

# Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities

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# Speak Up!

By Lillian Afridi

Anyone can be considered an activist, but most people choose to silence their opinions, allowing others to speak up. Barack Obama once said, “A change is brought about because ordinary people do extraordinary things.” Using your voice to speak out against injustices helps better the world. Young adults like Emma Gonzales, Malala Yousafzai, and Greta Thunberg are speaking up and starting to change things around the world.

On February 14, 2018, the Parkland School shooting occurred, inspiring students like Emma Gonzales, a Parkland shooting survivor, to speak up for gun control. At one of Emma’s biggest speeches, she called “B.S” on some politicians and their claims of safety. Emma Gonzales is also one of the co-founders of Never Again MSD, a student-led gun control committee whose mission is to inform people about gun violence. Emma is standing up for what she believes in and will not stop until appropriate gun control laws are enforced.

Malala Yousafzai is speaking out for girls’ and women’s education around the world. In 2007, the Taliban began controlling Swat Valley and girls were banned from attending school. Two years later, Malala started a blog and wrote about how women and girls had a right to learn, using the name Gul

Makai. She continued to speak out as change was arriving in Pakistan. On October 9, 2012, Malala was shot three times, but she survived! Malala is the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner and continues to speak for girls' education.

Since 2018, Greta Thunberg has been taking action to stop climate change. Greta started promoting climate awareness in 2018 when she entered a climate change writing competition and won. A few months later she vowed to protest until the Swedish government would meet the carbon emissions target made in 2015. Greta began missing classes every Friday to protest, and soon she became well known. Last year, Greta took the whole year off from school to protest about climate change. Greta is such an influence, and although she has been ridiculed, she perseveres.

Change is on the rise all around the world. People have been standing up for what they believe, and things are starting to happen. Young activists are using their experiences and pasts to speak up and better the world. Emma Gonzales, Malala Yousafzai, and Greta Thunberg are all advocating for a better world where we will see peace, equality, and a healthy planet.

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