THE SCARS LEFT ON ME WILL ALWAYS BE A REMINDER OF VIOLENCE....BUT I DO NOT LET THIS MAKE ME A VIOLENT PERSON. THE SCARS ON MY BODY REMIND ME THAT I AM A SURVIVOR.

CESSA GILLIAM, POLO PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

MY COACHES TAUGHT ME DISCIPLINE WITH LOVE, TO PARTICIPATE AND TO HAVE A FAMILY OUTSIDE OF THE WALLS OF MY BIOLOGICAL FAMILY.

SAGE PERSAD, OSCEOLA CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

I FOUND THAT EVEN THE BULLY GETS BULLIED, BUT THE SAD PART WAS SHE WAS GETTING BULLIED BY HER OWN FAMILY.

JOVONE DINNARD, JEAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL

I HAD A CHOICE TO RISK MY LIFE OR LIVE LIFE LONGER. IT IS HARD TO STOP BEING IN A GANG BECAUSE EVERYONE KNOWS ME OUT THERE ON THE STREET. TODAY, I MAKE THE CHOICE TO STAY AWAY FROM THE GANGS.

WILDER LOPEZ, LAKE WORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE 2017
The goal of the program is to raise awareness among middle school students about the harmful effects youth violence has on a person's physical, psychological, and emotional wellbeing. The program seeks to reduce violence in our homes, schools, and communities by encouraging students to make a personal commitment to help solve this serious public health crisis.

Complete information about the national program is available online at www.dtwt.org and the Palm Beach County program at www.dothewritethingpalmbeach.com.

There are approximately 36,000 students enrolled in Palm Beach County's 34 traditional public middle schools. We are pleased to report that of those 36,000 middle school students 30,575 accepted the Challenge and courageously answered the three questions in writing. Even more students participated in classroom discussions. Thirty-two of 34 traditional middle schools had at least 50% of their students participate in the Challenge, and each of those 32 schools was eligible to advance its “Top 10” best students to the next level of judging. Additionally, the “Top Students” from two fully participating non-traditional schools were advanced. All 320 student essays are published in this book.

Since its inception, over a million students have committed to do something about the problem of youth violence in our communities by participating in Do the Write Thing Challenge.

All 320 essays in this book were reviewed by several panels of highly committed and accomplished “Reading & Ranking” committees who narrowed the submissions to five boys and five girls chosen as the overall student finalists for Palm Beach County.

The judges represent a cross-section of Palm Beach County educators, attorneys, law enforcement personnel, members of the judiciary, and parents committed to help solving the epidemic of youth violence in our communities.

It is our great privilege to send one boy and one girl participant as guests of the local committee to serve as Ambassadors from Palm Beach County at the national recognition ceremony this summer. They will join their fellow Do the Write Thing Challenge Ambassadors from across the country and have the honor of meeting with national leaders to discuss the issue of youth violence.

Do the Write Thing Challenge was established by the National Campaign to Stop Violence (“NCSV”). The Challenge is administered by the national office and by the local steering committee in each participating region. NCSV encourages individuals and businesses to make a difference in the lives of America’s youth. If you would like to help NCSV by generously donating your time or resources, please contact the National Campaign to Stop Violence at 2021 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone: 202-293-4483 or 800-256-0235.

You can contact the local steering committee via its chairman, Bill Bone, Esq., at 550 South Quadrille Boulevard, West Palm Beach, FL 33401. Telephone: 561-832-0623.

DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE

2017 PALM BEACH COUNTY

Do the Write Thing Challenge offers Palm Beach County middle school students a supportive forum to share their thoughts and feelings about how youth violence affects their life and what they can personally do to help eliminate it.

The program is comprised of a classroom discussion and a Challenge for students to address three important questions about youth violence through a personal essay:

**How has youth violence affected my life?**

**What are the causes of youth violence?**

**What can I do to reduce youth violence?**

The following localities are currently active in Do the Write Thing Challenge:

Los Angeles, CA; Colorado; West Palm Beach, Miami, FL; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Detroit, MI; Helena, MT; Las Vegas, NV; Newark, NJ; New York; Charlotte, NC; Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, PA; Jackson, Memphis, TN; Austin, Beaumont, Browsville, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Odessa, San Antonio, Victoria, TX; Utah; Washington, D.C.; Milwaukee, WI.
The entire ceremony will be filmed for broadcast on The Education Network (T.E.N.) on Comcast Channel 234 and 235 at the end of the month.

T.E.N. is the television station for the School District of Palm Beach County. For broadcast times, contact the station at (561)738-2926.

DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE

2017 PALM BEACH COUNTY RECOGNITION CEREMONY
The Expo Center at the South Florida Fairgrounds
Thursday, May 11th, 2017

PROGRAM

BILL BONE, ESQ.
Trial Lawyer with Larmoyeux & Bone
Palm Beach County Chairman, National Campaign to Stop Violence

J. PEPE FANJUL, JR.
Executive Vice President, Florida Crystals Corporation
Palm Beach County Sponsor

DR. ROBERT AVOSSA
Superintendent, Palm Beach County Schools

HONORABLE RIC BRADSHAW
Palm Beach County Sheriff

HONORABLE DAVE ARONBERG
State Attorney 15th Judicial Circuit Court, Palm Beach County

HONORABLE CAREY HAUGHWOUT
Public Defender 15th Judicial Circuit Court, Palm Beach County

2017 DO THE WRITE THING VIDEO PREMIERE
Palm Beach Film Institute, J. William Metzger, Chairman and
Mental Imagery Films, Producers Raymond Knudsen and Wally Aime.

I-CHANGE THE WORLD
A Montage Performed by the Do The Write Thing Ensemble

Ensemble Performers:
Brian Edgecomb, Jeanine Gangloff-Levy, Deltoya Goodman, Charlie Alguera, Justin Sims and Renee Elizabeth Turner
Stage Manager: Tim Bowman

Created from the writings of the following students:
Casey Hudspeth, Cheyenne Vil, Hannah Baldwin, Kerri Ann Jones, Alyss Shirley, Martin Mejia, Aaron Hayes, Angel Ceniceros,
Rida Talukdar, Ayah Jaber, Tre Hands, Natalie Salvador, Ali Mujahid, Brian Mercier, Shia Rozier, Karina Velasquez, Justin Calix,
Damian Bastias, Tamara Hislop, Amanda Perez, Meranda Rodgers, Irene Mendez, Alexis Upson-Gutierrez, Dyani Beraza, Kai Dawson,

Special thanks to Saint Andrews Episcopal Church, Lake Worth
for their generous donation of time and space for rehearsals.

The entire ceremony will be filmed for broadcast on The Education Network (T.E.N.) on Comcast Channel 234 and 235 at the end of the month.
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## PARTICIPATING MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND TOP 10 STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bak Middle School of the Arts</th>
<th>Sally Rozanski, Principal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Tyler, Coordinator</td>
<td>Saanvi Agrawal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah Baldwin</td>
<td>Skyler Hancock</td>
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<td>Crede Janson</td>
<td>Abby Judah</td>
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<td>Taylor Kent</td>
<td>Katherine McCabe</td>
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<td>Natalie Maloon</td>
<td>Joshua Smith</td>
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<td>Joshua Smith</td>
<td>Cheyenne Vil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bear Lakes Middle School</td>
<td>Kirk Howell, Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathamba Miller-Anderson, Coordinator</td>
<td>Keane Andradra</td>
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<td>Aqsa Batool</td>
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<td>Amanda Martin</td>
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<td>Boca Raton Middle School</td>
<td>Peter Slack, Principal</td>
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<td>Joshua Pack, Coordinator</td>
<td>Maria Cordeiro</td>
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<td>Zoe Diaz-Blox</td>
<td>Allison Fleming</td>
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<td>Jack Lull</td>
<td>Olivia Schmitt</td>
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<td>Hannah Tuttle</td>
<td>Carver Middle School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiwana Alexander- Prophete, Principal</td>
<td>Stephen Smith, Coordinator</td>
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<td>Jhoselin Batista</td>
<td>Zoe Bell</td>
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<td>Ayla Gonzalez-Salinas</td>
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<td>Christa Mcauliffe Middle School</td>
<td>Jeff Silverman, Principal</td>
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<td>Penni Lee, Coordinator</td>
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<td>Samantha Winkoff</td>
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<td>Denise O'Connor, Principal</td>
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<td>Kawana Burrell, Coordinator</td>
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<td>Howell L. Watkins Middle School</td>
<td>Dr. Don Hoffman, Principal</td>
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<td>Shauna Turner, Coordinator</td>
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<td>Leah Gedeon</td>
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PARTICIPATING MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND TOP 10 STUDENTS

Lake Shore Middle School
Anthony Lockhart, Principal
Brian Fitzpatrick, Coordinator
Adolfo Alcantar
Aaron Davis
Dalia Garcia
George Faith
Kenya Intervol
Michela Julio
Mya Rodriguez
Jennifer Simms
Kaelani Toledo
E’nariyah Williams

Lake Worth Middle School
Mike Williams, Principal
Risa Della Rocco, Coordinator
Jonathan Carrasco
Chimindu Ejidike
Manuela Gomez-Abreu
Wildar Lopez
Alexia McKay
Daniella Munoz
Emily Ramallo
Jiang Seeraram
Ariana Villatoro

Lantana Middle School
Ed Burke, Principal
Christina Kenny, Coordinator
Andrina Bleus
Annajelis Delgado
Andrea Duarte
Jason Lincoln
Yaquelin Jose-Lorenzo
Makenzie-Anne-Louis Linfield
Kendall Lovelace
Shelby Oakley
Daisy Perez
Meranda Rodgers

LC Swain Middle School
James Thomas, Principal
Cinnamon Oates, Coordinator
Mahmuda Akhtar
Humaira Ashrati
Jamie Buzzell
Jeanine Darius
Jair Flores
Tamarra Hislop
Hancyca Lafate
Yaxciri Palacios
Allan Perodomo
Rudasya Pratt

Okeechobee Middle School
Dr. David Samore, Principal
Tamara Smith, Coordinator
Isabella Alvarez
Justin Calix
Fernanda Giron
Mariana Gonzalez
Anaise Guzman
Jessica Leon
Martin Mejia
Natasha Montoya
Amanda Perez
Rida Talukdar
Mya Rodriguez

Omni Middle School
Gerald Riopelle, Principal
Dennis Pfeil, Coordinator
Daren Basel
Sam Chaskin
Isabella Hernandez

Omni Middle School con’t
Hannah Khalil
Brianna Levine
Alex Lotz
Natalie Salvador
Emma Serrie
Deirdre Steele
Leah Zeledon

Osceola Creek Middle School
Nicole Daly, Principal
Lisa Simpson, Coordinator
Tanner Basso
Macy Brockelbank
Daniel Filosa
Takayah Howard
Levente Lawrence
Sage Persad
Nathan Purbaugh
Kali Shano
Joseph Shipe

Pahokee Middle School
Dwayne Dennard, Principal
Sonja Sato-Ramirez, Coordinator
Dyan Beraza
Ashunti Chappell
Guadalupe Cortes
Rabia Diya
Victoria Guerra
Isabel Prieto
Lilliana Rodriguez
Alysa Samuels
Tasnia Tabasum
Shamila Tonima

Palm Springs Middle School
Sandra Jinks, Principal
Maribol Collis, Coordinator
Karla Alom
Stephanie Bruzon
Hanny Delgado
Alexandra Diaz
Farisha Jalal
Andrew Kingsbury
Daniela Pelaez
Joshua Rodriguez
Melissa Rodriguez
Gabriel Villaneua

Polo Park Middle School
Ann Clark, Principal
Craig Corments, Coordinator
Haley Bustraan
Sarah Garfield
Cessa Gilliam
Milan Jean-Louis
Bruny Jaisal
Danna Magdaleno
Fernanda Morales
Kelsey Payne
Anthony Petrurelli
Isabella Smith

Roosevelt Middle School
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Sequoia Powell, Coordinator
Matthew Carney Jr.
Deven Chapman
Christina Chen
Mohammad Chowdhuy
Tae Hands
Makaylah McCray
Briana McFarlane

Roosevelt Middle School con’t
Maya Pandey
Shia Rozier
Krisha Sorna

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Sarah Armada, Coordinator
Amanda Arthurs
Sophia Balboa
Angel Ceniceros
Stacey Daris
Jaclyn Egan
Katelyn Fecho
Olvin Matute
Jeff Saint-Fleur
Ayleen Trindade
Morgan Walker

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Martha Griffith, Coordinator
Vanessa Battles
Carolina Bull
Ashlee Cravero
Sirius Crumby
Alana Ferguson
Trinity Hoyt
Carlin Nguyen
Hanna Pinino
Angela Rojas
Kenneth Toppin

Wellington Landings Middle School
Blake Bennett, Principal
Carla Lewis, Coordinator
Isabella Anise
Cynthia Calderon
Lilliana Campos
Kai Dawson
Valery Long
Micaiai Morris
Kelsiyah Roberson
Kate Sarto-Lanza
Leonardo Spears
Jabar Williams

Western Pines Middle School
Robert Hatcher, Principal
Cheryl Sall, Coordinator
Wyatt Anderson
Gabrielle Bradford
La Britteney Carey
Brianna DeMoura
Armand Lopez
Catalina Martinez
Alani Milledge
Jeremy Sorell
Jessica Talley
Storm Tackett

Woodlands Middle School
Jeff Eassa, Principal
Patrick Organ, Coordinator
Kyle Boone
Ashon Charles
Danielle Cora
Kyle Edison
Ashley Flanagan
Tanisha Louis
Riley McClanahan
Margo Mandell
Irene Mendez
Natalia Oviedo

Lake Worth Middle School
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Alysa Samuels
Tasnia Tabasum
Shamila Tonima

Palm Springs Middle School
Sandra Jinks, Principal
Maribol Collis, Coordinator
Karla Alom
Stephanie Bruzon
Hanny Delgado
Alexandra Diaz
Farisha Jalal
Andrew Kingsbury
Daniela Pelaez
Joshua Rodriguez
Melissa Rodriguez
Gabriel Villaneua

Polo Park Middle School
Ann Clark, Principal
Craig Corments, Coordinator
Haley Bustraan
Sarah Garfield
Cessa Gilliam
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Kelsey Payne
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Moneek McTier, Principal
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Matthew Carney Jr.
Deven Chapman
Christina Chen
Mohammad Chowdhuy
Tae Hands
Makaylah McCray
Briana McFarlane

Roosevelt Middle School con’t
Maya Pandey
Shia Rozier
Krisha Sorna

Tradewinds Middle School
Becky Subin, Principal
Sarah Armada, Coordinator
Amanda Arthurs
Sophia Balboa
Angel Ceniceros
Stacey Daris
Jaclyn Egan
Katelyn Fecho
Olvin Matute
Jeff Saint-Fleur
Ayleen Trindade
Morgan Walker

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Jabar Williams

Western Pines Middle School
Robert Hatcher, Principal
Cheryl Sall, Coordinator
Wyatt Anderson
Gabrielle Bradford
La Britteney Carey
Brianna DeMoura
Armand Lopez
Catalina Martinez
Alani Milledge
Jeremy Sorell
Jessica Talley
Storm Tackett

Woodlands Middle School
Jeff Eassa, Principal
Patrick Organ, Coordinator
Kyle Boone
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National Campaign to Stop Violence
Washington, DC
2017 “TOP 10” PALM BEACH COUNTY FINALISTS

Selected from theFully Participating Middle Schools in Palm Beach County

BOYS

Ambassador
Sage Persad, 7th Grade
Osceola Creek Middle School

1st Runner Up
Omar Shalabi, 7th Grade
Howell L. Watkins Middle School

2nd Runner Up
Corye Readon, Jr., 6th Grade
Don Estridge Middle School

3rd Runner Up
Damian Bastias, 7th Grade
Crestwood Middle School

4th Runner Up
Wilder Lopez, 8th Grade
Lake Worth Middle School

GIRLS

Ambassador
Cessa Gilliam, 6th Grade
Polo Park Middle School

1st Runner Up
Jovone Dinnard, 8th Grade
Jaega Middle School

2nd Runner Up
Casey Hudspeth, 8th Grade
Eagles Landing Middle School

3rd Runner Up
Hannah Baldwin, 7th Grade
Bak Middle School of the Arts

4th Runner Up
Isabella Alvarez, 8th Grade
Okeeheelee Middle School

The Ambassadors from Palm Beach County

The First Place girl and First Place boy Challenge participants earn a trip to Washington, D.C., representing Palm Beach County as Do the Write Thing Ambassadors at the national recognition week ceremonies held July 22nd through July 26th this summer. Ambassadors are accompanied by a parent and a teacher from their school. All major expenses for the Palm Beach County delegation such as travel and lodging are covered by the local committee. The National Campaign to Stop Violence is grateful to Florida Crystals Corporation, the William H. Pitt Foundation, the Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office Trust Fund, Thomas S. Kenan, Susan & James Patterson, The Mary Alice Fortin Foundation, Kuwait America Foundation, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, Marriott Foundation, Southwest Airlines, and the law firm of Larmoyeux & Bone for helping to underwrite all the expenses of the Palm Beach County Do the Write Thing Challenge.

The Published Writings of the Top Student Submissions

The essay of each Ambassador together with the essays of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th runner-ups for both boys and girls appear at the front of this book. Thereafter, all Challenge essays are listed in alphabetical order by school.

In an effort to honor the stylistic decisions of each student-author and in recognition of the fact that the Challenge is more about identifying solutions to the problem of youth violence than it is about writing skill, the essays published in this book have not been edited for grammar, spelling, or structure. Students were judged solely on the content of their thoughts and ideas in response to these three Challenge questions:

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

Congratulations to Every Student who Participated in this Program!
## 2016 FINALISTS

### BOY
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Quinton Williams, Howell L. Watkins Middle School
- **1st Runner Up**
  Jaydon Hood, Crestwood Middle School
- **2nd Runner Up**
  Samuel Kassel, Boca Raton Middle School
- **3rd Runner Up**
  Christian Nakotey, John F. Kennedy Middle School
- **4th Runner Up**
  Devin Locke, Western Pines Middle School

### GIRL
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Kirsten Brown, Don Estridge High Tech Middle School
- **1st Runner Up**
  Helen Gutierrez, Palm Springs Middle School
- **2nd Runner Up**
  Celina Phal, Loggers Run Middle School
- **3rd Runner Up**
  Emily Briceno, Conniston Middle School
- **4th Runner Up**
  Bailey Nathan, Independence Middle School

## 2015 FINALISTS

### BOY
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Colby Guy, Watson B. Duncan Middle School
- **1st Runner Up**
  Chad-Aaron Walker, Western Pines Middle School
- **2nd Runner Up**
  Michael Cevallos, Okeechobee Middle School
- **3rd Runner Up**
  Alphonse Alfred, Emerald Cove Middle School
- **4th Runner Up**
  Edward “Scotty” Brooker, Omni Middle School

### GIRL
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Maya Monson, Independence Middle School
- **1st Runner Up**
  Zakiya Hobbs, John F. Kennedy Middle School
- **2nd Runner Up**
  Sydney Levy, Boca Raton Middle School
- **3rd Runner Up**
  Catherine Hook, Don Estridge High Tech Middle School
- **4th Runner Up**
  Annie Wu, Congress Middle School

## 2014 FINALISTS

### BOY
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Michael Lesh, Don Estridge High Tech Middle School
- **1st Runner Up**
  Dakota Downs, Pahokee Middle School
- **2nd Runner Up**
  Keimoni Hunter, John F. Kennedy Middle School
- **3rd Runner Up**
  Josue Rendon, L. C. Swain Middle School
- **4th Runner Up**
  Jamarian Green, Lake Shore Middle School

### GIRL
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Kennedy Thomas, Crestwood Middle School
- **1st Runner Up**
  Kaitlynn Adams, Conniston Middle School
- **2nd Runner Up**
  Caira Palmer, Lantana Middle School
- **3rd Runner Up**
  Patricia Willoughby, Christa McAuliffe Middle School
- **4th Runner Up**
  Manula Leyva, Boca Raton Middle School

## 2013 FINALISTS

### BOY
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Brandon Schloss, Okeechobee Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  Coltrane MacKendrick, BAK Middle School of the Arts
- **3rd Place**
  Noah Friedman, Western Pines Middle School

### GIRL
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  Della Gaylor, Okeechobee Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  Desirae Merrit, Western Pines Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  Joy Sohn, BAK Middle School of the Arts
### 2012 Finalists

**Boy**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - David Dunleavy, Don Estridge High Tech Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Nathaniel Sybron, Howell L. Watkins Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Christopher Burrett, Watson B. Duncan Middle School

**Girl**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Ashley Coons, Western Pines Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Melanie Camejo, Lake Worth Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Joy Sohn, BAK Middle School of the Arts

### 2011 Finalists

**Boy**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Jacob Wesson, BAK Middle School of the Arts
- **2nd Place**
  - Nathanael Carman, Osceola Creek Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Robert (RJ) Brown, Western Pines Middle School

**Girl**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Kaaza Lightbourne, Congress Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Kira Ogburn, BAK Middle School of the Arts
- **3rd Place**
  - Candice Arthur, Lake Worth Middle School

### 2010 Finalists

**Boy**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Maxx Melanson, Boca Raton Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Christian Coury, Watson B. Duncan Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Chad Bonincontri, Western Pines Middle School

**Girl**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Jessica Stone, Palm Springs Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Joelisha Banfield, Osceola Creek Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Vanessa Guerrero-Cruz, Christa McAuliffe Middle School

### 2009 Finalists

**Boy**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Christian Correa, Palm Springs Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Roy Brown, Tradewinds Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Brandon Ives, Osceola Creek Middle School

**Girl**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Kaaza Lightbourne, Congress Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Kira Ogburn, BAK Middle School of the Arts
- **3rd Place**
  - Destiny Martinez, Omni Middle School

### 2008 Finalists

**Boy**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Nicholas Galarza, Congress Middle School
- **2nd Place**
  - Thomas Baker, Watson B. Duncan Middle School
- **3rd Place**
  - Ryan Roy, Congress Middle School

**Girl**
- **1st Place Ambassador**
  - Madeleine Kaye, BAK Middle School of the Arts
- **2nd Place**
  - Caroline Sans, BAK Middle School of the Arts
- **3rd Place**
  - Bridgette Gamble, Palm Springs Middle School
Few things motivate and leave an indelible impression on young people like publically acknowledging and handsomely rewarding their hard work. Through the generosity of Florida Crystals Corporation, the Do the Write Thing Challenge is able to acknowledge and reward Challenge participants who have written exceptionally inspirational essays about youth violence. The Top 10 Challenge participants, their parents, and teachers from each of the participating Palm Beach County middle schools are invited to attend the recognition luncheon on May 11th, 2017. The recognition luncheon as well as the Palm Beach County Ambassadors’ trip to Washington, D.C. for the national recognition week were made possible through the generous financial support of Florida Crystals Corporation. In addition, we are especially honored and grateful for the tireless efforts of Mrs. and Mr. J. Pepe Fanjul, Jr. in organizing the Do the Write Thing Challenge for the students of Palm Beach County. Florida Crystals Corporation is committed to producing eco-friendly organic and natural sugars. As evidence of its sincere commitment, it is America’s first and only producer of certified organic sugar that is grown and harvested in the U.S., and it operates the largest renewable energy facility of its kind in North America, providing clean energy for its operations as well as tens of thousands of area homes. Florida Crystals Corporation is headquartered in Palm Beach County, Florida.

Each middle school principal whose Challenge participation rate for his or her student body was at least 50% received a $500 gift from The William H. Pitt Foundation, Inc. We thank the Foundation for underwriting these grants. The William H. Pitt Foundation, Inc. is headquartered in Palm Beach, Florida. We are grateful to foundation President Pauline Pitt for her support.

The Top 10 essays from each participating school are published in this book so that anyone interested in the issue of youth violence has the opportunity to see what local middle school students think and how they feel about the topic. We would like to thank the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office Law Enforcement Trust Fund for covering the total cost of this book. Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to Sheriff Ric Bradshaw and his entire office for their unwavering commitment to the Do the Write Thing Challenge program. Captain Michael Kirschner and Sgt. Matthew Lavigna deserve special recognition for their volunteer efforts that went well beyond the call of duty. Finally, we thank our typesetter, Louise Hildestad; Patti and Bill Vitale and their staff Susan Smith, Eric Gillespie, Walter Funk and Larry Buete at Vital Printing Corp. for their many contributions to this book.

We are enormously grateful for the generous financial support and dedication of the law firm of Larmoyeux & Bone, which underwrites all the administrative expenses associated with organizing the Do the Write Thing Challenge in Palm Beach County. We would like to recognize the extraordinary volunteer work of founding partner, Bill Bone, Esq., along with Brian LaBadie who serves as an Investigator with the firm and the 2017 Program Coordinator for the Challenge. Additional support provided by Elsa Martinez, Pedro Martinez Jr., Lissett Martinez, Aaron Sambeli, Kylie Sambeli, Luke Sambeli, Nate Johnson, Tajae Morgan, Jorge DeLeon, Keely Saemmer, Genesis Hernandez, Miriam LaBadie, Brianna LaBadie, Brandon LaBadie and “Dolly” LaBadie.

We thank Thomas S. Kenan for his financial contribution; and Susan and James Patterson for their financial contribution and advice. Mr. Patterson has created more enduring fictional characters than any other novelist writing today with his Alex Cross, Michael Bennett, Women’s Murder Club, Private, NYPD Red, Daniel X, Maximum Ride, and the Middle School series. And we thank The Mary Alice Fortin Foundation for their financial contribution. The Fortin Foundation has been extremely important to the civic life of Palm Beach County, first under the direction of Mary Alice Fortin and now with the involvement of her children and grandchildren.

We also thank these organizations and volunteers: The School District of Palm Beach County for putting this program into the middle schools and especially Dr. Robert Avossa, Superintendent; Diana Fedderman, Director of Secondary Education; Kim Mazauskas, Bullying Prevention/Intervention Coordinator; Palm Beach County Youth Services Department and Tammy Fields, Director, for their experience working with the issues of youth violence; The Education Network (T.E.N.), especially Station Manager Dave McKinley, Frank Gorora and Jose Merced for filming and broadcasting the recognition ceremony; The Palm Beach Film Institute, its Chairman J. William Metzger and Mental Imagery Films Producers Wally Aime and Raymond Knudsen for filming and editing our special video about the 2017 program; Wellington Hospitality Group especially Aaron and Julie Menitoff and The Expo Center at the South Florida Fairgrounds, especially Annabell Manners and Alex Rodriguez for helping to make our recognition luncheon an unforgettable event; Elaine Weber and Elaine Weber Designs, Inc. for creating the original cover design of this book.
The judging process was a tremendously time consuming undertaking that simply would not have been possible without the assistance of all our wonderful volunteers, teachers, administrators, and staff of the participating middle schools together with the members of the local steering committee. Due to the efforts of everyone involved, each student who participated in the Challenge had his or her essay read, ranked, and judged.

We are grateful to Captain Michael Kirschner, Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office Community Service Division, for serving as Chairman of the Boy’s Judging Committee and to Lynn Powell, Esq., Palm Beach County Office of the State Attorney, for serving as Co-Chairs for the Girl’s Judging Committee. The advice and wisdom of these people is reflected in every aspect of selecting the finalists and the Palm Beach County Ambassadors.

Additional organizations and individuals involved in reading, ranking and judging

Palm Beach County Office of the State Attorney: especially Honorable Dave Aronberg, Chief of the Juvenile Division Lynn Powell, Esq. and their team of volunteers: Adair Young, Cathy Fulton, Christine Vaughn, Ellen Mark, Assistant State Attorney Emily Walters, Erminia Cain, Assistant State Attorney Laura Fisher, Mika Weerasinghe, Mark Seaton, Rosemary Deckert, Assistant State Attorney Wendy Borrego, Lana Ann Marsh, Lee Brewer, Linda Moberg, Linda Sabol, Mary Ann Senator, Assistant State Attorney Monique Wilson, Assistant State Attorney Lynn Mindlin, Assistant State Attorney Che Pardon, Patty Isola, Lois Williams, Taylor Welling, Assistant State Attorney Cheo Reid, Michelle Gran, Assistant State Attorney Benjamin Baxter, Kathy Aguirre, Assistant State Attorney Andres Amon, Katelyn Primich, Chelsea Pearce, Raymond Dudek, Assistant State Attorney Josh Dockus, Leslie Eschave, Assistant State Attorney Laura Laurie and Taylor Travis.

Palm Beach County Office of the Public Defender: especially Honorable Carey Haughwout and her Program Coordinators Jennifer Loyless and Schnelle Tonge and their team of volunteers: Jasmine Hope, Ashley Zuckerman, Kylie Marcus, Matt Blust, Tim Wang, Ikram Ally, Amneit Mand, Jordan Holmes, Destiny Fullwood, Nora Gay, Tyler Obenauf and Veronica Hazzard.

Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office: especially Sheriff Ric Bradshaw and Captain Michael Kirschner and their support team: Lieutenant Matthew Lavigna, Sergeant Adam Avey, Sergeant Roshawn Baker, Deputy Sheriff Brittany DiStefano, Deputy Sheriff Joshua Dixon, Deputy Sheriff Marco Flores, Deputy Sheriff Chris Gannon, Deputy Sheriff Martin Gareau, Deputy Sheriff Gregory Gerbs, Deputy Sheriff Michael Kelly, Deputy Sheriff Terence Lee, Deputy Sheriff Gregory Lynch, Deputy Sheriff Brendan Maduri, Deputy Sheriff Karly Miller, Deputy Sheriff Stephen Miller, Deputy Sheriff Trevor Mock, Deputy Sheriff Alexander Perez, Deputy Sheriff Ryan Sanders, Deputy Sheriff Dalmino Simmons, Deputy Sheriff Rudolph Roche and Deputy Sheriff Albert Tejada.

Florida Crystals Corporation: especially Executive Vice President J. Pepe Fanjul Jr., and his support team at the Palm Beach County headquarters: Carmen Gibby, Chris Winterling, Lucia Meade, Roe Vieira, Lissette Saballos, Caroline Villanueva, Jose Miranda, Erik Atkinson, Michael Bates, Angela Serrano, James Warnke, Daniel Falero and Gabriel Ferrer.

The Office of Congresswoman Lois Frankel: 22nd Congressional District and especially Felicia Goldstein and Charity Lewis along with their support team: Jenny Ceasar, Tina Marciano and Nancy Germansky

The School District of Palm Beach County: especially Superintendent Dr. Robert Avossa, and Diana Fedderman, Director of Secondary Education and their support team: Kerry Emery and Deborah Millien.

Department of Safe Schools: especially Kim Mazauskas, Bullying Prevention and Intervention Coordinator.

Palm Beach County Youth Services Department: especially Youth Services Director Tammy Fields and her team of volunteers: Tamika Kramer, Stacey King, Rebecca Krogman, Laurie Pine Farber, Tanya Tibby, Amanda Terrell, Patty Hindle, Crystal Batista, John Harre, Aline Jesus Rafi and Ike Powell III.
DO THE WRITE THING HIGHLIGHTS

Pepe, Jr. and Lourdes Fanjul with 2016 Ambassadors Quinton Williams, Kirsten Brown and Bill Bone, Esq.

Congresswoman Lois Frankel

Lynn Powell, Esq.

PBSO Chief Deputy Michael Gauger and Tammy Fields

Brian LaBadie, Anthony “Buckets” Blakes, National Chairman Dan Q. Callister, Esq.

Schnelle Tonge, Esq. and Kim Mazauskas

Honorable Dave Aronberg speaking at 2015 DTWT event

Actress Nia Long speaking at the 2016 National Recognition Dinner.

Brandon LaBadie, Dolly LaBadie with 2016 Ambassador Kirsten Brown at the Kuwait Embassy in Washington DC

All ten 2016 DTWT finalists with Dr. Robert Avossa, Sheriff Ric Bradshaw, Bill Bone and Pepe Fanjul, Jr.

Captain Michael Kirschner and Ronald Alvarez, Esq.
esteemed volunteer judges who devoted many hours to reading. We are enormously grateful for the selfless commitment of our committees who narrowed the submissions to five boys and five of highly committed and accomplished “Reading & Ranking” student essays. All 320 essays in this book were reviewed by several panels to do something about the problem of youth violence in our communities by participating in the Do the Write Thing Challenge. Since its inception, over a million students have committed themselves to help solve this serious public health crisis. The program is comprised of a classroom discussion and a Challenge for students to address three important questions about youth violence through a personal essay:

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

The program seeks to reduce violence in our homes, schools, and communities by encouraging students to make a personal commitment to help solve this serious public health crisis. If you would like to help NCSV by generously donating your time or resources, please contact

DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE SUPPORTERS

Organizers and Principal Sponsors
Lourdes & Pepe Fanjul, Jr.

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Honorable Paulette Burdick with Palm Beach County School Board Representatives Karen Brill, Erica Whitfield and Chuck Shaw, Chairman

Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw

Palm Beach County State Attorney Honorable Dave Aronberg

Superintendent Dr. Robert Avossa, West Palm Beach Mayor Jeri Muoio, Anne and J. William Metzger

Jennifer Loyless, Honorable Carey Haughwout and Charity Lewis.

Honorable Paulette Burdick with Palm Beach County School Board Representatives Karen Brill, Erica Whitfield and Chuck Shaw, Chairman

SPECIAL THANKS

I-CHANGE THE WORLD
A Montage Performed by the Do The Write Thing Ensemble

Ensemble Performers:

Brian Edgecomb

Jeanine Gangloff-Levy

Renee Elizabeth Turner

Stage Manager Tim Bowman

Justin Sims

Deltoyia Goodman

Charlie Alguera
Florida Crystals, which is headquartered in Palm Beach County, is the world’s largest producer of refined sugar. The company and the Fanjul Family have underwritten all the costs of the Recognition Luncheon and the costs to send the delegation of student Ambassadors and parents and teachers to Washington, D.C. this summer.

www.floridacrystals.com

The William H. Pitt Foundation was established in 1986 to benefit deserving youth primarily through education. The Foundation rewards middle schools that participate in this program by giving a “no strings attached” grant to every principal who voluntarily convinces at least 50% of the students in his or her school to participate in “Do the Write Thing” Challenge.

www.pbso.org

The law firm of Larmoyeux & Bone helps injured people get their lives back together in legal cases throughout the State of Florida. Bill Bone and Chris Larmoyeux, with over 50 years of combined experience, have donated the administrative costs of “Do the Write Thing” Challenge in Palm Beach County.

www.lb-law.com