

The Community Page

“Remembering America’s Heroes”

2009 Melaleuca Freedom Celebration Essay Winners



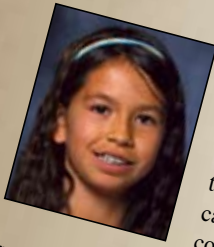
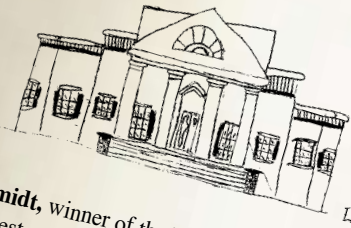
Sharla Stegelmeier, winner of the grades 7-12 “Remembering America’s Heroes” Essay Contest, has always loved to write. It is not surprising then that one of her favorite subjects in school was English, her second being choir. She hopes to take this love with her to college at BYU-Idaho where she plans on majoring in voice or vocal development and maybe going into teaching vocal development or English. Sharla works at Journeys in Rigby, which provides information and services for the developmentally disabled. Sharla also loves to do anything outdoors. She says that she and her family of three brothers and one sister go camping frequently, with her favorite place being Big Springs.

Remembering America’s Heroes by Sharla Stegelmeier

Images and memories cascade through one’s mind at the mention of America’s history. Many would refer to school textbooks where they first interpreted the malice of war. Others would ponder on the countless documentaries and movies displaying vivid images from America’s struggles and conflicts. And yet still some have real photographs from ancestors to document the heartbreaks, and yet the victories of America. However, when I think of America’s foundation I think of my great-grandfather.

My great-grandfather influenced America in more ways than one. Not just fighting for the country he loved, and thus instilling his patriotism in his descendants, but also in living the way any American should live. Major Daniel R. McGrew served faithfully in the army and fought valiantly and bravely on the beaches of Normandy on what has become known as D-Day, June 6, 1944. My great-grandfather was one of 150,000 men who stormed the beaches on that day over sixty years ago; a day which would determine the course of not only our country, but the entire world. His courage, strength, and love are qualities each American should cherish in one another. I have gained many invaluable characteristics from watching and learning from this amazing man. My great-grandfather served his country to the fullest that day in France. He also laid his life on the line many times before and after, as he continued his service during the Korean conflict. This amazing man, whom I am blessed to have as my great-grandfather continues to serve others even to this day. He had been an immense example to me in understanding the precious blessing it is to live in this great country and partake of the wonderful life that is offered to us here.

My great grandfather not only implanted loyalty and love for America in me, but he also showed by example how I should live my life. The same grandfather who fought relentlessly in a time when a shock should have taken over is the same man who drives 800 miles twice a year to see his great-grandchildren. My great-grandfather enjoys seeing each one of his 12 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-grand grandchildren. He makes a special effort to have a conversation with every single one of his posterity. His sense of humor exemplifies someone who has lived life to the fullest and would love others to come along for the ride. He never fails to have a story to tell that will leave the children mesmerized. Even though I do not have the opportunity to see my great-grandfather on a regular basis, I am still learning from him everyday. He taught my grandmother to love and serve those around her. This great example has been passed down the generations and is currently affecting how I live. This man illustrates by how he acts and speaks that he is as faithful a husband, father, and grandfather as he is loyal to his country. Although this man is important to American’s history, he is more important to me as a loving grandparent who took part in making America great.



Leah Schmidt, winner of the K-6 “Remembering America’s Heroes” Essay Contest, says that along with writing, she loves to draw. Two of her other hobbies are riding and caring for horses. She says that she has been riding horses since she was 4 or 5. While she likes to ride horses, draw, and write, she also loves to go camping with her family. When she was asked where her favorite place to camp was, she said, “This has to be a trick question.” Leah showed her love for this country, drawing, and writing with her essay about Thomas Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson by Leah Schmidt

I think Thomas Jefferson is a good example of someone who made America great for the many things he did to make America a better place. First of all, Idaho would have never been a state, but thanks to the Louisiana Purchase it is. Join me as we learn about Thomas Jefferson, and other huge events throughout his presidency.

All about Thomas Jefferson:

One of the things you may not know about Thomas Jefferson is that he was an inventor. He invented things such as automatic double doors. Hidden under the floor was an operating mechanism which controlled the doors, opening and shutting them both when one was moved. He made other inventions like revolving bookstands or beds that raised up. He invented a plow called the moldboard that was beautiful and effective. He didn’t even patent his design but wanted people to copy it.

Thomas Jefferson’s roll in making America great was what?

Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of The Declaration of Independence. This important document made Thomas Jefferson famous throughout the world. Soon after it was written, the document was amended. Jefferson also sent Meriwether Lewis & William Clark on an expedition known as the Corps of Discovery to explore the Louisiana territory. A quote from Thomas Jefferson said, “...The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river, may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent for the purpose of commerce...” Jefferson was also in charge of the Louisiana Purchase. The Louisiana Purchase was bought for the price of \$15,000,000. Although it was expensive it almost doubled the size of our country.

Fun Facts:

- Thomas Jefferson was the first president to shake hands instead of bowing to people.
- Jefferson inherited 200 slaves
- Jefferson had the first grandchild born in the White House.
- Jefferson wrote 20,000 letters in his whole lifetime.
- Last but not least, Jefferson kept a mockingbird in the White House, named Dick

If you think the last five facts have been strange read this:

- Every morning for 60 years Jefferson would take a cold footbath!
- Once, to prove it wasn’t poisonous, Jefferson ate a tomato in public
- Did you know that Jefferson City, Missouri is named after Thomas Jefferson?
- Given to Thomas Jefferson was a 1235 pound of cheese which inspired the “the big cheese”.
- Jefferson’s instrument was the violin.

Thomas Jefferson accomplished a lot in his lifetime. He also helped to start many big events like founding our country, starting a college, and expanding our country. In 4th grade we learned about the Corps of Discovery, and that’s how I learned about Thomas Jefferson. I enjoy learning about new people. It’s an adventure to me. That is why I wrote my essay on Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson’s life was influential and inspiring and so I chose him as my subject.



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