

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YWCA Recognizes Young Writers in Annual Essay Contest

PITTSBURGH, PA (April 13, 2009): The YWCA Greater Pittsburgh will recognize the finalists of the 2009 Dr. Helen S. Faison Racial Justice Student Essay Contest during an awards ceremony on Wednesday, April 15. The event begins at 6 p.m. at the YWCA, 305 Wood Street, downtown.

Student finalists for 2009 include:

Sixth Grade

First Place: Lina Apte, St. Agnes School

Second Place: Liam Bachtell, Dickson Intermediate School

Third Place: Olivia Hughes, St. Agnes School

Seventh Grade

First Place: Sequoyah Rodgers, St. Agnes School

Second Place: Maria Castello, Holy Sepulcher School

Third Place: Nathan Albensi, Holy Sepulcher School

Eighth Grade

First Place: Nicholas Suarez, Home School

Second Place: Anna Rosswog, Holy Sepulcher School

Third Place: Shanté Wright, St. Agnes School

During the awards ceremony, the YWCA will present the nine finalists with U.S. Savings Bonds: First place: \$1,500; Second place: \$1,000; and Third place: \$750.

For this year's essay question, the YWCA asked students the following: Barack Obama will be inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States on January 20, 2009. What can young people do to eliminate racism and other forms of prejudice during President Obama's time in office?

"These young people not only demonstrated strong writing skills, but they also showed creativity and a passion toward eliminating racism, which is the one imperative of the YWCA and the focus of the essay contest," said Magdeline E. Jensen, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh.

(more)

For over a decade, the YWCA's Office of Racial Diversity and Inclusion has conducted an annual racial justice essay contest for students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. The annual essay contest supports the One Imperative of the YWCA (Eliminating Racism) by raising awareness about diversity among young people and acknowledging their search for ways to create racial harmony and equality.

The essay contest was renamed last year and is now officially known as the "Dr. Helen S. Faison Racial Justice Student Essay Contest." From her rise from teacher to deputy superintendent, Dr. Helen S. Faison has shaped and changed the lives of thousands of students, teachers and parents. During more than 43 years of service with the Pittsburgh School District, Dr. Faison was one of the first African-American teachers and the first female and African-American high school principal.

The YWCA Office of Racial Diversity and Inclusion empowers individuals, organizations and communities to engage in educational and communication opportunities that address racism, injustice, oppression, diversity, and inclusion.

The YWCA Greater Pittsburgh is a women's membership movement committed to the elimination of racism and the economic empowerment of women and girls. For more information about the YWCA's programs and services, persons may visit www.ywcapgh.org or call 412-391-5100.

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