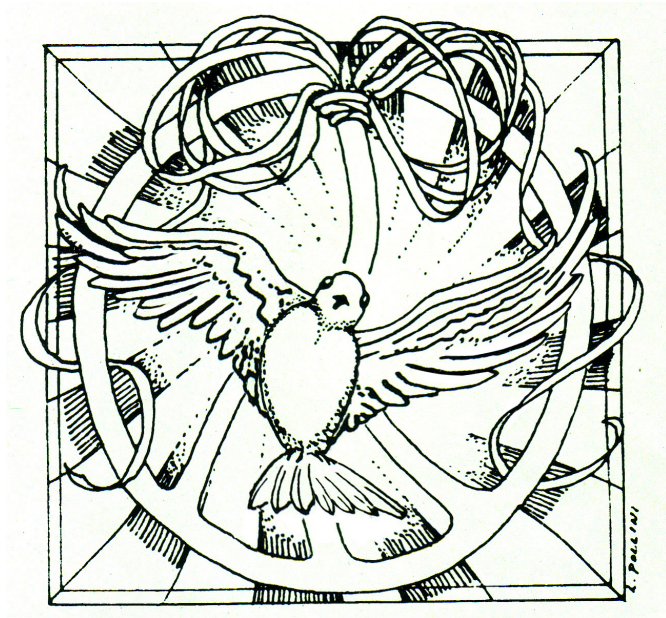


2019 Peace Poetry Contest



Alachua County Schools Grades K-12

Sponsored by Veterans for Peace, Gainesville Chapter 14



The text of all the poems contained in this book are printed as submitted. Due to space and color restraints, we were unable to include special illustrations and designs that accompanied poems.

A full video of the 2019 Peace Poetry Reading will be available via YouTube. Please email vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com for more information after the Reading.

Veterans for Peace will also make photographs and video from the Reading available on our website at vfpgainesville.org.

If you'd like to support the Peace Poetry Contest, Peace Scholarship or the Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace, you can donate or send suggestions to:

Gainesville Veterans for Peace
P.O. Box 142562, Gainesville, FL 32614

All checks should be made payable to Veterans for Peace, Gainesville. Thank you for your support this year!



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2019 Peace Poetry Contest

Alachua County Schools Grades K-12

A collection of the winning poems from the tenth annual Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County schools, grades K-12, sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter 14 of Veterans for Peace.



About the Peace Poetry Contest

This is the tenth year that Gainesville Veterans for Peace has organized the Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County, where all students, grades K–12, are encouraged to submit one original poem focusing on their interpretation of “peace.”

Veterans for Peace members believe that peace-making and hope for a peaceful world begin in our community, our homes and our schools. That is why we invited students to participate in the contest this year; a peaceful possibility lies in the younger generations of today who will be leading, transforming and inspiring the world tomorrow.

We want to honor the ideal of peace through the perspectives of young people. Peace is a uniquely human conception and affirms the human spirit. It is especially important to remember that peace is not merely a goal but a human right.

This year we received 300 poems from all grades, and the poems were judged by a panel of community poets and writers and Veterans for Peace members. The winners were asked to read at the Peace Poetry Reading, and their poems are published in this book.

Veterans for Peace would first and foremost like to thank all of the participants in the Peace Poetry Contest. Without the poetry submissions, there would be no Peace Poetry Contest and none of the dialogue that comes with it.

Parents and teachers also play a large role in the Peace Poetry Contest every year by encouraging their children to participate, sometimes awarding extra credit and providing other incentives. Thank you for helping make the Peace Poetry Contest a success.

The lead community judge, Syraj Syed, narrative specialist, educator, public health advocate, and community builder, was integral to this year’s contest. Thank you.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville has hosted the Peace Poetry Contest ten years in a row now, and Veterans for Peace is grateful for their support and continued cooperation. Specifically, thank you to UUF and VFP member Mary Bahr who helps with the arrangements for the Reading.

Peace Scholarship

Earlier this year, Veterans for Peace announced the annual Peace Scholarship award, a college scholarship program for Alachua County students. The scholarship competition was open to eligible high school seniors, college students, and adults who need financial support to succeed in college and who have demonstrated a commitment and leadership in activities involving peace and social justice and/or nonviolent social change.

Peace scholarship applicants were asked to provide a brief autobiographical statement and evidence of leadership and/or personal initiative in activities in an organization (including volunteer or paid work) relating to peace and social justice, conflict resolution and/or nonviolent social change. Applicants were also asked to provide two letters of recommendation. In the end, VFP awarded peace scholarships to three students in the amount of \$750 each. The scholarships were awarded to:

Daphnee Paul is studying to be a nurse at Santa Fe College. Daphnee is a graduate of the University of Florida, and she plans to combine a career in nursing and combatting child slavery in Haiti.

Keely Luttrell is a history major at the University of Florida. She plans to use her training in oral history and the digital humanities to create educational opportunities for disenfranchised and low-income children.

Jessica Cooke is a pre-law student at the University of Florida. She plans to pursue a career in law to defend the rights of LGBTQ+ people, immigrants and working class people.

To learn more about the VFP Peace Scholarship so you can apply next year, visit vfgainesville.org. There you will find detailed instructions and the application for the scholarship. If you have specific questions, contact VFP member Paul Ortiz at ortiz-prof@gmail.com or 831-334-0131.

Winning Poets

Grades K-2

First Place — Princess Maddox, Grade 1, Caring and Sharing Learning School

Second Place — Laila Stanley, Grade 1, Caring and Sharing Learning School

Third Place — Stanley Jose Cruz-Davis, Grade 2, Jordan Glen School

High Honors — Madeleine Cottle, Kindergarten, Healthy Learning Academy

High Honors — Asher Faust, Grade 1, Jordan Glen School

High Honors — Amaree Lopez, Grade 2, Caring and Sharing Learning School

High Honors — Daijah Williams, Grade 2, Caring and Sharing Learning School

Grades 3-4

First Place — Diego Frenock, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School

Second Place — Benny White, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School

Third Place — Zora Beauvais, Grade 4, Caring and Sharing Learning School

High Honors — Ellie Rosenberg, Grade 3, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School

High Honors — Lily Tomlinson, Grade 3, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School

High Honors — Lily Vaillancourt, Grade 3, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School

Grades 5-6

First Place — Maya Rose Allen, Grade 6, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy

Second Place — Matthew Stocker, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School

Third Place — Seamus Moran, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School

High Honors — Evan Amar, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School

High Honors — Ciaran Foley, Grade 6, Westwood Middle School

High Honors — Anna Hayse, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School

High Honors — Timothy Sheridan, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School



Grade 7

First Place — Easy Sorel, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School

Second Place — Catalina Romero, Grade 7, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy

Third Place — Luke Fariborzian, Grade 7, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy

High Honors — Lila Ayers, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School

High Honors — Daniel Brown, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School

High Honors — Gabriel Lavan-Ying, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School

High Honors — Layne Morton, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School

Grade 8

First Place — Keilsha Andre, Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School

Second Place — Nate Harrison, Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School

Third Place — Laila Jones, Grade 8, Westwood Middle School

High Honors — Emily Pitocchi, Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School

Grades 9–11

First Place — Lindsay Jenkins, Grade 10, Oak Hall School

Second Place — Kate Porter, Grade 10, Gainesville High School

Third Place — Leila Parsons, Grade 10, Newberry High School

High Honors — Evan Cook, Grade 10, Gainesville High School

High Honors — William Jordan, Grade 11, Lofton High School

Grade 12

First Place — Muhannad Farahat, Grade 12, Buchholz High School

Second Place — Stephanie Koppel, Grade 12, Oak Hall School

Third Place — Ciree' J. Dubose-Coleman, Grade 12, Buchholz High School

High Honors — Ricardo Deleon, Grade 12, Buchholz High School



SAVE THE EARTH!

I love everyone here.
I don't want war but I want peace.
I want the earth to be clean.
Let's save our planet today.
So when I grow up I'll have a world
That is safe for me to stay.

*Princess Maddox, Grade 1, Caring and Sharing Learning School
First Place, Grades K-2*

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Roses are red, violets are blue.
I want to live in peace.
What about you?

The sun is yellow. The sky is blue.
I want hating to stop
What about you?

*Laila Stanley, Grade 1, Caring and Sharing Learning School
Second Place, Grades K-2*

Peace is poetry and poetry is peace
Peace is when I play with my friends
Peace is when I rest all day
Peace is when I sleep and dream.
Peace is when I pet my pig.
Peace on earth when everyone smiles
Peace is when there's purrs and barks, tweets and shouts!

*Stanley Jose Cruz-Davis, Grade 2, Jordan Glen School
Third Place, Grades K-2*

I love people
just the way they are.
I think everyone
Is a superstar.

*Madeleine Cottle, Kindergarten, Health Learning Academy
High Honors, Grades K-2*

Peace

Peace is good to the world.
I think peace is good.
What do you think?
I think peace helps us
reflect
on how good the world is.

*Asher Faust, Grade 1, Jordan Glen School
High Honors, Grades K-2*

LET'S TRY TO DO BETTER

I love my friends and I love my teachers.
I love my mom and dad.
But everybody don't believe in love and
That makes me feel so sad.

Why does there have to be wars?
I wish we could all get along.
Let us try to do better.
We all know right from wrong.

*Amaree Lopez, Grade 2, Caring and Sharing Learning School
High Honors, Grades K-2*

PEACE AND LOVE

I wish there was peace. I wish there was harmony.
In fact I have friends who have fun with me.
Let there be love everywhere!
Let the whole world show that we care.
Loving each other is very cool.
Everyone knows that's the golden rule.

*Daijah Williams, Grade 2, Caring and Sharing Learning School
High Honors, Grades K-2*

My Life Has Changed Forever

It was a day like any other day,
I tell my parents it's game night, let's play!
Then I hear banging on the door,
I grab the game, there's banging once more.

Dad goes to see who's there,
He sees it's something worse than a bear.
He yells, "Run! Run!"
I think I see a gun!

We grab food and sheets,
Definitely less than a feast.
I hear cracking, they're coming in,
What's about to begin?!

I'm just a small child,
Did I do something wild?
We get pushed in the truck, all out of order -
I'm going to the border!

There's no escape.
I must now accept my fate.
Where's my brother, Trevor?
My life has changed forever.

Diego Frenock, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School
First Place, Grades 3-4

At the Border

Why is this person holding me?
He is not my daddy.
He is not my brother,
Just let me see my mother.

I'm wiping tears off my face,
It's not like home, that's not the case.
I'm wondering why?
Please let me see them one more time.

My eyes open,
Maybe it's just a dream,
But fate has a very different scheme.

Benny White, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School
Second Place, Grades 3-4

YOU ARE SPECIAL

Peace and social justice are powerful words.
People stand up and make their voices heard.
We should all be equal and celebrate who we are.
Whether we are Black or White it is not that hard.
Everyone is smart, different, and unique.
Everyone has a voice so they can speak.
So let's fight for people's rights during day and night.
Let's speak out and do what is right.
So, let's not stop now that's not what we're about.
Why just fit in when you were born to stand out?

*Zora Beauvais, Grade 4, Caring and Sharing Learning School
Third Place, Grades 3–4*

Peace

No one is fighting
everything is very calm
no one is judging

*Ellie Rosenberg, Grade 3, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School
High Honors, Grades 3–4*

Peace

Graceful dove
peaceful love
as my hair goes
back when the wind
blows I feel safe
because I know peace
is in the air and
that is a good sign.
I know peace is a calm
feeling that I feel
when I lay bundled in my blankets
at night. Peace makes me
feel like wars will
never happen again.
Peace soothes me when
I have a red angry
face but then it goes

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away. Peace you make
me happier, every day
when I'm at
school and at home.
Peace thank you
for my warming
heart you give me.

*Lily Tomlinson, Grade 3, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School
High Honors, Grades 3–4*

Peace

Peace is love,
 Peace is here with me and you,
Only together we can make Peace,
Peace means no war,
 Peace means no fight
Peace is light
Peace means to find your center,
Peace means to look inside others,
Peace means to be centered,
 Peace means to love,
 Peace is Peace.

*Lily Vaillancourt, Grade 3, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School
High Honors, Grades 3–4*

War,
is a bloodthirsty thing,
Peace,
is the right thing,

Sent to war,
Can't find peace,
Death has taken over,
Hope has faded,
Why don't we choose peace?

I am a veteran now,
I am still remember war,
We still fight,
Why don't we choose peace?

*Maya Rose Allen, Grade 6, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy
First Place, Grades 5–6*

Why War?

War. Why war?
Can't we have peace?
What's the use of more land or power?
We are fine the way we are.
War. Why war?

War tears people apart.
War is bad.
Why do people not know that?
They just keep choosing war.
War. Why war?

Boom!
War destroys people,
Places, land, and loved ones.
Stop the wars!
War. Why war?

War is the worst option.
Why can't you have peace?
If we all work together,
Then we will thrive.
War. Why war?

Missed ones, fathers,
Loved ones; all died because of war.
War is evil.
Choose peace.
Choose the good.
Stop wars.
It will only help.
War. Why war?

*Matthew Stocker, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School
Second Place, Grades 5–6*

With the sound of silence within these doors,
the drying blood of the fallen caking the floor
No one escapes the effects of war,
not the boar, nor the poor.

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The blood of the fallen polluting the lake,
where the dead bodies bake.
The cannons singing their song of death,
the soldiers breathing their last breath.

The toxic gases filling the lungs of young and old,
no one will survive, not even the bold
The barbed wire surrounding the camp,
the bloody floor damp

The disease called war
spreading across the land, peace banned.

Hopefully the peace we can mend,
before our lives will end

*Seamus Moran, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School
Third Place, Grades 5–6*

Peace Poem

Watch as the rain falls from the sky
Those who are expected to work want to cry,
but they can't, they must hold it all inside.

They must fight one another unwillingly
and pray not to die, they must hold all
their anger inside, they want to see their loved ones but
they can't leave, not while in war at least.

If they get injured while in battle all they
have to share the pain is
no one but the gravel, as they lay on the ground injured
and bleeding out they speak the last words of,
“Tell my family I love them so and that I shall
watch over them and that I will still be alive in their hearts.”

As he lie on the gravel the sergeant comes to see why he
is on the ground and he sees that he lie dead, he is
put out of his pain as he lie dead on the ground it begins to rain.

*Evan Amar, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School
High Honors, Grades 5–6*

School shooting needs to STOP
School should be a place where kids can feel safe not worrying about life or death
every day
Innocent kids running for their life seeing the bullet zoom right past them
Stepping over dead bodies watching your friend fall down
Worrying about what will happen next where to escape
Hiding in the corner of the class praying that you don't die
Hearing people scream outside your door
As blood appears on the window
You worry if this will be your breath or your last word
Teachers risking their life for you
Telling you to leave but you are too scared
You have the courage to run as the teacher follows as he grabs on to your back
As he tells you you're on your own now
The footsteps are becoming louder
Out the school you go but you see the next shots as they are everywhere
You can't find your best friend
But you see your brother's face in the window you blink then his face is gone
You can't stop and cry or you might join him
Look behind you as your sister grabs your hand
Then you see the shooters standing right next to you
You yell here I come brother
Then you take your last breath
School Shootings need to STOP

There is too much hate in this world
Not a lot of love
Everyone needs to be treated the same or hate starts
People might not know about that person but it gets too late then the person may
do a school shooting
Spread the love fight against hate
Schools should be safe not a worrying place
Schools should have more protection

Ciaran Foley, Grade 6, Westwood Middle School
High Honors, Grades 5–6

Racism

The world was divided, and now it's two sided.
This is not how it was supposed to be.

Color White
Segregation
This is not how it's supposed to be.

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People abusing others of the same human race.
This is not how it's supposed to be.

Slaves and trades
This is not how it's supposed to be.

Killed and mistreated
This is not how it's supposed to be.

No rights. Living owned.
This is not how it's supposed to be.

Wouldn't it be beautiful if
Different races, different faces, different cases were all in the one world together.
Not guided onto different paths or separated at sea.

Our world was created as one and wouldn't it be beautiful if the other side would die.

Then the curtains of the earth opened. But there is still a gash in our world of where the
curtain used to stand. This is not how it's supposed to be.

One world... is that the way it can be?

Anna Hayse, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School
High Honors, Grades 5-6

Humanity is like water
Whenever a drop falls it causes ripples of change.
We cause change.
Whether it is pollution,
or racial discrimination.
Change is change.

From wars won to wars lost,
People dying, people not.
Nobody can change this world
unless they try.
Change is change.

Brought together by anything
people will be hurt, offended, and/or discriminated.
However, we can do something about this.
So let's do it.
One step at a time.
Change is change.

But there is backlash.
There is always backlash.
Even if they are against name calling,
They are using it themselves.
And this has an effect.
Change is change.

Common sense isn't so common.
And unity is something that people hate.
A wave of change shall come.
Turning over those hearts of stone
And making them hearts of love.
Because change will always be change.

*Timothy Sheridan, Grade 5, Hidden Oak Elementary School
High Honors, Grades 5–6*

Actions, Thoughts, and Prayers

Children screaming, chaos reigns.
Not thoughts.
Not prayers.
Action
Footsteps running, voices in pain.
Not thoughts
Not prayers
Action
Silence, cold whispers in the dark.
Not thoughts.
Not prayers.
Action.

Stop thinking in vain, living in your privileged contentment.
Stop praying to your gods, who sit in their resolute silence.
Not thoughts.
Not prayers.
Action.

Pull the wool out of your eyes, see what goes on beneath your gaze.
Look at the pain of people who suffer undeserved.

Take action for change.
Take action for peace.
Take action for love.
Take action for life.

*Easy Sorel, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School
First Place, Grade 7*

Tiny Seed

Peace is like a beautiful flower
It starts out as just a tiny seed
The seed is planted by nobody with power
Just a kind heart, with a good deed

As many days and nights go by
The tiny seed will begin to grow
But only for the patient and wise
Will the peace start to flow

Before us is a beautiful flower
It started out as just a tiny seed
The seed is planted by nobody with power
It can be planted by you and me

*Catalina Romero, Grade 7, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy
Second Place, Grade 7*

Justice Peace Power

Love is not a secret
It is something you find inside
At this time you might find out
It is something you cannot hide

Justice is not a choice
It is something that has to be
Even though it has a small voice
It can be heard across the sea

Peace is powerful
It has the power to bring evil to its knees
Though it cannot hurt a fly
It is just a calming gentle breeze
This is not a lie.

Justice, Peace, and Love
Are all characteristics we want and adore
All three are so powerful
It has the potential to stop a war.

*Luke Fariborzian, Grade 7, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy
Third Place, Grade 7*

Drip.
Blood puts out the candle.
Blood puts out the light that will never guide our future
Sliding down the wax
Sliding down their cheeks
Tears run black and red.

Crack.
The bones under their feet snap
The broken souls arise
The spirits fly high
Letting go.

Boom.
All the bombs in the distance
Exploding lives
Shredding existence
Piece by piece

Shriek.
Lives being stolen
The thief runs invisible
Never to be caught.

Silence.
The cold whispers hang in the air
The blood stops running.
The bones stop cracking.
The bombs stop booming.

Song.
The weary, broken voices
Sing songs of love
Soft and scared
They sing.

Chant.
They grow in pride
They have confidence
The voices grow louder
And drown out the hate
Bringing peace and music.

Lila Ayers, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School
High Honors, Grade 7

Another gun,
Another school,
Another person,
In a blood filled pool.

Another bullet,
Through the head,
Millions more,
Now lay dead.

Another mosque,
Another church,
Evil lurks above,
Sitting on its perch.

Evil waits,
For one to do its bidding,
We need to stop hating,
And start value living.

Daniel Brown, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School
High Honors, Grade 7

I wake up in the morning
I get ready to go
If I do not show up
No one will even know

I go to my history class
I learn about war
And how we do not have peace
And the countries that are poor

I walk down the hallways
And I get pushed to the ground
From the student who everyone likes
But is a bully when nobody else is around

Teachers are smart in their teaching
But blind when something happens
And when a student starts their preaching
They just get ignored

Teachers act like they are aware
Before something happens
And when something happens
Most do not even care

The school says that they have a zero tolerance of bullying
But that is not entirely true

Because when I start my crying
No one starts to move

We have many emotions
But are afraid to show them
Because if we do
There will be a commotion

*Gabriel Lavan-Ying, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School
High Honors, Grade 7*

I Am Scared

I am only 13, but yet the world has managed to go from excited to terrifying in the time between my childhood and now

When I was very young I was scared of the monsters under my bed.

When I got a little bit older I was scared of big storms

Now I'm scared that I will end up like the children killed in wars

I am scared that I will see one of my friends get tormented because of the color of their skin

I am scared that the job I always dreamed of as a little girl, will never come true because I am a woman

I am scared because I know that girl on the street who wears her religion is being threatened daily because of what others did

I am scared that one day the shooter "drills" at my school won't be a drill

I am scared that my church will be the next one on the news after a shooting

I am scared that no one around me will try to help

I am scared that no matter how hard I try to change things I will be yet another voice drowned out by hate

I am scared that when I try to speak out I will be labeled "strange" because I feel so strongly

I was always scared of something but now my fears are threats, now my fears are realistic, now my fears are all around me

*Layne Morton, Grade 7, Fort Clarke Middle School
High Honors, Grade 7*

The Hidden Peace

Peace is all around,
Hidden by so much sound.
Sounds of sadness,
Sounds of chaos.

Peace is a soft soul,
Waiting for someone to hold.
Someone to tell the story,
The story of Peace's gold.

Peace is what we could have.
If we lay our pride down,
Peace could be ours now.
How beautiful life would be.

Kelisha Andre, Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School
First Place, Grade 8

Them

They're spending all this money,
On nothing but regret.
Blood runs thick like honey,
But people's needs are never met.

Our soldiers keep on dying,
Coming back in boxes
Their families keep on crying,
But unlike Them, it shocks us.

We have bigger issues,
Than Their made up dramas.
Migrant children needing tissues,
Crying for their mommas.

Problems like starving kids,
In all kinds of places.
While They're plenty fed,
Making bids on expensive military bases.

Or immigrants who need to run,
But have nowhere to go.
We all know war is no fun,
But to Them, it's one big show.

Nate Harrison, Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School
Second Place, Grade 8

It Starts in The Home

A happy kid, he once was
Always smiling
Always laughing
Until Pops lost his job..

And after Mom left
Pops had whiskey for dinner,
Every night
Life was falling apart

The boy became a punching bag.
Pain was normal to him these days
Everyone should feel my pain, he thought
Everyone..

The big, bad bullies were no icing on the cake.
Pushing him and calling him names,
Beating him up in the hallways while gradually
Depression became his name

He cried himself to sleep
There was no peace.
When will the world let him be?
Pain turned to anger..

Bag stocked full of loaded feelings,
He walked into the school.
There was no longer a soul in that body
No longer a heart

Shots rang out in the hallways
Instant chaos,
They will all feel my pain
The classroom floors stained with vital fluid

He stopped,
There was a pause in the world and in his head.
He said, "I'm sorry" as his last bullet
Went through his chest.

Laila Jones, Grade 8, Westwood Middle School
Third Place, Grade 8

WEAPONS I WONDER?

What would the world be like without weapons?
Such peace, like magnets pulling us towards the center together.
We wish the worst came with beckons.
In the blink of an eye, weapons gone forever.

Absence of the things some may carry.
We'll never want to do the nightmare to have to bury.
The second amendment allows the right to bear arms.
These weapons are okay to use if they don't cause any harm.

Would there be justice if we removed both from the good and the bad?
Will having a world minus weapons deliver more peace?
Taking and giving almost needs a signing under oath.
Could a world without weapons one day save your niece?

If we didn't have weapons we'd be shaken.
No more weapons In sight we would have been mistaken.
When there were no more weapons we'd be on another's turf.
It would be like humans living on Mars watching planet earth.

Nothing will go wrong is what we've planned.
As we see something fatal we musn't intrigue.
None of us like the nightmare, agreed with our nearest colleague.
What would the world be like without weapons?

Emily Pitocchi, Grade 8, Fort Clarke Middle School
High Honors, Grade 8

An Ode from Horace

dulce et decorum est
pro patria mori
yet these words still so grotesque
they paint a vivid story

but when the tale twists and turns
if darkness and wickedness come
like a trigger pulled purely with hate
to deadly weaponry madmen succumb

he lowered his life as he raised his gun
he lost his mind and his humanity
as he shot and shot and didn't stop
a regular day turned into calamity

why do we wait and not take action
after catastrophe and casualty take place
the status quo defiles satisfaction
while we still move at a doltish pace

whether it's legislation, rallies or speeches
we must speak out to prevent this evil from biting
but one small thing that we all can do
is promote World Peace through writing.

*Lindsay Jenkins, Grade 10, Oak Hall School
First Place, Grades 9–11*

The End of Peace

Peace ends.

Peace ends when a six-year-old is shot dead at school,
Just before Christmas.

Peace ends when the blame of an assault is placed on the victim.

Peace ends when women and children are left stranded and hopeless,
Because they are denied refuge.

Peace ends when tears are shed over fourteen dead students,
On a day intended for love.

Peace ends when a defenseless man is murdered over the color of his skin.

Peace ends when men and women are abandoned by their parents and
society because of who they love.

We can prevent the end of Peace.

Let us not let Peace end.

*Kate Porter, Grade 10, Gainesville High School
Second Place, Grades 9–11*



Havoc

The concrete is hot on my back
I can feel the vibrations of the havoc going on around me
I cannot hear
I cannot see
I can only feel the deprivation of what should be free to me
I am soaking wet with a mixture of water and sweat
The tingling within my skin grows as time slowly passes by
I'm hurt and left to die
By the hand of the white man in blue
By the hand of the white man that people look up to
The streets are filled with gas and water
All for simply fighting for what was taught to me by my father
But here I lay left to die
All while trying to fight for my people's right
No second glance is made
The sun blazing and beating down on my face
While havoc breaks out due to fighting for the rights of my race

Leila Parsons, Grade 10, Newberry High School
Third Place, Grades 9–11

We see the faces,
The boys going off to war
Their hearts filled with cheers
War is an adventure just as before
but soon their mothers eyes are filled with tears
Most of those boys are never more
The ones who remain are haunted by their fears

We see the faces,
Now men fight with anger for one another
Evil armies march and yanks roar
Led by twisted men brother kills brother
The bodies of brave men litter the beaches' shore
Just as before, waterfall tears run down the faces of their mothers.

We see the faces,
In the jungles screams are heard
Like items in a store shelf men are plucked
They fight in a place before unheard
Into body bags the dead are tucked
Men, Women, Children; the enemy is blurred

We see the faces,
We see the faces of the fallen in our generations
Even now mothers still cry and weep
From all places and from all nations
We see the faces of those who war has and will reap.
Terror, sorrow, destruction, and misery
The price of wars fine by us anything but cheap
And now in this future we shall not add to death's heap.

*Evan Cook, Grade 10, Gainesville High School
High Honors, Grades 9–11*

Endless War: A Collection of Haikus

Six million people,
Victims of a bogus war,
My question is, why?

Eighteen years ago,
The two kings. Toppled in vain,
The east's fate is sealed.

One war turns to four,
Tricking boys to risk their life,
But for what reason?

One killed, five more appear,
Eighteen years since this first started,
Will there be an end?

Taught the young to hate,
All we are to them is death,
Who is to blame here?

Countless lives broken,
States are failing; one by one,
Please, just leave them be...

*William Jordan, Grade 11, Lofton High School
High Honors, Grades 9–11*

Allahu Akbar

They call it a war on terrorism
But it's more like a form of hypnotism
Here let me tell you their confession
Straight to the point with no digression

The U.S. says that they eliminate
Yet they're the ones that cultivate
Have you ever heard of the group ISIS
Well yeah, the U.S. created that crisis

With aid from the news, yes they deceive
To make sure you're in the dark and naive
They paint you a picture, a little blurred
And give you false info, completely absurd

They say "their women are oppressed"
Just look at the way they are dressed
However, they don't tell you they have a say
Look, they wear it for the culture by the way

The Israelis come push them off their land
And then claim that that's their mainland
The news then attempts to hypnotize
And makes it out that Palestinians terrorize

They say the conflict is a mess
Seems pretty simple nonetheless
The news takes those lies
And make the Muslims the bad guys

Real quick I just remind
I'm not full of hate; I think I'm pretty kind
I really just want this world to integrate
And yes, my title means god is great

*Muhammad Farahat, Grade 12, Buchholz High School
First Place, Grade 12*

Poppies for Edmund

Dedicated to my grandfather, Edmund Anton Harwig, the best man I've never met

Red poppies and rainy days
Lying in the open field of Silesia
The breeze brushes against my face,

*A ringing in my ear
And a sting on my cheek
We cry out and take cover,*

An ant is climbing a blade of grass
His Queen orders him to fight for her
To give his life for her,

*Smoke clouds the heavens
The blue of the sky has been missing for days
The warmth of the sun is a long forgotten memory*

Water begins to dribble
A fog covers the plains
I stayed to remember, becoming drenched
*Fire drips down my cheek
I'm soaked in the color,
My family has bled in the color*

The ants scurry back
To save their home
Some lose their way, and their lives

*Sour and rotting
The people around me disappear
My memories are what remain*

The water from above grows larger
Sinking into the ground
Quenching the lands thirst

*Wading through muddy trenches
The weight on our backs
Is just as heavy on our hearts*

I seek refuge under a tree
As the bubbling sky
Pours down harder

continued on next page

*We can no longer salvage
Our bodies or minds
For we have seen and done the unthinkable*

The poppies I pluck
Wither soon thereafter
Sooner than I had hoped

*We only had one thing left
Hope that it would end
That we could go home*

I tried to see the bright side
The supposed greener grass
But it was simply grey

*We were the few
Those that made it
Those that survived*

I could no longer see that ant
It had properly washed away
Forgotten by everyone but me

*We didn't want to remember
But we didn't dare forget
Our time can never be returned*

***Stephanie Koppel, Grade 12, Oak Hall School
Second Place, Grade 12***

Boy Soldier

Boy Grows Up Naive and Sheltered

Believing in tales of princesses and knights

Knights who fight the infidels for fame and glory

Who bring honor to their kingdoms in noble fights

Who come home and are greeted with flowers

So boy gets a buzz cut and ships off to war

But things are much different from stories

The ones he used to love are the ones he began to abhor

Because the atrocities he had witnessed

Were anything but glorious

And when he arrived back to his kingdom

He made his exploits obvious

But he was jobless

*Ciree' J. DuBose-Coleman, Grade 12, Buchholz High School
Third Place, Grade 12*

Honor for one, Peace for Another

Honorable men burst through the powerful gates that speak freedom.

Buildings turned to dust, It blusters through the air like a dandelion in the wind

Synchronized boots unknown of their final prints, They drop to protect.

Heads turning, not knowing where their final breath will be taken from them.

Heroes scarred, exceedingly Desensitized by the utter commotion.

Torn apart as a citizen, and built up to be a warrior.

The training that have led them this far couldn't have prepared a soul for this.

Their minds move in slow motion, as their friends are being ripped from them.

As they watch their bodies seamlessly lost to an abyss.

No movie could ever compare to this level of chaos, no matter the director or videographer.

Screams leap from their mouths like sirens in the bunkers, There is never a winner
in war.

Most look upon war as families are broken, whilst two gentlemen knock at your
door they reiterate to your loved ones,

continued on next page

About how your kin had succumbed to his or her wounds, and that they have died.

The words echo in your mind, as years and years past.

You envision your lost relative kneeling down in front of you and they say, “I did it all for you, so you’d see your future.”

Ricardo Deleon, Grade 12, Buchholz High School
High Honors, Grade 12

Thank You, Teachers!

Without the teachers of Alachua County who encourage their students to participate in the contest each year, there would be no Peace Poetry Contest. Veterans for Peace would like to publicly recognize those teachers who participated this year.

Terri Blakeslee, Westwood Middle School

Rikki Boria, Loften High School

Lynne Bramlett, Buchholz High School

Jamie Coons, Westwood Middle School

Hayley Delapena, Hidden Oak Elementary School

Josephine Harris, Jordan Glen School

Deborah Hartlein, Jordan Glen School

Matthew Kron, Fort Clarke Middle School

Katherine Mariani, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School

Amy Richter, Jordan Glen School

Annette Roberts, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy

Carol Shelley, Newberry High School

Angie Terrell, Caring and Sharing Learning School

Julie Thompson, Lawton M. Chiles Elementary School

Juliet Tinckham, Fort Clarke Middle School

*Veterans for Peace would
like to specially thank
Gainesville's own*

Alivia Regan Hunter

*for performing at the
2019 Peace Poetry
Reading*



**THINKING ABOUT THE MILITARY?
MAKE AN
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ADVICE FROM VETERANS
ON MILITARY SERVICE
AND RECRUITING PRACTICES**
A Resource Guide For Young People
Considering Enlistment

<http://www.afn.org/~vetpeace/>

Gainesville



Chapter 14

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP of Gainesville
SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL
CO-SPONSOR PEACE POETRY READING**



We believe all people share a moral responsibility to create peace. Mindful of both our rich heritage and our past failures to prevent war, and enriched by our present diversity of experience and perspective, we commit ourselves to a radically inclusive and transformative approach to peace

From the UU Statement of Conscience, 2010