**Maryland Writers’ Association**

**5 Church Circle #165 ~ Annapolis, MD 21401**

[**http://www.marylandwriters.org**](http://www.marylandwriters.org)

**Teen Writers’ Clubs**

**2019-2020**

**Mission:**

Teen Writers’ Clubs (TWC), an official project of the Maryland Writers’ Association (MWA), provides a forum for fellowship and education for teenage writers and is meant specifically to assist them in the craft of writing. To date, all clubs have been co-sponsored by a branch of the public library, which provides free space and publicity. Other cosponsor arrangements are possible. MWA is a not-for-profit, 501c3 organization.

**Project Name:**

Teen Writers’ Clubs

**TWC Coordinator**

The coordinator of the TWC program is appointed by the president of the MWA. The current coordinator is Christy Lyons (christina@bylyons.com 301-587-2712).

**Leader Eligibility:**

Club leaders are volunteers and must be members of the MWA. Prospective leaders must provide the TWC coordinator with a resume or concise vitae, additional contact and other information as requested, and submit to an interview. Volunteers must be approved by the coordinator and/or MWA president.

**Teen Membership Eligibility:**

Eligibility is generally limited to ages 11-18, although the exact age range is determined by the individual club leader and the hosting library, which may have its own rules. Clubs were originally limited to high school students, but the addition of middle school students has proved hugely positive. Club members are required to fill out signup sheets providing basic contact information, including school information. A permission slip from a parent or guardian is also required.

**Location:**

Clubs must be located in public areas that provide easy access to large geographic regions. Public libraries are preferred because they: widely recruit TWCs, provide private meeting rooms; are free; offer a safe environment; are centrally located; and provide access to people with disabilities. Public libraries advertise TWCs on their web sites and via posters within the libraries. Many offer, upon request, additional posters to leaders for their own promotions. Some libraries will print materials, but this is sporadic. Librarians also work with TWC leaders to coordinate library events that include club members. PTAs are also valuable avenues for providing publicity and helping with recruitment.

**Meeting Frequency:**

Leaders of each club select the day of week, the time, and frequency of each meeting in conjunction with the hosting library or administrative unit. Currently, we have clubs that meet weekly, twice a month, or once a month—all with success. Schedules must favor each leader’s private calendar, vacations, holidays, and holydays. Library and school calendars also must be considered. Whether the club meets in the summer also is at the discretion of the leader.

**Meeting Time:**

Leaders determine the length of each meeting. Most are 90 minutes.

**Meeting Structure:**

Most important: This program is meant to be a *club* and should not be confused with school lessons or tutoring. Homework assignments and research projects are not acceptable as parts of the program. TWC grew out of a recognized need for teen writers to meet each other so they could socialize while sharing common interests in writing. Teen writers, just like adult writers, often isolate themselves. This fact is important to remember because many teens, unlike adult writers, often believe that no one their own age shares their intense interest in writing.

Often the biggest challenge is for each leader is to provide balance in the meeting between socializing and teaching. The club belongs to the members; ask them what they want; offer suggestions; ask for feedback.

Leaders set their own framework. Each meeting generally starts with announcements and the question: “Who wants to read their work?” This is necessary to determine quickly how to divide time for: a short lesson, critiques, visiting author, discussion of upcoming club projects, and so forth. Experience has proved that teens mostly want to read their work. They expect their stories and poems to be critiqued and are bitterly disappointed when time runs out before they get to do so.

Leaders have several options when teens wish to present work. It can be read aloud or copies can be made (usually that means getting the material before the meeting) or some combination of the two. Learning to read aloud is valuable, but often reading on paper and writing comments that later go to the author, can provide more detailed feedback.

A moderate budget is available to reimburse leaders for copying expenses.

Dealing With Sensitive Issues

Teens often write about issues and feelings that concern them, including topics relating to death, harm to self, harm to others, bullying and sexual orientation, to name just a few.

For most teens, writing about these subjects is a way to think and explore or a kind of catharsis. Whenever possible we should allow for free expression and sharing, but there will inevitably be times when we need to step in.

A poem or piece of prose may raise concerns if:

--It feels like a cry for help

--You worry about the teen’s wellbeing

--It concerns bullying or some other illegal activity

--It’s a dramatic change from past work you’ve seen

If you are concerned, the first step is usually to talk with the teen. Consider asking:

What was the inspiration for the work? Does it reflect how you personally feel? If so, do you have the support you need to deal with your problems and feelings?

If the answers don’t resolve your concerns, please consult with the teen club coordinator (Christy Lyons) about further steps. If you feel there is an emergency, call 911.

**Websites and other Resources for Teen Writers and Leaders:**

 Books:

**Cuyugan**, Erica and Ann Wagner. “Write On! Summer Creative Writing Workshop for Teens.” *Voya* Apr. 2012. 16-19.
**Dickey,** Janet. “Teen Writers Workshop.” *janetdickey.com*. <http://www.janetdickey.com/freebies.php>

**Fesko**, Shari. “Write On! Writing and *Teens at the Library.” Voya Oct. 2012. 352.*

***Figment****.* < http://figment.com/>

**Goldberg**, Natalie. *Writing* Down the Bones. Boston: Shambhala, 1986.

**Hanley**, Victoria. *Seize the Story: A Handbook for Teens Who Like to Write*. Fort Collins: Cottonwood Press, 2008.
**Hardesty,** Constance. *The Teen-Centered Writing Club: Bringing Teens and Words Together*. Westport: Greenwod Publishing Group, Inc., 2008.

**Levine,**Gail Carson. *Writing Magic: Creating Stories that Fly*. New York: Collins, 2006.

**Reeves**, Judy. *A Writer's Book of Days: A Spirited Companion & Lively Muse for the Writing Life*. Novato: New World Lib

**Scalzi**, John. “10 Things Teenage Writers Should Know About Writing.” *Whatever*. 27 Apr. 2006. rary, 2010.

Newspaper Story:

**\*Meoli,** Jon. “Young Authors Share Inspiration, Encouragement at Cockeysville’s Teen Writing Club.”

* *Baltimore Sun* 6 March 2012.

Websites:

***Maryland Writer’s Association.*** <http://marylandwriters.org>

* The Maryland Writers' Association (MWA) is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the art, business, and craft of writing in all its forms.

**Mazer**, Anne and Ellen Potter. *Spilling Ink: A Young Writer's Handbook.*

* New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2010.

***MY-Say*.** <http://www.my-say.org/>

* *MY-Say* is an online magazine designed to promote literacy, creativity, and expression by and among Maryland’s middle school students.

***NaNoWriMo’s Young Writers Program*.** <http://ywp.nanowrimo.org/>

* National Novel Writing Month website for teen writers. Under “Educators” tab, there are helpful lesson plans to teach writing techniques.

Blog: <http://whatever.scalzi.com/2006/04/27/10-things-teenage-writers-should-know-about-writing/>; **Scalzi**, John. “On Teens, and the Fact Their Writing Sucks.” *Whatever*. 18 June 2007. Blog. <http://midlothianlibrary.org/thesword/>>

Midlothian Public Library’s Teen Writing Blog in conjunction with The Sword, their Teen Writing Club.

***Teen Ink***. <http://www.teenink.com/>

T*een Ink* is a national teen magazine, book series, and website devoted entirely to teenage writing, art, photos and forums.

***Wattpad***. [www.wattpad.com](http://www.wattpad.com)

Online writing community with app.

***IMAZINE:*** nccteenzine@gmail.com

**T**he New Castle, Kent & Sussex County Teen Magazine is available online here. Links to the submission guidelines, parental ***IMAZINE* T**he New Castle, Kent & Sussex County Teen Magazine is available online here. Links to the submission guidelines, parental release forms, and submission email address can be found here.



**Teen Writers’ Club**

**Parent/Guardian Permission**

**General Information**

 (Please retain page 1 of this form.)

The Teen Writers’ Club (TWC), an official project of the Maryland Writers’ Association (MWA) in conjunction with local libraries, provides a forum for fellowship and education for teen writers and is meant specifically to assist them in the craft of writing.

Participating teens will be encouraged to share their writing with the club and to provide peer feedback when other members share writing. The focus is on creative fiction and non-fiction. This is not a homework club or a club designed for remedial writing skills. No homework assignments will be reviewed.

Parents and guardians should be aware that teens often write about sensitive subjects, including depression, sexual identity, and suicide. While club leaders will be alert to any concerns about these issues, parents and guardians should understand that often stories are read aloud without an opportunity for prescreening. Even when prescreening is possible, leaders will refrain from censorship unless there is a strong reason to intervene. Parents with concern about this should discuss it with the club leader before signing the permission form.

MWA is a not-for-profit, 501c3 organization.

The following information is provided for your use as needed:

Name of club leader: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Joanne Zaslow

Contact information for leader: Email - jzaslow@comcast.net

Meeting location: Odenton Library of Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL)

Meeting frequency, time, day of week: Second and Fourth Thursdays of every month at 7:00pm (NOTE: Meeting dates may change throughout the year.)

Clubs will not meet on federal holidays unless members and parents are notified.

*Club meetings will generally be canceled if schools close because of weather or other safety concerns. If meetings are cancelled for other reasons, every effort will be made by the leader to contact you.*

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**Teen Writers’ Club**

**Signup Form**

Please tell us a little about yourself. Please write clearly:

Today’s Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your Current Grade:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your Current Age: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your cell phone number, if you have one: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your e-mail address, if you have one: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the name and phone number of a parent or guardian in case we need to reach him or her.

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What is the e-mail address for this parent or guardian? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any allergies or medical problems we should be aware of?

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I hereby give permission for\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the activities of the Teen Writers’ Club.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian’s e-mail address\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian’s phone number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Day

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Evening

Is there any other information TWC should have about the participating teen (i.e. allergies, problems, goals, whatever)?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_