

American Legion Auxiliary awards Humbolt students for winning Americanism essays

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Nearly 100 students grappled with how to address the health and well-being of veterans, the military and their families in the American Legion Auxiliary’s annual Americanism Essay Contest.

Coordinator Sherry Feiger said Ellis Tracy Unit 77 has participated for many years, but the pandemic has made it difficult to recognize this year’s essayists.

National leaders from the Auxiliary choose the question each year, and winners are selected on a local level, then state, regional and national.

Feiger said the students typically winning first, second or third place in their divisions read their essays at a potluck dinner at the Alec Gay Hall in John Day, but the dinner, due to COVID-19, was canceled.

“It was also planned to honor two young women who attended 2019 Girl’s State last June, Kaytlyn Wells and Samantha Floyd,” Feiger said.

Humbolt Elementary School teacher Amy Martin’s students took the top three spots in the third- and fourth-grade division. Carter Watterson’s essay won the first prize while Alana Spence and Gage Rosta won second and third prizes, respectively.

For the fifth- and sixth-graders, Jessica Surchorski’s students won the first, second and third places. Maleah Archibald’s essay took the top spot, followed by Hannah Cole and Eliza Bailey.

Feiger said the first-place essays went to the state competition, but she has not heard if they placed at that level.

Watterson wrote that veterans fight for freedom and keep the country safe. “They’re American heroes,” Watterson said. “I want them to have the best care that they can.”

Maleah Archibald said addressing the health and well-being of veterans and their families is an issue that is important to her.

“Veterans fought for our freedom,” Archibald said.

‘VETERANS’ BY CARTER WATTERSON, FOURTH GRADE

I think veterans are the most important people in our lives besides your family. I think that because they are the ones who fight for freedom and keep the United States of America safe. I think that if we want to have freedom we should help the veterans by giving them support and getting really good doctors to help them. We could give the veterans and their families care and help if they need it by starting fundraisers and raising money to give them all sorts of stuff. Like we could make them tiny houses for the poor families or if they lost their homes.

One way we can help veterans is we can start a fundraiser to help raise money to give to the homeless veterans or the veterans that are poor. We could start off by selling cookies or a lemonade stand or anything else that can help us raise money for them.

One other way we can help the homeless veterans is we can build tiny houses or raise money for them to buy a house. I feel like we need to do some good to them because they give us care because they fight for our country and keep us safe. So we definitely owe them something.

So we thank them very much for all the good they do for us and the country to keep us safe.



Contributed photo
Carter Watterson, a fourth-grader at Humbolt Elementary School, took first place in the third- and fourth-grade division of the American Legion Auxiliary’s annual Americanism Essay Contest. This year’s topic was on addressing the health and well-being of veterans, their families and those who are actively serving.

‘ADDRESSING OUR VETERANS’ BY MALEAH ARCHIBALD, FIFTH GRADE

We need to address the health and well-being of veterans in the military and their families. We can help them overcome their stress and disabilities. When they come back from the military, they and their families have trouble with health issues, finding health care, injuries, finding work, homelessness and death. We can help them!

We need to make sure veterans get all of the health care they need. Some care that they need is not available for them. We need to have all of the health care they need close to them and accessible for them. Wherever they live they should be able to get help. They should get that because they served for our country.

PTSD is one of the health issues veterans have. It is a disorder where a person has a hard time recovering after being in awful events. Between 11 and 20% of veterans have PTSD. We should make sure they are able to get therapies, medications and go to specialists.

Veterans also come back from war and can’t find jobs. They need to support their families. We should make up an organization that is run by veterans so they can easily get jobs once they come back from the military.

Another problem is that some veterans come back and they are homeless. One-third of homeless Americans are veterans. When they come home we need to make sure they have a home. We could make up an apartment for veterans (if they don’t have a home) that they can stay in when they get back from the military.

When they are in the military it is also hard. They have to fight. We could help them by sending them care packages. We could also donate to the USO. The USO helps the military workers and their families.

In World War II 420,000 U.S. soldiers died. Many military workers die today. Their families are left by themselves. Their families should be able to get the help they need no matter the cost. They should be able to have food, homes and health care too.

Veterans are important. They served for our country. We need to make sure that they and their families get what they need to live. We need to them with their health issues, finding health care, injuries, finding work, homelessness and death. As you can see, we need to address the health and well-being of our veterans, military and their families.



Contributed photo
Maleah Archibald, a fifth-grader at Humbolt Elementary School, took first place in the fifth- and sixth-grade division of the American Legion Auxiliary’s annual Americanism Essay contest. This year’s topic was on addressing the health and well-being of veterans, their families and those who are actively serving.

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