

# Pinole **Historical** Society

## 2009 Flag Day Essay Contest

The Pinole Historical Society congratulates the winners of its 2009 Flag Day Essay Contest.

### BACKGROUND

Students in Pinole schools were given the opportunity to answer the question, *“What does the American flag mean to you?”* The PHS received entries from St. Joseph School, Shannon Elementary School, Stewart Elementary School, and Pinole Middle School.

Students in grades K-3 were asked to write essays of 100 words. Students in grades 4-12 were allowed 200 words. The judges were Pinole Councilwoman Debbie Long (St. Joseph School), who had the idea for the contest; retired Pinole Valley High School music teacher Nancy Gill (Shannon Elementary School); and Veronica Ahuruonye, Director of Las Deltas Early Intervention Center, a Richmond pre-school for children from low-income, high-risk families. All are Pinole Historical Society members.

All students who wrote essays received certificates of merit from the PHS.

On Monday, June 8, Ed Downer, Chairman of the Board of Mechanics Bank; Fernanda Rodrigues, Community Affairs Officer of Mechanics Bank; and Marcia Kalapus, President of the Pinole Historical Society, presented certificates to all of the grade winners, and savings bonds and U.S. flags to the grand-prize winners at St. Joseph School, Stewart Elementary School, and Shannon Elementary School.

The principals and teachers were very grateful for the recognition of their students, and the children cheered for their classmates when their names were announced as winners.

### THE WINNERS

#### **ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL**

**Kirbin Lum, 1st grade**

**Marisa Ornelas, 3rd grade**

**Julia Chacko, 8th grade**

#### **STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Ryan Belan, 4th grade**

**Giovanny Vasquez, 6th grade**

#### **SHANNON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Adilene Tejeda, 2nd grade**

**Summer Fenk, 4th grade**

**ESSAYS AND PHOTOS ON FOLLOWING PAGES**



St. Joseph School grade winners

## Flag Day Essay Contest St. Joseph School



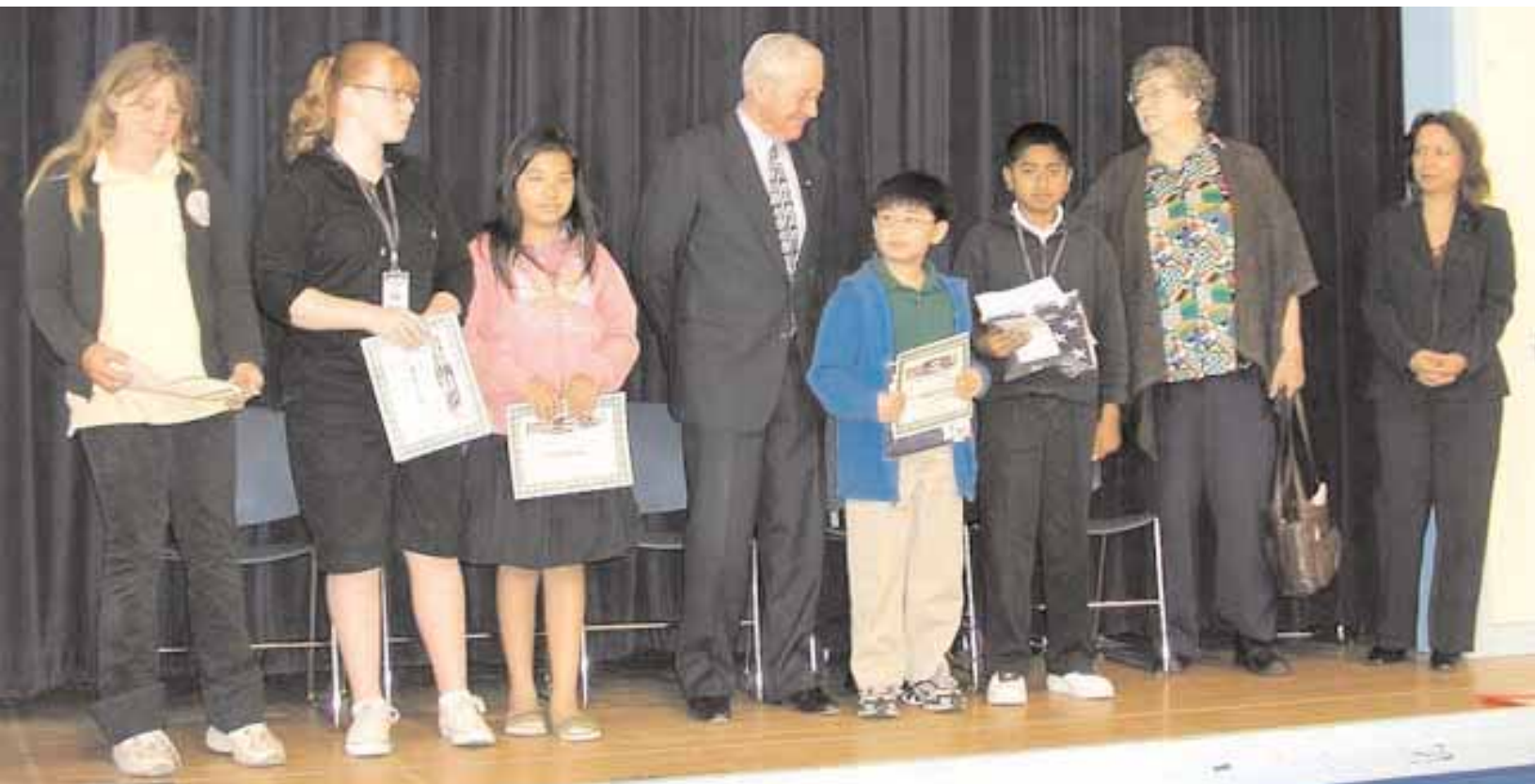
**PHOTO LEFT:** Pinole Historical Society President Marcia Kalapus (left), Chairman of the Board Ed Downer (with microphone), and Community Affairs Officer Fernanda Rodrigues (seated) presented savings bonds and U.S. flags to winners of the PHS Flag Day Essay Contest at St. Joseph School in Pinole.

**PHOTO ABOVE:** St. Joseph certificate winners were: Kirbin Lum, 1st grade; Dean Dimalanta, 2nd grade; Marisa Ornelas, 3rd grade; Cecilia De La Campa, 4th grade; Jared Arpa, 5th grade; Maria Helena Buitrago, 6th grade; Lauren Kizer, 7th grade; Julia Chacko, 8th grade.

# Flag Day Essay Contest Stewart Elementary School



**TOP:** Stewart Elementary School grand-prize winners Ryan Belan (blue jacket) and Giovanni Vasquez (black shirt) with Ed Downer and Marcia Kalapus.



**BELOW:** Grade winners at Stewart Elementary School.

# Flag Day Essay Contest Shannon Elementary School



Shannon Elementary School  
savings bond and flag winners  
Summer Fenk (above) and  
Adilene Tejada (right)



## Contest certificate winners

### SHANNON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

America Muñoz, 1st grade  
Adilene Tejada, 2nd grade  
Natalie Gomez, 3rd grade  
Roxana Ramirez, 3rd grade  
Summer Fenk, 4th grade  
Kailey Hunter Hernandez, 5th grade  
David Fang, 6th grade

### STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ryan Belan, 4th grade  
Katie Duckworth, 4th grade  
Alex Muñoz, 4th grade  
Giovanny Vasquez, 6th grade  
Stephanie Cowen, 7th grade

### PINOLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mark Ohlmann, 7th grade

**STUDENTS' ESSAYS ON FOLLOWING PAGES**

# Flag Day Essay Winners

## ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

### **Kirbin Lum, 1st grade**

When I see the American flag I think of the people who died in the war a long time ago. When I see the American flag I think about people who were in a war and proud to be soldiers. When I see the American flag I remember the soldiers who tried to protect our country when we're in war. When I see the American flag I think about happy things like freedom.

### **Marisa Ornelas, 3rd grade**

To me the flag means fairness, boldness, courage, and happiness. It gives me courage to stand up for what I believe in. That's what makes me keep on trying. The flag makes me proud of what I believe in, and what I am. As long as the flag is waving I am a free, brave person.

The flag is still waving now, and it's still going to be waving 100 years from now. Long live America!

### **Julia Chacko, 8th grade**

As Americans, we are a very proud people. Through all the tears and bloodshed we have established a nation of pride, prosperity, and promise. We, the people of the United States, are strong, confident, and united in the pursuit of independence and happiness. Nothing embodies all that is America and its history better than the American flag.

The flag of the United States consists of thirteen horizontal stripes of alternating red and white, with a blue rectangle in the canton bearing fifty white stars. The thirteen stripes represent the first thirteen colonies to become states in the Union, while the fifty stars represent the fifty states that make up our country. However, the flag signifies something entirely unique to each individual American.

To me, the American flag is a compilation of that I have learned and now understand about our great country. Beyond the red, white, and blue façade, I see each cannon fire, each gunshot, and each fallen soldier that has made our nation the impenetrable force it is today. I can see the gruesome and bloody struggles that our people had to go through in order to ensure our freedom. Yet, most of all, the flag is a symbol of my basic rights and liberties as a proud citizen of the United States of America.

# Flag Day Essay Winners

## STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### **Ryan Belan, 4th grade**

Have you ever thought of the American flag? If you have, what have you thought about? For me, the American flag is the best thing about the United States. It has 13 stripes to represent the 13 colonies. Now, there are 50 stars to represent the 50 states. The flag is the thing that holds the 50 states together.

The three colors represent courage; red stands for courage that says, "I will face any danger for three." White means purity or innocence, meaning that almost everyone behaves. Blue stands for justice and doing the right thing, making the right decisions. The flag isn't just a flag; it is a symbol that says we must stick together always and help one another.

The flag's history traces back to 1777, when it was first flown. It has survived many battles. The National Anthem (The Star Spangled Banner) was inspired by it.

The way to salute the flag is to put your hand on your heart, to respect it. I salute you, flag. You are the greatest of them all!

### **Giovanny Vasquez, 6th grade**

The American flag means a great deal to me. The flag, to me, means hope, freedom, and unity. The flag also shows the work and trouble this country has gone through to have it.

To me, the flag means hope. The U.S. has gone through many troubled times. The flag was a symbol for Americans during wars. There are many problems in our country right now with the war. The flag is a symbol that we will come out of the war safely.

The flag means freedom to me. When we first became a nation, the whole point of the flag was to show that we were free from England. It still represents that today.

The flag also shows unity. It shows that we are a nation united. It shows that we are in these situations together. This is what the flag means to me.

The flag is a symbol that represents the United States today. It represents the hardships we went through to get the flag. To me, it represents the hope, unity, and freedom of my country.

# Flag Day Essay Winners

## SHANNON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### **Adilene Tejada, 2nd grade**

The American flag means freedom, justice, and belief in this country. They're six white and seven red stripes. They stand for the thirteen colonies. The fifty stars stand for the fifty states. Each star stands for a state.

I'll never put the American flag on the ground because that shows no respect for American and the flag. It's a symbol of the land that I love.

The flag stands for liberty It is a wonderful world. The flag changed twenty-seven times. I love the American flag so much. I will stay in American all my life.

### **Summer Fenk, 4th grade**

The American flag is very important to me. It represents freedom, justices, and hope. It also represents the many opportunities that are available for all Americans.

The American flag represents my citizenship as well as my civil rights. It represents how truly beautiful American is.

It also represents our history. What made our country what it is today. The fifty stars are for the states that are the U.S. The thirteen red and white stripes represent the first thirteen colonies. The color red stands for the valor and hardiness of the people who fought for our freedom. The color white stands for purity of our beliefs that people have the right for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The color blue stands for perseverance, justice and vigilance.

I love this country and the American flag.