



Diocese of Allentown

Stand Up For Life



Essay Contest 2017

**JOINTLY SPONSORED BY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS AND
THE OFFICE OF PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL CONCERNS**

The *Stand Up For Life Essay* contest is a voluntary contest open to all students in grades seven through twelve in public and private schools in the Allentown Diocese, as well as home-schooled students at those grade levels.

Four winners will be chosen in each deanery, a first and second place winner in each division. From these deanery winners the top four essays will be chosen and the winners awarded the following prizes:

**JUNIOR DIVISION
(Grades 7 and 8)**

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1 st prize	\$125
2 nd prize	\$75

**SENIOR DIVISION
(Grades 9 through 12)**

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1 st prize	\$200
2 nd prize	\$100

All winners and their parents will be honored at an awards ceremony. The date will be announced in the coming weeks.

SENIOR DIVISION THEME

High Schools and Planned Parenthood

Recently there have been “news” reports of public high schools attempting to setup Reproductive Health Resource Centers in their schools. One of these proposals happens to be close to home. An article published in May, in the Reading Eagle, speaks of Reading High School’s desire to contract with AccessMatters, an organization based in Philadelphia to oversee the program while Planned Parenthood Keystone would manage daily operations. Funding would come from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, with no cost to the district. The center would provide students with confidential counseling services, condoms and referrals to the Planned Parenthood office in Reading for other services, including all other forms of birth control and testing for sexually transmitted diseases. To note, the Planned Parenthood Office in Reading a few blocks away from the school, provides abortion services.

Newspaper Article from Reading Eagle:

READING, PA — Reading Eagle | Reading High School

Reading School Board puts reproductive health resource center vote on hold

By Lea Skene

The Reading School Board decided Wednesday to delay voting on a proposal for a reproductive health resource center at Reading High School until next month. AccessMatters, an organization based in Philadelphia, would oversee the program, while Planned Parenthood Keystone would manage daily operations. Funding would come from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. There would be no cost to the school district.

The center would provide students with confidential counseling services, condoms and referrals to the Planned Parenthood office in Reading for other services, including all other forms of birth control and testing for sexually transmitted diseases. After being discussed at a committee of the whole meeting last week, the proposal had seemed ripe for a decision at the board meeting, but the board continued the discussion instead.

A few members voiced concern at what they see as a lack of quantifiable evidence that the program would deliver desired results. Brian Buerke said he wanted to see data such as reduced rates of pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease because maybe the district should consider a different program that would be more effective.

Other board members challenged his request. Robin Costenbader Jacobson said: "Not all sharing of knowledge and education is measurable. Children being prepared to make any decision based on information and knowledge is invaluable, especially in breaking the generational cycles of learned behavior and lifestyle. I'm not going to leave this subject as long as I'm on the board. I see too many young women who end up pregnant and do not have the opportunity to continue their education." Ultimately the board voted to speak more with program organizers at their committee of the whole meeting June 21 before voting on the program at the June 28 regular meeting. Board member Manny Guzman, who supports the center, called the delay "an absolute disservice to our kids."

Respond to this article in the form of a persuasive essay which persuades the school board to vote “no” on this proposal. Use your knowledge of the Faith, your critical thinking skills, and your perspective as a “Catholic” high school student.

Consider the following points, although you are not limited to these discussion points:

- Whose responsibility is it to provide reproductive health services for students? Is this a needed service at the school?
- What kind of impact might it have on the behavior and mindset of students if contraception was accessible privately through school?
- What risks might this open the door to if the school partnered with Planned Parenthood Keystone?
- Does the data back up the claim that providing teens with contraception reduces teen pregnancy and reduces high school drop out rates?
- What other ways could the school or community address the concerns raised by the school board?

ESSAY RULES FOR THEME DEVELOPMENT

1. Each essay must be the original work of the student and it shall not have been submitted in any other contest for publication.
2. The theme, covering all points, *must be developed* in no longer than 800 words.
3. The essay must be neatly written or typed on only one side of the paper.
3. The judges are not to know the names of the writers. Therefore, the name of the student and all other identifying information should not appear on the essay. Instead, the essay should be accompanied by a cover sheet, (sample attached) which includes the student’s name, address, telephone number, school, and grade. The essay and cover sheet shall be secured by a paper clip – please do not use staples to attach the cover sheet.

All original entries shall be forwarded to the following deanery coordinators* in time to reach them by *November 3, 2017*:

BERKS:	Len Weckel 570 Gulden Road Blandon, PA 19510 610-926-3731	NORTHAMPTON:	Michael Adams 1930 Fairview Ave. Easton, PA 18042 484-553-9069
CARBON:	John Fitzpatrick 513 Steeplechase Lane Allentown, PA 18106 610-530-7728	SCHUYLKILL:	Gene Haslam 537 Pine Hill Street Minersville, PA 570-544-3136
LEHIGH:	John Fitzpatrick 513 Steeplechase Lane Allentown, PA 18106 610-530-7728		

**Your deanery is the county in which the school/parish is located, not where the student resides.*

JUDGING CRITERIA:

The judges shall select the winners based on the following:

THEME DEVELOPMENT*	40
ORIGINALITY AND IMAGINATION	20
<u>USE AND ACCURACY OF REFERENCES</u>	10
CLARITY OF EXPRESSION	10
GRAMMAR, SPELLING, AND NEATNESS	10
CONCLUSION (“I” Statements)	10

*The author developed the essay theme, covering each point, so that the message is communicated to the reader in logical, clear, and concise terms, sentences, and paragraphs.