



Journalism Contest Honors Youth Worldwide

WEST HARTFORD, Conn., U.S.A. – Young writers, photographers and artists from across the globe took home prizes in the Youth Journalism International 2015 Excellence in Journalism contest.

Annie Schugart, a standout editor for a suburban Kansas City high school paper who's now a freshman at Harvard University, took top honors as this year's Student Journalist of the Year.

Competition was stiff in nearly every category, with more than 130 awards in about three dozen categories going to students in 23 U.S. states and Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Egypt, Italy, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria and the United Kingdom.

"This year the field of entries was the strongest I've seen. It was inspiring to see so many well-crafted pieces on so many diverse topics," said judge Joe Killian, a daily newspaper reporter in Greensboro, N.C. who got his start through Youth Journalism International.

The annual contest, now in its sixth year, recognized student writing and reporting, art, photo and multi-media skills in more than two dozen news, sports and opinion categories. A panel of experienced judges chose the winners and those picked in the top categories will receive engraved crystal trophies. Prizes for finalists and winners in the other categories are custom-made certificates.

"It becomes more obvious each year that the talent level is always increasing," said judge Frank Johnson, the outgoing leader of the Manufacturing Alliance of Connecticut. "What great writers and such interesting topics. Many of these writers are far better than those who report local news in Connecticut or elsewhere."

Another judge, Dr. Mariechen Puchert from East London, South Africa, said, "This year brought an impressive cross-section of feature writing. It was a pleasure to see that young journalists are not shying away from addressing serious topics that have a direct impact on their peers. "

Other big winners in the contest included Journalism Educator of the Year Barbara Bateman from Mobile, Alabama; Eden Tadesse, from Ethiopia, who won the Courage in Journalism Award; Sophie Tulp, of Shawnee Mission East High School in Prairie Village, Kansas, whose newswriting earned her the Frank Keegan “Take No Prisoners” Award for News; and Ahmad Zaqout, a Roanoke College freshman in Virginia, who collected the Jacinta Marie Bunnell Award for Commentary.

“It is truly an honor and a privilege to review the work of so many talented young people,” said judge Lynn Abrahamson, a public health official in Maryland. “It was especially hard to choose winners this year, since there were a number of excellent submissions.”

Shawnee Mission East High School posted the best overall record, taking home 15 awards. A Las Vegas, Nevada high school – Southwest Career and Technical Academy – placed second with 10.

Youth Journalism International has been educating the next generation of news professionals and talented teens since 1994. Formally incorporated in 2007, it is a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit public charity. Its website can be found at www.youthjournalism.org.

The contest covered work published in English between Jan. 1, 2014 and Dec. 31, 2014. Those eligible must be 19 or under and not working professionally.

For more information, please contact Jackie Majerus, Youth Journalism International’s executive director, at (860) 523-9632 in Connecticut or write to jmajerus@youthjournalism.org.

A complete list of winners, along with judges’ comments in italics and many links, is below and also posted online at www.youthjournalism.org.

HIGHEST HONORS

STUDENT JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Winner: Annie Schugart, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

We certainly aren’t the only ones to recognize why Annie Schugart deserves to be the Student Journalist of the Year. After all, she’s already moved from serving as editor of

The Shield, the paper for Saint Thomas Aquinas High School in Overland Park, Kansas, to a first-year news reporting post at The Harvard Crimson.

Her high school paper's adviser, Matt Hallauer, called her "an incredible journalist" who turned around an anemic paper with her enthusiasm, tech-savvy and skill. He said, "Annie's productivity is equal to Henry Ford's assembly line accidentally producing a Ferrari."

"I don't believe that I can see the world through only two eyes," Schugart said.

"Journalism gives me the methods to see the world through the eyes of everyone around me."

Aside from producing a wide-ranging portfolio of solid stories, Schugart "implemented a new technology – the Aurasma app – to scan print pictures in the newspaper and bring up broadcast video and media on a smart phone. Essentially, it's like Harry Potter in which pictures come to life."

While so many reporters and editors are fretting that their industry is dying, she said, with the sort of idealism and hope that great students always possess, "We are living on the very cutting edge of the journalism industry, and I'm so excited to see where journalism is headed."

Because of students like Schugart, so are we.

Finalist: Kennedy Huff, Pflugerville High School, Pflugerville, Texas

Finalist: Maria Luiza Lago of Universidade Positivo, Curitiba, Brazil

Finalist: Ruby Falciani, Freeman High School, Rockford, Washington

JOURNALISM EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Winner: Barbara Bateman, Murphy High School, Mobile, Alabama

After a tornado ripped into Murphy High School on Christmas Eve in 2012, teacher Barbara Bateman relocated her classroom and got her students right to work documenting the event. That passion for news led her to convince administrators to let her start an introduction to journalism course a year ago and add classes in broadcasting and photography this school year.

While she's taught everything from the inverted pyramid in newswriting to interviewing techniques, four of her students said the best thing she offered them was "how to stay professional and accept that unexpected things happen." She also showed

them they could rise to the challenge, said students Lillian Thomas, Abby Aguilera, Tynecia Curry and Regan Francis.

Though only in her sixth year teaching at Murphy High, Bateman is making difference in Mobile. She has helped "build a dream" there and guided her students as they pursued it, as co-editors of The Mohian Michaela Allen and Chiante' McWilliams put it.

Finalist: Elizabeth Granger, Lawrence Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Finalist: Stacey Hetrick, Saegertown High School, Saegertown, Pennsylvania

Finalist: Matthew LaPorte, Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada

Finalist: Rachel Rauch, Homestead High School, Mequon, Wisconsin

Finalist: Derek Burtch, Olentangy Liberty High School, Powell, Ohio

COURAGE IN JOURNALISM AWARD

Winner: Eden Tadesse, Sandford International School, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

For only the second time, a Special Award for Courage in Journalism is being awarded this year. Eden Tadesse, a student at Sandford International School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, earned the honor for her dogged effort to get the story of an 18-year girl raped and murdered by a gang of men.

To find out what happened to Hanna Lalango, Tadesse said she traveled in secret to the girl's "poor, dirty, isolated and crime-stricken village" to talk to her family and learn about her life. Writing the story, published in the Pakistan's YouthPlugged online magazine in December, was "brutal and unbearable," she said, because the victim was her own age and could easily have been a friend or one of her eight sisters.

When her school paper refused to print the controversial story -- the government was trying to keep it under wraps -- Tadesse pursued another outlet for her work.

While her story of the gang rape itself could use some polish, there's no denying that Tadesse showed grit, bravery and determination to uncover the awful tale. She pursued an important story that nobody wanted her to go after. She said that if her family and friends had known what she was up to, they would have been "very upset," and no doubt that's true.

FINALIST: *The Chronicle*, William Mason High School, Mason, Ohio for stories by Abbey Marshall and Ariel Jones

FRANK KEEGAN “TAKE NO PRISONERS” AWARD FOR NEWS

WINNER: Sophie Tulp, of Shawnee Mission East High School, Prairie Village, Kansas, for [“A Look at Poverty in Johnson County”](#)

Poverty rates at Shawnee Mission East High School in Prairie Village, Kansas had more than doubled in the past decade, a pretty good story for student reporter Sophie Tulp of The Harbinger. But she didn’t stop there.

Instead of just presenting the facts and figures – important as they are – she delved deeper. Here’s a small piece of her story:

“Near the end of the month in January, junior Dylan Abbott wasn’t worrying about making plans for the WPA dance, or what his grade was on his math test. Instead, Abbott wondered if his third grade brother was going to have to sleep in a cold room on the 13 degree January night, or if his family would be evicted from their apartment in the coming weeks. As the end of the month approached and the time to pay the bills came near, his mom’s paycheck didn’t come at all.

“Abbott’s mom, the single working parent for her three children was injured when an object fell on her at the custodial job she works at a local bank. With no income for an entire week, Abbott’s family lived in a state of uncertainty. They faced the reality that there was not enough money in their bank account to pay the bills that were piling up.”

It’s that extra effort to provide a glimpse of what those numbers mean that put Tulp at the top of a competitive list to win this year’s Frank Keegan ‘Take No Prisoners’ Award for News, named for a newspaper editor with gumption and grit. Tulp carries on his commitment to solid journalism.

JACINTA MARIE BUNNELL AWARD FOR COMMENTARY

WINNER: Ahmad Zaqout, Roanoke College, Roanoke, Virginia, for [“In Gaza”](#)

Not long after the bombs stopped dropping in Khanyounis in the Gaza Strip last summer, Ahmad Zaqout wrote a moving piece that tried to explain the perspective of the embattled Palestinians.

In the wake of battle, Zaqout, now a freshman at Roanoke College in Virginia, said people showed “sorrow in one eye and happiness in the other.”

“Gazans appreciate life more than anyone in this world,” he said, one reason they are willing to give their lives. “They die for the sake of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. And most importantly, they live for today.”

FINALIST: Julia Dupuis, Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, California, for “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot”

HIGH HONORS

CARTOONS

FIRST PLACE: Ryan Zhang of California High School in San Ramon, California

Great rendering, quick humor, smart composition

SECOND PLACE: Lynn Fong of Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, California, for “The Pressure is On”

Strong conveyance of stress with imagery and word repletion, point is clear and made

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Monica Alder of Borah High School, Boise, Idaho, for “[Textbooks v Tablets](#)”

Good intentions, but the execution needs refinement

Andrea Galvan of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada

Too reliant on text with imagery as periphery, more like an ad than a cartoon

<http://southwestshadow.com/editorial-cartoons/editorial-cartoon-15/>

Keilana Lorenzana, California High School, San Ramon, California,

Strong effort to render clear image, but composition too heavy centered and loses focus on message

COLUMNS

FIRST PLACE: Alexa Kannenberg of Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri, for “Feminism is a Modern Necessity”

I was incredibly impressed with Alexa's honesty as she described her own feminist awakening and the need for social equality in her own school. In a time when the word "feminist" is often used as pejorative, Alexa's column works hard to dispel the myth of the "angry feminist" and encourage her own classmates to take up the cause. From a technical standpoint, her writing is succinct and relatable to her primary audience.

SECOND PLACE: Summer Thomad of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for ["Not-So Fake Geek Girls"](#)

Link: Summer Thomad's piece on the double standard that "geek girls" experience within their own subculture is both engaging and enlightening. Thomad does an excellent job of providing the reader with a sufficient background into her topic and exploring the ways in which female gender expectations defy the original purpose of creating a community based subculture.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Lauren Pope of Kings Norton Girls' School, Birmingham, United Kingdom, for ["Pakistan School Attack: How Should We Respond to Those Who Speak in Violence?"](#)

Abbey Marshall of William Mason High School, Mason, Ohio, for "8,397"

<http://thecspn.com/?p=23955>

Steven Du of Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, California, for ["The Shrub A Cryptocurrency Conspiracy"](#)

Ellie Booton of Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas, for ["Making the Best of a Sickly Situation"](#)

DOCUMENTARY

FIRST PLACE: Zachary Maxwell of LAB Middle School, New York City, for ["Anatomy of a Snow Day"](#)

This is an astonishing piece of work, full of humor and skillfully done.

EDITORIAL

FIRST PLACE: *Inklings* of Staples High School, Westport, Connecticut, for [“Let's Face It”](#)

Editorial writing at its best, with a clear understanding of the student audience's interests along with a real and clear voice that speaks directly to school administration demanding action.

SECOND PLACE: *Southwest Shadow* of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for [“NFL needs to reassess handling of abuse cases”](#)

This editorial jumps into a topic of national debate. The writing is especially strong, the position clear. A more direct connection to the student audience would have moved this piece into first place.

HONORABLE MENTION: *The Spotlight*, Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, for “Change can be good”

Clear writing with a logical 10-point plan for the township to follow to improve the student experience.

ENTERPRISE, individual

FIRST PLACE: Sam Bernitz, of West Anchorage High School, Anchorage, Alaska, [Working in Prudhoe Bay](#)

Sam showed a lot of gumption visiting an oil town and talking to the people who live and work there. The story kept me interested from start to end. He also has a great voice.

ENTERPRISE, team

FIRST PLACE: Ashley Shuler and Monica Guzman of Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, for “The Beatles”

It was fun and refreshing reading teens writing about their grandparents' music. They showed an uncanny understanding of the importance of the Beatles music to the U.S. and the world. Great job!

FEATURE WRITING, individual

FIRST PLACE: Reese Anderson of Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri, for “Karley returns to the game”

SECOND PLACE: Daniel Rinner of Shawnee Mission East High School of Prairie Village, Kansas, for “Finding Family”

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Gina Deaton of William Mason High School, Mason, Ohio, for “Transformed”

Alexis Drevetzki of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for “[Geographically Uneducated](#)”

Bridget Randazzo of Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri, for “From pain to love”

Emma McNail of Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri, for “Still the same Kate”

Anna Kreyenin of Homestead High School, Mequon, Wisconsin, for “[Come out, come out, wherever you are: GSA promotes acceptance and unity](#)”

Entung Enya Kuo of Irvington High School, Fremont, California for “80 Years of JSA”

FEATURE WRITING, team

FIRST PLACE: Zoe Brown and Jane Levy of Staples High School of Westport, Connecticut, “The Sport That Has No Boundaries”

It was a pleasure to read about a sport written so fluently. Interviewing both participants and onlookers of parkour, was a good decision. The lead is well-chosen and awakens curiosity in the reader. The flow of the feature is appropriate and the style is very well done.

SECOND PLACE: Dorrian Murphy and Desiree Castillo of Pflugerville High School, Pflugerville, Texas, for "Growing up Gay"

A potentially volatile topic addressed with candor and sensitivity. Well done on two very thorough interviews and maintaining a balanced tone.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Ariel Jones and Abbey Marshall of William Mason High School, Mason, Ohio, for “The Power of Choice”

A hefty piece written fluently with good interviewing skills.

Lyssa McGauran and Carly Rubin of Homestead High School, Mequon, Wisconsin, for [“Yik Yak: The Virtual Bathroom Wall”](#)

A good analysis of the modern difficulties with cyberbullying; well-balanced reporting.

Amanda Wester and August McKernan of Borah High School, Boise, Idaho, for “Biting the Bullet: Exploring the link between school violence and mental health”

Another sensitive topic that is current and well-handled. I enjoyed the interview with Long; the journalists had a good grasp on important questions.

Joyce Ho and Heather Wong of California High School, San Ramon, California, for “Closed Campus Angers Students”

<http://www.thecalifornianpaper.com/2014/09/closed-campus-angers-students/>

A feature that illustrates how important school-bound issues are to students and how they can be reported in a balanced fashion.

FIRST PERSON ESSAY

FIRST PLACE: Julia Poe of Shawnee Mission East High School, Prairie Village, Kansas, for "Let's Talk About Suicide"

A beautifully written personal piece that focuses on an important and serious topic with bravery and honesty.

SECOND PLACE: Olga Gutan of Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong, for ["When no one has heard of your country, hometown memories are hard to share"](#)

The writer showed great writing skills in remembering her homeland, involving the reader and sharing the value of memories.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Celine Wang of Sage Hill School, Newport Beach, California, for "Pistachios and Ferris Wheels"

Sydney Hallett of Oakville High School, St. Louis, Missouri, for ["Missouri Rioting Must Stop, for Michael Brown and for the Good of St. Louis"](#)

GRAPHIC DESIGN

FIRST PLACE: Hannah Knotts of Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, for redesign

SECOND PLACE: *The Chaminade Talon*, Chaminade College Preparatory, West Hills, California

HONORABLE MENTION: Lydia Bradley of Eaton High School, Eaton, Colorado, for "Keeping Score on the Mascot"

ILLUSTRATION

FIRST PLACE: Bailey van Tassel of Chaminade College Preparatory, West Hills, California, for ["Jesus mosaic"](#)

MULTIMEDIA NEWS

FIRST PLACE: Barae Hirsch, West Anchorage High School, Anchorage, Alaska, for [Proposition 4](#)

SECOND PLACE: Yelena Samofalova, Hall High School, West Hartford, Connecticut, for ["Congressman Hails Climate Change March"](#)

HONORABLE MENTION: Danijel Zekanovic of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for [Fashion Forward competition encourages student creativity](#)

MULTIMEDIA FEATURE

FIRST PLACE: Matthew Spellings, Bitia Ghassemi, Griffin Baker of Pflugerville High School, Pflugerville, Texas, for ["Studying Abroad: Obstacle or Opportunity?"](#)

This reporting team must have really taken the time to sketch out a plan for the story they wanted to tell, and how they would use scenes, one-on-one interviews, and even colorful props to tell it. Visually, it was appealing. And, there was a good mix of voices (adult and youth, foreign and American) and scenes, but what I really liked is that they had a clear topic, and they reported it out. The most important aspect of a piece for me – as a journalist and as a consumer of journalism – is whether it teaches me something. And this one did. I learned about the various aspects of study-abroad, and that Americans need to embrace this activity more often.

SECOND PLACE (TIE): Chloe Chaobal, West Anchorage High School, Anchorage, Alaska, for ["Youth on Councils"](#)

What I liked about this story was that it was told through a variety of voices, each of which captured the frustrations and controversy around this idea of youth serving on councils. I could actually imagine some of the adults with their brows furrowed as I listed. I also liked seeing a radio entry into the contest. My only suggestion would be to allow the music to fade in or out, but not just play continuously because there is the risk of it being a distraction for some listeners. The actualities were compelling enough to stand on their own after the fade.

SECOND PLACE (TIE): Keeyun (Jackie) Nam of Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, California, for ["15 Fresh Faces"](#)

I liked this presentation. It was simple. It looked clean. It looked youthful and fun. So many multi-media presentations feature a lot of complex bells and whistles. This one was simple and sometimes that just works best. I liked that it did just what it promised. It gave the audience a nice snapshot of 15 new faces in a way that was fun. I liked that you could click on the box to see their q and a. My only suggestion here is to have more

fun with the questions. Since these are all young people, don't be afraid to throw in questions that prompt funny or surprising answers, or that really speak to this generation.

NEWS INDIVIDUAL

FIRST PLACE: Isabel Hanewicz of Robinson High School, Tampa, Florida, for ["Hiring Freeze Leaves Math Class With Substitute"](#)

Isabel's interviews perfectly highlighted the absurdity of budget cuts that leave students without a competent teacher. I hope the school board read her story.

SECOND PLACE: Samantha Verdisco of Robinson High School, Tampa, Florida, for ["After brutal beating, Tariq Khdeir is back to school"](#)

Samantha gives us a sensitive look at a difficult subject.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Rachel Kuhr of Juan Diego Catholic High School, Drape, Utah, for ["Doctors say not enough known about e-cigs"](#)

Well sourced and informative.

Austin Hille of California High School, San Ramon, California, for ["Flag confiscation creates controversy"](#)

Austin comprehensively covers this controversy both from the legal and social angles.

Abby Christensen of Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri, for "His mother teased him about it and his father told him to stop seeking"

Abby's story opens the door to a world few of us get to see.

NEWS TEAM

FIRST PLACE: Tom Vaughn of Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury, Connecticut, and Yelena Samofalova and Mary Majerus-Collins of Hall High School, West Hartford, Connecticut, for ["Inferno under the Big Top: Survivors remember the Hartford Circus Fire"](#)

The circus fire story was thorough, well written and informative. It caught my attention at the first sentence and kept my attention through to the conclusion. Although I know a bit about the subject matter there was new information I had never heard. Great job.

SECOND PLACE: Maggie Hopkins and Emily Skirven. of Bloomington High School South, Bloomington, Indiana, for “Teen workers: know your rights”

A very well-constructed and informative piece about labor rights, presented as an easy-read. These writers have a solid future no matter where they choose to write.

HONORABLE MENTION

Austin Hille and Kaila Young of California High School, San Ramon, California, for [“Wondolowski Takes Over”](#)

A well-written story about the school principal that was presented in a cogent and logical manner. Two more writers with a bright future ahead.

OPINION

FIRST PLACE: Mugdha Gurram, Conard High School, West Hartford, Connecticut, for ["What Do Women Owe 'Nice' Men? Nothing"](#) by Mudgha Gurram

In the wake of last year's shooting rampage in Isla Vista, California a lot of the discussion centered on gun control and mental health treatment. Gurram's piece gets at a lesser explored but fundamental part of the tragedy – the feeling of sexual entitlement voiced by the killer and its roots in our culture. Gurram also effectively ties in the more widely reported Isla Vista killings with a stabbing in Milford, Conn. – closer to Gurram's home – and explains how they are of a piece. An incredibly complex topic explored skillfully and mined from a lot of less intelligent, less nuanced national coverage. Well done.

SECOND PLACE: Madalyn Parrish of Borah High School, Boise, Idaho, for "Policy Targets Females More than Males"

Parrish's look at her school's dress code policy wasn't just a ranting polemic – it took real reporting, interviewing school administrators who did not share her view and a

willingness to speak truth to power. She treats the topic with the weight it deserves but also manages to keep it light when that will be most effective (the crack about larger breasts not being mail order but genetic). The topic has been done to death, but that makes doing it well – local, specific, fair handed but challenging – all the more impressive.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Celine Wang of Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, California, for "Woody Allen vs. Dylan Farrow: The real story behind child sexual abuse"

The Woody Allen/Dylan Farrow story is a complicated, fraught topic for any writer. Wang took the smartest and most valuable route by using this widely covered story to talk not about famous people and their guilt or innocence but about how we deal with – or perhaps more accurately fail to deal with – child sexual abuse. A gutsy piece done well – above the fray of he said/she said pieces, tackling what's important.

Ryan Zhang of California High School, San Ramon, California, for "[Powdered alcohol poses possible threat](#)"

Informative, sharply written and funny. And I'm not just saying that because I didn't realize kids were snorting condoms these days and my watching this on YouTube sent me into spasms of laughter followed by deep, full body cringes. Looking at strange corners of our shared culture and being clear eyed about the part your own generation plays - that's a valuable part of this type of journalism. Many writers twice Zhang's age wouldn't have handled this type of piece as well.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

FIRST PLACE: Emma Sheldon of Freeman High School, Rockford, Washington, for "[Welcome to Freeman](#)" (cover, pg 1).

Great submission and layout!

SECOND PLACE: Amanda Galvan of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for "Satisfying the thirst for performing arts"

[Editorial: Satisfying the thirst for performing arts.](#)

HONORABLE MENTION

Annika Sink, Shawnee Mission East High School, Prairie Village, Kansas, for "Not Asking For It"

PHOTO ESSAY

FIRST PLACE: Antonina Campos Silveira Machado of Colegio Antonio Vieira, Bahia, Brazil, for ["Antarctica: Peace, Cold, Penguins"](#)

The photos included in Antonina's essay were truly sensational and images I would expect to see in a major publication. The image "three Gentoo penguins in Antarctica" was classic, but especially poignant was the image that juxtaposed the cruise ship with the shoreline, barren except for the penguins. It brought to mind the ever expanding reach of human activity even in a distant land such as Antarctica.

SECOND PLACE: Olga Gutan of Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong, for ["Chisinau"](#)

Olga's story and images really brought together the act of finding beauty in our surroundings. Her sunset photo and image of the green space of her hometown are in such stark contrast to the image of the syringe in the park. Olga certainly did a great job in portraying her "own backyard" as a place she loves and gave me a greater understanding of the country no one has heard of.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Leen Othman of Little Village School, Damascus, Syria, for ["Damascus, My Beloved Ancient City"](#)

Fascinating images that take me into the heart of the photographer's hometown. The images of the ancient buildings, streets, hotel and mosque brought me back in time to one of the oldest cities in the world, yet the Qasyoun Mount overlooking Damascus at sunrise image reminded me that Damascus is still alive today.

Martina Ghinetti of Impington Village College, Cambridge, UK and Genova, Italy, for ["Iceland's Black Sand Beaches, Heated Sidewalks And Breathtaking Beauty"](#)

Major publication quality images. I especially enjoyed "The view from the North American plate." I could almost feel the earth moving apart as I viewed this photo.

Mugdha Gurrām of Conard High School, West Hartford, Connecticut, for [“Maid of the Mist”](#)

Who doesn't love Maid of the Mist – it's a must-do when at Niagara Falls. Mugdha's first image of the Maid of the Mist boat in between the two falls illustrated very clearly how very small a large boat is when it's journeying into these magnificent falls.

PHOTO FEATURE

FIRST PLACE to Allison Hall of Marshall School, Duluth, Minnesota, for [“One Chilly Morning on Lake Superior”](#)

Loved the use of the icicles in the foreground, draws the viewer into the shot, almost so much that you can feel the cold, like you can reach out and touch it. Nice spin on how chance can give you a different perspective. Striking. The water looks amazing as well, almost like it's made of something else.

SECOND PLACE: Migi Contreras of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for [“Veteran Nurse”](#)

The photo on its own tells a wonderful story with just one glance...almost no description needed. But the story was great, words of wisdom and last glimpses into what it's like to be at the end of life. Also the message to follow your passion is great, even if it finds you 40 years into another career!

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Maxx Lamb, Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas, for “Crowd Surfer”
Great expression and capture of a fun moment in time ... good lighting as well.

Dina El Halawany of the AAST Business University, Alexandria, Egypt, for [“The Bridge That Connects Buda and Pest”](#)

Unique shot, looks like it's frozen in time.

PHOTO NEWS

FIRST PLACE Tamar Gorgadze, Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia, for [“Washington Protesters”](#)

The protester, juxtaposed against the sea of other protesters, highlighted the inclusion of all citizens in their outrage over perceived injustices against black Americans.

SECOND PLACE: Maxx Lamb, Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas, for “Color Run KC”

While straddling the line between new and feature photo, “Color Run” pops with spontaneity and color. A great page one enterprise image.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Matthew Marvar of Mason High School, Mason, Ohio, for Showtime

Loved the view of both sides of the stage, seen and unseen

Arooj Khalid of Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, Pakistan, for [“Cycling through the monsoon”](#)

Caroline O'Kane of Staples High School, Westport, Connecticut, for “Gov. Dannel Malloy”

The interaction between Gov. Malloy, suffering from a diminishing approval rating, and his constituent had strong emotion that masked any disapproval.

PHOTO SPORTS

FIRST PLACE (TIE): Tre Redeemar of Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, Indiana, for “High Flyer”

Perfect timing; excellent angle

FIRST PLACE (TIE): Caroline O'Kane of Staples High School, Westport, Connecticut, for “Sliding to safety”

Right on; Timing is great and photographer's angle is there too

SECOND PLACE (TIE): Madison Masters of Pflugerville High School, Pflugerville, Texas, for "Little Giant"

I love the expression; I use the word timing a lot but in sports photography timing is everything.

SECOND PLACE (TIE): Callie McPhail of Shawnee Mission East High School, Prairie Village, Kansas, for "Longboarding"

Perfect timing. Also like focus on the eyes

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Maxx Lamb of Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas for "Table Tennis Motion"

Creative exposure; Motion is nice, you can still make out player's face; I would have cropped out person on right side of picture frame

Jennifer Young of Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas for "Emotional hug after school's first State Championship victory"

Really nice expression; Photographer positioned herself perfectly and waited for correct moment

PROFILE

FIRST PLACE to Maxx Lamb of Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas for "An Unusual Friend"

Very well written and organized, the piece engaged the reader from the first sentence. The photos and facts are visually interesting and Maxx makes great use of quotes to develop the story line

SECOND PLACE: Claire Hubert of Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri, for "Karley Branch"

Well constructed and arranged, the piece has a great lede. The story is built in a compelling and powerful way and Claire makes good use of quotes

HONORABLE MENTION: Isabel Hanewicz of Robinson High School, Tampa, Florida for "Chasing His Passions"

Well written and researched, Isabel's piece captured the essence of the sports photographer. She made a potentially boring profile interesting and the quotes helped tell the story in an effective way.

REVIEWS, FILM AND THEATER

FIRST PLACE to Arooj Khalid of Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore, Pakistan, for ["Craving the old mystery in the new 'Sherlock'"](#)

Arooj understands that the purpose of a review is to approach a piece of art with a studied eye, whether it be a TV show, a film, or a play. Arooj's disappointment with the recent episodes of Sherlock demonstrate a knowledge of the character, the series, and where recent episodes went off-track. A worthwhile read, but be careful not to do too much plot exposition. Leave that to the show!

SECOND PLACE to Lauren Pope of Kings Norton Girls' School, Birmingham, United Kingdom, for ["Frozen has a new kind of Disney princess"](#)

Lauren not only possesses a critical eye, she is able to tie in the themes of the film into a large context of Disney's earlier work and contemporary society. Well done!

HONORABLE MENTION: Jessie Zhu of Juan Diego Catholic High School in Draper, Utah, for "The halls are alive with 'The Sound of Music'"

Not a review, but a well-written feature.

REVIEWS GENERAL

FIRST PLACE: Althea Gevero of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada for ["'Skinny Fats' a treasure among local restaurants"](#)

Her prose style is lively and has a lot of personality, but more importantly, her descriptions are colorful and useful to the reader. She sounds authoritative. All of that is what makes a review worth paying mind.

SECOND PLACE: Audrey Danciger of Shawnee Mission East High School in Prairie Village, Kansas, for "[Restaurant Review: The Farmhouse](#)"

HONORABLE MENTION: Mugdha Gurram of Conard High School, West Hartford, Connecticut, for "[Willard Chapel: Tiffany Jewel in Auburn, NY](#)"

REVIEWS Team

FIRST PLACE: Alan Burkholder of Boston University and Bristol, Connecticut, and Ambriel Johnson of the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy of Hartford, Connecticut, for "[The wild rumpus had a great run: Art museum pays tribute to Maurice Sendak.](#)"

That the creator of Where The Wild Things Are had some great art is no surprise, but Alan and Ambriel did a terrific job of summing up an exhibit that any fan of Max and his monsters would enjoy.

REVIEWS MUSIC

FIRST PLACE: Sophie Tulp of Shawnee Mission East High School, Prairie Village, Kansas, for "[Fleetwood Mac Fanatic](#)"

It's very "personal-essay"-ish, as opposed to the more analytical style of the other two pieces, but the prose style and personal engagement are head and shoulders above the other two. Plus, Sophie does incorporate a contextual understanding of her subject matter that arts journalism needs, and her placement of her subject in a cultural context, even one filtered through subjective experience, is richer than that of the other two writers, whose treatment feels kind of "surface" by comparison.

HONORABLE MENTION: Nikki Molina of Southwest CTA, Las Vegas, Nevada, for "Heart On My Sleeve" pairs poetry with a pulse"

<http://southwestshadow.com/ae/heart-on-my-sleeve-pairs-poetry-with-a-pulse/>

The writer displayed critical thinking skills and an understanding /contextualizing of her subject matter.

SPORTS FEATURE

FIRST PLACE to Maxx Lamb of Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas, for "Broken Belles"

Effectively told the story and made the reader feel what the dancers feel. Good combination of local quotes with a larger perspective.

SECOND PLACE to Julia Poe of Shawnee Mission East, Prairie Village, Kansas, for ["Getting Back in Rhythm"](#)

Good storytelling. Effectively linking the sport to the tragedy and how they were interlinked.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Kishan Patel of The John Carroll School, Bel Air, Maryland, for ["Dynamic due dominates tennis court"](#)

Bobby Ceresia of the University of Missouri, Columbia, for "Dirty Dancing"

SPORTS NEWS INDIVIDUAL

FIRST PLACE: Jake Barnes of California High School, San Ramon, California, for ["Tackling concussions head on"](#)

Stated premise early on ... supported by facts ... and strong supporting quotes ... careful job making sure there are balanced quotes offering the varying points of view and good framework to conclude the story appropriately. A good read. I learned something for sure. Well done.

SECOND PLACE: Holly Fredericksen of Mona Shores High School, Norton Shores, Michigan, for "Shores caps season as state runner-up"

I really liked how you set up the multiple goals and then followed up by laying each one out individually. Additionally, in using quotes to support each section, you effectively chose to get different sources (several different people) so the reader

recognizes you were thorough in your reporting...excellent job.

HONORABLE MENTION: Shreya Yepuri of Chaminade College Preparatory, West Hills, California, for ["Boy Sports vs. Girl Sports"](#)

I liked how your opening graph framed the rest of the story. Always attempt to grab the reader with a strong first graph. Nicely done.

SPORTS OPINION

FIRST PLACE: William DiGravio of Plymouth North High School, Plymouth, Mass, for "O'Captain! My Captain! Thoughts on Derek Jeter's final Year"

SECOND PLACE: Maria Luiza Lago of Universidade Positivo, Curitiba, Brazil, for "Doctors for World Cup tourists, but waiting rooms for ordinary Brazilian citizens"

Note to student journalists: We'll be doing this contest again next year for stories written in English between Jan. 1, 2015 and Dec. 31, 2015 by students 19 and under. Think about what you can do to win and then do it! There are a lot of categories – and we're open to creating new ones – and plenty of opportunities to bring your work to our attention.