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The Community Page

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REMEMBERING AMERICA'S HEROES

2013 Essay Contest

Melaleuca is proud to present this year's winning essays for the Remembering America's Heroes Essay Contest. This program gives K-12th grade students throughout Southeast Idaho a chance to put pen to paper and submit essays about a variety of patriotic topics.

Each winner received a \$500 scholarship, a family pack of tickets to the Melaleuca Freedom Celebration's banquet/symphony, and a commemorative flag that was flown over the Idaho State Capitol. Their essays are published in the Post Register, read over several popular radio stations and posted online for the community to review.

We celebrate the resolve of the American spirit and share their inspirational messages as a tribute to the many soldiers, veterans and patriots who have demonstrated what it means to be American.



WHAT IS PATRIOTISM?

BY KESLEY WILDE, 6TH GRADE,
UCON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Patriotism. Pa-tri-ot-ism. A four-syllable noun that means devoted love, support and defense of one's country; national loyalty. But is that all that it means? Is that the only definition? That is the definition, but it is not all that patriotism stands for. Patriotism can be shown in many different ways.

DEVOTED LOVE

I have a neighbor that is a veteran. He just returned home from his fifth and last tour of duty. When he came home, everyone came out of their houses and lined the streets with flags and posters that they had made as a family. Some people from other neighborhoods came also and helped line the street. One of the people there handed out red, white and blue necklaces for people to wear. We had enough people to line up the whole street. There were enough flags, necklaces, and posters to make a red, white and blue street. It was so cool to see him arrive home in his uniform. He held his hand out of the car to give people high-fives and read all of the posters we made for him. This is patriotism.

SUPPORT

Families who send their mother or father to war give a lot of support to the American army. They send encouraging letters and wish them safety. They can't wait for them to come home

but are excited that they have a family member supporting the Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marines. They support and give all that they can. This is patriotism.

DEFENSE OF ONE'S COUNTRY

I read about an Air Force radar repairman. He told about his enemy's first attack on him. He compares it to his childhood and playing hide-and-go-seek with his friends, sitting in the dark trying to not make any noise. But there were no friendly neighbors around; there were only people who were searching for his destruction. To me it is a big sign of patriotism that he could sit through the horrible thought of being killed, and the wonderful thought of doing it for his country or defending his country. That is patriotism.

NATIONAL LOYALTY

In my class, I read a story about Clara Barton, nicknamed "the angel of the battlefield." She got this nickname because she was always out on the battlefield helping injured soldiers in the Civil War. She collected supplies for the soldiers for over a year and supplied them with food, blankets and clothing.

After the war people came to her and asked her if she could find missing soldiers. Then she brought Red Cross to America and was president of the American Red Cross until she retired in 1904. She always was loyal and dedicated to helping others.



UNITED WE STAND. DIVIDED WE FALL.

BY KATHRYN LINFORD, 7TH GRADE,
SANDCREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

"United we stand. Divided we fall." It is such a straightforward and simple phrase, that even Aesop, to whom this phrase is credited, a slave who lived two-and-a-half thousand years ago, could recognize the valuable principle it teaches and the importance of sharing this belief. It is understandable why it has always been a well-known expression. It holds significant wisdom in just six plain words that can easily be comprehended. United, we are more powerful than we could ever have been on our own.

"United we stand. Divided we fall." There is a reason that our country is identified as the United States of America. As separate states, cities and communities, we are feeble and frail compare to the strength we have when we stand together as American citizens. This has been demonstrated countless times in American history. For example, against England the colonies were weak when they tried to stand alone; separately they fell every time. The colonies became great when they united as one for the birth of our nation in 1776 and again to win the Revolutionary War seven years later.

Unfortunately, Americans forgot this principle in 1861 when we parted at the beginning of the Civil War. The United States was thrown into chaos because we became divided, and our country began to take a nosedive into the bottomless pit we had created ourselves. America began to collapse and rip at the seams when neighbor fought neighbor, friend brawled friend and brother battled brother. The Civil War resulted in hundreds of thousands of horrible fatalities. Each death still serves as a reminder of how much our states depend on each other, then and now, and why we must be united in order to stand.

In 1929, the United States of America faced a different kind of challenge at a level we could have never expected. The Great Depression, followed by a horrible and prolonged drought, left our citizens bankrupt, hungry and feeling hopeless. No matter how hard we tried, there appeared

to be no light at the end of the tunnel. As a nation we realized that we had to pull together for any possibility of recovery. We became joined as one when we gave to one another what little we could spare. This unity became our greatest defense in World War II.

On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed. It was a tragedy we could have never imagined, yet the United States entered the Second World War united as one. Our men stood together on the battlefields, and our women joined in the factories. Our country was more unified than ever before in the common cause of freedom. America's death count was more than 400,000, but we know the blood of each of those soldiers bought liberty for not only our nation, but the world.

One of the greatest demonstrations of the importance of unity was on September 11, 2001, an unforgettable and unbelievable event that shocked our country and left all Americans heartbroken. Without being asked, our citizens joined together to volunteer in New York and Washington, D.C. to help aid the rescue efforts and to comfort the devastated families. Donations of money and supplies poured in. Immediately the support we had for one another was noticeable as our flag was raised in yards and businesses across the nation that day.

That same flag that we pledge our allegiance to is raised as a witness of our unity and loyalty to fellow Americans and our nation, the United States of America. To me, the phrase "United we stand. Divided we fall" means that our country would crumble to pieces as divided states, cities and communities. But as we unite in the cause of freedom, together we can stand with more strength than we could have ever done separately. It is my hope we never forget that "United we stand. Divided we fall."

HONORABLE MENTION:

- Abigail Pollard
- Sadie Pollard
- Emily Landon
- Mary Alyse Anderson
- Vanessa Greener-Burnside
- Micah Kenney
- Madeline Newman
- Carolyn Stegelmeier
- Phil Ma

