January 21, 2023

Dear Principal:

Anne Arundel Peace Action, Maryland Peace Action Education Fund, Benjamin Peace Foundation, and the Peace and Justice Center of Annapolis Friends Meeting are sponsoring a statewide writing contest for middle school students in Maryland focusing on the themes of peace and social justice. We invite your students to participate.

This is the 24th year the contest has been conducted. It was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic but is now returning. It is open to all 7th and 8th grade students enrolled in public or private schools in Maryland and to home-schooled students at the equivalent level. Enclosed are flyers describing the contest. Please distribute them to social studies or English teachers or to any other teachers or students whom you think would be interested.

Four cash prizes will be awarded: $350 for first place, $250 for second place, and $150 for third place, and $100 for fourth place. The winners will be honored at a special program. The previous year's winners were from the following schools: Sykesville Middle School, St. Anne's School of Annapolis, and two from Thomas W. Pyle Middle School.

This year, students are being asked to address the following topic:

Some students have engaged in school “walkouts” to express their views on an issue on which they have a strong opinion. The “climate strikes” proposed by Greta Thunberg calling attention to the challenges posed by climate change and the “March for Our Lives” advocating gun control are examples of this tactic. School officials have responded in different ways. Some have allowed it, some have “scripted” the actions with specific guidelines and limitations, and some have declined to permit it. You are asked by your principal to serve on a committee at your school to develop a policy governing student actions on important issues such as climate change and gun control. What would be your suggestions and why?

Thank you for your assistance in publicizing our writing contest. Please contact me at the above telephone number or e-mail address if you would like additional information or flyers.

In peace,

Michael J. Keller
Contest Coordinator

Working for a Sane World
FRED B. BENJAMIN PEACE WRITING CONTEST
For Maryland Middle School Students

Description: This is an annual, statewide writing contest for middle school students in Maryland focusing on the themes of peace and social justice. The contest, now in its 24th year, is sponsored by Anne Arundel Peace Action, Maryland Peace Action Education Fund, Benjamin Peace Foundation, and the Peace and Justice Center of Annapolis Friends Meeting.

Eligibility: All 7th and 8th grade students enrolled in public or private schools in Maryland or home-schooled students at the same grade levels are eligible to enter.

Requirements: Students must write no more than 1,200 words on the following topic:

Some students have engaged in school "walkouts" to express their views on an issue on which they have a strong opinion. The "climate strikes" proposed by Greta Thunberg calling attention to the challenges posed by climate change and the "March for Our Lives" advocating gun control are examples of this tactic. School officials have responded in different ways. Some have allowed it, some have "scripted" the actions with specific guidelines and limitations, and some have declined to permit it. You are asked by your principal to serve on a committee at your school to develop a policy governing student actions on important issues such as climate change and gun control. What would be your suggestions and why?

The entry should be double-spaced and one-sided and accompanied by a separate cover sheet which includes all of these:
• Student’s name, address and phone number (or e-mail address)
• School’s name, address and phone number
• The name of the teacher sponsor, if applicable

Personal identifying information must not appear anywhere on the entry. Cover sheets should be attached to the entries by paperclip. No staples anywhere, please.

Deadline: Send entries and cover sheets to Peace Writing Contest, 310 Riverview Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403-3328. Entries must be postmarked no later than May 15, 2023.

Awards: Winners will be selected by a panel of three distinguished judges. Winners will receive prizes of:

First place: $350
Second place: $250
Third place: $150
Fourth place: $100

Winners will be recognized at an awards ceremony. Attendance is not required to receive an award.

Working for a Sane World