



## **Young people write: How to make Taos a better place**

*The Taos News, 9/13/2012*

*Here are the winning student essays written for the Young Regeneration Festival held Labor Day Weekend. On Friday, Aug. 30, a few of the winners came to Open Space to read their essays to Assistant Town Manager Abigail Adame.*

*All the honorable mention winners received \$5 and the three top winners each received \$50 each.*

*—Editor Joan Livingston*

My name is Angel Lopez.

I am in fifth grade and go to school at the Taos Day School in Taos. I think Taos can be a better place for me and others by all of us coming together and doing these things.

Plan A: We can all come together as a community and help those in need of food, clothing, and other things that people need to live. If we all helped each other out, we would have less people who would be doing without what they need. We would all have what we need.

Plan B: We can all come together and help people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. If we had more places to help stop addiction, and if we could get the drugs and alcohol off the streets, we would have less violence in our town, and less people dying, and less stealing from other people who work hard for what they have.

Drugs and alcohol are bad for you.

Plan C: We can start a community garden and get everyone involved so everyone in Taos can start eating healthier and become healthier.

Plan D: We can all make a pledge to recycle. If we all recycled our air and water it would be safer, and we would have less trash around Taos.

Recycling books would be good too, because everyone would have a chance to read a book, rather than just having it sitting around or throwing it away.

Taos is beautiful so we should do our part in keeping it that way. It is better to help the earth than it is to destroy it. There will be people after us who will live here.

We should all help to keep Taos a clean and safe place.

If we all helped out, we could make Taos a better place for us and the people of the future.

It would be fun to do all these steps, and it would also be more fun to make these steps a competition to get everyone involved.

Remember, doing all of this would make a better Taos and a better world for all of us. We could be proud of ourselves and maybe even see it in the history books. If we do all this together and at least try, we could make Taos a better place.

— *First-place winner Angel Lopez, fifth grade, Taos Day School*

My name is Damian Lefthand. I'm in fifth grade. I go to Taos Day School. I want to make Taos a better place for me and everybody else.

We should have an art show so no one will do graffiti on the walls or at local places.

People should not litter; we should put up more trashcans where people can put their litter so Taos won't be polluted.

I don't like alcoholics because they might hurt someone while driving. Don't play with fire so you don't start a fire.

In order for Taos to become a better place, people need to change themselves for the better. We need to change the way we treat each other. Then Taos will become a better place to live than it already is.

By this I mean if a person changed their attitude about life for the good, then we can all work together to make Taos and the world a better place. Then if we think good and healthy, we will have an environment that is good and healthy. Then society as a whole can move forward for the betterment of people, animals and local government so that we can live as one healthy, happy and proud people.

Don't be racist about anyone, like about their skin tone or how they look. There should be no inappropriate stuff like guns or weapons, alcohol, drugs or any other stuff.

— *Second place winner Damian Lefthand, fifth Grade, Taos Day School*

I come from a place where it's always quiet and birds are always singing and you can hear the wind. It sounds like someone is talking to you and they give you advice. You end up with someone saying, "Why are you talking to yourself?" and you freeze up and walk away from them. Then you think to yourself, "Who was I talking to?" Then you remember it's just the wind.

This is how to make Taos a better place: For me, there will be no drugs and no gangbangers. There will be no dirty water or homeless people. There will be the best servers wherever you go. And there will be clothes on your back and shoes on your feet. And there will be more trees growing. This is how to make Taos a better place for me.

— *Honorable mention, Francisco Molina, 11, Taos Middle School*

Actually, to me, Taos is the best place. There are so many trees and people to meet. To me, Taos is better than any other place that people would like to be. So I love Taos the way it is and all the many people we know. I love to come to school and I love to play sports for teams because here in Taos, we all are a team.

— *Honorable mention, Enrique Archuleta, 12, Taos Middle School*

I come from a place where no one cares what you do and where you have to do your own things and live your own life. My grandma tells me I could go and have fun and I do. I go and knock on my cousins' doors and they go with me. We swim in lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds. We ride our bikes wherever we want to. We ride horses, bikes, dirt bikes, and four wheelers.

We know what we do is good. We know we're allowed to do it so we do, and have fun with it. And we love each other. And we don't care what anyone thinks! There isn't a wrong; there is only a right.

To make Taos a better place for me would be to have way lower gas prices, and food and supplies could be cheaper.

I would love to have a new dog, but prices are way too high. I don't just want this dog because it is cute; I want it because it reminds me of me, but in dog form. It is shy like I was. It's small like I am.

And it is a smart dog. And this dog would not only make me happy, it would make my life and my town a better place.

— *Honorable mention, Hazelia Martinez, 11, Taos Middle School*

This is how to make Taos a better place : For us to stop all the bad stuff like bullying or drugs. We should stop people from stealing and killing. Let Taos be a nice place, not bad.

All the people who did bad things should tell them you're sorry and they will forgive you.

And then you'll make up, be friends, and go get yourself a big ice cream and a pat on your back.

Be nice. Have fun. Make Taos a better place .

— *Honorable mention, Ysidro Gravelle, sixth grade, Taos Middle School*

Taos is grand. Taos is fun.

So please, Taos, don't change.

Don't change your beauty.

Don't change your traditions.

No, no, don't change a thing.

The mountains are beautiful. The valleys are grand. The snow that falls perfectly in your glory.

Taos, don't change. Stay beautiful. Stay clean. Tell all your residents to help make you the same, the same old you. Don't fix your plaza or parks.

Just please, please fix the potholes in the road.

— *Honorable mention, Isaac Medina, 11, Taos Middle School*

Hi. My name is Jamall and this is how to make Taos a better place. I would not want people to throw their trash on the ground. People should not leave their trash at the park or at other places. We should not cut down a lot of trees because some animals might die. They should have more swimming pools and they should have a place that you can go rock climbing. There should be a place that you can play paint ball wars with your friends or family.

I wish that there was grass at my school soccer field and some new basketball nets for the goals.

That would make Taos a better place for me.

— *Honorable mention, Jamall, fifth grade, Taos Day School*

Hi. My name is Dominick Ortiz. I go to school at Taos Day School. I think Taos can be a better place for me and my family and friends by these things: I think that Taos would be a better place if the cops would stop people if they run red lights even if a cop isn't around. Also, it would help if people wouldn't litter so it doesn't hurt the earth. It would help if people didn't put graffiti on the walls and on property that is not theirs.

I also think that people should stop bullying at school.

I think that people should stop drinking and driving so they don't put people's lives at risk, especially children and babies. The parks and schools should be safer so kids won't get hurt while they are playing.

Those are the things that will make Taos a better place for me and my family and friends.

One more thing: I like where I live and I think that Taos should be a safe and fun place to live for me and my family.

— *Honorable mention, Dominick Ortiz, fifth grade, Taos Day School*

I think Taos can be a better place for me and my family by making more jobs for families and people. We should get more people to get healthier by not smoking and drinking.

I wish that I could have a better house. I would like to have a better baseball field, more electronic cars, no more diesel trucks, more concerts, and less fast food, please.

Healthier food, please. No more plastics. No more artificial food.

— *Honorable mention, Hunter Lujan, fifth Grade, Taos Day School*

Hi. My name is Noah Lujan.

I am a photographer. I go to the Taos Day School. I love to take photos of the land. I hate the litter. I see cans around the campsites. I also would want to have a warm food drive for the homeless and make family shelters for the families without shelter.

I would like to see more people riding their bikes instead of using their car because you pollute the air and it is healthier riding your bike. I would also want people to like each other, not hate each other. I would also like to stop people drinking and driving.

I would also want to make a place where it is open to everyone like a gym where you can go practice your basketball skills and whatever else, or you can just chill there whenever you want.

I would want a giant swimming pool like a river, not like a pool, because a pool does not clear itself like a river. A pool just sits there. A river cleans itself so it's clean.

That's how I would make Taos a better place for me.

— *Honorable mention, Noah Lujan, 5th grade, Taos Day School*

My name is Jarvis Spotted Corn. I go to the Taos Day School. I am in fifth grade and I am 11 years old. I think Taos can be a better for me, my friends, and my family by these things: No more smoking.

Less school hours, like one less hour  
Less fast food places (except McDonald's)  
No more alcohol  
Lower gas prices  
Lower prices at Smith's  
Make two more movie theaters with low prices  
Make more fun things to do for less vandalism.

They should keep on doing those music things in the plaza; even when it's raining or snowing they should still do it. It's fun!

People should really stop smoking because some can have asthma and if they breathe in the smoke, who knows what will happen?

I have asthma, but I don't breathe in the smoke from cigarettes or any other smoke.

People should recycle. They also shouldn't throw their trash on the ground. When they throw trash on the ground it pollutes our rivers that we drink. It wouldn't be good for anyone who drinks from the river.

And those are all the things that I think or know would make Taos a better place for me.

— *Honorable mention, Jarvis Spotted Corn, fifth Grade, Taos Day School*

Hello, my name is Seth Murphy. I go Taos Day School. I think Taos can be a better place if we stop drugs and if kids get out of school at 1 p.m.

The other thing is to stop bullying people everywhere in the country, and to help each other and stuff.

If people could stop drinking and driving that would be fine; that way people could be safe and not be in the hospital or jail.

People should stop smoking so their lungs won't get horrible cancer and so people won't die. Some people die from lung cancer, colon cancer, and brain cancer.

As a community, we can stop littering on the roads, including the dirt roads. We should also recycle. Solar panels are more eco-friendly and they save people money. Old tires are used in solar houses.

You should be riding your bike to school or to work to save the environment. You should also recycle vegetable oil instead of using gas. We should use certain light bulbs that are made to save energy.

— *Honorable mention, Seth Murphy, fifth grade, Taos Day School*