

# The Language of Friendship

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When I was twelve, my parents took my siblings and I on a mission trip to Vietnam. My job, along with my two siblings, was to work at the local kindergarten to befriend the children of the area.

Day one: I was hit with an intense culture shock. These children, no more than six, ate one meal a day, wore the same clothes as the three prior mornings, never tasted sugar before, and had never seen a digital camera once in their lifetime.

Day two: An hour into the school day, it was evident that regardless of the language barrier, we would be great friends. My sister and I had taught them how to braid hair, (all went home with little braids) taught them American songs, drew with them, ate with them, and took a nap with them, all without communicating a single word to another that could be understood.

Day three: My brother brought bubbles. Boy, did they love the bubbles. We spent the entire day blowing bubbles on one another, on the teachers, in the pond water watching the soapy suds float above the koi's, and most importantly, laughing so hard our lungs hurt. I still had not spoken a fluent sentence to them, yet left school that day with hugs from all of them.

Day four: I brought chalk, my sister brought beads and string to make them jewelry, for they had none, and my brother brought himself, for he planned on wrestling with the boys and teaching them kungfu. I was finally able to speak my words. I was able to draw myself holding their hands, able to draw what the United States looked like, able to teach them symbols of friendship like doves, peace signs, and hearts to show that friendship can be found in animals, their peers, and even strangers like myself.

Day five: the previous night was my siblings' tenth birthday, we had about half a cake to be eaten, so we brought it to the school. Words could not describe how joyous I felt watching them eat their first piece of cake. Their wide eyes widened my heart, revealing the purest joy—one that transcends words and differences. From that moment on, I registered that a friendship is not something spoken; it is felt. It is in the gentle gestures, shared laughter, the unspoken comprehension that we are all connected. As I hugged them goodbye, we posed for a picture, hands flashing peace signs as the teacher took a picture on my Polaroid. The image printed in seconds, but the memories would last far longer. Regardless of the 8,169 miles, a 16-hour flight, and an entire world of differences separated us, distance could never erase the bond built. It lives forever in the laughter we shared, in the warmth of a hug, and in the joys of chalk and bubbles. Then, I realized that friendship—unspoken, pure, and limitless—is the most powerful force in the world, capable of bridging any divide to unity.



## **2025 YOUNG ARTISTS & AUTHORS SHOWCASE “FRIENDSHIP: The Heartbeat of Global Peace”**

### **Application Form**

I have reviewed the eligibility criteria for the 2025 Young Artists and Authors Showcase and I am ready to start my application.

Yes

### **Student's Information**

**Name**

Syd M Kasahara

**Birthdate**  
11/14/2007

**Age on April 1st**  
15-18 Years Old

**Student's Email**  
99060707@my.hartdistrict.org

**Student's Phone**  
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**Mailing Address (Santa Clarita Students)**  
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**Mailing Address (Sariaya and Tena Students)**  
27090 Jarana Court, Saugus, CA 91354, United States

**School's Name**  
Saugus High School

**If you're submitting this entry as a class assignment or for extra credit, please provide your teacher's name.**  
Brant Botton

**Class Name, if applicable**  
AP Lang and Comp

## Entry Information

**Category**  
Essay/Creative Writing (.doc; .pdf)

**Title of Entry**  
Kasahara, Syd - The Language of Friendship

**Medium and Tools Used to Create Artwork - For Classic Art entries ONLY**

**What inspired you to create this work? Include any description or context you would like to share (no more than 700 characters).**

My inspiration for this assignment fostered from the realization that friendship is something that can be accomplished without words. Going through a heavy connection with the children in Vietnam that I met on a mission trip, regardless of the different languages, revealed to me that sincere friendships are found in laughter, kindness and shared moments. I wanted to write and capture how seemingly simple acts—like chalk art, bubbles, beads and jewelry and eating cake—can form lasting bonds and memories. This experience educated me that despite differences, all humans all have the capability to understand, connect, and care for another's well-being.

**Upload your entry here.**  
Sydney Kasahara extra credit SS essay (2).pdf

**How did you hear about the Young Artists and Authors Showcase (YAAS)?**  
my teacher shared it to us for extra credit

**Is this your first time to participate or submit an entry for YAAS?**  
Yes

By submitting this entry, I agree to give Santa Clarita Sister Cities/Santa Clarita Valley International Program (SCVIP), its Board members, members, and affiliates permission to publish and display the submitted entry at public exhibits, online, in publications, and/or in promotional materials at their discretion. I agree to abide by all the rules and terms of the showcase, and agree to waive all claims of any kind.

against showcase organizers.

I understand that all showcase entries become the artistic property of Santa Clarita Sister Cities/SCVIP. Although the artist/author retains their copyright to the submitted piece, by submitting this entry, I hereby grant to Santa Clarita Sister Cities/SCVIP perpetual, non-exclusive fully-transferable, and sub-licensable rights and license to use, reproduce, publicly perform, display, and distribute the submitted work through all media now known or hereafter developed, including, without limitation, any future publication use in promotional material and/or online service with no compensation other than credit with my name. The license rights granted to Santa Clarita Sister Cities/SCVIP shall include the right to translate, alter, modify, and make derivative works of the piece without limitation. Santa Clarita Sister Cities/SCVIP takes no responsibility and will not compensate for any lost or damaged work.

For photo entries: By submitting a photograph, I represent and warrant that I have the right to grant to Santa Clarita Sister Cities/SCVIP the unrestricted use of the photograph.

For original music entries: I have secured all licenses necessary for creating audio recordings.

**I agree:**

Yes

**Parent's Name**

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*For questions email: [sistercities@santaclarita.gov](mailto:sistercities@santaclarita.gov)*