

Impact Statement

Serenity Balluch, Grade 4.

The Heart of Dr. Helen Taussig, 2020.

Charcoal on paper, 11 x 8.5 Inches.

Lee Elementary School, Manhattan, KS

Unsung Hero: Helen Taussig

I really like how Helen Brooke Taussig continued to try her hardest to achieve her dream even when times were tough. She was not allowed in many medical schools merely because she was a woman. She also suffered hearing loss and relied on sign language and lip reading to learn. She also suffered from dyslexia, which made reading a challenge for her. Her mother died when she was eleven, so her grandfather, who was a physician and had an interest in biology and zoology, influenced her. I believe she is a great role model for women, and a great role model for perseverance. If it were not for her, medicine and healing would be a whole lot different nowadays. If she did not find the cure for Blue Baby Syndrome, a congenital heart defect that causes the heart to not get enough oxygen, around 90 percent of children would die before the age of ten. She was the first woman president of the American Heart Association and received the Medal of Freedom from President Lyndon Johnson. She inspired me that you should never give up on your dreams, and you can achieve great things!

Dr. Taussig developed open heart surgery, and her whole life's work revolved around the heart. The heart was very challenging to draw, but I tried my best and never gave up, just like Dr. Taussig never gave up on her patients! I even shaded it and drew lines outside of it to make it look like it was beating. The heartbeat line represents the beating hearts of the 90% of her patients with Blue Baby Syndrome who survived. Since Helen Brooke Taussig helped develop open heart surgery, I drew a picture of a realistic heart. I drew a heartbeat over it just for fun! I connected with Dr. Taussig because I did something I loved (drawing) to represent something she loved (the heart and healing others).

Drawing is something I have loved since I was three, and it helps me to not care about the world and problems around me. It helps me focus on my creativity and self-esteem. Through this project, I was hit hard by the fact that I could have been one of those babies that Dr. Taussig saved with her lifetime of work. In fact, I am ten years old, the age where Blue Baby Syndrome is less likely to occur. I consider myself lucky, and all the young children she saved are lucky too. I also connected with Dr. Taussig because I never give up on my drawings, and she never gave up on her dream of becoming a doctor. Due to Covid-19, I am unable to share my project in person. Because Dr. Taussig's story is so amazing and inspiring, I want to share it with everyone because men and women can become doctors like her! I will share my project with my community via Zoom. I will connect with my family and friends, share my artwork, and read them what I have learned. My stepmom put the project on Facebook so friends can read Dr. Taussig's story. My mom put it on Instagram to share as well.

The project overall was fascinating, educational, and super fun! I think that the title of my project illustrates that Dr. Taussig had a big heart for saving all those young people. She is such an inspiration.