

## FIRST PLACE ENTRIES

### Peace in Your Heart

By: Yasser Azzou; Kindergarten – First Place  
The Islamic Academy for Peace, Methuen MA

Peace, Peace, where are you?  
I'm looking everywhere for you!  
I looked at home  
I looked at school  
I looked in the farm  
I looked in the factory  
Here you are, in my heart.  
Look for peace in your heart.

## CRASHING WAVES

By: Selena Almeida, First grade – First Place  
Tilton School, Haverhill, MA

Peace is being at the beach  
Listening to the ocean.  
Peace is listening to the waves crashing.  
Peace is walking in the sand  
Feeling it on your feet.

## PEACE IS BEAUTIFUL

By: Sena Kaplan, Second grade – First place  
The Islamic Academy for Peace, Methuen, MA

I love peace be on you.  
At school we say peace be on you.  
Every day Muslims say peace be on you.  
Muslims are peaceful.  
Peace is beautiful.  
Muslims pray and say peace be on you.

## PEACE

By: Bella Lomaka, Third grade—first place  
Sargent School, North Andover, MA

Peace is as warm as a fire on a cold winter day.  
Peace is as calm as watching snow fall.  
Peace is as pretty as a rose.  
Peace is as bright as the sun in the summer.  
Peace is as nice as hot chocolate on a cold winter day.  
Peace is as big as the world.  
Peace is as strong as metal.  
Peace is as graceful as a ballet dancer.  
Peace is as fun as playing with your friends.

## PEACE KNOWS NO DIFFERENCES

By: Adel Sounalah, Fourth Grade – First place  
The Islamic Academy for Peace, Methuen, MA

We were born with differences.  
How we were born, where we were born.  
Where we come from, where our parents come from.  
The world is bright.  
The world is bright.  
Colors everywhere, happiness everywhere.  
Let's be happy, let us put our differences behind.  
Let's live in peace.  
Peace is life.  
God is peace.  
The blue sea and the blue skies are for all of us.  
Be strong, have peace in your heart.  
Thank God and ask for more peace in your heart.

## ONCE UPON A TIME...

By: Niranjana Nair, Fifth grade – First Place  
Sanborn School, Andover, MA

Once upon a time,  
Flowers grew in the world.  
They touched the sky and stood towering  
Above.

Once upon a time,  
Life was colorful.  
Empathy once overpowered  
Greed.

Once upon a time,  
Cranes gracefully danced  
And doves flying in the skies  
Every single day.

Once upon a time,  
Humans stood together as one.  
They were proud of their differences  
And accepted for who they were.

Once upon a time,  
The whole world held hands.  
All people from different places and cultures  
Were allowed to live.

Once upon a time,  
Everyone lived in harmony.  
We worked together to make  
A better tomorrow.

Once upon a time,  
The world was a better place.  
People had freedom and justice.

Once upon a time,  
We acted as one.  
We respected each other.

Once upon a time,  
Dreams came true.  
And there wasn't a single nightmare.

Once upon a time we were able to open our hearts and let peace spring out.  
Make once upon a time a reality again.

## THE FLAME OF PEACE

By: Aisha Farheen Riaz, Sixth Grade – First Place  
The Islamic Academy for Peace, Methuen, MA

Peace is like a candle in a dark room  
When you light it, it stays lit only for some time  
The wick burns out  
Then it's gone  
Peace is the small flame  
When first lit, it is strong  
Then the wick, the will to not fight, shrinks and shrinks  
The flame dies  
And we are left again  
In the darkness

But then,  
The flame of peace is lit again  
But who is watching over?  
Is it an elderly wise man?  
Nay, it is the youth of the era  
Having learned from their elders  
More cautious, more brave,  
Stronger than their ancestors  
Not stronger as in brawnier  
But stronger as in more determined  
Determined to keep the flame of peace lit  
Throughout the ages  
Forever

## BETTER WORLD

By: Andrew Kanakor, Grade 7 – First place  
Saint Michael School, Lowell, MA

**When** you're growing up in a world that is hard to understand  
**Or** when you have to do things you don't want to because of society  
**Riding** different types of waves is how we fit in  
**Lending** a helping hand is rare

Don't get mixed up once you find those true friends nothing else matters

Peace is something we lack in today's world

Everyone would rather see drama for entertainment

Acting as a false friend to be a friend just to bring someone else down

Coming to conclusions before knowing the whole story

Everything is not what it seems, but not everyone wants to process that

## THE END OF WAR

By: Timothy Tran, Grade 8

Lowell Catholic, Lowell, MA

The soldiers were fearful, ferocious, but forgiving

The soldiers were tired from the agonizing war

The safety of people was that they were delivering

In the return the aura sore

At the port, visitors ecstatic

The president announced, "war, never more!"

The scars of the soldiers were dramatic

The people ask, "War, what for?"

After war, peace will come

Prosperity will open, a new door

All of the profit for the allies, income

But scars have stayed with those in the menacing war

Peace at last, but uprisings sprout

For citizens of many countries, there is lore

The rebels to society look for clout

They accomplish this causing an uproar

Armies confront them and bring peace

Trying to keep eternal peace at their core

With hope that peace will increase

And hope that no one will ignore

And with peace, there is treacherous work

Their country, soldiers fall for

They endure and persevere with teamwork

And peace in their mind, they persevere evermore

The battlefield haunts its victim

But soldiers still proceed furthermore

And if they survive they gain wisdom

To try to keep peace so wars do not transpire anymore

So people can live as they did long ago

And that's why peace is loved and war is deplored

## O' BRAVE NEW WORLD

By: Rayna Rodriguez – Grade 12 – First Place High School  
Methuen High School, Methuen, MA

A woman that I admire warned me that Americans are always in a rush.  
Constantly in a hurry to keep going, never knowing where although  
We believe to have a destination. And in these journeys we become so  
Wary of one another, focused on our own goals, afraid that friends and neighbors  
Will become obstacles and make us late. But to what appointment  
That is no longer guided by faith or fate? We are always rushing.  
Never stopping, never looking, always moving. And I wonder, have I missed out on  
My life by doing the same? Always wanting to grow up, never understanding that just wanting  
Won't be enough. We lose ourselves in screens, we forget each other's faces.  
We google search an image just to travel to other places. Will we forever be stuck  
In a technicolor phase? On the contrary, I believe, we are the ones who will live  
Much better days. We march in streets like soldiers, protest white houses and squares in  
Beijing.  
Create safe spaces for all communities, advocate our rights and other things.  
Our women will be leaders, justice will be brought about with the words #metoo.  
Trans rights will be human rights, support will lie with lgbtq.  
And every race, white, black, Hispanic, Asian or etc.,  
Will feel equal in their value for this is America.

## SHATTERED PEACE

By: Nancy Earley, Adult submission, -- first place

My mother was an uncommonly gentle Irish woman.  
At her funereal, when I was seventeen, strangers came wave after wave, to tell me,  
*"She was as beautiful on the inside as she was on the outside."*

I was seven years old, it was after dinner, and I wanted cookies.  
My mother gazed into the refrigerator at nothing.  
*"We have no cookies"* she said dully.  
*"But I know we do"* I cried. *"They are on the top shelf."*  
*"Those are your father's diet cookies. You won't like them."*

Spying me teetering on the counter, she screamed *"Get down from there!"*  
I heard the heavy glass milk jug in her hand slam to the floor and I yelped.

*"Four children lost their father today, and you're crying about a COOKIE?"*  
(She said "fathah" in that horrible Boston accent.)

I climbed down, slowly...my skull feeling the pins and needles  
Of being embarrassed, ashamed...but not knowing why.  
I turned to her, crying—that cry so deep, it makes no sound.  
I tried to talk, to move...but the glass...and her anger.

Then I saw my mother on her hands and knees, coming toward me.  
She had reached for my father's winter coat hanging on a peg, and laid it out on the floor.  
*"I didn't mean to cry about a cookie" I sobbed.*  
*"Shhhh, shhhh" in her dulcet tones, rocking me. "Mumma knows, Mumma knows."*

My mother taught me how to sew, how to find treasures in junk stores,  
And how to give your best treasures away to other people.  
She taught me to be kind, no matter what—to turn my back on what people said about us.

The most important treasure she left me, was the one lesson in motherhood I would need.  
The day the glass shattered on our kitchen floor was April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1968.  
It was the day the nation, my mother and I, and the four little children and *their* mother  
grieved.

It was the day when I learned how, and when, and why to crawl over broken glass.