

Pinole **Historical** Society

P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

2010 FLAG DAY ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Certificates of Achievement

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

Matthew Tayag, 1st grade
Kirbin Lum, 2nd grade
Ryan Mahaffey, 3rd grade
Allison Wedman, 4th grade
Nicole Fernandez, 5th grade
Krystal Alvarez, 6th grade
Maria Buitrago, 7th grade
Chelsea Velez, 8th grade

SHANNON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Shania Cochran, kindergarten
Isaac Castaneda, kindergarten
Mia Cacho, 1st grade
Evelyn Romo, 1st grade
Michelle K. Hong, 2nd grade
Christian Lonis, 2nd grade
Princess Joy, 3rd grade
Brandon Garcia, 3rd grade
Linh Pho Thai, 4th grade
Esmeralda Topete, 4th grade
Brenda Moreida, 5th grade
Karla Cadena, 6th grade
Eric Boster, 6th grade

STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Isaiah Delgado, 2nd grade
Anna Chang, 2nd grade

ELLERHORST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Seth Hunt, 5th grade

COLLINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mariah Guzman, 1st grade
Andrea Perez, 1st grade
Justin Perez, 1st grade
Nico Carlos Castrillo, 1st grade
Saalem Abdelleoui, 1st grade
Justin Nguyen, 1st grade
Justine Nino, 1st grade
Requesa Jackson, 1st grade
Jeremy Francisco, 2nd grade
Scott Siverson, 3rd grade
Vicente Orozco, 3rd grade
Kiara Dumalag, 3rd grade
Alexander N. Kaminski, 5th grade
Angel Turner, 5th grade
Cireya Lucietta-Jackson, 6th grade

Collins Special Ed class

Jaliah Allen
Keiry Banda
Emily Lonis
Sierra Jackson
Felicity Tuason
Jordan Washington
Patrick Bringas
Edward Wu
Amaya Duckett

PINOLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Sharon Elberfield, 12th grade
Pratichya Shrestha, 12th grade
Tania Gomez, 11th grade
Lawrence Cen, 11th grade

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GRAND PRIZE WINNERS

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

KIRBIN LUM, 2ND GRADE

The flag means bravery for those who have fought throughout all these years for us. The flag means we should pray for the men and women who served the army with their courage, bravery, and their destiny to save us through those wars.

The flag means we don't forget about all those souls who were lost. The flag means we should let it shine and never let it fall to the ground.

The flag means we always know they will be with us and we should pray for them. The flag means we honor the men and women who fought in the war. The flag means we put flowers on top of the graves of the men and women.

NICOLE FERNANDEZ, 5TH GRADE

On the American flag I see stars and stripes. These stars and stripes show 50 states and that we had 13 colonies. These 50 states and 13 colonies show that we are one country.

The flag to me shows that we have been through a lot of blood and tears to get where we are today. The flag also tells me I can do anything. The American flag always tells me that I am safe.

The American flag has three colors. These colors are red, white, and blue. The red shows the blood that was shed for this country. The white shows the purity of our amazing country. The blue shows the country's perseverance and justice. It always tells me we had many wars, but we will always have peace.

The American flag to me tells a lot about our nation's history. One thing it shows is red. The red means blood was shed for this country so we could become a country. It shows our independence, our revolution, our sacrifice, and our bravery. That is something that will always tell me how amazing our beautiful country is.

Our flag is very special to me because I always wonder what other changes will appear in our country's history. To many people, our country's history never stops growing. To me, everything around us is history, like schools, monuments, people, and much more. The only thing is that you never know what will happen in our nation's history.

Our flag also shows white, which is purity. Our country to me is pure because we believe in our country. We will always defend it because it is our home and our lives. It is also pure because the people in our country make it pure. That is something that always tells me that we will always care about our country.

Lastly, our flag shows blue, which is justice and perseverance. The colors red and blue to me mean the same thing because for the Civil War, we had slavery, which was one of the main reasons for the Civil War. We had a war to make justice for the people who were slaves so they could be free.

Another reason I think the colors red and blue are the same is because some people died for justice. To me, that is why red, white, and blue are on the American flag. I think the flag shows a lot about our people, our country, and our lives.

In conclusion, The American flag is the symbol of our country and our history. It shows what we did and how long we have had to work to keep the American flag flying high.

To me, there will be no end to our beautiful flag. The flag shows what we stand for as a united nation. The flag will never stop showing its history.

MARIA BUITRAGO, 7TH GRADE

Our flag is a symbol of opportunity, a chance to be free. This is the emblem that helps the oppressed strive, knowing that there is an escape, and more importantly, hope. It is the emblem of the “American Dream,” that all men are created equal, and that all men have the right to be free.

Ours is a country that has evolved, made on the backs of slaves, gaining territory by dealing or waging war, or being prejudiced; but through all this, there were those who are remembered in history for knowing what our country needed was change.

Our founding fathers said, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Our founders separated themselves from the British, knowing that we should be free.

Our country has now become known for our change. We now have the first African-American president; we have freedom of speech, of religion, and something many countries do not have, freedom of the press.

Our flag reminds people of a port of hope for immigrants, like Ellis Island, where all are welcome. Our flag reminds people to believe in justice, just like the statue of liberty, whose arms hold the keys to our freedom.

Still, what I see in the American flag are the citizens, a united people through war, peace, and struggle, sharing a bond of love and pride for our country. Our flag is a symbol of our country, and our country a symbol of hope.

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL



Certificate winners (L-R): Matthew Tayag, Kirbin Lum, Ryan Mahaffey, Allison Wedman, Nicole Fernandez, Krystal Alvarez, and Maria Buitrago. Principal Arlene Marseille is in the back.



Grand Prize Winners: Students Nicole Fernandez, Maria Buitrago, and Kirbin Lum are joined by (L-R) Mechanics Bank Chairman Emeritus Edward Downer III, Pinole Historical Society President Marcia Kalapus, and Pinole Mayor Debbie Long.

COLLINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

KIARA DUMALAG, 3RD GRADE

When I think of the American flag I think of the Pledge of Allegiance. The word I think is special is liberty.

Liberty means freedom. Freedom is important to me because we should have freedom to vote for whoever we want, travel wherever we want, buy whatever we want.

But freedom comes with responsibility. Being responsible means to pay the bills, go to work, and follow the rules. Freedom also comes with respect. Being respectful is like being nice to others.

ANGEL TURNER, 5TH GRADE

To me the United States flag means respect, honor, freedom, and unity.

Respect is for the people who went to war and fought for us. Honor is for the people that gave us the right to feel safe. Freedom shows that we fought for our rights. Unity stands for every citizen of the United States for being a part of our great United States.

To me the stripes and stars show a lot. The stripes show the 13 colonies which equals 13 stripes on the flag. Then the stars show 50 states united together as one nation.

But not does it only represent us as one nation, but it also pays tribute to all the soldiers that have fallen in a time of war and gave us a land that makes us able to say, "We're free."

We are the ones to say that we want the right of free speech. If I met one of those soldiers I would say, "Thank you. Thank you for going to war and fighting for my freedom. Thank you."



**Grades 4-6
Grand Prize Winner
Angel Turner read
her essay to her
classmates as (L-R)
Mechanics Bank
Community Affairs
Officer
Fernanda Rodrigues,
Alexander Kaminski,
Mechanics Bank
Chairman Emeritus
Edward Downer III,
and Cireya
Lucietta-Jackson
listened.**

COLLINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Certificate winners grades K-3



Grades K-3 Grand Prize Winner Kiara Dumalag read her essay to her classmates.

COLLINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Teacher Julie Willis's (far left) special education class



Grades 4-6 Grand Prize Winner Angel Turner (second from left), with certificate winners Alexander Kaminski and Cireya Lucietta-Jackson, are flanked by (L-R) Mechanics Bank Community Affairs Officer Fernanda Rodrigues, Mechanics Bank Chairman Emeritus Edward Downer III, Pinole Mayor Debbie Long, and Pinole Historical Society Secretary Jo Ann Gannotti.

COLLINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Watercolor painted by kindergarten student Emily Lonis, who is in teacher Julie Willis's special education class.

SHANNON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BRANDON GARCIA, 3RD GRADE

Do you know what the flag means?

It is a symbol of our country. The flag has fifty white stars on a blue square, red and white stripes also. The white stars mean our fifty states and the stripes stand for our 13 colonies.

To me when I look at the flag it means we have freedom, justice, strength, fairness, liberty, and unity. Also, when I look at the flag, I'm proud to be an American citizen.

ESMERALDA TOPETE, 4TH GRADE

The American flag means to me my freedom in this country where we can all live together peacefully. Where even if we're from different racial groups and we have different skin color it doesn't matter because we are all the same.

The flag means many things like peace, love, a hard-working country that fights for its freedom.

I, as an American, will treat the flag with respect, love, and care. The 50 stars on the flag represent all the states that are part of America.

The colors of the flag have meaning to me. The bright red is a symbol of love and the blood of the soldiers who fought for our country. The color white means peace and a guiding light that has shown us our way through the most terrifying times. The brilliant blue means freedom.

Last of all, the flag is America's flag. I live in America, so America's flag is my flag.



Grades 4-6 Grand Prize Winner Esmeralda Topete (center), with (L-R) Mechanics Bank Chairman Emeritus Edward Downer III, Mechanics Bank Community Affairs Officer Fernanda Rodrigues, Pinole Historical Society President Marcia Kalapus, and Pinole Mayor Debbie Long.

ESSAYS FROM PINOLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

LAWRENCE CEN, 11TH GRADE

The American flag is an arrangement of both colors and shapes, but one cannot judge a book by its cover and consequently, a flag by its decorations. The American flag is not just any flag, but a symbol of the goals of a perfect world: freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

For me, the American flag has a much more deeper meaning than what the colors or shapes on the flag show. Decades ago, my parents immigrated to the United States for new opportunities. Every time I see the American flag now, I cannot help but think if it were not for freedoms of the United States, how life would be different for me and my family.

As a first generation American-born, I have strong, loyal feelings for our flag; were it not for the country behind the flag, things would not be the same. These feelings, although difficult to describe, may be called patriotism by others.

Needless to say, the American flag has a huge impact on my life; I cannot help but feel an intense emotional attachment between me, my country and its flag. As a citizen of the United States, feeling any other way would be an insult to this wonderful country I live in.

TANIA GOMEZ, 11TH GRADE

The American flag is a symbol of opportunity and liberty. It is proof of what determination and a passion for freedom can do. It is the everlasting outcome of our forefathers and what our fallen soldiers fought for, and are fighting for 'til this day.

The American flag shows the unity between the fifty diverse states, a feat many haven't been able to accomplish. It represents strength, strength to persevere in the toughest times. It proves versatile to the ever-changing generations.

The American flag is the apparent victory over both religious and political suppression. It reins over a country it helped create. It exudes our pride in a country built on a vision for a better future.

In the end, the flag represents me.

ESSAYS FROM PINOLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

SHARON ELBERFIELD, 12TH GRADE

The American flag has become a personal icon to me. The flag represents more than a stitched cloth. It represents more than what the naked eye can see. For more than 200 years, the American flag has been the symbol of our nation's strength and unity. It has been a source of pride and inspiration for millions of citizens. There is so much hidden value in the American flag. Some of those hidden values are honor, courage, and commitment, which are the core values of the U.S Navy.

One of my best friends is serving in the United States Navy. Observing his maturation made me realize what the U.S. military can do for its men and women. They can take a girl or boy and transform him/her into a mature individual. I believe it is an honor to serve in the U.S. military and a privilege to serve their country.

The amount of courage military personnel display for their people is a comfort to me. Knowing that there are people defending their own and civilians' rights is reassuring. These heroes are out on the battle fields, ships, planes, and naval bases, while the rest of us are at home.

The military must have commitment to the values represented by the flag. If they do not have commitment, the safety of the U.S. people becomes an illusion. The American flag is a valid representation of the spirit of the American people's past, present, and future.

When the founding fathers created the concept of the American flag, there were different opinions involved. In May of 1776, Betsy Ross reported that she sewed the first American flag. Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies; the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well. Red symbolizes hardiness and valor; white symbolizes purity and innocence; blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice. I believe it to be a privilege to be an American citizen and have this flag as a symbol of my country.

ESSAYS FROM PINOLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

PRATICHHYA SHRESTHA, 12TH GRADE

I am a Nepali-American and I feel that although I was not born in this country, the American flag represents whom I am.

The first characteristic of the American flag that stands out the most to me is the color arrangement: red, white, and blue. Being the same colors of my homeland's flag it makes me feel a bit closer to Nepal.

The colors also have individual representations in my eyes. The color red represents blood, which stands for family and unity, something that makes a person who he or she is and America what it is. The white represents purity and heavenly wings that help us rise above, and the blue represents the endless blue sky that is full of possibilities and improvements.

Another thing is that there are thirteen stripes on the flag showing that the country's past is never forgotten. America never forgets what it started out with, which was 13 states. Similarly, I have never forgotten my past as well.

My parents came to the United States with little money, but many dreams. We started our first few years buying most of our belongings from thrift stores and working low-wage jobs. So far through our life in America, our financial status has fluctuated as time has gone by, but our dreams have always been big.

The fifty stars on the flag represent the bright and beautiful outcome of hard work and sacrifice. As my family and I have done both these things, we hope to have a bright and beautiful tomorrow. With the dedication our parents have instilled as a necessity in the minds of my siblings and I, we have all made it our goal to succeed in life and make something of ourselves.

While my sister is in UC Davis getting a degree, I will be joining her next year on my to becoming a pediatrician. My ambition in life is to save at least one life, and if not one, many. At a very young age I learned what it meant to sacrifice your own needs for the enrichment of others, so when I see little kids suffering it hurts. I also hope to go to Nepal one day and volunteer as a credited doctor to help the poverty stricken.

The stars, in addition to representing a bright future, represent the unity and the individuality of every person in the United States. We all shine separately, but in the end we are all in one box together.

Coming to America has helped me learn and understand a variety of cultures. Although many of the cultures I've learned about are very different from my own, I can stand beside the people of these different cultures and become a unity. Having so many things to offer one another, we can make up for each other's flaws and teach tolerance.

The American flag has more than one meaning, but as it represents America, it represents each and every person within it and one of the many people is me, Pratichhya Shrestha, a Nepali-American.