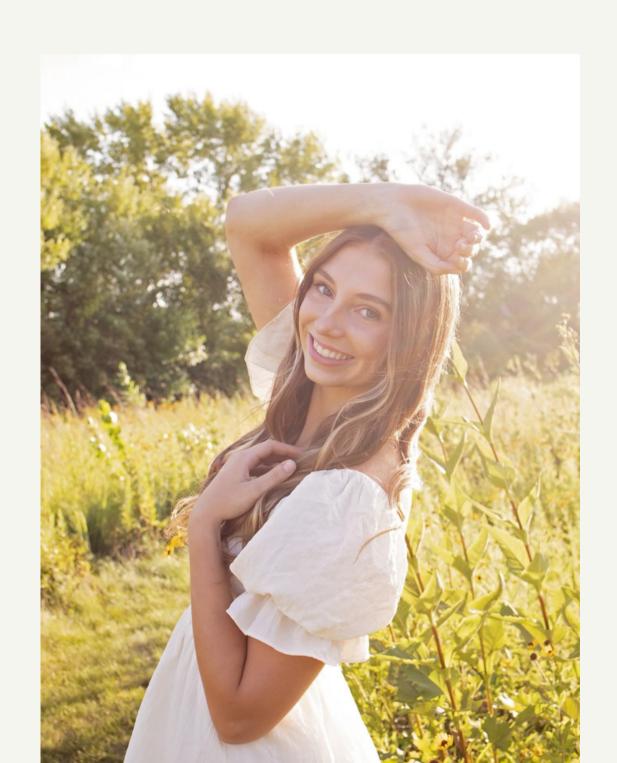
MILA VAN WEELDEN

Writing Portfolio
Marion High School
The Vox Online-Editor



Writer **Biography**

As senior class president, the newspaper editor, and an involved student, I have used the platform I have to shine light on big issues affecting my peers and our society and given voice to topics and people that often go overlooked.





No safe places

By: Mila Van Weelden

The bright-eyed, excited-about-life backpack over her shoulder as she dash es through the door to the yellow bus. She finds a seat next to her best friend detail how they will spend their time at ecess that day, as that is the most crucia information that could be on the brain.
What she doesn't know is that before she

swing set, slide down her fa-vorite slide, and play a game o tag that gets a tad too intense she will have to hide in a And that is what it is like to go to school in

out in body bags, and as a society, we have begun to become desensitized. It is not

Children get and prayers, we

have a mini uprising on social media, then we proceed on with our lives as though gun violence is not the leading cause of death amonest children in the United States On top of the fact that many enjoy brushing aside, The Washington Post reports that over 349,000 students have experienced run violence at school since 1999. That is 349,000 lives that will be changed forever, 349,000 students that will never see school the same, and 349,000 people that will most likely flinch at any loud sound until they leave this earth. However, change is still yet to come. According to BBC, not only have there been more mass shoot ings than days in 2023, but for the last three years, there has been a 600 per year average. The news turns on each morning and the likelihood that there was some s of shooting overnight is exorbitant, but each person hears the same "It's a second amendment right" argument ad nauseam

people are laying down others' li to protect was written in 1791. Ac-cording to Gilford's Law Canter, 85 of mass shootings today are done

with automatic weapons, yet author Davi Grace states that in 1791, one couldn't us a gun without training, they could only once every thirty seconds, and a craz person could only kill one person at a tim in 1791, the weaponry that is present in today's society was unfathomable. Therefore when it was written, it was most like not asking for the second amendment to stripped, rather make it so that an 18-yes

store and buy a n with little to steps to mak

21, the banning

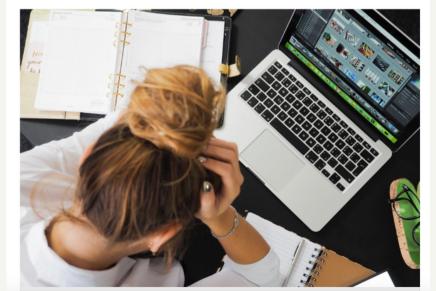
rifles which enables faster shooting," th requirement of safe oun storage for hor with children, and other various bills tha would essentially save lives. Sadly, this package did not move far in the Senate, b this is precisely the type of hill that would make it a tad easier for a mother to send her child to school every day.

I have always wanted children, but I wi imply not bring another life into this el, corrupt world without at least trying t change it first. As a 16-year-old, my voice matters little-to-none, but I will continu to fight for all of the people that can't figh for themselves. I will fight for those killed, and I ask that everyone else opens their eyes and gives those people a voice too

Step back

Mila Van Weelden, Editor

January 11, 2024



Proving we can show love

By: Mila Van Weelden @milavanweelden

Lam a Christian. Lam one of those hu mans who loves Jesus, goes to church and church camp, follows the Bible, and does all of the other God-related activities that one might assume takes place in a Christian's life. I am a kind, loving-of-all-people person, and because of how my culture has treated certain groups of society, that fact about myself is one of the biggest shocks of all. I am a Christian, and those four words alone can spark feelings of love and admiration or disgust and hate, and that divide is detrimental to religion and society alike.

Christianity today is full of grey area. Looking at the 1,200 pages of the Bible translated multitudinous times in numer

ous languages leads to misinterpretation left and right. What one church deciphers as a certain meaning could be the exact opposite as the one not a block away. In theory, this wouldn't create as big of a problem as it does Why would the deduction matter if the morals of the people practicing the religion are the same or if everyone had a general understanding of the Bible's main teachings? The problem is that they don't, and that's where issues

Christianity is a religion full of all

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some, it is a genuine shock to find out I am a Christian since I try to be the kindest

the assumptions, negative and positive, would be cleared up if every Christian wholeheartedly, faithful ly, and truly followed that phrase. Loving one's neighbor is quite simple in that it does not matter who they are, where they come from, or what their background is, but one loves first. I don't see much of that

many people as one can. Many of

Hate is spewed left and right by the same ones who say they follow Jesus's teachings. A person will go up to others who are simply loving who they want to love and tell them that they are going to burn in Hell, will spit on them, verbally and physically assault them, and then make their way to church the next Sunday and

be told how perfect of a human they are There, they are praised for their actions, as it is seen as somehow "saving" these people The cycle repeats itself until eventually, those who are a part of the LGBTO+ community won't touch churches with a ten-foot pole. According to Public Discourse, the percent age of Americans who identify as Christian has dropped from 75%

to 65%, and the percentage of people who don't believe in any religion has grown from 17% to 26%. With this I ask, how i this helping? How is turning others away

from "a religion that saves" solving issues? In my mind, the answer is it's not. It is not

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Abstract idea

By: Mila Van Weelden @milavan-

The average, typical life of an average, typical human appears in various ways, but one constant throughout are the burdens that weigh on most people. Almost everyone has some sort of responsibility, stress, or albatross that makes their life that much more difficult, but not too often do we think about what stressors we force on ourselves. What barriers we create to stop ourselves from success. For me and many others, having a firm grasp on everything around us, having control of the uncontrollable, gives us a false sense of security. Control is a short fix to usually long-term issues, and that need and want of ascendancy can do more harm than good.

Many people, in leadership positions especially, have to learn how to let go. That can be letting go of a small mistake, a comment made, or even just trusting those whom one is leading. From personal expe-

most of the humans we try to show off all this tenacity to already think the world of us. We can hand over some of the control we think we need and let life run its course a bit. Trust in the people that trust in you, and know that they are usually there to offer a helping hand. One crucial thought to remember is that taking the hand does not make us less-than. It does not mean that we couldn't have done it all on our own; it means that we are allowing our life to be a little easier when the same product will be produced in the end. You should not feel guilty for taking what's offered. Even as these words are appearing on the page, Lam using them to remind me of what I constantly forget. Not only will it make our lives easier, it may just teach someone a new skill that they didn't have. They can then teach more people, and all of a sudden, your support system has removed one of the many stressors in your life.

Many of us overthinking,

anxiety-prone people that just

want to do well in this world

have a plethora of support from

all directions. It is possible that

Although, there are times when said support system is trying

> to alleviate some menta pain, but they just don't

know how. They use words like "control freak" or say, "just relax," thinking that will be the magic fix to whatever we have going on in our heads. To those in the corner of someone who carries the world on



As a society, many long for the feeling or the sense of control. In reality, there is very little one can do to achieve that goal.

rience, trying to guide a group of people toward a common goal without wanting to do it all myself poses quite a challenge. When I know how to do it and how to do it correctly, it is hard to see the value of outside help. When I am past my breaking point and can't physically do any more, I still want to take it on personally to prove that I can. That I am strong. Though, the real showcase of strength comes from when I step back, take a breath, and let the many people that try and take some of the weight off my shoulders do just that.

their shoulders, I ask to give a little grace. I may no be a famous philosopher with all the knowledge at my fingertips, but I do know what it's like to try and do everything myself, physically not knowing how to accept assistance. Most of the time, we are trying to do it for the sake of everyone else, and

when we think people hate us for doing that, it can put us in a negative mind loop that we sometimes can't escape.

I end this by saying control is an abstract idea. One can never truly be in control of all aspects of their life, nor should one try. Life throws so many obstacles that if we as a society place even more unnecessary tasks on our plate, we won't be truly living, Like I said before, step back, take a breath, and know that you don't have to do

Change the cruelty

Mila Van Weelden, Editor

A group of people stand togeth-

though they are Christian, they

er in protest to show that even

love every person equally.



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