



VETERANS FOR PEACE

Gainesville, Chapter 14
vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com

"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

Dear Educator and Community Leader,

The Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace announces its **14th ANNUAL PEACE POETRY CONTEST** for Alachua County, where all students, grades K-12, are encouraged to submit one original poem focusing on the idea of peace and social justice.

Veterans for Peace members believe that peace-making and hope for an end to war, violence and injustice begins in our community, our homes and our schools. Through the Peace Poetry Contest, we hope to stimulate discussion and critical thinking on tough subjects like war, racism, injustice, hate, environmental harm and inequality. By addressing these issues, we can begin to make them right.

That is why we invite you and your 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 of tomorrow.

In years past 200-400 poems were submitted. We did not hold the contest in 2021 out of respect for teachers overburdened by additional COVID safety demands. But, after teachers contacted us to ask if VFP was going to resume the contest last year, we gave it a hopeful try. We received many inspired entries.

A panel of local authors and poets will judge poems based on creativity, content, and use of language. The winners will be published in the 2024 Peace Poetry Book and asked to recite their poem at the public Peace Poetry Reading on May 18. Winners will also receive valuable gift certificates from a local bookstore.

If your student(s) want(s) to submit a poem to this year's Peace Poetry Contest, **the deadline for submissions is April 8, 2024.** Poems can be submitted via email to vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com.

Submissions must include the poet's name, grade level and school, and two preferred methods of contact for the parent/guardian and/or teacher (e-mails, and/or phone #'s). We need this information to notify the winners efficiently and reliably. Teachers can serve as direct contact for the winning student, helping us to notify the parents, but this is not required. All students will be notified of the results, even if their poem does not place.

For more information, please email vfpeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com. To see a copy of the 2023 Peace Poetry Book, visit <http://www.vfpgainesville.org/>.