

Alachua County Peace Poetry Contest

A collection of poetry by the students of all ages from Alachua County Schools, containing the winning poetry from the first annual Alachua County Peace Poetry Contest 2010, sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter of Veterans for Peace.

*Published by Veterans for Peace,
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FOREWORD

This book of peace poetry celebrates the poetry of the winners of the first annual Alachua County Peace Poetry Contest sponsored by the Gainesville Chapter of Veterans for Peace. The focus of the contest is peace, nonviolence, and the abolition of war and hate.

VFP believes that the message of peace and nonviolence can best be articulated by the voices of veterans themselves. Also, through “non-veterans” who believe in peace-making, peace-building and peace-keeping can the work of waging peace move forward in our communities and the world.

The children, particularly, are open to creatively expressing feelings through poetry. Teachers and families, likewise, are vitally interested in promoting peace and nonviolent solutions and attitudes needed to seek a community and world at peace.

VFP believes that poetry is a prime and meaningful medium for creating a “culture of peace.” Poetry uses an ancient format to advance culture and learning. It makes creative use of language and ideas to advance the creation of folk art. VFP believes that peace poetry contests can help change the cultural focus from “poetry of war” to “poetry for peace”, a much broader, humanitarian appeal. The Peace Poetry Contest provides a positive milieu where children and young people can share feelings and craft their words creatively, with adults, through poetry.

These poems were selected as winners because they spoke directly to the veterans and judges. Some were simple, basic though expressed poetically. Some were more complex and developed, showing a progression of thought and feeling. All poems appear as the author wrote them.

Thank you for your participation in this program celebrating a “Culture of Peace.” VFP considers all contestants winners!

Jessica Newman

Veterans for Peace member and Peace Poetry Coordinator

Acknowledgements

Veterans for Peace would like to thank not only the participants who submitted entries to the contest, but also those who were involved in organizing and planning the contest.

UF English Professor, Dr. Sidney Wade, contributed in unspeakable amounts by collecting the poems and organizing her English graduates to judge the poems. Dr. Wade and her team received and read all the poems submitted to the contest this year, judging each one individually based on its message and creativity. We greatly appreciate the time and the dedication that went into the judging process, as this contest would never be possible without them.

VFP would also like to thank the VFP Samantha Smith Chapter in the North Shore area of Massachusetts for sharing the idea of the Peace Poetry Contest with us. With their help and materials, them being the original founders of the contest, the Gainesville VFP chapter was able to put together a successful Peace Poetry Contest here in Alachua County.

With the continued support of all parties involved, the Alachua County Peace Poetry Contest will be able to prosper and grow for many years to come.

Peace

Peace, oh, Peace
is sing Peaches.
Peace, oh, Peace
is singing Peaches,
'tis to love.
Peace, oh, Peace
like to sing Peaches,
'Cause love needs to be loved,
Peace, oh, Peace,
means love.
Love & Peace are always friends,
together, and loved.

*Karla Mejias, 3rd Grade, Archer Community School
Youngest Participating Poet*

Peace Poem

Peace is like a pillow of fleece
when the world lays its head down
for some sleep.
When it counts the sheep in its dreams,
the wars will cease,
for Peace has come.

*William Davison, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace

Peace is a

Great word

That shivers

down

My spine.

And it wraps

Around

My heart

Like a great vine...

Peace is what

We need in the

World.

*Nyah Miller, 7th Grade, Westwood Middle School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Airman Poem

I was juvenile
Unintellectual
I thought it would be fun
To kill
To fight
Until our war had been won
So I killed
I bombed
Destroyed many lives
Until
On the inside
I rotted and died

*Dayo Nunn, 8th Grade, Kanapaha Middle School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace so big in our lives
yet we forget it exists.
Peace is a gift
if you can make it
you are gifted with God's love.
Peace is such a small thing
it's a miracle to see it happen.
With all the wars
we think it never happens. But it does
in our own lives.

*Alex Ladun, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace

Peace is the rumbling of the ocean at the
break of dawn.
Peace is the joyful birth of a newborn fawn
Peace is a soldier who did a great deed
Peace is a newly planted seed
Peace is so clever
Why not peace forever and ever.

*Dalton Cone, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
3rd Place, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace, Love, Happiness

Peace is something that brings us together.
Peace is just like love.
Everyone who loves you
will tell you it comes from above.
So gather around boys and girls.
As we pray for peace with a little help
from you and I,
we can stop all these wars and begin a new world.
So never say never,
coming from the heart.
It's now time for our part.
So let's bring peace
for you and me
and become a happy family.

*Kaitlyn Henderson, 7th Grade, Westwood Middle School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace

Peace is no war.
Peace is no violence.
Peace is harmony,
Like in a song,
All the notes blend
making a beautiful sound.
This sound is peace.

*Alex DiCairano, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Men at war facing death,
Ponder the importance of life,
If not passion, if not spite,
Fight for the simple delight.
Yesterday is a waste, as is tomorrow.
As Navy Sailors might sympathize,
“The only easy day... was yesterday.”
We must live for the moment,
While considering tomorrow’s satisfactions.
Live to live, not to die.

*Logan Forgey, 8th Grade, Kanapaha Middle School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Thoughts on Peace

The dove in the sky, the wind in the trees, the leaves silently
whispering
Tales from east and west, north and south
Stories of peace, success, and joy
Stories of far away.
And yet, why are these stories so familiar?
Even though the memories are from distant lands?
Because, says I, they are thoughts on peace.

*Sean Devlin, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace is the hope of tomorrow.
Peace is a look of content.
A wonderful optimism.
A beautiful song.
A happy little melody.
Everyday we are closer, and closer, and closer.
But with each bad deed we are farther, and farther, and
farther.
There is hurt.
There is trouble.
There is pain, and there is hatred.
But one thing is certain, the sun will rise tomorrow,
And a second chance at peace will be possible.

*Ava Criscitiello, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace

Peace, my last word
To my people. When I'm
Long gone I want my people
To stand strong. I remember
Walking on the dusty road
Seeing dead bodies, they
Were so cold. I lift my
Head up in hope to find a friend that
Friend of mine. You stand there
With guns and for what? To
Kill your brother or sister
With this weapon. The
Blood that flows in me
Flows out of he who has not
yet come to know me. I cry
out for help to try to stop
this war. Hope is all that
is left. You people deceived
me, saying how we are
all a family. Why would
my brother help kill
another? Make believe,
lies, deaths, and all.
Yet you see in the midst
Of it all I still stand tall.
Peace, I say, is my final
Word of today and
Any other day. No
More pain and misery
For my eyes or children's eyes to see.

*Lakisha Locus, 7th Grade, Westwood Middle School
2nd Place, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Peace to the Wars

Now there's fighting, now there's war and the world can't
take much more.

But there is some hope, there is some light if we can stop all
the fights.

Then the world will be in peace and on the path to loving
even the least.

*Seth Borgert, 6th Grade, St. Patrick Interparish School
Honorable Mention, 6th Through 8th Grade*

A rage of despite, a want for distress, All war is good for

A rage of anger and a want for death,
All war is good for is making a mess.
With the first cannon, we all line in rows,
When the back row stands down, we shoot at the foe.
The ground transforms into a dark maroon,
As blood seeps in filling every last room.
Survivors are few, dead are many,
This was a war much worse than any.

*Andreea Martin, 8th Grade, Kanapaha Middle School
1st Place, 6th Through 8th Grade*

Veneration of Peace

The onyx sky hovers over my head, freckled with glinting stars. They wink and collide in their mysterious formations in the deep black velvet heaven. The luminous moon hangs like an enchanted orb in the dark abyss. Leave float across the meadow on the curls of the wind; sweeping and floating like dancing faeries prancing across the petals of tender flowers. The hum of a tenor cricket serenades the otherwise silent night. Cold grass crunches underneath my body. The flitting wind catches my raven hair and tosses it about as a wave in the ferocious ocean. The dark tendrils soar up into the darkness flying fast and beautiful; dark and mysterious. The black sky motions me to come nearer, to swallow me up into all its calm and mellow certainty. To step away from this uncertain world would give me tranquility beyond measure, but not if I must never return. To stay in this changing world would be my choice. To have these peaceful moments that I can treasure. To show me that everything is worth the devastation if you can always cherish these moments. The moments that matter. In this ever changing world, I know one thing. To speed through life without noticing these moments is like the sky without the sun. Without the vibrant sun your world can have no light. The luminous moon can cause the wolf to howl, but only if the wolf is willing to look up at the moon. As I gaze into the dark heavens, I know that the wind playing with my hair and the crunch of grass underneath me is my quiet moment, a life in its own. A moment to embrace for the rest of my life.

*Lisa Tessman, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
3rd Place, 9th And 10th Grade*

Peace Poetry

There is so much violence and hell on earth, we just need to chill and start a rebirth. People are dying, many people losing lives and a lot of family members. There once was peace on earth, do you remember? There are a lot of veterans and a lot of soldiers who risked their lives for ours every day, do they get respect? – Some, but some don't even get a "hay"! We need to start paying our dues and find a way to once again have peace for our nation. If we don't, more hell will come to our plantations.
We need peace for our nation – no, as a matter of fact, we need to start a new colonization.

*Zevian Pettway, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
Honorable Mention, 9th and 10th Grade*

Many talk of wanting peace.
They talk of peace as the ultimate goal.
There are songs of peace, poems of peace, stories of peace.
Some think of peace as a faraway, hopeful idea.
Others bring peace near to them, hoping to spread it far.
Peace we need, peace is our call.
Peace will heal us all.

*Meghan Kessler, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
Honorable Mention, 9th and 10th Grade*

Open Doors for Peace

The world is at war
And wants to have peace.
People will fight blow for blow,
Duck and weave.

Some will lead, and
Some will flee.
Let peace come,
And let hate leave.

Peace is deep –
Deeper than some can reach.
Peace is sitting in the heart of us.

It lives in us like an old oak tree,
Roots deep into our souls.
It holds our happiness.

Open doors for peace.

*David Jones, 9th Grade, Eastside High School
2nd Place, 9th and 10th Grade*

Peace of Mind

My mother always said, "have peace of mind"
But what did this saying mean?
My mind was never in distress,
Why should it, I'm only fifteen.

I have no worries, no bills, no job,
I am at peace all the time,
Maybe she thought my life was tough,
After all thinking's not a crime.

So I took her advice and went all day
Being as peaceful as could be,
And by the spring in my step and the sparkle in my eye,
My world seemed suddenly at ease.

The air seemed fresher, the sky bluer,
And oh my the trees,
Like jungle gyms reaching to grab the sun,
And suddenly I could see.

Peace is a self evident right
That takes some time to find,
So to have a good life, take mom's advice,
And always have peace of mind.

*Sommer Nichols, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
Honorable Mention, 9th and 10th Grade*

Peace Waits Until Tomorrow

I am ready to run, run, run like the wind. Ready to learn, to experience, to grow on my own. I wish to leave the norms of society behind that overpower us all. Please understand, you are and always will be first in my heart. Ideally, now is the time for me to go. To live my life, make my own choices, and pay for the mistakes that I will surely make; peace waits until tomorrow. You have raised me, you want to keep me all for yourself, but that would not be fair to anyone. I am sure that when you were my age, you experienced skepticism. I desire to travel and study, for the only thing that gets in the way of my learning is my education. I am no genius, definitely not a prodigy, just someone who is tired of the bounds and limits of our society; peace waits until tomorrow. I know that I need to find myself. You have raised me to be strong, honest, intelligent, and brave. Maybe someday I'll find the courage to live my life out loud; but until then, I will live a muffled, even silent life. My education has ceased to interest me; we are forced to memorize, understand, and process only the information that they instruct us to. How can this possibly judge our intelligence? Is this learning? I appreciate that we must be "well-rounded" to understand the world and be successful, but who can define this? Only we can, each individual, can decide what is important for us to learn. However, I know I will continue to ask these questions. Until I am brave enough to do something about them, I will be here, always wondering, wishing, and waiting; *peace waits until tomorrow.*

*Ashley Baros-Kabler, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
Honorable Mention, 9th and 10th Grade*

Peace

Where did the love and peace go in a home of comfort?
The little girl who trusts the man that's called her father who
 beats her to death to show that's love
Where did the love and peace go in a country that's called
 freedom?
When men are in prison that don't even belong there, away
 from their family and children
Where did the love and peace go in a place that's supposed
 to be safe
When you walk out your house and think you're coming
 back to
 your family and don't,
Where did the love and peace go when the one you love hurt
 you the most
When you been by their side through thick n' thin
Where did the love and peace for the victims in Haiti
The victims without a home, who have no one to love and
 care about them
Where did the love and peace go in the world?
 The world that we call home
Love and Peace what strong words to use

*Shakela Martin, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
Honorable Mention, 9th and 10th Grade*

The Meaning of Peace

A long time ago when I was ten years old and live life slow
Of planet earth's woes, I had no desire to know
I was obsessed with the Pokemon show.

But as I grew in physical stature and content of mind,
I realized that the world was cruel and very unkind,
Just look at the people being killed by long forgotten land
mines.

Whether it is fighting in the street
Or conflict in the Middle East,
People just don't know the meaning of peace.

From that moment on, I devoted myself to learning the true
way,
Spent long nights just thinking about what I'm going to say,
Peace is keeping hatred sealed away.

We send each other to physical and spiritual war,
Then we walk around showing off our scar,
Peace means acceptance near and far.

Partisan politics is just one big metaphor for everything that's
wrong.
We've got to be strong and realize we can't keep shoving
along.
Peace means listening before the opportunity is long gone.

All I'm saying is that before we act, we should think.
It should take longer than the time required to blink.
Peace is fighting the fear that pushes the society to the brink.

Continued on next page.

Once we understand that we shouldn't fight instantly,
And instead think about the mothers whose sons serve in the
infantry,
We will begin to see that peace means treating each other
equally.

We have to realize that peace cannot simply be a goal
Or, merely a word that we always use to console.
Peace must be ingrained indelibly in our hearts and souls.

*Arnav Gupta, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
Honorable Mention, 9th and 10th Grade*

Peace of the Soul

Peace in one,
Becomes peace in all,
And eventually can become
Peace for the Earth,
But first
The heavy heart must rest in calm
And learn to give love.
All for one, one for all.
So we retreat ourselves
And search for the darkest black,
Put it on a paper,
Letting the ink
Sink,
And we let our hearts think
As we look for God in the sky
And those sins burning wildly in the fire
Turn into peace of heart,
Peace of the soul
Where everything is colored Beautiful
And hopefully not forgotten in the winds of tomorrow.

*Kisha Bwenge, 10th Grade, Eastside High School
1st Place, 9th and 10th Grade*

That When I Smile

When I'm here,
And we walk together
While I talk, and you never answer,
My thoughts float freely.
And as my thoughts drift from one to another, there in the
quiet
It's then that I smile.

When I'm here,
Life is 45 minutes East.
The lights of the night make my breath slightly shallow.
The kiss of August breath covers my cheeks and blankets my
neck.
Everyone is asleep while the wind wakes the trees,
And the forest breathes the sound of night.
Alone on those nights,
It's then that I smile.

When I'm here
Remembering everything, so to reassure myself it's more
than fabrication of thought.
When having company has never been so comforting.
While you're here, with me, I feel safe.
It's then that I smile.

When I'm there,
With the uncertainty of a new dawn,
It's then I remember how easy it is to fall into simplicity.
It's then I recognize the strength of what goes unseen.
It's then I realize I still have you there.
And then, with my mind put to ease,
It's then that I smile.

*Alley Muir, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace with your Body

My lips are too thin, my arms are too fat
I constantly wish I could change all of that
My hips are too big, my teeth out of line
But my mom says that I look fine
My legs are too wide to fit into my jeans
I want to look like the girls in magazines.
I need to stop complaining and ripping my body apart
Because in the end, nothing will be bigger than my heart
When it all comes down, it's just me in the end
I'll make peace with my body because it's my friend

*Nina Flowers, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

No Need for Ammunition

Peace is just a feeling
When there's no hurting, fighting, stealing

Peace is just the definition
Of not having a need for ammunition.

Peace is just a name they give
When all are free to live and let live

*Rett Skipper, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace is what's best!

Peace is whatever we make it out to be
Without war, without violence, without racism,
Without anything harmful to the human race, environment
and culture

Peace is whatever we make it out to be:

No worries, freedom from dispute, freedom from police action
in order to restore peace.

Quietness, seclusion, serenity, tranquility, a mental calmness,
Freedom from disturbance!

This world, our world, God's world

Was created to be peaceful.

But yet there is still agitation and distress can't keep our
composure, can't keep contentment

In our classrooms, bedrooms, courtrooms, restrooms, families,
churches, homes, even on our cell phones!

Anywhere you could possibly think of

The importance of peace is profoundly wanted.

We as people do not see the importance of peace; we do not
realize that

"peace is not merely a goal but a human right."

Because of this, I believe everyone should have the honor to
experience peace.

Those in the north,

those in the south,

those in the east,

those in the west,

those on other continents.

But if you know what's best, you'll know there is really no
peace on earth.

The ultimate peace place is beyond this universe,

A place where not everyone but a few are waiting to attain
to.

Continued on next page.

While we wait we should make use of our lives
and make it great.

We should create peace, grasp it
and bring others to
our sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, co-workers, teachers,
sons, daughters.

Everyone.

We all have a choice to be peaceful or harmful.

I, we! Can truly say peace is what's best.

Peace is whatever we make it out to be.

*Ezra Wallace, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
3rd Place, 11th and 12th Grade*

Tangled

As the amber light fades to dusk
and the lights lining the street illuminate,
two lovebirds lay in the frigid night.

The heavens shine down upon the pair
but they are lost in each other,
tangled up in their serenity.

Sheets of rain pour from the dark abyss
and cover the fragile tundra,
the tranquility was only ephemeral.

*Maddie Upthegrove, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Saving the World

Guns without ammo,
Fists without bones,
Words without meaning;
This is how I would save the world.

Lying on my back,
Face to the skies,
The bright and starry night
Is ruined by another bright light.

I see it coming,
The end of all things.
My mind says to run,
But I know I'm finished; it's done.

The calm before the storm
Is all I have left.
Do not call me cynical;
I am not depressed.

I have found happiness
In my acceptance,
With reserves, of course,
And some regrets:

I didn't remove
The ammo from the guns,
The bones from the fists,
The meaning from the words.

I wasn't able to save the world
Because
Peace without peace is
The only peace possible.

*Sean Rice, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace is elusive and mysterious,
Hidden between a picture and a word,
Slithering between the sane and the delirious,
Hidden among the sensible and the absurd.
Each day, the sun rises,
Each day, countless breaths cease,
For war, for violence, for the wrath of Poseidon's seas,
And yet peace lives on.
Within the flower's petals,
And in the flight of the swan,
From the hearts and minds, peace blossoms,
Everlasting yet brief as the dawn.

*Huanzheng Chen, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Time

The wind whispers delicately
And tickles the trees
Time is frozen
For the two on the swing
Somewhere a bird chips
But the sound is lost in the silence
Around them time is swirling
Wishing and waiting for the next compliance
But the hearts are not yet ready
So for now they keep
The comfort and stillness
Of the peace

*Genevieve Frank, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Prince of Peace

My fortress, my savior, my rock.
When troubles come, I call your name
You cured the blind and healed the lame,
You, are my prince of peace.

My lamb, my Sheppard, my gift.
Defeated the odds and death itself
You loved the poor and shunned the wealth,
You, are my prince of peace.

My counselor, my truth, my father.
You lead the way and show wrong from right
At the end of the tunnel there shines a bright light,
You, are my prince of peace.

My alpha, my omega, my beginning and end,
You provide help for the lost and hope for the weak,
Love for the hurt and strength for the meek.
You, are my prince of peace.

*Joey Muccio, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace of Mind

On the sunny day of June the Fourth
I relaxed quietly on my porch.
Waiting for both family and friend
Wishing never for the day to end.

A car pulls up, there appears my aunt,
My uncle, my niece and my cousin, Grant;
They approached my house with a smile,
Picturing tranquility all the while.

Continued on next page.

As I waiting upon my porch,
I watched my family continue to lurch
Up the steps and through the door,
Until I saw them not any more.

I laid back again into my chair,
Captivated by nature's stare
I heard a voice so soft and weary,
I turned my head to face the query.

“Uncle James! Uncle James! What is peace? What is peace?”
Asked incessantly by my niece.
“I heard a man say it's a myth, it's a lie!”
Followed by this, she explained why.

“So long as man walks upon this Earth,
Or there's war, famine and human birth;
There'll be no peace for you or I,
That is, until, we all die.”

She talked of men with metal barrels,
Spreading dismay and causing terrors;
Of artillery pieces and iron eagles
Destroying the tops of regal steeples.

“And all for what? A whim? A cause?”
After that, I bid her pause.
I told her that the man is wrong,
And begged her listen to nature's song.

As she sat, her face grew bright,
When she realized I was right.
“Peace on Earth is easy to find,
It's found on your porch, as peace of mind.”

To all the soldiers out of place,
And the families lost in haste;
I wish you all peace, far and wide;
By saying your porch, is right outside.

*James Boudreau II, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace Poem

Peace is like a skier climbing a snow-covered mountain.
The mountain is there sitting in solitude,
Desired by all who see it,
And worshipped by those who have conquered it.
War is like the downward slope of the mountain.
Always there waiting for the skier to make a mistake,
To come tumbling down in an avalanche of frustration and
fury.
The uphill battle for peace is obtained through risk and co-
operation,
While the downhill slope is the easy way out,
Taken through weakness and selfishness.
Once the skier has conquered the mountain,
He is able to overcome the weakness,
And enjoy the final ride.

*Jay Rose, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

A Peaceful Goodbye

It seems that everything
is so simple, when we all
know it's really not.

The complexity of a body
that works and grows for
Only One. Its obsessive
breath from the lungs.
A constant forgetting of a
beat of a heart, and the skillful
use of a thought from the mind.

Continued on the next page.

Every cell, every organ and muscle
intact, know the one purpose they
seek is to make life a gift that may never
be given back. For this body suffers only
for one in hopes that a peaceful
appreciation will come.

*Kristin Marshall, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Nature

The waves crashing on the shore,
Another wonder for me to explore.
Floating in the warm water,
Eyes closed, face toward the sun.
My toes sinking in the sand.
Searching the beach for shells,
It is as though the ocean has a spell
Over me.

The stars shining in the bright night sky
Make me feel as if I could defy
All of the evil in the world.
Shooting stars, vivid planets
Dazzling me with their vibrancy
And their unappreciated tranquility.
Unassuming, unaware of their supremacy
Over me.

The stream trickling through the woods,
Another beauty of nature misunderstood.
The sun shining through the trees,
The light air, the cool water,
Flowers blossoming near the brook.
Nature,
This, this is the place
For me.

*Sarah Soltis, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Socrates would have loved YouTube

When petty bickering has ceased,
And idiocy is no longer a part of the human genome,
There can be peace.

When every newborn has a chance of succeeding in life instead of living in poverty,
And a man can love another man without being persecuted,
There can be peace.

When society chooses to be eco-friendly on its own accord,
Rather than because of the fear stricken into them by a rabid environmentalist,
There can be peace.

When West and East can shake hands not because they are blind,
But because the minor differences between each other no longer mean anything,
There can be peace.

When the supposed words of Jesus Christ are followed,
Instead of twisted to fuel the bigots, the racists, and the hypocrites,
There can be peace.

When corporations are no longer intent on raping civilization,
Simply to fuel their thirst for paper imbued with ink,
There can be peace.

When there occurs the genocide of tyrants,
And the fat cats are brought down to average weight,
There can be peace.

When the simple notion that we are here to live and nothing more is understood,
And people stop wasting their reality away in mediocrity,
There can be peace.

Continued on the next page.

When every single person wakes up on the same day and realizes:

“Holy Shit! We could achieve so much if humanity was not ludicrously retarded!”

And hence, begin a new era of prosperity, free of despair and power thirsty bastards,

There can be peace;

At least, Isn't it pretty to think so?

Alexander Sarwer-Foner, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School

Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade

Peace

When people are going crazy around you, where is the peace?

When life is chaotic and you feel helpless, where is the peace?

When are thoughts are awhirl with worry and anxiety, where is the peace?

Peace can be found in the silence of your breath,

In the laughter of a child, in the melody of the ocean,

In a bird's morning song.

Peace can be found deep down in your heart

Deep in the depths of our inner self,

Peace can be found.

Shayna Stringer, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School

Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade

Peace

It's found on the farmer's callused hands.
For every tear on his body comes a soft twang of wisdom
from his lips.
He comes home tired and worn down with his wife eager to
see him,
but he's never too tired to dance with his wife, hands gently
placed on her hips.

It's found in every phrase of a musical masterpiece.
Each note brought out can change the world if only one
listens.
For every pain brought on by worldly strife
There's a glorious instrument to make the earthly hurt glis-
ten.

It's found in a school full of children's faces.
Each a different size, shape and color.
Each united under one goal of learning all that can be
learned,
Saying the pledge in their own accent, exploring their own
sense of wonder.

It exists as long as we protect it.
Without nurture it can be lost within human violence and
deception.
Decade after decade, century after century
We must improve it for further happiness, not leave it as an
exception.

*April Lundell, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
2nd Place, 11th and 12th Grade*

The Dance of Peace

A Blank Page,
Devoid of substance, of Spirit, of Life,
Until the first note resonates.
Then slowly, lines form and curve and engage
In a Waltz across the page.

As the song continues,
Dark rings tango with the lines
To the melody taking shape.

The rings pirouette,
 Leap,
 Glide,
Gracefully between each line
As harmonies form and sound undulates.
An organized pattern of sound and silence.

In the waves of sound,
Between those lines,
During that Waltz,
Is bliss.

During the pirouettes, the leaps, the glides;
In the harmonies and melodies,
In the utterance of the very first note,
In music, is where peace abounds.

*Kayla Greene, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

In War

Five soldiers lay
Overlooking the barren countryside
Straining their eyes
And seeking out the enemy
As the crack of a sniper rifle filled the air.

Once, what seemed an eternity ago
These men once pondered
Over their suppos'd enemies
Wondering if they, too,
Lived under the same pressures of life.
This they would think
As the crack of a sniper rifle filled the air.

Yet these thoughts were, without a doubt,
Quickly erased from their minds.
They were to show no mercy,
No regret, and ruthlessly eliminate
Those enemies from hell
As the crack of the sniper rifle filled the air.

As the line spread thin,
A private took aim at an insurgent
Who craftily hid amongst the trees.
"No mercy" was uttered from the private's lips
As the crack of a sniper rifle filled the air.

So immune had he become
To the screams, the guns,
And the death all too common here.
His heart was so cold he hardly recognized
The faint tolling of a bell in the distance
And the crack of a sniper rifle
As a bullet pierced his heart.

*Alex Soucek, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Victorious?

We disagree
Therefore, we fight
I, because I know I'm right
You, because you think I'm wrong
I'm the winner here

We disagree
Let's invade their land!
Take it all
On my command!
If they resist
Then take 'em down
I'm still the winner here

We disagree
Drop the bomb!
I am right
They must be wrong
End it all in one big flash!
Am I the winner here?

So if it can be as easy
As a piece of cake
Or if we can have
A peace of mind
Is it so much to ask
For a peace of the human kind?
We're all the winners here

*Jon Apple, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace

Peace is a world without war
Its total tranquility
Peace is being content with who you are everyday
Its complete happiness at any moment in time
Its living like tomorrow may never come
Peace is knowing you've done your best whatever the out-
come
Its being comfortable with the decisions you've made
throughout your life
Peace is realizing someone else's life was made better by
your existence
Its waking up to a new day
Peace is something this world could use a lot more of

*Gabrielle Jones, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace – a real thing, or an unobtainable dream?
A dream such as the one from Martin Luther King?
What does it mean?
Is it achieved when we join hands and sing?
Does it originate from the mind of our own being?
Does it cease when we stop believing?
I feel, that it is real; it just needs to be spread.
Giving the hungry a good meal, stops children from winding
up dead.
Instead of war, we should abstain from letting children eat
mud.
As their tummies shrivel, we stain the world with blood.
It seems mankind has lost sight of what's worth fighting for.
I wonder when
we will begin
to fight
no more.

*Gabrielle Jones, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace, Simple Peace

So basic a human concept,
Yet so difficult a human accomplishment.
The great and foremost precept,
But man's utmost disappointment.

How is that life goes on
With so many tragic human actions?
Sometimes I wish the world foregone
Because of its many detractions.

Yet at that moment of absolute dejection,
A hand stretches into the abyss,
And pulls the down-trodden from their rejection,
Granting them justice in the stillness.

My hope is thus renewed,
Because though often forgotten,
Man's goal of peace is viewed.

*Thomas Arndt, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace

Guns fire, bombs explode.
Never is there a quiet moment.
A young soldier of only 19,
He's crouched behind a bunker.
Scared, trying not to show it.
This is what he signed up for?
If only he'd known,
No peace, no quiet, no sleep or rest.
He waits for his signal.
Finally, go! go! go!
He pauses, then out into the chaos.
Noise on the left, yelling on his right,
Gunfire from every directions.
His heart pounds. He thinks to himself,
"We're fighting for peace."
He moves forward as his friends, soldiers
drop beside him.
He trips over something...
It was his friend Jim.
"We're fighting for peace."
He pushes forward, praying.
He fires his gun.
Down they drop,
"We're fighting for peace."
He reaches a rest spot.
"There's no peace here."
He takes a breath,
Out into the storm he returns.
But he notices, it's quiet.
He looks around, lives lost everywhere.
Not again would his life be without peace.

Continued on the next page.

“We found peace.”
He walks down the field.
He hears shots fire.
He should have known
War brings no peace.
But now, the quiet, the peace and rest he searched for,
It all came to him.
Not again would his life be without peace.

*Elizabeth Russell, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Is, Always, Never

Peace is always and never

Peace is elusive,
Always chased, never caught

Peace is lost,
Always looked for, never found

Peace is predicted,
Always coming, never present

Peace is written,
Always fiction, never reality

Peace is choice,
Always an option, never established

Peace is hope,
Always a wish, never granted

Peace is war
Always a battle, never completed

Peace is always and never

*Sierra Solaun, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Not War, This Peace

If only all others could live just like me,
could walk in my shoes instead of bare feet.
If only I could spread what I have with verve,
because this something I have,
is something everyone deserves.

Ever-present in your mind, it sparks alive every time
that your jaw clenches tight, eyes dart outside, heart racing,
fright!
Because a bomb went off in the distance, and you still hear
the drone of engines,
and you clutch your loved one closer and you remember the
lie you told her
“everything will be all right.”

Because that’s the yearning burning bright, the only thought
in your mind,
that everything will be all right, and War will turn to Peace.

And when you have it, do you ignore it, do you stuff it away
and store it,
because the memories of War are too horrid to recall?
Or are you grateful for it always, taking comfort in its solace,
happy have a home that does not tremble with every drop?

Attritions trudge through the trenches, boots and bullets,
buddies and wenches.
Hostile territory, dissent in occupation, dead-man’s zone,
target location.
Collateral damage, acceptable losses, civilian casualties,
garbled corpses.
Roaring noise and deafness. Pain and numbness.
Life leaking out to embrace sweet Nothingness.

Continued on the next page.

But if you live, you yearn and burn and hope for armistice.

If only all other could live just like me,
could walk in my shoes instead of bare feet.
If only I could spread what I have with verve,
because this something I have, this peace.

*Daniel Steffee, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Peace

We all want Peace, but what is it really?
Is Peace just a five-letter word found in the P section of the dictionary?
Is Peace in the amount of people that love us?
Is Peace something that comes from within us?
Is Peace the place we call home, or the place we can be alone?
Is Peace in our achievements or in our failures?
Is Peace in foreign places or in familiar faces?

Peace, it is none of these.

Peace is sitting outside, as time passes by.
Peace is listening to music with your best friend on a Friday night.
Peace is lending a helping hand, not because you are obligated to, but because you want to.
Peace is following your own path, no matter how hard the struggle may be.
Peace is an inner happiness, a balance in life.

Peace is something we all want, but are looking for it in all the wrong places.

*Gabriela Siem, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

What's a feather in a world of stones?
Its touch would never be felt when we're only used to hard-
ness.
And how could we appreciate the soft, fine fibers,
Attached to a hollow spine?
It could only seem weak.

What's the worth of a candle in a world of darkness?
It could never be seen in a world that's grown up blind.
And how could we all feel that tiny heat,
When it's hardly more than a spark?
It would only seem inadequate.

What's the sound of a violin in a world of explosions?
It could never be heard while our ears are still ringing.
And how could we love the sweet notes,
When we are unable to comprehend the love that created
them?
It could only seem meaningless.

But a feather is a proof of life,
Of angels flying over the world,
Showing us that not all hardness is strength,
Not all that is hollow is weak.

A candle is proof of light and hope,
Of warmth ready to be felt,
Spread from person to person,
Until the heat is no longer inadequate.

And music is proof of continued peace,
Of a single person who refuses to fight,
Choosing to love instead,
And give the word meaning again.

*Paris Tressler, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

The Worker's Respite

I.

Another day, another war,
Another fight to reach the door.
The engine stalls, then sure and slow,
The tires trundle through the snow.

II.

Angry faces all around,
Tires screech, a piercing sound.
And every minute, worst of all,
A car horn makes its blaring call.

III.

Countless hours upon a seat,
Without, the snow; within, the heat.
Close and cramped, he toils away,
And for his sweat, receives his pay.

IV.

Droplets hammer on the car,
Lightning flashes from afar.
The water rushes, thick and fast,
Until he finds his home at last.

V.

A soothing fire relieves his pain,
Its heat is welcome, not a bane.
Against the horns, his walls are proof,
The rain, a patter on the roof.

*Cayley Robinson, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

First Time I Felt Peace

I remember it so well
Made me smile so wide I had to tell.
I remember embracing this strange feeling so hard
My happiness was so great one could have sworn I was
made.
But then again this feeling rejuvenated my life
It's thought seemed to end my strife.
And the days I did not feel it,
I truly believed God had taken away my saving grace.

Was this more than an emotion?
Or had I truly taken a sip of this special potion?
Sincerely a sight to behold, treasured even more than gold.
It is a special fruit of the spirit according to the good word
He who finds this feeling better give thanks to his Lord.
I have found it and there truly is nothing better in this world.
It is such a tease, this peace.

There goes that smile again
I try to stop it, but to no avail
This peace is for all from the short to the tall.
I am appalled that some have never had this feeling at all.
I say what this feeling I feel, what I know is that
Deprivation of it must sting like an eel.
Never have I felt this way
What is this feeling that causes one to feel so gay?
PEACE, I say, PEACE.

*Tomi Akinyemi, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
Honorable Mention, 11th and 12th Grade*

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade

we showed up just in time
to hear the yearly speech about
how far we've come
how far we've got to go and
how we're going to get there.

we sing "we shall overcome"
and even us pale-skinned "minorities"
know all the words.
we hold hands and a black man holds Laura's
for the entire parade.

I talk to Eddie about where he lives
and our wisdom teeth surgeries
and gay marriage.
we know that injustice anywhere
is a threat to justice everywhere.

girls my age behind us cheer and laugh.
one rides an electric scooter.
she waves as she rolls past
and wears a picture
of a beaming new president.

our water bottles and fair-trade bags
make a circle around a light post.
we answer questions:
"will we come next year?" and
"did we feel uncomfortable?"

I answer that fighting for peace
is never comfortable and
since we will never be done
we will be fighting for the rest of our lives.

*Lindsay Smith, 12th Grade, Buchholz High School
First Place, 11th and 12th Grade*

Winners

Youngest Participant

Karla Mejias

Grade 3

Archer Community School

Grades 6 Through 8

First Place

Andreea Martin

Grade 8

Kanapaha Middle School

Second Place

Lakisha Locus

Grade 7

Westwood Middle School

Third Place

Dalton Cone

Grade 6

St. Patrick Interparish School

Grades 9 and 10

First Place

Kisha Bwenge

Grade 10

Eastside High School

Second Place

David Jones

Grade 9

Eastside High School

Third Place

Lisa Tessmann

Grade 10

Eastside High School

Grades 11 and 12

First Place

Lindsay Smith

Grade 12

Buchholz High School

Second Place

April Lundell

Grade 12

Buchholz High School

Third Place

Ezra Wallace

Grade 12

Buchholz High School