

WE READ YOUTH VOICES



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We Read Youth Voices Writing Contest Returns April 3

MADISON, WI– Madison Public Library will once again host the We Read Youth Voices Writing Contest in collaboration with Forward Madison FC and the Wisconsin Book Festival with support from the Madison Public Library Foundation in the spring of 2023.

Submissions will be accepted beginning April 3, 2023 online and a kick-off event will take place at the first home game of Forward Madison FC's fifth anniversary season on Saturday, April 15. The We Read Youth Voices Writing Contest Youth Ambassador will kick out the first ball and families are invited to visit the Dream Bus between 5-7PM for an interactive writing challenge and to pick up writer's notebooks.

"Forward Madison is thrilled to continue such a fantastic writing contest with the Madison Public Library," Evan Warwick, Forward Madison's Director of Public Relations, said. "The creativity from youth in our community comes out in full force for this, we can't wait to see the 2023 submissions!"

Youth 18 and under are encouraged to submit to the contest, with the opportunity to win cash and prizes, be honored at a Forward Madison FC game, and be published in the second annual We Read Youth Voices Anthology. The theme for the 2023 Youth Voices Writing Contest is "Moving Forward - Together" and was determined by this year's youth ambassador, Madeleine Bohn. Bohn is the first-ever City of Madison Youth Poet Laureate and was also a runner up in last year's contest for her story, *Sunlight*.

"When we measure something's worth in numbers and figures, we miss out on a whole world of beautiful human connection; we highlight the lines that divide us rather than the common paths we share." Bohn reflected, "So much of empathy and of coming together relies on looking at things from another person's perspective, which is why I'm excited to see the unique ways each young writer interprets this year's focus."

Submission Guidelines:

Any form of submission is welcome - stories, poems, songs, etc. There is no minimum length, but submissions must not exceed the word limit for the writer's age group. Authors should limit themselves to their single best piece for submission, and collaborative pieces are welcome.

Contest submissions will be accepted April 3 - June 30, 2023.

Submissions are judged by local writers and literacy advocates in 3 different age groups:

Ages 7 and under | 250 words

Ages 8-12 | 750 words

Ages 13-18 | 1,000 words

Submissions may be in English, Spanish, or Hmong and are submitted online at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/youthvoices.

Contest Prizes:

Through the generous support of the [Madison Public Library Foundation](#), the winner of the grand prize will receive \$500, with two runners up winning \$250, and age group finalists receiving \$100. Additional prizes include merchandise from Forward Madison FC, a scholarship to attend a Young Writer's Camp of their choice through the Greater Madison Writing Project, and more. The grand prize winner and runners up will be announced and recognized at the August 12 Forward Madison FC game. See the full list of prizes online at madpl.org/youthvoices.

All of our winners, as well as any honorable mentions from the submitted pieces will be published in this year's We Read Youth Voices Anthology, available online, at each Madison Public Library, and at each Madison Metropolitan School District Library.

Accompanying Writing Events:

Madison Public Library is organizing a handful of opportunities for youth to spark their writing creativity in the library.

During Madison Metropolitan School District's Spring Break March 27-31, 2023, Madison Public Library has invited [Whoopensocker](#) teaching artists to host fun, interactive workshops at three library locations. The workshops encourage creativity, expression, writing, collaboration, and performance. This workshop is designed for kids ages 7 and up.

Whoopensocker Creativity Workshops:

- [March 27, 2-4PM | Sequoya Library](#)

- [March 28, 2-3PM | Meadowridge Library](#)
- [March 29, 10-11:30AM | Central Library](#)
- [March 30, 2-3PM | Meadowridge Library](#)

Interactive Writing Prompt Program

Starting Saturday, March 25, Madison Public Library will also have a passive program happening in all library locations. Kids can participate in a community ideas board by contributing a character, action, conflict or setting to do some storytelling together. Free writer's notebooks will also be available to pick up and take home (while supplies last), so kids can grab an idea from the board and write their own submission for the We Read Youth Voices Writing Contest. The Dream Bus will have this program available during the April 15 Contest Kick-Off at Breese Stevens Field. Learn more about the writing activities happening at Madison Public Library during Spring Break here: madpl.org/springbreak.

To learn more, please visit madpl.org/youthvoices.

About Madison Public Library

Madison Public Library's tradition of promoting education, literacy and community involvement has enriched the City of Madison for more than 145 years. Visit the library online at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org, [madisonpubliclibrary](#) on Facebook, [@madisonlibrary](#) on Twitter, or [@madisonpubliclibrary](#) on Instagram.