VFW Announces 2011-2012 National Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Essay Contest Winners

Read and listen to America's youth discuss patriotism and pride in our military

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The winners of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary sponsored Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition and the Patriot's Pen essay competition were announced late yesterday afternoon during the 2012 VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

The Voice of Democracy program celebrated its 65th year with this year's theme, "*Is There Pride in Serving in Our Military?"* The first-place winner, Elizabeth Scannell, sponsored by Post 10256 and Ladies Auxiliary in Goose Creek, S.C., received an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., where she was presented with the T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship award in the amount of $30,000. The second-place winner, Josiah Lippincott, sponsored by Post 2002 in Tulare, Calif., received the $16,000 Charles Kuralt Memorial Scholarship Award. The third-place winner, Alexis Dominique, sponsored by Post 12065 and Ladies Auxiliary in New Iberia, La., received the $10,000 VFW Scholarship Award. All other state winners received at least a $1,000 college scholarship. Nearly 50,000 students participated in this year's competition.

Read Elizabeth Scannell's award-winning essay

Watch Elizabeth deliver her essay on-demand at vfw.org

See list of all winners

The Patriot's Pen program is designed to foster patriotism by allowing students the opportunity to express their opinions on democracy based on an annual theme, this year's being,*Are You Proud of Your Country?"* The first-place winner, Lydia Macfarlan, sponsored by Post1674 and Ladies Auxiliary in Siloam Springs, Ark., received an all-expense-paid trip

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to Washington, D.C., where she received a $10,000 savings bond. The second-place winner, Emily Jones, sponsored by Post 261 and Ladies Auxiliary out of Lawrence, Ind., will receive an $8,000 savings bond and glass plaque. The third-place winner, Ashlyn Carlson, sponsored by Post 11402 and Ladies Auxiliary in Olympia, Wash., will receive a $7,000 savings bond and glass plaque. Wood plaques will be sent to all of the sponsoring Post's Department headquarters for presentation during their respective Department Convention or other appropriate ceremony. A total of 140,000 students participated in this year's competition.

Read Lydia Macfarlan's award-winning essay

Watch Lydia deliver her essay on-demand at vfw.org

See list of all winners