



We Choose All of Us

We are a people who choose
 A world where everyone is valued
 where everyone is safe
 where everyone can thrive.
 A world where love is love and kindness
 is everything.
 Nothing less than this.
 Every day we choose love
 and in this love everyone
 belongs to beloved community.
 Everyone.

9th Annual **Stories of Transformation** Writing Challenge Themes and Rules

Idaho middle school/junior high and high school students are invited to enter the 2017 **Stories of Transformation Writing Challenge**. We believe the six themes - We Choose All of Us, Belonging to Beloved Community, Restoring Wholeness, Our Spirit, and Our Humanity, Together We are Stronger, Living in Abundance and Harmony, and Earth is Sacred, Water is Life - will move us into a future narrative now where everyone is valued, everyone is safe, and everyone can thrive.

Themes

1. We Choose All of Us: We Choose All of Us is a (r)evolution for humanity, a time to plant and nurture the seed that reconnects us to us.

Get started! We Choose All of Us is about our deepest values, our connection to the world and to each other, about love and resilience, about seeing each other's whole selves, and valuing that wholeness. It is about choosing to act and living into these values. We hope for radical empathy and a world where love is love and kindness is everything.

Time to write:

- What does We Choose All of Us mean to you?
- Describe what it looks like when you choose to see someone's full humanity.
- What does it feel like when someone chooses to understand and celebrate all of you?
- Can you remember and describe a time when you experienced this?

2. Belonging to Beloved Community: Building Beloved Community is a choice to recognize everyone's inherent value.

Get started! Write about how we can authentically be ourselves, whole and complete human beings that are not restricted by assumptions, stereotypes or biases based on gender or any identity. When you feel recognized and valued, does that make it easier for you to share that same compassion with others?

Time to write:

- Reflect on a time when you knew you belonged, unconditionally. What made this belonging possible?
- Describe why gender stereotypes are meaningless.
- Describe a day with no assumptions, stereotypes, or biases based on gender or any identity. What do you see/hear/notice instead?

3. Restoring Wholeness, Our Spirit and Humanity: We understand the connections between mind, body, and spirit.

Get Started! Drawing from wisdom passed through generations, we gather the strength to carry out our sacred responsibility to care for one another and the Earth. Take several minutes to “time travel” to this place. Is this world something that only exists in your imagination or have you experienced it in some way in the present?

If you've seen glimmers of this world, what could you do to fully realize it? What needs to happen? What is it like once you're there?

Time to write:

- In your own experience, how would you describe sacred?
- Reflect on a time, place, or relationship that felt sacred to you. What made this sacred and why?



Storm

Statistics show	ripping houses from
that people	their foundations.
heed hurricane	Do not mistake my
warnings less often	passion for violence,
when the storm has	my eye is still calm,
a name like Florence,	but I am not afraid to
Irene or Hazel,	raise my voice,
even when they	to howl, to roar.
rain destruction.	They will listen.
My voice is the wind,	I will make them
Sixty miles an hour	listen.
tearing down trees,	

Linnea Boice

Boise High School
Jennifer McClain – Teacher

North Fremont High School – 2017 ChalkHeArt Award

Artists: Alexa Shepherd, Abigail Ayers and Kodie Hooper – Teacher: Janine Davidson

4. Together We are Stronger: By repairing past and current harms in our communities, we bring new possibility to the future.

Get Started! Who or what shaped you? When you think about what shaped you and where you came from, what is the story you tell? How do the stories of our ancestors inform who we are? How do the stories of your ancestors – known and unknown – inform who you are?

Sometimes the stories that formed us can be painful or scary to think about. How do we and our communities heal from those stories? How do we tell our story and let the page bear the weight of it? What are the healing stories? If you could talk to your ancestors, what questions would you ask them? What would you want to know?

Time to write:

- Who are your people? What is the past, present, and future story of your people? All of your people?
- Write a story about healing from harm from the ways we have dehumanized communities.
- Our culture devalues and dehumanizes people based on their identities. How has this shaped us? What would it take to create communities that value each and every person?
- Write a letter to an ancestor or to one of your descendants

5. Living in Harmony and Abundance: We live knowing that none of us can thrive until all of us thrive.

Get started! Guided by cooperation, equity, and sustainability, our needs for food, clean air and water, education, healthcare, space, and time can be met when we make choices for the mutual well-being of people and the planet. Think about a time when you experienced abundance, when you had what you actually needed (versus want). Can you imagine a place where everyone has that same feeling of abundance, where everyone has what they need (versus want)? When you imagine what it looks like to come from a place of abundance, what do you see? How does it change the world around you?

Time to write:

- What is a gift that you bring to others naturally just by being yourself? What is a story of sharing your gift in community/family?
- Write about a time when you had (or witnessed) a feeling of abundance and small daily acts of interdependence in a group or community.



6. Water is Life, Earth is Sacred: By reconnecting to ourselves and to our sense of place, we restore our relationship with each other and with the Earth.

Get Started! Imagine the roots underneath a tree, and imagine those roots stretching out and connecting to others beneath the earth. Now imagine you are the tree and your roots are stretching far beyond yourself. What do they touch?

When you imagine the parts of you that could change the world for the better, describe what you feel. Is that self any different than the way you are now? What keeps you from being that person fully? Once you've imagined this self, put it in conversation with the world outside. What does it say?

Time to write:

- What place in nature — a body of water, a forest, a mountain, a desert, etc. — do feel most connected to, and why?
- Where in the natural world do you feel whole? Tell the story of this place.
- Who is the earth? Write a persona poem answering that question.
- Who is water? What happens when you personify water? Use all of your senses to explore and understand the sacredness of water.

Rules

How does it work?

Create an original poem or story! Writing must be 75 words or less (title does not count) of an original work related to one of the six themes.

You can submit up to three poems or stories. Write in the language where you can best express yourself.

Over 100 poems or essays will be selected for each of the middle school/junior high and high school books that are creative and capture the spirit of one of the themes.

Who is eligible?

Student authors should be in Idaho middle school/junior high school or high school - public, private, alternative school settings, or youth groups.

Deadline

Deadline for submission is midnight Friday, December 15th, 2017

Awards

- \$100 awarded to the top 10 selections for middle school/junior high school and the high school categories.
- \$25 will be awarded for each of the 100 or more of the top writings selected for publication for the middle school/junior high school and the high school books to be released in February 2018.
- All published works will list the author, teacher, and school. A book of the published works will be distributed to Idaho's secondary schools. Make sure your school is represented! Published students will be invited to share their writing at the Stories of Transformation on April 5, 2018 in Boise, Idaho.

How to Enter by Friday, December 15th

- 1) Log on to www.ourgenderrevolution.org and enter your submission online, or
- 2) Mail your writing submission, name, address, cell phone number, school name, grade, and teacher's name to: Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, Linen Building, 1402 W. Grove Street, Boise, ID 83702

Questions?

Contact Jennifer at jenniferm@engagingvoices.org at the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence.

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We are a people who choose
A world where everyone is valued
where everyone is safe
where everyone can thrive.
A world where love is love and kindness is everything.
Nothing less than this.
Every day we choose love
and in this love everyone belongs to beloved
community. Everyone.

We are whole human beings,
we believe in our collective humanity and our deep
connections to all living things, to air, water, fire, and
earth that sustain us.
In our wholeness we are many branches of one family,
one community, one people with many roots.
We are those who no longer remain in physical form,
and those who do not yet exist in body,
the fallen trees and dried rivers, the dandelion seeds
who have yet to sprout.
We will create the world we want to see and
move forward with courageous love
and mutual responsibility.

We are all part of this story.
We believe in the power of what we speak and sing,
in connection, in transformative conversations.
We choose to tell the whole story,
in all its pain, fear, and poison,
healing the wounds that constrain our dreams.
We believe listening will transform hearts and minds,
cultures and systems.

When believe when we imagine together, we can
achieve the unimaginable.
Together, we can change everything.
We commit to bringing forth a world rooted in
interdependence, resilience, and regeneration.
We commit to weaving together our stories
and our hearts.
We commit to finding our way back to our ancestors,
ourselves, and each other;
through kindness,
through strength,
through community,
and through love.
We will value and respect each other.
We will see our interconnectedness
and honor our differences.
We will celebrate each other and listen deeply;
hear and be heard.
When we are struggling, we will struggle together
to become a part of something bigger than ourselves.
We will live into this new story.
With sacred responsibility, in silence,
We look to the stars for lessons of interconnection,
And abiding spirit.
We believe in the wonder of what wholeness can look
like; the small glimmers of this place, first; and then
the soft voice, growing stronger and clearer, until this
world is fully realized.
Our choices have power.
We will be bold.
We invite you in.
We choose all of us.