

City of Rock Hill
Community Relations Council
presents the
MLK Youth Essay Competition

***“Our lives begin to end the day we
become silent about the things that
matter.”***

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter." In this quote, King emphasizes the importance of speaking out against injustice and making our voices heard on issues that matter to us and society. King articulated this idea during the Civil Rights Movement, where he became a leading advocate for racial equality and justice in the United States throughout the 1950s and 1960s.



The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia and died April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. He was a Baptist minister and social activist who led the Civil Rights Movement from the mid-1950's until his assassination in 1968. Dr. King rose to national prominence as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. His leadership was fundamental to the movement's success which led to the end of legal segregation in the United States.

During Dr. King's leadership of the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans achieved genuine progress toward racial equality. Drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. King is widely regarded as America's pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.

Dr. King used the power of words and acts of nonviolent resistance, such as protests and grassroots organizing, to achieve seemingly impossible goals. He led campaigns against poverty and international conflict, driven by his belief in equality of all people, regardless of color or creed.

Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Nobel Peace Prize Lecture and "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" are among the most revered orations and writings in the English language. Dr. King is one of the few non-presidents to have a national holiday dedicated in his honor and is the only non-president memorialized on the Great Mall in Washington D.C. Dr. King's name and likeness appears on statues, in parks, on streets, in squares, in churches and in other public facilities around the world. He remains a visionary leader whose teachings are increasingly relevant to the welfare of the human family.

Today, Dr. King is one of the most important figures of the 20th century, not only for African Americans but for all who seek freedom, justice, equality and peace. His unique approach to nonviolent action is one of the most successful alternatives to the ongoing struggle against violent conflict and structural injustice.

City of Rock Hill Community Relations Council

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.

2024-25 Youth Essay Competition

ENTRY COVER SHEET

Deadline: December 06, 2024

A copy of this cover sheet must accompany each essay submitted to the 2024-2025 Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Competition. Please complete all the information on this sheet in type or with blue or black ink. DO NOT include any identifying information on the submitted essay.

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2024-25 Youth Essay Competition

Grade Level High School: Grade: 11th _____ 12th _____ ONLY
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Student's Name: _____

Student's Address: _____
(Street/Post Office Box)

(City) (State) (ZIP)
Student's Phone Number: (_____) _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

Preferred phone number of parent/guardian: (_____) _____

Parent/Guardian's email address: _____

School: _____ School Phone Number _____

Principal's Name: _____

School Address: _____
(Street/Post Office Box) City) _____ (State) (Zip)

Circle or mark the name of High School You Attend:

- South Pointe High School
- Northwestern High School
- Rock Hill High School
- Other: _____

Essay Topic # _____ Number of Words: _____ (400-600 words)

Essay-can be submitted via email/regular mail as follows:

Attention:
Jason Weil-CRC Rock Hill Liaison
PO Box 11706
Rock Hill, SC 29731
crc@cityofrockhill.com

Official Competition Rules

“What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.”

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A. HOW TO APPLY

Complete and mail the scholarship application form and required documents by the deadline date of **December 06, 2024.**

B. ELIGIBILITY

1. High school junior or senior graduating in June of current school year from a school in the Rock Hill School District or otherwise a resident of Rock Hill city limits and completing their education at another school or homeschool.
2. Demonstrates commitment to public service.

C. REQUIREMENTS OF APPLICANT

1. The student applicant must be a high school junior or senior.
2. Complete the **student entry cover sheet form** (above).
3. **Submit the recommendation form** signed by high school guidance counselor, **another** school official or community leader.
4. Complete and **submit essay** (essay prompt found at the top of the application form).
5. Submit **resume** of extra-curricular civic/religious activities and community service.

D. NOTIFICATION OF RECIPIENT

The City of Rock Hill Community Relations Council Award Committee will thoroughly review all applications, select the award-winning candidate and notify the recipient that they are a finalist by **January 3, 2025.**

E. AWARD AMOUNT & PAYMENT

An award intended for use toward higher education will be awarded as a one-time **amount of \$1000** to the winner, \$500 for second place and \$250 for third place. Recipient must provide intended college/university/trade-school information to the CRC-Rock Hill Scholarship Board.

Essay Topic

- Students are asked to write an essay based on the 2024- 2025 Martin Luther King Jr. Day theme, *"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter"* addressing one of the following prompts:
1. Explain in your own words what this quote means to you. Provide examples of current events related to the quote, and what your hopes are for the future. Additionally, how does this quote inspire you to act for social justice?
 2. One quote that Dr. King shared was **"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."** What does this quote mean to you? How have you taken a stand for positive change and social justice? How do you plan to use your voice to make a difference for social justice?

RESUME OF ACTIVITIES

*Please feel free to type or print in black or blue ink.
You may also include this information on a separate typed resume.*

Academic Information:

High Schools Attended: _____

Grade: _____

Graduation Date: _____

GPA: _____

Dates Attended: _____

Educational Interest (i.e. Academic Track, Subject Focus)

Honors, Awards, Achievements, Scholarships

Extracurricular Activities

Organization Membership (academic, social, civic, church, etc.)

Community Involvement

Employment Experience

City of Rock Hill Community Relations Council

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AWARDS

The top three essay winners will be presented with an award intended to support post-high school education. The first-place winner will receive **\$1,000**, the second-place winner will receive **\$500** and the third-place winner will receive **\$250**. Additionally, the first-place winner will be given an invitation to present his/her excerpt at the city-wide MLK Interfaith Ceremony on **January 20, 2025**.

The high school with the most essay competition participants will be recognized at the ceremony. In addition, all essay competition participants will be invited as special guests to attend the City of Rock Hill's Black History Program in February 2025.

JUDGEMENT CRITERIA

Originality • Relevancy to Theme • Grammar • Effective Expression • Creativity

ESSAY SPECIFICATIONS

This competition is open to all high school students attending public, private, charter or home schools. The student must attend a Rock Hill School District 3 school or reside within the Rock Hill city limits.

1. Your participation in the essay competition grants the City of Rock Hill permission to use your essay in whole or in part during the Interfaith Prayer Breakfast.
2. All essays must be typed in a 12-point font using either Times New Roman or Arial and double-spaced.
3. Add a header stating which prompt number (one or two) you select.
4. Essays must be between 400 and 600 words.
5. Essays are not to include illustrations, images or photographs.
6. The title of the essay is to be typed at the top of the first page **only**.
7. An entry cover sheet must accompany each original essay with the essay number choice, **one or two**. Word count **MUST** be included.
8. DO NOT include any identifying information on the submitted essay.
9. Submit a letter of recommendation from a school official, guidance counselor or community leader.
10. Reminder: The deadline for submission is **December 06, 2024**.

Essay Questions?

Email CRC-Rock Hill at crc@cityofrockhill.com with the subject line "MLK Scholarship Competition".