

AH

3rd Place
Linsley

High school

Heart to Heart Essay Contest
by Kaitlin Snyder

I think it's a sad realization that the sick and the elderly are helped less and less as generations get older. In fact, I think it's sad that the disabled, ill, and elderly are all grouped together and viewed as one. I believe that the reason for both of these cases lies in the way we value these groups in this era. The youth today seem to cast off any who can't help contribute to society or the furthering of human life. In past times, it seems as though older people we're looked upon with a certain gratitude and appreciation for all that they've contributed during their lives as well as for their wisdom. Also acknowledged for our devotion toward helping the sick and old, I think we, the young, are often reminded that we must continue to advance society; ~~that~~ the future lies in our hands. When the young are told that we are the very essence of what the future holds, I believe we start to think that we contain the ultimate answers to the future and forget to look to the wise for guidance. The young may be smarter and hungrier to make their mark on the world, but one thing we don't contain is wisdom, which can only be acquired by living and experiencing life through many years. We forget that the past shapes the future just as much as the present does. So engulfed in the whirring world we live in today, younger people forget that one day we will be old and our days to make an imprint on society will be close to their end, too.

Also, for the sick, we get so caught up in trying to help them that I think we forget to help them. By this, I mean that we strive to find the cures for diseases and conditions they have for the solitary goal of helping future generations, always knowing that the ones who have already acquired an illness are just a means to obtain a better future.

So, recognizing that in this age the young admire the future too much is the first step in solving this problem. The real solution would be to stress on upcoming generations the importance of helping those who we may initially cast off as dead, for all intents and purposes. We should stress that the ill could contain answers to the future that we may not have ever otherwise noticed. We should emphasize that the old are only old because they have lived and experienced much that we, the young, haven't yet experienced. We should look to their expertise for direction, analyze their mistakes in hopes of not repeating them, and treat them as we hope to be treated after a long life.

These solutions can only come about by making care for these groups a priority; the only way to do this would be by teaching the youth early on!