



HOLOCAUST  
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# **CELEBRATING LIFE**

## Holocaust Writing, Art, & Film Contest 2022 Winners

Presented in memory of Jacob Friedman



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# Contest Prompts



## Option 1: Art, Film, & Creative Writing

*"Being alive, it is a gift. I use it, I love it, I am a happy person [but] with a memory I can never forget." - Noémi Ban, Holocaust survivor. 1922-2019*

The lives of Holocaust victims who perished, and those who survived, are too often defined by their Holocaust experiences alone. The Jews of Europe, however, led diverse and vibrant lives before the Holocaust era (1933-45) -- and survivors persevered post-war to raise families, continue their education, and contribute meaningfully in so many ways, living full lives.

Prompt:

With fiction/story, poetry, or expository writing; visual art; or a short film of your own creation, convey how a Holocaust survivor's post-war life experiences demonstrate the "gift of being alive."

## Option 2: Argumentative Writing

Next fall (fall 2022), the Holocaust Center for Humanity is required to submit its recommendation to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in the state of Washington regarding whether instruction about the Holocaust should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

The current law, which "strongly encourages" teaching about the Holocaust, indicates that, "The studying of this material is intended to: Examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences."

Prompt:

In a cohesive paper, write a letter to the legislature arguing in favor of mandating (requiring) Holocaust education in Washington State schools.

*\*The writing entries included in this booklet are excerpts from the original works. To read the full entries, please visit our website.*

# Creative Writing- Grades 5-6

## **1st Place: Max Gibson, 6th Grade, Islander Middle School, Mercer Island**

Pt.3: the spelling bee  
Holocaust, holo, hollow, hollow of love,  
hollow of health, hollow of  
food. Holocaust, holo, caust, cost, it  
costs my loved ones, it costs my rights,  
it costs me.

Holocaust.

A spelling bee.

Definition?  
Holocaust, fear, death, sorrow.  
Can you put it in a sentence?  
I suffered in the holocaust.

Holocaust,  
h o,  
l o,  
c a u s t.

Correct, you can move on.  
This is me.

## **2nd Place: Cecelia M, 5th grade, West Woodland Elementary, Seattle**

### **My Great-Grandfather is a Hero**

Surviving a war. Overcoming a horror. Building a new life. Max Lewin, my great-grandfather was born on August 18, 1908, in Tutz, Germany. He was a talkative, kind-hearted soul and believed strongly that everyone should be created equal.

Even after experiencing all the prejudice and horrible things Hitler did to his family in Germany, Max still had an open mindset and wanted equal rights for all people in America. He always voted for women and people of color who were running for leadership positions in the government. He always hired Black people into his business. Max did equal amounts of housework with his wife. He encouraged his daughters to get strong positions and stand up for their rights.

## **3rd Place: Yisrael Adir Swedarsky, 5th grade, Torah Day School, Seattle**

### **Teacher: Judy Temes**

### **Standing Up for Agi Day**

“For her children, and to my mother, always her children were the most important thing in the world and that’s I think something that probably I’ve inherited from her too.

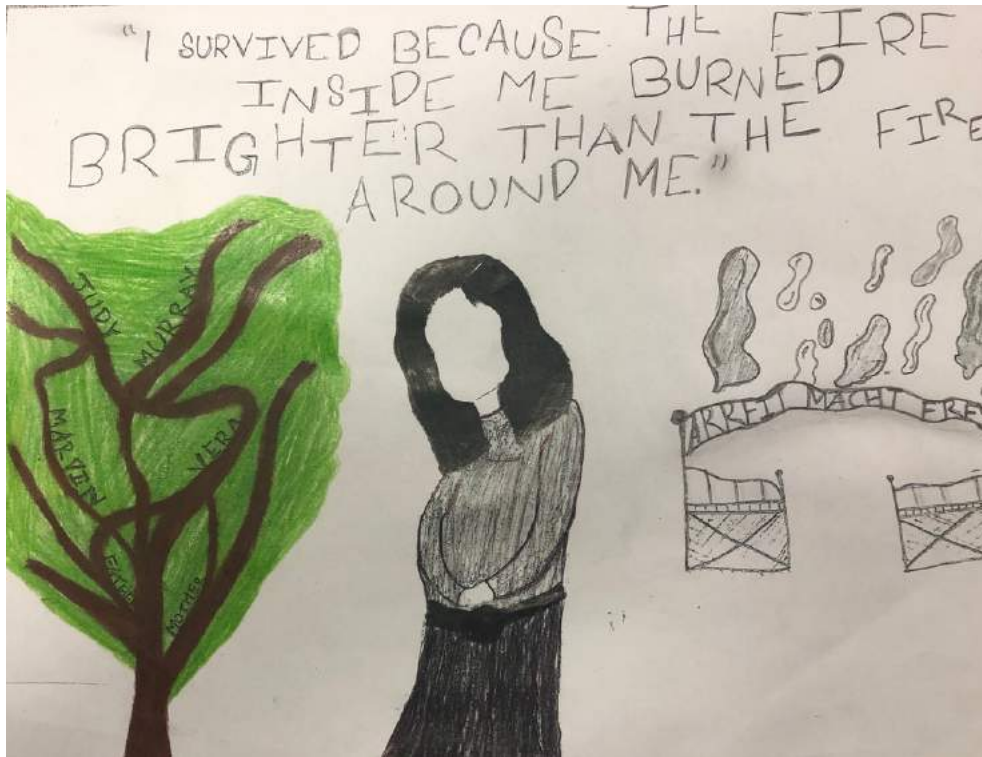
-Agi Day

Agi’s life after the war shows how life is precious because by becoming a teacher, she nurtures the lives of children by teaching them about a range of many things. By connecting to the Holocaust Center, she helps teach people in Washington about history. When history is taught, people can make sure not to make past mistakes.

# Art- Grades 5-6

**1st Place: Allison Condiotty, 5th Grade, Torah Day School, Seattle**

**Teacher: Judy Temes**



My picture represents how Vera Federman's life kept tilting to each side, from good to bad and back again, but in the end it turned out to be good. Vera was deported to Auschwitz, where she was tortured, forced to work, and suffered. She was finally liberated by American forces and met Marvin. They made a beautiful family together. My drawing shows that despite all that she lived through, in the end she was able to see the light, and the good that is life.

**2nd Place: Desmond Orlee, 5th Grade, Torah Day School, Seattle.**

**Teacher: Judy Temes**

My art piece shows a curtain with Eva's play called "A page from the past... Or is it?" On the side that says 'A page from the past...' It shows Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass) and shops that have broken windows. On the right side, where it says 'Or is it?' it shows a quote Eva said. In the middle she is holding her arms out and it shows in bold letters the word 'LIFE' to show it all adds up to life. In good times and hard, we should always be thankful for life.



**Honorable Mention: Nyah Fox, 6th grade, Grade Central Kitsap Middle School, Silverdale, Teacher: Anna Quam**



For survivors, the hope of rebuilding their lives was scary. With barely any ways for emigration, tens of thousands of homeless Holocaust survivors were put in displaced persons camps. I thought of creating a drawing, of a homeless Jew, having no place to go... with a little girl who is helping a man, not knowing who this man is, or what he is going through, that might have been the best way that man was treated in a very long time. He might have thought it as a miracle, just imagine being in his place. It might as well been his "gift of life".

## Argumentative Writing- Grades 5-6

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**1st place: Benjamin Wu, 6th Grade, Narrows View Intermediate School, University Place Teacher: Allison Swarner**

Teaching the Holocaust is an opportunity to teach students about love, inclusion, and tolerance. Even in the darkest period of history, the brilliance of human nature will never be extinguished...

Because mandatory teachings of the Holocaust can prevent future mistakes of ignorance, protect against the trappings of racism, and teach students more about tolerance, I believe that we should make Holocaust teaching in schools mandatory. With all of the benefits of mandatory Holocaust teaching, we can surely make the world a more tolerant, loving, and benevolent place. That's why you should pass a bill making mandatory Holocaust teaching-and all of the benefits it brings-a reality.

**2nd Place: Asher Smith, 6th Grade, Park Place Middle School, Monroe Teacher: Robyn Hayashi**

The Holocaust needs to be taught in all schools. It was a horrible event that shows how low people can get. It shows that the world isn't a perfect place and it's overshadowed by other history which includes history that isn't even true! I never had a school teach me about the Holocaust, which shouldn't be a fact, yet it is! I didn't even know it existed until 6th grade! That needs to change.

**3rd Place: Felix Sargeant, 6th grade, Chimacum Elementary School, Chimacum**  
**Teacher: Gretchen Berg**

Social media is a popular thing that a lot of children or teens can have a hold of or just simply stumble upon. Over five billion people use the internet today, that's over 63% of our world's current population! So, if a horrific and senseless massacre. (with mass destruction), occurred like the Holocaust, a lot of information would be spread. This also includes loads of misinformation and websites supporting off-putting people. I've seen several groups and sites on social media spreading false deception about the Holocaust and Adolf Hitler, some even saying that it "never occurred", or that, "Hitler was a good person". If a young individual with no to little information about the Holocaust or Hitler saw and/or was taught by these communities without an actual teacher (or guardian) to show them the truth about what actually happened, they could be led on by these types of people and groups.

## Creative Writing- Grades 7-8

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**1st Place: Danika Dicks, 7th Grade, Lake Washington Girls Middle School, Seattle**  
**Teacher: Jenny Zavatsky**

### **Echoes**

Bright sun shines through the curtains, reflecting into the eyes of the happy couple. They are seated on the couch in their little blue house on the waterfront, the sound of the waves hitting the bulkhead with a splash. She leans into his side, placing her head in the crook of his neck, her curly hair tickling his skin. Their two children tumble across the lime green rug, babbling and squealing with delight. The sound of their laughter echoes off the walls. The older child grabs hold of their sibling's hair and pulls. A scream is torn from their lips, and suddenly the couple isn't sitting on their couch. Before they can rush to the child's aid the flashback starts.

They're standing in the camps, two different places, similar experiences.

**2nd Place: Natalia Martin, 8th Grade, St. Luke School, Shoreline**  
**Teacher: Jennifer Fargo and Rosemary Conroy**

### **A memory I can't forget**

The red rose,  
with soft petals  
sits gently in my  
hand.

The rose has a pungent, warm,  
sweet smell.

*The burning of cold  
patches  
of snow  
sting my numb nose.*

The green stem  
with small pointy thorns,  
is attached to a  
tall bush with green leaves.

*I have to decree,  
I know now work won't set  
you free.*

**3rd Place: Anita Nordwall, 7th grade, Lake Washington Girls Middle School, Seattle**

**Teacher: Jenny Zavatsky**

**Don't Forget**

A chance to break free

I can flee

I need to see

That the world isn't broken

My family may be gone

But the Shoah

Didn't break me.

I will teach the next generation of my people

I am not a feeble little girl anymore  
I faced the harsh reality of my family that all  
passed while I was in misery.

Forced to stay inside, I never was allowed  
outside but now I am.

I am here in this world to teach

I will teach you all, all that I know.

About my people and our struggle.

And you will forever remember my name

Hester Kool.

## Art- Grades 7-8

**1st Place: Claire Xu, 7th Grade, St. Thomas School, Medina**

**Teacher: Jen McConnell**



On the left of my art piece is her younger self when [Maria Frank Abrams] was in the concentration camps, and on the right side is her older self. Young Maria is holding a scrap of paper and stub of a pencil, drawing, for that was her passion. She's focused on her drawing. On the right, older Maria is also making art, but on a canvas. She is looking at her younger self, reflecting on how far she has come. In the background, I redrew a few of her most known paintings to show where her love of art brought her.

**2nd Place: Olivia Chen, 7th Grade, Open Window School, Bellevue.**



My entry expresses both the joy and the pain experienced by three Holocaust survivors: George Elbaum, Sonia Warshawski, and Ferenc Schatz. Inside the eye, you will find five of many terrors branded into their memories. Outside, the scarf from Sonia's mother, the happiness of young George nibbling his first sugar cube in a long time, and a poem, Sonia at 32 by Morrie Warshawski, continue to provide them joy and comfort. I chose to portray the gift of life through memories because these very moments carry into their post-war lives and prompt Sonia and George to spread their stories.



**3rd Place: Ayar Newman, 7th Grade, Lake Washington Girls Middle School, Seattle, Teacher: Jenny Zavatsky**



At the young age of 15, Ada Van Esso worked hard hours in the Auschwitz laundry rooms, forced to endure harsh living conditions, and fight for not only her own survival, but for the survival of those around her as well. Like many post war survivors, Ada persevered and settled down in her home country, Holland, where she later raised a family. My piece is a charcoal recreation of a photograph depicting Ada with her young daughter Ine-Marie, representing how Ada continued to live but never forgot her experiences and never took for granted the gifts that life can bring.

## Argumentative Writing- Grades 7-8

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**1st Place: Grier Mooney, 8th Grade, Coupeville Middle School, Coupeville, Teacher: Casie Greve**

Holocaust education is a root that nurtures the growth of young students' mental and empathic states. That growth, even if it's small, will make room for what comes next in their future. Even during events that are going on right now with Russia and Ukraine, students that have received Holocaust education are bound to understand what is happening more clearly. They're able to speak their opinions and show which side they support. They refuse to stay silent, and that's what young people need today in a world still full of anti-semitism and racism. Governor Jay Inslee, you can control what the future of Washington's people stand for, and whether you'd rather them stay silent or speak out for what they believe in.

**2nd Place: Sofia Bharati, 8th Grade, Coupeville Middle School, Coupeville, Teacher: Casie Greve**

Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, said in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, "What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedoms depend on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs."

If you believe that something like that could never happen again, if you are ignoring the signs of hatred and oppression that still goes on in this world, it creates a risk. It is very important that we still teach the stories of those who endured these times, because if it's overlooked, a similar disaster could happen again one day.

**3rd Place: River Drake, 8th Grade, Coupeville Middle School, Coupeville**

**Teacher: Casie Greve**

Based on a survey conducted in September, 2020, 32% of Washingtonians did not know what Auschwitz was, and 58% did not know 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust (Claims Conference Survey). It is imperative that these topics are taught early in life, to elementary or middle schoolers, to prevent events related to the actions acted out during the Holocaust from resurfacing in the way other people, people from younger generations, act. Students before the 9th grade should be already informed on this subject, since that generation is starting to expand more into everyday life as citizens, and less as children.

## Creative Writing- Grades 9-12

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**1st Place: Chloe Adams, 9th Grade, Freeman High School, Rockford**

**Teacher: Pia Longinotti**

His memory brought him immediately back to what happened after his name was called. He had been in Sobibor for over six months, being supervised by numerous guards, watched by standard soldiers and SS troops. A revolt was being planned. He, along with 600 others tried to escape, 300 making it out and only 54 surviving the rest of the war. "I helped to plan the Sobibor revolt, and managed to escape. I do not remember if Officer Demjanjuk was at Sobibor at the same time as me, but if he was, he was a murderer. However, there were only 17 SS soldiers in Sobibor at any one time, so he could have easily slipped my memory," stated Thomas.

"Is that all Mr. Blatt?" asked the attorney.

"One last thing," Thomas was exhausted. "I'm not looking for revenge. I want justice."

**2nd Place: Lillia Nielson, 9th Grade, Vallivue High School, Caldwell, Idaho**

**Teacher: Amber Ford**

Karolina and I have lived in Israel for twelve years, but we moved to the USA just last month. I've met a very nice man named Richard Sweet. I quite fancy him. He's very kind and understanding and has a smile that's so warm it could melt all the snow in a Poland winter. I know we've only just met, but I really do feel he could be the one. Life is good. Birds sing beautiful songs here and the sun shines and complete strangers will smile at me as I walk down the street.

The war will never leave me though. The delighted screams of little children remind me of the broken ones at camp. Loud bangs remind me of the gunshots and the bombs that would shake the ground. I am so fortunate to have lived through all of it, and I will never, ever take the gift of being alive for granted.

**3rd Place: Angie Chen, 9th Grade, Peninsula High School, Gig Harbor**

**Teacher: Eileen Osera**

When it was finally liberated, I could not rise from the stretcher. It was typhoid fever. By then I no longer prayed. Who and what was God? After recovering I did not know where to go. It was at that time that I strongly questioned my motives for living. The camps and the war and the starvation, and the cold were terrible, but now that it was all over I continued to suffer - from nightmares. Nightmares of the Riga Ghetto, Father's screams, and Mother's frightful whisper before she left. I had just survived a horrible experience, lost both parents, and had no idea how to contact the few remaining family members I might have. I wanted to find Eric, but I did not know where to look. Could he have gone home?

## Art- Grades 9-12

**1st Place: Cameron Yetzer, 12th Grade, Tesla STEM High School, Redmond**

**Teacher: Jenai Sheffels**



Nearly everyone can and should be inspired by Thomas Blatt for bringing his fellow prisoners at Sobibor hope. This sculpture emphasizes this hope. The hand represents an offer of help to his peers, while at the same time representing the physical embodiment of hope. The gilded cracks follow the Japanese philosophy of Kintsukuroi, which states that a broken object can become new again. Thomas Blatt faced months of abuse at Sobibor (the cracks), only to find new purpose (gold) in assisting and galvanizing others. He repaired himself as the vessel of hope for the individuals around him.

**2nd Place: Bonnie Chen, 9th Grade,**  
**Edmonds Woodway High School, Lynnwood**

My piece is on Ann Birulin. The clock in the background represents the passing of her life and the scenes in the clock show her experiences. I chose to draw her in old age to represent how her experiences have shaped her. The various colors in her face shows how vibrant, and full of life she was, despite all the hardships she went through. The colors in the clock go from dark to light to show how things got better. The flowers represent mourning for the deaths of her loved ones and her own eventual passing in 2018.



**3rd Place: Danika Ronda, 10th Grade, West Seattle High School, Seattle**

**Teacher: Christina Dahms**



The gift of life I chose to render through my oil painting is familial love. It's the gift Robert Herschkowitz's parents strove to protect when they shielded their two-year-old son from stukas with only their bodies and a suitcase. It is a connection so vital, so universal, that many of the Holocaust survivors found healing and normalcy through it, including Robert, who had grandchildren. Familial connections (the grandchild's light) helped drive away oppressive memories lingering from the Holocaust (the smoky Jewish badges). The unspecified survivor's face emotes peace despite the surrounding darkness, and his grandchild's touch gives him color.

## Argumentative Writing- Grades 9-12

**1st Place: Kathryn Sestero, 11th Grade, Lewis and Clark High School, Spokane**

**Teacher: Roger Kugler**

Washington State should enact a Bill for Holocaust education because teaching students about the horrific events will increase students' emotional intelligence. The Oxford dictionary defines emotional intelligence (EI) as "the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions and handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically." Exposing students to the Holocaust forces them to put themselves in other people's positions and recognize the struggles people around them face. Students would learn to value those who have encountered hardship, honor those who lost their lives, and respect those who face difficult emotional challenges today.

**2nd Place: Eleanor Plager, 10th Grade, Lewis and Clark High School, Spokane**

**Teacher: Roger Kugler**

The State of Washington must require Holocaust education in our schools in order to preserve the future of peace in our world and to end the poisonous effects of hate between all people groups. The students in our schools hold the future of our world in their hands. 195,000 survivors of the Holocaust and their families remain to tell their stories and of their experiences, reports The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. But what will happen when they pass away with the motion of time, and all we have left to remember this horrific, yet deeply important event are stories and photographs? Implementing Holocaust education means keeping the memory of genocide's terrible impacts alive, and therefore ensuring future generations will work to prevent it from ever happening again.

**3rd Place: Iris Smith, 10th Grade, Lewis and Clark High School, Spokane**

**Teacher: Roger Kugler**

According to a study taken by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, 58% of Washington's population aged 18-39 were unaware that six million Jews died in the Holocaust (Mccarthy). How have these people made it through their entire education without learning this? Another survey taken by the American Jewish Committee/Taylor Nelson Safres polls stated that only 33% of the US guessed the correct answer when asked "How Many Jews Were Killed in the Holocaust?" (Vashem). I do not understand how after such a horrific event, we cannot even teach our society about it. This is the reason history keeps on repeating itself. Many genocides including the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides have occurred since the Holocaust both resulting in thousands of people dead. The least we can do is teach future generations about those murdered. If we give those who have a story the chance to tell it, our chances of avoiding another Holocaust in the future are better.

***\*The writing entries included in this booklet are excerpts from the original works.  
To read the full entries, please visit our website.***

# Film Contest Winners: Grades 5-8



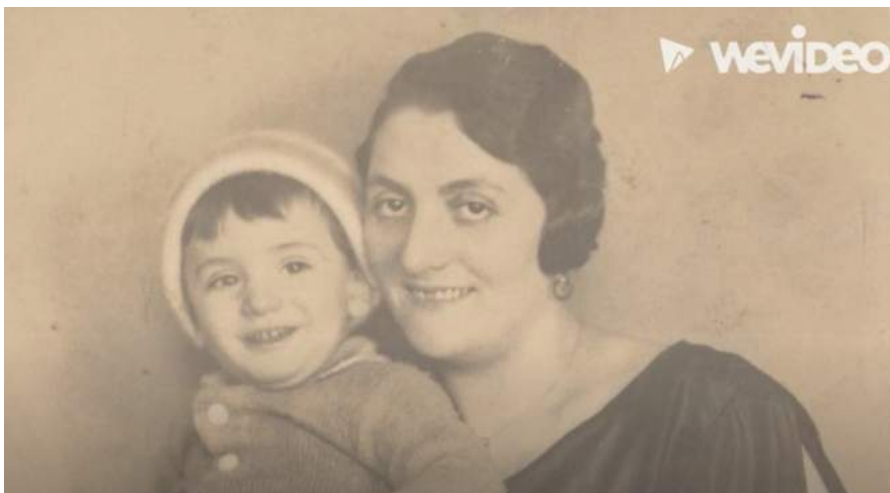
## 1st Place Film

**Tallulah Hudek & Grace Hintz  
7th Grade, Lake Washington Girls  
Middle School, Seattle  
Teacher: Jenny Zavatsky**



## 2nd Place Film

**Talia Trupin, 7th Grade, Lake  
Washington Girls Middle  
School, Seattle  
Teacher: Jenny Zavatsky**



## 3rd Place Film

**Elisha Bergman, 5th Grade,  
Torah Day School, Seattle  
Teacher: Judy Temes**

# Film Contest Winners: Grades 9-12



## 1st Place Film

**Maxwell Soh, 12th Grade. Tesla STEM High School, Redmond  
Teacher: Jenai Sheffels.**



## 2nd Place Film

**Philip Araujo, 12th Grade, Tesla STEM High School, Redmond  
Teacher: Jenai Sheffels.**



## 3rd Place Film

**Rohan Iyer, 12th Grade, Tesla STEM High School, Redmond  
Teacher: Jenai Sheffels.**



## Honorable Mention

**Lane Mathews & Nash McLean, 9th Grade, Freeman High School, Rockford  
Teacher: Pia Longinotti**

# Participating Schools:




Bonney Lake High School	Liberty High School
Brier Terrace Middle School	Mead High School
Cascade Middle School	Narrows View Intermediate School
Central Kitsap Middle School	Ocosta High School
Chiamacum Elementary School	Odle Middle School
College Place Middle School	Open Window School
Couhar Rdige Elementary School	Park Place Middle School
Coupeville Middle School	Peninsula High School
Edmonds Woodway High School	Roosevelt High School
Finn Hill Middle School	Sacajawea High School
Frankel Religious School, Herzl, Ner Tamid	Sammamish High School
Freeman High School	Seattle Hebrew Academy
Gateway Middle School	Seattle Preparatory School
Griffin Middle School	Skyline High School
Islander middle School	St. Luke School
Issaquah Middle School	St. Thomas School
Juanita Middle School	Tesla Stem High School
Kellogg Middle School	Torah Day School
Kalama High School	Vallivue High School
Kamiak High School	West Seattle High School
Lewis and Clark High School	West Valley High School (Yakima)
	West Woodland Elementary

## Thank you to teachers who participated:



Ann Lochhead	Hannah Huddleston	Matt Barmore
Andi Neuwirth	Jamie Kahana	Michael Ready
Anna Quam	Jenai Sheffels	Nadia Counter
Beth Poole	Jennifer McConnell	Natalie Arthur
Brian Elsner	Jennifer Fargo	Pia Longinotti
Cait Slack	Jenny Zavatsky	Roger Kugler
Casie Greve	Judy Temes	Rosemary Conroy
Clementine Nielsen	Kimberly Forsberg	Seth Neill
Eileen Osera	Maggie Groth	Susan Stottlemyre
Elle Eichner	Mariah Lacey	Teddy Hanlon
Gretchen Berg		Tessa Garrels



We received 581 Entries this year!

Thank you to everyone who participated and made this contest possible.



# Thank you to this year's judges:

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Claire Bruncke  
Mario Campos  
Laurie Cohen  
Brian Crawford  
Sean Dougherty  
Stefanie Felix  
Geoff Froh  
Casie Greve  
Andy Helman  
Judah Henderson  
Marieke Hess  
Ira Kitmacher

Jason Reuven Kropsky  
Alli Lapps  
Leslie Mickel  
Marcelo Prieto  
Madison Renaldo-Bilbrey  
Raul Sanchez  
Carl Shutoff  
Sarah Smith  
Marcy Stein  
Dara Vodder  
Jordan Weiner  
Kyle Wylie  
Michael Young

## Programs:

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