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We Are One

“Do I belong?” This question has followed me like a shadow for as long as I can remember. My family is a bit different than most, my mother is white and my father is black. I am biracial. So during family reunions, it gets awkward for me and I’m left feeling either too white or too black. Lately, this has made me feel like I am not enough. Somedays it feels too much to carry and I don’t know how to move forward. A while ago I went with my older sister to Fruition in downtown Ada and I felt so out of place it hurt. These experiences pushed me to fit in, to a point that changed who I am. Over the months, as I look at myself in the mirror, it isn’t me who is looking back. The girl looking back is a person I don’t even know anymore, she’s the dough who cut off pieces of herself to fit into the cookie cutter of society. At that point, is it even worth it?

No, it's not. It’s not worth it because it isn’t even *you* who has a spot at the lunch table, it’s saved for a made-up person.

For a while, I sat on an island not many people inhabited. I wanted someone *just like me* to come and tell me they knew how it felt. But this is middle school, and what you get is not what you *wanted* but what you *needed*. I waited for what felt like an eternity before I could understand that with the diversity at my school, my island was *never* lonely. I have friends here, at Forest Hills that I never thought I would have friends from all over the world with different backgrounds, ethnicities, and histories. My friends don’t look like me or have a family like mine, and that's okay. In the end, I *didn't* find my dream person just like me to tell me they knew *exactly* how it felt, but I *did* get friends with so many different experiences. I have never had a place where I felt like I fit in more than school. Our various stories and challenges are what help us grow as a community.

“Do I belong?” I now know the answer is yes, I belong at Forest Hills Public Schools because if everyone is different then no one truly is. We are one.