



Local high school and middle school students competed in an essay contest held by the Lodi Community Outreach Program.

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## Winners of Lodi Funeral Home's Memorial Day essay contest announced

By Frank Carlo Mills  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SENTINEL

Young Lodi area writers shared their thoughts on Memorial Day in a new essay contest held by the Lodi Community Outreach Program, an arm of the Lodi Funeral Home.

The inaugural contest opened in April inviting middle and high school students in San Joaquin County to write essays on "The True Meaning of Memorial Day."

The contest was created to inspire local students to learn more about the holiday.

"The writing contest provided an important opportunity to encourage (youths) to honor the men and women who have served our country," said Michael Collins, mortuary manager.

The six winning essays and their writers were announced on May 27 during an awards ceremony at the funeral home.

The writing contest's theme had deep and personal meaning for the guest speaker, Alan Ashbaugh, a Vietnam War veteran who was the keynote speaker at the ceremony. Ashbaugh shared his military experience from some 50 years ago and a tribute to all those who have served, past and present.

The winners in the middle school division were Rebecca Brodehl, Angelica Magallon, and Katie

Moreno. The winners in the high school division were Kameron Fernandez, Avneet Kaur Gill, and Ana Sandoval. First-place winners won \$500, first runner-ups won \$300, and second runner-ups won \$200. In addition to the cash prizes, all of the winners received an essay contest medal.

The following contestants received an honorable mention for their essay entries, as well as a \$25 Visa gift card and an essay contest medal: Benjamin Lozo, Maeralyn Pogoso, Kelsey Marie Ladao, Emma Jane Hand, Newly Nuno, Brixton Delaserda, Noah Vinoya, Devan Bolina, Alyssa Palacio, Hunter Schuler, Marissa Serrano, Xraret Nájera, Victoria Rocha, Catalina Torres, Manaar Salama, Nkeiruka Anyasado and Andrew Parkins.

The winning essays may be found on the Lodi Funeral Home's website.

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