

2017 Human Rights Creative Expression Contest

Official Entry Form

DEADLINE FOR THE 2017 CONTEST IS 5PM ON TUESDAY 28, FEB. 28, 2017
at the Beaverton City Hall (Bvtn Bldg at The Round) Human Resources Department.

Student Name: MATTHEW GROH

(Please note that each participant must fill out a form. Please attach all forms to the entry being submitted.)

Parent/Guardian Name: Kim Groh

Address: 12558 SW Bridgeview Ct. Tigard, OR

Phone: 503-887-4953

Email: mgroh@vcstudent.org

School: VALLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Teacher name and email: MARTY KARLIN, mkarlin@valleycatholic.org

Grade Level: 11

Name or Title of Entry: Acceptance and Human Rights

Where did you hear about this Contest? TEACHER

Did you use the QR (smart) code on a flyer to reach the CEC webpage? NO

My signature indicates that I understand that all entries will be displayed publicly for up to one year. I also agree that if I am a winner/runner-up, my name, school's name, winning entry and photo may be published in local newspapers and other media, and on the City of Beaverton website.

Entries can be picked up from the Human Resources Dept. at City Hall in June 2017.

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| <u>Matthew Groh</u> | <u>3/1/17</u> | <u>Marty Karlin for Kim Groh</u> | <u>3/1/17</u> |
| Student signature | Date | Parent/Guardian signature | Date |

Please attach this completed form *securely* to your Human Rights Essay Contest entry. Thanks!

Acceptance and Human Rights

Acceptance and human rights are topics that are constantly debated today. What qualifies as a human right? What measures should be taken to ensure human rights and acceptance are protected? What role should the government play in protecting human rights? Today, things accepted as human rights include freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to assemble. In terms of acceptance, it is widely considered that we should accept all people into our society--no matter their race, gender, religion, or sexuality--and not condone harmful actions directed at towards them. Sadly, this is not reality. We see crimes and other hateful acts directed at blacks, Jews, Muslims, gays, and other groups every day. Though it was not tied with any of these groups, I have my own personal experience with these types of harmful actions.

When I was in middle school, I went to Sunday School at my church. It was not particularly exciting, and I eventually fell into the same pattern of going through the motions every week, but one thing stuck out to me. There was a boy in the grade above me that was different from the rest. He had a mental illness that caused him to not really have a "filter" in his mind. He would often say whatever was on his mind and he did not really know when to stop talking. Now the people at my church were not particularly mean to him, but they did often ignore him whenever he attempted to start a conversation. It attributed to a bit of a stigma that he was the weird kid, and that because of his disability, no one wanted him to be around. Unfortunately, I was part of the unaccepting crowd from time to time, and although it never seemed to particularly bother him, I still felt bad about ignoring him because everyone has been in that situation before. Even if you do not suffer from a mental illness, there has been a time where you do not know anyone around you, whether it is at school or on a sports team or another

social situation, and you have to try to make new friends. I look back on those times in Sunday School and think about how I should have acted differently. I should have had the courtesy to talk to him and be his friend, as well as encouraging those around me to do the same, because that was all he wanted. If I had put myself in his shoes, I would have understood what he was feeling and taken the initiative to be friendly.

You may believe that there will never be a time where everyone will be accepted as equal and will have access to basic human rights, but I choose not to believe that. I think we as a society can change our ways of treating those around us, and all it takes is putting ourselves in their situation. If we do this, we can begin to understand how their life is and what they have to go through, and maybe then we will realize that we are not too much different from them. Some of these extremely awful stereotypes and generalizations may disappear, and once they do, we will see everyone as equal, and we as a planet can move together towards ensuring acceptance and human rights for all.