Excellence in Diversity Award
Entry by: Nesrine Mansour, PhD Student in Architecture

Abstract

Diversity is not a strange concept to me, as I grew up surrounded by diversity in nature, in people, in political views, in culture, in religion, etc. We are all englobed in a mélange of superimposed cultures, yet some of us represent the invisible diversity in a visible realm.

My project started three years ago with me embarking in a quest to find a meaning to life after the loss of my mother. For the first time I was facing the realization that death existed and that we are only here for a mere moment.

As I was looking for ways to give sense to my life, I tried to find inspiration through readings, documentaries, and spiritual outlets; until I discovered a TED talk by a person who went through a similar experience. Her story intrigued me because just like her, I needed to grief my loss in order to reestablish clarity in my life by sharing my experience and knowing what other people think.

Inspired by the artist Cindy Chang, I made a chalkboard wall with the inscription “Before I die I want to…” and placed in the middle of campus (The Rudder Plaza in front of the MSC) giving the opportunity to people passing by to stop and ponder upon this question. I documented the wall everyday as I watched it become a big success. I had to erase it 3 to 4 times a day so more people can write on it. I was happily surprised to see that people even started writing on the surrounding ground expanding the limits of the board. It stayed up for a month in May 2013 but I have received many requests asking me to put it back.

By creating this wall, I was able to change people’s vision about life at the same time it gave me the opportunity to get inspired by others and be able to grieve the loss of my mother.

The wall was featured in the Battalion and Archone, I was also approached by the Eagle newspaper to cover the story. You can visit the wall’s facebook page entitled: Before I Die Wall-Texas A&M University.
Before I die I want to

Texas A&M University

Student creates wall for students to write, reflect - ArchTONE

In her search for meaning after her mother’s death, Texas A&M graduate architecture student looks towards a new, concrete structure as students...
I want to be all used up and to have used all He gave me to glorify Him and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Me too! I want to learn.