

PATRIOT'S PEN CONTEST

FIRST PLACE 2011 NATIONAL WINNER Julia Funk South Carolina

Julia Funk, recipient of the \$10,000 First Place North End Post 144, Paul A. Spera Past Commander-in-Chief Award, is a seventh grade student at Oakbrook Preparatory, and she lives in Duncan, South Carolina. Julia was sponsored by VFW Post 9539 in Roebuck, South Carolina.

“Does Patriotism Still Matter?” By Julia Funk

Is patriotism our star spangled banner swirling in the cool breeze over a stadium? Is it singing the national anthem at a sports game? Or is it a lone trumpet honoring a fallen soldier while loved ones grieve? All of these American traditions are symbols of our patriotism, but true patriotism is much more. Webster defines patriotism as “devoted love, support, and defense of one’s country.” Does this mean that you agree with every decision and are proud of everything your country has done? No, I believe patriotism is loving your country but questioning and standing firm in your beliefs. Patriotism for one’s country is like a mother’s love for her child. She may not like or agree with everything he does, but she loves, supports and encourages him in his hopes and dreams. Doing our part to help make this country the best it can be is part of life long patriotism. We need to establish our patriotism today with true unity, support, and service.

Our country’s ability to be unified in our case for freedom allows us to be “one nation under God.” Who would have thought that 12 small colonies could battle the strongest army in the world to become the United States of America? Our country was formed because people united to work for a common cause. We had patriotism from the beginning and without it, America would not exist. Americans must continue to work together or our beloved country will perish.

How can we as citizens today demonstrate and sustain our patriotism? Speaking out and standing firm in our beliefs exercise our constitutional rights. If you disagree with something you see you need to act and try to improve your country. Voting is an important right which allows us to express ourselves. You also need to look for ways to serve your country. Some ultimately risk their lives for their country’s freedom, but we can all volunteer in public service to help our individual communities.

Finally, we are a united nation under God and Americans must trust in the Lord. Our founding fathers built this country on their hope for a Christian nation and their desire for religious freedom. Patriotism means unity, support, and service to make America the best it can be. Patriotism definitely matters and is our responsibility as citizens of American today.