

# IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Congratulations to our 2019 Essay Contest Winners!



High School First Place

**ANAHI ORTIZ**

12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL •  
ECTOR COUNTY, TEXAS

"At first, I didn't know how to teach him because he moved too much. Once I even thought he was too hyper for me, but then I realized that I'm the same way... I found that crazy because he ended up with me, someone who has been through the same thing he's going through. Is this destiny or just God's plan? We might never know. But what I do know is that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has helped me impact another person's life by helping them improve their reading skills."

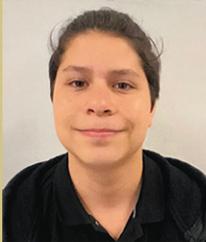


Middle School First Place

**VINCE ALINDOGAN**

7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • NEW OPEN WORLD ACADEMY, LOS ANGELES

"Teachers deserve substantially more appreciation and respect than they get, since they're building our future. I know first-hand that it can be difficult to teach... At first, it was frustrating trying to teach the math concepts in a way my tutees would understand... Now, after a few months of tutoring and practicing my patience, I'm able to help my tutees and give them a better understanding of their assignments. I'm glad that I got the amazing opportunity to be in this program. It's made me a better person and taught me valuable things that will help me later on in life."



High School Second Place

**JUAN GARCÍA**

10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • SOUTH SAN ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL •  
SAN ANTONIO

"Every time I go over to the elementary school, I feel a sense of value from my tutees... Truly speaking, throughout my life, so far, I haven't had a good outlook on life. I take life as it comes, and there's not much in this world I could say I cared about. My tutees have brought light upon the good that still exists in this world. Having something to care about is what makes us human. I've begun to care more about myself and those close to me, and I care about my tutees."



Middle School Second Place

**FATIMA VALSECA**

7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • NEW OPEN WORLD ACADEMY, LOS ANGELES

"Before I was a tutor, my grades weren't so good, and I was close to failing the most important subjects: math and English... I have learned about responsibility because I am a mentor to all of the kids before me. Most importantly my commitment has improved like no other... Tutoring isn't just helping kids find an answer. It's building a bond with your tutees... I love knowing that I am making a difference in these kids' lives... I have learned throughout this whole process that every kid is different, but each is unique and amazing."



High School Third Place

**EMAJE' WILLIAMS**

11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL •  
ECTOR COUNTY, TEXAS

"This year, I had a student who didn't like to speak up and pay attention. He was afraid to be wrong and didn't want to be embarrassed. So, I... tried my hardest to figure out ways to help him understand. My tutee has improved so much since then!... His parents even sent a letter thanking me because he's changed so much, and he is always talking about the lessons I do with him... If it wasn't for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to fulfill my goals. It has shown me that I can make a difference. I am going to become a teacher and help all kids feel that they are good enough and change how they view teachers. I want to be a part of that change."



Middle School Third Place

**MIRANDA TORRES**

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • DWIGHT MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

"The tutees look up to me and it gives me a great sense of being needed, as if I'm important to someone. It feels really good to not only teach but also see them happy, smiling and having a good time learning with me... I also changed for the better because if I misbehave, I can't go to see my students. I have even been told that they ask for me when I'm out sick from school. That makes me feel special and good inside... To make a difference in someone's life, it's the best feeling in the world!"

## High School Honorable Mentions

ARIANA SUCHIL – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL • ECTOR COUNTY ISD, TEXAS

DEYONNA HERNÁNDEZ – 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • SOUTH SAN ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

## Elementary School Winners from Charles C Ball Academy, San Antonio

FIRST PLACE – AMBER ORTIZ – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

SECOND PLACE – SELENA LUNA, 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

THIRD PLACE – MYNERVALEE CASTILLO, 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

HONORABLE MENTION – LIZETH ACOSTA, 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## Middle School Honorable Mentions

FRANK CERDA – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • ZAMORA MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

SARAH PETERSON – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • CARSTENS ACADEMY OF AQUATIC SCIENCE AT REMUS • DETROIT

HAMEEM AHMED – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • NEW OPEN WORLD ACADEMY • LOS ANGELES

PAULA OLIVO – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • DWIGHT MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

## Elementary School Winners from PS94 Kings College School, New York City

FIRST PLACE – SARIYAH MITCHELL – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

SECOND PLACE – SHAREEF BELL – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

THIRD PLACE – ANIYAH CURRY – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

FOURTH PLACE – TYLER GARDNER – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

FIFTH PLACE – WINNER MARTÍNEZ – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

HONORABLE MENTION – JAYALAH JONES – 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

Scan this code to see the full essays and learn more about the IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program!



[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)

See the full essays and the elementary school essays online!