

New writing program targets teens

By: [Maddie Forshee](#) | C&G Newspapers | Published January 2, 2018

On Tuesday, Dec. 19, a second cohort of students graduated from the One Earth Writing Ambassadors program at Madonna University in Livonia.

The One Earth Writing is a young nonprofit that helps teenagers in seventh to 12th grades develop writing and leadership skills. The ambassador program aims to connect teens from all races, religions and socioeconomic statuses.

“Our whole goal is to build confidence and voice in teens so that they become our future leaders who are welcoming and accepting of difference,” said Lynne Golodner, founder of OEW.

Golodner founded OEW two years ago, she said, during her “midlife crisis.”

“As a mom of four teens, I wanted to make the world a better place,” said Golodner. “I wanted to teach teenagers that there are others who are different from them and we can always learn from everybody, and maybe it changes future learners.”

Nine teenagers graduated from the 10-week program. Graduates receive a certificate of completion that counts toward six hours of community service.

Those nine students were from all over metro Detroit and beyond, including one West Bloomfield resident, Brynna Connolly.

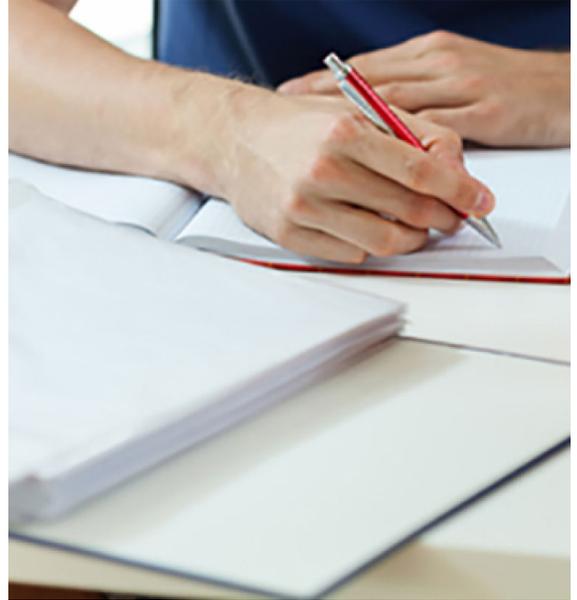
Connolly is a 16-year-old junior at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills. She said she wanted to join the program because she’s interested in diversity and loves to write.

“I figured, ‘Why not combine them (and) put these things to good use?’” she said. “I had a lot of fun. I met a lot of different people.”

Connolly she plans on continuing to improve her writing, and she hopes to write about environmental issues one day.

“When I’m older, I want to make a difference in the environmental community, with animals, aid and conservation,” said Connolly. “Essays are really influential — if I could write a good essay, I could make a change in a lot of lives.”

After graduating, ambassadors can apply to become Senior Ambassadors and continue working with the nonprofit while writing, planning and leading programs with OEW.



OEW hosts workshops for its ambassadors, bringing in community and faith leaders and professionals to build the teens' understanding of writing and community.

The ambassador program is free, transportation is provided for those who need it and dinner is supplied during every workshop.

“We want this program to be open to all teens, so we tried to remove any barriers from entry,” said Golodner. “We keep this program free of charge because we want to cross race, religion and socioeconomic lines very easily, so there’s no barrier to entry for anybody.”

OEW meets at Madonna University in Livonia for its workshops. The winter 2018 program will run 5:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays Feb. 6-March 27. OEW is accepting applications for its winter 2018 class. Interested students have to submit writing samples and a one-page letter of interest. Applications are due by Jan. 10.

To apply, students can go to www.oneearthwriting.org/ambassadors.