



VETERANS FOR PEACE

Gainesville, Chapter 14

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"If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children." – Mohandas Gandhi

For Immediate Release

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Veterans for Peace Announces 13th Annual Public Reading and Reception of the Veterans for Peace Poetry Contest & 9th Annual VFP Scholarship Awards Ceremony

On Saturday, May 6th, 26 students from Alachua County schools will read their peace poems aloud at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship as winners of the 2023 Peace Poetry Contest.

The 13th annual Peace Poetry Contest began in January, inviting all K-12 students of Alachua County schools, both public and private, to submit one poem on what peace and social justice means to them. A team of community writers and poets judged the over 200 poems submitted, according to age group.

From those poems, 26 students were chosen to perform their pieces on May 6th and will have their winning poems published in the 2023 Peace Poetry booklet. Winners also receive a certificate of accomplishment and a gift certificate to a local bookstore.

Though this contest holds no formal position on the current state of world affairs, we still 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. In that spirit of reflection, we are very pleased with the success of this year's contest.

We would especially like to thank the many teachers who encourage their students to participate every year, and to all the young poets who wrote such beautiful, moving poems.

Veterans for Peace will be awarding four, \$1500 Peace Scholarships at the Peace Reception. VFP created these scholarships to give financial support to students who are planning careers in pursuit of a more equitable, peaceful, and just world. The scholarship winners have demonstrated commitment and leadership activities involving peace and social justice, conflict resolution and nonviolent social change.

For names and more information about the 2023 Peace Scholarship winners please contact us. One scholarship will be awarded in honor of John A. Penrod, a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the

Spanish Republic, and a lifelong social justice activist in Alachua County.

This year's reading will be held on Saturday, May 6th at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville (4225 NW 34th St.), from 2pm to 3:30 pm. The event will include inspiring poetry readings by the student poets and music by Alivia Regan Hunter, a young singer/songwriter. Refreshments will be served after the program. The program is free and open to the public.

For more information on the 2023 Peace Poetry Reading and Peace scholarships, please contact the organizers at vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com, or 831-334-0117. <https://vfpgainesville.org/>

Masks are optional but recommended.