

# UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO Do the Write Thing!

Utah Board of Juvenile Justice \* Utah State Capitol Suite E330 \* SLC, UT 84114-2330 \* 801-538-1031 \* Fax: 801-538-1024

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Thank you for involving your 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the 2008 *Do the Write Thing* Challenge. All across America, students like yours are rising to the challenge of doing something to end youth violence. The *Do the Write Thing* Challenge gives middle school students an opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives and, in written form, communicate what they think should be done to change the culture of violence.

Personal responsibility is emphasized. By encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem, the program ultimately seeks to give them the opportunity to break the cycles of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge in Utah.

Please review the following materials concerning program rules, entry deadlines, judging criteria, classroom discussion, and student recognition before presenting the program to your students.

### Program Rules

- Students may use any form of written expression (e.g. essays, poems, plays or songs), as long as the language is positive and not derogatory. Students may submit only one entry per year. Each entry must be the work product of only one student.
- Student entries, at minimum, must address three questions: How has youth violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence?
- Entries should be approximately 500 to 1000 words in length. Written forms of expression such as poetry, that by their nature may be shorter, may contain fewer than 500 words.
- Entries must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8-1/2" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used and the pages should be numbered. Please paper clip, do not staple.
- Entries must be in English.
- If the student participant uses a quote or another person's materials in his or her entry, the entry must identify whose work is being used by citing the person's name and/or citing the source of the material. Writings based upon plagiarism will not be advanced in the judging process.
- Entries must have a Cover Sheet with the consent statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian.
- No personal information should appear on the body of the written entry.

- Entries without a signed Cover Sheet cannot be advanced in the judging process. (See attached Cover Sheet with the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement.)
- Editing for content, grammar or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted.
- A completed Teacher Survey (attached) must accompany all entries. Please note the total number of students in your classes that participated in the Challenge.
- ***Entries must be submitted with one photocopy of the writing paper-clipped to the original.***

### Submission Deadlines

Entries must be received, along with attached/signed Cover Sheets and completed Teacher Surveys, by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, January 21, 2008.** The address is:

Utah Board of Juvenile Justice  
 State Capitol Complex  
 East Office Building, Suite E330  
 PO Box 142330  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2330.

### Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged by Utah's *Do the Write Thing* Committee. Last year the committee included Third District Juvenile Court Judge Andrew Valdez, members of the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, Jack Stewart with Real Salt Lake, Olympic Silver Medalist Billy Schuffenhauer, Congressman Jim Matheson, Nadine Wimmer from KSL and others. Entries will be judged on the basis of content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions:

- How has youth violence affected my life?
- What are the causes of youth violence?
- What can I do about youth violence?

Grammar and spelling will not be used as criteria for judging entries.

Encourage your students to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence and offer specific suggestions about what they as individuals can do to reduce youth violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. *Students who share personal experiences about the impact of youth violence on their lives and the lives of their peers consistently receive top scores.* The panel of judges will be looking at how well your students present their views on these matters and scoring will be based on the following criteria:

- Category 1 ..... Question Responsiveness (0 – 25 points)
- Category 2 ..... Originality (0 – 30 points)
- Category 3 ..... Content (0 – 45 points)

## Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is not mandatory for participation in the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge. However, over the years we have found that participating students and their teachers gain much from the connections that result from exchanges about the impact of youth violence that occur in pre-writing classroom discussions. Teachers relate their amazement with the openness and honesty of classroom discussions. These discussions present excellent opportunities to identify and prevent youth problems before they reach crisis proportions.

Many teachers whose classes have participated in the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge have invited speakers knowledgeable about youth violence issues to lead pre-writing discussions. Other teachers have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about youth violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles which emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problems of youth violence, prove to be particularly useful.

On the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** website at [www.dtw.org](http://www.dtw.org) you will find the National Campaign to Stop Violence's Discussion Paper on the Causes of and Solutions for Youth Violence and other national resources. The Discussion Paper is based upon writings of National Finalists from 2000. Feel free to download and copy this material for your class or use any of the other materials available on this web site.

Additional information, including Utah's 2007 State Finalists book and several lesson plans, may be found at: [www.juvenile.utah.gov](http://www.juvenile.utah.gov).

Consider the following sample questions to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge:

- How does youth violence affect your daily life?
- Where are you confronted with youth violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you as an individual do to reduce youth violence in your community?

## STUDENT RECOGNITION

### Local Level:

Participating schools must submit all essays from each participating classroom to the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice for statewide competition. Students from local universities will score the entries, selecting the best from each region, and then forward them to the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. From those entries, the Board will select 12 finalist entries for VIP judging.

### State Level:

The Utah Board of Juvenile Justice hosts a recognition ceremony in late April to honor the 12 State Finalists. In addition to the twelve finalists, students' parents, teachers and principals will be invited to attend the recognition ceremony.

Two "National Finalists" will be announced at the recognition ceremony. The *Do the Write Thing* VIP Judges will select the boy and girl from Utah who submit the most thought provoking entries.

The Board will also publish the writing of all finalists and distribute the publication to community, business and governmental leaders as well as the national *Do the Write Thing Campaign*. This book will also be posted on the Board's web site.

### National Level:

The two National Finalists along with their teacher and one parent or guardian will be invited by the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** to attend the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge National Recognition Week in Washington, DC in July.

The primary sponsor, Kuwait-America Foundation, national sponsors and/or funding generated by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, will pay travel costs for each jurisdiction's "official delegation" to the National Recognition Week activities.

Last year's National Finalists met with the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Deputy Attorney General and with Members of Congress to discuss the problem of youth violence. Students were honored at an embassy reception hosted by the Ambassador of the United States from the State of Kuwait and a book of their writings was placed in the Library of Congress. At the National Recognition Ceremony in the House Caucus Room on Capitol Hill, last year's National Finalists read excerpts of their writings to a gathering of national leaders including key Senators and Representatives.

### Teacher Survey

*Complete the attached one page teacher survey, which provides the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** with information and statistics needed to administer the **Do the Write Thing Challenge**.* Essays submitted without the teacher survey will not be forwarded for scoring.

# UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO *Do the Write Thing!*

Thank you for participating in the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge. To have your entry considered for recognition, you and a parent or guardian must complete this Cover Sheet and sign the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement below.

Student's First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's School: \_\_\_\_\_ School's Phone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Phone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female

## **Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement**

The National Campaign to Stop Violence, and the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice (UBJJ), which sponsor the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge nationally and in Utah, will publish selected student writings and quotations in books and in discussion papers on youth violence both in print and electronic format. Before publishing your writing, the National Campaign and UBJJ require your written consent and the written consent of your parent or guardian.

Finalists will be invited to recognition events in Utah and or Washington DC where the media may be present. This may result in photographs, video and audio being recorded that may be broadcast through print, television, radio and internet.

If you and your parent/guardian agree to permit the National Campaign and UBJJ to publish your writing and use your photograph for promotional purposes please read the following statement and sign below:

We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to the National Campaign to Stop Violence and the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice so that it may be considered for recognition and published. We also understand that photographs or videos may be used for future promotional purposes.

### **Agreed:**

Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

# UTAH'S CHALLENGE TO Do the Write Thing!

## TEACHER SURVEY

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Home Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Home Phone\*(     ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions:

1. How many of your students submitted writings for the 2008 Challenge?

2. Did you have a classroom discussion about youth violence before your students prepared their writings for the 2008 Challenge? Yes  No  If so, how many of your students participated (were present) for the discussion? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What (in your opinion) were the top three causes of youth violence identified by your students in their discussions and writings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What (in your opinion) were the top three solutions for youth violence identified by your students in their discussions and writings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\* This information is very important. Much of the activity in the program takes place during the summer months and it is crucial that we be able to contact you. Thank you for helping your students participate in the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge.