



Good morning, and it's that time of year. My Open Book EXPO. There will be a twist to it this year. It will be held at Concord Christian Center, 265 Manor Avenue SW, Concord, North Carolina. on September 12, 2026. It will be open to the public at no cost, totally free. Author tables are free. Free food while it last will be burgers and bottled water. There will be a essay contest, for a scholarship with 3 different categories:



3rd grade - 5th grade

1st place prize - \$100

2nd place prize - \$50

3rd place prize - \$25

6th grade - 8th grade

1st place prize - \$250

2nd place prize - \$100

3rd place prize - \$50

9th grade - 12th grade

1st place prize - \$500

2nd place prize - \$250

3rd place prize - \$100



I need help on what the essay should be about. I'm also giving these scholarships, in honor of my daughter Alisha Renee O'Neal. The Expo will be at 12:00 pm - 5 pm. Please help me put this together.



Scholarships presented in honor of Alisha Renee O'Neal
Essay Contest Theme (Unified but Age-Appropriate)

Overall Theme:

The Power of My Voice: How Reading, Writing, or
Education Can Change My Future."

The Open Book EXPO
Youth empowerment
Literacy
Legacy and purpose (in honor of Alisha)
Essay Prompts by Grade Group

Grades 3-5

"Why my voice matters and how learning helps me dream big."
What do you like to read or learn?
How does school help you become who you want to be?
How can your words help others?

Prizes:

\$100 | \$50 | \$25

Grades 6 -8

"How reading, writing, or education can help me overcome challenges and
shape my future:'

What challenges do students your age face?
How can education help you rise above them?
What kind of impact do you want to make?

Prizes:

\$250 | \$100 | \$50





Grades 9-12

Prompt:

"Using my voice to change: how education prepares me for purpose, leadership, and legacy!"

What issues matter most to you today?
How does education equip you to lead or serve?

What legacy do you hope to leave?

Prizes:

\$500 | \$250 | \$100

Judging Criteria (Simple & Fair)

essays will be judged on:

Clarity of thought

Creativity & originality

Connection to the theme

Heart & authenticity

Grammar matters, but voice matters more.

Essay length and rules:

Grades 3-5: 1 page

Grades 6-8: 1-2 pages

Grades 9-12: 2-3 pages

Typed or neatly handwritten

Students name, grade, and school included

One entry per student

Honor Statement (You can use this publicly)
These scholarships are awarded in loving honor of
Alisha Renee O'Neal
celebrating the power of youth voices, education,
and the legacy we leave through learning.

Event Schedule

12:00 PM - Doors Open | Author Meet & Greet

1:00 PM - Youth Literacy Moment

3:30 PM - Essay Winners Announced

4:00 PM - Scholarship Presentations

5:00 PM - Closing



MY OPEN BOOK EXPO

Essay Application Form



Essay Contest Dates: Begins Thursday, May 1st

Deadline: All essays and applications must be received no later than Friday, August 1st.
Important: Please attach your completed essay to this application before submitting.
Incomplete applications without an attached essay will not be accepted.

Student Full Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

School Name: _____

Teacher Name (if applicable): _____

Essay Information _____

Essay Title (Optional): _____

Which grade are you applying for the essay? _____

Signature _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if applicable): _____

Date: _____

Essay Submission Instructions

Please attach your essay to this application and submit by dropping off or mailing to:

Attention: My Open Book Expo

Essay Contest

Madelene Yahya

265 Mannor Ave

Concord, North Carolina 28025