



## 2015 -2016 Utah's "Do the Write Thing" Challenge INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

### Introduction

Thank you for involving your 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the 2016 Utah **Do the Write Thing Challenge**. All across America, students are rising to the challenge of doing something to end youth violence. The **Challenge** offers middle school students the opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives, and to communicate in writing what they think should be done to change the culture of violence.

The **Challenge** emphasizes personal responsibility by encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problems related to violence. The program ultimately seeks to give students the opportunity to break the cycle of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of the **Challenge** in Utah.

**Carefully review** the following materials concerning program rules, entry deadlines, judging criteria, classroom discussion, and student recognition before presenting the program to your students—and to **be sure your students' writings will not be disqualified.**

### Program Rules

- Students may use any form of written expression (*e.g.*, essays, poems, plays or songs), as long as the language is positive and not derogatory. The intent of the program is to get students to communicate a personal experience. Stories based on fiction are strongly discouraged. Students may submit only one entry per year. Each entry must be the work product of only one student. If an entry is fiction, it must be identified as such.
- Student entries, at minimum, **must address these three questions:**
  - How has youth violence affected my life?
  - What are the causes of youth violence?
  - What can I do about youth violence?
- Entries should be 500 to 1000 words in length. Poetry/song may be shorter and contain fewer than 500 words.

- Entries must be in English.
- Proper citation is required if the student uses a quote or another person's materials in his or her entry. **Plagiarism will be cause for disqualification from the judging process.**
- Entries must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8-1/2" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used and the pages should be numbered. **Do not staple writings.** Instead, use a paper clip to hold the writing together.
- **Do not include** personal information (*e.g.*, name, school, teacher, etc.) on the body of the written entry. This information should only be included on the entry form.
- Collect all the students' writings for submission. The provided entry form must accompany each student submission and both the student and the parent, or guardian must sign it. **Entries without a signed "Student Entry Form" will be disqualified from the judging process.** (See attached Entry Form with the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement).
- Paper-clip each of the students' individual writings to its entry form.
- Teachers are to select the top four (4) writings (2 boys and 2 girls) from each class period, make four (4) photocopies of these writings. Create a submission package for each class period. Place the top four at the beginning of the package followed by the rest of the students' writings.
- Editing of content, grammar or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted. Only original student entries are eligible to be submitted by the teacher. Grammar and spelling are not considered in the scoring matrix.
- One completed "Teacher Survey" is required from each teacher. Please fill out the teacher survey completely, including the questions regarding the total number of students who participated in classroom discussion, the number of writings collected and the number of writings submitted.

## Submission Deadline

The entry **submission deadline** is **Thursday, December 10, 2015**. Entries **must be postmarked** by Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup> 2015. Send these items to the following addresses by any of the indicated delivery services:

<b>United States Postal Service:</b>	<b>FED EX:</b>	<b>UPS:</b>
Utah Board of Juvenile Justice State Capitol Complex East Senate Building, Suite 330 PO Box 142330 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2330	Utah Board of Juvenile Justice 350 N State Street East Building Room E330 SLC UT 84114	Utah Board of Juvenile Justice 350 N State ST. E330 SLC UT 84114

## Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged by Utah's Do the Write Thing Committee and VIP judges. Last year's VIP judges included: Miss Teen Utah, Karlie Major; Ms. Katherine Decker and Mr. Joseph Decker of the Beesley Foundation; Olympic Gold Medalist, Derek Parra; Bobsled Athlete, Jeremy Holm; Salt Lake County Mayor, Ben McAdams; Third District Juvenile Court Judge, Renee Jimenez; ABC4 News Reporter, Jason Nguyen; Former SLC Police Chief, Chris Burbank; 2014 National Finalist, Cora Rasmuson and McCall Morris; CCJJ Executive Director, Ronald B. Gordon, Jr.; Kathy Younker of the Wheeler Foundation; Juvenile Justice Services Director of Office for Rural Programs, Reg Garff; and members of the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. Entries will be judged based on content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions:

How has youth violence affected my life?  
What are the causes of youth violence?  
What can I do about youth violence?

Grammar and spelling will not be used as criteria for judging entries, as this is an anti-violence initiative and the priority is to encourage students to examine the aspects of youth violence.

Encourage your students to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence and offer specific suggestions about what they as individuals can do to reduce youth violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. Students who share personal experiences about the impact of youth violence on their lives and the lives of their peers consistently receive top scores—for these reasons fictional stories are highly discouraged. The panel of judges will be looking at how well your students present their views on these matters and scoring will be based on the following criteria:

Category 1..... Question Responsiveness  
Category 2..... Content/Ideas  
Category 3..... Originality/Voice/Honesty

## Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is not mandatory for participation in the Challenge. However, over the years we have found that participating students and their teachers gain much from the connections that result from exchanges about the impact of youth violence that occur in pre-writing classroom discussions. Teachers relate their amazement at the openness and honesty of classroom discussions. These discussions present excellent opportunities to identify and prevent youth problems before they reach critical level.

Many teachers whose classes have participated in the Challenge have invited speakers knowledgeable about youth violence issues to lead pre-writing discussions. Other teachers have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about youth violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles that emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problems of youth violence, prove to be particularly useful.

The **National Campaign to Stop Violence** website ([www.dtw.org](http://www.dtw.org)) has a discussion paper on the causes of and solutions for youth violence and other national resources that are helpful. The discussion paper is based upon writings of national finalists from the 2000 Challenge. Feel free to download and copy this material for classroom use or use any of the other materials available on the website.

**Utah's Do the Write Thing Challenge** website ( [www.juvenile.utah.gov](http://www.juvenile.utah.gov)) includes several lesson plans and prior years Utah State Finalist books.

Consider the following sample questions to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the Challenge:

- How does youth violence affect your daily life?
- Where are you confronted with youth violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you as an individual do to reduce youth violence in your community?

## **Common Core Standard**

As of August 2011, the Do the Write Thing Challenge has been reviewed by a panel of highly qualified public school teachers. The Challenge has been aligned to meet all of the English Language Arts Standards in Writing for Grades 7 and 8 (Standards W.7.1 - W7.10 and W8.1 - W8.10). Please note that we have determined Standards W.7.2 and W.8.2 to only be applicable to nonfiction submissions.

## **Student Recognition**

### **Local Level:**

Participating schools must submit **all** writings from each individual participating classroom to the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. However, only the top four writings (2 boys and 2 girls) from each classroom period, as identified by the teacher, will be considered for judging. Each writing will be read a minimum three times by students from local universities. The highest average score for the first round of reading will be selected from each region, and then forwarded to the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. From those entries, the Board will select final entries for VIP judging.

### **State Level:**

The Utah Board of Juvenile Justice hosts a recognition luncheon in late April (usually the last Friday of the month) to honor the finalists. In addition to the finalists, honorable mentions, students' parents, teacher and principal will be invited to attend the recognition luncheon.

Two "National Finalists" or "Ambassadors" will be announced at the recognition luncheon. Our Do the Write Thing VIP Judges will select the boy and girl from Utah who submit the most thought provoking entries.

The Board will also publish the writing of finalists, as well as honorable mentions and will be placed in the Library of Congress. In addition, the Board will distribute the publication to

community, business and governmental leaders as well as the national Do the Write Thing Campaign. This book will also be posted on the Board's website: [www.juvenile.utah.gov](http://www.juvenile.utah.gov).

**National Level:**

The two National Finalists, or Ambassadors, along with their teacher and one parent or guardian will be invited by the National Campaign to Stop Violence to attend the National Recognition Week in Washington, DC in July 2016.

The primary sponsor, Kuwait-America Foundation, national sponsors and/or funding generated by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, will pay travel costs for each jurisdiction's "official delegation" to the National Recognition Week activities. The people of Kuwait have donated money to the Do the Write Thing Campaign for over 20 years. This has been done to say thank you to the American people for the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

National finalists will have the opportunity to meet and present their views to national leaders such as the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Secretary of Interior, the Attorney General of the United States, the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, as well as Members of Congress. Students will be honored at an embassy reception hosted by the Ambassador to the United States from the State of Kuwait and a book of their writings will be placed in the Library of Congress.

**Contact Information** - Please contact Cuong Nguyen at 801-538-1739 or email [cvnguyen@utah.gov](mailto:cvnguyen@utah.gov) with any questions. Instructions, lesson plans and prior students' writings publication can be found at [www.juvenile.utah.gov](http://www.juvenile.utah.gov).

## 2016 Utah's Do the Write Thing Challenge Submission Checklist

	Collect and submit <b>all</b> writings in their original form. (All writings will be sent to the National Campaign to Stop Violence and, among other things, used for research purposes.)
	One "Entry Form" must accompany each student submission and include the student's and parent/guardian signatures. Use a <b>pen</b> to legibly fill-in all required information on the entry form. <b>(Entries without appropriate signatures will be disqualified.)</b>
	Student writings must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8-1/2" x 11" paper, single sided, pages should be numbered, and length should be between 500 and 1000 words. Poem/song can be shorter.
	No personal information ( <i>e.g.</i> , name, school, teacher, etc.) should appear on the body of the written entry. Please <b>erase/omit personal information</b> on any of the writings prior to submission.
	<b>Do not staple</b> the entry forms to the writings. Use paper clips to keep paper together.
	Teachers <b>must clearly identify</b> the top four writings (2 boys and 2 girls) from each class period. <b>Make four (4) photocopies</b> and paper-clip to the original for submission.
	Teachers are required to submit only one TEACHER SURVEY.
	<b>Deadline -Thursday, December 10, 2015 (Postmarked)</b> Utah State Capitol Complex East Senate Building, Suite 330 P.O. Box 142330 SLC, UT 84114-2330



**STUDENT ENTRY FORM**  
**REQUIRED for EACH submission**

Thank you for participating in the Do the Write Thing Challenge. Participating student must fill out this entry. Please print legibly in black/blue ink. **To avoid disqualification**, students and their Parent/Guardian must sign this form.

Student's First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Legibly)      Student's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Legibly)

Student's Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Phone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Student's School: \_\_\_\_\_ School's Phone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement**

The National Campaign to Stop Violence, and the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice (UBJJ), which sponsor the Do the Write Thing Challenge nationally and in Utah, will publish selected student writings and quotations in books and in discussion papers on youth violence both in print and electronic format. Before publishing your writing, the National Campaign and UBJJ require your written consent and the written consent of your parent or guardian.

Finalists will be invited to recognition events in Utah and/or Washington DC where the media may be present. This may result in photographs, video and audio being recorded that may be broadcast through print, television, radio and internet.

If you and your parent/guardian agree to permit the National Campaign and UBJJ to publish your writing and use your photograph for promotional purposes, please read the following statement and sign below:

We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to the National Campaign to Stop Violence and the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, so that it may be considered for recognition and published. We also understand that photographs or videos may be used for future promotional purposes.

**Agreed:**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature      Parent's Signature      Date

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's E-mail Address      Parent's Name - Print



# UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO Do the Write Thing!

## TEACHER SURVEY REQUIRED for EACH Teacher

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Home Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Cellular Phone\*( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions:

1. Did you have a classroom discussion about youth violence before your students prepared their writings for the 2016 Challenge? Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, how many (overall) of your students participated (were present) for the discussion? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many of your students prepared writings as part of the 2016 Challenge? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many of your students submitted their writings for judging in the 2016 Challenge? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What (in your opinion) were the top three causes of youth violence identified by your students in their discussions and writings?

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Media                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Pressure/Gangs     | <input type="checkbox"/> Weapon Availability        | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying                | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Parenting/Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> War          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress/Anger/Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Prejudice/Intolerance      | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs/Alcohol           | <input type="checkbox"/> Low Self-Esteem/Image      | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____             |   |                                       |

5. What (in your opinion) were the top three (3) solutions for youth violence identified by your students in their discussions and writings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

\* This information is very important. Much of the activity in the program takes place during the summer months and it is crucial that we be able to contact you. Thank you for helping your students participate in Utah's Do the Write Thing Challenge.