I drew in symbolism. Sunrises are commonly seen as warmth and hope, like a new day, a new opportunity. I wanted to also express the pain that the children had went through, as it is very important to note their actual experience. Usually in Nazi camps, they had prisoners wear these striped clothing. I figured adding that piece in could put a lot more depth into the artwork. As you can see on the children frolicking around in the back, they are wearing the striped clothes, along with the indication of a camp in the background. All these aspects illustrate my story in a figurative way, so that it is understandable by a viewer.

Hope is a vital aspect of survival, and I believe everyone should include hope in their life. Without hope, there is a great feeling of despair. In such a horrible place, kids merely 10-13 years old only had hope to cling on too. They came together to create hope. Hope that says everything, every emotion, every thought should be expressed. Whether it is in the form of writing, drawing, painting, or anything else, it is beautiful. This story made me realize that children are one of the most important outlooks of hope in our society. I hope that my interpretation will reach others, and also help them realize the importance of hope and expression in dark times.