

2012 Youth Writing Contest

First Place Winner: Lower Division (8th-9th Grade)

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Educator: Jennifer Rice

The world we live in today. The very place everyone calls home is really just a breeding ground for ever-growing shadows of terrorism, famine, and a shrinking economy. These problems are not the only thing affecting people across the globe. Surrounding us in our everyday lives are problems that are not only global, but local too. Of course, the world wasn't meant to be that way, it just happened. But by trying to change the way in which you think about our problems and take action, you are helping to make a change.

Many lessons can be learned from the Jewish women in the partisans, lessons that inspire people today to make the reality of our current world a better place. Three of these lessons include showing leadership, having responsibility, and acquiring confidence.

It is helpful to have a leader, someone that people can look up to. Sarah Fortis, a woman partisan, was able to demonstrate the true meaning of leadership. Sarah had gone from village to village on the Greek island of Chalkis recruiting girls for partisan camps. She taught them how to behave as an equal around men, how to handle weapons, and fight. The girls saw her as Captain Sarika and referred to her as a leader. Leadership could easily inspire people today. By being a leader and organizing groups to help clean the areas in which you live, you are helping make the earth a much cleaner and healthier environment.

Responsibility usually includes doing work and being accountable for your actions. It is a hard thing to do, but Marisa Diena, Vice-Commander of Information Services in an Italian partisan group, had plenty of practice. Her job was to train women to be courier messengers. "No one suspected their involvement..." Marisa had explained. "We didn't have all the things that a real army has, like communications services. Instead, we had the peasant girls, who could maintain connections and pass information back and forth." It was important that Marisa had responsibility because it was crucial to teach these girls everything they would need to know about this dangerous job to ensure they were successful. Marisa was able to use responsibility to her advantage and if people around us were to have responsibility too, it would definitely help people make better choices when faced with tough situations.

Building confidence is something that takes time. With confidence, you feel like you can accomplish anything you set your mind to and that's exactly what Sonia Orbuch did. Sonia was a teenaged partisan, and like most other woman partisans, had little to no training. She had been immediately thrown into the role of a doctor's assistant in a makeshift hospital. With only a few days of training, she was expected to treat sick and wounded partisans. This was possible because she believed in herself and had confidence. Today, by building confidence, people can stand up against increasing problems such as bullying and get rid of it altogether.

The Jewish women partisans stood up for what was right. They fought with passion and were not afraid to show pride in what they were fighting for. Clearly, these women demonstrate what it really means to show leadership, have responsibility, and acquire confidence. The world is constantly changing even though you may not notice it. But by learning from these women and applying their lessons to your own life, you too can inspire others to make a more noticeable impact, an impact that would hopefully succeed in making our world a better place.