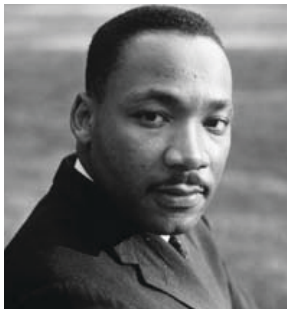

# 34th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Writing Contest

# "We Shall Overcome"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an activist committed to peace, justice, and equality. In his efforts for civil rights, he emphasized the importance of determination to achieve freedom and human dignity. His driving forces were love, the importance of family, and self-respect.

In 1981, Milwaukee educators and involved citizens began the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Writing Contest to celebrate and remember Dr. King's legacy. The contest continues today through their efforts.

This year's contest theme is "We shall overcome." The writers may relate this theme to themselves or others in their family, school, neighborhood, or the world.

## *Eligibility/Categories*

The writing contest is open to students in grades K-12 who live in the city of Milwaukee, or are enrolled in a school, either public or private, within the city of Milwaukee.

**There are seven grade level categories:**

- K-1: group project only (no individual essays), reflecting children's work and ideas
- Grades 2-3: individual entries, maximum length 250 words
- Grades 4-5: individual entries, maximum length 350 words
- Grade 6: individual entries, maximum length 400 words
- Grades 7-8: individual entries, maximum length 450 words
- Grades 9-10: individual entries, maximum length 500 words
- Grades 11-12: individual entries, maximum length 550 words

Typed essays preferred. Handwritten submissions must be neat and legible. Only one side of the page may be used. Entries must stay within word limitation for their grade level, otherwise the essay will be disqualified.

## *Judging*

The entries will be judged on a point system, with the following criteria considered:

- Entries must address the theme.
- Entries should relate the student's own personal ideas or experiences to the topic and show an understanding of Dr. King's ideals.
- Entries must not be a biographical sketch of Dr. King.
- Entries will be judged on the basis of clearly expressed, creative ideas. In judging entries, emphasis will be placed on clarity, creativity, and originality. Correct usage of basic grammar and writing skills will also be considered.

Teachers are encouraged to help students understand the historical context of Dr. King's words and actions, see the relevance of these words and actions in their world today, and become familiar with Dr. King's life and values. We recommend utilizing the resources of MPS school libraries and the Milwaukee Public Libraries.

The 2016-2017 theme comes from King's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech in Oslo, Norway, on December 10, 1964. **WE SHALL OVERCOME:** "I believe that even among today's mortar bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. ...I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down men other-centered can build up...I still believe that WE SHALL OVERCOME."

### *Prizes/Recognition*
Awards will be given at the Dr. King celebration on Sunday, January 15, 2017. First, second, and third place writing contest winners will receive an engraved plaque and a prize valued up to $100.

### *Entry Delivery Information*
All entries must be submitted by Monday, November 14, 2016 by 5:00 p.m. at one of the following locations:

The children's librarian at any Milwaukee Public Library
The MTEA Building, 5130 West Vliet Street, Milwaukee 53208

The original essay should be submitted. Entries will not be returned. Teachers may wish to make copies for their students prior to submission. Entries submitted after 5:00 p.m., November 14, will not be considered for prizes.

**NOTE:** ***Please do not send your entry to Milwaukee Public Schools Central Services Office.***

### *Identifying Your Entries*
To facilitate anonymity in judging, the following information must be clearly printed or typed **on the BACK** of each entry:

- Student's full name (include middle initial)
- Student's grade level
- Student's phone number
- Student's address (including zip code)
- School name and phone number
- Teacher's name

Student's name should not appear on the front of the essay. For each classroom packet of entries, attach a cover sheet (8.5 x 11) indicating the school, teacher's name, grade level and a list of the students entering the contest.

### *Questions/Concerns*
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Donelle Johnson, Contest Coordinator, at 414-445-5635, donellejohnson@aol.com, or the MTEA at 414-259-1990.

***Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association***

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