

# The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast Essay Contest

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## OFFICIAL GUIDELINES FOR 2015 - 2016

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*Theme:*

*“Beyond Poverty”*

**WHO MAY ENTER:** The contest is open to all students in grades 10-12 in all public, private, and parochial high schools of Metropolitan Birmingham. (Students must enter the contest through their local schools, and only one entry per school will be accepted into the final round of competition.)

**HOW TO ENTER:** Each school will conduct its own contest among as many students as possible and then select one individual winning essay from that school to be submitted to the area-wide contest. **Each school may submit only one essay to the final round.**

**CONTEST DEADLINE: Friday, December 11, 2016**

Each school’s winning essay must be submitted by the above date to:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Essay Contest  
c/o REV Birmingham  
505 20<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 1010  
Birmingham, AL 35203  
or submit via e-mail to [2016UnityBreakfast@gmail.com](mailto:2016UnityBreakfast@gmail.com)

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS:** We will announce our top three winning essays no later than Wednesday, January 6, 2016.

**AWARDS:** Awards for the top three winning essays in the area-wide contest will be presented at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast on **January 18, 2016** to be held at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Center.

The awards will be:

First Place:	\$1,000.00 scholarship award
Second Place:	\$750.00 scholarship award
Third Place:	\$500.00 scholarship award

All other individual school winners will receive a \$50.00 award and be an invited guest at the Unity Breakfast.

**PLEASE NOTE: ONLY ONE ESSAY PER SCHOOL WILL BE ACCEPTED INTO THE FINAL ROUND OF COMPETITION.**

## Important Information for Teachers and School Sponsors

### The 2015-2016 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Essay Contest

1. In the fall of each year, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast sponsors an essay contest in honor of the Dr. King Holiday the following January.
2. Copies of these Official Guidelines are mailed to school principals in the metropolitan Birmingham area. Individual teachers interested in sponsoring a contest in their classes may call Lemarse Washington at (205) 305-6333 to receive a copy of the guidelines.
3. The intent of the Essay Contest is:
  - to provide all students in each area high school with an opportunity to learn about Dr. King, his message and his work.
  - to give students the opportunity to reflect on our present and the future in light of Dr. King's work.
  - to encourage continued study through financial awards that can hopefully help students pursue their lives and education with a permanent appreciation for Dr. King and his work.

#### 4. THE THEME FOR ALL ESSAYS must be:

**“Beyond Poverty”**

#### 5. SELECTION OF THIS YEAR'S THEME AND ESSAY PREPARATION:

*One of the goals of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest is to encourage students to read some of Dr. King's writings. All students, therefore, are STRONGLY encouraged to show in their essay that they have read Dr. King's speech, “A time to Break Silence”.*

The text of many of Dr. King's writings are found in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by James M. Washington, Harper and Row Publishers. His writings can also be viewed online at the website of Stanford University's “The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. [www.stanford.edu/group/King/mlkpapers](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/mlkpapers)

#### 6. ESSAY FORMAT *(Please read carefully)*

- a. Each essay should be between 500-750 words, typewritten, double-spaced on white, 8½ X 11 paper. Each page should be numbered consecutively. Entries should be stapled securely together, not paper-clipped.
- b. Each entry must include a **title page** containing the following information: (This information should appear only on the title page since the essays will be judged with this page removed.)
  1. **The Title: “Beyond Poverty”**
  2. **Name, home address and phone number of contestant, age and grade.** This information is important since it is how the participants will be notified of the contest results.
  3. **Name, address, and phone number of school.**
  4. **Typed full name and signature of principal:** Phone number and email address
  5. **Signature and typed full name of teacher or other official sponsor:** Phone number and email address

#### 7. DEADLINE: Essays must be received by **Friday, December 11, 2015**, and mailed to:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Essay Contest  
c/o REV Birmingham  
505 20<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 1010  
Birmingham, AL 35203  
or submit via e-mail to [2016UnityBreakfast@gmail.com](mailto:2016UnityBreakfast@gmail.com)

**PLEASE NOTE: ONLY ONE ESSAY PER SCHOOL WILL BE ACCEPTED INTO THE FINAL ROUND OF COMPETITION.**

**8. TEACHER ASSISTANCE:** The essay should be the work of the student. Teachers may offer suggestions for improvement or correction, but all content should be the student's own thinking and all writing must be done by the student.

**9. CRITERIA FOR JUDGING:**

Content--Interpretation of and adherence to the subject	30%
Expression--Choice of words, imagery, and style	30%
Form--Organization, neatness, and presentation	10%
Mechanics--Grammar, spelling, and punctuation	10%
Overall Presentation-- Interest, appeal, clarity, and adherence to contest rules	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Essays are judged carefully on the basis of these criteria and compliance with the rules of the contest. A panel of five judges will select the final winners. The judges do not know the entrants' names or schools at the time of judging.

**10. AWARDS:** Awards for the top three winning essays in the area-wide contest will be presented at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast on **January 18, 2016** to be held at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Center.

**11. PUBLICATION PERMISSION:** By entering the contest, students give their permission for their essays to be finally formatted and printed in the program for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast, as well as, to be distributed to the community and the media.

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Questions? Contact LeMarse Washington at (205) 305-6333 or [2016UnityBreakfast@gmail.com](mailto:2016UnityBreakfast@gmail.com).

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