**Lions WriteOff**  

Lion President-

I am Lion Deb Koehnen of the Watertown Lions. I am currently the Write-Off Chair for District 5M2.

It that time again for the District 5M2’s Write-Off Contest!! I need your help in getting the word out there for the 2023-2024 Write-Off Contest. It is a part of 5M2’s Youth Projects with Liberty Day, Peace Poster and Leo Clubs. I hope you are already familiar with this project, but I will remind you of its main concepts. This project consists of high school students writing essays and submitting them to your club for judging. Your club chooses a winner and submits that essay to your Zone Chair for judging against other clubs in your Zone. Zone winners are then submitted to the district chair where they will be judged and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will be chosen. The 3 finalists will present their essays at the Midwinter Convention in Mankato where the district awards will be presented.

This is a great benefit for your high school students, your community and your club. The students are encouraged to submit their very best work to be judged. They experience competition and camaraderie. Your community benefits because it gets to observe the quality of work of its young people. Remember you are not limiting the contest to only public school students. Parochial and home schooled children of high school age are encouraged to participate as well. You are urged to advertise in the local media to get entrants for your contest. Finally, your club is the greatest winner of all. For a small sum offered as a prize at the local level ($25 or $50 are common amounts) you get to see the accomplishment of your young people. You might even get a good club program from it if you invite the winner to deliver his/her essay at your club.

How do you get involved? Those of you who have entered in the past know a system that works for your club. Otherwise, there is a method that works for this service project. First, your club must decide to participate. Second, appoint an active committee to oversee this project. Third, approve the budget for the project which will probably be limited to a small prize awarded. All awards above the club level- Zone and District, will be handled by the District. If you choose to participate the additional attachments will be helpful. I have included a letter to be sent to the local high school, the information on the topic, a judging grid, and the resume to be attached to the winning resume so that I have the necessary contact information to invite the potential winners to the convention and an address to send any awards.

Lion Deb Koehnen-

WriteOff Chair

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Topic

Judges and some observers of the program felt that the contest would be easier to judge and ultimately more fair if we suggest topics to the students. This year’s topic follows that of the Lions International President Fabricio Oliveria’s theme, “Make Your Mark.”

Oliveira shared his message to all Lions “No matter one’s talents, interests, or financial situation there is always an opportunity to make a difference. Make your Mark. Everywhere we serve, every time we give, we bring kindness and compassion, change and hope.” Writers can demonstrate how their individual talents and interests has allowed them to Make their Mark by serving with kindness and compassion to bring about change and hope. In this essay, write about who you are, how you answer those needs, and actions you take with others providing service.

Timelines

**Club level**: Essays should be done judging by October 31, 2024 and sent to the Zone Chair by November 10, 2024

**Zone Level**: Essays should be done judging by November 20, 2024 and sent to the Write-Off District Chair by December 5, 2024.

**District Level:** Essays will be judged by a district team to determine 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners by December 20, 2024. The top 3 will be invited to the Mid-Winter convention with their parents.

Other

Please remember:

First, the length should be approximately 500 words.

Second, the four areas recommended to the judges for selection are Originality, Content, Organization, and Mechanics.

Third, prizes at the upper levels are:

Zone $100.00 (one from each zone)

 District $ 500.00 – 1st place plus plaque

 $ 300.00 – 2nd place

 $ 200.00 – 3rd place

Lion Deb Koehnen