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On Behalf Of:
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Being white, one would think that in school I would have seen and read about a lot of people with whom I identified.

I did not.

I did not enjoy doing “girl” stuff, didn’t really identify with the emotions, the dress, the role, the pursuits that my girl peers engaged in. When I was first introduced to having to choose the right bathroom at school, this was difficult. I wasn’t a girl, though everyone called me that, and I was even less a boy. I went where other people wearing dresses went—to the not-a-boy restroom, and quickly memorized all their locations.

None of the people who dressed like me—in dresses mandated by dress code—seemed like me. It was lonely.

Imagine if there had been some non-binary characters in my school books—characters from all sorts of backgrounds with all types of families from all kinds of communities. I can only imagine how freeing and enriching that would have been. And how much of an adventure it would have been for all of us students to have been challenged to understand that diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging were for everyone. That there are more than 2 genders and some of us can be genderless.

Children thrive when they see themselves in stories where they’re successful, and they are more tolerant when they see people not so much like them also being successful and realizing that our differences matter only in how they broaden experience and diversity in life.

When we say, “Let children be children,” let’s remember that children are great explorers and love learning new things and provide them with those opportunities. Let them see themselves as successful, happy, compassionate, cognitive thinkers loaded with compassion.

Thank you.