

NEA Big Read

ALL PUEBLO READS ESSAY CONTEST

2020

WINNING ENTRIES

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Pueblo City–County Library District

ALL PUEBLO READS ESSAY CONTEST

Pueblo City–County Library District is pleased to announce the winners of the 2020 NEA Big Read All Pueblo Reads essay contest. Students, from grade 2 to adult, were invited to write an essay answering the prompt: “What would you take with you if you had to leave home and go to war?” The theme was prominently featured in Pueblo City-County Library District’s 2020 All Pueblo Reads book, “The Things They Carried” by Tim O’Brien. The youth companion book was “What Was the Vietnam War?” by Jim O’Conner.

Winners received a \$10 gift certificate to Books Again Bookstore, courtesy of the Friends of the Library, a booklet of the winning entries and a certificate of achievement. All participants received a certificate of recognition.

The library wishes to thank everyone who entered the contest and the teachers and parents who encouraged them to participate. We look forward to receiving your entry next year!

Winners

Townes Booker

Morton Elementary School - Mrs. Martinez

Maya Colon-Medina

Highland Park Elementary School - Ms. Ribal

Leonard Michael Trujillo

Pleasant View Middle School - Mrs. Thomas

Edith Edson

Adut Category

Townes Booker

Morton Elementary School – Mrs. Martinez

3rd grade

If I had to go to war, I would take some very special items. First, a photo of my family. This is important to me because I will fight for them. Then, I would take a cross necklace. I like this because I believe in God. Finally, I would take something my mom gave me. This object is the most important because it is from my mom. These are the objects that I would take to war.



Maya Colon-Medina

Highland Park Elementary School – Ms. Ribal

3rd grade

If I were to leave home and go to war, I would take one item with me. This item would be a first aid kit. A first aid kit would come in handy because it would help me if I get hurt. Usually first aid kits are red and white. No matter where you are - by a creek, or in a fire or event in the dirt, a first aid kit is necessary in a war.



Leonard Michael Trujillo

Pleasant View Middle School – Mrs. Thomas

6th grade

What would I take with me if I had to leave home and go to war? First, before choosing what to take, I would let my family know everything that is going on, and to not freak out and be prepared for what is coming.

First, thing I would take is pictures. I would take pictures of my family, friends, pets and other things to keep me positive. The pictures I would take would be of my parents, nieces, grandparents, my dogs and my sisters. By taking pictures this will let me know what is to come and what is waiting for me.

Next, I would take things to write to my family, such as, writers, paper, pencils and pens. If I write to my family this will let them know everything is okay and if I'm doing good. I would also write how much I miss them, to whomever I am writing to.

The next thing I'm going to take is not physical. I would take hard work. Working hard you will train good and practice hard. Those two things will help a lot while in combat. When working hard in combat you have a higher chance at survival.

Lastly, I would take a positive attitude. Having a positive attitude will help you get through. If you are positive, your family and friends will also be positive. Having a positive attitude will also lead to being motivated. Having motivation will help you work harder.

Clearly, taking the important things will lead to doing good in combat and you will also be motivated and positive, which will also make your family positive and not worried.

Edith Edson

Adult Category

A notice of upcoming deployment would be scary. In addition to the basic items that other women would pack, I would need guardians of my sanity. To keep me from losing my mind, I would take a pocket-sized New Testament. A journal would also be crucial. No list can be complete without considering intangibles, such things as courage, endurance, caring, faith, and a sense of humor.

Courage

My friend tells of a time during World War II when his unit was under fire. During a lull in the firing, they scrambled up the hill for safety. Jack was part way up when he realized his buddy wasn't with him. Jack went back down and found his buddy. Picking his comrade up, Jack started running back up the hill to get help. The struggle to climb the hill was exhausting, but Jack would not quit. At the top when he called for a medic, Jack was absolutely covered in blood. He put his buddy on the ground and realized the buddy was dead. Jack did his best to save his friend, and no way would he have left his friend behind even if Jack had known the man wouldn't live. What gave Jack the courage to risk his own life to save his friend? What would it take to have the inner strength that Jack had?

Endurance

Endurance can be exhibited in a single occurrence, but it is more often long term. In every war the United States has fought, endurance has been essential. Soldiers have endured the numbing cold of Valley Forge and Korea, weeks of rain in the jungles of the Pacific and Vietnam, heat and sandstorms in the deserts of Africa. Endurance is part stamina, part mental toughness. I can increase my physical stamina by enrolling in an exercise class and developing a walking routine. When unexpected changes in the weather could have ruined our vacations, my husband and I would not let them. Even though I haven't suffered much adversity, which might have fostered the skills of endurance, I think I can adapt to difficult situations. I drop endurance into my knapsack.

Caring

Any time groups of people are thrown together, but especially in tense situations like armed conflict, caring about others is necessary. Listening is truly an essential skill. Perhaps trying to see things from someone else's point of view can avoid conflict. I have lived and worked with people on a mountaintop. I have experience in customer service where the customer is always right. Even though I need to keep developing the art of listening, I add caring to my "things to take" list.

Faith

Like many other people, I believe in God. Because people of different religions believe that faith is important, the military provides chaplains. Many survivors of war testify to the saving

power of God. But how strongly do I believe in that power? Do I firmly believe that if I “wait on the Lord” I “shall rise up with wings like eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint?” The answer is unclear; but, even if my faith is weak, I can’t leave faith behind. So, I put it in my pack, hoping that, if my faith is tested, I will respond with trust.

A Sense of Humor

A sense of humor is what makes survival possible. “If you don’t laugh,” a friend of mine was fond of saying, “you cry.” Soldiers made fun of everything from “goober peas”, to “Kilroy was here”, to “the Hanoi Hilton.” No doubt humor will make itself known during the next war; and I will welcome it, and maybe contribute to it. At least, I will take a sense of humor wherever I go.

Courage Re-visited

When I was in fifth or sixth grade, we read a story about a World War I hero, Sargent York. Later we read about Molly Pitcher, who carried water to Revolutionary War soldiers. Such stories resonated with me. Today I live in Pueblo, “The Home of Heroes”. By Pueblo’s Convention Center stand statues of four Pueblo Medal of Honor recipients, Drew Dix, William J. Crawford, Raymond G. Murphy, and Carl L. Sitter. Not far from the Convention Center is the Center for American Values co-founded by Drew Dix. On its walls are photos of 168 Medal of Honor winners and quotes from each of them responding to the question, “What would you like future generations to know?” The Center focuses on character education. Their mission is “To honor the extreme sacrifices made to help sustain America’s Values and to ensure these extraordinary actions are preserved... forever.” Drew Dix’s actions exemplify sacrifices made for America, above and beyond the call of duty. Two heavily armed Viet Cong battalions attack the city of Chau Phu. Dix was serving as a unit advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Dix, with a patrol of Vietnamese soldiers, was called to defend the city. Dix organized a force to rescue a nurse, trapped in a house near the center of the city. Dix voluntarily led another force to rescue eight civilian employees from a building which was under heavy mortar and small arms fire. When he was under attack from automatic rifle and machine gun fire from a building, he personally assaulted the building, killing six Viet Cong, and rescuing two Filipinos. His heroism rallied his troops; they began firing on the Viet Cong. Dix captured twenty prisoners. I now understand that heroes core values, being authentically who they are, are key to their courage. Jack’s faith and his caring for his comrade, and soldiers’ commitment to “just doing my job,” led to their being able to do extraordinary feats. I realize that courage isn’t something one can pack; valor springs from values. By packing the intangible values I mentioned earlier plus integrity, which is part of my personality, I should be prepared for whatever will come.

