

SAN DIEGANS FOR A PEACEFUL WORLD



AWARD-WINNING ENTRIES

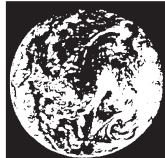
2006/2007 School Year

High School Peace Writing Contest

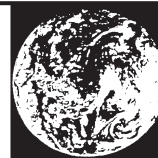
Topic: “What Can My Generation Do To Help Create
a Peaceful World Free of War and Violence?”

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San Diegans for a Peaceful World Writing Contest
A project of The Peace Resource Center of San Diego
3850 Westgate Place, San Diego, CA 92105



**San Diegans for a Peaceful World Writing Contest
2006-2007 School Year Contest winners**

(in alphabetical order)

ESSAY

Juliet Bernal
Age 15, Grade 10
Morse High School
Teacher: Ms. Scanlon

Douglas Blue
Age 16, Grade 10
Grossmont High School
Teacher: Ms. Wilson

Mona Le
Age 15, Grade 9
San Pasqual High School
Teacher: Mr. Wester

Jane Lee
Age 16, Grade 10
Rancho Bernardo High School
Teacher: Mr. Rowan

Kara Roudenbush
Age 14, Grade 9
San Pasqual High School
Teacher: Mr. Wester

CREATIVE WRITING

Rhiana Bible
Age 15, Grade 10
Grossmont High School
Teacher: Ms. Wilson

Dean Latney
Age 15, Grade 9
Clairemont High School
Teacher: Mrs. Martin

Alexander Ludington
Age 15, Grade 9
San Diego High School
Teacher: Mr. Robinson

Aurora Manimtim
Age 15, Grade 10
Morse High School
Teacher: Ms. Scanlon

Austriana Wagoner
Age 15, Grade 9
Clairemont High School
Teacher: Mrs. Martin

CATEGORY I

ESSAY

Juliet Bernal
Age 15, Grade 10
Morse High School

“Where is the Love?”

As young children, we had envisioned the new millennium to have flying cars, homes in the sky, robots everywhere, and world peace. The year is now 2007. Cars have not been lifted even an inch off the floor, houses are still on solid ground, and there is still no sign of robots. To make matters even worse, our progress towards world peace has only gone downhill. The United States is currently at war with the Middle East, North Korea has nuclear weapons, and there are millions of ill, starved children all over the world. The amount of explicit material in media has skyrocketed, exposing young people to content involving sex, drugs, and violence. There are also plenty of causes that need financial help such as the children infected with AIDS in Africa or the hundreds of homeless individuals living in the streets. Yet, people never seem to care anymore. If we could only fight for the sake of these reasons, our generation would be well on its way toward making this world a much more peaceful place.

Our first target would have to be the media. Throughout the years, the amount of explicit content has increased dramatically. Obscene language is now common in music and television, which leads children to picking up these words and repeating them.. Sex is also a common sight in the media. Music videos often feature scantily clad women treated like a piece of meat. Songs once focused on loving and caring but now only talk about sex and money. L The amount of R-rated movies in theaters has also gone out of control, while family-friendly movies quickly find themselves on the bottom of the charts as soon as they're released. The standards in entertainment have raised, but morality-wise, they have reached an all-time low. The media also fails to support the many problems going on in reality. If we can only encourage this, more people will be open to helping out for good causes.

Nowadays, it is very difficult to come across people who outwardly express their generosity. They see the people asking for donations outside a grocery store, but they hastily walk past them without a single glance. If young individuals like us could take helping out for good causes into consideration, there would undoubtedly be a change in the way our generation views the world. It would open our eyes to the hundreds of problems worldwide and encourage us to take more action. This is one of the most obvious reasons why the world seems oblivious to these serious predicaments—people have never made the effort to do anything. We would become better people if we could only learn to help the troubled souls in need of guidance.

Unfortunately, it is our generation who is the first to feel the effects of this corrupted world. This results in teenagers joining gangs, doing drugs, and having children before they even graduate from high school. This is why many find it difficult to go and help out other people—because they first need the help themselves. Local communities should have groups that help troubled teens. These groups can also help keep kids off the streets and get them involved in helping out good causes. For instance, there is the Boys & Girls Club, and even clubs sponsored by celebrities that want to promote the well-being of adolescents as well. If necessary, we should start off small, and gradually work our way towards helping the world in bigger ways.

There are many people who believe that world peace will only exist in our imaginations. However, those people must also believe that there is nothing we can do to create it. All we need to accomplish this goal is the confidence and determination to make this world the wonderful place we've dreamed of. Only then will we make this dream into a reality.

###

Douglas Blue
Age 16, Grade 10
Grossmont High School

In this day and age, world wide conflicts have the potential to escalate at increasingly alarming levels. With the abundant technology surrounding us, whether its purpose is communication or that of militaristic intent, it is very possible to build conflicts into problems of engulfing, epic natures. Our generation is faced with the responsibility of maintaining world order and peace, of refraining from indulging in the power we, as nations, societies and ethnic groups wield. In order to create a more peaceful planet, focus should not be placed on the world as a whole or its conglomerate national entities but rather on individuals. Before peace is extended to all regions of the globe, people must find peace within themselves. To do this requires that we each practice values that together provide the framework for peace and perform actions enlightened with said values. Such components of amity are: education, tolerance, forgiveness, and compromise.

Ignorance often breeds hatred; many of those who despise a culture, religious persuasion, or something of a less encompassing nature are often next to clueless about what it is that they hate. To combat ignorance and prevent the spawning of more prejudice and abhorrence, one must be educated. The hatred that burns meaninglessly in people could ideally be replaced with positive feelings if education on a basic plane included cultural, religious, and international awareness. If people learned about their own cultures as well as other cultures they come into contact with, racism would begin to dwindle. As soon as people witnessed how enriched other cultural traditions are, they would not have malevolent attitudes towards them. Education about world religions, big and small, would expand the perspectives of the common person and lead to the embracing of other traditions while maintaining the differences between faiths that make the world so diverse. Education about local, national, and international politics, history, and current affairs would let people understand the world in front of them and the world waiting for them. Observing art, harvesting spirituality, and employing methods for peaceful interactions would further inspire citizens of all sorts to create a peaceful environment. All of the education about differing and contrasting beliefs and traditions leads right into the practice of tolerance.

Once people have been educated about the world surrounding them, using tolerance in affairs connected not only to this education but in everyday life would further advance peaceful efforts. With tolerance, one might not necessarily agree with a person on a singular or perhaps multiple levels but still show respect for their differences. Many problems the average person experiences could be easily avoided with a display of tolerance, and the same can be said for the avoidance of problems of more political persuasions.

Along with tolerance, forgiveness functions as another instrument working for peace. Like tolerance, forgiveness can help prevent many problems. They differ in that tolerance exists in one's present experiences while forgiveness deals with one's past experiences, particularly where wrongs were done to them. By letting things go and not demanding reparations or vengeance of any sort, we can stop fighting for things unnecessarily and look towards a less conflicted future. Eliminating the escalation to violence and catastrophe with the power of forgiveness will advance us towards a progressively utopian world where hostility is replaced with compassion.

Disagreeable insistence leads to quarreling. Quarreling often leads into much more dangerous affairs between the involved opposing parties. To eliminate the possibility of matters getting out of hand, the art of compromise should become a fundamental part of one's nature. Cooperation is usually more beneficial than obtaining something at the expense of another. Not only do those involved get at least a satisfying fraction of what they originally desired, mutual bonds are then created between participants that can prove themselves to be invaluable. These bonds can hopefully lead to entities working together for the achievement of common goals. Cooperation only leads to unity, and unity contributes to the elimination of problems globally and within one's own reach. By giving leeway, we encourage others to work peacefully with us, establishing a peaceful network of people or groups of people.

Once the components of peace are utilized in daily relations among individuals, peace of greater scales will be born—within communities, broader spectrums of society, and throughout all nations of the world. Internal peace leads to peace reflected in external actions.

###

Mona Le
Age 15, Grade 9
San Pasqual High School

Since there has been man, there has been violence and conflict. Whether it is a dreadful and gruesome war or a pointless and trivial confrontation with a stranger, everyone has experienced anger: the root of all conflicts. But it does not matter how one feels, but how one chooses to resolve those conflicts. Some may choose the path of violence to settle the argument, but those who adopt a nonviolent alternative truly win the fight. Our generation can help create a peaceful world free of war and violence by simple acts such as compromising and negotiating, destruction of weapons, and raising peace awareness around the community.

The first step toward the dream of a peaceful world is to compromise and negotiate. With these two tactics, everybody can prevent violence from occurring. When confounded with an argument or conflict, one can learn to propose a compromise, where both parties end up satisfied. Not only does this method prevent a violent outcome, it leaves both sides content. For example, when I was younger, my brother and I started an argument over who would use the computer first. I refused to let him play because I wanted to, but we eventually made a compromise that left both of us satisfied; we decided to flip a coin to determine who has the first turn on hour intervals. Not only does creating a compromise such as this work on small conflicts, but it can also solve grater problems, such as preventing war and violence with another country, or even, one within our own.

The second step taken to accomplish a peaceful world is to destroy all deadly devices that cause most deaths: weapons. Weapons are immoral and violent tools that are used to fight and kill. Some may believe that one needs them for protection, but with peace and without weapons there is no need to protect oneself from violence. Without weapons everyone can live in peaceful harmony because everyone will be forced to compromise. The United States has countless military academies and war colleges and spends about \$500 billion annually toward weapon development, military training, and the maintenance of war machines. In contrast, expenditures on nonviolent alternatives to war are only a few million dollars per year. Instead of wasting billions of dollars on the production of more destructive weapons, everyone should focus on providing money for nonviolent alternatives to war. By focusing on the nonviolent alternatives and destroying weapons, the world will be closer to the goal of a peaceful world free of war and violence.

A third and last step of building a more peaceful world is spreading the word and raising awareness around the community. Although, many citizens in the nation share the dream of such a world, most people hesitate on acting upon it. World peace can only be accomplished when everyone participates, and is willing to make a change. Creating a poster or sign and posting it around the community, is a simple act that can take the world closer to peace. Although such an idea may seem too insignificant, we can take a small step to help prevent war and violence, and gradually lead to a peaceful life. We must all just work together.

World peace is a difficult and challenging goal but can be accomplished if everyone contributes. With methods like compromise and negotiation, destruction of weapons, and increased awareness within the community, we can achieve our goal of a peaceful world free of war and violence.

###

Jane Lee
Age 16, Grade 10
Rancho Bernardo High School

*“Imagine all the people living in peace. You may say that I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one.
I hope someday you’ll join us and the world will be as one.”*

Throughout centuries humans have been wrestling with the idea of world peace. It seems everyone wants to achieve this benevolent plateau of international peace without war, but no one has yet discovered a way to achieve it. These simple yet powerful lyrics are from John Lennon’s moving song “Imagine” written in 1971 in the midst of the Vietnam War. He believed his generation could bring peace into the violence of the Vietnam War by uniting people under one cause for peace. Then I ask what can my generation do in order to help create a peaceful world free of war and violence? My answer is we must learn to have compassion for others and realize we are all human beings first and nationalities later.

The definition of compassion is sympathy for the suffering of others, causing a desire to help them. An important step to take in order to achieve compassion in our hearts and bring forth a peace is through education. Education allows young minds to process through difficult political issues and bring forth their own intelligent opinion. This is different from people who might be easily steered left or right by viewing propaganda. According to Maria Montessori, the founder of the Montessori Method of Education, "Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics do is keep us out of the war." Most importantly, education brings forth the knowledge of different cultures. Since the majority of violent uprisings are caused by prejudice against a different national or religious affinity, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves about the different cultures and values that exist in our world. Through an understanding of different culture's values and beliefs, our eyes are opened to the profound idea that despite our apparent differences, everyone is a human being with the same rights, necessities and desires for safety and happiness. For example, a mother's love can be translated and understood to all nations. Once we realize that all humans are more alike than different, our generation gains a sense of community, sympathizing with others in their distress. Instead of viewing people in Africa, Iraq, and other nations as strangers, but as fellow mothers, sisters, and sons, we begin to gain compassion for them and desire to help them through their suffering.

In today's world the idea of universal peace is often scoffed at. The concept of world peace is continually written off as naïve. However, for our generation to believe that a peaceful means to a peaceful ends is possible, we must look upon role models such as Martin Luther King, Caesar Chavez, and Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi is renowned as the spiritual and political leader of India who gained India's independence through peaceful methods. He was a strong advocate of non-violence and introduced the concept of Satyagraha, the resistance of tyranny through mass civil disobedience. Gandhi believed that the British occupiers of India could be reached by arguments of justice and peace rather than counter-violence and he remained steadfast to his peaceful beliefs. In the end Gandhi's perseverance won out because in 1946 India gained independence from the British.

Another great figure of peace is Martin Luther King Jr., the 1960's civil rights movement leader of America. A follower of Gandhi's principles, Martin Luther King was an advocate of racial equality. At age thirty-five, Martin Luther King was the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in civil rights. The most memorable aspect of Martin Luther King's life was his "I Have a Dream" speech delivered for 250,000 people at a peace march in Washington, D.C. Although Martin Luther King did not live to see the day where skin color no longer determined the quality of a human, he has become the figurehead for peace. What our generation needs to remember is peace might be a heavy burden to carry, but with a strong perseverance and with courage it can be achieved. Our generation must continue to fuel the fire for a peaceful world handed to us and believe in this quote from Martin Luther King, "One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends with peaceful means."

However, the most important responsibility for a member of my generation or any other human being is to have peace within ourselves. How can my generation create a peaceful world free of violence if we can not achieve it ourselves? Since we are human beings first and nationalities later, we should not hold our government responsible for bringing peace into the world, but rather it should be each human being's responsibility. According to a Chinese proverb, "If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is peace in the cities, there must be peace in the home. If there is peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart." It might seem like one individual with peace in her heart might not make a difference, but that one person is like a pebble thrown into water causing ripples throughout the entire lake. When more stones are thrown into the lake they can create a wave of ripples. United under one cause for a peaceful world, our generation can cause the wave of change within cities, nations and eventually the world.

###

Kara Roudenbush
Age 14, Grade 9
San Pasqual High School

"Peace is the respect for the rights of others," says Benito Juarez, past president of Mexico. This statement means that in order to have peace, a person must have respect toward another individual's beliefs, ideas, and choices. My generation can do a significant amount to help toward a peaceful world in the future, free of war and violence. The idea that every individual is created equal is often forgotten by people these days, especially by teens. In elementary school it is mundane for students to not worry about what their peers think of them or who they hang out with, because, to them, every classmate is equal. But as the years progress, and high school comes

around it becomes a different story. Teens form their own cliques, and the thought of everyone being the same slowly becomes terra incognita. So that's why, in order to create a peaceful world, a person must start taking action where the ill-will and violence begin...high school.

There are various ideas and plans for a peaceful world, one of which is the, "Get to Know Your Peers" plan. In the "Get to Know Your Peers" plan, incoming freshman and upper classmen will fill out a mandatory survey about themselves at the beginning of the school year. Every teacher will receive a copy of these surveys so that each and every teacher can have that student's survey. By doing this, the teacher can review each survey in his or her class and pair up four students that are opposites to each other. The teacher will do this because when there is a group project consisting of four students, they will learn to work together. This potentially can help to create peace and harmony, teaching the students to respect each other's beliefs, ideas, and choices. Also, by doing this throughout sophomore, junior, and senior year the students can build a broader level of friendship with their fellow classmates based on exchanged interactions.

The media, especially movies, not only plays a vital role in stereotyping teens but reinforces their behavior to separate and segregate because it's the legitimate action to do. Whether it's being a dumb cheerleader, smart nerd, an antagonizing jock, or a rebellious punk all of these types of cliques are stereotyped. The result of this stereotyping reinforces conflict within high schools throughout the United States. The "Get to Know Your Peers" plan will be a tremendous help to this conflict because, when the students work in their groups, they'll learn more about each other's background and work together. Classmates will eventually see each other as for whom they are and not who they're stereotyped to be.

Teens often choose violence to resolve their conflicts because violence is shown and said in movies and songs that fight your enemy is the appropriate choice to choose. Also teens use violence because it makes them feel like they have power. Teens adopting violence is not wise because when they become adults they will think it's okay to fight off their problems, which will be far from peaceful. So using the "Get to Know You" program will teach teens to be less violent because they can talk to their group of peers about their conflicts. This is different than talking to their clique of friends because a teen's clique shares the same opinion, but in their group of four shares the teen gets to hear three other opinions.

In conclusion, the "Get to Know Your Peers" program will cultivate the new generation of teens because the program works towards learning respect, non-violence, and non-segregation and discrimination. If this program is followed through, our generation will be one step closer to a peaceful world, free of war and violence. After all, we all are created equal.

####

CATEGORY II

CREATIVE WRITING

Rhiana Bible
Age 15, Grade 10
Grossmont High School

"Smile"

Love, hate, peace, war.
All live together in one solid world.
The love of a child,
The hate of a killer,
The peace of a family,
The war of a nation.

In this world we live and we die.
We pass through,
Without a second chance,
Each of us is just one more in a line.

Every so often one steps out,
Steps out to change the line in which we stand.
Some are great,
Some are evil,
They change us all.
In the end though,
We all move along the same line.

We live each day
To get through,
To get through to a better tomorrow.
We wait for others,
To make that tomorrow for us.

We sit and watch the world pass by.
We wait for the changes that others make

We watch the wars,
The peaces,
The acts,
That influence our culture,
That shape our lives.

We've learned to coast,
And wait for things to happen,
And or other things to change,
We can't wait forever.

We need to step out of this line,
We need to show the world,
That we too can make a difference.
We need to share our love,
And to bury our hate,
And learn how to smile.

Change is inspired
By those who don't know it,
A secret smile to show affection
That inspires a better day,
For a better tomorrow.

That tomorrow we must make,
And make it the way we want it.
We must smile,
To share a kindness.
That kindness alone
Will make us step out,
And change the line we are in
To make a difference,
To where that line ends.

#####

**Dean Latney
Age 15, Grade 9
Clairemont High School**

“Peace Poem”

What is Today's Desire?
Our desire today is to have a Peaceful Place to Live
We want a nonviolent
War-free World!!!!
Walk away from violence
Grab Peace's Hand
Run free
Spread the News
We need to Stop War and Violence
For the sake of our future generations.
Is there anything I can do?
No, not on my own
Everyone needs to join together
Doesn't matter your race, class or color
We are all humans
We need to join as One
We shouldn't be fighting
We should be living peacefully together
It's not about how hard you can strike back
Its about how hard you can be struck
and
Keep moving forward
To create a Peaceful Place

###

Alexander J. Ludington
Age 15, Grade 9
San Diego High School: School of International Studies

“Save”

She *trembles*,
She *sobs*,
She *winces*,
She *burns*,
She *drowns*,
She *suffocates*,
She *bleeds*,
And she *reaches*,
But *no one* is listening.

Her cries
go unheard;
Her tears
go ignored;
Her pain
continues;
Her children
spite her.
But she doesn't know the reason.

She's never complained
She's never wanted much
She's never needed much
She's only asked
why?

What has she ever done
to us?
What did she do
to deserve *this*?

Her offspring
hate one another;
constantly Argue/Fight/Kill;
exploit her;
blame each other for her pain;
When they can come together,
Join hands,
Learn from their actions
And *change*.

Then maybe.
Just maybe,
They can save her....

Mother Earth

#####

**Aurora Manimtim
Age 15, Grade 10
Morse High School**

“I Pledge Allegiance to Peace”

I pledge allegiance to a city
where people are friendly.
Where anywhere and everywhere
people greet you with a smile.

I pledge allegiance to a state
Where no one is unsatisfied.
Where the only law
is to turn the other cheek.

I pledge allegiance to a country
where the president stays where he's wanted.
Where politicians only want
what's best for the people.

I pledge allegiance to a world
where murder is nonexistent.
Where violence doesn't equal violence
and two wrongs don't make a right.

I pledge allegiance to a utopia
where all I can do is dream.
Where you can dream too
and maybe this dream can become reality.

#####

**Austriana Wagoner
Age 15, Grade 9
Clairemont High School**

**“What can my generation do to help create a peaceful
world free of War and violence?”**

We could stop fighting with ourselves like children fighting over candy

We could start worrying about world matters and stop worrying about who is going to
win the super bowl

We could stop acting like we know everything about a person with just a glance

We could stop discriminating against people because they are not like us

We could realize that everybody is the same, just with a different wrapper

We could realize that not everything we hear on the news is true for everyone

We could stop wars that we don't even know who started or why

We could elect a future president who doesn't hold grudges against whole countries

We could elect a future governor who actually cares about our education

We could build confidence by giving compliments

We could use new technology to build a better life

We could do so much all we have to do is try

We can change the future because we are the future