

Responsibility Honesty

Escambia County Middle School


"Laws of Life"

Essay Contest

<p><u>contest begins</u> Feb 11</p> <p><u>deadline for essays</u> March 11</p> <p><u>award ceremony</u> May</p>	<p>AWARDS</p> <p>1st place \$200 cash - grades 5 & 6 \$200 cash - grades 7 & 8</p> <p>2nd place \$100 cash - grades 5 & 6 \$100 cash - grades 7 & 8</p> <p>3rd place \$75 cash - 5 & 6 \$75 cash - 7 & 8</p> <p>4th place \$50 cash - grades 5 & 6 \$50 cash - grades 7 & 8</p> <p>8 Honorable Mention \$20 each</p>
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For information contact your English teacher

sponsored by:
Atmore Rotary
&
Bob McMillan



Another initiative by the Community Character Project of Escambia County

Respect Courage

Compassion

Loyalty


Perseverance

Self-Discipline

Kindness

Love

SAMPLE CONTEST FLYERS



GEORGIA
Laws of Life
ESSAY CONTEST

A project of the
Georgia Humanities Council and
The Georgia Character Education Center

Approved
by the
Georgia Department of Education

2001-2002

Third "Georgia Laws Of Life" Essay Contest To Be Held In 30 Area High Schools For 2001-2002!

WINNING STUDENTS TO RECEIVE CASH AWARDS

The **Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest** is an event that encourages students on a voluntary basis to submit an essay about what they think is important in life. This contest is a unique opportunity to positively reinforce core values of a school and its students in our community.

Last year, 8,907 students wrote a Georgia Laws of Life essay in 21 area high schools. This year's goal is to expand the contest to 30 selected high schools in 11 counties in Georgia: **Fayette, Troup, Cobb, North Fulton, Habersham, Decatur, Henry County, Barlow County, Hall County, Coweta County, and Gwinnett, as well as the Atlanta City Schools.**

Contest Timeline

Contest Begins in Schools
November 1

Essay Deadline
March 7

Awards Dinner
April 29

GRAND PRIZES
Grand Prize
\$2000 Cash

First Runner-Up
\$1,000 Cash

Second Runner-Up
\$500 Cash

Third Runner-Up
\$300 Cash

Fourth Runner-Up
\$250 Cash

Fifth Runner-Up
\$200 Cash

School Finalist
\$100 Each

Grade Winners
\$75 Each

Napa County Commission on Self Esteem
is honored to host the 2002



Best Essays Written
Prize and Acknowledgment
Students author of the best and well-written essays will be selected for special recognition. All non-winners winners will receive a rank award. The first place winner will receive \$1,000! Student winners will be invited to a Recognition Banquet on November 19, 2002.

Essay Contest Winners
Student winners will be notified soon after the judging period is completed—December 5, 2002.

Submission of Essay Entries
Essays should be mailed or delivered to:

Priority Filing Period
for essay entries
October 11-22, 2002.

Napa Valley Alternative School
ATTN: Mr. Bruce Campbell
2447 Old Business Road
Napa, CA 94958

Secondary Filing Period
for late entries
October 26, 2002

Questions? Call Bruce Campbell - (707) 258-6117

High school students are encouraged to enter the "Laws of Life Essay Contest" and "...as a response to writing their personal ideas and the laws of life they value the most."

Proud Sponsor/Co-Sponsors: Napa County Commission on Self Esteem and Napa County Board of Supervisors

amount of cash awards to more than \$10,000, with \$500 for each grade 9 - 12 for each participating high school. The Grand Prize winner will receive a cash award of \$500. Other prizes include a certificate of appreciation for parents, their English teacher and School Principal. The contest will be held on April 29, 2002, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel and investment manager Sir John Templeton, the 30 communities throughout the United States, Russia, Bahamas.

IS A LAW OF LIFE?

Is that transcends modern times, particular cultures, and nations? Are these laws or guidelines that, if practiced, will improve the world in which we live?

Some are so clear that almost all people can agree on. Honesty and compassion rank high as universal principles of religious beliefs.



SAMPLE
CONTEST
ENTRY FORM



Laws of Life
ESSAY CONTEST

ACTON, ONTARIO LAWS OF LIFE ESSAY CONTEST

E N T R Y F O R M

Teacher's use only: ASSIGNED NUMBER _____

ESSAYIST: Please complete the following form. Make sure your name appears only on this cover sheet and nowhere else in your essay.

NAME: _____ AGE: _____

SCHOOL: _____

TEACHER: _____ DATE: _____

ESSAY TOPIC (Law of Life): _____

Have you previously won this contest? _____

If so, when _____ and what was your essay topic? _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

By signing this form, you (and your parent or legal guardian if you are under 18) give the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest Committee permission to use your information and essay at their discretion to publicize and promote the essay contest.

Please check one of the boxes below and sign:

- If my essay is used in any way, you may include my full name with it
- If my essay is used in any way, you may not include my full name with it

Signature(s): Essayist _____

Parent or Guardian _____

Judge's use only: FINAL SCORE _____



NOTE TO JUDGES

Thank you for agreeing to judge the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest. As a contest judge, you will help determine the prizewinners. Your cooperation, support, and — most important — your impartiality are essential!

Criteria when Judging an Essay

The following criteria should be used when judging an essay:

1. COMPELLING CONTENT: The most important criterion

Is the essay positive and life-affirming? Does it have universal appeal? Is there a **clearly articulated** *law of life* (in other words a wise saying or maxim) that would make the world a better place if everyone practiced it? Would most people agree that this is an important *law of life*? Did the essay make you both think and feel? Did the essay “move” you in some way? Did you learn something special and compelling about the author? Did the essay capture a value or ideal in a unique and special way?

2. PRESENTATION: Less important

Is the essay easy to read? Is it clearly written? Were you able to tell exactly what the author was trying to share? Do ideas and paragraphs flow smoothly?

3. GRAMMAR AND SPELLING: Least important

Unless there are many glaring mistakes that suggest a sloppy and hurriedly written essay, proper grammar and spelling are not important criteria. However, the contest judge should determine to what extent poor grammar and spelling may distract a reader from comprehending the basic message of the essay.



Judges' Tally Form

Judge: _____

Contest Date: _____

After you have read all the essays and have put them in order (most exceptional to least exceptional), enter them in this table. Please also include the student's age as written on his/her entry form. Use additional pages if necessary.

Your Score (Rank from most to least exceptional)	Essay I.D. Number	Student's Age
1 (Your First Choice)		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		



YOU CAN WRITE A PRESS RELEASE!

How can you help build a partnership between your community and schools while seeking to build support for your *Laws of Life* Essay Contest? Sending out a press release to your local media is a great way to make connections and raise interest. Consider using a press release to announce to your community the beginning of the contest and recognize the top finalists at the completion of the program. Write your press release with the goal of convincing potential volunteers and sponsors that they need to get involved in a winning program!

Before the contest, your press release should include a short description of the program. Provide the pertinent dates of the contest, what schools and grades are involved, who is sponsoring the contest, and finally, when and where the finalists will be recognized. After the contest, you may choose to emphasize your winning essays, the number of young people who participated, and comments and/or quotes from students and judges. Whatever you decide to publicize, make it fit your contest and community!

HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

Writing a press release is easy, if you follow these simple tips:

1. Be concise. Keep your release short and simple. Use short sentences and keep it to one page.
2. Give your release a catchy but short headline, which is centered at the top of the page. Put yourself in the shoes of a reporter. What would catch *your* attention?
3. Provide as much contact information as possible so a reporter can reach you easily. Include name, phone, address, email, website...as much as you can!
4. Include the date you send the release and when you would like the release to go out. You may want it to go out right away ("for immediate release") or the week before your event (include date- "for release on Month, Day, Year").
5. Make sure the first ten words of the release are interesting and persuasive. They are the most important. You need to convince a reporter to keep reading.
6. Your release should start with the important facts - answer the questions:
who will be (or was) involved? *where* will it take place?
what will happen? *why* will it happen?
when will it take place? *how* will it happen?
7. A well-written release is important. A reporter probably won't look at a release with bad spelling, poor grammar, or confusing sentences.
8. Make your press release as easy to read and understand as possible. Help the reporter by being short, powerful, and organized.
9. Consider sending out a press release before and after your contest.

News Release

Montville *Laws of Life* Essay Contest

March 4, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michele Rudolfi

Leonard J. Tyl Middle School,

66 Chesterfield Road

Montville, CT 06337

Phone: (860) 867-2839

Email: mr149@aol.com

More than 200 Tyl Middle School Students Write from the Heart about their Values

MONTVILLE, CT. Students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School participated in the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest sponsored by the School for Ethical Education and Wal-Mart last month. The *Laws of Life* Essay Contest encourages students to reflect and write about the values they believe will help them live successful and productive lives.

This was the first year that the contest was implemented in the New London area, with great success. Over 200 students participated in the contest, which ran from January 23 to February 13. The contest's theme supports Tyl's practice of promoting character education and resiliency within the school, a goal that has become more attainable since Commissioner of Education Theodore Sergi became an advocate. Contest coordinator Michele Rudolfi, a teacher at Tyl, became involved through her own experiences with various other character education initiatives. Rudolfi is a language arts teacher, teaching sixth grade students.

Tyl Middle School was fortunate enough to have many strong entries, out of which were chosen five winners: In first place, sixth grader Julianne Joyce; in second place, sixth grader Sarah Henry; in third place, seventh grader John Michaelson; and in fourth place, a tie between eighth grader Stephan Rice and sixth grader Nicole Taylor. Each winner will receive a plaque, a monetary prize, and recognition at both the May Montville Board of Education meeting and an awards ceremony honoring all participants to be held on April 18th at Tyl Middle School.

The *Laws of Life* Essay Contest was first created in 1987 by Sir John Templeton in Tennessee and has spread community by community across the United States and to more than 30 countries. In each community, the contest is locally funded and organized. A great variety of individuals, service clubs, businesses, community organizations, foundations, and colleges and universities have sponsored and organized the contest in their schools because they believe that the contest is a powerful way to make a positive and lasting impact in their community.

-----End-----



SAMPLE INVITATION
TO AWARDS BANQUET

*Laws of Life Essay Contest Awards Banquet
February 10, 2002*



*The H & H Foundation
invites you to the
Awards Banquet
Laws of Life Essay Contest
founded by John Templeton
on Sunday, the tenth of February
two thousand two*

*at the
Veteran's Memorial Civic & Convention Center
7 Town Square
Lima, Ohio*

Dinner begins at 5:30

*We look forward to
celebrating with you.*

Please reply by January 30, 2002

Name _____

_____ persons will attend

look of life
ESSAY CONTEST
Awards Banquet
January 14, 2002

Welcome: **Glenn McCutchen**
Publisher, Longview News-Journal

Invocation: **Pete Litterski**
Editor, Longview News-Journal

Opening Remarks: **Glenn McCutchen**

Dinner

**Awards Presentation
& Reading of Essays:** **Glenn McCutchen**
Stephanie Atkins
Marketing Director, Longview News-Journal

Closing Remarks and Recognition: **Glenn McCutchen**

Judges: _____ **Teachers:**

Caroline Geer
LeTourneau University

Christi Triage & Shirley Williams
Longview High School

Larry Liles
Texas State Technical College

Miriam Lancaster & Jolene Auderer
Pine Tree High School

Marilyn Richardson
Texas Association of Developing Colleges

Jan York
Spring Hill High School
Lottie Guttry
Trinity School of Texas

Congratulations to all of our essay winners:

LaKindra Hawkins
Andrew Jennings

Jenni Thompson
Prentice Wink

Mat Joseph
Amy Meyer

Jackie Medley
Wendy Palmer

Sponsored by:
LONGVIEW
News-Journal



SAMPLE
CONTEST
CERTIFICATE

First Prize Award

The International

Laws of Life
ESSAY CONTEST

Created and developed by

Sir John Templeton Foundation, USA

Is honoured to
award first prize to

Ankit Shah

of St. Vincent's High School, Pune, India
for his winning essay in the International
Laws of Life Essay Contest, September 2001,

Sponsored by:

Unity School, Vincentian Old Boys' Association, Screen-O-Vision





CONTEST FACTS AND BENEFITS SHEET

This sheet provides you with easy-to-use information about the contest that you can photocopy and share with the media, individuals, and organizations interested in the contest.

FACTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

- ❖ The contest was created in 1987 by international investment manager Sir John Templeton for his hometown of Winchester, Tennessee.
- ❖ Since its creation, more than 100 contests have been launched across the United States and around the world, in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, and China.
- ❖ Last year, approximately 75,000 students wrote a *laws of life* essay.
- ❖ The contest is endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.
- ❖ The contest is usually held in middle schools and high schools.
- ❖ The contest is adaptable to all age levels, and elementary schools and colleges have also participated in the contest.
- ❖ Each local contest is financially sponsored by individual donors, businesses, community organizations, civic and youth groups, foundations, and colleges and universities that care about the values and principles of young people.
- ❖ Contests can range in magnitude from one school or school district to statewide, regional, and even national contests involving thousands of students.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM:

- ❖ Challenges young people of all ages to discover *for themselves* the core values that will guide them, wherever they go and whatever they do in life.
- ❖ Provides schools with an effective, easy-to-implement character education program that enables their *own* students to win significant prizes.
- ❖ Improves classroom climate using an engaging writing activity that helps teachers and students to get to know each other better.
- ❖ Offers a community an opportunity to honor and recognize young people for taking a stand for what they believe in.
- ❖ Provides foundations, civic groups, and community organizations with a dynamic program that *reaches* young people.
- ❖ Enables business leaders to give back to their local community.
- ❖ Offers colleges and universities an opportunity to improve town-gown relations.
- ❖ Builds stronger community-school ties by enabling educators and community members to work side by side on a positive and affirming activity.
- ❖ Encourages parents and children to talk about what really matters in life.



SAMPLE ENDORSEMENTS

Like the facts and benefits sheet, you can share these endorsements — and add your own — with the media, individuals, and organizations interested in the contest.

“Your sponsorship of the contest will not only make a difference to the children in your community, but will bring joy to your life as well.” — *Former First Lady Barbara Bush*

“These essays give us great hope for our children, the future of our educational system, and our country.” — *Contest Sponsor Carolin Whitaker, Investment Advisor, Omaha, Nebraska*

“Writing the essay was the first time I ever felt like my own ideas matter, like I have something important to say.” — *Erika, age 16, Hartford, Connecticut*

“An activity that enables our young people to think about their values is something we should all get behind.” — *Contest Sponsor Lynn Joseph, Joseph Family Foundation, Carlsbad, California*

“Finally, a contest that honors students for having a moral conscience!” — *Agnes Becker, Language Arts Teacher, Carlyle Junior High, Illinois*

“The Clayton Rotary is a very proud sponsor of the contest.” — *Contest Sponsor Kathy Holman, Clayton Rotary President, Missouri*

“This program is a win-win for students, families, and the community as a whole.”
— *Amy Butler, Volunteer Contest Director, Atlanta, Georgia*

“I believe wholeheartedly that the contest has had a positive impact on my students and their families.” — *Janis Bean, English Teacher, Winchester, Tennessee*

“Florida State University is delighted to join with Leon County schools in sponsoring the contest.” — *Contest Sponsor Talbot D’Alemberte, President, Florida State University*

“Writing the *laws of life* essay convinced me that I have something to say, something worth listening to.” — *Melissa, age 18, Casper, Wyoming*



CONTEST ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please feel free to use this questionnaire as a tool for assessing all of the activities of your contest. The questions will help you determine what worked for this year's contest and what things you can do differently in future years. We invite you to share this information with us, and we look forward to talking with you about your experience working on the essay contest.

1. Securing Contest Funds

- ❖ What strategies worked best for securing funds, and why?
- ❖ What strategies were not successful? Why not?
- ❖ What other sources of funding could you explore for next year's contest?
- ❖ How will you approach new contest sponsors?

2. Contest Budget

- ❖ How closely did you follow your budget?
- ❖ Were there any unforeseen expenses?
- ❖ Were there any costs that you could reduce for next year's contest (or ask a local business or organization to underwrite)?

3. Promoting the Contest

- ❖ Which strategies worked best for promoting the contest, and why?
- ❖ What other organizations (schools, community organizations, businesses, etc.) could you invite to participate in and support the contest next year?

4. Working with Schools

- ❖ Did you face any challenges in working with the schools? How could you overcome those challenges next year?
- ❖ Are you planning to include more schools in the contest next year? If so, how might this impact your coordination of the contest?
- ❖ Are you satisfied with the number of students who participated in the contest? What target number of participants might you establish as a goal for next year? What strategies will help you reach your goal?



5. Judging the Essays

- ❖ Did the judging process (collecting the essays from schools, distributing the essays to screeners and judges, etc.) run smoothly? What would you do differently next year?
- ❖ Were you able to get prominent members of your community to judge the essays? What distinguished citizens could you ask to judge next year?

6. Planning the Awards Event

- ❖ Would you hold the awards event at the same facility next year? If not, at what other facility could you hold the event?
- ❖ Did you face any challenges in coordinating the awards event? How could you overcome those challenges next year?
- ❖ Would you change any parts of the awards program (ceremony, speakers, dinner, etc.) for next year?

7. Publicity

- ❖ How could you better publicize the contest next year to the community? Schools? Media?
- ❖ How will you get the media to “cover” next year’s awards event?

8. Publishing the Essays (for those contests that published their winning essays)

- ❖ Did you get a local business (such as a printer) to underwrite the costs or donate its services for the publication? What businesses could you approach for next year’s publication?
- ❖ How could you increase the distribution of the essay publication throughout your community next year?

9. Committee Work

- ❖ In terms of the division of labor among committee members, what worked best?
- ❖ What would you do differently next year?
- ❖ Who else could you invite to join your contest committee?



ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN SPONSOR THE CONTEST — IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

When you think about it, there is almost no limit to the kinds of organizations that can become involved in the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest. That is because most organizations are interested in supporting a positive educational activity that benefits young people, families, and the entire community. Here is just a sampling of the different types of organizations that frequently sponsor the essay contest. We hope this list will give you some ideas as you think about how you will promote the contest in your community.

CHARACTER EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

Many local and national organizations believe the contest is perfectly aligned with their mission. As such, the following organizations will often champion the program in their community:

- ❖ College or university character education centers
- ❖ Local chapters of Character Counts!
- ❖ Privately funded character education organizations
- ❖ School districts or county character education coordinators/councils
- ❖ State Department of Education-funded character education organizations

BUSINESSES

All kinds of companies, from small businesses to large corporations, have benefited from their association with the contest, for example:

- ❖ Banks
- ❖ Newspapers, especially Newspapers in Education (NIE) programs (could print the winning essays for free)
- ❖ Fast food and pizza shops
- ❖ Printing companies (could print your contest materials for free)
- ❖ Radio stations (could interview the winners and have them read their essays on the air)
- ❖ Restaurants (could host the awards reception for a reduction — or even free!)
- ❖ Retail stores & shopping malls (could donate gift certificates to the winners)



SCHOOLS OR SCHOOL-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The contest is a “natural” for these kinds of organizations, for example:

- ❖ Alumni associations
- ❖ Colleges and universities (love the opportunity to support a program that benefits their community)
- ❖ Local school boards
- ❖ PTOs: Parent-Teacher Organizations
- ❖ School associations
- ❖ School district offices

SERVICE CLUBS/CIVIC GROUPS

The contest is closely aligned with the goals of these organizations, with their focus on the community and youth.

- ❖ Jaycees
- ❖ Junto clubs
- ❖ Kiwanis clubs
- ❖ Lions clubs
- ❖ Optimist clubs
- ❖ Rotary clubs
- ❖ Soroptomists

FOUNDATIONS

Many times, a foundation will both sponsor and run the contest itself. Foundations that have launched the contest include:

- ❖ Community foundations
- ❖ Family foundations
- ❖ Private foundations

CHURCH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Faith-oriented groups find the contest to be a wonderful way to emphasize the values of good character.

- ❖ Faith-based independent schools
- ❖ Local religious orders
- ❖ Sunday schools

YOUTH-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS

The contest is a perfect fit for these kinds of organizations:

- ❖ Boy and Girl Scouts
- ❖ Junior Achievement
- ❖ YMCAs
- ❖ Boys and Girls Clubs

OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

There are so many different kinds of community organizations you can approach on behalf of the contest, for example:

- ❖ Chambers of Commerce
- ❖ City offices
- ❖ Community centers
- ❖ County boards of supervisors
- ❖ Local bar associations
- ❖ Merchant, business, or professional associations
- ❖ Parks
- ❖ Public Libraries



Developed by the John Templeton Foundation
Sponsored by friends and neighbors in communities just like yours

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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100 MATSONFORD ROAD
RADNOR, PA 19087
USA

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