



## Student Writings Program

The City of Columbia invites students in grades 4-12 to submit their original writings for possible publication in the 2024 Columbia Values Diversity Celebration Student Writings Booklet. This booklet will be distributed to over 1,000 people at the annual community celebration on January 24, 2024, and published on the Celebration website at [CoMoDiversityCelebration.com](http://CoMoDiversityCelebration.com)

### Theme

The theme for the 31st annual Columbia Values Diversity Celebration is: ***“Honoring the Dream While Remembering Our Past.”*** Because Columbia is a city of many ethnic groups, religions, cultures, and opinions, it is important that all community members know that their story and their voices are important and valued. Submit an essay or poem describing how there is inclusion and acceptance in our community despite our differences.

### Writing Suggestions

To help you get started, consider using one of the following prompts (or, *dream* up your own):

- **Narrative:** What is your personal dream of peace, justice, and equality for all? Like Dr. King, share personal experiences that relate to your vision.
- **Persuasive/Opinion:** How does reflecting on where our community has been, help us determine how we should move forward and honor Dr. King’s dream?
- **Expository:** Non-violence was an essential component of Dr. King’s dream. Research a problem in our community and explain how non-violent solutions should be used to resolve it.
- **Creative:** Using a genre of your choice (e.g. poem, song or short story) create an original writing that shows how our community is rich in diversity and is actively promoting Dr. King’s dream of peace, justice and equality for all.

### Program Guidelines

- **Eligibility:** Students in grades 4-12 who attend a school or are homeschooled in Columbia, MO are eligible.
- **Submission Guidelines:** Student writing submission should not be more than one page typewritten or two pages handwritten.
- **Selection Criteria:** A selection committee will choose writings based on the following criteria: artistic merit, relation to the theme, and quality of writing. Three or four students will also be selected with the opportunity to read their works and be featured in a video produced by the City of Columbia, which will be played at the Celebration and broadcast after the event.

**Submissions must include: Student name, grade level, teacher’s name, and school.**

**Submission deadline is Friday, November 17, 2023 by 5:00 p.m.**

**Submissions may be made online at: <https://forms.gle/ojRBjLn4x5169S5k9>**

<b>Send or deliver hard copy entries to:</b> City of Columbia Office of Cultural Affairs 701 E Broadway PO Box 6015 Columbia, MO 65205	<b>Program Contact:</b> For more information contact the City Office of Cultural Affairs: Email: <a href="mailto:Andrea.Jira@CoMo.gov">Andrea.Jira@CoMo.gov</a> Phone: 573.874.6387 Website: <a href="http://CoMoDiversityCelebration.com">CoMoDiversityCelebration.com</a>
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