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Holocaust center hosts art, writing competition for high schoolers

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(Photo: Holocaust Memorial Center)

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus is hosting the return of the Kappy Family Anne Frank Art & Writing Competition. The theme of the second annual competition is “The Power of Hope.”

The competition is open to students in grades 9-12 in Oakland and Macomb counties. The prompt for this year’s competition, intended to inspire a response in the form of art and writing submissions, is a quote by Anne Frank: “Where there’s hope, there’s life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again.”

The entry deadline is Monday, April 9.

There is a compelling reason the Kappy family supports the competition. Garry Kappy is the last surviving member of his family. Born in Opatow, Poland, Kappy was imprisoned in different labor camps when he was age 15. He survived the horrors of the Buchenwald and Auschwitz concentration camps. While Kappy recognizes the importance of memorializing the victims of the Holocaust, he felt it was crucial to educate and help prevent future genocides. It was this inspiration that led to the competition.

Kappy’s son Irvin said “the competition has confirmed to my father and family that engagement and education of well-meaning individuals is still the best way to combat hatred and future genocides.”

Reflecting upon last year’s submissions, Irvin added that the students “portray their own experiences with discrimination and are inspired by the heroes that have shaped their lives, creating pieces that reflect their hope for a better future and an abiding faith in the goodness of human nature.”

The competition includes three art categories: drawing, painting and photography. Submissions must be two-dimensional and not exceed 18 inches by 24 inches. Art submissions must be submitted on black or white mat board and accompanied by a 150- to 200-word artist statement.

Writing submissions must fall into one of three categories: poetry, fiction or non-fiction. These entries may not exceed three single-spaced pages and must be submitted electronically as .doc or .docx files. All entries must be submitted by April 9; writing submissions must be emailed to competition@holocaustcenter.org by 11:59 p.m. April 9; art submissions must be postmarked on or prior to April 9.

“Governor Snyder signing a law requiring Michigan public school students in grades 8-12 receive education in the Holocaust and other genocides has made a tremendous impact in enlightening our youth,” said Robin Axelrod, the center's director of education. “The Kappy Family Anne Frank Art & Writing Competition is a wonderful opportunity for teens to use their individual creative expression to convey the lessons learned during their classroom instruction. Submissions from the first year’s entrants were inspiring and thoughtfully crafted. We look forward to seeing how the students will interpret this year’s theme into original art and writing entries.”

Local teachers experienced first-hand the impact the competition had on students who participated last year.

“I have never been so touched by the message and feeling behind a competition. (The competition) was a celebration of life and diversity, empowering students to share their talents and thoughtfulness about a very relevant and important topic, expressing their personal interpretations of the power of one,” said Kimmi Dukes, art teacher at Harrison High School in Farmington Hills.

First-, second- and third-place prizes will be awarded in each of the categories. First place will receive \$250, second \$125 and third \$75. In addition, the teacher and school of all first-place winners will receive a \$200 Amazon gift card. Following the May 17 award ceremony, winning artwork will be displayed in a gallery at the Holocaust Memorial Center and the writing will be printed in a booklet.

For additional information, competition rules and guidelines and to access the submission form, go to www.holocaustcenter.org/competition or contact Aliza Tick at 248-553-2400, ext. 141.