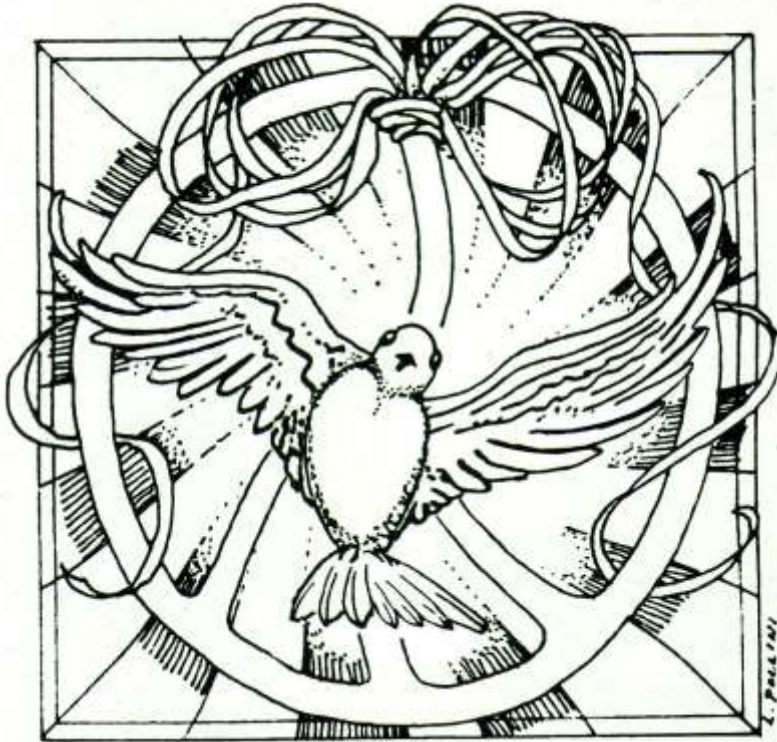


2020 Peace Poetry Contest



Alachua County Schools Grades K-12

Sponsored by Veterans for Peace, Gainesville Chapter 14



The text of all the poems contained in this book are printed as submitted. Due to space and color restraints, we were unable to include special illustrations and designs that accompanied poems.

A full video of the 2020 Peace Poetry Poets reading their poems will be available on the Veterans for Peace website at vfp Gainesville.org. Please email vfppeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com for more information.

If you'd like to support the Peace Poetry Contest, Peace Scholarship or the Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace, you can donate or send suggestions to:

Gainesville Veterans for Peace
P.O. Box 142562, Gainesville, FL 32614

All checks should be made payable to Veterans for Peace, Gainesville. Thank you for your support this year!



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2020 Peace Poetry Contest

*Alachua County Schools
Grades K-12*

A collection of the winning poems from the eleventh annual Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County schools, grades K–12, sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter 14 of Veterans for Peace.



About the Peace Poetry Contest

This is the eleventh year that Gainesville Veterans for Peace has organized the Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County, where all students, grades K–12, are encouraged to submit one original poem focusing on their interpretation of “peace.”

Because of the Shelter-In-Place orders, we are especially grateful for the students and teachers who still felt inspired to submit Peace Poems under trying circumstances and distance learning. Every year VFP notices a theme that runs through many of the poems. The last two years many students focused on safety in the classroom and trauma associated with the fear of being shot at school. The past few years there have been many environmental and climate change poems submitted and again this year. The new theme this year addressed Covid-19 and the belief that being a good citizen meant observing the Shelter-In-Place regulations. We were encouraged by the maturity expressed in these poems and of course blown away by the beauty of all the poems submitted.

Veterans for Peace members believe that peace-making and hope for a peaceful world begin in our community, our homes and our schools. That is why we invited students to participate in the contest this year; a peaceful possibility lies in the younger generations of today who will be leading, transforming and inspiring the world tomorrow.

We want to honor the ideal of peace through the perspectives of young people. Peace is a uniquely human conception and affirms the human spirit. It is especially important to remember that peace is not merely a goal but a human right.

This year we received 200 poems from all grades, and the poems were judged by a panel, including Veterans for Peace members. The winners were asked to record their poems at home and send, so they could be published online and in this book.

Veterans for Peace would first and foremost like to thank all the participants in the Peace Poetry Contest. Without the poetry submissions, there would be no Peace Poetry Contest and none of the dialogue that comes with it. Parents and teachers also play a large role in the Peace Poetry Contest every year by encouraging their children to participate. Thank you for helping make the Peace Poetry Contest a success.

Peace Scholarship

Earlier this year, Veterans for Peace announced the annual Peace Scholarship award, a scholarship program for Alachua County high school seniors, college students, and adults who need financial support to succeed in college and who have demonstrated a commitment and leadership in activities involving peace, social justice and/or nonviolent social change.

Peace scholarship applicants were asked to provide a brief autobiographical statement and evidence of leadership and/or personal initiative in activities in an organization (including volunteer or paid work) relating to peace and social justice, conflict resolution and/or nonviolent social change. Applicants were asked to provide two letters of recommendation. VFP awarded peace scholarships to three students in the increased amount of \$1000 each. The scholarships were awarded to: *Alera Gainy, Bryanna Michel, and Lily Orton.*

Alera Gainy is a dual enrollment student at Santa Fe College and Gainesville High School's Academy of Health Professions Program. She is the president of the GHS Spanish Honors Society where she speaks out publicly against violence in schools including giving testimony about bullying at the Florida Department of Education. She plans to earn her Associates of Science in Nursing at Santa Fe College and become a doctor.

Bryanna Michel is a dual enrollment student at Eastside High School and Santa Fe College. She is majoring in biology and plans to use her degree to "continue my research about the various disparities affecting our world [including] food, medical, nutrition, health and poverty." Bryanna has volunteered at Grace Marketplace since 2015 and received a Gold Ward from the Girl Scouts for developing a tutoring program for homeless youth. She also received a Borlaug Scholarship in 2019 for bringing awareness to social disparities in Haiti.

Lily Orton is a senior at Buchholz High School. While holding down a part-time job, Lily has been active in student government as well as the Organization Days for Girls which supplies menstrual hygiene kits for girls. She will be attending the University of South Florida to earn her degree in marine biology. Her goal is to become a marine biologist who works on the conservation and rehabilitation of Florida's ecosystems and the animals that live in them.

To learn more about the VFP Peace Scholarship so you can apply next year, visit vfpgainesville.org. There you will find instructions and the scholarship application. If you have questions, contact VFP member Paul Ortiz at ortizprof@gmail.com or 831-334-0131.

Winning Poets

Grade 3

First Place – **Miko Shitama**, Jordan Glen School

Second Place – **Stanley Jose Cruz-Davis**, Jordan Glen School

Third Place – **Simka Cruz-Davis**, Jordan Glen School

Grade 4

First Place – **Noah Sorek**, Jordan Glen School

Second Place – **Moses Shitama**, Jordan Glen School

Third Place – **Averie Zappini**, Jordan Glen School

Grade 5

First Place – **Asher Case**, Jordan Glen School

Second Place – **Fisher Eakin**, Jordan Glen School

Third Place – **Esmeralda Seda**, Stephen Foster Elementary

High Honors – **Marly Spicer**, Stephen Foster Elementary

Grade 6

First Place – **Allison Waddle**, Fort Clarke Middle School

Second Place – **Jai Subramanian**, Jordan Glen School

Third Place – **Seung Soo Baik (Emmett)**, Fort Clarke Middle School

Grade 7

First Place – **Jenna Petty**, Jordan Glen School

Second Place – **Geeta Pragash**, Jordan Glen School

Third Place – **Lily Whitehurst**, Jordan Glen School

Grades 8th -11th

First Place – **Rianna Griffith**, 8th Grade, Lincoln Middle School

Second Place – **Jacob Sandor McNamara**, 11th Grade, Eastside High School

Third Place – **Lindsay Jenkins**, 11th Grade, Oak Hall

High Honors – **Abby Hall**, 10th Grade, Homeschool

Winning Poets

Grade 12

First Place – **Julia Webster**, Buchholz High School

Second Place – **Boone Schroder**, Buchholz High School

Third Place – **Brindha P. Rathinasabapathi**, Eastside High School

High Honors – **Kennedy Wade**, Buchholz High School

High Honors – **Oliver J. Scott**, Buchholz High School

High Honors – **Abby Jones**, Buchholz High School

High Honors – **MacKenzie Green**, Buchholz High School

High Honors – **Wyatt Dyke**, Buchholz High School

High Honors – **Destiny Stevens**, Buchholz High School



WAR

I hear a loud bang, then I walk out the door,
I step into chaos, breathe in ash from the war.
Innocent people are fleeing from their homes,
People are being separated because of their skin tones.
People's hearts are turning charcoal black,
From the emotions that they lack.
Our wine, red blood is now being wasted,
We're throwing out food that hasn't been tasted.
We are wasting time holding grudges against friends.
When will this cruelty come to an end?
I am waiting for the day this will finally stop.
Social justice will be back on top!

***Miko Shitama, Grade 3, Jordan Glen School,
First Place, Grade 3***

PEACE

Peace is love; Peace are doves.
Peace is when I hear the rain's pitter patter on the roof.
All of a sudden peace goes away,
I hear bang, I hear clang, I hear screaming.
The sun is not gleaming, it's dark.
I hear clang, I hear screaming,
The sun is not gleaming, it's dark.
I hear silence, the war has ended.
Some people are offended,
We have lost, they are the boss.
We don't like it, but we can't fight it.
Some people die, even though we ended it.
Know there is peace, the sun rises again.
People hug and kiss, there is peace.
We can live in peace.

***Stanley Jose Cruz-Davis, Grade 3, Jordan Glen School,
Second Place, Grade 3***

PEACE

Peace is eating, eating is fun.
I like a hot dog with a delicious bun.
But don't pollute, it's toxic.
Soon it'll turn chaotic.
Plastic is bad, it makes animals sad.
It makes animals die.
Soon the ocean will be dry.
Don't kill deer because they are the ones with fear.
It's against the law to kill, so be aware.
Be good to the Earth and nice to the trees.
Once in a while they'll give you a breeze.
Don't waste paper, energy, and don't use trucks with smoke,
Soon the whole world will be broke!

***Simka Cruz-Davis, Grade 3, Jordan Glen School,
Third Place, Grade 3***

SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

You notice a bag floating in the sea,
Should you yank it, or let it be?
You decide to leave it.
Or play with it for a bit?
But it will go back in the water, And
get eaten by a bird's daughter. What
will happen to the gull?
Will it keep eating till it is full? The
bird keeps eating plastic bags,
Then, later it starts to gag, it coughs and wretches,
And its father it fetches.
Is it time to say goodbye?
Is it going to die?
Down it lays on its bed,
Three hours later, it is dead.
Too much gas, will it pass?
Airplanes are the problem,
Just look at all of them!
It's Global Warming!
And all that heat that's forming.
Do you notice that homeless penguin?
Will he ever see his home again?

***Noah Sorek, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School,
First Place, Grade 4***

PEACE

People are fleeing from corruption and violence. The
feared sound of BANG, then silence.
They take desperate measures to get away, To
go to the free, sovereign U S of A!
Then they get here and are sent to where they started.
They go back sad and broken hearted.
Either that or they are put in cages.
Parents get separated from their children of all AGES. But
we can make some CHANGES.
LET's start by NOT putting immigrants in CAGES.
And start giving them living WAGES.
Also, let's not send them AWAY.
Because I think they should be here to STAY!

***Moses Shitama, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School,
Second Place, Grade 4***

WAR

Jewish Ghettos, barbwire fences, Hitler's army,
The world's depressing, concentration camps,
Prisoners with clamps.

World War 2, that time was blue,
Whole countries crying, so much dying.

Now the world is a better place,
Back then Hitler wanted a single race.
Blond-haired, blue-eyed, gas chambers, broken pride. We
know better than this, but the list isn't done.
9/11 wasn't a war, but there still was plenty of gore.
We've been fighting since ancient times, Not just now.
Trojans, and Greeks sure had a row.

But I guess, it's just our nature, after fighting so long
We can't help it though; we know it's wrong.
I just hope someday, we'll all get along.
Because the last thing we need is another World War!

***Averie Zappini, Grade 4, Jordan Glen School,
Third Place, Grade 4***

I STILL BELIEVE

Peace is a gift, that has not yet been given
Peace is a car, that has not yet been driven
Peace is what should end every war
Peace is what we're all looking for
Although we haven't succeeded just yet I
still believe

Peace is a contract, that has not yet been signed
Peace is a word, that has not yet been defined
Peace is what runs through you and a friend
Peace is what causes all of the suffering to end
Although peace has taken its time
I still believe

***Asher Case, Grade 5, Jordan Glen School,
First Place, Grade 5***

STAY INDOORS

If you don't stay indoors,
Then Covid-19 will spread more.

As it continues to spread,
More people are dead.

You may think being home at home is boring,
While other people in Italy are mourning.

This is not a Chinese virus as you might think,
When people say it, it's racist and stinks.

We need to spread peace and love from six feet apart,
If you are bored then maybe make some art.

If you stay indoors,
Covid-19 will be no more!

***Fisher Eakin, Grade 5, Jordan Glen School,
Second Place, Grade 5***

Peace is the world
For every young boy and girl
Why we have friends
Our hearts beat again
So stay calm,
All the bad things are gone
Peace comes early
Hate comes late,
Peace is courage,

All the Time,
Even in this little rhyme
You just need to find it in your heart
Like a sour patch kid,
Life is sour,
Then it's sweet,
So find someone else to greet
Like I said,
Peace comes early
Hate comes late,
Peace is what brings us together,
Forever and ever,
Like trees and grass,
Our teacher and class,
Life learning skills,
For fish gills,
With all these wonderful thrills
Peace is the world for us

***Esmeralda Seda, Grade 5, Stephen Foster Elementary,
Third Place, Grade 5***

PEACE POEM

From the burning and blazing flames in Australia
to the Polar bears in Antarctica
Gazing at sea floor where their hearts soon will be.
Now you see they need peace more than me,
more than us
So we will share the fairest bit peace

Now the day comes where we welcome the young, the old, the furry, the scary, To
our delightful homes we share, we give, we forgive
We love them for who they are, not who they were, not what they did or how they did it,
That's the past, this is now,
That's what makes peace.

***Marly Spicer, Grade 5, Stephen Foster Elementary,
High Honors, Grade 5***

WHY CAN'T WE BE TOGETHER?

A bird circles the body of her dead mate
Her cries sound so forlorn
“Why? Why can’t we be together?”
A polar bear mother stands over her dead cub’s body The
mother bellows to the sky
“Why? Why can’t we be together?”
A dog in a shelter is separated from her sister
She wines sadly
“Why? Why can’t we be together?”
We are separated
By fences, barriers
Why be separated
When we are so much better together?
Separated countries, territories, continents
Separated by war
We are separated
Whether we realize it or not
We are separated
But
Why can’t we be together?
That is the question the bird asks, the bear asks, the dog asks
The question that I ask
Why can’t we be together?
That is the question
Peace is the answer
Peace

***Allison Waddle Grade 6, Fort Clarke Middle School,
First Place, Grade 6***



THE UNFORTUNATE OUTBREAK

An enormous shadow rose from afar
Many people consumed by its dark

The virus sweeping the land and all its people
Leaving many to kneel and pray at their steeple

All the houses are filling with many Leaving
many businesses with only a penny

A hero has not come to beat the villain so far So
all we can do is wish to a star

But many can help like you and me
To put an end to this monstrosity

We need to be calm and stay in our homes To
connect with society, call on your phone

I love using ZOOM to see my friends
If we all do the right things, this might come to an end

***Jai Subramanian, Grade 6, Jordan Glen School,
Second Place, Grade 6***

PEACE

Peace is like broken house
If you fix some parts of the house, some parts break It
loops
If breaking continues, it will be end of the house
Also end of the world

Peace is strange
People like peace
They hate peace, too
Because they can live better when they win the fight
If this continues, it will be end of the house
Also, end of the world

***Seung Soo Baik (Emmett), Grade 6, Fort Clarke Middle School,
Third Place, Grade 6***

PEACE IN THE PANDEMIC

A global pandemic, more sick each day In
most countries people at home Losing
jobs
Scrambling to keep safe from COVID-19 that is quickly spreading across the Earth
But
In one country
Taiwan
A small nation, just 24 million
People go about their everyday
Like almost nothing changed
Hand sanitizer and temperature checks everywhere
Shop keepers and schools keep their doors open
Trains, planes, subways travel
People do what they do
“Welcome” they might say
Fever? You go into quarantine, tracked by phone
If you leave your house, the government will find you
To keep their country serene
To keep their economy strong
Take the USA for example
95 cases for every 100,000
Versus 1 case for every 100,000 in Taiwan
2 deaths for every 100,000
Compared to 0.02 death for every 100,000 in Taiwan
USA waited
Now it's out of control
Except in Taiwan
Taiwanese leading
the globe in protection by far
The communities work together
Production lines up months ago
Instead of hoarding masks, donating
Over ten million masks packed up and shipped
To places where they are most needed
While the rest of the world freaks out and panics
There is Taiwan
The peace in the pandemic

***Jenna Petty, Grade 7, Jordan Glen School,
First Place, Grade 7***

We have ruined this place, we have done so much wrong,
we are corrupt, yet Mother Earth stays strong.
We've treated this place like it is our own
When thousands of species call this planet their home.
Humans have littered the surface with an abundance of pollution,
and nobody is able to figure out a solution.
As we split apart families, as we take away lives We
ruin the place mother earth gave us to thrive. We
blindly lead her into death and decay, powerless, she
can do nothing to escape her fate. She is crying out
for anyone to see,
she is crying out for all that she needs.
She is helpless.
We have been careless.

***Geeta Pragash, Grade 7, Jordan Glen School,
Second Place, Grade 7***

THE EARTHRESTS

The busy streets now are traffic free Schools
are closed and stores are shuttered I sip my
tea
Time to reflect and be still
Will life resume someday? I
think it will
Now is time to be still
We are all in this together
As we sit on our patio in this sunny weather
Right now we work and we chill
While the Earth is at a stand still
The Sun glistening on the leaves
We will be out by summer's eve
With this pandemic, things may seem hectic
But we all are the protagonists not the menace
The people need to ban
We'll work together to create a plan

***Lily Whitehurst, Grade 7, Jordan Glen School,
Third Place, Grade 7***

CLEAN WATER

Peace is an ocean in a world thirsty for drinkable water.
It's so close yet untouched. Unfiltered, with crashing waves stronger
Than outreached hands or peaceful protests.
We're drowning in violence without enough life vests.
Dying coral reefs and impoverished communities.
Another child on the news that never had the opportunity,
To drink.
Because we didn't filter out the poverty or the gun violence,
Laid to rest with the salty aftertaste of ignorance.
And his memory and those of every fallen heart is met with blind eyes
Too scared to open them, to see the other side.
To realize that conversations can reduce pollution in our communities.
Open ears and open minds open up so many opportunities,
To drink.
For peace and for hope, evaporation of hate and ignorance.
If we listen, and truly hear one another, we all can make a difference, And
one day find a world where
We all can drink.

**Rianna Griffith, Grade 8, Lincoln Middle School,
First Place, Grades 8-11**

REFUGEE FROM DAMASCUS

The heat of the sun warms the tattered plaid that
hangs from the back of that young lad, who
warbles to passersby like a desperate bird,
clutching the shoe polish and the brush that earns him his keep,
competing amid a cacophony of cries this side of the corniche

His brother was conscripted by insurgents to fight,
lured by promises of prosperity and justice
The screams of his sisters pierced the smoke in the street
and rubble rained down upon the masked men
who stuffed him into the hold of a diesel truck en route to Beirut,
fleeing the death and destruction in Damascus

His father told him not to return without bread,
so he lies on his side in an alley behind a restaurant in Hamra.
His ears bleed onto the concrete;
he watches as a trickle scales the slope of a sewage grate,
staining bronze a stray cigarette butt in its wake

The sun hangs in the sky like fruit, elusive
as sunset gives way to the hungry, bitter night.

**Jacob Sandor McNamara, Grade 11, Eastside High School,
Second Place, Grades 8-11**

παν (all) + **δεμός** (people) = *pandemos*

Just as Plato said;
The soul, Helpless.

That's how it feels to all
Who are trained to help
But destined to fall

Against this biological wonder.
It's smart, it lives
It mutates, it gives
Our world subject to its plunder.

But the heroes, outnumbered they be
Low in supplies and spirits
But with a vision to see
They come together on the front lines
And for good, use their hands, their hearts, their minds.

Stay home for them as they stay there for us
We help as one through our community And
when our world is truly whole,
It is then we have peace in Immunity.

***Lindsay Jenkins, Grade 11, Oak Hall,
Third Place, Grades 8-11***



WHAT WORLD

What world do we live in,
Where the villain slays themselves.
Where justice is but a word,
We used to describe ourselves.

One in which we fear,
someone's around the corner.
So scared of death,
We hold guns on our shoulder.

What world is this,
where we must pray for our children
For school is a battle,
and they might become the villain.

What world do we live in,
Where love has labels.
Where people are punished
For loving who makes them stable.

What world so beautiful,
To give us love, to give us hope.
What world so cruel
to watch us burn for them to cope.

Abby Hall, Grade 10, Homeschool
High Honors, Grades 8-11

WAR OF ATTRITION

What is love?
It's the flutter in the chest when someone walks in the room
It's the pain felt when that person leaves, the strength ebbing away with each step
The smile that runs across lips when two people talk
The graze of two arms as they walk
It's the "Have a great day" as the school bus rolls away
And the hugs and chatter shared at the end of the day
It's the rings on a pair of left hands
The promises- "for better or for worse"

What is war?
It's the death of the flutter that began at the barrel of the gun
It's the pain of the bullets, in his chest and their home
The smile that runs away when men in uniform show up at the door
The graze of strange hands on black clad shoulders
In the face of a black-backdrop future with a purple ribbon silhouette It's
the uncertain "I'll see you later" as the camo packs ride away

And the silence at the dinner table at the end of the day
She wonders if the other half to their pair of left hands rings Is
 somewhere lying in the dust
The promise “for worst” coming to life as the blood mingles with the gold ring dust

***Julia Webster, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
First Place, Grade 12***

The world was once a happy place,
The Amazon rainforests teeming with life.
Plants and animals going along at their own pace,
And wildlife coexisting without any strife.

But then came the Industrial Revolution,
And that was nature took a blow.
Pollution spread everywhere, without a solution , As
humans went on with their show.

The Amazon Rainforest, once filled with trees,
Has now been destroyed out of adversity.
With less oxygen produced to fulfill our pleas,
Habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation, and loss of biodiversity

Our grasslands, for our farmlands we have chosen,
Have by our forming equipment to the ground shaven.
No grass to hold the soil creates erosion,
Nitrates and phosphates creating cultural eutrophication.

Pesticides, though with food is our assistant,
We should look at them with disdain.
DDT, very widely used, is very persistent,
Bioaccumulates and biomagnifies in the food chain.

The coral reefs, once from humans never reached, Are
now dying in an eye's blink.
The coral becomes nothing but bleached
As the ocean becomes the ultimate carbon sink.

Coal, oil, and natural gas, things we take for granted
The effects thereof we should stand in mourning.
Pollutants and greenhouse gases burning them has chanted,
As carbon dioxide contributes to global warming.

With our machines we have beaten down this poor Earth,
But us humans, right now, have a chance to learn.
Either we turn around and give this abused planet a new rebirth, Or
we keep going to the point of no return.

***Boone Schroder, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
Second Place, Grade 12***

look me in the eye, tell me everything's alright

There is a fine line between innocence and ignorance.
When an abundance of time passes,
slipping to the bottom of the hourglass,
one becomes the other.

This war-torn, weary world is
hopeless - tragedy at every turn,
and we tell ourselves
there is nothing we can do.

We turn away, blind;
like Lady Liberty, proud face pointed up at the sun;
like Lady Justice, making judgements
without looking anyone in the eyes.

Not knowing is no excuse to not
face people's pain; look them in the eye
and let love win.
Compassion is a choice of consequence.

Like a dove leaping from her perch,
white wings splayed proudly against
a clear blue sky,
just trust In your ability to try.

Love is not blind—love
is when the burden of knowledge
has settled harsh and heavy on your shoulders
but there is still sunshine

In your smile; your radiance is enough
for if there is one thing that humanity excels at it
is finding a light in the darkness
and never letting go.

***Brindha P. Rathinasabapathi, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
Third Place, Grade 12***

America
Home of the free
Where you're free to get shot for walking down the street
Where it's free to get profiled because you're wearing a hijab
Where little black girls go missing without any media coverage at all
Where a women makes 61 cents to every male dollar
Where the entitled take all and leave nothing for the rest
Oh what a place to be
America
Home of the free

***Kennedy Wade, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
High Honors, Grade 12***

War might just be evil's root
No matter the enemy, Death always wins
One person under another's boot
You atone for someone else's sins
No helping hand when you come back
Fighting for an unjust cause
The PTSD will drag you back
An injured knee wrapped in gauze
Everyone should learn today
The price of war is too much to pay

***Oliver J. Scott, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
High Honors, Grade 12***

I yearn to weep,
But tears I shed are none.
A fire burns upon my breast,
My skin boils,
Turning teardrops to air
Before healing can come.
Tar stains my hair,
Once vibrant and fruitful
now graying.
I feel as my bones deteriorate,
Melting slowly
Into an endless, darkening sea.
I cry for help,
Do you hear me?
As you tread on me
And throw at me
And tear through me?
My time is near.
How desolate you will be
To have killed your own mother,
The one whose gift
Was life.

***Abby Jones, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
High Honors, Grade 12***

INJUSTICE IN INEQUALITY

The largest injustice in the world,
has many levels, first, second, and third.
The unequal distribution of resources and wealth,
would cause many to sacrifice their health.

The rich would become richer,
and the poor would be poor and bitter.
The world is becoming more mean,
and we should do our best to make this mess clean.

Competition and capitalism create a barrier,
and they need to be extinct to make us more merrier.

***MacKenzie Green, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
High Honors, Grade 12***

What if wars were fought with paint?
Maybe something beautiful could come from it.
Instead of only red and black,
Blues, greens, and yellows would cover the land.
More would be made than would be destroyed.
What if wars were fought with paint?
More talent would be found than talent would be forgotten.
Wounds could be washed and no lives would be lost.
If only wars were fought with paint,
And the world was without conflict.

***Wyatt Dyke, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
High Honors, Grade 12***

I don't care for the gators or the city I live in
Where the words "gator bait" can easily be mistaken.
Hearing the slurs and the snickers
But instead of doing something we take it to the chin.
We need to do better.

We say it happened in the past
But if I use too much slang
Or raise my voice
I can easily be declassified
We need to do better.

Some things just won't change
First, it was fear of being beside the biggest tree,
Now, it's the fear of being in someone's gun range.
But who's to say?
We need to do better.

Constantly I'll speak my truth
Even if you don't want to hear it
Or that bothers you like a wisdomtooth
I can compare it to our youth,
Just as bad as you want that varsity letter
We need to do better.

***Destiny Stevens, Grade 12, Buchholz High School,
High Honors, Grade 12***



Thank you, teachers!

Without the teachers of Alachua County who encourage their students to participate in the contest each year, there would be no Peace Poetry Contest. Veterans for Peace would like to publicly recognize those teachers who participated this year.

Emily Monda Poe, JJ Finley Elementary

Kim Gregg, JJ Finley Elementary

Blakely Porter, Stephen Foster Elementary

Gowri Navaratnam, Jordan Glen School

Kim Smith, Jordan Glen School

Tiara Tulloch, Fort Clarke Middle School

Lynne Bramlett, Buchholz High School



*Veterans for Peace would like to specially
thank Gainesville's own
Alivia Regan Hunter,
17 year old singer/songwriter for
allowing us to use music from her past
Veterans for Peace Poetry Reading
performances in our 2020 Peace Poetry
video.*

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