Dear Educators and Youth-Serving Organizations,

Lake County Rising is pleased to announce that it is once again hosting a youth contest as part of Lake County Rising, an annual program which seeks to end violence against women in all its forms.

Students in middle school are encouraged to submit original art work creations. High school students have an opportunity to submit original work in the following categories:: art, essay, or poetry.

Attached please find details for each of the contest categories as well as an entry form. Please share this information with the young people in your sphere of influence. In past years, teachers and youth organizers have found ways to integrate the activity in lessons including English and social studies/government. It has also been a catalyst for discussing and encouraging community/civic engagement.

Please feel free to contact us at LakeCountyRising@gmail.com if you have concerns or questions. The deadline for submissions is January 19th, 2026. Contest winners will be contacted by February 2nd and are encouraged to attend the Lake County Rising program scheduled for February 9th, 2026 from 6 PM to 7:30 PM at the College of Lake County.

Sincerely,

Lake County Rising Planning Team
Jennifer Couty, Chairperson

Lake County Rising brings our community together to raise awareness about the abuse women and girls experience and to take a stand to end it. Inspired by One Billion Rising—a global movement started by the playwright formerly known as Eve Ensler—this event is about rising in solidarity and taking action.
A big part of the event is the youth contests, where young people can speak up, share their creativity, and help end gender-based violence.

The theme for 2026 is:

“Reclaim. Resist. Rise.”
Against abuse. Against toxic norms. For every girl’s right to be real.

Essay entries should be 500 words or less, double-spaced, and connect to the theme—what it means to you, why it matters, or how it influences society.

Poem entries will be judged on originality, creativity, and artistic quality. Any style is welcome (except block or blackout poems), and they should connect to the theme. Poems should not be longer than two pages.

Poster entries must be original artwork and can use any medium—paint, crayons, digital, handwriting, etc.—just avoid stereotypical or harmful images of domestic violence, like bondage.

Submit your project and waiver form to lakecountyrising@gmail.com by Monday, January 19, 2026. You’ll get an email when your entry is received. Winners will be notified by February 2, 2026, and invited to share their work at Lake County Rising 2026 on February 9 at the College of Lake County, Grayslake Campus, from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m.

Lake County Rising Entry Form
Essay, Poem, and Poster (Art) Contest

_____

Student name (First and last name)

_____

Student email address

_____

School name

_____

Grade and age

_____

Parent/Guardian name (first and last name)

_____

Parent/Guardian email address

_____

Parent/Guardian phone number

_____

Parent/Guardian mailing address

Release/Waiver

By signing this form, I give permission to publish the name, school, grade, and age of the student submitting an entry. I also give permission to the Lake County Rising committee to publish any portion of the poem or essay, including publishing the entire submission. If submitting artwork, I agree to allow its display at Lake County Rising. If I am selected as the winning poem or essay, I agree to read it during the Lake County Rising event. I have read this agreement and understand it.

_____

Student Signature and Date:

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date:

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A big part of the event is the youth contests, where young people can speak up, share their creativity, and help end gender-based violence.

The theme for 2026 is:

“Reclaim. Resist. Rise.”
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For every girl’s right to be real.

Middle School poster entries must be original artwork and can use any medium—paint, crayons, digital, handwriting, etc.—just avoid stereotypical or harmful images of domestic violence, like bondage.

Submit your project and waiver form to lakecountyrising@gmail.com by Monday, January 19, 2026. You’ll get an email when your entry is received. Winners will be notified by February 2, 2026, and invited to share their work at Lake County Rising 2026 on February 9 at the College of Lake County, Grayslake Campus, from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m.

Lake County Rising Entry Form
Poster (Art) Contest - Middle School

_____

Student name (First and last name)

_____

Student email address

_____

School name

_____

Grade and age

_____

Parent/Guardian name (first and last name)

_____

Parent/Guardian email address

_____

Parent/Guardian phone number

_____

Parent/Guardian mailing address

Release/Waiver

By signing this form, I give permission to publish the name, school, grade, and age of the student submitting an entry. I also give permission to the Lake County Rising committee to publish any portion of the poem or essay, including publishing the entire submission. If submitting artwork, I agree to allow its display at Lake County Rising. If I am selected as the winning poem or essay, I agree to read it during the Lake County Rising event. I have read this agreement and understand it.

_____

Student Signature and Date:

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date: