Violence has affected my life. I’ve felt the fear and seen the pain. I know how it can wound victims both physically and mentally. It was 2nd grade when all of this happened. An 8th grader at my school had been brutally shot in the head while waiting for the bus to pick him up for school. The students and teachers at our school were in shock. I can remember thinking “What happened?” and “Why would someone do that?” To be honest, I was just plain scared. The part that scared me most was just knowing that there are more violent people out there. The victim’s friends were reacting the worst. I even heard a story that one student ran out of the school in tears. Who would even think about doing an act so evil and cruel? The next day I walked in to school and I could feel the sadness in the air. That day we happened to have a big field trip for chorus. It was a music contest held at Six Flags Amusement Park. Before we went some members of the chorus were interviewed by reporters and asked how they felt about the whole situation. We won the competition that day and it felt like his spirit guided us. When we returned to school there were even more interviews and interest from news stations. The whole community was shaken. Youth violence has really changed my life.

Violence in adolescents can be caused in many ways. For example, a child can be abused at home and take it out on classmates. This can hurt someone very badly. Also someone can be exposed to drugs and alcohol. When that happens this person can damage their brain and that can make them violent. Another way youth violence can occur is if the person has mental health problems. This could get them in hot water. You can even see this on the news like the shooting in the movie theater this summer and the shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. The people in the middle of it all have serious problems. Those are some of the ways youth violence can start.

There are many ways that youth violence can be stopped. For one, I can make sure that I never am exposed to youth violence and I am never a violent person. Because just one person can make a difference. Also you can make sure that if you see any sign of youth violence that you report it immediately. That could be
the difference. Just think about it — that could save someone’s life. You could be a hero. Now, wouldn’t it feel pretty good to make a difference? Youth violence can be also prevented by keeping away from things that can harm you or others in the long run. Youth violence is extremely serious matter and it needs to be stopped quickly. Every year we are losing so many lives to violence. Imagine what you would feel like if you were a victim of youth violence or lost a friend or family member. You would be scared of the life ahead of you. If we all work together this violence could be stopped.