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**TEAM IRON WILL**

# DOWN SYNDROME ADVOCACY ESSAY CONTEST 2026

Do you want to celebrate the intrinsic value  
of individuals with Down syndrome?

↓  
Do you like to write?

↓  
**This contest is for YOU!**

We're awarding **CASH PRIZES**, cool **TEAM IRON WILL GEAR**, and the chance to be **PUBLISHED** on the **TEAM IRON WILL WEBSITE!**

**DEADLINE:** April 10th, 2026, at 11:59pm Pacific Time.  
Winners will be announced in late April.



This essay contest challenges students to reflect on the personhood of individuals with Down syndrome. Each category offers two age-appropriate prompts designed to replace fear with hope and inspire persuasive writing.



## CATEGORY 1

### MIDDLE SCHOOL (5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE)

Students may imagine what society would look like if we saw individuals with Down syndrome through a lens of courage, joy, and possibility, or they may examine a common myth about Down syndrome and explain how choosing hope over fear can transform individuals and communities.



## CATEGORY 2

### HIGH SCHOOL (9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> GRADE)

Students may analyze and challenge a common myth or misperception about Down syndrome and its impact on personhood, or they may explore what it means to define someone by their humanity rather than a diagnosis and how belief can expand possibility.



## CATEGORY 3

### COLLEGE

Students may evaluate how lowered expectations shape outcomes for individuals with Down syndrome and discuss the ethical responsibility to uphold their dignity, or they may examine intrinsic human worth in a performance-driven culture and explain what it means to truly champion possibility today.

Visit [teamironwill.org](https://teamironwill.org)  
for full essay  
prompts, formatting  
requirements, prize  
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guidelines, and **TO  
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