

In 1987, Sir John Templeton initiated the Laws of Life essay contest in his hometown of Winchester, TN. His vision was to encourage young people to write about their own "Laws of Life." Contests now take place in communities and schools throughout the United States and worldwide. Each contest is sponsored by an individual or organization concerned with the moral ideals of our youth.

# Laws of Life

E S S A Y C O N T E S T

## Sponsor Spot

### Joseph Family Foundation Launches Laws of Life Contests in California

The Joseph Family Foundation is proud to be the first sponsor of the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest in the state of California. Blair High School in Pasadena, and Carlsbad and Oceanside High Schools in the North County area of San Diego eagerly accepted the contest manual and introduced the program through their English Departments. The response was overwhelming for a first year contest (at Oceanside High School alone, over 700 students wrote essays) and choosing the winner was not an easy task. We were so excited to see the response by the young people in our community, and school officials and teachers told us the contest was inspirational and motivating for all involved.



Stephen Colwell,  
Executive Director of  
the Joseph Family Foundation

We at the Joseph Family Foundation are committed to youth through our scholarship programs and realize that education plus opportunity equals success. We have always believed that an intellectual education in the classroom must be supplemented by moral or spiritual growth, and the true measure of our students' success is the measure of his/her moral and spiritual progress.

I first learned about the program after picking up a Contest information packet at a presentation given by Sir John Templeton in Atlanta, GA in the Fall of 1998. I wasn't really sure how I could make the Contest a reality in California; I only knew that it would be terrific if it could happen. However, as soon as the teachers saw how easy the Teachers' Guide was to use, the Contest practically happened on its very own! We were incredibly fortunate to have an outstanding coordinator at each of our three schools: Norm Morrow at Pasadena High School, Diane Tucker at Carlsbad High School and Ruth Sienkiewicz at Oceanside High School. They did tremendous work and are already excited about expanding the Contests next year.

I can't think of a better way for a student to grow spiritually and morally than by having the chance to express the important values in their lives through this wonderful Essay Contest. It is also a unique and effective way to pass on his/her values to family members and

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To learn more about the essay contest, call 800-245-1285 or 610-687-8942, or e-mail Anne Heilman at [heilman@templeton.org](mailto:heilman@templeton.org)

# Helpful Tips for Raising Contest Funds

Contributing writers: Amy VanHoose Butler, Contest coordinator, Atlanta, GA  
Arthur C. Franzreb, fundraising consultant, McLean, VA

Raising money to fund your *Laws of Life* Essay Contest is the perfect opportunity to promote and encourage community involvement and collaboration. Many communities have been creative in securing long-term funding commitments.

Fundraising requires an investment of time and talent. It is the application of philanthropy, a word that is Greek in origin and means "love of humankind."

When approaching potential funders, consider the following:

- Potential donors seek personal motivation that will provide them with a meaningful way to promote positive values, high academic standards, ethics, character, and accountability
- Potential donors must have confidence in the qualifications of all individuals who have a leadership role in the Contest
- There should be a long-range plan as a vision of the future — "a design for its destiny." Remember, the Templeton Foundation encourages you to plan a Contest that will become an anticipated annual tradition for many years to come.

The following are examples of individuals and organizations that may want to participate in some way that will help you better leverage your funders' investment:

- Radio stations (may want to interview students and have them read their essays on the air)
- Local newspapers (may want to publish essays with students photos)
- Local public relations firms (may want to offer public speaking/interview training to winning students)
- Civic organizations (Rotary, Lyons, Kiwanis, Junior League, etc.)
- Chambers of Commerce

The Contest coordinators at the John Templeton Foundation are a phone call or e-mail away and stand ready to help you strategize on how to most effectively approach sponsors.

Think creatively about fundraising and all the ways of approaching potential donors within your community. It is a fun and interesting way to network and link various community members, and conveying your commitment and dedication to the Contest is key to gaining support.

## New Video Release

The new *Laws of Life* Essay Contest video will be ready for distribution by July 1, and will feature Sir John Templeton, former First Lady Barbara Bush, and the voices of students, teachers, parents, sponsors and champions that have been involved in successful Contests all across the United States. Double R Productions in Washington, DC, is producing the 10-minute video which will be available from the John Templeton Foundation after the release date. Please call, write or e-mail us to request this exciting new marketing tool.

## Farthest North Essay Contest!

With the help of the local Kiwanis Club and the Chamber of Commerce, and funding from local oil companies, Mr. Corky Dow was able to successfully conduct the first essay contest in Alaska, thereby earning it the distinction of "Farthest North Contest." After learning about the program at the Kiwanis International Convention last July, Mr. Dow returned to Fairbanks with the realization that this would be an ideal and unique catalyst for community collaboration. Now



Left to right: Dave Watts, president, Chena Kiwanis Club; Aaron Seeger, second place winner; Lisa Jennings, first place winner; John Greenleaf, third place winner; and Corky Dow, Fairbanks coordinator.

the Fairbanks contest can also claim to be the "Farthest North Kiwanis *Laws of Life* Contest!"

# International Essay Excerpts

"I truly feel that to see another's point of view is to understand others' lives better. I hope in this way to be more tolerant not only towards human beings but towards all living things as well. This, I believe is the way to peace, the secret of my happiness."

— Indian student, age 12

"As time goes by, I am getting older and becoming sensible. I will have my own rules of life. I think the first one should be to learn to have others' interests at heart, always. With this premise, I can get along well with people, I can have good cooperation, I can live my life in an easier way."

— Chinese student, age 16

"In the 1960's my grandma was so poor that she had to pick up the abandoned vegetable leaves in the market to make meals. Although in that difficult situation, she still helped others to tailor clothes free by her masterly handicraft. The people who lived nearby all loved and esteemed her very much.

She is very industrious and she gives to others as much as she can. My father told me very emotionally: 'In my impression, I had never seen my mother sleeping. No matter how late I went to bed, I always saw her tailoring the clothes under the lamp. And whenever I got up, I would see her cooking breakfast.'

She wrote her life's melody by her genuine and virtuous heart. She taught me what love and kind-heartedness are. I am very happy that she helped me to find my creed of daily life —be virtuous and give true love to others."

— Chinese student, age 17

"I think that voluntary work is very important. It is good to help other people, do something useful and make another person feel happy. You must keep your eyes open for ways you can help another person and remember one important thing: can people do without you? The visit to an orphanage was a great experience for me. I have no my own pocket money because teenagers in our country can't have a part-time job and earn some money. So, my friend and I took all our toys and Barbies and gave them to the children in the orphanage. But what is more important for these children is communication. The children I visited were happy because I chatted with them and helped them."

— Russian student, age 13

*But one of the main laws of life is: a man must work. Work is the greatest thing in the world. 'Work is the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever be set mankind.'* (Carlyle)

I think that a young man must do his best to work at his upbringing: to learn, to think, to see the life around. A man does not live by bread alone. It is difficult to speak about principles of life in our not easy time. But my principles are: to be honest (as far as it is possible), not to betray friends, not to make compromise with conscience. I do not bear violence on a person and I can not be forced.

— Russian student, age 17

## Easy-to-Print Essay Booklets

If you are looking for a unique and reasonably priced way to compile your student essays into a booklet format, check out Chapbooks for Learning on the web at [www.chapbooks.com](http://www.chapbooks.com). They produce high quality paperback books that you can proudly distribute throughout your community. You need only select the design of the book from their library of templates, submit the text electronically, and conduct the final editing. And it can all be accomplished in less than one month! Chapbooks for Learning will also conduct a free publishing workshop in your community for groups of 20 or more. If you don't have Internet access, you can call Chapbooks for Learning in New York City at (212) 463-8504.

# Teacher Column

## Medford Area Middle School *Laws of Life* Essay Contest



Jackie Strick,  
Character Education  
Coordinator, Medford Area  
Middle School, Medford, WI

The Medford Kiwanis Club first brought the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest to my attention because it fit wonderfully with the district's Character Education Program. After talking with the teachers at our school we decided that every 7th and 8th grade language arts student would participate.

The teachers worked on the essay and writing process approximately four to five weeks. During that time the Kiwanis Club and I were hard at work planning the Contest banquet. Working with a community and youth-minded

organization such as the Kiwanis Club was wonderful. They raised the funds for the prize structure of the Contest and selected the community judges.

*The teachers really enjoyed the subject matter and one said that a few of her students seemed to "mature before her eyes, as they worked on their essays."*

The language arts teachers used the questionnaire in the teachers' guide as a way to get their students thinking about their particular Law of Life. The essays were then given to another teacher in the same grade for evaluation according to the Contest criteria.

Fifteen total prizes were given to the winners in the form of savings bonds (1st through 5th place, 5 Honorable Mention, and 5 Effort Awards). For the Awards Reception we decorated the school cafeteria, transforming it into a reception hall. The 32 essay finalists and their families were invited, along with involved community members, the Kiwanis Club, teachers and

school administrators. The middle school Solo & Ensemble students played their music selection as guests ate hors d'oeuvres, and all the essays were laminated and displayed (later they were published in the local newspaper). Winners were announced for the first time and the top five read their essays to the audience.



Left to right: Gina Henline, 8th grade; Andrea Jochimson, 7th grade; Rebecca Hemice, 8th grade; Aaron Hoefs, 8th grade; and Kelly Koenig, 8th grade.

The Contest was a big success and the Kiwanis Club would like this to be a yearly event in our school and in the high school. The teachers really enjoyed the subject matter and one said that a few of her students seemed to "mature before her eyes, as they worked on their essays." Middle school students are looking for their own identities and this Contest made them think about what is really important to them. Families sat down and discussed the essay topic and one family actually had a family meeting arise out of the discussion — they even decided to have family meetings more often!

*Laws of Life*  
ESSAY CONTEST

Official newsletter of the **Laws of Life** essay contest, a program developed by the John Templeton Foundation, P.O. Box 8322, Radnor, PA 19087  
800-245-1285, fax (610) 687-8961, [www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org)

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**The brand-new Essay Contest logo is now available electronically** to anyone who is interested in incorporating its design into their individual Contest materials (certificates, promotional flyers, announcements, booklets, etc.). Please contact Anne Heilman, who will send the logo design to you on disk or as an e-mail attachment.