

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to all of you this afternoon.

My experience in school was pretty normal for a kid: I didn't like waking up, didn't enjoy certain classes or teachers. But there were things that I did enjoy, like history, art, gym, and writing. But school wasn't exactly right for me. I didn't fit with its system. I was kind of that piece in the puzzle that everyone is frustrated with and can't figure out.

Since I've been home schooled things have been much easier for me and my mother. I am able to learn at my own pace and I don't have to worry about being held back. I enjoy how I learn and what I learn. A few days ago I watched the birth of a baby kangaroo!

I also believe I'm treated like an adult. As an equal, not a child. If I was still in school, even though I may have a deeper voice, more muscle tone, hair on myself, I would still be treated like a child learning the abc's again.

As I've been home schooled I feel like I'm able to learn much more. Learning is easier. I learn in a different way now and in a deeper way. Last year I delved deep into the study of WW2. Which led to reading The Diary of Anne Frank, then into the holocaust, which led to reading and watching survivor stories, which led to reading about the Hitler Youth and Hitler's brain washing of his people in Germany. I also learned about the partisans

who fought against the Nazis and attacked them in areas that the allies were unable. All of this led me to wonder why Jewish people have been oppressed for thousands of years which finally led me to learn about anti Semitism, and why Jewish people have been oppressed and hated for thousands and thousands of years. It was an in depth study that I never would have experienced in a class room.

I believe that the education system jams children and young adults like myself in the same room just because we are all born in the same year and so expected to learn in the same way. If you look at in perspective, school is like the race track and children are the horses and we run for graduation. Some will shoot out like rockets or fall back like tortoises, that's the way it is but the system tries to keep every body in line, pushing the tortoises and holding back the racehorses, so we all reach graduation together. If students were left alone and we were allowed to learn at our own pace maybe - just maybe - things would be more peaceful. There would be less competition - between countries, states, schools, teachers, parents, and students, maybe, more cooperation.

Thanks for your time my name is Jude Ali Steffers Wilson have a good evening.

## Jude Ali Steffers-Wilson

Jude is a 14 year old young man who lives in East Harlem with his mother. He went to NYC public schools for 7 years. He's homeschooled now, studies martial arts and meditation, and likes photography, editing and drawing