Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Living the Dream, Inc.
2027 Student Poetry Competition

Living the Dream, Inc. is sponsoring its **20th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Poetry Competition** for Topeka area students in grades fifth through twelve. This year, we have included spoken word entries.

Awards and Recognition
Certificates and gift card awards will be given to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner in each grade category during a King Holiday Student Awards and Recognition Program on **Monday, January 18, 2027 at 10:30 am at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park, 1515 SE Monroe Street.**

Who May Enter?
All poetry and spoken word entries will be judged in the following grade categories:

- 5th-6th grade
- 7th-8th grade
- 9th-10th grade
- 11th-12th grade

Poetry/Spoken Word Competition Guidelines
All poems and spoken word entries must be submitted in an electronic format that are typed and the original work of the student. Students will be required to **memorize and recite** their poem or spoken word during the Poetry Competition held on **Tuesday, January 12, 2027 at 6:00 pm** at the **Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Marvin Auditorium**, **1515 SW 10th Avenue**. Each judge's scoring will be based on the student's recitation, structure, originality, and creativity. Spoken word entries can be accompanied by background music, props or artwork. Offensive and profane language or music is prohibited. Because of their unique nature, Haiku and Acrostic poems will not be judged.

Poetry/Spoken Word Themes
Poems and spoken word entries should represent the student's interpretation of diversity, peace, unity, human rights, justice, or nonviolence as reflected in quotes or principles from civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma K. Gandhi, César E. Chavez, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, Mother Teresa, or another great civil rights leader. Students may also submit a poem or spoken word entry that promotes the **2027 Living the Dream Theme*: "Tomorrow is Today!"***

Where Do I Send My Entry?
All student poems or spoken word entries along with the signed entry form should be emailed to: Mrs. Cindy White, Chairperson, Living the Dream Poetry Competition at: clwhite4ku@cox.net. If you should have questions regarding the Poetry Competition, please contact Mrs. White at (785) 249-3396.

When is the Deadline Date?
All poems and spoken word submissions must include the signed entry forms. All documents must be emailed by **4:30 pm on Friday, December 11, 2026.** The **winners will be announced at the January 12**, **2027 Poetry Competition.**

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2027 Student Poetry Competition Entry Form

School Name _____ **School Address**_____

Teacher's Name_____

(Please print or type)

Principal's Name_____

Grade Level: (Please check your grade category below.)

____5th - 6th Grade ____7th - 8th Grade ____9th - 10th Grade ___11th - 12th Grade

Student's Name_____ **Student's Age**_____ **Grade**_____

Student's Address_____ **Zip Code**_____

Student's Phone Number_____ **Student's Email Address**_____

Title of Poem_____

I understand that my child's poem or spoken word will be entered and judged in the **Living the Dream, Inc. Student Poetry Competition**. I further understand and consent to any subsequent printing and display of the entry as deemed appropriate by Living the Dream, Inc. I understand this poem or spoken word is submitted for the sole purpose of the Poetry Competition and will not be sold or otherwise used for any commercial purpose unless permission is given by me, as parent and guardian of the above named child. I understand that this poem or spoken word will only be considered if the entry form is signed, postmarked and submitted by **4:30 pm on December 11, 2026.** I consent to the use of this submission to be judged in the Poetry Competition. I fully understand that my child has no entitlements or guarantees of prizes or recognition as a result of this entry, unless he or she is selected as one of the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place winners by the designated judges for the Poetry Competition.

Parent or Legal Guardian's Signature_____ **Date**_____

Parent's Email Address_____ **Parent's Phone Number**_____

Student's Signature_____ **Date**_____

Poetry or spoken word submissions and the signed entry form should be emailed to: Mrs. Cindy White, Chairperson, Living the Dream Poetry Competition at: clwhite4ku@cox.net no later than 4:30 pm on Friday, December 11, 2026. Please contact Mrs. White at (785) 249-3396, if you should have questions.