

Ryan White
A Boy Without Rights Changes A Nation

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Junior Division
Individual Exhibit

(This exhibit contains 496 student composed words)

Ryan White was barred from school because he had AIDS, and he was shunned by his community. Ryan fought for his right to go to school and challenged his community, school system, and the government. I was amazed by his actions. I wanted to learn more about Ryan's life and legacy, and I thought it was important for others to learn.

I started my research on the Internet to find reliable sources like journals, books and newspapers. I went to the University of Minnesota library, where I found some books and government publications about the Ryan White Care Act. I also found Ryan's autobiography.

Although I enjoyed reading about Ryan's life, I was more deeply moved when I watched videos about his life experiences. Seeing him and the ordeals that he faced with my own eyes touched me more than reading about his experiences, because I could see the sadness in people's eyes and hear it in their voices as they talked about Ryan.

I picked an exhibit board because I thought it would allow me to be creative and would be the best way to share a lot of information very quickly. I wanted to show photographs of Ryan and his mom and to share quotes about him. There were hundreds of newspaper articles written about Ryan. I made a collage of the 477 articles I found, because I thought that would be the most effective way to show just how much media attention he got. I had to shrink them down to 10-20% of their original size just to fit them all! The media liked Ryan, and the publicity was important for winning his right to attend school and for improving education about AIDS. I chose red for my color scheme because red is the official color for AIDS and the color of blood. My exhibit board starts with infected blood and ends with the nation making sure the blood supply is clean.

Once I got to the National level, I decided I needed to dig deeper. I was able to locate Ryan's mother, Jeanne White-Ginder. I interviewed her on the phone. This interview gave me a

lot of inside information that only a few people would know. I have also interviewed Professor Pauza, a leading AIDS researcher, and Shelly Henson, who was Jeanne White's personal assistant.

Ryan White and his mom pushed for basic rights for people with HIV/AIDS. Due to their efforts, the nation became more educated and supportive of HIV/AIDS sufferers. Public discussion of the way Ryan contracted AIDS contributed to the development of governmental responsibility for the development of HIV testing in blood products. A Federal funding program was created to help needy HIV/AIDS victims and to fund research towards an AIDS cure. The development of these Rights and Responsibilities helped HIV/AIDS sufferers better endure their disease while maintaining their dignity.

(477 words)