



VFWCA ANNOUNCES WINNER OF STATEWIDE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*The Winning "America: Where Do We Go From Here?" Speech Will Go On to Compete at the
VFW National Level for a \$30,000 Scholarship*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO, CA – Rebecca Joseph, a junior at Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek, California, was named the first-place winner of the California statewide Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California. She is sponsored by Post 8063 in District 10. Rebecca will continue on to compete at the national level for the \$30,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship Award.

The Voice of Democracy program requires the entrants to write and record a three to five minute speech on a patriotic theme. This year's theme is "America: Where Do We Go From Here?" and students from all over California entered the program for a chance to win various scholarships. Winners were determined at multiple levels, before making their way to the state finals. VFWCA Posts and Auxiliaries presented almost \$40,000 in scholarships and awards this year. Local banquets will be held across the state for the top five winners, for the finalists, their families, their schools, their communities, and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California.

Rebecca's audio essay reflected on America's past and talked of hope for the future. She stated that "where do we go from here" is not a new question for our nation; it has been asked before. But now it is her generation's turn to answer, and to make a difference.

"The Voice of Democracy Program is an exceptional opportunity for students to reflect on and write about the values of our nation," said VFWCA State Commander, Dawn Napier, "We are proud to encourage future leaders from across the state to use their voice to promote freedom and democracy."

2021-2022 Voice of Democracy Program California State Winners

- 1st - Rebecca Joseph of Walnut Creek. Sponsored by Post 8063 in District 10.
- 2nd - Lucia Williams of Los Angeles. Sponsored by Post 10049 in District 7.
- 3rd - Maximilian Rex Burgess-Shannon of Benicia. Sponsored by Post 1123 in District 16.
- 4th - Ewan McLean of Tulare. Sponsored by Post 2002 in District 9.
- 5th - Jason Pipitone of Roseville. Sponsored by Post 6158 in District 17.

2021-2022 Voice of Democracy Program Honorable Mentions/District Winners

- District 1 - Ethan Pellican of Chula Vista. Sponsored by Post 211 and awarded the Richard Eubank Committee Award.
- District 2 - Ariana Perez of Placentia. Sponsored by Post 3173.
- District 4 - Melyne Garcia of Cerritos. Sponsored by Post 7243.
- District 5 - Dylan Malone of Oak Hills. Sponsored by Post 9415.
- District 8 - Noah Bjorgan of Redding. Sponsored by Post 9650.
- District 12 - Bryce Mankovsky of Gilroy. Sponsored by Post 6309.
- District 13 - Nina Hollars of Vallecito. Sponsored by Post 12118.
- District 15 - Gannon Blake of Yuba City. Sponsored by Post 948.

For more information about the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California, please visit vfwca.org.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans' service organization composed of combat veterans and those who currently serve on active duty or in the Guard and Reserves. Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of war veterans and is one of its oldest veterans' organizations. With 2.1 million members located in 7,700 VFW Posts worldwide, the VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to "honor the dead by helping the living" through veterans service, legislative initiatives, youth scholarships, Buddy Poppy and national military service programs. Annually, the VFW and its Auxiliaries contribute more than 11 million hours of community service to the nation.

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