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Forward Madison FC and Madison Public Library Launch “We Read: Youth Voices” Writers’ Contest at June 12 Game

MADISON, WI -- This Saturday, June 12 marks the kick-off of the We Read: Youth Voices Writers’ Contest, an inaugural event that grew out of a partnership between Madison Public Library and Forward Madison FC. Aspiring writers 18 and under can submit a short story, poem, song, or any other written piece between June 12 - September 17. The theme of the contest is teamwork, but entries should not limit the definition to sports. Any piece that highlights people coming together towards a common goal - whether or not it is reached - is encouraged.

“We are excited about partnering with Madison Public Library on this writing contest and continuing to grow our partnership. We believe that the two organizations share a similar vision in terms of enhancing the Madison community. This contest will hopefully encourage the talented and creative youth that we have here in Madison to get more involved with the written word and to continue to develop their skills as young writers,” said Community Engagement Manager and Forward Madison FC player Connor Tobin.

The contest was inspired in part by local tween athlete, [Tikeh Tazeh](#) who turned his energy towards writing during the pandemic. While he could not play soccer, he could capture the essential elements of the sport - teamwork, sportsmanship, and perseverance - in a middle grade novel, titled [Hat Trick](#), that is an homage to the game. Tikeh will serve as the youth ambassador for the contest and will help launch the writing contest when he kicks out the first ball at the Forward Madison FC game on Saturday, June 12.

Contest Guidelines

Submissions will be judged by a community panel of judges including Tikeh Tazeh. Follow Madison Public Library and Forward Madison FC on social media as judges for each age group will be released there throughout the summer.

Age Groups:

- Ages 7 and under | 250 words
- Ages 8-12 | 750 words
- Ages 12-18 | 1,000 words

Three lucky winners (one from each age category) will:

- Receive a custom Forward Madison jersey and a Forward Madison scarf
- Get a used game ball signed by the team
- Be honored at half-time of the Oct. 23rd game (tickets for winners and family members)
- Have their stories published in an anthology available in Madison Public Libraries across the city
- Be featured at the Wisconsin Book Festival Fall Celebration.
- Have their work be shared via social media, the Forward Madison and Madison Public Library newsletters, and other community channels.

The grand prize winner will also receive a \$500 scholarship; the two additional winners from the other age groups will receive \$250 prizes.

A We Read in a Flock tifo, created in collaboration with local artist Emily Balsley, the Bubbler at Madison Public Library and The Flock will also be unveiled at Saturday's match. The Dream Bus will be on site outside the stadium to sign people up for library cards, hand out limited edition We Read in a Flock stickers, and other We Read giveaways.

Learn more about the contest and submit stories at madpl.org/youthvoices.

About We Read

We Read is a year-round, all-ages, community wide celebration of all kinds of reading. To participate, Madisonians can simply find something to read that they love and share about it with a friend or on social media using #WeReadMadison and tagging Madison Public Library.

About Madison Public Library

The Madison Public Library's tradition of promoting education, literacy, and community involvement has enriched the City of Madison for more than 145 years. All 9 library locations are currently open for in-person browsing, pickup-up of holds, computer service and in-person reference.