On October 9, 2012, a Taliban gunman boarded a school bus in Pakistan’s Swat Valley. He shouted, “Which one of you is Malala? Speak up, otherwise I will shoot you all.” When she was identified, he shot at her. She was hit with one bullet, which went through her head, her neck, and ended in her shoulder.

Why Malala? For several years before her shooting, starting when she was just 12 years old, Malala openly defied the Taliban as it closed schools for girls in the Swat Valley. On BBC Urdu, Malala declared that everyone had a basic right to an education. The New York Times did a documentary about her entitled “Class dismissed.”

After the shooting, Malala was airlifted to a military hospital in Peshawar, where doctors operated to relieve the swelling on the left portion of her brain. She was given a 70 percent chance of survival. When she was stable to travel, she was flown to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK. There she responded to treatment. She underwent another operation to restructure her skull. On January 3, 2013, Malala was discharged from the hospital to continue her rehabilitation in her family’s temporary home in England.

On her 16th Birthday, July 12, 2013, Malala Yousafzai addressed the United Nations: “So here I stand, one girl among many. I speak—not for myself, but for all girls and boys. I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.”

Malala has inspired millions around the world with her vision and courage—knowing she was in danger, she stood up and spoke out for what she knew was right. In her book, I Am Malala, she writes: “Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country—this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world…My world has changed but I have not.”