

Student & Teacher Reflections on LOVE YOUR TREE participation...

“I enjoyed doing this project because it was, in a way, my first real art for a purpose. Everything else I’ve done is because I’ve had an idea. This project had a message for a cause.”

~11th grader, Notre Dame Preparatory School

“After doing this project I gained a more powerful realization of how beautiful diversity really is... I’ve realized that to not accept my body just because it doesn’t look like someone else’s is unfair to myself.”

~10th grader, Notre Dame Preparatory School

“In doing this project, I was forced to look at myself in a new light. My body isn’t just an object that I have to ‘perfect’ and make more ‘beautiful.’ It is an instrument, a tool for me to use to live my life to the fullest. My body is a work of art and it tells a story... my story.”

~10th grader, Notre Dame Preparatory School

“After experiencing an eating disorder through my middle school years, this project was a challenge to me to say the least. As an artist, I knew it was important to tackle this project, despite the raw emotion behind it. I tried to approach this with the idea of natural beauty being strangled by self-doubt and insecurity. It’s inevitable that sometimes we are trapped in our bodies. My hope was that my artwork conveys that our bodies be viewed as a hope and not a prison.”

~ 10th grader, LYT Participant

“This was one project I really enjoyed. It was such a unique aspect on the issue of anorexia and eating disorders that it forced me to think about the topic in a new light. We rarely take the time to celebrate the beauty in our differences, and the sanctity of our bodies.”

~ 11th grader, LYT Participant

I learned through Love Your Tree that if I feel a little insecure about my body, I’m not alone and that a ton of other girls feel the same way. I learned that I can’t compare myself to other people because my body might not be similar to theirs, so I have to love the way my body is.

~ 10th Grader, LYT Participant

I really enjoyed learning about how the Love Your Tree poster contest started. I like how the African woman taught the founder to love her body. It was very inspiring.

~ Ridgley Middle School Student

“Creating this poster, I thought it was just another sketchbook assignment and it wouldn’t have any sentimental value to me at all. But as I continued with the project, thought of ideas, and an overall message, it came to mean something to me. I thought of the message of this assignment: Love Your Tree. Before this project, I was starting to doubt myself; my look, my body, my tree. Not only did I accomplish helping others with positive body image but I helped myself to love me and my tree.”

~ Ridgley Middle School Student

“In the Love Your Tree poster contest, not only did I learn a few new art techniques when making a poster, but on the way I learned to love my tree as well.”

~ Ridgley Middle School Student

“Participation in the *Love Your Tree* poster art campaign to promote a healthy body image has been a great experience for me and my students on many levels. Over the four years that I have been involved with the campaign, I have learned so much about eating disorders and the importance of having a healthy body image. We were so fortunate to have Julia Anderson share her wealth of knowledge through an outreach visit to our school. **I believe that it is so important that my middle school students understand how they can contribute to their community through their creative art works.** Students were eager to design their posters knowing that it could possibly help someone else. I also believe that the new knowledge we learned from the experience has also helped my students accept and celebrate the uniqueness of themselves and their bodies.”

~ Vernon Fains Art Teacher, Pine Grove Middle School

“Love Your Tree provides teenage girls, NDP students in particular, with a chance to express themselves about eating disorders, an issue that affects many girls their age in a safe and supportive environment, the art classroom. Students give each other feedback and guidance on the design and fabrication of their images with constructive and positive critiques. We have been participating for four years and every year the girls love to come to the exhibit, awards presentation and reception with their families. **Your event provides art students with a chance to show their parents the value of their artwork in a real world design application and in a broader community setting beyond the school community.**”

~ Anne Walker, Art Educator, Notre Dame Preparatory School

“This project was really hard for my students. They had to be able to visually convey an abstract concept. Body image is such a personal concept, it’s different for each person. I think through the readings from Eve Ensler’s *The Good Body*, the girls came to realize that body image is a worldwide problem, not just one of advanced nations. **It was a project that made them think and go outside of their comfort zone.** If even just one student can feel a little better about themselves after we hang the exhibit up, then we will have begun to debunk the ‘Barbie Doll’ myth of beauty. I am very proud of how my students rose to the occasion with this project.”

~ Eileen Clements, Art Teacher, Mount de Sales Academy