

AUSD Launches Season for Nonviolence Activities

Every year, AUSD participates in the Season for Nonviolence, a 64-day event that seeks to raise awareness of the philosophy and potential of attaining peace through nonviolent action. Celebrated by countries around the world, the event honors legendary pacifists such as Mahatma Gandhi, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama.

Here in AUSD, we acknowledge and celebrate the Season for Nonviolence with daily readings and quotes about peace in our classrooms, as well as readings at our bi-weekly Board of Education meetings. We also post the daily readings on our home page and via our social media platforms. (The readings are also shared at bi-weekly City Council meetings.)

Individual school campuses also hold activities. ASTI, for instance, has held an annual schoolwide Season for Nonviolence speech contest since 2011. All 9th and 10th graders write and perform a speech in English and/or Social Studies classes; 11th and 12th graders are also invited to participate. Eight to ten finalists are selected to compete at the school level.

“Black History Month is the perfect season for non-violence activities, as we discuss quotes from important figures like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi,” notes Elvis Obiorah, a sophomore at the school. “My favorite quote was from Bob Marley: ‘The greatness of man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.’ These activities have helped me to be more thoughtful in my actions.”

For the last three years, 5th graders at Edison Elementary School have embarked on community service projects during the Season for Nonviolence. This year they twice went to the Alameda County Community Food Bank in Oakland and worked a three-hour shift bagging apples, oranges, and pears for distribution. While there, the students “also got a chance to learn about food insecurity in Alameda County and about how the Food Bank works, and they were able to tour the

2019 SEASON FOR NONVIOLENCE
STUDENT SPEECH CONTEST

Saturday, March 16
City Hall Council Chambers
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda

Envisioning Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "beloved community" in Alameda

Finalists from Middle Schools and High Schools in Alameda compete. Speeches are 3-5 minutes on BELOVED COMMUNITY and must include a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, Mahatma Gandhi, or a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Participating schools may send up to 3 finalists for each of the contest categories. Finalists must be submitted to Ana Bagtas at abagtas@alamedaca.gov by **March 8**.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONTEST: 10AM-12PM
\$150-1st Place
\$100-2nd Place
\$75-3rd Place
\$50-4th Place

HIGH SCHOOL CONTEST: 1PM-3PM
\$250-1st Place
\$200-2nd Place
\$150-3rd Place
\$75-4th Place

ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

EVERYONE BELONGS HERE
QUESTIONS? Call Ana Bagtas at 510-747-6883, e-mail abagtas@alamedaca.gov

Rotary Club of Alameda
AUSD
ALAMEDA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Excellence & Equity For All Students

Kids need us. Make Time.

facilities, including walking through an enormous freezer!" says Kate Rome, a parent volunteer at Edison. "All together, they bagged 21,116 pounds of produce, which makes 16,501 meals!"

To make the experience even more meaningful, a group of Edison parents gave a workshop before the students began volunteering to talk about community service, community organizing, and food banks. The parents organized a second workshop after the volunteering sessions so that students could reflect on the experience and document future community service ideas. "We are so thrilled at the hard work and interest of the 5th graders and hope that this service learning will be part of their thinking as they move forward to middle school," Rome added.

And every year our community holds a speech contest for middle and high schoolers. This year's speech contest will be held on Saturday, March 16 in City Hall. The assigned theme is "Envisioning Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'beloved community' in Alameda." Speeches should be three to five minutes long and must include a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, Mahatma Gandhi, or a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The contest is sponsored by the Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth, and their Families, the Rotary Club of Alameda, and AUSD.

Of course, although the Season for Non-Violence technically only runs until April 4, here at AUSD we hope that we remember, use, and reflect on these powerful words and ideas throughout the year to provide safe, inclusive, and welcoming schools and help build a safe, inclusive, and peaceful community. "These principles and qualities that we discuss during this season are core to our work as public educators," says Superintendent Sean McPhetridge. "More and more research shows that we cannot help students reach their fullest academic, professional, and emotional potential without modeling and teaching them about respect, empathy, integrity, fairness, and justice. This is as much a part of our work as teaching them to read, write, and do arithmetic."