

Impact Statement

Katlyn Khuu, Grade 11

A Heart to Another, 2026

Colored pencil on paper, 12 x 18 inches

Alief Kerr High School, Houston, TX

Unsung Hero: Lois Gibbs

Where doors were often harder to open, and with a voice of hers easier to ignore, she lived a life told, in ways both forthright and hidden, that she will never belong. Helen Taussig, an American cardiologist born on May 24, 1898, was given a path she had no place to choose; yet, she created a new opportunity for women in the medical field. Alongside the blatant sexism she received, she lived her life with severe hearing loss, surrounded by barriers that would've suffocated anyone. Even so, her resilience and idealization opened an aspect that portrayed people's hate into what defines her.

Most notably known as the founder of pediatric cardiology, Taussig contributed to many groundbreaking concepts, one of which was the Blalock-Thomas-Taussig shunt. A surgical procedure that increases blood flow through the lungs, this life-saving technique was often used for babies who suffered from blue baby syndrome. Categorized as a rare, life-threatening condition that quite frankly makes infants "blue" due to the insufficient flow of oxygen, her pioneering work gave chances to babies who would never have gotten the chance. Although there was only hopelessness for any solutions, Taussig imagined it. Through history and success, her perseverance incorporates the complex relationship between struggle and power. As someone who revolutionized medical technology, Helen Taussig broke through hardened limitations that are still overlooked in society today.

My vision for this artwork was to create a timeline for her life. In my drawing, I chose a young and an older photo of her to show her dedication towards children in need. I decided that incorporating hearts should not be the only focal point, but her tenderness towards children. Her determination, from youth to old age, has inspired many to keep pursuing what they love and not to allow any criticism to fall in between that person and their goal. The impact of Taussig shows that a goal does not have to be a one-time reach, but a way to give back to others and also enjoy what you do. I wanted to make the painting as friendly and approachable as possible.

I wanted a drawing that would acknowledge her deeds, not only as a pediatric cardiologist, but as the person she is. Her morals, kindness, and determination all contribute to her as a person. Not allowing people to bring you down is the message I want to spread, along with Taussig's strong character, evidently becoming a symbol of hope and aspiration. My vision for this drawing was to make it fun and enjoyable, not just for me, but also visually appealing to look at. I wanted a strong vibrancy around the heart to show that a person's heart is a very important part of someone. Of course, it helps people function, but it can also be seen as how someone is. Does

someone have the heart to speak up? Does someone have the heart to make the first move? Her saving children with baby blue syndrome is an accomplishment that will be remembered, and so will her heart keep going.