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Dear Raquel J. Palacio,

Last summer, I finished the book *Wonder* and now it is one of my favorite books in the world. However, *Wonder* taught more about being just "kind". It showed me to respect everyone from the kindness in your heart. I learned that kindness isn't just a word, but a way of life.

Wonder helped me have a new view of the world around me through different eyes. I saw the same things I had been seeing, but in a different way after I finished the novel. It was like a 30 movie, everything I first saw was blurry and out of focus. But putting on the glasses brought the movie to life, like trying to focus on being kind makes the world a better place. I think it was amazing to learn how the main character Auggie (who has a mandibulofacial dysostosis better known as a facial difference) sees the world through his eyes. After reading this book, I realized that Auggie was just a normal 10 year old kid despite appearances. This made me notice that the message of *Wonder* is so much stronger than "don't judge a book by it's cover."

Wonder is not just any book. *Wonder* is a book that inspires; it inspired me to go beyond the definition of kind. I wanted to show that I could make a difference in the world after reading this book, big or small. But the problem is that I didn't know where to start. I was already your average kid, mainly kind to everyone, not really considered "the bully" like Julian in *Wonder* was. But there was a place in my heart that was aching, aching with desire to be kind, to show kindness to people like Auggie. I knew I needed to do something, and even though my heart was ready, my brain didn't know where to begin.

Two weeks after reading *Wonder* my family and I packed our things and headed to the mountains like we have done nine other times this point in the year. My father grew up in the mountains of Montreat, and every year for a month, my family takes a vacation there. Up in the mountains there is a day camp called "Clubs" which I attended. Because Montreat is an uncommon mountain, I usually spend a month with the same people every year. Each year when I attend camp, the same girl comes for two weeks. She is a quiet girl with down syndrome who lives a few hours away from me. Me and my friends from the mountains had never been mean to her. However, we usually didn't go out of our way to be super friendly to her. But this summer, after I finished the book *Wonder* I had a new perspective of life.

When the girl came to camp this year, I felt the same tug at my heart that I had when I finished *Wonder*. I felt a lightbulb going off in my brain; this was the perfect opportunity. I knew I could make a difference, big or small. So I decided to include her in camp activities. I wanted her to be on my team in dodgeball and play cards with me before we got picked up. When my good friend Ella Brooks had a play date with me and a few other girls, we decided to invited our special

friend, the girl with down syndrome to hang out with us. We knew she was having a hard time, and we wanted to make it better. I knew it was only a start, that we could have done a better job including her. But, now I can hardly wait for next summer when we meet again.

I am so fortunate that *Wonder* has given me another try at friendship, and at life. I am extremely lucky for the great friends I have and for the memories I have made with them. I am extremely blessed for my friends, and for everything they are on the inside and out. In the end I realized that the best thing about coming to the mountains is that I get to do it every year. So even when I mess up, the next time I know that I can let my kindness shine through. I would like to thank R. J. Palacio for writing *Wonder*. This book was not just inspiring, it was an inspiration to me and millions of other kids who have used your book to make a difference in their lives.

With kindness and courage,

Elizabeth Blair, Grade 5