

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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## ***16<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King Oratory Contest To Be Held in City Hall Council Chambers Commemorative Event Sponsored by Bank of America***

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, members of the **Municipal Council**, the **Dept. of Health & Human Services/Division of Cultural Affairs** and **Bank of America** will host the first round of the **16th Annual Martin Luther King Oratory Contest** at **3:00 p.m.** on **Tuesday, February 1, 2011** in the **at City Hall, 280 Grove Street.**

The contestants, who are broken down into two grade categories: 1) grades 3 to 5; and 2) grades 6 to 8 – must memorize and present an original work of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which is judged by representatives of the business community.

The Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> competition will see **grades 3-5** competing for a slot into the final competition add in when final is being held, while **grades 6-8 will compete at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Each year, public, private and charter schools across the city are notified of the contest, and asked to hold an internal selection process in which they send two students to compete in each grade category. The oration must be memorized and no longer than 10 minutes. Each presentation will be judged according to length, clarity, memorization, and overall presentation.

Approximately 80 students will participate in the contest from the following schools: P.S #23, P.S # 20, Academy I, P.S. #6, St. Josephs, Resurrection, P.S. #16, P.S.#14, P.S.#2, P.S.#27, Golden Door Charter School, P.S. #25, Sacred Heart, M.S. #7, St. Patrick’s, M.S.#40, P.S. #11, M.S., P.S. #8, P.S. #9, St. Aloysius, P.S.#28, and P.S.#38, of which twelve students are chosen to compete in the final round which takes place at **3:00 p.m. on Monday, February, 7, 2011.**

“Every year, the students who participate in the contest bring their awe inspiring perspectives on Dr. King that always impresses the community and their peers,” said **Mayor Healy**. “Our annual Oratory Contest not only provides a great opportunity for Jersey City school children to learn about Dr. Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, but also teachers them public speaking skills that will stay with them as they grow and will help them in all aspects of their lives.”

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Following the final competition, **Mayor Healy** and **Ed Montesdeoca**, Consumer Market Executive from Bank of America will present an award to the top orators.

“Year after year, the oratory contest provides local students with an opportunity to understand and appreciate Dr. King’s historic words, while helping develop crucial public speaking skills,” said **Ed Montesdeoca**. “At Bank of America, we recognize the important role this and similar initiatives play in youth development.”

For the past two years, Bank of America has sponsored the entire **Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratory Contest**. Their contribution of \$1,700 will go towards the six top award recipients with U.S. Saving Bonds and trophies and the six honorable mentions will receive plaques and books. In addition, Bank of America will also provide refreshments as well as an announcement ad in the local newspaper announcing this year’s winners.

“Bank of America’s generous contribution is critical to our city’s needs as they help us provide a venue in which our children can learn and develop both socially and academically,” said **Mayor Healy**. “I am grateful for their support and for their help in engaging and educating the community in which they serve.”

The following prizes will be awarded by Mayor Healy to the top students in each of the two categories:

- 1st Prize -- \$500 savings bond
- 2nd Prize -- \$250 savings bond
- 3rd Prize -- \$100 savings bond
- Honorable Mention -- a book of Martin Luther King’s original works

All of the awards are provided by Bank of America, who has co-sponsored the event for the past nine years.

The Oratory Contest is one element of the Division of Cultural Affairs’ month-long tribute to African-American history and culture as the City celebrates Black History Month.

Other events include the **Black History Month Group Art Show** being held through the end of the month in City Hall’s John W. Meagher Rotunda Gallery. The exhibit is free and open to the public and is handicap accessible. The show, which is curated by City Hall Art Curator Greg Brickey, will run through the end of this month. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, **contact the Division of Cultural Affairs at 201-547-6921.**

**All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-369-0699.///**