

Plover VFW Announces Essay Competition Winners

Local winners of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy essay competitions were announced on Saturday by Plover VFW Post 10262 PP/VOD Chairman Norb Strasser. The winners received their awards in a special presentation at the post.

Patriot's Pen competitors submitted written essays on the theme, "What Is Patriotism To Me?" The winners are as follows:

First-place winner was Analiese Rusch, an 8th grader at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Stevens Point. Rusch received a check for \$100, a certificate of merit, a gold medal and a lanyard. She is the daughter of Mark and Nadine Rusch. In her spare time, she enjoys ice skating and art.

Second place went to Chase Kramer, a 7th grader at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Stevens Point. Kramer received a check for \$75, a certificate of merit, a silver medal and a lanyard. He is the son of Karla Glenetske and Joe Kramer. He enjoys playing all types of sports, especially football.

Third place went to Payton Hoffman, a 7th grader at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Stevens Point. Hoffman received a check for \$50, a certificate of merit, a bronze medal and a lanyard. She is the daughter of Ryan and Holly Hoffman. She enjoys painting in various media and drawing cartoons.

Voice of Democracy competitors submitted audio essays of three-to-five minutes on the theme, "Is This The Country the Founders Envisioned?" The winners are as follows:

First-place winner was Madelynn Raschka, a 12th grader at Stevens Point Area High School. Raschka received a check for \$100, a certificate of merit, a gold medal and a lanyard. She is the daughter of Matthew and Julie Raschka. She is active in health science (HOSA) and family consumer science (FCCLA) clubs at SPASH, participates in SPASH gymnastics, and works part-time at Belt's Soft Serve.

Second place went to Joshua Bourget, a 12th grader at Stevens Point Area High School. Bourget received a check for \$75, a certificate of merit, a silver medal and a lanyard. He is the son of Patti Ferrone and Jerome Bourget. He enjoys running, basketball and participates in track and field.

Third place went to Jacob Bourget, a 12th grader at Stevens Point Area High school. Bourget received a check for \$50, a certificate of merit, a bronze medal and a lanyard. He is the son of Patti Ferrone and Jerome Bourget. He enjoys sports with friends, videos and reading, and participates in cross country and track and field.

The winners move on to the WI VFW 7th District for the next level of competition.

To promote democratic ideals and foster patriotism and good citizenship in America's youth, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) established the Patriot's Pen (PP) and Voice of Democracy (VOD) national competitions.

The Patriot's Pen is a youth essay-writing competition that comprises students from grades 6 – 8. Students draft a 300-400 word essay, expressing their views based on a patriotic annual theme chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief. Annually, more than 120,000 students enter to win award money and prizes totaling \$1.1 million, as well as an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the national first place winner.

The Voice of Democracy, an audio-essay competition, provides students grades 9-12 the opportunity to express their views of democratic ideas and principles. Each year, more than 51,000 high school students from across the country enter to win a share of the \$2.2 million in educational scholarships and incentive awards. The national first-place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. Other national scholarships range from \$1,000- \$16,000 and the first-place winner from each (State) VFW Department wins an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

For more information on these programs, go to:

<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships>