

Patrick Hoyack
Huber Middle School
8th Grade

Are we realizing the dream of equality for all in our country?

I believe we are realizing the dream of equality in the United States of America. We have come a long way. In 1776, when Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he owned slaves, but today slavery is illegal in America. "We the people" in 1787 probably didn't mean all the people. It meant white people, and men, and rich people. Today, "We the people" means everyone. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln wanted to free the slaves and make equality the way we live in the United States. But did he mean equality for women? Did he mean equality for Native Americans? Equality under the law is a great idea, but when we say "for all," we do not understand that idea.

We are getting closer to making the dream come true, but we still have a long way to go. We have more freedom and equality than any other country on Earth, but we still haven't achieved the complete dream.

African Americans are still the targets of unfairness. So are Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans and Native Americans. These Americans don't always get the same education as do white Americans. They don't always get the good jobs, the good doctors, or other opportunities. When they get arrested, they don't always get the good lawyers to help them. Some of these Americans aren't allowed to vote. And we still have a lot of poor people in America, and many of those people are minorities.

Women are also not treated as equal as men. Many women live in poverty and they don't get the same opportunities for education, jobs, salaries, or medical care. There are lots of problems for women when it comes to their health and their bodies. If we want a really equal

nation, we need to respect all people, and treat everyone the same way. Men need to let women be equal. Maybe one day we will have a woman president. Maybe it will definitely help.

There are other people in America who aren't always treated equally. Some people don't want new Americans to come to America. Immigrants have a very hard time, and if they are here "illegally," they don't have much of a chance. We shouldn't be mean to immigrants because almost everyone in America came from somewhere else. Another example is if a man falls in love with another man, they can't get married in most places. When a woman falls in love with another woman and they live together for a long time, they don't have the same rights as a man and a woman who live together for a long time. It's true that American's with disabilities are protected, but they don't always get the same chances as healthy Americans. And sometimes people of certain religions don't like or treat fairly people from other religions. Christians, Jews, Muslims, or whatever; God loves us all. The laws should treat us all the same and love us equally.

When Martin Luther King, Jr. made his "I have a dream" speech in 1963, I think he got it right. He wanted total equality and justice; he wanted his dream to be for everyone. He wanted to cash the check of freedom for every American. This was the American promise that all men and women would be guaranteed the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Everyone should have freedom and justice, and Dr. King wanted them to have those rights now, not later on. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

King said we should always march ahead. We cannot turn back. His dream was that every American would be brothers and sisters. In every part of America there would be freedom and justice for all. We would all be judged only by the content of our character. His dream was equality and justice for each and every one of us.

We have come a long, long way. We are realizing that dream of equality in America, but we can do more and we can go further. We aren't there for all Americans yet. We want freedom and justice for other people in other countries around the world. We give them money, and sometimes we fight and die for them. We try to show other people how we do it in the United States. But we aren't perfect. We can be even more about equality; we can have more justice, and more freedom, right here in America. And then, one day in every part of our country, every little boy and every little girl will be able to join hands as sisters and brothers, and as equal Americans.