

WHAT'S NEW

Sixth Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School Poster-Essay Contest

Maeve Daloz Winning MLK Poster 2023



Each year, a committee comprised of representatives from the VBA staff, the VBA Diversity Section, and the VBA Young Lawyers Division, chooses a quotation by the Dr. King to inspire Vermont's middle school students to participate in a Poster-Essay Contest. This year's quotation came from a sermon Dr. King delivered in 1957: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

Each year, after removing the names and identifying information from the entries, the judges choose a winner, a first runner-up, and a second runner-up. The judges this year were impressed with the thoughtful responses of all the contestants.

Several entries focused on the hard times that COVID had brought to them personally or to the wider community. Others reflected on how help from others was critical to them in getting through difficulties they had faced. Some highlighted their gratitude for parents, helpful professionals, such as doctors, nurses, and teachers. Some told stories about times that they had helped others. It was clear that each entrant had thought long and hard about Dr. King's quotation and its meaning in their lives and for the life of the community.

In addition to being published in the *Vermont Bar Journal* and on the VBA website, the winning entries were displayed at the VBA Young Lawyer's Division Mid-Winter Thaw in Montreal over the 2023 Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. They will next be displayed at the Vermont Supreme Court. In addition, the winners and their families will be invited to an award ceremony with Governor Scott followed by a meeting with Supreme Court justices. The date for the ceremony remains TBD at the time of publication, but the hope is to have it sometime in early to mid-March. All entries outside of the top three were awarded honorable mentions, and all were well deserved.

2023 Winners

Maeve Daloz, an 8th grader at U32 in Montpelier, took the first-place award. Her skillful drawing of a hand reaching down to pull up another, rising from the darkness, was an economical and effective visual representation of the quotation. Her essay, which is printed in full below, was a touching personal account of how a friend had taken trouble to help when she was feeling depressed. She noted that small kindnesses, although maybe not on the scale with Dr. King's achievements, "really do matter."

William Cunningham, an 8th grader at Mater Christi in Burlington, was awarded first-runner up. His very accomplished poster featured a pair of drawings. One shows a person in darkness, chained to wealth. The essay explains that this represents being self-centered and doing nothing for others and so leaving no lasting legacy. In the other drawing, a person is helping a hungry child. The essay explained that help provided to another will have changed a life and so changed the world.



First Runner up MLK Contest William Cunningham

Hannah Drury and Zofia Willis, also 8th graders at U32, teamed up to create a poster and essay that took the second runner-up award. Their entry demonstrated great originality by *not* including a drawing. Instead, they compiled a series of encouraging text messages, arranged them in columns, and printed the series in black and white. The striking format draws the viewer in to study the details, and the text messages embody an actual kind gesture. "What can you do for others" made them think of what others had done for them, inspiring them to show the messages from their parents offering regular support and encouragement.

The VBA congratulates the winners and all the participants.

**Winner, Vermont Bar Association
2023 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Middle School Poster/Essay Contest
by Maeve Daloz**

Martin Luther King Jr was a great person who was always fighting for others. In many ways his kindness changed the world. He was always thinking of other and helping people as much as he could. He inspired many people and changed many unjust laws oppressing people of color. Admittedly not all of us can be as great as Dr King but I believe little kindness can still make a big difference.

I often get depressed for no apparent reason. When this happens often being alone makes it worse but I don't necessarily want to be around people. This happened to me while I was away at a summer camp last summer. I had gone up to my room trying to suppress tears when a few minutes later, I heard a hesitant knock on the door. It was one of my roommates who had come to check on me. They explained that when they were sad they didn't want to be alone and asked if I wanted to talk. It made me feel alot better just talking. Though they did not literally offer me their hand, they pulled me out of the darkness of my own mind and back into the light. Ever since then I've tried more and more to empathize with other people and try to help them when possible.

What this person did for me was not earth shattering and didn't save the world but they helped me when I needed it and I think these little kindnesses really do matter. Showing someone you care can help more than you think.



Second Runner Up Poster by Hannah Drury and Zofia Willis