

Elementary 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner for 2016

**Lydia Coombs** from Selma Elementary School

Adam Faulkner, teacher

Joel Mahaffey, Principal

Helen Keller once said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved." Integrity is doing the right thing when hard times come, even when nobody sees.

Keller was a person of integrity because, even though she was deaf and blind, she learned to communicate and taught people about women's right to vote and worker's rights. My brother, like Keller, has physical challenges to overcome. He has food allergies, but he's learning to be a man of integrity. He's learning to be polite and patient in restaurants and with friends who don't understand the consequences of him eating harmful foods. Life isn't fair for my brother, but he is learning to be thoughtful toward people and do the right thing even when it is hard.

I do my best to be a big sister of integrity. I read labels for my brother, watch everything that he eats, and pack him safe foods when we go places. I learned to make recipes that are safe for people with food allergies and I started a business selling food mixes that are allergy-friendly. As a business owner, I am always fair and honest because I value good character.

Integrity is about making good choices. Choosing to be fair, thoughtful of others, and honest even when it is not easy or convenient. Being strong enough to make these difficult choices has made me a person of integrity.