



1 5 T H A N N U A L

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest



 PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY
Library District

Sponsored by the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association
and Pueblo City-County Library District

The Pueblo Medal of Honor Association began in 1997 when Robert H. Rawlings, owner and publisher of The Pueblo Chieftain, began a project to create a Medal of Honor Memorial which would be a lasting testament featuring bronze statues honoring Pueblo's four Medal of Honor recipients: William J. Crawford – Army WWII, Carl L. Sitter – Marines Korea, Raymond G. “Jerry” Murphy – Marines Korea, and Drew D. Dix – Army Vietnam. Additionally, the names of all the over 3,500 recipients of the Medal of Honor since its inception during the American Civil War would be listed on granite plaques.

This Association successfully bid for, and brought to Pueblo, the Congressional Medal of Honor Society for their national convention in September of 2000 to be held at the time of the unveiling of the Medal of Honor Memorial. Ninety-seven out of 147 Medal of Honor recipients living at the time were in attendance.

The mission of the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association is to preserve and expand the memorial dedicated to Medal of Honor recipients; to advance the history of the Medal of Honor; honor the legacy of those who have received the Award nationwide; to promote democratic ideals; and encourage among the people of the United States, and especially its youth,

citizenship, character, integrity, and selflessness as epitomized by the Medal of Honor.

In 2009, the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association created this essay contest to draw the attention of Pueblo students to the true heroism represented by the recipients of the Medal of Honor. The Association raises money for JROTC scholarships, upkeep of the Medal of Honor memorial, as well as a Medal of Honor display inside the Pueblo Convention Center. The Association also assisted with the database for the Veteran's Bridge at the Riverwalk. In 2017 this group again brought the Congressional Medal of Honor Society national convention to Pueblo where 40 of the 79 living recipients were in attendance.

In June of 2022, the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association funded the renovation of the window display inside the Convention Center and created an interactive display with a 2'X 7' screen for visitors to view information about Pueblo's Medal of Honor Recipients, how the Pueblo sculptures were created, information about the Medal of Honor, information on those listed on the Veteran's Bridge at HARP, and attractions around Pueblo including over 30 military monuments and memorials in the area.



This display is free and open to the public during regular hours at the Pueblo Convention Center.



Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest 2023

T H E M E - S T U D E N T S

“What can students your age do to promote patriotism and protect our great democracy?”

T H E M E - T E A C H E R S

“What can you do, both as a teacher and citizen, to promote patriotism and protect our great democracy?”

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association, in cooperation with Pueblo City-County Library District, is pleased to announce the winners of the 15th annual essay contest.

The following guidelines were required:

All entries must be typed.
300 – 500 words for grades 4 and 5
400 – 700 words for grades 6-8
500 – 1,000 words for grades 9-12

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association judges were Kevin Cover, Don and Mary Gray, Margo Hatton, Frank and Pebbles Spinuzzi, and Jim Stuart. There were 137 entries this year.

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and Pueblo City-County Library District wish to thank teachers and parents for encouraging their students and children to participate in this essay contest.

A special thanks to the Pueblo City-County Library District for their assistance each year with this essay contest. We are pleased to bring the awards ceremony back to the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library. Congratulations on a beautiful newly renovated library!

PRESIDENT

Paulette Stuart

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Frank Spinuzzi



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719-544-2435



Winners

Elementary School

1st place – Hunter Mutz

5th grade, Cedar Ridge Elementary, age 11

2nd place – Alaina Buchleiter

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 11

3rd place – Allyson Sekos

4th grade, North Mesa Elementary, age 11

Honorable Mention – Micha Lewis

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

Honorable Mention – Maya Saenz

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

Honorable Mention – Isaac Bogarin

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

Honorable Mention – Ashley Balderrama

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

Middle School

1st place – Francesca Rowell

6th grade, Home School, age 12

2nd place – Simona Rowell

8th grade, Home School, age 14

3rd place – Gabriel Shoup

8th grade, Pueblo School for the Arts and Science, age 15

High School

1st place – Daniel Badillo

12th grade, East High School, age 18

2nd place – Zachary Zenner

9th grade, Pueblo West High School, age 16

3rd place – Cayden Rousseau

12th grade, Pueblo West High School, age 17

Honorable Mention – Jackson Dahlke

10th grade, Pueblo West High School, age 17

Teacher Category

1st place – Jeremiah Blaha

East High School

Hunter Mutz

1st Place, Elementary School

5th grade, Cedar Ridge Elementary, age 11

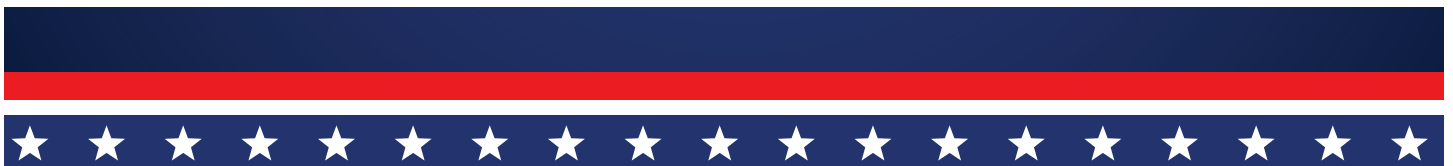
Students my age can do many things to promote patriotism in our country. By each citizen doing simple, but yet helpful things, I think it would make our country stronger and more kind. Some ways to show patriotism is to put your flag out on President's Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and Veterans Day.

Another way is to say the Pledge of Allegiance and to sing the National Anthem at school, sporting events, and any other public places where people gather. Children my age can thank service members in their local communities or throughout our nation when they are at parades, the grocery store, at the airport and any time you see a service member. I can also make sure that I take off my hat when showing respect to the United States of America's flag. I feel that it is important to not allow the flag to hit the ground and to

always treat the flag with respect.

Some ways to protect our democracy can be that I encourage my parents to vote and serve on jury duty. Children my age can volunteer to clean up at a local park or other public places. I can send a letter to an elected state representative or state senator about a topic I am passionate about. Participating in school and other activities can help myself and other children learn leadership and skills so they can be a good leader in our community, state or this great nation someday. Learning about our country's history in school, going to museums' and the library is a good way to support and better understand how it came to be.

Being a citizen in the United States of America is a privilege and I want to use my knowledge to promote patriotism and protect our great democracy.



Alaina Buchleiter

2nd Place, Elementary School

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 11

Barack Obama once said, “Our responsibility as citizens is to address the inequalities and injustices that linger, and we must secure our birthright freedoms for all people.” What can students my age do to promote patriotism and protect our great democracy? Patriotism is the feeling of love, devotion, and a sense of attachment to one’s country. This attachment can be a combination of many different surfaces, languages relating to one’s own homeland, including ethnic, cultural, political, or historical aspects. Democracy is a form of government where the people have a say in their leaders and laws.

To begin, students can promote patriotism in many different ways. Students can sing the Star Spangled Banner or say the Pledge of Allegiance with pride. Students can visit as well as help clean up our national parks. Students can thank veterans and do so much more for them. James Byrce once said, “Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.”

To add, students can promote democracy in many different ways. Students can intentionally share diverse perspectives, including those about challenging issues. Students can respect other students’ ideas and contributions. Students can ask their parents to vote for a president. Students can run for class president or other positions of student council. Students can practice democracy by voting for everyday things that affect their lives. For example, what they have for breakfast or lunch, a class pet, what to do for recess, field trips they want to go on, and even what games to play during free time. John F. Kennedy once said, “ Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

To conclude, students can promote patriotism and protect our great democracy in many different ways. I learned how students can make a difference even though they are still kids. President Reagan once said, “All great change in America begins at the dinner table.”



Allyson Sekos

3rd Place, Elementary School

4th grade, North Mesa Elementary, age 11

In my opinion there are many things students my age can do to protect democracy. Showing patriotism, such as understanding the American flag, teaching the meaning of democracy, and learning the importance of voting is where I think it all starts.

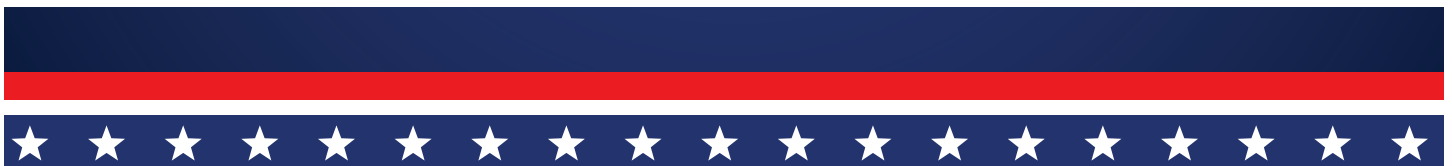
Patriotism is defined as loving your country. When you love something you want to protect it. I think kids can participate in events such as flag-in (placing flags beside veteran's headstones), adopting a deployed soldier, and learning flag etiquette. Children can attend 4th of July parades to show patriotism. Flag etiquette is important because you will know how to properly care for our flag and appreciate it. In some schools, children put the flag up and take it down each day. For this you must know how to properly fold it and that you must keep it from touching the ground. The flag is important because it's a symbol of our nation representing pride, respect, and love for our country. By doing these things and other things you can show both love for your country and support for those protecting it. Hopefully you are helping spread patriotism at the same time by learning about the flag.

Learning the meaning of democracy is important because our country uses this system. To use the system, you must understand what democracy is. Democracy is a certain form of government that allows people to choose their leader. Voting is an example of democracy. The people will vote for whoever they think will be the best for the job. You vote for whoever

you think will give you a voice in the government. Once all the votes have been counted whichever candidate has the most votes wins. Voting is one example of democracy, but there are many more.

As a child I may not be able to do things like vote in the presidential election and such, but as a student I can vote in my school elections, familiarizing myself with the voting system and its process. Voting in school helps me begin to exercise my right to vote so when I'm old enough to vote I'll understand how to vote in the elections. By learning how to vote and understanding the process I am defending my democracy. If children my age are not learning to understand the importance of our right to vote, then it might be something we could lose. But if we are familiar with how to vote and what it means we will hopefully protect that right when it is our turn as adults.

Altogether, students my age can do many things to promote patriotism and protect democracy, such as participating in flag-in, adopting deployed soldiers, and actively voting when being given the opportunity. This is important because if you understand what the flag represents then you will want to defend your country in honor of those who fought for us and to protect the democracy that you know and love.



Micha Lewis

Honorable Mention, Elementary School

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Patriotism is the feeling of love and dedication to one's country. Democracy is a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. Patriotism and democracy are important because they protect our country. What can students my age do to promote patriotism and democracy?

To begin, students can promote patriotism even if they are kids. For example, students can help and respect veterans and other members of the United States military by thanking them and praying for them. They can be respectful to the flag when saying the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem. Students can show love for their country by learning about and respecting those who fought for this country's right to be free. Students can support national parks by donating money and picking up trash. James Bryce said, "Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong."

In addition, students can promote democracy even if they are kids. For example, students can ask their parents and other adults that are over 18 years old to vote in important elections.

Students can write letters to their elected officials or even write one together as a family. Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education." This is why it is important for students to pay attention in school and to learn as much as they can about democracy. Students can also check out books in their local library to learn more about democracy.

In conclusion, students my age can promote patriotism and protect our great democracy in many different ways. Democracy is good because everybody gets to be a part of the government. I love America because everyone gets to vote but in other countries, not many people can vote. I also love America because young people can still participate in democracy even if they can't vote yet.



Maya Saenz

Honorable Mention, Elementary School

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

The thirty-third U.S. president once said, “America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.” How can students promote patriotism and protect their great democracy? Patriotism is showing love for one’s country. Also, democracy is a government picked by their citizens. The United States celebrates the patriotic holiday, the Fourth of July as the birth of America’s Independence. A fun fact about patriotism is that the current flag for the United States was designed by a teen. A fun fact about democracy is that the word democracy comes from the Greek word demos, which means people.

To begin, students can promote patriotism even though they are kids. According to Calvin Coolidge, “Patriotism is easy to understand in America. It means looking out for yourself by looking out for your country.” For example, students can cheer for U.S. athletes in the Olympics. Students can learn and sing the National Anthem correctly. Also, they can learn

how to display, fold and retire a flag properly. Students can support and be nice to the brave people serving in the U.S. military as well as support veterans.

To add, students can protect their great democracy through their actions, words, and ideas. One way is that students can tell their parents and other adults to vote. Students are not old enough to vote but they can vote for student council members representing their school. Also, they can participate in student council to help make their school a better place. According to Thomas Jefferson, “The government you elect is the government you deserve.”

In conclusion, students can promote patriotism and protect their great democracy in many ways. I learned that if you don’t fold a flag properly you are disrespecting the flag. I’m lucky to live in the United States of America because students can still promote patriotism and protect their great democracy even though they are kids.



Issac Bogarin

Honorable Mention, Elementary School

4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

Singer/songwriter, Phil Vassar wrote, “Dreams can grow wild, Born inside an American child.” How can students promote patriotism and protect their great democracy? Patriotism is the showing of love for one’s country. Democracy is a government chosen by the people.

To begin, students my age can promote patriotism in many different ways. For example, they can support a veteran by doing more than just thanking them for their service. Even though that is important, they can also make stuff for veterans on Veterans Day and every day, or even help them with chores. Another way students can promote patriotism is by singing proud and standing up for the Star Spangled Banner. Students can respect and support family members and other members of the military. According to Eleanor Roosevelt, “Time patriotism springs from a belief in the dignity of the individual, freedom and equality not only for Americans but for all people on earth, universal brotherhood and goodwill, and a constant

striving toward the principles and ideals on which this country was founded.”

To add, there are many ways students my age can protect our great democracy. One way they can protect this great democracy is by honoring the principles upon which our nation was built. For example, students can vote for student council members, such as a new president at their school. They can also tell their parents to vote in elections for a new president and other government representatives. According to Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”

In conclusion, students my age can promote patriotism and protect their great democracy in many different ways. I learned democracy cannot succeed without the people. I am proud to be an American because Americans have the freedom to vote for its leaders and laws.



Ashley Balderrama

Honorable Mention, Elementary School

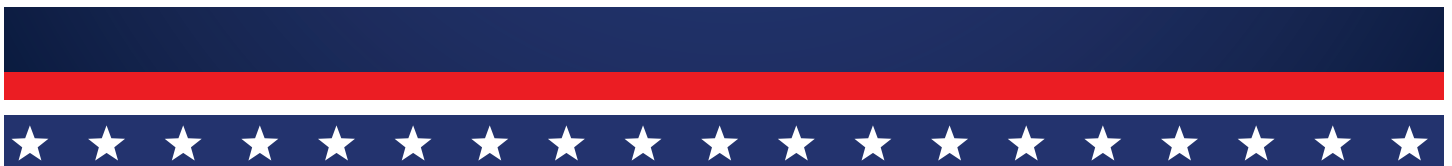
4th grade, Eva Baca Elementary, age 9

“The essence of America-that which really unites us-is not ethnicity, or nationality or religion-it is an idea-and what an idea it is: That you can come from humble circumstances and do great things,” (Condoleezza Rice). How can students promote patriotism and protect their great democracy? Patriotism is a quality of being patriotic, which is supporting and being devoted to one’s country. Democracy is a system of government which is voted on and led by the people. The United States celebrates its patriotism by celebrating the Fourth of July. They celebrate the Fourth of July because of the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.

To begin, students can promote patriotism in many ways. For example, they can be respectful when saying the Pledge of Allegiance. They should show respect for the flag because they are making a promise to the United States. Students can also support veterans and honor the men and women who are serving in the United States military. According to Adlai Stevenson II, an American politician, “Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.” Acts of patriotism and feeling patriotic will make this country a stronger nation.

To add, students can protect our great democracy. One way can be by persuading their parents and other adults to vote. It is important to vote because people vote for the ones who represent the citizens of our country. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education...to prepare each citizen to choose wisely and to enable him to choose freely are paramount functions of the schools in a democracy.” Students can protect this great democracy by practicing democracy in the classroom and in life and promoting values such as inclusion, voice, representation, and participation.

In conclusion, students can promote patriotism and protect our great democracy in many ways. I learned that we always have to respect all Americans whether they immigrated from different countries or were born here. We are all Americans. America makes me proud because it is a patriotic democracy that has given the people of America the power to freely choose who they want as their leaders with a fair voting system.



Francesca Rowell

1st Place, Middle School

6th grade, Home School, age 12

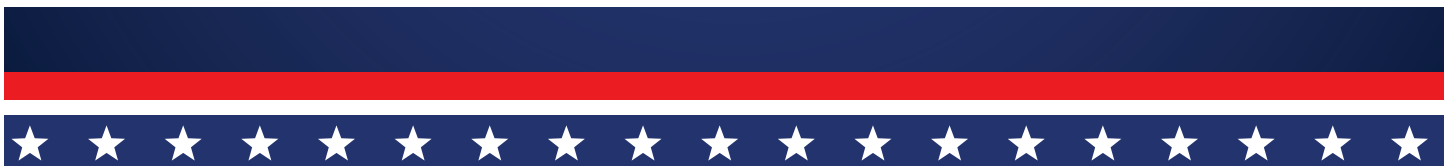
Hello, my name is Francesca Rowell, I live in Pueblo, Colo. When I first read this question, I thought it would be hard, but as I thought of all the things I can and have done it was not as hard as I thought it would be. I will tell you how a kid my age can promote patriotism and protect our great democracy.

How can kids my age promote patriotism? Stand for what we believe in! One of the easiest things we can do is to display patriotism with dress, flags, stickers, and any other patriotic displays. We can attend peaceful protests and protesting injustices. Attending a peaceful protest is a wonderful way to be patriotic. Pray-Ins have been used as a protesting method since 1774. Thomas Jefferson found that Pray-Ins are remarkably affective. I can also respectfully encourage others to stand with me for what I am fighting for. Finally, I can pray for my country, democracy, and leaders.

How can kids my age protect this great Democracy? "Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people." Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln is my favorite president. He is my favorite because he is easy to understand, and he had a profound impact on America. I love this quote because it clearly tells me what democracy

is and should be. One of the things I like to do to protect our democracy is write to the president and leaders of America. I have a voice, so I should use it. When I write, I thank them for the good they do and share my concerns for America. Another way to promote democracy is to be a good citizen. I practice the principles: caring for others more than myself, keeping the parks clean, and helping and feeding the homeless. I study our country's past, so that I know the uniqueness of our country and the sacrifices made to create it. And I learn more about what is going on presently so I can understand what is happening in America today. I also like to know what is going on in Pueblo, so I, as a citizen, can share my thoughts with the leaders of this city. One way I do this is by attending city council meetings so that I can be aware of what is going on and what decisions are being made.

These are the ways that I work to promote patriotism and protect democracy. I will continue to look for more opportunities to support my country. America is a wonderful place and I love that I live here. The people in America are what makes it a great nation. Our country was set up to preserve the leadership to be for and by the people. I am proud to be one of those people.



Simona Rowell

2nd Place, Middle School

8th grade, Home School, age 14

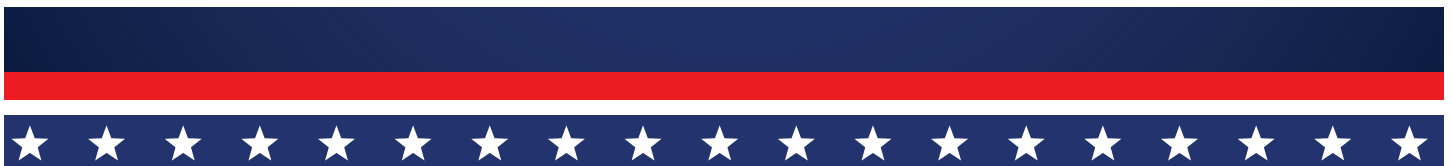
“Always stand on principle...even if you have to stand alone.” -John Adams. This quote is a perfect representation of John Adams bravery and what we ourselves must be willing to do to promote patriotism. Sometimes we must fight for things all by ourselves. In this essay, I will share what I want to fight for and the ways that I will.

I admire Thomas Jefferson since he wrote the Declaration of Independence and had a profound influence on America. The four main points or ideals of the Declaration of Independence are equality, unalienable rights, consent of the governed, and the right to alter and/or abolish the government. Thomas Jefferson was trying to give rights to the people by leaving room to alter the government and giving the people the choice to choose whom they wanted to lead them. He was trying to create a country different from England. He wanted a country where the people truly had the power. The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, by 56 brave men, our founding fathers. These men were giving up everything and defying a huge empire that would surely destroy them. Thomas Jefferson says it best, “If you want something you’ve never had, you must be willing to do something you’ve never done.” The importance of the Declaration of Independence is still evident today. We have equality, limited government, unalienable rights; we might consider these things normal by today’s standards, however it was truly revolutionary at the time. I think it is extremely important that we protect these things that we were given so long ago.

If we do not recognize how hard these things were fought for, we will never fight for them ourselves. Ways I think I can fight for these principles are by simply being a good citizen, being educated, and learning our country’s history so one day I might be of service to my country. In John F. Kennedy’s words, “Ask not what your country can do for you but ask what you can do for your country.” In the future and the present, I hope to be of service to my country. Right now, I can do small acts for my community. I have participated in Everybody Counts, which gives free meals to the homeless. Every year my family does Walk for Life, which raises money for A Caring Pregnancy Center. In the future, I can protect my rights by voting for the leaders that will stand up for our democracy and by having a job to be a productive citizen. Engaging in peaceful protests is another way I can protect democracy.

Speaking up for the things I believe in is something that no one can stop me from doing. Haven’t we seen that throughout our history? From the Revolutionary war to the industrial revolution to the civil rights movement our nation has always been speaking up. It is true that our country has been through a lot, with injustices, wars, trials, and challenges.

However, what’s greater than all of that is our perseverance to fight back. To speak up for what is right and never settle for what is wrong. That is what patriotism is all about, and that is what we must fight for.



Gabriel Shoup

3rd Place, Middle School

8th grade, Pueblo School for the Arts and Science, age 15

When you think of the U.S.A. what do you visualize? Maybe the first think you visualize is a redneck. Although that may be true, there are many other things that make up the U.S.A. I shall explain what you can do to show your patriotism. My main sources are mainly from <https://arborsassistedliving.com/5-ways-to-show-your-patriotism/> and you can click on this link to read more into my sources.

The first thing you can do is to vote. Voting has been many ways to see which leaders we want to see lead our great country. Many great and important people and leaders of our nation have been chosen by either voting or serving our great country through tough times. Voting ages are usually at the age of 18 years old but that soon may change in the future depending on the circumstances. The main reason why people vote is because of favoritism and or reasons on actual things that we need to change. You can also volunteer to work the polls during an election and see how our system of government works. There are going to be other things that you can do to show your patriotism. I will now talk about another way you can show your patriotism.

The second way you can show your patriotism is to support a veteran that has served for our country. And I don't mean to say thank you or anything like that but to do favors for them. Like mowing their lawn, giving them a gift or walking down to the store to buy groceries for them. They can also give you a gift in return for the favors but then again the reward is doing the favors themselves. You can also talk to them and tell them things. Like how the weather is, how they're doing, and what they have been doing these past few days. They'll definitely enjoy the meaningful conversations people have with them. I still have a few other ways that you can show your appreciation and devotion to your country.

Another way you can show your appreciation is by flying our flag the proper way and yes there is a proper way to carry our national flag. There is a S. Flag Code that

people and soldiers must obey so as not to upset people that are very serious about patriotism. One of the rules is that if people carry it at night it must be illuminated with either lights or some other method. The main reason why you should do this is because if you do this in front of a veteran they will be proud that our great nation has heroes of the future and great people that are devoted to their country and this great nation we call the U.S. You may also help a veteran hang up their flag by building a flag display on their front porch. I have only two more reasons on why to show patriotism that I can think of and I think these reasons are amazing in itself.

One of the reasons to show patronage to your great nation is to support different National Parks through the country. You can send money or you can give suggestions to make the parks better. Like telling them to add structures to help hikers find their way or maybe tell more about the history of the park. People can be more interested in the park if you give more information or detail on how this park came to be. The National Parks also do this thing where people can sign up in the summer and volunteer to help out there. You can help with the wildlife and help people get to where they need to go. You can try to also pick up a job in that park so you can help our ecosystem.

The last motive for showing your patriotism is to serve on jury duty. Even though it may not seem like the best thing to show your patriotism it is still helpful nonetheless. Jury duty can give back to the community by helping clean up trash. Or you can go to a homeless shelter to help fix meals for the homeless and help feed them and help the staff members there as well.

These are many ways that you can show your support and love for the U.S.A. By helping out veterans. Doing charitable things. Or doing things to help our great community/country. Thank you for your time and appreciation to read this and I hope you can do these acts to help support local and national areas.



Daniel Badillo

1st Place, High School

12th grade, East High School, age 18

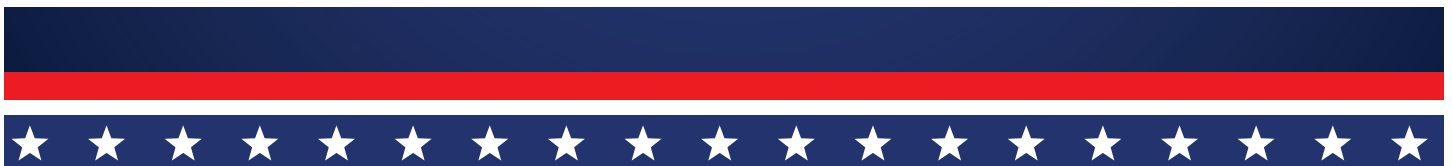
In today's day students can be patriotic and help protect our democracy in multiple ways, sometimes without even knowing. Being patriotic can mean many things, for instance loving your country and showing devotion to your country.

In my life of sports before every football game, wrestling dual and baseball game we always start the game off showing devotion to our country by doing the national anthem also known as the star spangled banner. People every day show patriotism even when they don't know they are showing it. You could vote, it's one of the best ways to honor the principles of our nation. Supporting a veteran is another way to support patriotism. They fought for our country and by the grace of god they were able to make it back to their homes and families. Most soldiers don't get that opportunity sadly. Even the simplest things can be portraying patriotism like going to a parade and enjoying it with your family, lighting fireworks on the Fourth of July, studying our nation's history, obeying all laws, even wearing red, white or blue is being patriotic. There are so many ways to show patriotism. Sometimes people don't even know they are showing it.

While people attempt to join the army, in some circumstances due to the effects of their lives they can't join to help our country. However, that does not mean they can't protect our democracy. There are many ways to protect our democracy such as volunteering. We as students are the future of our nation and we

can protect our democracy by volunteering, working to make a difference and engaging with people from over 700 different communities. Another way to help is by registering and voting. Making sure our families and neighborhood is up to date on their registration. As a student we can't participate in running for office but adults can most definitely run for office. From the school board to the state house, there are so many opportunities to run for office to make a difference and put your opinion and ideas out there. It is important to protect our democracy because its governed nations are more likely to secure the peace, deter aggression, expand open markets, promote economic development, protect American citizens, combat with international terrorism and crime, uphold human and worker rights, avoid a humanitarian crises and refugee flows, improve the global environment and national parks, and protect human health as much as possible. With these as just some goals that the United States has in mind, the United States seeks to promote democracy as a means to achieve security, stability and prosperity for the entire world. We as a nation would also assist newly formed democracies in implementing democratic principles, assisting democracy advocates around the world to establish many vibrant democracies in their own countries and identify and denounce regimes that deny their citizens the right to choose their leaders in elections that are free.

In conclusion there are many ways to show patriotism and promote our democracy.



Zachary Zenner

2nd Place, High School

9th grade, Pueblo West High School, age 16

Throughout the history of the United States, we have witnessed the great democracy that our forefathers created through great effort. From the war for independence from our colonial rulers to the ratification of our Constitution, this country has seen us at our best and worse.

Throughout it all, America has had one theme that has been unyielding: patriotism. Former Governor of Illinois Adlai Stevenson once stated, "Patriotism is not short, frenzied bursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime." As a citizen of this country, it becomes a person's duty to protect that patriotism that makes it whole. This statement becomes unclear, however, when asked of an American student who cannot demonstrate patriotism in the traditional ways anyone else can. Regardless, a student can promote patriotism by becoming involved in the community, outreaching out to the heroes that protect it, and learning the history of our great nation and its democracy.

The local community becomes the heart of America and all the things that make our nation stem from there. Patriotism drives its citizens, and becoming involved in the community allows you to learn of and protect that patriotism. A student can become involved in their community with volunteer work. Volunteering is an act that brings good to the community as well as to all other parties involved. The student learns of the importance of supporting others as well as themselves. A prominent part of patriotism is being able to make a change in your community through your effort. Every community has its local legislatures and executives who create and enforce the law. A student can become involved in these processes by going to city addresses or meetings, speaking to Law Enforcement, or even doing something as simple as writing a letter. These efforts to become involved in the political side of the nation inform students of what is around them, bringing them closer to the country as a whole; This allows them to be prideful of what their community is doing, which is what patriotism stems from.

America is protected by the best military in the world;

however, those who have served are underappreciated for their sacrifices. Almost all small communities have a Veteran's Day parade, in which people march to honor veterans. Participation in this parade is a simple and meaningful way to demonstrate patriotism while honoring the veterans that have fought for it. Moreover, being able to see the veterans allows patriotism to shine. These veterans are living proof that patriotism is worth fighting for. Then, students can write letters to veterans to exemplify their appreciation for their service. A simple letter such as this can make someone's day. Nevertheless, a simple gesture promotes patriotism by supporting the country and its veterans.

The history of America is substantial to learn about as a student because it provides the backbone of being able to devote yourself to it. Learning about the Revolutionary War allows students to understand the predominant ideas of the country and what led to them. Thomas Paine's pamphlet Common Sense affirms the vision of republican democracy. The Articles of Confederation demonstrate the first attempt at a governing set of laws. The Federalist and Anti Federalist papers make up direct ideas of how the government should work. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights define a citizen's liberties. The Emancipation Proclamation becomes the abolishment of slavery: a step toward a better future. The Civil Rights Act creates the first leap toward equality. Educating yourself on these events and documents is paramount to patriotism to prevent nationalism. Not understanding the country you have unwavering pride in becomes blindly following it.

To protect patriotism and the great democracy of the United States, a student can become involved in their community, appreciate the veterans who safeguard it, and learn about the country as a whole. Serving the community allows finding pride in themselves and their country. Honoring veterans causes an appreciation of the country and those who defend it. Learning about American history permits the preservation of patriotism while preventing blind nationalism.



Cayden Rousseau

3rd Place, High School

12th grade, Pueblo West High School, age 17

Patriotism is the love and loyalty to one's country. It is a feeling that inspires individuals to work towards the betterment of their nation and to defend it against all odds. As students, we have a crucial role to play in promoting patriotism and protecting our great democracy.

Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the people and exercised through elected representatives. It is a system that values individual freedom, equality, and justice. Our democracy is not perfect, but it remains one of the most durable and resilient political systems in the world. In this essay, I will outline some of the ways in which students my age can promote patriotism and protect our great democracy.

One of the most important ways to promote patriotism is to become informed and engaged citizens. This means staying up-to-date with current events, participating in political discussions and debates, and exercising our right to vote. Voting is one of the most powerful tools we have to shape our country and the policies that govern us. It is our duty as citizens to participate in the political process and make our voices heard. This requires us to take the time to educate ourselves on the issues and the candidates, and to vote in every election, not just the ones that receive the most media attention.

Engaging in community service can promote patriotism. Community service is a way to give back to our country and to our fellow citizens. It is an opportunity to put our values into action and to make a positive difference in the world. By volunteering, we can help to address some of the most pressing social and environmental problems facing our country. We can also gain a deeper understanding of the needs of our communities and the challenges they face.

Community service also provides an opportunity to build relationships with people from different backgrounds, which can help to promote unity and respect for diversity.

Embracing diversity and promoting inclusiveness is one of the best ways to promote patriotism. Our country is a melting pot of cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs, and this diversity is one of our greatest strengths. However, in order to fully embrace this diversity, we need to create an inclusive environment that values and respects all individuals. This requires us to be open-minded and to listen to different perspectives, to understand and appreciate different cultures, and to work together to find common solutions to our challenges.

Finally, we can promote patriotism by being responsible and accountable citizens. This means being active participants in our communities and taking an active role in shaping our future. It means being responsible for our actions and taking responsibility for our mistakes. It means being accountable to one another and to our country. When we are responsible and accountable citizens, we can help to build a strong and vibrant democracy that will endure for generations to come.

In conclusion, as students, we have a crucial role to play in promoting patriotism and protecting our great democracy. We can do this by becoming informed and engaged citizens, engaging in community service, embracing diversity and promoting inclusiveness, and by being responsible and accountable citizens. These actions may seem small., but they have the power to shape our country and our future. By working together, we can help to promote patriotism, protect our democracy, and build a better future for all.



Jackson Dahlke

Honorable Mention, High School

10th grade, Pueblo West High School, age 17

Students these days have really gotten out of reach of protecting and defending our democracy we have here in the United States. Whether it's because their political beliefs don't line up or just the fact that they don't like the people in power, we should all still promote our democracy because it puts the power in the people's hands. Patriotism is often mocked these days but people need to embrace it, our Constitution gives us life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and we all need to embrace it. In more ways than one, the students of the United States have the most power to promote our democracy. Whether it's setting up that lemonade stand on the side of the road or voting in any election. It's all supporting our democracy, and students have the most influence promoting patriotism and protecting democracy.

Voting is one of the most taken for granted and important things that our democracy has given the people. Voting puts the power in the hands of the people to pass onto the person they trust most to hold this power. Students who are of legal voting age should go out and vote, it's a right they gain and they should use their ability because each new generation if they so choose to vote can sway the tides in the votes. Students who are of not voting age should endorse what they believe in, go out and research the candidates so when it comes time for them to vote they already know who to put their vote in for. But more importantly these students should go out into the world and encourage people to vote. They can influence an election by telling people not who to vote in but why to vote. Students who are not of age should tell anyone of age that voting is important for them to do because it protects our democracy which gives us our right to vote, voting shows that, "We the people tell the government what to do, it doesn't tell us." -Ronald Regan.

Another way we the students can promote patriotism and protect our democracy is by respecting the flag and representing our democracy with T-shirts and directly quoting our constitution when deemed

necessary. Respecting the flag is a simple but important task in patriotism, respecting the flag means to stand up, take your hat off, and hold your hand over your heart during the National Anthem or The Pledge of Allegiance. This also means to treat the flag with respect when handling it and not letting it touch the ground. Representing our democracy is almost as important as respecting our flag, and there are so many ways that we the students can do this. An example is just express yourself as you are, this is the beauty of our democracy is to express ourselves freely without government interference, this is what the 1st Amendment gives us. If we express ourselves freely that is the greatest way to represent our democracy because some countries don't allow their people to express how they feel towards certain subjects. Even just speaking out against the government because they are doing something wrong is the greatest freedom of speech right we all have, peacefully protesting. Sometimes we are faced with the fact that our democracy has had its downs, but we have got to accept that it happened, we fixed the issue, and we have to continue not forgetting the mistakes of the past because we don't want to make them again in the future.

One other topic that our generation as students can do to support our democracy is to support our Military Veterans. Now this might not seem like something to support our democracy but I truly and deeply believe that it is supporting our democracy. One of the things about our military that many other militaries don't have is the fact that ours is not a mandatory thing to go into. In almost any other country it is mandatory to serve in the military for a few years, in ours you volunteer. We as students should support active military members as well as Veterans. These military members volunteered to serve in the service of their country and we as students should acknowledge that. As students we can support Veterans by going and talking to them, hearing them out and



just hanging out with them in general is a great way to show these Veterans that we support them and their sacrifice they made in service of our democracy. To Active Duty members students should support them at home by respecting the flag and acknowledging the fact that they are overseas for us and our country. In all, as students, we should support our military and its members for they protect our democracy and are the true Patriots.

No matter how old you are, or where you come from, we can and should promote our democracy and promote patriotism. This is because America is one of the freest countries in the world where

everyone is welcome. But we should also, no matter what we believe in, promote our democracy to show the world that we are not ashamed of ourselves. We as the students can support our democracy by doing something as simple as standing for the National Anthem or The Pledge of Allegiance. We the students should show that we support our democracy through our great spirit of patriotism, because we are the future of America.



Jeremiah Blaha

1st Place, Teacher Category
East High School

Embracing our Freedoms: Teaching Patriotism through Utilizing our Freedoms

Patriotism is the celebration and utility of the freedoms granted to Americans on a daily basis. A teacher by trade, instills knowledge within students, so that they might develop into more competent and confident young adults. The teaching of patriotism is a skill that all teachers have the ability and duty to undertake, regardless of the grade level or content they may teach.

Developing a good citizen out of each student is instrumental in all that a teacher does, and should be recognized as a central component of a teacher's responsibility to students. Therefore, teaching students about patriotism and the opportunities our democracy offers citizens is fundamental to all that we do.

Freedom of choice is vital within American democracy, and is a freedom without boundaries. Individuals have the choice to vote how they please, select a career that is suitable and fulfilling to them, live where they choose and spend money how they see fit. Teachers have the responsibility of teaching students how to make good choices, and how to celebrate this freedom that is too often taken for granted. This is no easy task asked of teachers, but is critical to the development of students, so that they may become productive members of society, and responsible citizens able to participate in the American democracy. Patriotism is often a fundamental reflection of one's own choices. Choices such as choosing to celebrate one's country, or choosing to promote one's heritage and culture, are common displays of one's patriotism.

Vital to democracy and the celebration of patriotism is the freedom to own property. This critical freedom is essential to allow American citizens to better participate in their democracy.

Property rights and home ownership are essential freedoms for all Americans. Teachers have a duty to instill within students that Americans have a right to life, liberty, and property, an idea that was unpopular prior to the founding of this country. It is the freedom of home ownership that enables Americans to build and grow wealth, which in turn allows them to celebrate their patriotism, and their freedoms. Acquiring personal property and wealth are goals that students should aspire to, and which will allow students to live free from poverty. Alongside the freedom of property and ownership, is the pride of ownership. Patriotism and the pride of ownership work hand in hand, are both skill that can be taught by teachers. The care of and responsibility for one's own property can be an expression of one's patriotism and the celebration of this unique freedom.

While many students may not recognize education as a freedom, instilling the love of learning and being a life long learner is an essential aspect of teaching in America. In America, all students are guaranteed the right to a free and appropriate public education, a freedom that should be held dearly as not all children of the world are granted this opportunity. It is through education that students are able to change their lives, better themselves, and thus bring more added value to this great country. As citizens, there is an inherent expectation that we better ourselves, so that we may raise ourselves up from our current position. In turn, this strengthens America, and allows for a cohesive and stronger citizenry.

Comprehensive patriotism in the classroom involves much more than simply reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Teachers can promote patriotism on a daily basis, by celebrating and teaching about the many freedoms offered to the citizens of these United States. By law, students are entitled to a free and appropriate education. American schools offer



students the opportunity to eat lunch and breakfast, an opportunity guaranteed by law not otherwise offered to some children in other countries. Teaching students about laws, how they work and how they guarantee basic rights and freedoms is a way that any teacher can help teach students about patriotism. It is through freedom, guaranteed by law and by our constitution, which enables all Americans the opportunity to live free, and to pursue their own American Dream. Pursuing the American dream is largely about embracing patriotism.

Exercising one's freedom of speech on a daily basis is an example of how one can both embrace and celebrate their patriotism. The ability to exhibit one's thought is a critical freedom, and teachers have the opportunity to teach students the vitality and uniqueness of this freedom. Promoting patriotism via a written essay is a method of utilizing the freedom of speech. In certain countries across the globe, such an essay as this might be cause for arrest and imprisonment or worse. Teachers should instill in children this sacred freedom as a form of promoting their own sense of democracy and the values of American patriotism. Developing the voices of young students is critical, and teachers have a responsibility

to promote ethical, responsible and proper utilization of this freedom.

Teachers, by nature have a lot of work expected of them. Students must learn the fundamental skill of reading, and how to do mathematics. They must also understand the principles of science, and the utilization of the scientific method to better understand the world. The social studies field expects students to learn a variety of topics, such as geography, history, economics, and civics, which includes patriotism. Music, art, physical education, and a host of other topics are introduced to students to develop a comprehensive and diversified education. All teachers can and should have a role in the teaching of patriotism. While most natural for a civics teacher to teach about patriotism, a music teacher can expose students to the bounty of patriotic music that exists. PE teachers, can teach students about the benefit of a healthy and strong society. English teachers can teach about how to appropriately express their freedom of speech. Every teacher has their place teaching students about patriotism, and each teacher should work to ensure they are developing students to become citizens that have a pride of patriotism which celebrates this wonderful country.



