



A love of country

Pictured above are American Legion members with student essay winners. In back, from left, are Kathy Schultz, Carol

Johnson, Laurie Zamarripa and Collin Hanson. In front are Sharon Seraphine, Jackson Fiamoncini and Kennedie Owens.

What freedom, family mean

The American Legion Auxiliary recently held their Americanism Essay Contest for students in Grades 3-12.

The top three winners this year were Jackson Fiamoncini of Tainter School, Kennedie Owens of St. Joseph School and Collin Hanson of St. Joseph School.

The theme this year was What Does Freedom Mean to My Family? Essays are as follows.

by Jackson Fiamoncini

To my family freedom means showing pride. People like veterans, every day people, citizens, military or people like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. fought for freedom. If it weren't for those people, things in cities wouldn't be free or equal. We wouldn't have friends in school that have different color skin than my family.

On Memorial Day, Veterans Day and the Fourth of July, I feel proud because many people in my family were brave enough to be in the military like my dad, uncles, grandma and several grandpas. My grandpa fought in the Vietnam War. Three of my great grandpas fought in World War II. One of my great grandpa's fought in World War II and the Korean War. I never met three of my great grandpas but my mom took me to my great grandpas gravestones and their military gravestones.

I feel cared for by my family, leaders and veterans. I'll do my best in school so when I grow up the people who cared for me will feel cared for back. I will show freedom and give others freedom for the rest of their lives.

by Kennedie Owens

Freedom is the power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint. We are fortunate to live in a democracy. A democracy is a system of

government in which people elect representatives. My mother always says, "If you do not vote then you can not complain." What my mother is saying is that if someone lives in a democracy and chooses to not take the time to vote then they should not complain about the laws that are established. My mother believes that people have a privilege and a responsibility to vote.

Without freedom my family might not be alive. With freedom, my parents were able to choose their own spouse, and have as many children as they wanted. My family has the choice to live in the state and town that they want. My mother and father were able to go to college and choose careers that they wanted. It is important to my family that we are able to receive accurate news information from the media. We are able to read books and

newspapers that we choose. My family has a choice if we want to go to a public or Catholic school. Religion is a wonderful freedom that we are fortunate to have. We can worship in the manner that we choose. Living in a free country gives us the opportunity to visit other parts of the world.

On way we are reminded of our freedom is to recite The Pledge of Allegiance. My family and I are blessed in many way to live in a country where freedom is protected. As Americans, let us never forget the privilege and responsibilities that we have received.

by Collin Hanson

To my family, freedom is the ability to live in this great country, but knowing it has a cost. The cost is people fighting for our freedom. Each day, thousands of soldier, men and women, fight to keep us safe each and every day. I remember when I was younger, my mom would tie a yellow ribbon around our huge oak tree down our

driveway. I always thought to myself, "Why?" We did this because it symbolized when someone has been fighting overseas returns to their families or homes. I never really know how much that one yellow ribbon meant.

I remember the early mornings and late nights when my sister would leave us in order to serve this country we call home. She would be dressed in her uniform with her bags packed next to the door. My parents would be saying their good-byes, my grandma would be waiting for her turn to say good-bye. When my grandpa was alive, during these times he would have his fair share of words to say to her. My brothers would be sitting on the couch sad, but proud, to know that their sister is fighting for our freedom. I would be sitting down not even knowing how to feel. Most kids argue and wish their sister wasn't even there, but then there's me, having that tiny feeling of what if she doesn't come home. I would always try to hold back the tears but as were hugging, I could not help but break down and cry. I do not think she ever has known how proud and happy I am, to have her as a sister. What she has done, not just for me, but for my country will never be forgotten no matter what differences her and I have had in the past.

I know my story is just one of many, but I hope someday we can all come to realize how lucky we are to live in this country. There are millions of people fighting for you, so what shall we do for them?

My family has cherished the freedom we have today because we never know when that freedom could be taken away. But I know that with the strength and courage of our soldiers, freedom is ours forever.