

State of Rhode Island Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission

The Commission is pleased to announce its annual Essay Contest. This year's contest is intended to encourage students from across the state to reflect upon Dr. King's life, philosophy, and impact on the Civil Rights Movement and present day in America.

Contest Rules:

- Must be a middle or high school student
- Essays must be typed in the Microsoft Word format and limited to 500 to 750 (middle school) or 750 to 1000 words (high school)
- Entries must include student's name, address, telephone number, email address, name of school, and grade; as well as parent name and contact information.
- Essays must be submitted individually and must be the original work of only one student.
- Each entry must be accompanied by an official contest entry form (see form attached here).
- Essay submissions and entry forms **MUST** be electronically submitted to doris.delossantos@gmail.com

The Commission reserves the right to promote, publish and/or distribute any or all entries.

Entry Deadline: By October 25, 2019

Two winners will be selected. Each one will receive a \$100 prize and are expected to attend the Commission Ceremony scheduled for January 20, 2020

Following the contest rules:

Middle School Students:

Write an essay describing a time when you spoke up for that which was right. Tell us about your experience and how it relates to the teaching of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

High School Students:

Choosing at least one of the ***Six Principles for Nonviolent Social Change*** based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns and teaching that emphasize love in action (Information Gathering, Education, Personal Commitment, Discussion/Negotiation, Direct Action and Reconciliation) write an essay explaining how you may apply the chosen principle today to help bring our country/state to a more united movement for social change, justice and equity.

Questions? Contact Commissioner Doris M. De Los Santos at doris.delossantos@gmail.com or (401) 413-5775

SIX PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE

PRINCIPLE ONE: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

It is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

PRINCIPLE TWO: Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding. The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation.

The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.

PRINCIPLE THREE: Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice not people. Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people.

The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil not people.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform. Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation.

Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate. Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body.

Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative.

PRINCIPLE SIX: Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice. The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win.

Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice.

SIX STEPS OF NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

The Six Steps for Nonviolent Social Change are based on Dr. King's nonviolent campaigns and teachings that emphasize love in action. Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence, as reviewed in the Six Principles of Nonviolence, guide these steps for social and interpersonal change.

INFORMATION GATHERING: To understand and articulate an issue, problem or injustice facing a person, community, or institution you must do research. You must investigate and gather all vital information from all sides of the argument or issue so as to increase your understanding of the problem. You must become an expert on your opponent's position.

EDUCATION: It is essential to inform others, including your opposition, about your issue. This minimizes misunderstandings and gains you support and sympathy.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT: Daily check and affirm your faith in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. Eliminate hidden motives and prepare yourself to accept suffering, if necessary, in your work for justice.

DISCUSSION/NEGOTIATION: Using grace, humor and intelligence, confront the other party with a list of injustices and a plan for addressing and resolving these injustices. Look for what is positive in every action and statement the opposition makes. Do not seek to humiliate the opponent but to call forth the good in the opponent.