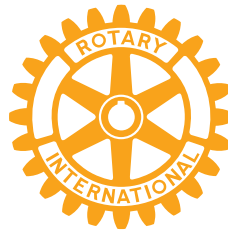


2021-2022

Laws *of* Life



THE GEORGIA
ROTARY CLUBS
LAWS OF LIFE
ESSAY CONTEST



Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest 2021-2022 Facts and Impact

Believing in the power of personal maxims or *laws of life* that, if lived by, would guide youth to their best lives, Sir John Templeton, noted philanthropist and financial pioneer, created the Laws of Life Essay Contest to encourage young people to embrace the wisdom of the sayings and to honor them for their work.

As a social and emotional learning tool, the contest fulfills the state-mandated character education requirement and is offered free of charge to high schools. The contest encourages students to select a law of life, reflect upon their lives, and express their personal beliefs through writing.

A signature program of the Rotary Clubs of Georgia, the contest takes Rotary's emphasis on ethics, education, peace, and literacy into schools and classrooms. **133** Rotarians from **41** sponsoring clubs served as essay judges to select the student winners.

This year, **29,977** students from **62** partner high schools shared their Georgia Laws of Life Essay. The contest named **140** School-Level Winners and **7** State Winners, and it presented **\$17,950** in cash awards to students and teachers.



The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is an outreach program of the Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose vision is to transform lives by engaging students to reflect upon their lives, express personal beliefs, and affirm strong character values through writing.

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***“What lies behind you
and what lies in front of you,
pales in comparison
to what lies inside of you.”***

Dear Friends,

A wise person once said, “What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.” Those of us fortunate enough to be involved with the Georgia Laws of Life essay contest agree.

Every student who writes a law of life essay is to be commended for sharing their stories of lessons learned from loss, love of family, friends and even strangers, dreams of days yet to come and hope for the future. We thank each student for their inspiration. We particularly congratulate and thank the seven essays shared in this publication. As you read these essays, we hope you too will be inspired and encouraged by their words.

We are thankful also for the teachers who help their students explore their lives, the Rotarians who serve as judges giving their time to “listen” to the writers, the Rotary Club partners and sponsors who recognize the deserving students and all the corporate, foundation, and individual sponsors. Inside each of you is what makes the contest possible.

Sincerely,

Beth McIntyre
Board Chair, Georgia Rotary Districts
Character Education Program, Inc.
Member, Rotary Club of Winder

Carol J. Gray Walker
Executive Director, Georgia Rotary Districts
Character Education Program, Inc &
Georgia Rotary Clubs
Laws of Life Essay Contest
Member, Midtown Atlanta Rotary Club

Sarah Adams

Atlanta Classical Academy – 10th Grade

State Winner

The Power of Kindness

Steve Maraboli once said, "A kind gesture can reach a wound only compassion can heal." This simple message is a great law of life to live by. It challenges you to show kindness to everyone and shows how impactful it can be on the lives of strangers.

When I went to my first Braves game, I was very reluctant to go. I was not anticipating the impact it would have on my life. I have never been a sports fan, but when the Braves were playing some of their last games before the World Series, I was dragged by my family to go to the game against the LA Dodgers.

The seats were uncomfortable and I was distracted by the fans around me defending their team and yelling at each other. The smell of popcorn and hotdogs filled the air. The strangers in front of me and behind me were loud and obnoxious. I started to wish the game was over already. A lady sat down next to me and I was annoyed that I had to sit next to a stranger.

As the game started, I had little interest in any of it. Every time the Braves would score, however, I would stand up and shout. I would high five the lady next to me and we would celebrate together. I felt bad that she was alone. My mission was to make her feel like she had a friend. Although she was a nameless person, I felt a connection with her as we anticipated the results of each play.

After the third inning, she asked if I would take a picture of her. She went down to the railing and she held up a Freeman jersey next to her. I was very curious why she took a picture with a jersey, but I took several to ensure she got a good one. She thanked me multiple times. To me, taking that picture took thirty seconds, but it had a lasting effect on her. I looked over and saw her eyes swell with tears. She showed me a picture on her phone. It was of her and a man wearing the Freeman jersey.

"This is my husband. I was recreating this picture, so thank you for taking it."

"Of course!" I was suddenly aware of how the rest of her story might go.

"We used to go to every Braves game together and sit in these exact seats. He would sit where you are sitting right now."

My jaw dropped. I was speechless.

Law of Life

"A kind gesture can reach a wound only compassion can heal."

~Steve Maraboli

"He is dead now, but I know he is watching down on the game and celebrating with me."

My eyes filled with tears: "I am so sorry for your loss, that is terrible. Thank you for sharing your story with me."

"It's okay. He's happy. He's in heaven now. Thank you for giving me comfort during this game. I'm glad I could share this moment with someone."

I was shocked, speechless. Her tragic story was so moving and beautiful. I felt sad for her. I started crying. Not knowing what to say, I gave her a hug and we continued cheering. When the Braves won, I was ecstatic. Not because of the actual game, but because this kind stranger next to me got to experience this victory. I could tell how much she wanted them to win.

I left the stadium speechless with tears in my eyes. I did not realize how my simple acts of kindness changed this woman's memory of the game. She had someone to celebrate with. Although I could not bring back her husband, I could give her a couple hours of peace and happiness despite how much she misses her husband.

Ever since then, I have tried to be kind to every person I meet. You never know what someone is going through, so good deeds can really turn their day around. This experience has made me appreciate courtesy. Small acts of kindness can go a long way in healing the wounds of people experiencing pain.

~Sarah Adams

Courtesy

1st Runner-Up

Law of Life

“The two most important days of your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

~Mark Twain

Everyone Has a Purpose

Every person in this world helps others in their own unique way. For example, my fifth grade science teacher helped me discover one of my passions by introducing me to American Sign Language. I quickly fell in love with the language, so I enrolled in ASL classes at my local Recreation Department. At the time I started learning, I had no idea that signing would have a huge impact on my life and allow me to form lasting relationships with people that are deaf and hard of hearing. The author Mark Twain once said, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.” On a Tuesday evening in January, I was able to help a hard of hearing person order at a restaurant, and that small act of service made me realize that my purpose in life is to work with the deaf community.

The night that changed my life began like any other. I arrived at Mock Trial practice, and I placed my bag on the floor while I sat down on a cold plastic chair. I was exhausted because I woke up when it was still dark outside, and it felt like I was racing against

Zoe Karaberis

Bremen High School – 10th Grade

the sun to start my day. I watched as my fellow teammates arrived, one by one, to the room where we held practice. The sound of chairs squeaking and papers rustling filled the air as we waited for our coach to commence the meeting.

I was rewriting notes from government class when I felt a vibration from my phone. I noticed that I got a text from my friend, Kimberly. Kimberly is a hard of hearing woman who is a customer at the restaurant where I work. I always sign with her when she eats with us, and we have each other's phone numbers so we can send ASL resources back and forth. On that Tuesday night, I saw that she texted me her food order, and she asked me to call it in for her. I asked my coach if I could step outside to make a phone call, and I exited through a door on the right side of the room.

When I went outside, the harsh wind shut the door behind me and blew my hair in all directions. I sat down on the frigid concrete and called one of my coworkers to place Kimberly's order. Once I hung up the phone, I took a moment to reflect on the action I just completed. The phone call I had just made encouraged me to want to help the deaf community on a larger scale. It made me realize that I want to be an educator and a Sign Language interpreter, so I can help people to communicate more effectively.

The wise words of Mark Twain really put my experience into perspective. That average Tuesday ended up being one of the most important days in my life because it gave me direction for the path I want to take. I want to make the world a better place through education and communication so more people can be encouraged to discover their purposes in life. Every person is significant, and we should all allow our passions to drive us towards greater things. There is nothing more unstoppable than a person that knows what they want out of life, and is motivated to fulfill their goals.

~Zoe Karaberis

Jalen Furqan

Paul Duke STEM High School – 12th Grade

2nd Runner-Up

Law of Life

“If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it.”

–Richard Branson

During my Junior year, I was given the opportunity to travel to Cape Town, South Africa and work with the Suff Academy, a technology focused youth development organization with the goal of “developing the next generation of innovators and leaders.” On this morning, as we drove through traffic, the program’s Social Media Manager turned to me and said, “Today we are going to a youth detention center for young adults who have been convicted of crimes, and I want you to speak to them about your technology experiences at your high school.” Our destination sounded really scary, but what actually filled me with the most anxiety was having to speak when we got there.

Early in my childhood I was identified as having a speech delay. From kindergarten through high school, an Individualized Education Program has helped me focus on improving my communication. While I have worked hard at improving my speaking skills by working with this organization and joining Toastmasters to improve my progress outside of school, speaking at that detention center was my first time speaking in front of a crowd, and I was really nervous and scared.

The detention center was a large building that looked like a large, metal cage patrolled by uniformed guards. We were patted down by the guards, and our bags were searched before being led into a large auditorium filled with young men, all wearing green jumpsuits. Some of the detainees were huge and covered in tattoos; others looked young and innocent – all of them stared at me. I stood silently while the Social Media Manager gave a lecture on how the study of technology could transform their lives and then, he stopped. He turned to me and said, “You study technology at your high school and use it in your everyday life in America, correct?” When they learned that I was from the United States, all eyes immediately focused on me: the students, the guards, the manager, everyone in the building seemed to be

looking at me. All I could get out was “Yes.” One word. That was all I had.

Then something happened that I will never forget. The detainees began trying to get to know me. They asked questions, they cracked jokes on each other, and they laughed in a way that was comforting, warm and familiar. They embraced me. So, I talked. We talked about life in America, we discussed technology, computer science and the future – mine and theirs. In that scary South African detention center, surrounded by gates and guards, I worked to help contribute to change for them, and without knowing it, they had done the same for me. We were at the center for 2 days.

That day I learned two things: First, that scary things, when I face them, are not as scary as they seem. And second, that all the subjects I had spent years studying at my STEM high school weren’t only interesting, they were important! They could change lives! And if they could change lives, they could change whole communities, even whole nations! I came home from South Africa knowing what I wanted to do with my life.

~Jalen Furqan

Courage

3rd Runner-Up

Law of Life

“Heroes aren’t extinct.
Heroes are all around us.”

—C. G. Cooper

My sister joined, and almost died.

It was 5:00 o’clock in the morning. And she saw them. Their faces snarled with rage. And out here that can only mean one thing...suicide bombers. Anger was rolling off them like steam from freshly baked bread. But no bread was made here. Hair was matted to their faces like saliva on a dog’s face. Their eyes flickering with hatred. A hatred that, undisputedly, cannot be turned to the good side like Lord Vader. Their footsteps were quiet but intense. Their breathing was like a beast close to their prey, ragged and teeth bearing. From 6,816 miles away, my mom’s ringtone sends waves of vibration across the floorboards notifying us that my sister, Jasmin, is wanting to FaceTime.

My mom picks up and immediately you could hear gunshots firing in the background, “Mom? Mom!” she pauses to catch her shaky breath, “I love you! Tell Soul’ Elle that I love her! I don’t think I’m gonna make it out of here.”

“Oh my god! What? I love you, too! Soul’ Elle is here! Soul’ Elle come here!” My mom yells.

“Hi, Jazzy! What’s up?”

“Soul’ Elle, I love you! I don’t think that I’ll make it out of here. There’s—there’s a suicide bomber... at my base.” She said.

At the time I had no idea what a “suicide bomber” meant. I didn’t think someone would blow up something and kill themselves in the process. Perhaps, I still don’t understand why.

“Mom!” Jasmin says, “Call the Red Cross!”

She hung up. The phone went blank.

Fumbling, my mom clicks the call button on the

Soul’Elle Firman

Alpharetta High School – 9th Grade

screen for my dad. It rings and rings and rings. A decade goes by. The ringing stops. My dad doesn’t pick up. She panics and calls her best friend. She doesn’t pick up either. Then, she called her best friend’s husband. He picks up. Finally.

“Eric! Jasmin-Jasmin is being attacked at her base and I have n-no idea what to do—”

“Ok. What did she tell you to do?”

“She told me to c-call the Red Cross.”

“Have you done that yet?”

“No.”

“Then go do that!”

My mom hangs up right then and calls the Red Cross. She tells them exactly what happened. I slowly walk away bewildered as the voices drone out of earshot. One minute ago, I was watching Curious George, and now, my sister might die. I never realized how much you love someone until this moment. I never realized that there was so much chaos in the world. I never realized my sister would do this to protect our country. Or me. It doesn’t take just anyone to do that. It takes someone special. As a teenager, she has always wanted to work at the FBI. At seventeen, she asked my mom if she would sign a document allowing her to go into the military. She didn’t agree at first. It took a lot of convincing.

“Mom, this is my dream.”

“Mom, are you signing? Please?”

“This is what I have to do to get the job I want.”

“Momma, I love you. Pleeeeease.”

After a lot more convincing, she signed the document. And here we are now, my mom is probably still trying to figure out why she agreed. A day goes by not knowing whether Jasmin made it or not. Not knowing is the hardest part. It’s a shark waiting to ambush on a summer’s eve. Waiting for the right moment to make its move. On a Thursday evening, we finally hear some extraordinary news. My sister was alive. She was alive! She told us that she even earned a medal for saving most people from the woman’s bunk, that she’d leveled up to a sergeant. On video chat, we all virtually hugged, and I remember thinking, “She did it. She’s alive. She’s ok.” I never knew that my sister would, by choice, sacrifice her life for millions of others. But I learned something valuable from my 19-year-old sister, as C. G. Cooper said; “Heroes aren’t extinct. Heroes are all around us.”

~Soul’Elle Firman

Emily Martinez

Shaw High School – 11th Grade

When life calls, you listen. You don't have a choice. It's harsh, like the knockback of a shotgun, or the slam of a book on a table. Life is a river running rough and rapid, and it never flows the same course twice. Yet, even more so than life, is grief. It never follows a plan, and it never makes sense. Grief is one among the many mysteries that lie in the depth of the ocean: when it calls to you, you're pulled in deep, and it takes all that you are not to drown.

I was six years old when my dog died, and this was my first experience with grief. I had never felt this much of anything in my short life before that moment. I lashed out at my mother, "How could you let them take him? How could you?" When I learned that he passed because he was sick, I blamed the doctors, claiming they didn't do a good enough job. At that age, with the fortunate luck I had grown up with, death was something foreign and distant, something only personified by great-great-grandparents and The Baby-Sitters Club books. It was never truly real, at least not until this.

That was far from my last experience with grief, however. At age 12, I lost a brother before I even got to meet him. At age 13, I lost my romantic partner to suicide, and that loss hurt more than most. This time, I directed the blame at me: I wasn't good enough, I didn't do enough, I didn't help enough. At age 16, I lost my grandmother to COVID-19 unexpectedly. Illness can attack at the worst of times: when your back is turned and your guard is down. I've lost friends and family both, and I've grieved the loss of other things as well, such as familial ties and friendships. Life, and therefore death, is a constant cycle, and it takes and takes until you're left with but a string to cling to.

It's your choice what you do with it.

4th Runner-Up

Law of Life

"What is grief, if not love persevering?"

–Wanda Vision

Me? I wove the broken twine into something new. It's the only option that you have, unless you just want to sit there in a pile of your own broken pieces. Currently, I try to use my past experiences to help others the best I can. After giving myself time to heal, I've been able to weave a new tapestry out of the frayed string. It's not perfect, and it's not scarless, but it's mine, and if you look closely you can see my history hidden between the messily-woven threads. To me, this quote is a reminder that as long as you still have that one last string, you can pick yourself up, and you can rebuild. Grief is heavy, and no one can deny it. It is so much more than just the "denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance" that you always hear it is. Yet grief is, in fact, simply love persevering, and as long as that love perseveres, you can learn to love once again.

~Emily Martinez

Hope

5th Runner-Up

Law of Life

“If I sit silently, I have sinned.”

—Mohammad Mossadegh

Upstander: Standing Up when Everyone is Sitting Down

I remember the sudden chill that washed over me as the derisive laughter flooded my senses. The pavement in front of the school sizzled under the beating of the sun’s heat, blurring my vision. Yet, her words—her spiteful, wounding words—came through, loud and clear. I recall a silencing mechanism inside me that had engaged immediately, shutting down my ability to defend myself against the girl’s belittling comments towards me. I remember having felt a prick in my eyes, an intimation of the tears to come, yet I had remained quiet. I pretended such gibes thrown at me didn’t make a dent.

A ripple of laughter shot out from the din of the 6th-grade classroom, jolting me back into the present day. I stood up from my desk, searching for the source of laughter. I found that it came from a group of boys and girls hovering over my friend. Although they seemed to be conversing with her, I sensed something amiss. Passing her weight between her feet, she crossed her arms tightly over her shoulders as she struggled to keep the strained smile plastered on her face. Concerned, I quickened my pace until their words began to hit me, nearly stopping me in my tracks. I heard the obscene remarks about her body, the innuendoes about what she would do with a boy, the sickening scenarios in which they had imagined her. It was repulsive.

Enraged, I felt myself returning to that memory – standing under the sun, enduring the harassing words of that girl making fun of me, wiping the

Oyinkansola Adebomojo

Brookwood High School – 10th Grade

unshed tears from my eyes. Then I remembered the relief that washed over me when someone had shot back, with the bravery I didn’t have at the time, “Hey, stop it, you’re not funny.” I didn’t know that person, and I wouldn’t know them even after the incident, but I will never forget how their words saved me that day.

Mohammad Mossadegh once articulated, “If I sit silently, I have sinned.” I couldn’t hypocritically stand still and let this derogatory “joke” continue. That person who spoke up for me gave me a voice when I lacked one. Now, it was my turn to lend mine to my friend. Looking back at my friend who had lost her voice, I didn’t think twice, impulsively stomping my way over to the group. With each step I took towards the group, I felt empowered with this rationale.

“Hey, don’t you feel disgusted with yourselves?” I barked out to the group. They gawked at me as I expelled a shaky breath, my hands jerking behind me. My eyes glanced over to my friend, her eyes downcast, her stiff posture giving way to a defeated slump. I pushed past my anxiety. “If I hear you guys make another stupid harassing comment about her,” I continued, pointing to my friend, “I’ll tell the teacher and ensure that every one of you gets in trouble.” I clenched my hands by my side, fighting the urge to touch my neck as an agonizing stillness followed my words. Finally, one of the boys of the group scrambled out a surprising “sorry” before walking away with the rest of the offenders on his trail. Once they were gone, my friend enveloped me in a warm embrace. “Thank you,” she softly expressed. Grinning, I returned the gesture, my heart pounding as the rush of adrenaline gave way to a sense of achievement.

Five years later, I’ve come to the realization that being an upstander requires the bravery to push through fear. It’s easy to be an upstander in one’s mind, but much harder in practice. That fear of not being taken seriously, that your words might worsen the situation rather than help it, will always creep in. However, if I had stayed silent during that situation, I would’ve sinned against my friend who needed a voice, against that person who provided me a voice, and against myself. Such offense would’ve hung over my head, a weight more unbearable than any comment I could have ever spoken. Today, I speak up, even as my fears try to hold my tongue, and I refuse to stay silent, for myself and others.

~Oyinkansola Adebomojo

Emily Escalera-Franco

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts—11th Grade

George A. Stewart, Jr.
Character in Action Award*

Law of Life

“The only thing that overcomes
hard luck is hard work.”

—Harry Golden

Clink, clank, clunk. The rhythm of nickels makes my ears ring for the second time this week. I watch Thomas Jefferson’s silver face spiral down into the bright coin-star in the middle of Food Depot. Beep Beep Beep. My receipt prints out. “\$32.20 ama.” I turn over to face my mom as I read out the amount. We readily grabbed only the essentials. My family and I have turned to exchanging coins at our lowest point in hopes of always making ends meet. Family debt had become a financial burden I have had to overcome as college approached closer to my future.

As Covid-19 made its way into our lives, everyone started to lose their jobs including my dad. The rent, bills, and groceries all became the first thing on our minds. How are we supposed to make do with no income? Loans were the only possible solutions at the moment. But as the loans continued to mount up, it was only a matter of time before my parents let me know that they could be of no financial support for my college career. I felt as though my world came crashing down on me. I lost control of the little assistance I thought I could rely on, but I knew there had to be an approach to overcome this situation.

A bright yellow bulb lit up as I turned the light switch entering the dining room. One in my head soon followed. For as long as I could remember I loved baking. It was a way for me to channel my passion for art as well as a way for people around me to indulge in delicious sweets. Without a second thought, I got to work. First creating a logo, then a business card, soon after an Instagram platform. The only thing left was to get to baking where I made sure to experiment with the multiple different recipes I had in mind. In a blink of an eye I had created my very own business. Soon then came orders, from small arrangements to now catering to weddings.

Not only did I create a business but an outlet for myself during stressful times. My business has allowed me to learn how to manage my finances, be organized, and above all communicate with people. Though my parents’ finances are out of my reach, I created a way to have control over what I believed I had lost.

All in all, not only has this experience taught me to remain humble but to prosper in the process. With a teaspoon of power and a cup of courage, I made sure I saved for myself and my future endeavors. Family debt was an obstacle I overcame in the process of facing the hard truth that I would be financially responsible if I wanted to pursue my college career. Everyone in their life has experienced hardship but it’s not what happens to you but how we choose to conquer our obstacles. As Harry Golden once stated, “The only thing that overcomes hard luck is hard work.”

~ Emily Escalera-Franco

** The George A. Stewart, Jr. Character in Action Award, which carries a \$1,000 prize, is presented in conjunction with the Dunwoody Rotary Club to honor Dunwoody Rotarian George Stewart for his dedication to student character education and for his long-time service to the Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest.*

Congratulations School Winners

Alpharetta High School

Soul` Elle Firman, 9th Grade

Arabia Mountain High School

Paige Harris, 11th Grade

Archer High School

Zander Milliron, 11th Grade

Athens Christian School

Bradley Zimmerman, 9th Grade

Atlanta Classical Academy

Sarah Adams, 10th Grade

Bainbridge High School

Anthony Allen, 12th Grade

Bremen High School

Zoe Karaberis, 10th Grade

Brookwood High School

Oyinkansola Adebomojo,
10th Grade

Carrollton High School

Olivia Cranford, 11th Grade

Central High School (Carrollton)

Kai McMichael, 9th Grade

Colquitt County High School

Kayla Giang, 10th Grade

Dawson County High School

Austin Corn, 11th Grade

Deerfield-Windsor School

Sophie Singleton, 11th Grade

Denmark High School

Ellia Houtsma, 11th Grade

Dunwoody High School

Kate Nelson, 10th Grade

Evans High School

Aliana Cabrales, 10th Grade

Forest Park High School

Cynthia Amaya, 10th Grade

Furlow Charter School

Brooklyn Killcrease, 11th Grade

Gatewood School

Garric Embry, 12th Grade

George Walton Academy

McKenna Rutledge, 9th Grade

Georgia Connections Academy

Gabriel Price, 10th Grade

Gilmer High School

Cecile Jeannotte, 9th Grade

Greenville High School

Keshawn Lakes, 10th Grade

Hapeville Charter Career Academy

Coriana Thomas, 12th Grade

Haralson County High School

Jake`Ryan McNicholas, 12th Grade

Hart County High School

Riley Sokol, 11th Grade

Heritage High School

Kendyl Nimmons, 10th Grade

Jackson High School

Hannah Lubin, 12th Grade

LaFayette High School

Lane White, 12th Grade

Lamar County High School

Erireyonna Barkley, 9th Grade

Lambert High School

Emma Richardson, 10th Grade

Lassiter High School

Lauren Choe, 11th Grade

Lovejoy High School

Christopher Smith, 11th Grade

Martha Ellen Stilwell**School of the Arts**

Emily Escalera-Franco, 11th Grade

McIntosh High School

Boris Zdravkov, 10th Grade

Midtown High School

Caitlin Stanley, 10th Grade

North Forsyth High School

Nathaniel Prewett, 12th Grade

Northside High School (Columbus)

Joshua Wimberly, 12th Grade

Oak Mountain Academy

Jackson Pike, 9th Grade

Paul Duke STEM High School

Jalen Furqan, 12th Grade

Peachtree Academy

Nathanael Occilien-Similien,
10th Grade

Pickens High School

Zoe Kelly, 9th Grade

Rome High School

Elizabeth Sufill, 9th Grade

Shaw High School

Emily Martinez, 11th Grade

Shiloh High School

Jorge Alvarez, 11th Grade

South Forsyth High School

Maggie Thompson, 11th Grade

St. Theresa's Catholic School

Morgan Wright, 11th Grade

Thomas County Central High School

Natalie Carlisle, 9th Grade

Thomson High School

London Jackson, 9th Grade

West Hall High School

Ashanty Vargas, 12th Grade

We would also like to thank the following schools for participating:

Campbell High School**Chamblee Charter High School****Forsyth Central High School****Greene County High School****Lake Oconee Academy****Parkview High School****Putnam County High School****Rockdale County High School****Roswell High School****Salem High School****West Forsyth High School****Woodland High School**

Congratulations!

Teachers of Distinction*

Athens Christian School
Amelia Kemmerer

Bremen High School
Jessica Allen

Carrollton High School
Hunter Spurlock

Central High School (Carrollton)
Megan Wooten

Dawson County High School
Lindsey Luchansky

Deerfield-Windsor School
Irmgard Schopen-Davis

Forest Park High School
Shellie Taylor-Rogers

Furlow Charter School
Nichole Walker

George Walton Academy
Wrynn Carson

Haralson County High School
Carol Fasick

Northside High School (Columbus)
Sonya Trepp-Fuller

Peachtree Academy
Katie Kuhns

Rome High School
Amanda B. Howell

St. Theresa's Catholic School
Tye Beck

Thomas County Central High School
Kensey D'Souza

***Schools with 80 percent or higher student participation rate.**

English Teacher of the State Winner

Asha Kapelina-Thomas, Atlanta Classical Academy

English Teacher of the George A. Stewart, Jr. Award Winner

Brigette Washington, Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts

School Contest Chairs with 100% Student Participation

Tye Beck, St. Theresa's Catholic School
Carol Fasick, Haralson County High School

Thank You

Essay Judge Volunteers from Partner Rotary Clubs

Rotary Club Alpharetta
Americus Rotary Club
Rotary Club of Braselton
Rotary Club of Buckhead
Rotary Club of Canton
Carrollton Dawnbreakers Rotary Club
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