

# VFW Essay

- FAIRPORT HARBOR EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL -

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DECEMBER 2016

Harding Jr/Sr High School

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## WINNING ESSAYS

*Patriot's Pen & Voice of Democracy*



### Voice of Democracy Winners

- 1st Jessie Smith - 10th grade
- 2nd Gabby Palmer - 9th grade
- 3rd Marcus Toreki - 12th grade

### Patriot's Pen Winners

- 1st James Dean Spiesman - 8th grade
- Runner Ups:
  - Tierny DeGidio - 8th grade
  - Connor Hulett - 8th grade
  - Ryan Heller - 7th grade
  - Joseph Tanker - 7th grade

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# VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

*1st Place Winner: Jessie Smith 10th Grade*

My Responsibility To America

By Jessie Smith

My responsibilities to America are to support and defend the Constitution. I have the right to express myself so that makes it easy to support and defend the Constitution. I also need to follow the laws whether I want to or not. I have no objections at my age for any of the laws. Another responsibility that I have to respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others. Participating in your local community is one thing I really like. I feel like you should be able to and that's one of my favorite responsibility but at the same time it's nice to have a choice to; I also really like being able to serve on a jury when called upon. I really feel happy about that because you get to vouch for what or who you believe in. I feel like that's a very big part in my responsibility as an American.

There's also the responsibility of defending the country you live in. That's very important. If you live in a country you should definitely defend your country. There are veterans who did it and people now doing it so everyone should if those people are putting their life on the line. I'm very proud to be a citizen of America. America is the best country in the world. No matter what country you live in you should be proud no matter how bad conditions are.

What I think Americans should do to make it a better place is start by not littering. The reason why I think this is because it pollutes the air and kills many animals and makes things more dirty and make people more sick. It's really not that hard to throw away your own trash. There's no point of just throwing it all over the place. It really makes everything worse. We also need to stop all of the gun violence. That is one of the most outrageous things in this country today. Every day on the news there's always stuff about either police shooting people without a serious reason or people killing police. This is probably one of the biggest things right now in this country. Well we're on this topic I would really like to add how this racism going around isn't helping this country. This is something that's been going on forever and it really needs to stop. Who knew after centuries of this it keeps going on. People are people no matter what color you are. We are all the same and no matter what you are shouldn't matter. I feel like there will never be a time when your race won't matter. If there is ever a time it won't be when I'm around that's for sure. This is America and I will try to do my best to make it better each and every day and so should everybody. Just a little bit from everyone will change the world. Other than the negatives of what I said, this country is really great and I'm very proud of being an American citizen.

# VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

*2nd Place Winner: Gabby Palmer 9th Grade*

My Responsibility to America By Gabby Palmer

Growing up as a kid, I never really had very many responsibilities. I had always been a good little girl, who sat quiet and played with her toys. I tried to stay in my own little world, away from other people, and not bothering anyone. In my mind, I could do whatever I wanted, my creativity had no limits, it still doesn't. Growing up, I've always asked myself the typical questions, such as, "What are you going to do with your life?" or "What are you going to do after you graduate, and everything changes?" But as I'm beginning to mature, another question has popped into my head, this one more important than the others, I believe. "What are you going to do for your country, and those around you?"

I come from a very religious family, as well as a very patriotic family. My grandfather served in the army, World War 2 to be more specific. My grandmother had always told me stories about him, and how funny and kind he was. I never met my grandfather sadly; he died from Alzheimer's about 2 years before I was born. As well as being kind, he was also very strict; he raised my mother to appreciate our veterans and love the country she grew up in. Of course, my mother then taught me in this way. My grandfather had other siblings, 5 brothers, I recall. They were all army men too, they all died during the war however, I don't think I remember any stories about them though.

Dorothy Height was an American administrator and educator, who was also a very strong civil rights and women's rights activist. She fought for her beliefs, focusing on the issues of African-American women and their illiteracy, unemployment and their voter awareness. She once spoke the famous words, "I want to be remembered as someone who used herself and anything she could touch to work for justice and freedom... I want to be remembered as the one who tried." When I read that quote for the first time, it really got me thinking. I don't want to be remembered as the one who gave up. I want to be the women who did a service to her country. Now this doesn't always mean, joining the army, or serving the National Guard, though that is still a good way. Other times it means, giving back to your country what she gave you. Giving back to the people who fought and died for you, and the people around you.

We all have our rights as Americans to believe what we want to believe, or say what we want to say, but there are certain rights not particularly found in the amendments that I believe all Americans should have. We have the responsibility to follow the laws of our constitution and enforce those laws, not by physical force, but remember that we, ourselves, must keep our country in balance and free and follow the constitution to keep it that way. I also believe that schools should enforce the reading of our constitution and our laws. Most schools are starting to refrain from reading these sorts of things, why they are doing this is not to my current knowledge. Schools should enforce the learning of our veterans and what they are doing for our country. Freedom isn't free and I don't think schools and people truly understand that.

Not enough people truly appreciate what it means to be free. We all just take it for granted not appreciating our veterans, who fought and died for all of our freedoms. Thanks to them I can go to church with my family on Sunday mornings, to learn and get an education. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be here writing this paper, and saying what I mean. As an American, I must leave an imprint, so our future children learn to take care of their country, and be thankful for their freedom. As an American, I will take care of those around me and the others, who need more than me. As an American, I will always spread the word and appreciate what it means to be free.

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# VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

*3rd Place Winner: Marcus Toreki 12th Grade*

My Responsibility to America

By Marcus Toreki

My responsibility to America is to be a responsible citizen who plays his best role in American society. When we are born in America, we have an opportunity to be the best person we can be, no matter our circumstances and the cards we're dealt, even though the odds may be stacked against you more than others, there is always opportunity. To play our best role in society, is to use our interests and natural skills to find what we want to do for a living, but most importantly how you contribute to American society and having the responsibility to have that role. The key is Hard Work. Once we enter our profession, it matters that we do it to the best of our ability and not just do what we have to do to get by.

Our work life is very important, but one thing that it isn't more important than is our family, our children, and even yourself. One big responsibility that a lot of people tend to forget about is family and kids. Some people often get so caught up in their work that they forget to spend time with their family, or even just check on them to see how they're doing which can cause families to drift apart or get divided. Sometimes kids of parents who work a lot don't really get to have a relationship with them because they are always so caught up in work. It's understandable on the parent's part that they work, but it's also irresponsible to have children and not be able to be there for them regardless of the excuse because they are the future of our country and it's the parent's job to do their best to guide them to their goals. Children rely on their parents for many things, social skills, moral support, guidance, and financial help.

I want to enter the field of criminal justice and that field requires a lot of critical thinking and judgment. I also have a lot of contact with people. My intro to criminal justice teacher at Lakeland, Mr. Thorne, always reminds his students how important it is to treat everyone I come in contact with, with respect even if they are not the most compliant or the easiest to talk to. The idea that this gives me is to treat everyone equally no matter what's on their "track record". He also talks about knowing how to talk to people. Not just for your job although you do need it for your job, but you need to be social to work your way to get the job, such as setting up interns and working with people in the field before you officially enter the profession. Knowing how to talk to people is probably your most useful tool in your work life but most importantly life in general. Another thing that I believe I am responsible to do, is being a good citizen. To help your community and your neighbors is what being American is all about, it's about unity, and celebrating with each other and helping each other get by. What reminds me of this is on my mom's, sister's and my birthday, we always take a piece of cake to our neighbors to celebrate our birthdays and they do the same for us every year and it reminds us that we are all here together as one.

To live in America is a blessing, but it comes with all of these responsibilities as well. We all need to embrace being hard workers, responsible parents, and good citizens. This is what our veterans died for and continue to die for today, to protect their country so that its people have the opportunity to have these responsibilities. It would be the least we could do to meet these responsibilities.

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# PATRIOT'S PEN WINNER

*1st Place Winner: James Dean Spiesman 8th Grade*

The America I Believe In

By James Dean Spiesman

"America was not built on fear. It was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand." this quote was said by Harry Truman. This quote describes what I think about America. I think America is like that because it is filled with hard working people. I also think America is built on courage because of all the people that fought for us every day in the military and anyone that is brave enough to sacrifice something for other people. America is also built on imagination. It is built on imagination because you have to imagine what you want it to be, and how you need to do it.

I believe that America is the best country in the world. I believe that because we get the freedom of speech and the freedom to do whatever we want. We also have the privilege to vote for what we want and what we do not want. The best of all is we do not have to flee from war or have to worry about every time we step out the door.

My grandparents and my parents were never very wealthy. But my mom and my grandparents are very hard working people that are trying to make a better future for me and my little sister. We got that chance because we live in America and how wealthy it is unlike other people in other countries that have to worry about the next time they will eat or shelter or finding water that is drinkable.

I will never stop believing in America because it is my home and the land of the free and I am safe here. I do not imagine me living anywhere else because America is the best place in the world. These are all the reasons why I believe in America.

# PATRIOT'S PEN WINNER

## *Runner Up: Tierny DeGidio 8th Grade*

The America I Believe In

By Tierny DeGidio

The history of the United States is very important. Studying it helps us to not make future mistakes. In the past, we have tried out different forms of government. Some worked, some did not. So, what is the America I believe in?

I believe in a country where everyone has rights. I have hope for a country where there is better treatment and better housing for the homeless. In some American cities, it is illegal to be homeless.

I can see a country where women have more equal rights. We are a free country where women have rights, more than most countries, but equal pay could be a great step forward. I am glad to live in a country where I can get a good education. Some countries have very expensive schools, and most kids cannot attend. However, I can get a great education for little to no money.

I believe in a country where people are people and not considered more or less. No one is nor should they be defined by their race, sex, or where they come from. Anyone should be able to call this country home, with the acceptance that they deserve.

Immigration laws, a very controversial topic, should be changed in a few ways. I believe that immigration should be controlled and constantly checked. I also believe that it should not be so expensive to move here from a different country. Some immigrants do not make enough money to live off of. In most cases, people immigrate here because of bad situations in their birth country or new, better opportunities here.

In our country, we have many opportunities. Jobs, schools, and rights are only three of the many. People who live here or move here should always have a government that can back them up in times of financial trouble. Some people may take advantage of the many programs that can help, but many use them only to get back on their feet at low points in their lives.

The U.S is such a large country, home to millions of people. Each and every one of our citizens have the rights that they deserve.

# PATRIOT'S PEN WINNER

*Runner Up: Connor Hulett 8th Grade*

The America I Believe In

By Connor Hulett

"We still believe in the America that is a land of opportunity and a beacon of freedom. We believe in the America that challenges each of us to be better and bigger than ourselves." - Mitt Romney. To me this quote means that America stands for opportunity and freedom. To me this also means you have to challenge yourself to be bigger and better than you are now.

I believe Americans should believe in freedom. To me believing in freedom means a lot of different things. One thing freedom means to me is you can believe in what you want. I believe freedom also means living in a safe society where we are protected. I believe we have this freedom because of the veterans and current military members that have served for our country. I believe freedom is one of the reasons America is great today.

A reason I believe in America is because we always recover from all of the different terrorist attacks and other bad events that happen to us. A good example of this is 9/11. This is a good example because after the deadliest terrorist attack in America we recovered. We recovered from this by being strong, staying together, and believing that we can. If we want America to stay strong we as Americans have to be strong, stay together, and believe.

"America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand." - Harry S. Truman. To me this quote means you cannot have fear. I believe that it also means you have to have courage and be determined to do what you want. This is a few of the many reasons I believe in America today. Other people should believe in America like I do

# PATRIOT'S PEN WINNER

*Runner Up: Ryan Heller 7th Grade*

The America I Believe In

By Ryan Heller

I believe in freedom for all people and races. We all are people and we all have lives and freedom gives us a chance to do what we want. Freedom gives us chances to do things that other countries do not do. It makes the country easier to live in knowing we are able to do some laws other countries do not allow. Another big factor in America is jobs. It gives people money for things to buy for others or to pay bills and taxes. We have a very wide variety of different jobs to choose from it could be anything from a doctor or the military. Jobs help us in many ways like if you are a doctor or nurse you help hurt people or you can build houses or cook food for people. It truly does help everybody in America.

I believe in protection. We have a military who protects us every single day making sure we all are good while we live our everyday lives. They work hard and risk their lives for us everyday and protect the land. We have cops that enforce laws. If we break a law we could either break a law like speeding and get a ticket or we could rob a place and we would go to jail. Cops have a very important job because some people break lots of laws, so cops have to arrest them. Also, they have to patrol towns looking for people breaking laws. We have freedom but sometimes if we try things that are too extreme we get sent to jail. We have very trustworthy protection for our country.

The last thing about the America I believe in is about education. Our education is some of the best in the world I think. We have some great teachers that spend half of their day educating young people to become smart. We have to learn and have homework to educate ourselves for the future. The teachers have to go through a series of training to teach us. America really has some good education!



# PATRIOT'S PEN WINNER

*Runner Up: Joseph Tanker 7th Grade*

The America I Believe In

By Joey Tanker

The America that I believe in has freedom for everyone. Anywhere in the world should have as much freedom as they want. Freedom is one of the most important parts of America so you can do and say whatever you want. If you do not have freedom then everyone is going to try and tell each other what to do. After everyone tries to dictate each other then it is going to turn into fights and that would be horrible. Anywhere in the world with people should have as much freedom that they want. That is why freedom can be counted as one of the most important items in America.

If America wants to be great we might need to help out other countries and find a cure to diseases so more people can stay in America. If we help out other countries then wars will not be started that much or at least wars that involve us in it. If we also become partners with other countries then we can trade items and supplies to make food that we do not have here in our country. The next topic we will talk about is making the cure to diseases. If you find the cure for diseases more people will be in our country and not as many people will die.

Who in the United States does not love sports? I think sports are amazing because it keeps you in condition and it is really fun to play. Just because you are not good at a sport does not mean you cannot play it. The last topic I have is to try to have the best President you could possibly have. If we have an amazing President that leads to a very successful government and economy. This is why I think all of these topics are important and help out America in a good way.

