Community, a word commonly known but defined differently by everyone who uses it. Community typically means a group of people living in one community with common interests, however in the book Outcasts United, community means so much more. It means security, super-diversity, transitions, and most of all it means change. Clarkston, Georgia was a typical homogenous town until refugees from all over came to seek safety from the world's war zones. Parents left native lands where they had nothing, and came to America where they once again had next to nothing, and worked selflessly and tirelessly to provide for their children. These children often spoke broken English, and stuck together with other children of their race instead of mingling with other races, but that all changed with one woman, Luma Mufleh. Luma unified Clarkston's refugee families, and little by little she unified Clarkston and created a sense of community within for all the inhabitants.

The best word to describe Clarkston, a town of white people who lived by their town's motto, "Small town...big heart." (8), in the beginning is homogeneity, Civilians had a hard time adjusting to the influx of refugees that were settling down in their beloved hometown, and even refugees had a hard time adjusting to other refugees. The refugees were as diverse as the world, there was a wide range of ethnicities from Somalis through Ethiopians, and many didn't speak the same native language and spoke little English. As time went on, the homogeneity made way for pluralism, a form in society where minorities maintain their cultural independence, but learn to coexist and come together as one community. The Fugees, three soccer teams of refugee children, paved the way for this change, and people followed suit as they all overcame civic barriers as dangerous as police brutality and gangs, and as minuscule as where the Fugees could
play soccer. Luma brought nations together by starting with the refugee children, teaching them to work together seamlessly in the game of soccer while simultaneously teaching them to coexist in the game of life.

This experience happens to everyone, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, etc. because everyone is different, and the world is a diverse place where we all have to learn to coexist. Experiences will all range on extremity, but everyone will have an experience in their lives where they have to learn to coexist whether it is on a sports team, in a new neighborhood or a new job. This experience happened to me when I was going into middle school as a seventh grader. In my town, there are three elementary schools: Bryantville, Hobomock, and North Pembroke. Each school has a nickname for the other two, for instance the children at Hobomock were called "hobos", and the children at North Pembroke were called the "elites" because that was the richer part of town. Once we got to the middle school however, that all changed. We were no longer segregated in three parts and we were instead unified as one school. For the first few weeks, people tended to stay attached to their elementary buddies, but as the year went on schools were mixed up and people no longer identified as a "Bryantville" kid, they were just a seventh grader. When I asked my younger sister how she felt about the theme of community and the point of coexisting, she agreed with me, especially on my experience. She experienced the lumping of three schools last year, and her experience mirrored mine, and all the students that came before and will follow us. While our experiences were mild, considering we weren't running from a war zone, we learned the same lesson of coexisting that the people of Clarkston eventually did.

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, is another book with a broken community that needed to learn to coexist and come together as one. Maycomb, Alabama is also a typical racist
southern town, and the book highlights both the good and the bad citizens within. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the struggle to coexist stems mostly from black prejudice and social inequality, whereas in *Outcasts United* the struggle stems from prejudice and a sense of patriotism. Atticus tries to teach his children, Jem and Scout, that people are not inherently good or evil, but instead have both good and evil traits within them. Atticus proves to be a great role model because he admires a neighbor, Mrs. Dubose, for her courage while still discouraging her racism. While Maycomb, Alabama never ended up coexisting within the book, the theme of community and an attempt at coexisting was still ubiquitous. *Outcasts United* fortunately had a happier ending, with the town of Clarkson coming together as one. There was a new police chief, who was appalled at the way the old squad engaged with the community and at the lack of trust between the refugees and the police force. Other towns also wanted a way to help, and some parents donated soccer balls and cleats. Luma and her family, mainly her father, also found a way to overcome challenges and find a way to coexist with one another again. While *Outcasts United* is primarily about a soccer team for refugee children, the woman who put it all together and how Clarkson came to be one town, but from a more grand-scale point of view the book is about social change, and how to create a sense of community in a place where the only thing people have in common is a desire to be with people like them and an inherent distrust of those who are different.