Writing Contest
Submit your 400-word essay by Friday, November 13, 2015, for a chance to win an Apple iPad Air and $1,000 for your school!

Contest Overview
High school students in Virginia are invited to honor outstanding African Americans by participating in Dominion Resources' and the Library of Virginia's Strong Men & Women in Virginia History student writing contest. Four winning essays will be chosen, one from each of the four regions in Virginia that Dominion serves.

Prompt
“I must give just as I receive—I have been receiving from others all my life.”
“To inspire people, to encourage them to have faith in themselves.”

Richmond postal worker Thomas Cannon Sr. was a philanthropist who gave away more than $156,000 during his lifetime. In 1972 Cannon began donating money, frequently choosing people who had been featured in the news. His recipients included people who had experienced great hardships or had performed distinguishing acts of heroism, generosity, or community service. On one occasion, he boarded city buses to hand out envelopes filled with money. Although his annual salary never exceeded $25,000, Cannon funded his philanthropy by living frugally. His generosity and unwavering spirit drew local and national recognition. In his final days, Cannon requested that people honor him by helping others as he did throughout his life.

Cannon kept a list of eighteen reasons why he gave away his money. Two of the reasons are shown above. Create your own list of reasons why you help others. What does your list include? Explain why you chose your reasons. Do you think Thomas Cannon would have agreed with your list? Why or why not?

Contest Rules
Entries must be submitted online by Friday, November 13, 2015.
Each entrant must be a high school student at a public or private high school in one of Dominion’s four regional service areas in Virginia. Homeschoolers may also apply; the $1,000 school award can be applied to a homeschooler association if the winner’s family has an active, dues-paying membership.
All entries must be original works that have not been published or submitted for publication anywhere else.
Entry should not exceed 400 words.
Entries become the property of the Library of Virginia and will not be returned.
The Library of Virginia and Dominion reserve the right to use the winners’ names and entries for promotional purposes in all forms of media without notice, review, approval, or compensation, except where prohibited by law.
Submit entries to: www.lva.virginia.gov/smw

Timeline
Deadline for entries is Friday, November 13, 2015.
Winners will be notified by December 14, 2015.
Winning essays will be posted to both the Library of Virginia (www.lva.virginia.gov/smw) and Dominion (www.dom.com, keyword “strong”) websites on January 8, 2016.
Awards ceremony will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2016, in Richmond.

Judging Criteria
Content—Reflection of careful and thorough thought
Focus—Prompt questions answered and main idea clearly articulated
Support—Relevant, quality details about important thoughts and concepts
Style—Essay flows well and shows good word choice and structure
Mechanics—Correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Winners
Winning students will receive an Apple iPad Air.
Winning students’ schools will receive a cash award of $1,000 at the award ceremony in February. Each winner and a school representative must attend the ceremony to receive their awards. Dominion will provide overnight accommodations for out-of-town winners.

Good Luck!
Questions?
Please call 804.692.3999 or e-mail education@lva.virginia.gov.

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