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Abraham Lincoln

I stood facing 56 tall, white, steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which seemed to stare back at me. Determinedly and purposefully, I marched up the stairs. When I reached the memorial, the awesome grace and beauty amazed me. While my parents read the information about our sixteenth president aloud, I surprisingly found myself actively listening. Right then and there, I knew Abraham Lincoln was my favorite president. Right then and there I understood why his face is forever carved into the side of Mt. Rushmore, imprinted on the five-dollar bill, and etched on the penny. Right then and there I knew why this founding father is an American Leader, and deserves a place in history.

Some people recognize Abraham Lincoln for his honesty. However, I admire him for a different reason. I am inspired by Lincoln's fortitude, his doggedness. I revere this president because he didn't give up. The clichéd saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" seemed to adhere to Lincoln. Abraham didn't fear or resent failure, he embraced it. He helped me understand that failure is like oxygen, it's omnipresent, it's unavoidable, and it's simply apart of life.

On February 12, Lincoln's birthday, students nationwide will be learning about the important contributions he made throughout history, and this year 7th graders in our school had an interactive fair. There were various activities like tossing pennies into a top hat. My favorite stand was a roulette game, with all of Lincoln's failures in life. For example, in 1856 he lost for Vice President, and in 1858 he was defeated for the U.S. senate. Finally, in one section clearly labeled as March 4, 1861, Lincoln succeeded, the day he was finally inaugurated as the President of the United States. In 1861 after years of failing, of being knocked down, Lincoln kept on standing back up, and it paid off.

Lincoln inspires people everywhere to overcome life's difficulties, just as he has inspired me. He is my favorite president of course for his accomplishments, such as the emancipation proclamation to free slaves, but also for his character, and his strong will. Sadly, Lincoln was shot for freeing slaves at the age of 56. Now when I think back to the day in the District of Colombia I realize those steps I climbed were filled with meaning and symbolism for one of the greatest leaders in U.S. history.