



## INTERFAITH CENTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE (ICRJ)

*"... involving a community of respect and Justice"*



### 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Elementary School Oratory Contest *A Sense of Justice*

**Theme:** A Sense of Justice

**Overview:** Macomb County elementary students are invited to submit video recording of their recitation of a passage that combines a statement on voter registration from Martin Luther King, Jr. from February 1965 with an excerpt from President Lyndon B. Johnson's Special Message to the Congress on March 15, 1965 outlining his plans for supporting voting rights. Students are judged on memorization and delivery.

**Background:** Use the links provided to watch a bit about the history of voting rights in our country.

- The Voting Rights Act: 50 Years Later (The White House): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb9YymBkG80>
- A History of Voting Rights (The New York Times): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4XtZ-tlzIA>
- Bridging History: Selma and Voting Rights Act (US House): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URMb2D3kFZQ>

#### Rules and Regulations

- I. Eligibility – Elementary school students in Macomb County
- II. Time Limitation – A time limit of two minutes will be permitted for orations.
- III. Presentation of Oration
  - a. Contestant will record a delivery of the passage from memory or using notes/prompts.
  - b. Contestant will introduce herself/himself by stating in complete sentences: "Judges, Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is..."
    1. Name (first and last) and age
    2. Teacher and grade
    3. School and City
- IV. Deadline for submissions – Monday, December 5, 2016
- V. Contestants must upload a video recording of the oration to the Internet (e.g., YouTube) and email the link and contact information (name, phone number, school, teacher's name and email address) to [smcbrady@misd.net](mailto:smcbrady@misd.net).
- VI. The teacher/parent is permitted to assist the contestant during the preparation and with the video recording of the speech, however teachers/parents should avoid offering prompts and assistance in the delivery of the speech.
- VII. Contestants will be evaluated on the following criteria:
  - A. Accuracy
  - B. Composure (self-confidence, audience appeal)
  - C. Voice quality (audibility, articulation, inflection of voice)
  - D. Posture and physical dynamics (proper use of gestures)
  - E. Observance of time limit
- VIII. The decision of the judges is final.



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### Prizes

- Finalists will have their videos featured on the Macomb ISD website during 2017.
- Finalists will receive 3 tickets to the 2017 MLK Holiday Celebration on January 16, 2017.
- The winner will may deliver the passage live at the 2017 MLK Holiday Celebration.
- The winner will be featured in a press release.
- The winning student will receive a pizza party for his/her entire class at school, sponsored by the Clinton Township Cultural Diversity Committee.

**Understanding of Publication:** All contest materials are the property of the ICRJ and the MLK Holiday Celebration of Macomb County. By submitting a video, you confirm that you understand that your video, whether a winning entry or not, may be used by ICRJ in whole or in part, royalty free, in any printed or electronic media and in promotional materials, including fundraising and online publications.

### For more information, contact:

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**Passage for recital** (*adapted from Dr. King's statement in February or 1965 and President Johnson's Speech to Congress on in March of 1965*)

In 1965, Dr. King appealed to all people:

There is one blow for freedom which we must all strike together. It is the blow which racists feel at the ballot box where we all register and vote. Your vote is not a small contribution to the struggle for freedom. It is as large – as significant – as any can make. There is no short-cut to freedom, but the road is shorter through the ballot box. On behalf of those who struggle at this very moment for the freedom of us all, I ask you – register and vote.

Soon after, President Johnson delivered a special message to Congress, and said:

I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy. Our mission is the oldest and the most basic of this country: to right wrong, to do justice, to serve man.

This dignity rests on the right to equal opportunity. To deny a man his hopes because of his color or race or religion is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor those who gave their lives for American freedom. Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote.

There is no constitutional issue here. The command of the Constitution is plain.

There is no moral issue. It is wrong to deny the right to vote in this country.

There is no issue of States rights or national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights.

And we *shall* overcome.