

Impact Statement

Sheo Kim, Grade 8.

Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes, Blue Paper, Brown Paper, 2023.

Mixed Media, 12 x 8 inches.

Tyee Middle School, Bellevue, WA

Unsung Hero: Jane Elliott

I found my unsung hero, Jane Elliott, while looking through the approved list, and reading about her there, I found her to be inspirational. Which is why I chose her as my unsung hero for this project. As her Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes experiment really stuck out to me. This fact was due to her act in showcasing what racism and segregation was like in the real world to her young students. For, Jane Elliott was just a third-grade teacher in the 60s when she created the Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes experiment. This was especially inspiring to me because she wanted to address a big, real-life problem that was occurring during the time to her students. She showed them just how vastly different people were being treated because of a physical trait such as the color of their skin, by having them experience it themselves in the classroom with the color of their eyes. Using collars to indicate her blue-eyed students having more privileges while the brown eyed students had less privileges one day and the brown eyed students having more privileges and blue eyed students having less privileges the next. A student who partook in this experiment said it was something you couldn't unlearn and was something unforgettable unlike a math formula. I discovered this experiment she had her students follow particularly interesting and wanted to express it in my art. With this interpretation, I wanted to highlight the blue and brown colors used when she ran the experiment. In which, I used blue and brown colored magazines to make a collage for the background. Wanting to further my interpretation I used the impression of the papers colliding into each other to make it seem like how she had her students switch their given privileges on different days. Having the flying paper connecting this idea even further, as it flies out of her Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes book she wrote later on. In the process of making this artwork, I thought about how a simple act in showing young students a big issue could be so impressionable in influencing them. It made me think about the many things we could be teaching students now using a similar experiment. I want to show others just how important teaching children big issues can be with this art piece.