

Stacy Olivar - Tolland Middle School

Sarah Harris

Have you ever wondered about our history and who helped build it? Well, here's an important one, Sarah Harris!

Sarah Harris Fayerweather, born on April 16, 1812 was a woman who was brave, and unlike you might think, she wasn't famous for jumping off a cliff or winning a hot dog eating contest, Sarah was an activist who fought for school integration in the early 19th century. I know, I know, you might be thinking, "what? What's the big deal?!?" Well, in the early 19th century, racial segregation was a big problem. Separate water fountains, bathrooms, and even separate schools! This problem was bad, especially to Sarah. Sarah, like most of the people, did not like this bad segregation between the color of people's skin. Sarah fought for African-American people to go to school and to have proper rights. Some events in Canterbury, Connecticut, in the early 1830s brought racism to the forefront. A white teacher named Prudence Crandall admitted Sarah Harris, an African-American student, to her boarding school and subsequently, opened a school for Black students. Let me start from the beginning...

In 1832, a young 20 year old girl named Sarah, an African-American student of Canterbury Female Boarding School wanted a change. She noticed a pattern of white people and black people being treated differently and non-inclusively. This is what Sarah was noticing, Therefore, Sarah went into action and became an activist for African-American people's rights. Her determination changed my state forever. Her brave actions influenced me greatly. Sarah helped many African-Americans have the rights to the proper appreciation and education that they deserved to have in the first place. Sarah truly helped me, others, and the community be united the way it should have been many years ago... She was inspiring and brave to stand up for people's rights. She shaped our history and made a change to our state forever. Even though I'm not African-American I have friends who are, and I am grateful I was able to meet them in a school where everyone is treated with respect and equality. I am grateful for everything that Sarah Harris has done for me and the community. Though Sarah died in 1878, we will always remember what she did for us and this great state of Connecticut.