

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCSD Hosts 2nd Annual MLK Oratory Contest

ORANGEBURG, S.C. – Orangeburg County School District’s 2nd Annual oratory competition, held on January 30, 2023, featured 14 of OCSD's best and brightest students. The talented group of orators comprised fourth and fifth-grade contest winners from each of the District's elementary schools. The contest allowed OCSD students to use their voices to motivate and inspire others through the art of public speaking. The students masterfully delivered prepared speeches during the event, which commences the celebration of cultural diversity and spotlights the students as they honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each student’s powerful, deeply personal speech was based on the competition theme, “Celebrating the Impact of our Youth,” and answered the question, “As an OCSD student, what are some educational experiences you have or would like to have that will empower you to be a leader who can impact your community, and how will you use those experiences to make such as impact?”

Jaiden Seawright, a fifth grader at Sheridan Elementary, won first, Neshel Mantle, a fourth grader from Ellore Elementary School place second, and Ava Ferguson, a fifth grader at St. James-Gaillard Elementary, brought home the third-place prize. Congratulations to these three, along with all 14 inspiring participants.

Each original two-to-five-minute speech incorporated ideals from Dr. King’s teachings and demonstrated how his words continue to impact and inspire lives.

OCSD's first-place winner, Jaiden Seawright, said, "Just like Dr. King, my teachers have instilled in me always to feel that I count, always feel that I have worth, and always feel that my life has ultimate significance, and today I’m thankful for the dedicated educators whose adoption of this mentality opened the doors for my success...**A Growth Mindset.**"

Each contestant received a certificate of participation, a trophy, and a gift certificate. A check for \$500 was the reward for first place, \$300 for the second, and \$150 for the third. MLK, Jr. Contest Winners will also deliver inspirational messages as part of the back-to-school celebrations for the coming year. And all participants will host a segment on 'Fostering OCSD with Dr. Foster!'

"These students remind me of my why," shared Dr. Shawn Foster, OCSD Superintendent. "The reason we do what we do every single day on behalf of children is because parents have entrusted us with educating our future doctors, educators, Broadway performers, musicians, fashion designers, attorneys, and paleontologists," he continued.

More than 300 supporters witnessed the students present in-person during the event held at New Mount Zion Baptist Church. The award-winning St. James Gaillard Elementary School Beta Club Dance Team added to the event's excitement with their dance performance. A recording of the event is on the District's website and YouTube channel.

CONGRATULATIONS AGAIN TO OUR ORATORY CONTESTANTS

Areyana Lewis, Bethune-Bowman Elementary (4th)

Teagan Allen, Holly Hill Elementary (5th)

Jaiden Seawright, Sheridan Elementary (5th)

Azaria Williams, Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Elementary (5th)

Ava Ferguson, St. James-Gaillard Elementary (5th)

Ty'Rae Clark, Vance-Providence Elementary (5th)

Neshel Mantle, Ellore Elementary (4th)

Bryson Cummings, Mellichamp Elementary (5th)

Jackson Jett, Lockett Elementary (5th)

Anaria Golson, Dover Elementary (4th)

Jakariah King-Bari, Edisto Elementary (4th)

Raybon Patrick, Marshall Elementary (4th)

Lauryn Miller, Whittaker Elementary (5th)

Chelsie Ramos, Brookdale Elementary (5th)

Link to the YouTube Video is below:

<https://youtu.be/62hsWAEKKrk>

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at ocsdsc.org