

## Roxanne Maher

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**From:** Gary St. Vil  
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 3:26 PM  
**To:** Ryan Earley  
**Cc:** tbrannan@ledyard.net; kiabaird@gmail.com; Roxanne Maher; Jason S. Hartling; April Brunelle  
**Subject:** Revised / 2026 Black History Month Student Essay Contest (Ledyard Middle School)  
**Attachments:** GR6-12 Essay Contest.jpeg

Dear Principal Earley,

As we approach Black History Month, the Town Council's Community Relations Committee (CRC-DEI) would like to once again partner with Ledyard Public Schools to offer middle school students an opportunity to reflect on the significance of Black History Month through a voluntary student essay contest. Please share the contest details below and attached with your teachers and students.

**The 2026 Black History Month theme is:** From History to Responsibility: The Legacy We Carry, the Future We Create

**Contest Overview:** Black History Month helps students learn about important people, events, and contributions that have shaped our society. Remembering this history is not only about the past—it also challenges us to think about responsibility, leadership, and the role each of us plays in shaping the future. This essay contest invites students to reflect on how learning Black history informs the choices we make today.

### **Essay Prompts (choose ONE):**

1. **From History to Responsibility** - Explain what this theme means to you. How can learning about Black history help people act responsibly in their schools or communities today?
2. **The Legacy We Carry** - Choose a person, event, or moment from Black history and explain what responsibility it teaches us today.

### **Contest Details:**

- **Duration:** Now through February 20, 2026
- **Eligibility:** Middle school students. Open to all students residing in Ledyard, including those who are home-schooled or attending private or technical/magnet schools.
- **Format:** Essay (one submission per student)
- **Essay Length:** Minimum of 300 words. There is no maximum word count.

### **Submission Guidelines:**

- Only one essay submission per student (no group projects)

- Essays must include the student's name, school, and grade
- Essays should be submitted electronically to Town Council Chairman Gary St. Vil at [gsvil@ledyardct.org](mailto:gsvil@ledyardct.org) and [garyastvil@gmail.com](mailto:garyastvil@gmail.com)

**Prizes:** Middle and high school submissions may be combined (contingent upon the total number of submissions), with first, second, and third place winners selected:

- **1st Place:** \$125 gift card
- **2nd Place:** \$75 gift card
- **3rd Place:** \$50 gift card

Winners will be notified by February 27 and formally recognized by the Town Council at an upcoming Town Council meeting. Thank you for your continued partnership. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

**Gary A. St. Vil**

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