



THE SISTER ROSE THERING FUND FOR
EDUCATION IN JEWISH-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

January 12, 2018

Dear Teachers:

The Sister Rose Thering Fund for Education in Jewish-Christian Studies is pleased to announce the Ninth Annual Essay Competition based on the Academy award nominated documentary film, *Sister Rose's Passion*. The Fund, named in honor and memory of Sister Rose Thering, O.P., Ph.D., who devoted her life to reducing religious prejudice and promoting dialogue among all people, is offering this competition once again for high school students in grades 9 through 12. **The deadline for submission of essay entries is March 5, 2018.**



Both the film and the essay competition provide a great opportunity to engage students in a meaningful dialogue about imagining a world without prejudice. It also offers an opportunity to provide education in keeping with the *New Jersey Mandate for Genocide and Holocaust Education* (http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/about_us/mandate.html). We welcome and encourage the participation of our high schools and students so that the great life lessons learned in the process can stem the tide of prejudice, in all its forms, with a wave of respect, tolerance, acceptance and understanding starting in the world around them. Outlined below is some important and helpful information about the competition.

2018 THEME

The theme for this year's essay competition is **"Be an Upstander, Not a Bystander."** Sister Rose Thering was everything that embodied a true "Upstander" in her efforts to stamp out anti-Semitism and to break down barriers of religious prejudice and foster dialogue, particularly between Christians and Jews. With the prevalence of bullying today in our schools and among young people, which has also found its way into cyberspace, the message of Sister Rose Thering continues to inspire people of all ages to "stand up" against injustice as she did in her day. It is hoped that in using the film, coupled with the questions to be addressed in the essay, that this will provide an opportunity to engage students in some meaningful dialogue about being *Upstanders* today. Please see the guidelines attached for essay details.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Teachers are asked to show the 30 minute film, *Sister Rose's Passion*, to their classes and announce the competition. *The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education* in Trenton has previously distributed DVDs of the film to all schools in New Jersey. Please check with your school library or administration to locate your school's copy of the DVD. If your school does not have a copy of the film, please contact the Sister Rose Thering Fund Office by sending an e-mail to srtf@shu.edu and we will make sure you receive a DVD.

After viewing the film, students are asked to write a 500 word essay based on the theme. **Each school may submit up to a maximum of the ten best essays per grade level.** (No more than 40 total essays per school.) Deadline for submitting essays is **March 5, 2018**. All entries must be postmarked or received electronically by the deadline to be included.

ESSAY SUBMISSION PROCESS & STUDENT RELEASE FORMS

The preferred method of submitting the selected essays for consideration is electronically via our website: https://setonhall.formstack.com/forms/sister_rose_essay_competition. PDFs or Word documents containing the essays can be uploaded via this webpage. Essays may also be sent via email to srtf@shu.edu. Please be sure that each essay is accompanied by both a Student Essay Competition Application and a Release Form signed by a parent or guardian so we can publish the winning essays. (Please see forms attached.)

WINNERS

Notification of awards will be sent via mail by the **first week of April**. There will be four first place winners; one for each high school grade level. First place winners will be awarded monetary prizes and certificates. There will also be four honorable mention awards; one for each high school grade level. Honorable Mention awardees will be presented with certificates only.

All essay winners, both first place and honorable mention, along with their families and teachers will be invited to attend our **Celebration of Education Reception on April 29, 2018** at Seton Hall University. Please save the date! All winning essays will be published in a booklet which will be distributed at the spring reception.

COMPLETE COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Full competition guidelines and rules along with evaluation criteria are enclosed with this letter. Please be sure to read all instructions and materials so that your essay submissions may receive full consideration by our judges.

Please share this information with your colleagues and feel free to copy the application and distribute it to your students. If there are additional questions about the competition, please call us at the Sister Rose Thering Fund Office at 973-761-9006 or you may also contact Mr. Lawrence Glaser, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education at 609-984-4927.

Now more than ever our world is in great need of more *Upstanders*. How many future *Upstanders* are sitting right there in your classroom today who just need that little bit of encouragement from you and to be inspired by the passion of Sister Rose Thering? We hope you will participate in this essay competition and help us shape a future without religious prejudice.

Sincerely,



David Bossman, Ph.D.
Executive Director and
Professor of Jewish-Christian Studies



Deborah Lerner Duane
Chairman of the Board

THE NINTH ANNUAL SISTER ROSE THERING FUND
ESSAY COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

2018 GUIDELINES

Theme: “Be an Upstander, Not a Bystander”

“The world is a dangerous place. Not because of those who do evil, but because of those who stand by and do nothing.” Albert Einstein

Sister Rose Thering believed in being an *Upstander*, someone who sees an injustice or wrong being done to another and does not simply stand on the sidelines as a bystander, but takes action to stand up for the person or group being wronged to help correct it. She became an *Upstander* in support of the Jewish people when she saw what the scourge of anti-Semitism did to millions of Jews during the Holocaust. Rooting out religious prejudice became her passion. However, her work is not yet done. The world needs more *Upstanders* to help stamp out religious prejudice and prejudice in any form. Are you ready to stand up with Sister Rose?

After watching the video, *Sister Rose’s Passion*, consider what Sister Rose did to stand up for the Jewish people to stamp out anti-Semitism.

- What characteristics did she demonstrate that made her an *Upstander*?
- How do her life and work inspire you to be an *Upstander*?
- Describe a time or situation when you acted as an *Upstander*. **OR,**
- If you were to witness a situation in your school or community where a friend or classmate was being bullied because of his or her religion or personal characteristics, what would you do? How would you act like an *Upstander*?

1. **Guidelines:** After viewing the film, write an essay on this theme in five-hundred words (about 2 pages, **typewritten**, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman, one side only on 8 ½” X 11” paper with 1-inch margins.)

BE SURE YOUR NAME APPEARS, TYPEWRITTEN, on each page of the essay itself in the upper left corner (you may include it in the document header). Please also include the name of your teacher, your school and your grade. ***No handwritten essays will be accepted.***

2. **Judging Criteria:** Essays will be judged on *originality of theme relevant to Sister Rose’s message, overall organization, grammar, spelling and punctuation*. ***Please be sure to mention Sister Rose in your essay.*** Essays will be judged according to the grade level of the student.
3. **Winners:** One first place winner will be selected for each grade level across all the high schools that enter the competition. These winners will receive a monetary award and certificate. One Honorable Mention award will also be given for each grade level across all the participating high schools and will receive a certificate only. NOTE: Each school may submit **up to 10** of the best essays for each grade level participating.
4. All essays will be kept on file in the office of the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton Hall University and will not be returned to students.
5. All essays **MUST** be submitted for entry through their teachers. Students may not submit their essays directly to the Sister Rose Thering Fund. **Deadline for submitting essays: March 5, 2018.**

6. **How to enter:**
 - a. Complete the Student Essay Competition Application (page 5)
 - b. Complete the Student Release Form (page 6)
 - c. Return your essay and the two forms to your teacher by the school's requested deadline
7. **Submitting Essays:**

TEACHERS: There are three ways you may submit the top ten essays per grade level in your school by **March 5:**

1. Preferred: Register and upload the essays at https://setonhall.formstack.com/forms/sister_rose_essay_competition
2. Via e-mail to srtf@shu.edu
3. Hardcopy by postal mail should be sent to:

Sister Rose Thering Fund Essay Competition
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, NJ 07079

Thank you for participating. Good luck to your school and students!

**RELEASE FORM FOR
SISTER ROSE THERING FUND STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION**

I/We give our permission for the essay entitled

_____ submitted to the
Sister Rose Thering Fund Student Essay Competition sponsored by the Sister Rose Thering Fund at Seton
Hall University, South Orange New Jersey, to be used in any future publications of the Fund.

Student name (printed)

Student signature

Parent/Guardian name (printed)

Parent/Guardian signature

Date _____

Thank you.