



**Contest Open to 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Graders  
in public, parochial, private or home schools or youth programs**

**Topic – Homelessness: What does it mean to you? How has it touched your life? What are your ideas about how to assist our homeless neighbors here in Westchester County?**

**Why Lifting Up Westchester is sponsoring this contest and why we have selected this topic.**

On any given night in Westchester County, one of the wealthiest areas in the country, approximately 1,750 people are homeless – 655 of them children. If we add those students whose families are “doubled up” living with relatives or living in other temporary accommodations – the number of homeless children in our County is closer to 2,800 according to data collected by Southern Westchester BOCES.

An educated community is essential to dispel misconceptions about poverty and homelessness and to cultivate empathy and respect for those in our community who are experiencing homelessness. We hope that by sponsoring a contest for 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders more youth—their parents – will learn more about this important issue and start thinking about what we all can do to start reducing the problem.

The contest has been funded in loving memory of Beth Massey Rubens, a long-time Scarsdale resident and a lifelong teacher, tutor and mentor with a particular love for language arts.

#### **About Lifting Up Westchester**

Lifting Up Westchester serves homeless men, women and children and others in need by providing them with emergency food and shelter, pathways to employment, permanent housing and other support so that they can achieve greater self-sufficiency. In 2016, we provided shelter to more than 1,300 homeless adults and served more than 100,000 meals through our soup kitchen, shelters and other homeless programs. Our housing programs helped homeless individuals find stable housing and maintain that housing through ongoing financial and case management support. Our youth programs work with hundreds of homeless children every year to help them be the first in their families to go to college and the last to live in poverty.

## How the Contest Works

- Any student in grades 7 through 12 who is a Westchester County resident is eligible to participate in the contest regardless of where he or she attends school.
- Essays are due on **January 31<sup>st</sup> by 5 pm** and must be submitted in PDF format via email to [2018EssayContest@LiftingUpWestchester.org](mailto:2018EssayContest@LiftingUpWestchester.org)
- Student's name, grade, school and contact information (email, telephone number and mailing address) must be included at the top of the essay.
- Essays must be the original work of the student
- Essays must be between 750 and 1000 words and be formatted in Times New Roman 12 point
- **Students need not have personally experienced homelessness to participate** however students are welcome to include references to their own personal experience, interaction with homeless individuals, or volunteer work

Parental or guardian consent will be required as submission constitutes consent for publication by LUW of the essay submitted, student's name and photograph.

(A copy of the release is attached and also available at [bit.ly/essayreleaseform](http://bit.ly/essayreleaseform))

- Winner(s) will be announced on March 15, 2018
  - Essays will be judged by grade groups as follows:
    - 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
    - 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade
    - 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - There will be three prizes for each grade group:
    - First Prize     \$500
    - Second Prize   \$250
    - Third Prize     \$100
  - Each grade group will have a panel of 3 to 5 judges from the community who will evaluate the essays based on:
    - Quality of written expression (style, word choice, organization, grammar, spelling and punctuation)
    - Effectiveness of argument (is the essay focused, purposeful, does it build a logical coherent argument)
    - Depth of understanding and appreciation of the issue of homelessness (does the essay demonstrate more than a superficial knowledge of some aspect of homelessness)
    - Creativity and practicality of proposed solutions
- Award ceremony to be held in the spring of 2018 at a date and location to be announced.

## Questions?

Email: [2018EssayContest@LiftingUpWestchester.org](mailto:2018EssayContest@LiftingUpWestchester.org)



## Publicity Release

I hereby give my permission to Lifting Up Westchester and any of its affiliates or subsidiaries, to use the written work I submit to the Lifting Up Westchester First Annual Essay Contest, my identity, my likeness, alone or with others, by means of photograph, video or other medium chosen by Lifting Up Westchester for use in promotional materials or publicity. I understand my written work, my identity and/or my likeness may appear in internal publications or external publicity, including, without limitation, promotional audio/visual presentations, print media and use on Lifting Up Westchester website, social media, newsletters or annual report.

I agree that I shall have no right of approval or claim to compensation, including any claims for libel, defamation or invasion of privacy, arising out of any use described herein. I agree that Lifting Up Westchester shall own all images taken by it or its representatives. I have given this release without any prior payment or promise of payment or compensation and without expectation by me of payment or benefit in return.

I have read this agreement and I fully understand it. This permission shall be binding on me and my heirs, legal representatives and assigns.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian's name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_