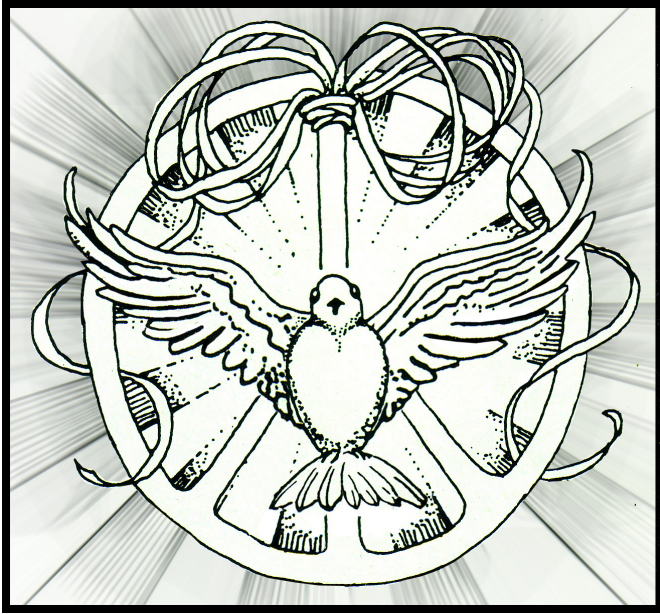


# 2013 Peace Poetry Contest



*Alachua County and  
Marion County Schools  
Grades 1-12*

Sponsored by Veterans for Peace, Gainesville Chapter









# *2013 Peace Poetry Contest*

*Alachua County and  
Marion County Schools  
Grades 1-12*

A collection of the winning poems from the fourth annual Peace Poetry Contest in Alachua County and Marion County schools, first through twelfth grades, sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter of Veterans for Peace.





The text of all the poems contained in this book are printed exactly as submitted. Do to space and color restraints, we were unable to include special illustrations and designs that accompanied poems. But you can view the originals on our website at [www.vfpgainesville.org](http://www.vfpgainesville.org).



# Acknowledgments

Veterans for Peace would first and foremost like to thank all of the participants in the 2013 Peace Poetry Contest. This year we received approximately 230 poems from students of all ages in Alachua and Marion counties with diverse interpretations of peace. Without the poetry submissions, there would be no Peace Poetry Contest and none of the dialogue that comes with it.

The purpose of the Peace Poetry Contest is to encourage young people to think about peace and describe their ideas in a creative way with no rules and no direction. The result of this process is a dialogue about peace and nonviolence that will hopefully develop into peaceful worldviews applied to real world situations when the now-young poets grow up to be the future leaders of the world.

Parents and teachers also play a large role in the Peace Poetry Contest every year by encouraging their children to participate, sometimes awarding extra credit and providing other incentives. Thank you for helping make the 2013 Peace Poetry Contest a success.

UF English professor, Dr. Sidney Wade, was integral to this year's contest as head judge of the poems. Dr. Wade also enlisted her team of graduate students to help judge the large number of submissions. Thank you to Paulette Bane, Kristen Dawes, Claire Eder, Terita Heath-Wlaz, Adam Stengel, and Ezra Stewart-Silver for your time and effort.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville has hosted the Peace Poetry Contest four years in a row now, and Veterans for Peace is grateful for their support and continued cooperation.

With the sustained support and work of everyone involved, Veterans for Peace believes the Peace Poetry Contest will continue to grow and prosper, spreading the ideal of peace to more and more people each year.

Thank you for making this year's program a success.



# Winning Poets

## *Grades 1-5*

Malaqhi Jones	7
Honorable Mention	
Murdolph Jones	7
Honorable Mention	
Ashley Wilson	7
Honorable Mention	
Sydney Millinor	8
Honorable Mention	
Viviana Goldstein	8
Honorable Mention	
Nina Zhang	9
3rd Place	
Julie Waldrop	9
2nd Place	
Caden Kresak	10
1st Place	

## *Grades 6-8*

Sophie Viviano	11
Honorable Mention	
Alex Muse	11
Honorable Mention	
Jordan Yachabach	12
Honorable Mention	
Chloey Ramsey	13
Honorable Mention	
Summer White	13
Honorable Mention	
Peyton Haug	14
Honorable Mention	
Nate Englert	15
Honorable Mention	



Kayla Barrera	14
Honorable Mention	
Brian Byrne	16
Honorable Mention	
Chris Campo	17
3rd Place	
Xylie Miller	18
3rd Place	
Aaron Stutz	19
2nd Place	
Peter Acs	20
1st Place	

## *Grades 9-10*

Christina Lauer	21
Honorable Mention	
Deja Cray	22
Honorable Mention	
Hannah Walker	23
3rd Place	
Hali Troendle	24
2nd Place	
Alice Hou	25
1st Place	

## *Grades 11-12*

Shaquille Pratt	26
Honorable Mention	
Ashley Torres	26
Honorable Mention	
Shaniqua Donley	27
Honorable Mention	
Cassidy Davis	28
3rd Place	
Brianna Sirmons	29
2nd Place	
Devon Washington	30
1st Place	







## Peace Poem

Peace is when you're alone.  
And when it is quiet and calm.  
When you have peace it is a good time to take a nap.  
Or a good time to read a book and kick back.

*Malaqhi Jones, 1st Grade, J.J. Finley Elementary School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 1-5*

## World Peace

World peace is when peace is all over the world. The name kind of gives it away. We have never had world peace, because people are always at war. War isn't peace, it's fighting and fighting is wrong. World peace will bring a lot of happiness to everyone.

*Murdolph Jones, 2nd Grade, J.J. Finley Elementary School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 1-5*

## Peace

Bells are ringing,  
birds are singing,  
there is peace on Earth today.

Peace on Earth,  
there is new birth.  
I hope there will always be peace.

*Ashley Wilson, 3rd Grade, J.J. Finley Elementary  
Honorable Mention, Grades 1-5*



## Peace

Oh Lord there is nothing like peace  
or nothing better.  
Peace is the present god  
gave us and we should cherish this with all our  
hearts.  
Peace is what raises our hearts and sets us free  
throughout our lives.  
The one thing that can help us  
stop a war the one thing we  
depend on in  
hard times.  
Even if it feels like  
you have descended to Hell peace can still  
save you. Peace can save you any where  
or anytime. When you're in trouble peace  
can still save you.  
Oh Lord there is nothing like peace  
or nothing better.

*Sydney Millinor, 4th Grade, Wiles Elementary School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 1-5*



Peace is careful and sometimes rare in your family.  
It is the time when leaves calm and wind stops blowing.  
It is very important.

*Viviana Goldstein, 3rd Grade, C.W. Norton Elementary School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 1-5*



## Nature's Peace

During the bloody war,  
I looked into the core  
of the great willow tree  
I saw a stream of light  
that looked like a blessing for me  
The birds started singing,  
the river began to bubble  
It all seemed like a  
harmony of peace  
O, the joy!  
The world gave  
Nature's peace to me!

*Nina Zhang, 4th Grade, Wiles Elementary School  
3rd Place, Grades 1-5*

## The Things I See

The smell of roses are filling the air,  
from a familiar tree I pick off a sweet  
pair. The birds are tweeting all day long,  
The birds are singing a beautiful song.  
I feel like I am falling gracefully from the air.  
It feels so cool like the wind is blowing  
my hair. When I snuggle up in my warm bed,  
then I see something floating that is red,  
then I knew it was a rose,  
because of the smell that came to my  
nose. I feel like a very nice queen, sitting  
on a throne that everyone has seen.  
Now I'm in peace.

*Julie Waldrop, 3rd Grade, J.J. Finley Elementary School  
2nd Place, Grades 1-5*



## If We Try

If there are no boundaries  
Between north and south, west and east  
And we all share the land,  
Then we can all live in peace

If we help one another  
Aid the poor, spread the feast  
And we all share Earth's goods  
Then we can all live in peace

If we can agree to disagree  
The whole world sign a treaty  
And we use words not weapons,  
Then we can all live in peace

No folded flags for mothers  
All the violence has ceased  
If we all accept our neighbors,  
Then we can all live in peace

*Caden Kresak, 4th Grade, Archer Elementary School  
1st Place, Grades 1-5*





I got shot  
I've been hit  
I've been down on my wit  
I've been poor  
I've been sad  
I've been down on my knees  
I've been pray'n to God to help me please  
I've been brave  
I've been strong  
I've been pray'n all along

*Sophie Viviano, 6th Grade, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*

## Peace

I got lucky  
A “perfect life”  
Or so they say  
But they don't know  
What's bottled up inside

I don't have peace  
I don't have love  
What do I have?  
A bunch of stuff  
Is that what I want  
No not really  
But people don't get that  
No, not anybody

*Alex Muse, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*



## A peaceful fly in the night

The sky so bright  
Just a little breeze  
A good time for a flight  
I grab my head gear  
I shall fly like a kite  
I start to takeoff  
I'll be doing this till night  
The clouds as little puff balls  
All but one in sight  
The big dark cloud starts rumbling near  
Although I am at a great height  
I can't think of what to do  
Aha now I have something is I might  
I try going up, not a chance  
I try going down finally there's a whole in sight  
I go down and around and then, I was at peace again  
Peace in the night  
I waited in my plane all day  
Then I thought "now this I might"  
I'll write a poem about peacefully flying in the night.

*Jordan Yachabach, 6th Grade, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6-8*





A brand new mother, rocking her baby softly  
“I love you,” on her last breath  
The only true peace she’s ever felt  
Her love lingering through death

Certain of joining the fight for peace  
A brand new soldier, sitting alert  
He never doubted what could happen  
But still, his blood stained the dirt

Love is patient, love is kind  
Then why is peace so fleeting?  
All the good in the world cannot go unpunished  
Every good person must take their beating

*Chloey Ramsey, 8th Grade, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*

## Safe

When you awake in the middle of the night,  
With fear seeping into your dreams,  
Palms shaking, forehead sweating,  
With memories,  
Of explosions, people dying, screams,  
Remember, you’re okay,  
You’re safe.  
You will never enter into the mouth of hell again.

*Summer White, 8th Grade, Kanapaha Middle School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*



## Peace Poem

A bullet shot near  
Rings in my ear  
Bringing stripes of pride.

As we run we bring red  
As we fight, white  
And our tears streaming blue.

Though we are gone  
Remember, with a song  
Our flag so bright and bold

Now that I am cold, stories are told  
With ease  
I am  
At peace

*Peyton Haug, 8th Grade, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*

## Peace

Something so complicated and hard to find  
Represented by a circle and a few lines  
Something thwarted by guns and mines

People pulled in by the seduction of a fight  
Only to feel immeasurable regret next night  
Always overpowered by fear and spite

Constantly in pursuit of peace  
Though we can only achieve it temporarily  
But every second devoid of blood and war  
Is without a doubt worth fighting for.

*Kayla Barrera, 8th Grade, Kanapaha Middle School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*



## Tip the Scales

War is good, some people say,  
while in the ground, their families lay.  
They talk about serenity,  
but act with utter enmity.

In the night, the bombs will fall,  
killing mother, father and child all.  
Why we do it, no one knows,  
but yet we continue exchanging blows.

How to stop it, this terrible force,  
to me, there is only one true course.  
We must use peace to save the earth,  
tip the scales, embrace life's birth.

So, tip the scales, and release the hate,  
for peace always does lie in wait.  
You know how to find it, it's in you and me.  
Just believe in peace, and you will be free.

*Nate Englert, 8th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*





## Peace Poem

As I look to the sky  
My eyes lay upon the glistening moon  
Hearing the distant cry  
For the battle will be here soon

The soft, sweet breeze  
Flowing towards the west  
Does not settle or ease  
The pain filling my chest

My life has been taken over by fear  
And my memories are now only distant dreams  
For tonight I will shed my last tear  
Over come with Satan's evil screams

Will I escape this living Hell  
or will I perish for my Country  
For if this is my last farewell  
I hope I do not leave bluntly

I wish this could all change  
As I watch the trees sway back and forth  
Though all we pay attention to is rifle range  
And how stealthily we move north

What we need is not only love  
We don't only need courage  
Not the wake up calls of the Morning Doves  
Or frantically forage

What we need is something simple  
Something easy to grant  
Something beyond any stars twinkle  
But smaller than any plant



For this divine gift  
Is not an enemy cease  
But the pain lift  
Of the great and mighty peace

*Brian Byrne, 8th Grade, Queen of Peace Catholic Academy  
Honorable Mention, Grades 6–8*

When it comes time for war,  
People must stop and think.  
Who wants it?  
Who needs it?  
Instead of debating our problems,  
A soldier bleeds it.

Why do we fight?  
Over oil,  
Over money,  
Over power.  
Since when do objects control our lives?  
Why let our lives be controlled,  
When we can save lives instead?

We may live in separate countries,  
Different continents.  
We may have different religions,  
Different beliefs.  
But aren't we all the same?  
Why don't we prove it?

End the fighting,  
End the war.  
If peace is achieved,  
The past won't matter anymore

*Chris Campo, 8th Grade, Kanapaha Middle School  
3rd Place (tied), Grades 6–8*



## Peace Within Myself

One day I'll find peace;  
At least within myself  
I'll keep a smile on my face  
And never let it fall

I'll walk with a bounce in my step  
No matter what's going on  
I'll be immune to the bustle of life,  
And just take a deep breath.

I have a river of peace that flows within me.  
Sometimes reality is like a dam.  
Blockin the peace the flows within me,  
starting as wood and growing stronger into steel.

War, fighting, death who wouldn't lose faith.  
Now matter how much flow the dam blocks  
I know I'll find peace,  
Even if I have to start with a little thing like me.

*Xylie Miller, 8th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School  
3rd Place (tied), Grades 6-8*





## Hide and Seek

Where are you?  
Where could you possibly be?

Do you hide behind the monopolies?  
Or do you sneak in the shadows of oligopolies?

Maybe you hide inside outrageous taxes,  
or slither inside the mountains of debt owed  
but never paid.

Do you bury yourself within the  
sounds of war?  
Or do you stash away in capitalism  
and communism?

Where are you?  
Why won't you show yourselves?  
Is it because you are afraid?  
Do you reside in the fear and  
superstitions between countries?

Where do you two conceal yourselves?  
Must I shout your names?  
Show yourselves tranquility and peace!  
So you can flaunt and prance  
in this world once again.

*Aaron Stutz, 8th Grade, Fort Clarke Middle School  
2nd Place, Grades 6–8*



## Peace

Peace is as smooth as jazz,  
it smells like a brilliant array of flowers.

It looks like everyone.  
from a happy student, to an elderly lady.

It tastes like the sweetest Honeysuckle flower,  
and feels like the smoothest leather.

War will tear it apart, break it down, and rot it.  
Try to keep it fresh and together.

Drive safely, talk safely, and listen carefully.  
Everybody makes mistakes, even perfect people.

Peace, a wonderful and colorful thing,  
purely indescribable and perfect.

Colorful as a bundle of circus balloons,  
and as safe as a loaded .45 caliber pistol.

No fighting, no loss, and no horror.  
Peace, a simply exquisite thought, or idea.

*Peter Acs, 6th Grade, Oak Hall Middle School  
1st Place, Grades 6–8*





## PEACEFUL PLACE

There are birds, bees and tall brown trees.  
I go and play there every day,  
And all my problems blow away.

The only one there is me.  
That's all there is I like to see.

Others say "Can we play?"  
And I say "No, go away!"

I made this place just for me,  
Just for me, so I can be free!

*Christina Lauer, 9th Grade, PACE Center for Girls  
Honorable Mention, Grades 9–10*





## PEACE OF MIND

Not knowing what you're  
Doing or who you're with  
Worries me.

It scares me to think  
Of you leaving and  
Being free.

Never saying 'I love you'  
Or 'miss you babe'  
Makes me feel like  
I'm pushing you away.

But, the day you told  
Me I had your heart  
And that you were here  
To stay made me feel  
Special in each and  
Every way.

Many people say that  
Love can make you blind,  
I say sometimes  
Love can give you  
A peace of mind.

*Deja Cray, 9th Grade, PACE Center for Girls  
Honorable Mention, Grades 9–10*



## For a Moment

Ecstatic, young children  
running free,  
hair crazy in the wind,  
their arms waving high,  
pumping with beautiful electricity.  
Gentle grins, insane smiles,  
bare feet skipping, sprinting,  
little toes innocently crunching fragile leaves.  
They gallop to the gorgeous fields ahead,  
where love and freedom and peace are wed.  
Soft blankets of green await.  
For a moment, there will be peace.  
For a lifetime, there will be love.

*Hannah Walker, 10th Grade, Newberry High School  
3rd Place, Grades 9–10*





## Peace Is a Cure for the World

Peace is the handshake between foes when the battle has ended  
When the war is over and the suffering subsided  
Peace joins those who once walked in darkness  
It creates friends out of adversaries  
Peace is a cure for the world

Peace sings a melody to the heartbroken people of the world  
The harmony of peace never diminishes  
Peace is the way of the unprejudiced  
It carries out the world's virtuous deeds  
Peace is a cure for the world

Peace will stand for the lawful and never fall for the unjust  
Inviting the world and turning down not one person  
Peace sings the words of the people  
It substitutes anger and hatred with love  
Peace is a cure for the world

Peace is a gentle stream flowing in a sound and steady course  
Picking up societies like a river picks up silt  
Peace is a waterway that flows through our souls  
It is a medicine for our bodies  
Peace is a cure for the world

*Hali Troendle, 10th Grade, Forest High School  
2nd Place, Grades 9–10*





When a voice can influence a mind,  
And not be judged by the gender of the speaker,  
And not be judged by the color of the speaker,  
We will be free.

When a couple can show their affection through marriage,  
And not be judged by their infatuations,  
And not have others judge about their rights over marriage,  
We will be free.

When we can step outside our door,  
And not be scared to run back,  
And not be scared that we are living in a world where danger lies  
close to home,  
We will be Free.

When nations can stop their wars,  
And not attack those who are different,  
And not attack other forms of government because they are different,  
We will be free.

When we can accept the world and people for who they are,  
And not be separated by physical appearance  
And not be separated by wealth  
And when we can call ourselves, together as one, the people,  
We will be Freed.

*Alice Hou, 10th Grade, Eastside High School  
1st Place, Grades 9–10*





## Peace

Peace is the marriage of people and the planet with all attendant races.

Peace comes from being able to contribute the best that we have,  
And all that we are, toward creating a world that supports everyone;  
But it is also securing the space for others to contribute the best  
that they have

And all that they are.

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.

*Shaquille Pratt, 12th Grade Eastside High School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 11–12*

## PEACE

I find peace in silence.  
There's peace when I sleep.  
It's peaceful at night,  
    on cold days with no crickets singing.  
There's peace in death.  
I can imagine sleeping peacefully,  
    not ever being disturbed.  
I hear peace in the howling of  
    The wind at night.  
There's peace in a cat's purr  
    when they rub on your face.  
I find peace when I'm alone.  
There's peace in nothing.  
There's peace in abyss.

*Ashley Torres, 11th grade, PACE Center for Girls  
Honorable Mention, Grades 11–12*



## PEACE!

Sitting on the dock  
Looking out into the deep sea  
Birds flying, the sun's beaming,  
Waters washing onto the reef.  
I look over my head  
And I see color.  
Blue!  
And white like puddles  
The wind is piercing through  
My face. It's refreshing  
It looks like the birds  
Are having a race.  
I love coming onto the reef  
It clears my mind and I  
Have so much Peace.

*Shaniqua Donley, 12th Grade, Eastside High School  
Honorable Mention, Grades 11-12*





## PEACE

There's nothing more peaceful than a day at the lake  
Like the keys to the city  
There is nothing more pretty  
The sun beats on my skin  
Sand pushing through my toes  
Nothing but time  
Nowhere to go  
Hop on the boat  
A dip in the lake  
No worries or concerns  
Until after summer break  
Stay a week or two  
As long as it takes  
Water lapping on the shore  
Riding a board across the wakes  
This is my home  
This is where I'd love to stay  
A nice peaceful lullaby  
Of a long lazy day

*Cassidy Davis, 11th Grade, Forest High School  
3rd Place, Grades 11-12*



## A Mug of Tea

Peace exists in many forms  
Which everyone sees differently-  
“No more war!” is the shouted norm  
But I think peace is a mug of tea-

Its best served warm, and sweet and flavored  
And you can't help but share-  
This calming thing you've come to savor  
With those for whom you care-

Whenever you share both tea and peace  
It warms you to the bone-  
Especially when the world is cold  
And makes you feel alone-

I don't think everyone on Earth agrees  
On just what peace exactly means-  
And truly there is no wrong answer  
But I believe peace is a mug of tea.

*Brianna Sirmons, 11th Grade, Forest High School  
2nd Place, Grades 11-12*



## Flames of Peace

Peace is like a blossoming tree  
Its petals dancing hand-to-hand with the wind, unbound and free.  
Peace is like the first sunset  
When the earth and heavens at last connects.  
Peace is like an eternal flame  
That is fueled by all the hopes and dreams of those who are truly  
willing to believe.  
Peace at times may seem distant, but not unreachable.  
Through the depths of war it remains untouchable.  
Peace is possible as long as we stand by it;  
The flames of peace will forever burn bright  
As long as our hearts are there to light it.

*Devon Washington, 12th Grade, Eastside High School  
1st Place, Grades 11-12*





*Veterans for Peace would  
like to specially thank the  
musicians who performed  
at the 2013 Peace Poetry  
Contest!*

**Lindzi Ferguson, Vocalist**

*(recommended by Gainesville Academy of Art and Music)*

**Terrance Williams, Vocalist**

*(of Eastside High School)*

**Keith Peters, Guitarist**

**THINKING ABOUT THE MILITARY?  
MAKE AN  
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ADVICE FROM VETERANS  
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**Gainesville**



**Chapter 14**



If you'd like to support the Peace Poetry Contest 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!







