



# The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Writing for Literacy Library Essay Contest

## Sponsored by:

Friends of the San Diego Public Library  
San Diego Public Library  
San Diego Unified School District Library Media Teachers  
KPBS & Lloyd Pest Control

**OPEN TO:** All public and non-public school **students** in grades 4, 8 & 10 who attend a school served by the San Diego Public Library system.

**Topic Choices and Entry Forms** which explain this year's guidelines for writing an essay are included in this e-mail and will also be posted on the Library Foundation web site:

<http://www.supportmylibrary.org/pub/Essay%20Contest%20intro%20flyer.pdf>

**AWARDS:** The writer of each essay will receive a Certificate of Participation and there will be BARNES & NOBLE book store gift certificates for winners at each school.

## **SCHOOL WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN JANUARY, 2012**

The school awards will be presented at individual branch libraries by the  
Friends of the San Diego Public Library.

This contest supports The California Department of Education LITERACY STANDARDS (Reading and Writing)

The **DEADLINE** for receipt of entries is:

**3:00 PM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2011**

**Four Grand Prize Winners** at each level will be announced during a ceremony at

THE BALBOA PARK CLUB ON MAY 3, 2012.

Top prizewinners will each receive a monetary award

One special prize of \$500 will be awarded for the best overall essay  
in memory of  
JACK and CAROLYN WINER

QUESTIONS : Contact Wendy Gay, [pahlwen@pacbell.net](mailto:pahlwen@pacbell.net) OR 619- 697-2024 and/or Marian Day/Carleen Hemric, Friends of the Library, (619) 542-1724 Tuesday and Thursday 8:00-12:00

## ESSAY TOPICS FOR THE 2012 STUDENT CONTEST

Once again KPBS is providing this Essay Contest with major topics based on themes found in the three 2012 "One Book, One San Diego" selections:

*Sky of Red Poppies* by Zohreh Ghahremani

This story, set in pre-revolutionary Iran, is about two young girls who become best friends even though they come from different social and economic classes. They are alike, until each makes a fateful decision: Shireen becomes politically active while Roya does everything possible not to draw attention to herself. The reader gets to see the consequences of the girl's decisions as they grow up, and grow apart because of the different paths they each have chosen.

*Moloka'i* by Alan Brennert,

Young Rachel Kalama is growing up in an idyllic loving Hawaiian family in the 1890's. Her dreams for the future are shattered at age seven by the discovery that she has leprosy. She is sent to a leper colony on the island of Moloka'i where her life, though shadowed by disease, isolation, and tragedy, is also one of joy, courage, and dignity. This story is not about death and despair, but is about life and hope, AND the strength of the human spirit.

*Into the Beautiful North* by Luis Alberto Urrea

19-year-old Nayeli, who works at a taco shop in her Mexican village, dreams about her father, who went to the US to find work. It soon dawns on her that he isn't the only man who has left town. In fact, there are almost no men left in her village; they've all gone north. While watching the movie *The Magnificent Seven*, Nayeli decides to go north herself and recruit seven men--her own "Siete Magnificos"--to come to her hometown and protect it from the banditos who plan on taking it over. This is the story of a determined young woman's quest to find herself on both sides of "the fence".

**(1) As you read one of these books** think about issues such as friendship, immigration, religious differences, culture 'clash', parental discord, consequences of war, sorrow, grief; then write an essay discussing how or where you experienced (or observed or read about) overcoming these issues. Use narrative techniques and follow the guidelines for size, spacing, font etc. outlined on the entry form.

If these titles do not 'work' for all readers we have included a list of similar titles in this mailing and posted at <http://www.supportmylibrary.org/pub/Essay%20Contest%20intro%20flyer.pdf>  
Students may choose one of these titles to read, then discuss the same issues as stated above.

Students might also like to read one of the two previous One Book, One San Diego selections: *Outcasts United* and/or *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*:

### **OR you may discuss one of our traditional topics:**

**(2) Research and report on a famous library in history. What impact did it have on civilization?**

*California Literacy Standard:*  
2.3 - Information Report (Grades 4, 8, 10)

**(3) If all the books in the world were about to disappear, but you could save one, what would it be? Why?**

*California Literacy Standard:*  
2.3 - Information Report (Grades 4, 8, 10)

**(4) What resources are available to you at your San Diego Public Library relating to your personal interests, such as your favorite sport, hobby, etc.? Describe.**

*California Literacy Standards:*  
2.3 - Information Report (Grade 4, 8, 10)  
2.4 - Persuasive Composition (Grades 8 & 10)

For more information about "One Book, One San Diego go to [kpbs.org/onebook](http://kpbs.org/onebook)

Local Branch Library: \_\_\_\_\_

**Students:** Attach this completed entry form to your essay. *Keep a copy of your essay and this entry form for your records!*

Please put your name on all pages of your essay.

## 2012 STUDENT WRITING FOR LITERACY ESSAY CONTEST ENTRY FORM

PLEASE PRINT

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

(First) (Last)

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Number

Street

Zip

HOME PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR ROUND yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_

TOPIC OF ESSAY: \_\_\_\_\_

(Select from topics listed on the reverse of the contest flyer.)

TEACHER FULL NAME (print): \_\_\_\_\_

(First)

(Last)

### JUDGING CRITERIA:

Grades 8 & 10 entries **must be typed**; Grade 4 entries may be typed or **written legibly in ink**. All entries will be judged on originality and focus on the selected prompt by a panel of community members.

**Schools submitting 1-10 entries will have one winner, 11-20 entries will have two winners, and above 20 entries will have three winners at the branch library.**

Each branch library will then select and submit a first prize essay at each grade level for Grand Prize judging.

### Suggested maximum length:

Grade 4: Suggested Maximum 250 words

Grade 8: Suggested Maximum 500 words; 12 pt. size type

Grade 10: Suggested Maximum 1000 words; 12 pt. size type

### SIGNATURES:

We certify that this entry is a new original work and was developed and written by the student.

*We give permission for the writer's essay and picture to be reproduced for promotional purposes including publication in the news media.* We understand that the objective of this contest is student recognition and that there is no compensation beyond the prizes mentioned.

**STUDENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

To be officially entered, all signatures must be complete when the entry is received.

The DEADLINE for receipt of entries at your branch library is:

**3:00 PM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2011**

**QUESTIONS CALL:** Wendy Gay, SDUSD Librarian, Retired, (619) 697-2024 or phlwen@pacbell.net

Also: Marian Day/Carleen Hemric, Friends of the Library, (619) 542-1724 Tu-Th 8:00-12:00

This contest supports

***THE CALIFORNIA CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR LITERACY***

## 2012 Essay Contest - Additional book titles

Cha, Dia. *Dia's Story Cloth*. New York: Lee and Low Books, Inc., 1996. unpagged

Born in Laos, Dia fled with her family to Thailand as a child, spending four years in a refugee camp before arriving in the U.S. Her story is chronicled in an intricately stitched, traditional, colorful story cloth. For centuries, needlework has been part of Hmong culture. But it has only been since the war in Vietnam and Laos, which displaced many Hmong, that the new, narrative form of "story cloths" has emerged as a bridge between past and present. grades 1-6

Cooney, Caroline B. *Diamonds in the Shadow*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2007. 228 pages.

The Finch family in Connecticut welcomes five refugees from Sierra Leone, but only four are going to stay with them. Jared, the Finch family's oldest son, realizes that something is wrong, and he must make a decision that could change the fate of both families. grades 5-8

Ellis, Deborah. *Mud City*. Oxford University Press, 2003. 164 pages.

Orphaned Afghan refugee Shauzia, 14, leaves a rough Pakistan border camp and joins other homeless children on the streets of Peshawar. Her dream is to reach the ocean and a place called France. Instead, disguised as a boy, she begs and scrounges for food and odd jobs. In the end, she returns to the rough camp and the tough camp leader, Mrs. Weera, whom she thought she hated. This is a survival adventure, but Shauzia is no sweet waif; she's brave, determined, and rebellious. Her struggle with the rough Mrs. Weera reveals that they are both strong and brave.

grades 4-8

Na, An. *A Step from Heaven*. Penguin Putnam, 2001. 159 pages

Young Ju is a Korean immigrant whose family left Korea to come to America (specifically California) for a better life. Young Ju is suspended between adopting American ways and keeping her Korean heritage alive. Young Ju's family is not what it appears on the outside. Her father is abusive and an alcoholic. Her mother is obedient but strong. Young Ju is trying to cover up her reality and her brother is rebelling against everything. What becomes of this family makes a compelling story of how much a family can endure and overcome. grade 8 up

Paterson, Katherine. *The Day of the Pelican*. New York: Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), 2009. 144 pages

The Lleshis are Albanians living in Kosovo, a country trying to fight off Serbian oppressors, when suddenly they are homeless refugees. They find their courage tested by hunger, illness, and a long, arduous journey with danger on every side. Then, unexpectedly, they are brought to America by a church group and begin a new life in a small Vermont town. The events of 9/11 bring more challenges for this Muslim family--but the US is their home now so there is no turning back. grades 5-8

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. *Under the Persimmon Tree*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Francis Foster Books) 270 pages

Najmah, a young Afghan girl whose name means “star,” suddenly finds herself alone when her father and older brother are conscripted by the Taliban and her mother and newborn brother are killed in an air raid. An American woman, Elaine, whose Islamic name is Nusrat, is also on her own. She waits out the war in Peshawar, Pakistan, teaching refugee children under the persimmon tree in her garden while her Afghan doctor husband runs a clinic in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. grades 6 and up

Williams, Karen Lynn. *Four Feet, Two Sandals*. Erdman Books for Young Readers, 2007. Beautiful illustrations.

Ten-year-old Lina is thrilled when she finds one sandal that fits her foot perfectly; then she sees that another girl has the matching sandal. The two girls Lina, and Feroza soon meet, each wearing one coveted sandal. Together they solve the problem of having four feet and two sandals. They decide to share the sandals and their stories. grades 2-5

Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. New York: Lee and Low Books, 2005, unpagged, advanced picture book.

Eight-year-old Garang is tending cattle far from his family's home in Sudan when war comes; he returns to that home to find everything has been destroyed. Soon he meets other boys whose villages have been attacked. They become a moving band of thousands, walking 100s of miles seeking safety — first in Ethiopia and then in Kenya. The boys face numerous hardships and dangers along the way, but their faith and mutual support help keep the hope of finding a new home alive in their hearts. grades 1-6