

Foreword

Something remarkable has taken place each spring for the past six years. School children and teachers from the Canadian border to the Lowville foothills of the Adirondacks have expressed their feelings about peace in poetry and submitted those poems to our annual peace poetry contest. Peace is a difficult and often evasive virtue, and sometimes it takes a child to get us to see that vision of hope and peace. And this year, I am so happy to be a part of it as I take over from Dr. Paul Saint-Amand and hope that I can really fill those “big shoes” in allowing our children to express, from their hearts, the message of Peace.

This chapbook calendar grew out of the 6th Annual Peace Poetry Contest. We invited children from North Country K-12 classrooms, both public and private schools to create and submit original poems on the subject of peace. Though the contest held no formal position on the current state of world affairs, still we wanted to honor the ideal of peace.

Over eight-hundred poems were received by the March 15th deadline. Of these submissions, over 80 poems were chosen for their originality, artistic merit, imagination, and affirmation of peace as an ideal and as a way of being in the world. These poems dealt with peace in relation to the family, school, war, nature, and music. Children, in particular, have a way of cutting through all the side-issues that cloud the adult mind to remind us of peace’s bounty. This calendar is dedicated to all those young poets who put their feelings and craft toward the purposes of peace-building – which is truly a bounty for us all.

Our thanks go to the many people who made this contest possible. **We would especially like to thank the TEACHERS of the North Country.** It would have been easy for these extremely busy people to put aside our contest notice about this contest and stick to their established lesson plans. The fact that they did not – the fact that they took the time to help and encourage their students to submit poems — testifies to the care and dedication they have for their students: the type of dedication that cannot be measured in test scores but is crucial to the education of young people. Children cannot learn to speak the language of possibility, or envision a culture of peace, if they do not have the opportunity to identify such moments and values within themselves and their relationships. It is our responsibility, as educators, to offer students a way to fuel their imaginations and embrace the concept of peace.

The project also thanks the Samantha Smith Chapter of Veterans For Peace, Ipswich, MA who inspired this contest. Many thanks to our college personnel and friends of this contest: **Mr. George Kahn** for his dedication. And sincere gratitude to our contest judges: **Dr. Victoria Levitt** and **Ms. Nancy Berbrich**, and student judge **Mr. Chris Dywer**. Special thanks also goes to the Department of English and Communication’s Administrative Assistant **Mrs. Pam Cullen** for her invaluable help and support throughout the year and the English Department student assistants: **Miss Meagan Brady**, **Miss April St. Thomas**, **Miss Tiffany Prashaw**, And also **Miss Jessica Freeman**. And finally, thanks to this year’s intern **Mr. Shawon Rodger** for his sense of commitment.

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This Poetry Contest is co-sponsored by:

The Department of English and Communication and The School of Education and Professional Studies

Special Thanks to:

Dr. Galen Pletcher: Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences

Dr. William Amoriell: Dean of the School of Education and Professional Studies

Dr. Richard Henry: Chair of the Department of English and Communication

Dr. Margaret Madden: Provost

Special Thanks to the Judges:

Dr. Victoria Levitt: Associate Professor, Department of English and Communication

Ms. Nancy Berbrich: Lecturer, Department of English and Communication

Mr. Chris Dywer: Graduate Asst. & Coordinator of Mentor Program, School of Education and Professional Studies