



Essay Contest • Concurso de redacción



4th Annual SCLC & MIRA Unity Conference

4^a Conferencia de Unidad de SCLC y MIRA



Building Bridges Through Diversity: One Goal, One Vision, United Power

December 3-5, 2009 • 3-5 de diciembre de 2009

Cabot Lodge Millsaps • 2375 North State Street • Jackson, Mississippi

Rules, Eligibility and Prizes

You must be between 12 years and 18 years of age, a resident of Mississippi, and enrolled in, or graduating from a Mississippi school to participate in the 2009 SCLC & MIRA Unity Conference Essay Contest. All prizes are subject to sufficient eligible Essay Contest entries. Every participant will be recognized at the 4th Annual Unity Conference in Jackson, Mississippi. Prize winners must be able to appear in person to receive their monetary awards at a Conference Dinner on Friday, December 4, 2009, at 6 p.m., in Jackson. There are two divisions in this essay contest: Middle School and High School. Participants in the High School Division can submit either a written or a video essay. The written essay and video essay contests will be judged in separate categories.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION (6th-8th Grade) – Written Essay Only

Place	Prizes	Maximum Number of Winners
1st	***\$100.00 Savings Bond	One Winner
2nd	***\$75.00 Savings Bond	One Winner
3rd	***\$50.00 Savings Bond	One Winner
4th	***\$25.00 Savings Bond	One Winner

HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION (9th-12 Grade) – Written and Video essays

Place	Prizes	Maximum Number of Winners
1st	***\$200.00 Cash Prize	One Winner
2nd	***\$150.00 Cash Prize	One Winner
3rd	***\$100.00 Cash Prize	One Winner
4th	***\$50.00 Cash Prize	One Winner

The contest ends at Midnight October 31, 2009. Mailed entries (whether U.S. Postal or electronic) must be postmarked no later than October 31st. All entries must be received no later than November 5th. SCLC and MIRA take no responsibility for entries which are lost in the mail.

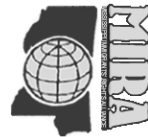
Winners will be notified via e-mail, phone, and/or in writing by Friday, November 20, 2009, and will be required to respond to this notice. Upon notification, certain documents for tax purposes may be required to claim your prize. All forms must be returned within 60 days from the date the contest closes.

Winners will also be asked to sign a release permitting the publication of their names and papers in the media and on Conference websites, including the MIRA website, www.yourmira.org. Winners will be asked to keep their status confidential until they are announced at the Dinner on December 4, 2009. Mileage reimbursement and one night's accommodation will be provided as needed, for winners who live more than 70 miles from Jackson, Mississippi.





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Essay Contest Questions

Please select **one** topic and treat it thoroughly in your essay.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. What does “bridging the gap through diversity” mean to you?
2. Have you ever had difficulty communicating with someone? If so, describe that challenge and how you overcame it.
3. What is Census 2010? Why is it important, and to whom is it most important?
4. Tell us about an immigrant who has made a great impact on your life, either directly or indirectly.

HIGH SCHOOL

1. What does “bridging the gap through diversity” mean to you?
2. Compare and contrast the current immigrant rights movement to the Civil Rights Movement. What potential lies in Unity among people of color in Mississippi?
3. If you had \$10,000 to create a youth program that encourages social justice and build unity at your school, how would you spend it? Please include a budget breakdown in Excel.
4. What are the challenges and opportunities for “intergenerational” organizing around human rights issues?

Valid mailed Essay Contest entries **must** contain the following:

YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME

YOUR PHONE NUMBER

YOUR COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS

SCHOOL AND PRINCIPAL'S NAME

A VALID E-MAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)

THE ESSAY TITLE & THE ESSAY ENTRY ITSELF





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Essay Contest Entry Methods & Official Contest Rules

How to Enter: There are two (2) methods to enter the Essay Contest. Contestants should use only one entry method. Participants in the video essay contest must submit electronically.

Method #1: Online: Email your information and essay entry to buildingbridges@yourmira.org. You will receive a confirmation via e-mail notifying you that your entry has been received. This is the **ONLY** method that will allow you to receive any confirmation of entry. Confirmation of entry does not necessarily constitute a valid Essay Contest entry; it is only a receipt of your Essay Entry. You are encouraged to save your entry until you have received an e-mail confirmation.

Method #2: Mail-in: Mail your information and essay entry using sufficient postage to: Unity Conference Essay Contest, MIRA, P.O. Box 1104, Jackson, MS 39215. All mail-in entries must be postmarked no later than October 31st. All entries must be received no later than November 5th. SCLC and MIRA take no responsibility for entries which are lost in the mail.

Essay Contest entries must be typed, double-spaced, on separate 8 ½" by 11" pieces of white paper (one side only) for each unique page. Each page must be numbered. ***The essay can be written in the language you speak most comfortably, but a translated version must be submitted in English.*** The contact information should be contained on a separate 8 ½" by 11" piece of paper (one side only), and submitted as well. The **maximum word count** for the Middle School Division is entry is 1000 words. The **maximum word count** for the High School Division is 5000 words. There is no minimum length. This word count does not include your contact information. We will not disclose entries which have been disqualified, or the reasons for disqualification.

All entries that do not comply with any of the requirements stated herein will be automatically disqualified. The Contest Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, incomplete, damaged, altered, postage-due or illegible entries. All entries submitted, including essays, photos and videos, become property of the Contest Sponsor and will not be returned or acknowledged. Limit: One entry per person regardless of entry method. Multiple entries from a single person will automatically be disqualified.

It is suggested to all who wish to participate in the Essay Contest, that you have someone review your finished essay. Furthermore, before submitting the essay, you should make sure it is complete as no re-submissions or corrections are permitted. You are welcome to document references and sources of information, but you must be the original author of the essay. Essays Contest entries may be disqualified if: 1) It is not on topic; 2) It exceeds the maximum word count; 3) It is post marked after October 31, 2009; and 4) It plagiarizes someone else's work.

How we will judge your Essay: The final winners will be selected by third-party judges from the human rights activist community selected by the 4th Annual Unity Conference planning community. In event of a tie at any stage in judging process, tied entries will be re-judged by an additional judge serving as a tiebreaker. Decisions of judges are final and binding on all matters relating to this Essay Contest. Every participant who submits a valid Contest Entry will be recognized at the 4th Annual Unity Conference in Jackson, Mississippi. Prize winners must be able to appear in person to receive their monetary awards at a Conference Dinner on Friday, December 4, 2009, at 6 p.m., in Jackson.

