

NIAGARA REGION RIGHT TO LIFE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM 2026-2027

Please include all this personal information as to name address, telephone number, school attended, name of principal etc. as part of your initial email when submitting attachments (like letters of reference, self-profile and essay). This will avoid problem of scanning this application form.

Student's Name (last): _____

(first): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

School Attended (name): _____

Grade: _____

School Address: _____

City: _____

Prov: _____

Postal Code: _____

School Phone #: _____

School E-mail: _____

Name of School Principal: _____

Name of reference writer: _____

Email of reference writer: _____

Date: _____



Helpful hints for the essay writing component are posted on theinterim.com/scholarship-program/. One can also find samples of previous winning essays on a variety of topics.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2025-2026



1ST PRIZE

**SARAH MARIE
SCALE**
Arthur Voaden
Secondary School,
St. Thomas,
Ontario



2ND PRIZE

EMILY LANE
Catholic
Central High
School,
Lethbridge,
Alberta



3RD PRIZE

**LOGAN POLINSKY-
PALMER**
St. Anne Catholic
High School,
Belle River,
Ontario

For 25 years NRRTL has been sponsoring a scholarship program. It is appropriate to remember that when societies face grave moral challenges one should heed the wise words of exemplary persons and the ideals set out in important documents, words that call us to respect and care for our fellow human beings:

Pope St. John Paul II:

Society as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person's life.

Edmund Burke:

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

NIAGARA REGION RIGHT TO LIFE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2026-2027



As part of its mandate to educate and inform the younger generations regarding the preciousness and possibilities of human life from conception to natural death, Niagara Region Right to Life is proud to sponsor this scholarship program open to all grade 11 and 12 students in Canada. The essay contest component is meant to encourage students to engage critically and meaningfully with key public issues that may impact on human life especially in its early stages.



NIAGARA REGION RIGHT TO LIFE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

For a quarter century Niagara Region Right to Life (NRRTL) has been offering a scholarship program based primarily on an essay writing contest. The topics or themes have been selected by the Board of Directors of NRRTL. Usually these themes have been focused on some aspect of life and family issues.

In the past several years it has become increasingly challenging for the volunteer marking committee to properly evaluate the essays submitted by candidates. Modern tech tools have raised concerns as to the originality of essays presented.

In addition, there is a conviction that young people can display their intellectual inquiry skills in modes other than research and essay writing skills. Words are powerful, whether written, spoken, or sung. It is also true that images, pictures, graphics, photos, film can also be effective means of communicating meaning and profound truths. In the next few years NRRTL is going to explore and make space for newer modes of expression, for example video and audio podcasts.

It is also quite apparent when reading and evaluating the personal profiles of candidates that there are brilliant young people in Canada and who are contributing in a very positive way in their school and wider community. They are helping to build a Canada where our common humanity, our identity as rational, compassionate human beings is respected and treasured.

The purpose and general objectives of the scholarship program are not changing, but the means of achieving them are in need of modification. There are diverse ways to express ideas, principles and values that respect the dignity and sacredness of all human life and throughout its full cycle of existence, from the moment of conception to its natural end.

Hence, in the future there is likely to be alternating schemes, projects and awards with their own set of criteria for evaluation purposes. But, for this 2026-2027 edition, the traditional essay contest remains at the heart of the NRRTL scholarship program. The essay theme addresses one of the great concerns impacting the program, namely – the role of AI in human society.

The prizes are awarded following an evaluation process conducted by a committee that assesses the essay-writing component (75%). Other considerations include letters of reference, one's personal résumé/pro-file (including knowledge of pro-life values and/or involvement in pro-life activities). (25%)

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

As many as three prizes are offered: \$2000 first prize, \$1500 second prize and \$1000 third prize. A writing contest organized by Niagara Region Right to Life is a determining factor in the awarding of the scholarship prizes.

ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES MUST:

- be high school students entering grade 11 or 12 at a Canadian high school (or be homeschooled in Canada)
- **obtain a teacher's confirmation that their student essay is free of plagiarism or AI generated material**
- provide a substantial (one page) personal resumé outlining their participation in school life (clubs, sports, leadership roles, academic achievements, etc.) and community activities, including any past or present interest/involvement in the pro-life cause. **Please note: lack of such involvement does not disqualify the candidates from the scholarships.**
- submit all attachments (except for reference letters) in word format. Reference letters should be pdf.
- not be related to employees or directors of Niagara Region Right to Life. Previous prize winners in this scholarship program are also ineligible.

ESSAY COMPONENT

The student must submit a typed **original essay**, approximately 1,500 words in length. **To be considered and properly evaluated, the candidate's essay must be submitted by email, only in Word document format, to dirocco401@yahoo.ca, no later than midnight of Friday, October 16, 2026.** The theme of the essay reads as follows:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has entered the daily lexicon of ordinary people. With respect to AI, all kinds of questions pop up and some are fundamental: (a) Is AI a force for good, freeing mankind from drudgery, suffering, and poverty, or is it a dangerous technological tool that undermines the innate dignity of human beings?(b) Is AI a means for redefining what is a human being as well as how human beings are reproduced and how they die (IVF, surrogacy, gene editing, embryo screening, designer babies, commercialization of fertility, extension or termination of human life)? Address these fundamental questions, with the emphasis definitely on question (b), and discuss the moral aspects of AI development and its many potential applications.

To help you get started in your research you are encouraged to consult a few articles and links to YouTube videos that touch on some aspects of the essay theme. The articles and video links are posted for your use at niagararegionrighttolife.ca/projects/scholarship-program and also at theinterim.com.

PROGRAM: RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A committee selected by Niagara Region Right to Life supervises the program.
- Copyrights to any essay submitted for the purpose of the contest will be retained by Niagara Region Right to Life. Any publication or other use of the work would be acknowledged by naming its author.
- Prize winners will be asked to provide a photo of themselves so it may accompany the publication of their essay.
- Submit a minimum of one letter of reference from a school staff member or community representative (pastor, employer, coach, etc. but not from any family relations or parents).
- The candidate's teacher reference writer must review the essay prior to its submission by the student and confirm that the essay is an original student-written essay, free of plagiarism or AI generated material.
- The essay component is marked according to a set rubric. The mark sheet rubric may be found online at either of these two web sites niagararegionrighttolife.ca/projects/scholarship-program or theinterim.com. Such a rubric gives the candidates ample information on how their essays are evaluated.
- Note in particular that there must be concrete evidence or back up (i.e. footnotes/proper citations) even when offering an opinion. Footnotes should be placed at the end of the essay rather than at bottom of individual pages.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNING ENTRY

The prize winners will be declared by **Friday, December 18, 2026** via an announcement by Niagara Region RTL.

For further information leave message for Dan Di Rocco at (905) 294-4219, email dirocco401@yahoo.ca or visit our website niagararegionrighttolife.ca or theinterim.com.