

Sainty freshmen win essay contest

Three of Lisa Gibson's freshmen English class students placed in the AMVETS National Americanism essay contest which is available for those sixth through 12th grade. This is a patriotic program offered to schools and youth organizations as a resource for teaching students about their American heritage, civics and citizenship.

Tilyn Bell placed first and earned \$100; Kaitlin Figgins came in second, winning \$50; and Sam Reed placed third and won \$25. All are St. Francis high school students.

These winners have won at the Kansas local level and now their essays will proceed onto the national level. National winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa., for a long weekend of youth-oriented activities. Dynamic speakers and sightseeing are the highlights of the trip.

What an awesome honor for these students," said Mrs. Gibson. They are receiving a monetary award for their essays at the local level.

"This essay proves to students that writing can play an important part in their high school and extended educational careers.

"I am so proud of the students this year for just being able to write their feelings and thoughts into essays. Congratulations!"

Following are the essays written by the students:

What does an American veteran mean to me?

By Tilyn Bell
A-mer-i-can
Pronunciation (uh-mer-i-kuhn) - adjective

1. Of or pertaining to the United States of America or its inhabitants: an American citizen.

vet-er-an
Pronunciation (vet-er-uhn, ve-truhn) - noun.

1. A person who has had long service or experience in an occupation, office, or the like: a veteran of the police force; a veteran of war.

Shown above is the official definition of an American veteran. However, these words do not even begin to describe the meaning of an American veteran to me.



Bell

When many people think about American veterans, they think only of old men. Men, like my grandfather, that you might see sitting at the coffee shop, eating doughnuts and exchanging old war stories, are obviously veterans. The thing that most do not realize is that veterans can come in all shapes and sizes. The middle-aged father at the supermarket could be a veteran. Women can be veterans. Those who have survived a war are not the only type of veterans either. They are all different; however, they are all brave.

Veterans have to be extremely strong. Surviving in a war, would take immense mental and physical strength. I can't imagine risking my life for my country, whether as a firefighter, police officer, or soldier. That would take more pride and courage than I can even fathom.

Veterans also have to have an extreme sense of persistence, and a positive work ethic. They must be able to overcome difficult situations to reach a common goal, and use hard work to get there. Also, veterans must be able to work as a team. As soldiers, firefighters, or officers, they must become a sort of family, and act like one as well.

There is one thing that I learned from my father concerning veterans. Always thank them when you see them. Our constitution promises freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, the right to a fair and speedy trial, protection against unreasonable searches and many more. I love the endless freedoms that I have. People in other countries do not always have these freedoms, and I have my American veterans to thank for giving them to me.

What does an American veteran mean to me?

By Kaitlin Figgins
American veterans are amazing people because they have been to hell and back, but some are blessed enough to still be here today to tell their story. American veterans to me are brave men and women who risk THEIR lives just

to improve OURS the slightest bit. They make the world a better place little by little.

Millions of men and women have died and have been severely injured fighting for our country just to get one step closer to bigger freedom.

As George Washington once said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation." This quote couldn't be more accurate. The men and women that have served this country are braver than anyone I know and they do get the respect they deserve.

People such as Bill Cosby, President Bush, Clint Eastwood and Chuck Norris, people that we all know so well, have served this country. Veterans around the world that have served in the two World Wars, Vietnam, Gulf War, or any other wars, have put their blood, sweat, tears, emotions, and lives into doing what is right and beneficial for this country. In this day and age, our generations are faced with so many trials, that we are going to have to come together and fight through this until the very end. "These are the times that try men's souls... but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of and woman... that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph." These are the amazing and true works of Thomas Paine. The wars that veterans have been through have been amazing triumphs because they stood up for their country's worth.

A veteran means that we as Americans are free to walk down the streets and greet each other without the fear of being punished for it. Veterans mean that more little children in the world can play outside without being scared. So, when you see a veteran today, tomorrow, or even in twenty years, never forget to thank them for all they have done to make you free and for giving their lives to this country.

What does an American veteran mean to me?

By Sam Reed
Honor, courage, respect, perseverance.... are words that true veterans live by. Men and women who have served our country deserve much respect.

But what exactly is a veteran? In my opinion, it is someone who has served our country during times of war. A veteran is someone who was or is currently in the military. They live a disciplined life so that we don't have to. They go off to war to ensure our freedom and protect our way of life.

They are heroes to us, but to them they are just normal people. They are modest. They don't look for publicity. They claim to just be doing their job. They state things like the real heroes are those who didn't return from the war.

My grandfather was a Korean War Veteran. He tells us stories about the men in his platoon. He says that out of the 47 that went into battle, only 19 came back. He says if it wasn't for the heroism of the others, he wouldn't be standing here today. I am very proud of my grandfather; he is one of my biggest heroes. He wants no notoriety or fame. He was just doing his job. I admire his humility.

Veterans deserve our respect. They honor us with their presence. They are men of courage and discipline. We honor those who serve or who are currently serving on Veteran's Day. On that day, my grandfather has the whole family have a moment of silence for his fallen comrades. Then we visit the local military cemetery to pay our respects for all the young men who died in battle.

In conclusion, veterans don't ask for much. They at least deserve our gratitude. They are just everyday people who were turned into soldiers. I am very proud to have so many members of my family serving my country.



Figgins



SWIM TEAM is in the vigorous practice mode getting ready for the first swim meet to be held in Bird City on Saturday. Coach, Margaret Poling, middle is instructing swimmers.

Herald staff photo by Betty Jean Winston

Grass reserve program deadline is June 24

Jack Salava, acting state executive director of Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency has announced that this agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are accepting applications for the 2009 Grasslands Reserve Program.

Grasslands Reserve Program is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to landowners and operators for the restoration and conservation of the nation's grasslands.

"Enrollment of land in the program will have a positive economic impact on the country and improve environmental quality

by preventing the conversion of grassland to other uses, including crop production and urban development," said Mr. Salava.

The two offices will accept applications on a continuous basis for easements or rental agreements. Applications received by June 24, will be evaluated for 2009 funding; applications received after this date will be evaluated for future Grasslands Reserve Program years funding.

According to Mr. Salava, the program has several enrollment options: permanent easements and 10, 15, or 20-year rental agreements. Application evaluation for

acceptance in the 2009 program will be based on ranking criteria that will emphasize grazing operations; protection of grassland, land that contains forbs, and shrub land at the greatest risk from the threat of conversion to uses other than grazing; plant and animal biodiversity; restoration costs; and expiring Conservation Reserve Program contracts.

Eligible landowners who enroll in the program will receive payment for permanent easements based on the lowest amount of either the fair market value of the property less the grazing value of the land; geographical cap as de-

termined by Natural Resources Conservation Service; or offer from landowner.

Participants with approved rental agreements will receive annual payments for the contract period.

Grasslands Reserve Program enrollment permits common grazing practices, haying, mowing, or harvesting for seed production, subject to certain restrictions. All participants in Grasslands Reserve Program are required to implement a grazing management plan approved by Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For additional information contact your local Service Center.

SFCHS HONOR ROLL

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