Student Writings Program

*Forward in Unity: Embracing Our Beloved Community*

Students in grades 4-12 are invited to submit their original writings for possible publication in the 2018 Columbia Values Diversity Celebration Student Writings Booklet. This booklet will be distributed to over 1,000 people at the annual community celebration on January 11, 2018 and published on the Celebration website at: www.como.gov (Search: Diversity Celebration)

**Theme**
The theme for the 25th annual Columbia Values Diversity Celebration is: *"Forward in Unity: Embracing Our Beloved Community."* Because Columbia is a city of many ethnic groups, religions, cultures, and opinions, it is important that all community members know that their story and their voice are important and valued. Submit an essay or poem describing how there is inclusion and acceptance in our community despite our differences.

**Writing Suggestions**
To help you get started, consider using one of the following prompts:

- **Narrative**: Write a story, real or imagined, describing how we celebrate our community and embrace its diversity.
- **Persuasive**: In what ways is there already celebration of our community and our diversity within Columbia and in what ways does our community still have work to do, to better celebrate our beloved community?
- **Expository**: Research and describe an individual, organization, or event in our community that has and/or continues to actively celebrate our diverse community in Columbia.
- **Creative**: Using a genre of your choice (e.g. poem, song/rap, etc.) create an original piece of literature that shows how our community is celebrated and our diversity embraced.

**Submission Guidelines**
Students in grades 4-12 throughout the Columbia area are eligible to participate. Student writings should not be more than one page typewritten or two pages handwritten. An independent selection committee will choose selected writings from all grade levels for publication. The booklet will be distributed at the Columbia Values Diversity Celebration on Thursday, January 11, 2018 and published on the celebration website. Three or four students will be selected with the opportunity to read their works and be featured in a video produced by the City Channel, which will be played at the Celebration as well as broadcast after the event.

Students should include: name, age, grade level, teacher’s name, and school on the essay/poetry submission. Entries will not be accepted without this information.

*The deadline for submitting writings is Monday, November 13, 2017.*

Send or deliver essay/poetry entries to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Columbia Public Schools students</th>
<th>All other students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Baumstark</td>
<td>Columbia Values Diversity Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relations</td>
<td>c/o Office of Cultural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Public Schools</td>
<td>300 S. Providence Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818 West Worley</td>
<td>Columbia, MO 65203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia, MO 65203</td>
<td>E-Mail: <a href="mailto:OCA@como.gov">OCA@como.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contact**
For more information please contact the Office of Cultural Affairs:

**Phone:** (573) 874-6386  
**E-mail:** OCA@como.gov  
**Web:** www.como.gov (Search: Diversity Celebration)