

# With A Bevy Of Ads, Students School Us On All The Little Joys In Life

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LA Johnson/NPR

When we asked listeners to write advertisements for the small joys in life, the stuff and experiences money can't buy, we weren't surprised to find a few things come up often in the sales pitches. Sunsets, breezes, stars and granddaughters — we're with you on those, dear listeners.

Funny enough, though, something else kept coming up: math. There were ads for arithmetic, graph theory, the unending wonders of pi ... what was going on here?

"My 10th graders thought it was the best way ever to spend the last day before holiday break," says Katherine Socha, math teacher at Park School in Baltimore.

Her students had just turned in a big exam, and she wanted them to think creatively about what they love about the subject. So, she asked them to sell it.

They weren't the only ones. Dozens of students — from schools ranging from Virginia Commonwealth University and Appalachian State, to UCLA and even elementary schools — drew up commercials about the little things they love.

"I did it for myself as much as for my students," laughs Katie Lianza, eighth-grade language arts teacher at Newmarket Jr/Sr High School in New Hampshire.

She assigned the task to her students after they got back from break, in the new year.

"When we do New Year's resolutions, we often think about what we don't have," Lianza says. "I wanted them to think about what they have and love already."

For the record, that includes those moments you wake up before your morning alarm, books, autumn leaves and summer sand. Oh, and checklists — "Drake makes checklists!" eighth-grader Mia Smith wrote.

A compelling point indeed.

"They really surprised me," Buddy Gouger says. The English teacher at East Stroudsburg High says that his students took the assignment reluctantly at first — but that by the end, there was a long line at his desk, filled with teens asking his thoughts on their sales pitches.

"You think that you have them figured out," Lianza says of her students, "but an assignment like this really shows you another side of them."

## Samples Of Student Work

From Corrina Petrus of the Danville Area School District in Danville, Pa.:

*Laughs laughs laughs!*

***Get laughs now** or live your life lacking!*

*Ever had an awkward silence where you wish you could just, well, make it less awkward?*

*That's what these are for!*

*Get your lifetime supply of giggles and never live a dull moment!*

*A cackle a day keeps the doctors away! That's right, It's healthy!  
You must get your laughs now before it's too late  
They're available in bulk or in just small snickers  
Everyone needs laughs, including you!  
Need a pick-me-up from time to time? Get some laughs and have yourself a guffaw rodeo!  
Ever feel down? Laugh.  
Ever embarrass yourself? Laugh.  
Ever feel stressed? Just laugh!!!  
Any situation is a perfect situation for a good ol' laugh!*

From Celka Rice of Park School in Baltimore:

*Have you ever become bored in math class? Begun to doodle, and then felt guilty as your teacher looks on disapprovingly?*

*Never fear — you can now doodle in a guilt-free manner. **Meet math doodles: the Diet Coke of class art!***

*All you need is a simple mathematical concept — perhaps the Pythagorean theorem, the golden ratio, the Fibonacci Sequence. Then let your creativity soar! A sequence of shapes, an unending spiral — the possibilities are limitless!*

*Math doodles: guilt-free doodling!*

From eight students, grades 6-12, at Meridian Academy in Jamaica Plain, Mass.

*Ever feeling blue?  
Find that thing that says "goo-goo"*

*Ever got the lows?  
Just look at all those little toes*

*Ever in a pickle?  
Listen to that tiny giggle*

*Ever in a bad mood?  
Watch it enjoy the mushy food*

*Ever feel the need to bawl?  
Go check out that cutie crawl*

Ever feeling sad?

Just go hang out with a baby, and get glad

**Babies, the cure to all woes**

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