

YOU

ARE

RESILIENT

STRONG

HOPEFUL CARING

BRAVE

THOUGHTFUL

VULNERABLE

CHANGED

A SURVIVOR

TELL US YOUR STORY

APPLICATION KIT

ANDRERIVEROFLIFE.ORG/PARTICIPATE/AWARD

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The 2010 Andre Sobel Essay Award

~A juried competition for young survivors of a catastrophic illness~

Young people who are diagnosed with a life threatening illness experience an extraordinary journey and one common consequence is isolation from their peers.

In recognition of Andre's struggle with this challenge, and realizing that this happens all too often for others, the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation offers an annual Essay Award to young survivors of a catastrophic illness as a chance to express the reality of their experiences.

Dear Friends,

We know that your journey extends beyond the physical, and that you have become quite a different person because of your profound experience. We believe that only those like you, who have already "been there," understand best how to encourage and uplift others who will face the same intense trials in the future.

Your unique story and the insights you gained from it have a lot to offer!

We hope that you will submit your response to our essay topic in the coming weeks. While this is a competition with prizes awarded, selected entries from across all submissions will be chosen for a publication intended to help other newly diagnosed young people and be a comfort and guide to their friends and family.

With appreciation for your time and participation,

All of us at the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation

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ABOUT

Andre Sobel was a remarkable young man who had natural dignity, a promising future and an unconventional sense of humor. Andre's young life ended just one year after he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. He was 19. He was the beloved son of Erwin and Valerie Sobel and brother to Simone.

Andre was well traveled, often seeking destinations that were frequented by his favorite authors, like Samuel Beckett, St. Augustine and Franz Kafka. The books Andre treasured were filled with his margin comments, underlinings and asterisks, the stamp of his rich intellectual curiosity. But the finest of all his gifts were his qualities of mercy and compassion.

To honor Andre, and out of their deep love and respect for him, his family established the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation and shortly thereafter the Andre Sobel Essay Award. The purpose of this competition is to honor the young survivors of a catastrophic illness. If you consider yourself to be a "survivor," we celebrate with you and look forward to your submission.

This year, several cash awards will be granted; the first place winner will receive a \$5,000 cash prize. Smaller cash prizes will be awarded to the runner-ups, and to a participating Companion Writer of any of these winners. The cash award can be used in any way the recipient chooses.

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TOPIC

**“Things I’ve needed to tell you:
My experience facing illness and how it has changed me.”**

Ideas to stimulate your thinking:

- ✓ Write about how a relationship was challenged, changed or improved by your experience facing a life-threatening illness.
- ✓ What did you find hardest to talk about during your illness and why? What was left unsaid that you wish you could have discussed with a family member or friend during that time? What could others have said or done that would have helped you?
- ✓ Do you live your life differently now that you have experienced your illness? Do you think, behave, act and interact differently? How so?
- ✓ What did you learn about relationships from your journey that could help others who have been newly diagnosed with a life-threatening illness?

Be as serious, humorous, chatty or formal as you want. Be comfortable and “real.” It is a guarantee that YOUR TRUTH is exactly what someone else is craving to hear!

*If you are a participating “companion writer”, the above essay dialogue ideas still apply, except tell us about how YOU experienced the relationship. Of course, you will be referring to “my friend’s illness” and what your struggles and insights were.

For the Survivor’s Companion if the applicant opts to participate in the Companion Writer Option:

“Things I’ve needed to tell you: Your experience facing illness and how it has changed me.”

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RULES

RULES AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please read all the rules and guidelines carefully so that your essay will be eligible for consideration.

ESSAY FORMAT

This is not an English class. We want you to be true to yourself and express your thoughts in any form that feels natural and comfortable to you. Therefore, we have expanded the range of choices so that you may **best** express yourself in a style that is comfortable for YOU.

For example, you may present your entry as an essay, a short story, a letter, an email, a recorded conversation, a cell phone call or text message, a blog, a MySpace entry, or any other written format you wish to use because you feel that it best captures your message and voice.

- Create your entry keeping in mind that you are *talking to your peers*. We encourage you to be honest and personal about your thoughts. This is the time for you to say what you may have felt unable to share before. What you have lived through and learned could prove invaluable to a new “patient” somewhere whose experience is perhaps very similar to yours.
- **The Companion Writer Option***: In past years, this Essay Award has invited the work of one author. As we did in 2008, we offer you a choice to invite a friend or relative to interact with you from his or her perspective. Every relationship involves two people, and the way your illness affected you AND someone close to you is an important story. Perhaps exploring this together and recording the resulting interaction may even provide you with new insights about each other. We welcome this important perspective!

**If you choose this option and your combined entry is selected, your Companion Writer will also receive an award.*

- All entries will be judged equally, no matter which essay option you choose.
- All we ask is that you end up with an entry that is translated into writing, and that you limit your submission to 1,000 words or less [4 double-spaced typed pages].

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SUBMISSIONS

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- All submissions must be in WRITING. No other formats will be accepted.
- All submissions must be received in their entirety by midnight EST on Thursday, April 1, 2010.
- A complete submission is defined as a packet that includes the essay, the submission form (found on page 6 of this document) and a photo of the applicant all submitted TOGETHER.

*If a Companion Essay is to be considered, the participating partner in the Companion Essay must provide his or her own entry form and photo, and both applications must be submitted TOGETHER.

- Submissions should be emailed to rachel@andriveroflife.org.
- If you are unable to email a complete submission, you may mail the hard copy to:

Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation
Andre Sobel Award Submission
c/o Anne Swire, CEO
8520 Howell Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

- Notifications: An email notice will be sent to your email account providing acknowledgment that we received your essay. Award recipients will be notified by phone before July 1, 2010. A list of all winners will be posted on our website shortly thereafter.
- Qualifications: Applicants must be between the ages of 12 and 21 as of February 1, 2010 and consider themselves cancer survivors or survivors of a critical or life-threatening illness. Companion Writers' ages may vary. All applicants must reside in the United States.
- Because this is not a scholarship, *please DO NOT send* school transcripts, letters of recommendation or financial records. All we want is YOUR essay!
- Equal Opportunity: The awards will be presented without regard to race, religion, sex, citizenship, sexual orientation or national origin.
- For more information: Email your inquiries and questions to rachel@andriveroflife.org. As we receive a large number of inquiries, please allow at least 72 hours for a response. No phone calls please.

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APPLY

2010 Andre Sobel Essay Award Submission Form

Please ensure that your form is legible and complete, and submit it at the same time as your essay and photo. All submissions must be received prior to midnight EST on Thursday, April 1, 2010.

Please review the 2010 Rules and Submission Guidelines for more information.

Submission Date: _____ Age as of February 1, 2010: _____

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email Address: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Brief Description of illness, including date of diagnosis, treatment, treating hospital and current status:

Name and address of current or last school attended:

How did you hear about the award?

Thank you so much for your submission.

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RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rachel Litt, Award Coordinator
Rachel@andriveroflife.org
(301) 365-1137 or (310) 276-7111

Young Illness Survivors' Essay Submissions Sought for André Sobel Award

February 1, 2010

Los Angeles--The André Sobel River of Life Foundation is seeking submissions for the ninth annual André Sobel Award, an essay contest for survivors of pediatric cancer or other serious illnesses. A \$5,000 cash award will be presented to the first place winner, with additional prizes going to second and third place winners. Participants must be between the ages of 12 and 21. This year, participants are asked to respond to the topic:

“Things I’ve needed to tell you: My experience facing illness and how it has changed me.”

Writers also have the option to submit an essay in conjunction with a companion essay, written by a close friend or relative.

The André Sobel award was established to honor young survivors of a catastrophic illness and to enable them to fulfill a cherished desire as they proceed with their lives in a way that was not possible for André. The award is in celebration of André’s life that ended prematurely, one year after being diagnosed with a brain tumor at 17 years old. Shortly after his death, the family established the André Sobel River of Life Foundation to honor him through the work of the foundation. His mother, Valerie, serves as the Foundation’s president. About the essay contest, Ms. Sobel says, “This award celebrates survivors and the courage of those who speak openly about their journey.”

Submissions will be accepted until April 1 and winners will be notified by July, 1 2010. Information and guidelines are available online at: <http://andriveroflife.org/participate/award/>. Last year’s winning essays were chosen by a panel that included Dr. Deepak Chopra, adolescent/teenage psychiatrist Dr. Esteban Fuentres, author Lisa See, filmmaker Tatiana von Furstenberg, and artist Patience Brewster. The 2010 award is sponsored by Varian Medical Systems.

About the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation

The Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation (a 501(c)(3) public charity) provides emergency assistance within 24 hours to single caregivers of children with catastrophic or life threatening illnesses who face financial crises. Working in partnership with 12 pediatric hospitals nationally, ASRL has helped over 10,300 family members. Without ASRL’s support, many children with life threatening illnesses would be facing pain, treatments, fear, and at times, even their death, without a parent by their side.

“When Compassion can’t wait.”

www.andriveroflife.org