

VFW Announces 2013-2014 National Youth Scholarship Contest Winners

See VFW's national annual essay contest winners

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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 yesterday during the 2014 VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

The Voice of Democracy program celebrated its 67th year with this year's theme, "Why I'm Optimistic About Our Nation's Future." The first-place winner, Madison Haley, sponsored by VFW Post 777 and Ladies Auxiliary in Mount Pulaski, Ill., 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, Grace Speas, sponsored by VFW Post 10097 and Ladies Auxiliary in Fort Myers Beach, Fla., received the \$16,000 Charles Kuralt Memorial Scholarship Award. The third-place winner, Luke Ball, sponsored by VFW Post 2573 and Ladies Auxiliary in Wilmington, N.C., received the \$10,000 VFW Scholarship Award. All other state winners received at least a \$1,000 college scholarship. More than 40,000 students participated in this year's competition.

Read Madison Haley's award-winning essay.

Watch Madison deliver her essay.

See the complete 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, "What Patriotism Means to Me." The first-place winner, Alexis Canen, sponsored by VFW Post 1125 and Ladies Auxiliary in Glendive, Mont., received an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., where she received a \$5,000 award. The second-place winner, Noelle Nakaoka, sponsored by VFW Post 2875 in Honolulu, Hawaii, will receive a \$4,000 award. The third-place winner, Olivia Leising, sponsored by VFW Post 9357 in Cambridge, Neb., will receive a \$3,500 award. More than 111,000 students participated in this year's competition.

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