

WIN CASH PRIZES IN THE LIBRARY'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

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

Tulsa City-County Library's annual Young People's Creative Writing contest can help achieve a writing routine. The contest is organized much like a publisher works: writers are given a deadline, parameters and encouraged to submit their best story.

Entries for the 2016 contest are being accepted Feb. 1-March 5. The contest is free to enter and open to young people ages 10-18 who live in Tulsa County, attend school in Tulsa County or have a non-resident 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 or 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 ½" by 11" paper and submit as flat work, not as a booklet.

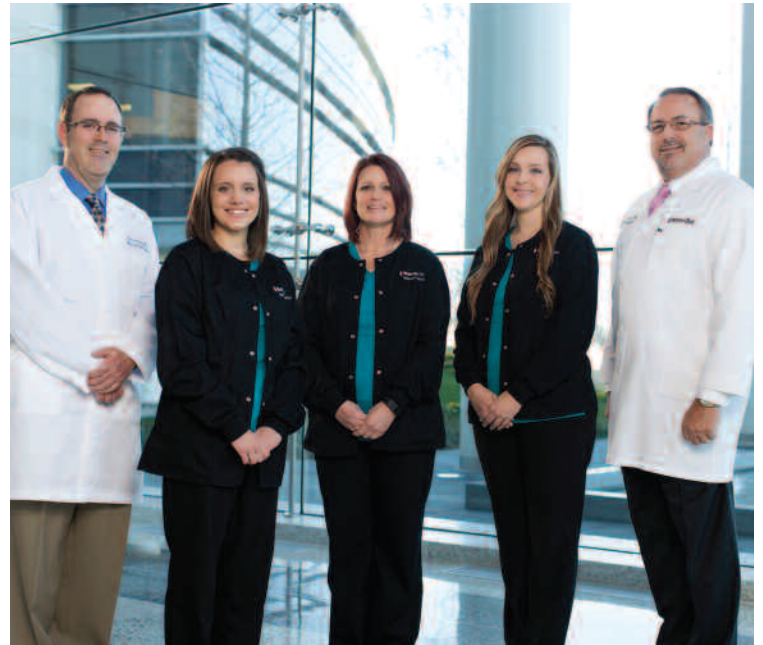
Within each age division and category, cash prizes are awarded in the following amounts: \$100 for first place, \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. The "Writer to Watch" award is endowed by retired TCCL librarian Rosemary Moran, the award of \$100 recognizes a young adult who consistently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

All entrants will receive an invitation to the awards program, which will be held on Friday, May 6, 7 p.m. at Hardesty Regional Library's Connor's Cove, 8316 E. 93rd St. Gordon Korman, winner of the 2016 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature, will be the featured speaker and will present the awards.

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 with rules and regulations are available at all TCCL locations or on the library's teen website, <http://teens.tulsalibrary.org>. For more information, call your local library or the AskUs Hotline, 918.549.7323.

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Pictured left to right:
David Gorenberg, M.D.
Casey Busch, BSMIRS, RDMS
Angie Ruppert, RDMS
Tamara Hager, BSRT, RDMS
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HOLLY EMBRY, TEEN LIBRARY ASSOCIATE, SOUTH BROKEN ARROW LIBRARY

say it with stories and crafts

Forget romance! Valentine's Day is much more fun when the emphasis is placed on love in general -- especially the love you feel for the kids in your life. If celebrating the love shared between family and friends sounds like your idea of a great holiday, then perhaps you're in the market for some sweet stories and heartwarming crafts. The Tulsa City-County Library has a swoon-worthy collection of books that are perfect for celebrating Valentine's Day, so keep reading for a list of stories and related crafts that are sure to woo your little sweeties.

Let's start with the littles! Perfect for babies and toddlers, *Time for a Hug* by Phillis Gershator teaches basic counting skills while showing children how irresistibly huggable they are. Make the story interactive by giving your kids a squeeze each time the phrase "Time for a Hug!" occurs. Emma Dodd's *Love You Books* are silly, yet sentimental, and feature rhyming text and illustrations accented with shimmering foil. Recommended titles in this series include *When You Were Born*, *Everything*, and *No Matter What*. Inspire young minds with *An Awesome Book of Love* by Dallas Clayton. This catchy story contains hand-lettered text, whimsical illustrations, and affirmations in rhyme.

Moving into the elementary



CLAY VALENTINE HEARTS (ABOVE).
HEART PAPERCHAIN (BELOW).



grades, there is no shortage of books that will expose children to the power of love. Animal enthusiasts will gush over *Puppy Love: True Stories of Doggie Devotion*. This newly published National Geographic title features uplifting stories of loyalty and companionship. For the young activist, try *Love Will See You Through* by Angela Farris Watkins, Ph.D. Written by Martin Luther King Jr.'s niece, this powerful book demonstrates the importance of approaching injustice with love and compassion. To celebrate the silly side of life, try reading the feel-good poems in *We Go Together: A Curious Selection of Affectionate Verse* aloud with your kids.

And let's not forget to show the teens some love! There are plenty of books written for this age group that push beyond the surface of dating and touch on deeper issues such as self-esteem, coping with bullies, and the beauty of individuality. *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell is a quirky love story that tackles some touchy topics with humor and grace. Jerry Spinelli's *Stargirl* will inspire teens to love and embrace their differences rather than reshaping themselves in an attempt to gain the fickle affections of their peers.

In addition to reading with the kids in your life, you can always make them feel loved by taking time to create something

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beautiful together. Even if crafts are not your cup of tea, keep in mind that kids are not likely to judge your artistic abilities. They'll just be appreciative of time spent with the adults they adore. Here are some ideas:

- Make keepsake charms using oven-bake clay, paint, and mini cookie cutters.
- Repurpose and preserve valentines by creating collaged bookmarks. Paste valentines to cardstock and have them laminated to use as bookmarks that will make your little readers feel loved every time they crack open a book.
- Try a fun spin on traditional paper chains by connecting colorful hearts with secret messages. To assemble, staple two strips (8.5" x 1.5" is perfect) of paper together at one end, then lay stapled-side-up and write a message. Loop one end through the last heart on the chain before stapling the other end of the strips into the shape of a heart. Use this project to count the days of the month in a fun, positive way!

Essentially, Valentine's Day can be whatever you want it to be. Why not designate this holiday as a time to direct all the love we can toward the kids in our lives? Read an extra book together before bed. Spend quality time making art with your family. Give good hugs. What's not to love about that?

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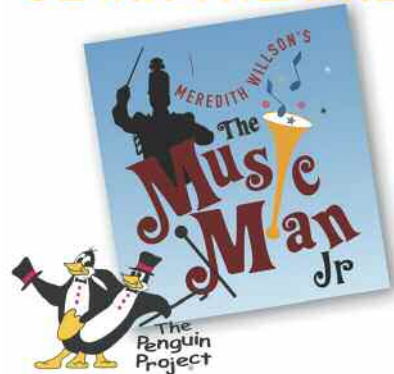
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