

***Finalist, Middle School Category***

Essayist: Victoria, age 14, BASIS DC

Advocating for: *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang

I've read several books since I've been able to read. I've read many different types of books, varying from length, to genre, to author. But we all have our few favorites we hold near and dear to our heart. Among the books I've read, there's a few that have absolutely stuck with me. One in particular is *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang. My younger sister, Olivia, was the one to suggest this book to me. I was hesitant to read it, as most of her books weren't at the level of books I read, but decided to give it a try. The book is about Mia and her family, who moved from China to the USA and work at a motel. The book shows the hardships Mia and her parents have to go through in their daily life as immigrants, and racism that they receive on a daily basis. The book exposes racism all around us, no matter what you do to try and fit in. After I read *Front Desk*, I found that Kelly Yang had young adult books. Those books were equally as good as *Front Desk*, showing the racism asian people face like *Front Desk*. All of Kelly Yang's books bring the topic of racism towards asians in the US, not something you typically find in kids books. The book really opens you up to the world we still live in. Both my parents are immigrants, and I've been lucky enough that they've been able to support me and my sister all through out, but that's not always the case for all immigrants. Some people have to deal with the hardship of finding a job and having to start over with virtually nothing, like the Tang's in *Front Desk*. Having to start over in a brand new country must be terrifying, not knowing whether or not you'll be able to get a job and get money to live in this new country. My mother, an immigrant from Colombia, was fortunate enough to have a job she was coming to, not having to search for work. My father on the other hand had to start from nothing, like the Tang's in *Front Desk*. The book prompted me to talk to my parents about when they first came to America and their experience as immigrants. Reading *Front Desk* inspired me to ask about my parent's life experience, something I felt weird asking about before. Speaking with my parents let me in on a part of their lives and my family's history I previously hadn't known. *Front Desk* educates kids about the inequality in America in a very soft but informative way. I believe *Front Desk* should be added to the magical library in planet word, as the book has a wonderful message for anyone who reads it and a heartfelt story in store.