Media Fellowship House Scholarship Program 2026/2027
Marie Whitaker Scholarship for Juniors

Thank you for registering for our annual scholarship program. To be considered for this award, please submit a short essay or creative project by the **deadline of February 28th, 2027**. A list of choice prompts and directions on the submission process are listed below.

Please choose ONE of the following prompts and respond with either:

- **A 1–2 page written essay,**
- **A recorded video or audio response (no longer than 5 minutes), or**
- **A visual project (artwork, photo series, or digital media).**

If you choose a video, audio, or visual response, please also include a short paragraph (4–6 sentences) explaining your project and how it connects to the prompt. ***(See question below.)***

This Year's Theme: Recognizing the Wisdom and Dignity in Every Person

Every person has a story, experiences that shape their perspective, and wisdom that can teach us something about the world. Yet, too often, people are judged by their circumstances, defined by their past, or excluded from conversations that affect their lives.

Through this year's scholarship program, Media Fellowship House invites students to reflect on whose voices are heard, whose experiences are overlooked, and what we can learn when we approach one another with curiosity, humility, and respect. We encourage you to consider how recognizing the dignity and wisdom in every person can help us build stronger, more understanding, and more equitable communities.

Prompt Options (Choose ONE of the three prompts below):

1. Beyond First Impressions — Seeing the Whole Person

We often form opinions about people based on what we see, what we hear about them, or what we think we know about their experiences. These assumptions can prevent us from recognizing a person's full story, strengths, and wisdom.

Reflect on a time when you learned something that changed the way you understood another person or group of people. What did you learn, and how did it challenge your assumptions? How might our schools, communities, or society change if we were more willing to look beyond labels, circumstances, or past experiences and recognize the dignity of every person?

2. The Wisdom in Every Person — Learning Through Listening

Every person carries knowledge, experiences, and lessons that can teach us something about the world. Yet, some voices are overlooked or dismissed because of a person's background, identity, age, or life circumstances.

Whose wisdom do you think our society often overlooks? What might we learn by listening to people whose experiences differ from our own, including people who have experienced incarceration, immigration, discrimination, or other forms of marginalization? How can listening with curiosity and respect help us build stronger relationships and more understanding communities?

3. From Understanding to Justice — Turning Awareness into Action

Sometimes, unfairness is rooted not only in how individuals treat one another, but also in the rules, systems, and attitudes that shape people's opportunities and experiences.

Identify an injustice or barrier that concerns you in your school, community, or society more broadly. This might include inequities in education, housing, immigration, the criminal justice system, or another issue that matters to you. Who is most affected, and whose perspectives might be missing from the conversation? What could individuals or communities do to address this issue while recognizing the knowledge, strengths, and humanity of those most affected?

REQUIRED For Creative Submissions: If you choose to create a visual, audio, or video project, please include a short paragraph (4–6 sentences) responding to the following question:

What message or story were you hoping to express through your project, and how does it connect to the scholarship prompt you selected?

GUIDANCE ON USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (A.I.)

ASSESSMENT & AUTHENTICITY

We want to hear **your voice**—your ideas, your experiences, and your reflections. A.I. tools may be helpful for organizing thoughts or proofreading, but your submission should represent **your own original thinking and creativity**. Trust in your abilities and share from your perspective.

If you are selected as a finalist, our committee looks forward to connecting with you to discuss your submission and learn more about your inspiration and process.

If you used A.I. in any way (for brainstorming, editing, or research), please include a brief note (2–3 sentences) explaining how you used it and how the final submission reflects your own ideas.

ABOUT MEDIA FELLOWSHIP HOUSE

Media Fellowship House was founded in 1944 by four women of different races who wanted to promote fellowship and understanding by creating a space for a diverse community to come together. Media Fellowship House has continued the work of our founders' mission for 80 years by creating programs, organizing coalitions, and facilitating conversations that promote diversity and understanding. To learn more, visit: www.mediafellowshiphouse.org

ABOUT THE AWARD

Named in honor of a founding member of Media Fellowship House, this scholarship opportunity for high school juniors encourages self-reflection and challenges students to consider the importance of speaking out and taking action against injustice in order to build a stronger community. These are the core principles that Media Fellowship House was built upon in 1944 and the values we strive to instill in our youth today. **Three high school juniors** will be selected to receive a **$500 scholarship** to support with application fees related to their post-secondary planning.

Submission Process: Visit mediafellowshiphouse.org/scholarship to submit your essay or project through our online form. Or you can email scholarship@mediafellowshiphouse.org and include your name, grade, and school on your essay/project and in your email message.

Before submitting your essay or project, take the time to review it carefully. We encourage you to check for spelling and grammar errors and consider sharing your work with a trusted mentor for feedback. Thoughtful editing and revision will help ensure your submission represents your best effort.

Deadline for Submission: February 28, 2027

Formats accepted:

For Short Essay Options:

- **Length:** 1-2 pages
- **Line Spacing:** 1.5 spacing
- **Font Size:** 11pt
- **File Types accepted as attachments by email:** .doc, .docx, or .pdf

For Creative Video Projects:

- **Video Project Length:** 3-5 minutes
- **File Types accepted as attachments by email:** MP4, .mov, or link to youtube post (or similar)

For Creative Visual Projects:

- **1-2 pages or up to 3 image designs**
- **File Types accepted as attachments by email:** .pdf, .jpg or .png

Decision Process: Submissions will be reviewed based on:

- **Authenticity of voice and reflection**
- **Creativity and originality of ideas**
- **Clarity, organization, and focus**

The top three, scoring highest, will be selected to receive a scholarship. Awards will be announced by April 15 and all scholarship recipients will be recognized at our Annual Award Ceremony held in May 2027.

Questions? Please contact Amy Komarnicki, Executive Director, 610-565-0434, x102 or scholarship@mediafellowshiphouse.org