

The Charlotte Jewish News Celebrating Jewish Youth Essay Contest 2023

What Is The Celebrating Jewish Youth Essay Contest?

This essay contest is an opportunity for Jewish youth from 8th-12th grade to reflect, express themselves, gain writing experience, have their essay published in a special issue of The Charlotte Jewish News, and win a \$100 Amazon gift card by writing an essay related to their Jewish experience.

How to Enter

1. There are two categories in which contestants can enter: 8th-10th and 11th-12th grades. Each category will have a first and second place winner who will be awarded a \$100 Amazon gift card and \$50 Amazon gift card respectively.
2. Students should write an essay between 500-700 words using the below prompt.
3. Essays should be sent as a text file (Word preferred) attached to an email to The Charlotte Jewish News at charlottejewishnews@shalomcharlotte.org.
4. Students should introduce themselves in their email and indicate their grade. Submissions with blank emails will be not considered. Essays submitted as links to downloads or as the body of the email will not be accepted.
5. The deadline for entry is March 20, 2023.

How Entries Will Be Judged

Entries will be judged based on content, organization, and mechanics according to the following rubric:

Content (50%)

Relevance to the theme, Comprehensiveness, Originality, Insights

Relevance to the theme — connection, significance of the issue being discussed

Comprehensiveness — how complete and detailed the writer's exposition of the topic

Originality — uniqueness, novelty and authenticity of ideas

Insights — a fresh way of looking at things, critical view of the subject

Organization (25%)

Clarity of Thoughts, Creativity, Unity and Consistency

Clarity of Thoughts — use of simple and appropriate words to convey ideas or issues.

Creativity — the use of appropriate devices and expressions in the exposition of the subject.

Unity and Consistency — ability to highlight the focal point

Mechanics (25%)

Punctuation, Spelling, Capitalization, Grammar

What to Write About

The Charlotte Jewish News “Celebrating Jewish Youth” May issue seeks to give Jewish youth an opportunity to consider and have their voices heard in matters of importance to the Jewish community today. With a historic rise in antisemitism, the conversations about how to combat antisemitism and hate are as relevant as ever. We wondered what our youth are experiencing and thinking.

Today’s students are faced with intolerance, discrimination, and hatred every day, whether first-hand or as a witness to events locally and beyond. The 2023 “Celebrating Jewish Youth” essay contest gives students an opportunity to consider how antisemitism has touched their own lives, how they have responded, and how they might respond moving forward.

Essay prompt:

Surveys have shown a disturbing rise of antisemitism nationally and locally. Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, brought the subject front and center of the public conversation with his escalating antisemitic comments and behavior in late 2022.

Consider the following and write an essay addressing your own experience related to antisemitism.

Have you changed your own behavior out of fear of antisemitism? If you have witnessed or experienced antisemitism, how did it make you feel and how did you respond? Have you been made to feel uncomfortable for being Jewish? Looking back over those experiences, would you do anything differently?

A broad interpretation of the prompt is welcome based on the student’s own experiences! Even though the prompt is written in the form of questions, we encourage students not to use a question-and-answer approach to this essay or feel the need to address each of the questions. They are meant to prompt the student to write a thoughtful essay that is relevant to themselves.

Thank you for your participation!

Shira Firestone, Editor
The Charlotte Jewish News
charlottejewishnews@shalomcharlotte.org
(704) 944-6765