

Prizes

Division One: 1st-5th grade

Certificates and Classroom Pizza Party

Division Two: 6th-8th grade

Classroom Essay — Pizza Party

-or-

Collaborative Essay — \$50

-or-

Individual Essay — \$50

Division Three: 9th-12th grade

Collaborative Essay — \$100

-or-

Individual Essay — \$100

Division Four: Adult

Individual Essay — \$100

Mission

It is the mission of Grand Rapids Community College to provide the community with learning opportunities that enable people to achieve their goals.

Vision

Grand Rapids Community College is a vibrant institution of higher education dedicated to enriching people's lives and contributing to the vitality of the community.

Values

- R Responsiveness
- A Accountability
- I Innovation
- D Diversity
- E Excellence
- R Respectfulness
- S Service

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Grand Rapids Community College is an equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, height, weight, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam Era veteran, and/or any other legally protected class not heretofore mentioned, in any of its educational programs and activities, including admissions and employment.

The above measures, in conjunction with other related state laws and the College's policies and procedures, will assure all individuals opportunity for consideration or redress of complaints of illegal discrimination. Equal Employment Opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act information may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources/Labor Relations & EEO, 404B CPP, 143 Bostwick Avenue NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503-3295. Telephone (616) 234-3972.

Grand Rapids Community College is a tobacco free campus; effective 11/20/2008.

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"THIS I BELIEVE" Community Essay Contest

Sponsored by
Grand Rapids Community College

Entry Deadline: Last Friday in March
Awards Announced: Second Week of May



The Contest

GRCC's version of the "This I Believe" essay series invites residents in the GRCC service area to write an essay derived mainly from a personal belief about COMMUNITY. The theme of this contest reflects the college's commitment to the community it serves. Our aim is to encourage literacy, creative thinking, and civic responsibility through writing.

The contest is modeled after National Public Radio's (NPR) "This I Believe" essay series. When NPR introduced the original "This I Believe" essay series in the 1950s, host Edward R. Murrow said, "Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent." Because the need is just as urgent today, our essay contest encourages all learners to share their philosophies and to explore their values.

Guidelines:

- I. Name the belief. If you can't name your belief about community in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about a belief.
- II. Tell a story. Ground your belief about community in the events of your life. Consider moments when your belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience of community in your workplace and family. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the topic of community and your beliefs about it.

Your essay may include personal reflection, examples, anecdotes, description, and/or details to support your belief about community.
- III. Be positive. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe.
- IV. Use first person. Use "we" if your essay is a collaboration; otherwise, avoid speaking in the editorial "we" and keep your essay about you by using "I."
- V. Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud several times. Each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.
- VI. If you use sources, you must cite and document them according to MLA guidelines and include a Works Cited page. Using a source may be helpful in providing a frame of reference to your personal story. Sources may include fiction, poetry, published personal essays, drama, biography, and autobiography.

Submission Details & Divisions

A separate cover sheet with the following information must accompany all entries:

- a. Author name(s)
- b. Essay division
- c. Essay type (classroom, collaborative, or individual)
- d. Name of school/college (if author is a student)
- e. Address, phone number, and e-mail address (Students should use school information where applicable.)

NOTE: Author name(s) should not appear anywhere on the essay itself.

Division One:

- a. Who: 1st-5th grades
- b. Type: One classroom essay, several collaborative essays (2-5 people), or individual essays
- c. Length: 30 word minimum – 1st-2nd grades;
40 word minimum – 3rd-4th grades;
75 word minimum – 5th grade
- d. Format: Must be written legibly or typed

If sources are used, essay must include a Works Cited page.

Division Two:

- a. Who: 6th-8th grades
- b. Type: One classroom essay, collaborative essays (2 people), or individual essays
- c. Length: 125 to 500 words
- d. Format: Must be typed

If sources are used, essay must include a Works Cited page.

Division Three:

- a. Who: 9th-12th grade
- b. Type: Collaborative essays (2 people), or individual essays
- c. Length: 400 to 500 words
- d. Format: Must be typed

If sources are used, essay must include a Works Cited page.

Division Four

- a. Who: Adult
- b. Type: Individual essays
- c. Length: 400 to 500 words
- d. Format: Must be typed

If sources are used, essay must include a Works Cited page.

*We're using NPR's maximum essay length of 500 words for all levels of our essay contest.

Submit essay by the deadline either in person or by mail, in an envelope with the division clearly marked.

In Person:

Delivered by 4 p.m., on the last Friday in March

English Department
502 Cook Hall
Essay Contest/Division

By Mail:

Postmarked by the last Friday in March

English Department
Essay Contest/Division
Grand Rapids Community College
143 Bostwick Avenue, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3295

Note: There will be ONE winning essay per Division

Judges reserve the right NOT to select a winning essay in any category.

Individuals related to judges and GRCC Faculty are prohibited from entering the contest.

All essays become the property of GRCC. GRCC will seek parental approval for minors before publishing their essays; otherwise, essays will be published anonymously.

Winners may be asked to read their winning essay at a GRCC public function. GRCC will seek parental approval for minors before inviting minors to read publicly.

Entries which do not meet the guidelines specified above will be disqualified.

No manuscripts will be returned.