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Tenth News

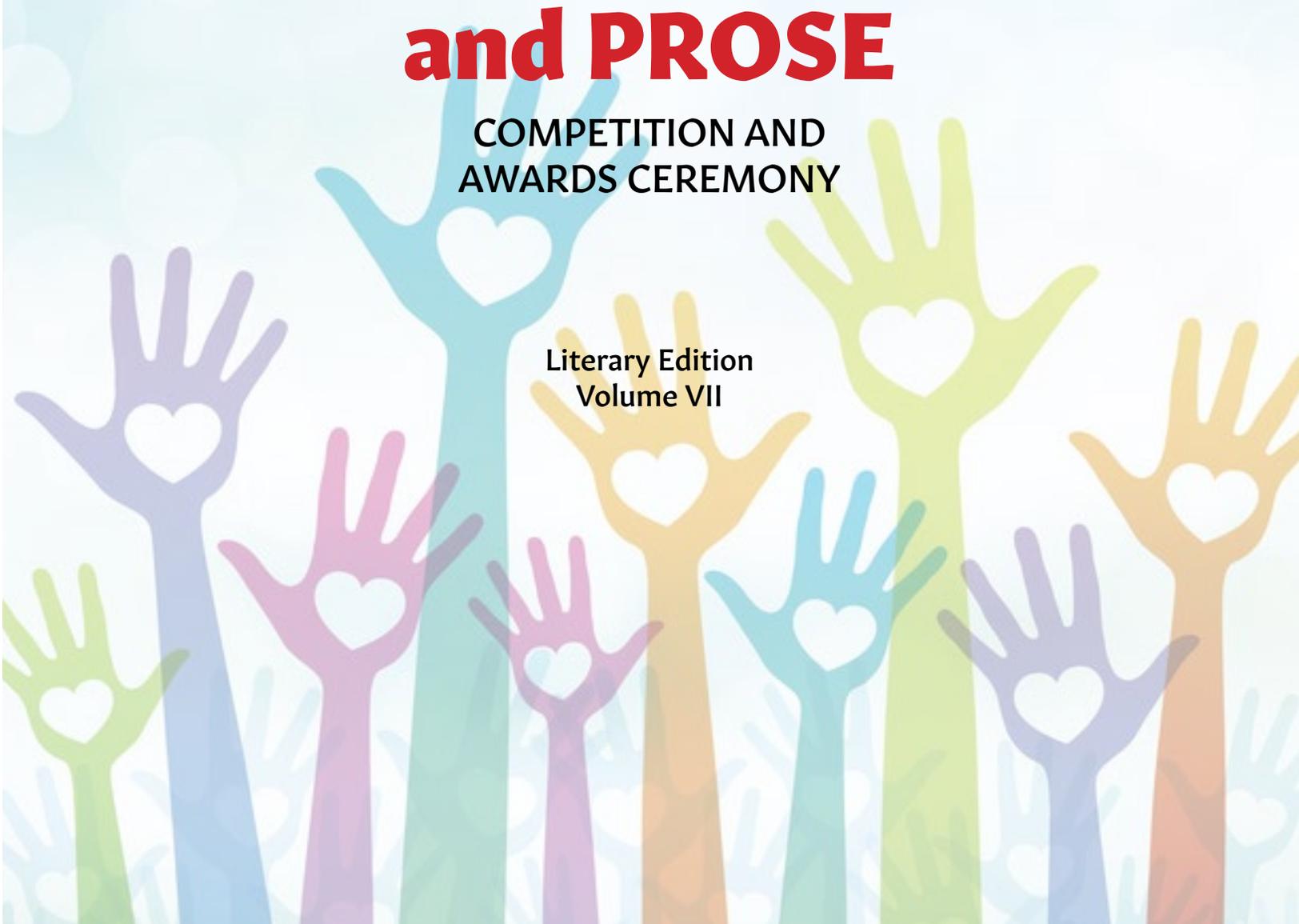
JUNE 2017 ILLINOIS TENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT DEMOCRATS NEWSLETTER VOL 14 NO 6 POETRY EDITION

Tenth News Special Edition

7th ANNUAL
**POETRY
and PROSE**

COMPETITION AND
AWARDS CEREMONY

Literary Edition
Volume VII



Our 2017 Poetry + Prose Competition Winners

First Prize, Poetry

Alanna Phillips, Zion-Benton High School,
"this strange work"

Second Prize, Poetry

Bianka Lewis, Zion-Benton High School,
"7:15 Every Morning"

Third Prize, Poetry

Jared Medina, Waukegan High School,
"Stained Glass"

Honorable Mention, Poetry

Joshua Avila, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"Looking For Help"

Honorable Mention, Poetry

Dominic Nelson, Zion-Benton Township High School,
"Life as we know it"

Honorable Mention, Poetry

Lily Holevoet, Zion-Benton Township High School,
"Ice Cream Truck"

First Prize, Prose

Kasandra Camarena, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"The Girl Without Service Hours"

Second Prize, Prose

Iris Sanchez, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"Knowledge is Hope"

Third Prize, Prose

Ranee Sanford, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"Servitium"

Honorable Mention, Prose

Jennifer Aguilera, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"A Helping Hand"

Honorable Mention, Prose

Julissa Medina, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"Our Future"

Honorable Mention, Prose

Michelle Unda, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School,
"Importance of Service"



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Young Authors Inspired by Theme of Service

by Jeanine Chyna

From Dr. Seuss and Chance the Rapper, to the TV series *Shameless*, the high school students who participated in the 7th Annual Tenth Dems Poetry & Prose Contest found their inspiration for the theme “Service” in a variety of sources. At this year’s Awards Night, held on April 18, some of the more than 120 high school students from Waukegan, North Chicago, and Zion who participated in the contest read their original poems and essays to an audience of family, friends, and other members of their communities. Congratulations went out to the students whose work placed first, second, and third, earning them awards of \$250, \$150 and \$100, respectively, as well as to the six students who earned honorable mention and received \$10 gift cards.

The Poetry & Prose Contest and Awards Night exemplify Tenth Dems’ belief that politics is about more than just elections and that Democrats’ goals of improving our community, our state, and our nation can be achieved in a variety of other ways—including nurturing the talent of our youth.

Most of the 12 student authors whose work was recognized as outstanding by the judges were present on April 18 to read their prize-winning works and accept framed certificates and cash awards. Several other students also came to the microphone to read the poems and essays they submitted to the contest, including Ada Rios, a 9th grader at Cristo Rey St. Martin High School in Waukegan, and Rita Adejudge and Hans Richardson, both 10th graders at Waukegan High School.

Waukegan Park District Commissioner Marc Jones, a member of the Waukegan community whose resume reads like the embodiment of this year’s theme of service, was the emcee. As he introduced each student reader, Marc put them at ease with his warmth and natural charm. Taking his own turn to read, Marc shared a poem attributed to Mother Teresa that

includes the following inspirational lines:

“The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.”

The evening began with brief opening remarks by Elizabeth Albert, a Tenth Dems volunteer and poet who was a driving force in organizing the very first Tenth Dems Poetry & Prose Contest seven years ago, and Barbara Altman, Managing Vice-Chair of Tenth Dems, followed by a warm welcome from Waukegan’s Mayor-elect, Sam Cunningham. Next, poet and author Jacqueline Harris, who led the judging of this year’s prose, introduced 10th District Congressman Brad Schneider.

Congressman Schneider commended the young authors and their families for their creativity and participation before he, too, read a poem, “No Man Is An Island” by John Donne. Lines like, “No man is an island entire unto itself” and “Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am a part of mankind” from this 17th century work spoke directly to our 21st century ideas of service.

Asked later about the evening, Congressman Schneider said, “The annual Tenth Dems Poetry and Prose Contest in Waukegan is a great event, and I’m so glad I could join this year. At a tumultuous time when so many critical issues are at stake, it was great to hear thoughtful and inspiring original works from our young people on the theme of service. A big thank you to the Tenth Dems for organizing this night.”

Congratulations to all who participated, and to this year’s awardees. As in past years, the judges read submissions that were anonymous—identified solely by randomly assigned numbers. Thus, the judges knew absolutely nothing about the student authors when they selected the prizewinning entries.

this strange work

you cannot serve God
with sin under your feet,
he said.

well in that case,
i whisper,
no one can

if God be not for the palms that sweat
or the minds that pick themselves raw
or the hardened hearts beneath breast

he is not for us.
tell me that he is a lonely God
tell me that he did not create dirt as well as place stars in firmament

tell me God is not insomniatic
that he does not deal with matters of the night
tell me he is afraid of the dark

or better yet
tell me that you do not have sin under your feet

that i cannot smell it on your breath
that you do not pick it from your nails before the sun can recount what you have done
tell me repentance is dead

tell me a resurrection joke
lay it flat upon the autopsy table
tell me his son did not die for the broken and dirty

tell me that God does not serve everyone
and i will tell you
we do not serve the same God.



The Girl Without Service Hours

People don't really consider the things she does as service. Waking up with a smile on her face, being caring and kind to her family and friends, putting others before herself for everything. People don't consider these things as doing something for others, more so for yourself. Frankly, I highly disagree with that statement. Being someone who watches her from afar, I can say she's the biggest person for others I've ever known. I guess that's the price some have to pay, living in a world where nothing is ever fair and you deal with what you have your own way.



Her day starts at around 5:40 in the morning. She wakes up and makes her bed, and begins to wake her brothers up. The process of waking them up is never quite consistent, the process is new every day. I mean you could understand it, they're just tired of everything. Usually, by the time her and her brothers are up her mom is off at work. She would hope her mom's at work. It's hard to tell if her mom is asleep on someone else's couch, or getting fired from another job. You never really know with her mom. Don't get me wrong, she loves her mom, she just doesn't love her. And it's wrong to say that, but it's true. At least her mother "loves" her more than her dad does, whoever that might be. And that has to count for something. After getting her brothers dressed and decently groomed, she has to hurry up and gather all their things. She always gathers her school things beforehand. Which still doesn't change the fact she wakes up without thinking twice about herself, she's too focused on making sure her brothers have everything they need to start off the day right. And her? Yeah I can't recall the last time she went properly groomed to school. Without her clothes being mixed matched while her eyes would carry a mixture of pain and shame on her part, not to mention the way the rings around her eyes would carry her exhaustion much further. She's a work in progress, but nevertheless, she still manages to watch over others in spite of her unkempt appearance. They get all their stuff and start walking over to the bus stop. The walk is about 8 minutes for them, give or take a few. As soon

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as they reach their bus stop they sit down and it's pretty quiet. None of them really like talking about what's going on. By none of them I mean her. Who could blame her. It's hard for someone with such an uplifting personality try to make sense of all the wrong going on in her life. She tries her hardest to keep her siblings happy, risking all her joy, and leisure on these boys. That's dedication. That's doing something for others. Making sure those kids don't get put into foster care, making sure those kids have warm food and a nice cozy bed to sleep in. The best part about it is, she wouldn't think twice about leaving them either. She wouldn't call this service.

At school, she conceals everything with nothing but a smile on her face. As soon as she walks into her school her heart fills with a stream of benevolence pouring into her silver-tongued mouth. She's usually the girl people are always asking for help. The one who doesn't make people feel stupid or less of themselves because she understands what it's like to get put down all the time. She's a wonder to have in class, she makes it easier for the teacher to teach in class, knowing there are people like her who actually listen. She's one of the girls who help others without expecting anything in return. Constantly giving up her spare time for others and showing the world that there's still good heart without tainted souls. She's the type of person who dedicates herself to this idea of wasting her time on others and helping them, while no one seems to do the same for her.

When she arrives home, she's the one who makes dinner for her brothers. She's the one who helps them with their homework. The one who explains to them a lesson when their teacher wasn't able to. She's the one who stays up past 12 trying to finish up her homework because she was busy tucking her brothers in and making sure they feel the love she never got. The one who tries making their life seem more bearable. She's the one who doesn't get the credit for her hard work and dedication on everyone but herself. And that's why I watch her. I wouldn't want to see someone like her just fade away like the others.

Kasandra Camarena, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School

7:15 Every Morning

Every morning you walk into your room at 7:15 sharp,

Pushing your key in the lock and sitting at your desk.

You're usually so confident, so upbeat,

But today you're nervous.

Your hands are fidgeting, the sweat on your palms dripping off your fingertips

Chanting, "Why are you here? You don't know what you're doing."

But you wipe away the taunts and wait for the familiar faces to flood the room and

Step foot into your garden;

The same garden that you had spent so much time fertilizing,

So much time caring for so that your young saplings could grow and thrive.

But sometimes it seems like everything you do is wrong.

They walk into your garden, gaze upon your neatly arranged plots and cry,

"This isn't right! Saplings can't grow this way!"

And tamper with them,

Pulling their roots from the ground and planting them

Where only the most vicious of weeds can influence and destroy.

And you feel powerless against their destruction.

You feel as though, if you lift even a single finger your plants will continue to wither,

That if you speak and show them where the richest of soils lie,

They will never listen.

But you try to make things right anyway.

Not because you have to, because this is your job,

But because you want to help them, your young saplings, flourish and bloom

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Into the strongest of oak trees that they desire to be.
You put in your best effort despite their screams of,
“You never tried! You didn’t help us! You acted like you cared, but it was all a front!”
Because if you listened, you would forget about
The healthy oaks that comes back to blow their grateful leaves at your feet.
So you walk into the room, push your key in the lock and sit at your desk
Every morning at 7:15 sharp

Bianka Lewis, Zion-Benton High School



Knowledge is Hope



I am a young hispanic girl who grew up in a small community full of minorities. I am first generation born to loving and hardworking immigrants. As a child, my biggest fear was coming home from school without parents who could be deported by ICE at any moment. I knew my parents meant no harm by living in this country. They simply came for the hope of a better country, yet so many people believed the false judgement that all immigrants were criminals unworthy of having the same rights. I watched it on TV over and over again; families being torn apart. This scenario continues to haunt my mind everyday.

A group of fellow high school students and I, concerned about social injustices in our community meet once a week to discuss what we can do in our community. My fear was a subject of priority to others in the group. We realized what we had to do, take away some fear by giving knowledge. Within our community we hosted a presentation to inform those impacted or in fear of deportations of their rights. Our school regularly does volunteer work, but for some reason this was different. Our families belonged to the community we were helping. We did not know what reactions to expect, but planned the event with anticipation.

The people nervously arrived and looked around. The students and I welcomed and ensured a feeling of comfort and safety. During the presentation, I translated the words of an immigration lawyer to some of my school faculty members. The looks on their faces showed the grievance towards the treatment and precaution an immigrant must experience. We ended the night formed in a circle. I listened as people expressed their fears and prayers, but left knowing their country had hope. As I looked around I saw parents, teachers, a sheriff, lawyers, and children. Numerous people together as one in hopes for an answer to the injustice. That night we gave the community an answer, knowledge and hope.

A woman approached a group of students and I and said, "I'm here on behalf of my sisters, who have feared coming out of the house due to their immigration status. I want to thank you for what you have done for the immigration community. Young people like you are the reason I have hope for this country." In this moment I was reassured that everything I do can change someone's life. No act of service is too small. Whether volunteering at a food pantry for two hours, helping your neighbor, or hosting an educational presentation for immigrants in your community, you are making a change. My actions of service make a difference, I am the change. My actions offered a feeling of hope for the lost, a solution to my fear.

Iris Sanchez, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School

Stained Glass

My can of pills has been empty for weeks
And I keep hallucinating where I go to the doctors but I don't ask for new ones
My grandma came and sang to me
She told me that she knew she would die soon before she did
I hear the triumph of angels calling her name
The air in June is filled with joy and smoke it stings my lungs
My can of pills has been empty for weeks and I can feel it mock me
It's bittersweet like my grandma's death
As I passed by the church that held her funeral
The pastor's words coming down like rain
How he called you a sinner but now you walk alongside Jesus
So the pills that took your life aren't gonna harm you any longer
I refuse to kneel or pray I won't remember you that way
But i'll serve you another way
I'll light you a candle in every cathedral across Mexico where our memories will stay lit
And I can keep you with me

Jared Medina, Waukegan High School



Servitium



Service comes from the Latin origin of the word servitium

Servitium: The condition of a slave

Condition of a slave: The condition in which one person is owned as property by another and is under the owner's control, especially involuntary servitude.

Servitude: The state of being a slave or completely subject to someone more powerful.

Power: having a strong effect on people's feelings or thoughts

Difference of voluntary service and involuntary service=power

Involuntary service example: slavery

Voluntary service example: community activism

Service can be seen as both gracious or gruesome. Voluntary service is a desire to help someone or something in need. It is one's free will and you are in control of your actions to serve the ones that need it. Feeding the homeless or going to an animal shelter to help out are both examples of voluntary actions of service. These acts of voluntary service are seen as gracious and build the community into a warmer, better place. Involuntary service, on the other hand, is the complete opposite. When you provide service involuntarily, you are forced into doing things that you did not consent to. You are not in control of your actions and your free will is taken away. Slavery and forced labor are two examples of this service. This can be seen as gruesome because a human is deprived of their rights or free will. The main concept that causes the difference between these two services is power. When one feels more superior than the next they feel they have the right to control one's actions. Gracious and gruesome services are both present in our society but people depict them in different ways based on how the individual is affected by the service.

Ranee Sanford, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School

Looking For Help

David has the bell ringing in his ear

He shoves his yellow notebook into his bag

Trying not to draw attention from the
swelling of his tears

Making his way to the bathroom to silently

Swear at his dad.

He takes a tab of acid to soothe the pain

And drifts through the halls

Floating on his emotions.

His mind was a storm that fell acid rain

Leaving his brain confused fighting

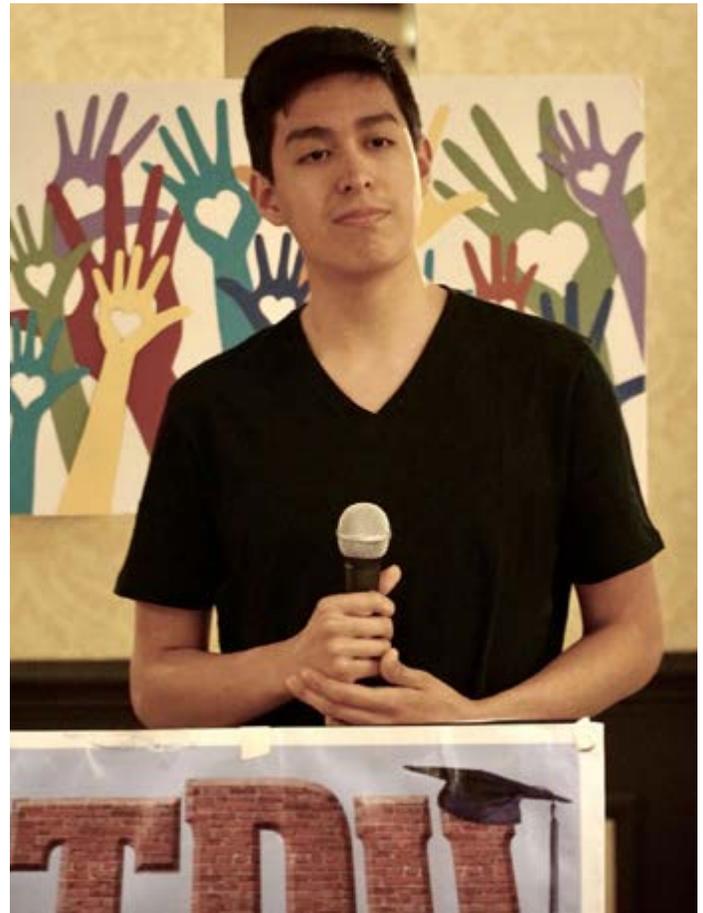
chemical contortions.

He limped to the counselor's room in search of

Life saving service

But the school was under budget and on her door

Was a sign that said on notice.



Joshua Avila, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School

A Helping Hand

I sat there as the young boy's imagination blossomed while thinking of what his newly-invented planet would look like. He decided that his planet would have a rocky texture and would be the color purple. He was engaged and so deep in thought that I could almost see the wheels in his mind turning. Every Monday evening, I walk into the library to find eager, bright faces staring back at me. I volunteer at a program called Homework Help and the children always greet me with a smile.

As a volunteer at Homework Help at the Waukegan Public Library, I work with multiple students, often at the same time, who struggle completing their homework. Their homework could range from adding fractions to structuring an essay or creating a presentation on a specific time in history. Although I enjoy tutoring all students, it has been most memorable helping a young girl with Spanish as her first language. She is not fully familiar with English and struggles most with her Language Arts work. Despite the struggle, this young girl enjoys reading out loud, and searching the word box for verbs that make most sense in the blanks. This is a challenge and gets more difficult when she encounters words she has never seen before. She and I have developed different ways of approaching her homework, making her more comfortable when working on English.

I also work with a middle-school student, who comes in weekly for math help. After coming in to Homework Help regularly, he has begun to do weekly extra credit for his math class. When he struggles with fractions or finding the slope of a line, he says so freely. I proceed to find an alternative way of solving a problem, because the first one simply did not make sense. We look through the math book resources, skim his notes and browse online in search of alternative ways of explaining the same concept. While volunteering at Homework Help, I've learned that every single child has a personal way of learning - visual, verbal, aural, physical, or perhaps a mix of two. I try to understand what ways of learning work best for each student and then try to help them use this knowledge to approach other classes.

Sometimes I believe that the students I work with teach me more than I could ever teach them. After a few months of working at Homework Help, I have learned that patience is a fundamental element everywhere - a classroom, home and life in general. The children I help are perseverant and this is a sight that I have been exposed to so closely in this program. I have been able to work with these students one-on-one that the barrier between them and I has been broken, and Homework Help is a place where they feel comfortable. Teaching certain subjects can be difficult at times, but I have learned the gift of working through problems, and cherish the idea that learning never ends.

Homework Help has given me the opportunity to encourage young children to learn and nurture their curiosity beyond the classroom. Seeing children thrive with the imaginative stories and approach math problems as if they were puzzles makes the program one of magic. After volunteering, I never expect anything in return but occasionally, kids comes back to hug me and parents come thank me personally. I value the fact that I was key in a student using their resources to shape not only their educational path, but career ahead.

Jennifer Aguilera, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School

Life as we know it

Life's hard as shit - that's common knowledge. From day one we have to fight to live these lives we lead. No matter how much we may bleed, so as long as we got our companions, we can be more hands on and get our jobs done. To some, this gift is a curse seen as their loved ones have been taken away by a hearse, a candle in the wind filled with desire and sin, but hey that's how life begins. Sick isn't it because it really is the game called life. This game will make others cry and just want to die to the point they just feel sick inside and just want to hide from all the lies they told to those helpless eyes. To some it makes them want to cry and to others it makes them want to die. We chose this life and boy has it been a wild ride but I see the end of it nearing now so I must say bye. For my loved ones, please don't cry as I have lived a hard but wonderful life. There is no need to cry, but don't bottle it up inside that just make you dead on the inside. If you have to cry then please don't be shy because that life is filled with pain and strife and has words so sharp and anxiety so bad that they cut you like a knife. Life is love and love is life so my boy be sad for my loss but be happy for your gain because life is already a huge pain. Why would you want more of it up in your brain so just let it flow and be mellow. Have fun, learn an instrument - play the cello whatever you do... do it with your heart and soul and if you lost those long ago then find the person or thing that will fill that hole and give you back your soul. I know life can take its toll, but hell that's life for ya so let's all just take a stroll down old memory road where it can take its emotional toll but that's your heart and soul. Your origins it's where you get your courage man so you can take a stand and write a song, make some noise, join a band. Hell life is just that a life and when you get old may you have a son and a wife so you can be repaid for your pain and strife with a happy life.

Dominic Nelson, Zion-Benton Township High School

Our Future

My mom always tells me, "Mija, you do so well in school and you're so smart. I can't wait to see what your contribution to society is." This used to irritate me; her expectation that I do something with my life that benefits both myself and my community. I used to roll my eyes and think: Why should I care about anyone else but myself? I'm working to make my life better. But I have since realized that I was so wrong to think that way. I have seen such injustice in my short sixteen years on earth and I want to make the world better. World hunger. Education refinement. Women's rights. LGBTQ+ inclusion. Immigration reform. I know I am only one girl, but I believe I can make a difference - I just have to start small. I try to do what I can by volunteering and spreading awareness for social problems that I hold dear to my heart.

I volunteer at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) once a month. FMSC is a Christian organization that runs on donations from the community to feed children around the world. FMSC buys the ingredients that their formulas require and volunteers are then able to go there to pack the food that will be sent around the world to countries where children are plagued by hunger. I love going to FMSC because it's a small way that I can contribute to helping that leads to a big difference. I also volunteered at an after school tutoring program called Beacon Place. I was able to help kids with their homework and do arts and crafts with them. It was so amazing to see how much potential they have to be our next great generation. These kids may come from poverty ridden areas, but their spirits are anything but poor.

Knowledge is power. Knowing what is happening in our society is the first step in making a change. I love learning about the problems that women and LGBTQ+ members face in our world; I love learning about this because it makes me so incredibly angry. I think everyone should get angry about it, and then maybe we'll do something to fix it. To think that anyone should have the right to tell a woman that she can't have an abortion because it goes against their beliefs or that some congressmen had to decide that it was okay for two women or men who love each other to get married. Why is this even something that had to be a question? It's ridiculous that human rights are something that has to be fought for by everyone who isn't a wealthy white male. These are issues that I believe I can do something about by using my voice.

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My family is Mexican American. We are fully Mexican. We are fully American. And we have just as much a right to be in America as any white European immigrant. With President Trump newly in office, so many people around me are terrified for their futures. It makes me so sad to think that people who have been here for so long are now faced with the possibility of being deported and losing everything that they have built up over the years. Children of immigrants are scared that “mommy and daddy” will be taken away from them and it makes my heart hurt. All of this fear just because people are scared of diversity. All of this racism and hatred towards strangers just because of skin color. It’s physically sickening.

I believe change for all of these things will come. I believe it will come through the next generation of young people. We are so aware of the problems that blight today’s society, and now more than ever, we are ready for a change. I believe this is what service to others truly means; making a difference and bettering society to give others a chance to succeed.

Muhammad Ali once said, “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth” – it’s time to pay up.

Julissa Medina, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School



Importance of Service

When I think of service, I immediately think of the service my school provides weekly, or even daily. There are students and staff who constantly take time out of their day to assist in either packing food, tutoring students, helping homeless people at PADS, and many more opportunities.

During my freshman year I found it hard to understand why people would take time out of their own day to do that, until I actually went myself. The first time I volunteered it was at Feed My Starving Children. There was so many people that each time I looked around I always seen a new face. I was overwhelmed, but I was excited. As I was packing the food, I thought of all the children that would benefit from just that one night. I felt as if I was a part of something much bigger than myself. This service was the action of many volunteers helping those in need and those facing troubled times. I have to say that is one of the best feelings ever. I am able to use my own energy and my own resources to give someone else an opportunity, even though I don't know them and they'll never know me. I do know I did something to impact someone's life.



Another more recent type of service I attended, was volunteer over the summer in a STEM program for children. The program consisted of three different groups which the children rotated in between, which all revolved around math, science, and technology. Everyday, for each group, there was a new lesson and activity, one particular lesson. And towards the end of the day they were able to use old technology to try to build something new, which was usually their favorite part of the day. When I first met all of the children they were shy and quiet, but by the end of the program they told me that I made them want to come everyday and learn. Again, I felt as if my service was promoting a progress. I was able to encourage these children to want to learn new things, to ask questions, and to be more involved. I impacted their lives in a positive way.

So, what I have learned about service is that it brings people together to build stronger communities. To be a part of that progress is valuable. Not only do I help others, but I also help myself because I knew that I was doing something great. Although I am only one person I was making a change by giving back to the community in my own way. Service is more than an "action of helping or doing work for someone."

Michelle Unda, Cristo Rey St. Martin High School

**2017
Poetry
+ Prose
Competition
Photos**















Meet the 2017 Judges

These published writers read the original work submitted by the students and selected the prizewinning entries. The manuscripts the judges read were anonymous, identified solely by randomly assigned numbers. Thus, the judges knew absolutely nothing about the student authors when they made their selections.

Lois Baer Barr (poetry), is an emerita professor of Spanish and a literacy tutor at Waukegan Public Library. Her work has been published in anthologies and journals, such as *Southern Women's Review*, *Alimentum Literary Magazine*, *cream city review*, *Persimmon Tree*, *Letralia*, *Flashquake*, *The Jewish Literary Journal*, *Zona de carga*, *Revista Centroamericana* and *Mochila*. She has received Pushcart nominations for poetry and fiction and has had books, articles and reviews on Spanish and Latin American literature published here and abroad. Her chapbook *Biopoesis* won *Poetica Magazine's* 2013 contest.

Cornell Ford (prose) began producing music from home in 1998 as part of a rap group called "Raw Dillaz," which produced two full albums. He eventually grew out of rap and concentrated solely on music production in 2003 producing two easy listening CDs entitled "Melodic Communion Vol. 1 & 2" in 2003 and 2005.

In 2006, Cornell wrote and directed his first film, *The Beat*. From there, he received his TV Producer Certification from Comcast School of Broadcasting in Waukegan in 2006. In 2007, Cornell wrote and directed his second short film, *Thirsty*, and in that same year he produced his first TV show, *What's Good?* The show aired on Public Access TV in Lake County from 2007 to 2012. In 2009, he produced his third short film, *Thirsty 2: The City of Lost Souls*, and in 2010, left the studio business to concentrate on filmmaking.

Cornell's first full feature movie entitled *Music's Son* debuted at the Genesee Theatre in Waukegan, Illinois in January 2012. His second feature, *Let's Shake On It*, debuted at the same theater in April 2013 (distributed by Maverick Entertainment with a short run on Redbox and is available on Amazon), and his third feature, *Eyes From Eden*, debuted at the Genesee on November 22, 2016.

Cornell has also written three books since 2014: *Stonecold*, under Black Bag Mafia Publishing, *IllegalTender*, and *Have You Wishing That I Was Yours*, on which he based his film *Eyes From Eden*. These titles are available on Amazon.

MJ Gabrielsen (prose) is a co-founder of Library Poets, a poetry workshop sponsored by the Deerfield Public Library. She is editor for *East On Central* literary journal and her work has been published in *The Avocet*. She has collaborated with five other writers on a progressive novella.

Jacqueline Nicole Harris (prose) is a writer, performance poet, and Shimer College graduate from North Chicago, Illinois. She is also a member of the Deerfield Library Poetry Group in Deerfield, Illinois. Jacqueline is the author of five chapbooks: *Random Acts of Verse*, *My Revolution*, *A Brown Girl's Story*, *7 Random Things*, and *ON LIFE*. Jacqueline is currently working on her first novel. She lives and works from home while trying to get out and give back to her community whenever possible. Her fifth book of Poetry *ON LIFE* is the winner of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's Ebook Award for 2017.

Raised in the Notorious Robert Taylor Housing projects comes **Joe Starks** (poetry), also known as **Suave Da Lyricist**. Introduced to music at the age of eight, he has been a fan ever since. This rapper/songwriter has been involved in the Chicago Music scene since graduating high school in 1998. Recently awarded best new entertainer at 2017 Chicago Music Awards, he is on a mission to bring love back to the genre of Hip Hop.

