

Invitation to High School Students of South Burlington

The Rotary Club of South Burlington is once again sponsoring its annual speech contest, February 19 at 7 p.m. in the SB High School Library. The topic for this year's speech is "How can I be an instrument for Peace?"

The South Burlington Rotary Club invites any high school student who lives in South Burlington to compete in round one with the chance to win \$200. The speech contest is also open to high school aged scouts who reside in South Burlington. The overall district winner would win \$1,750 after participating in all four rounds of the contest.

What is Rotary and why are they hosting a speech contest?

Rotary is a civic group that organizes volunteer projects and raises money for needs in communities. There are Rotary clubs in almost every country and in most cities and towns in the United States. Our South Burlington club has helped raise money and volunteers for local needs such as the Food Shelf, the Howard Center, and preventable diseases via vaccine distribution worldwide.

For Rotary to continue to help local communities here and across the globe, new leaders will be needed in every generation. Persuasive public speaking, what you will practice in this speech contest if you decide to enter, is an important part of leadership because it helps you motivate others to step up and help with you. Rotary's leaders want to support new leaders who want to serve others, no matter where, as this also serves our mission and this year's Rotary theme of "Unite for Good".

What should the speech be about?

- High school students should write a speech that connects to the topic and to Rotary's mission and philosophy exemplified by our motto "Service Above Self and the "Four-way Test" of things we think, say or do:
 1. Is it the **truth**?
 2. Is it **fair** to all concerned?
 3. Will it **build goodwill** and better friendships?
 4. Will it be **beneficial** to all concerned?
- The theme for this year is "How can I be an instrument of Peace."

What should the format of the speech be?

- The speech should be spoken naturally and should reflect a confident knowledge of the material and themes.
- The student may have a written copy of the speech to refer to but not read from it. The speech may be adjusted as the student is speaking as long as the theme and content remain consistent.
- The speech must be between four and five minutes long. Points will be deducted for speeches less than four minutes long. Speeches longer than seven minutes will be disqualified.
- These rules are the same at each round and in person or remote.
- There will only be one winner chosen for each round.



Where can I find out more about how to participate?

For more information on registration or other questions:

Please contact Rotarian Charlie Lawrence: Email: geochazman@gmail.com

Mobile: 1-346-313-0321

How does the contest work and what happens if I win?

- The contest includes four rounds (see poster for dates & cash prizes).
- A student may win one round or more rounds. Each round has a different monetary prize.
- All students who win a round must participate in the next round to be eligible to take home the prize money they won in the previous round.
- Prize money will be in the form of a check given to the winning student at the round following the round the student won.

When is the contest?

- The South Burlington Round 1 contest will take place February 19, 2026 at 7-8:00 p.m. in the South Burlington High School Library.
- The second round will take place no later than March 28, 2026.
- Round 3 takes place on Saturday, April 18, 2026 between 10 AM and 2 PM at Northern Vermont University, Lyndonville Campus in the Moore Community Building.
- Round 4 takes place on Saturday, June 13, 2026 at the hotel Estrimont, Orford, Quebec, in Canada roughly between 11 AM and 2 PM. Eligible students should be prepared for traveling to Canada as soon as possible in terms of travel authorization.

Is there anything else I should know about preparing for the contest?

- Yes. Please have a written copy of the speech to give to the judges before you speak.
- All students should be provided this document, the registration form, the current contest poster, and the judges' scoring sheet.
- All students should review all the documents on the Rotary district website and will be responsible for the information contained within. The poster provides essential details about this year's topic, schedule and prizes.