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“Write every day.”

That is the advice any award-winning author gives to aspiring writers. The practice helps build storytelling skills as well as establishing a daily routine to fuel creativity.

Tulsa City-County Library's annual Young People's Creative Writing contest is geared much like a publisher works. Entrants are given deadline, parameters and encouraged to submit their best story.

Entries for the 2017 contest are being accepted Feb. 1-March 4. The contest is free to enter and open to ages 10-18 for those who live in Tulsa County, attend school in Tulsa County or have a nonresident library card.

There are three age divisions: 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18. Participants may enter one manuscript per category. Within each age division, there are five categories:

- Short Story – each entry no more than 1,500 words.
- Informal Essay – a short composition on a topic of issue giving your opinion or recounting a personal experience. Limited to 1,500 words.
- Poetry – one poem, no more than 300 words.
- Short Play – no more than six characters, no more than three locations, no more than 10 pages. Limited to five to 10 minutes in length.
- Comix– entry must be complete in and of itself, and not a fragment of a larger work. No more than eight pages. Work can be with or without words, in black and white or color, and fiction or

nonfiction. Computer-generated images are acceptable as long as they are original works (no clip art). Use 8 1/2x11-inch paper and submit as flat work, not as a booklet.

Within each age division and category, cash prizes are awarded in the following amounts: \$100 for first place, \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. The "Writer to Watch" award is endowed by retired TCCL librarian Rosemary Moran, the award of \$100 recognizes a young adult who consistently entered the contest and demonstrated promising writing techniques.

All entrants will receive an invitation to the awards program, which will be held on May 5, 7 p.m. at Hardesty Regional Library's Connor's Cove, 8316 E. 93rd St. Laurie Halse Anderson, winner of the 2017 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature, will be the featured speaker and will present the awards.

"The Young People's Creative Writing Contest gives Tulsa County youth an outlet to express and exercise their imagination and creativity by offering them the opportunity to enter their writing in up to five different categories," said Leah Weyand, Tulsa City-County Library teen services coordinator. "Once a young writer ages into the contest at age 10, we encourage them to enter year after year and challenge themselves to improve their writing. Perspective, technique and skills change as they mature."

The contest is sponsored by the Tulsa Library Trust. Additional support provided by The Mary K. Chapman Foundation and George Kaiser Family Foundation.

Entry forms are available at all TCCL locations or on the library's teen website, <http://teens.tulsalibrary.org/YPCWC>.

For more information, call 918-549-7323.

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