

# News Release

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## **Rural Awareness Names Franklin Essay Winners**

*Hunterdon County* – Nine winners of the sixteenth annual Rural Awareness Scholar Award essay competition at Franklin Township School in Quakertown were recognized at an awards assembly on June 15. Winners were chosen from a field of 61 entries from the third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Students were asked to write about the season they feel closest to nature in Franklin Township and to colorfully describe the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches they experience then. Spring won 26 advocates; summer, 25; fall, 6; and winter, 4.

Third-grader Olivia Hammer won first place for her class and also was named Grand Champion. Her essay, *Five Senses of Spring in Franklin*, hailed the arrival of spring flowers and the greening of trees, longer days leading to summer, chirping birds everywhere, the smell of freshly cut grass, and the fun of picnics with friends.

Lucas Morais placed second in the third grade with *The Senses of Spring*, writing “[Spring] renews all of your senses and brings with it the happiness and excitement of the season.” Payton Dickson, took honorable mention for her work, *My Favorite Season*, which is summer with her favorite smell: campfire.

Fourth-grade first-place winner Anna Strauss titled her work *Signs of Spring*, which includes “feeling grass in between my toes,” finding wild raspberries, and catching fireflies. Ross Stephens took second place for *Summer Time* when he likes to go out into the woods with his siblings for an adventure. Jack Armagast won honorable mention for *Summer Walks*, about the walks he takes to the creek down his road where he sees deer, birds, turtles, fish, and foxes.

Fifth-grader Timmy LaSasso, took first honors in his class with *Franklin in the Winter* when, he says, “leafless trees show their true intricate and different designs.” Second place went to Vincent Randall for *Why I Love Summer in Franklin Township* when he can explore the creek, fish, and go camping. Scarlett Prendergast won third for *The Reason I Feel Close to Nature*, writing, “Spring is the best time of year” because the animals and insects come back and trees and flowers bloom.

First-place winners received a \$50 gift certificate for the Frenchtown Bookshop; second-place winners, a \$30 Bookshop gift certificate; and honorable mention, a \$10 Bookshop gift

certificate. The Grand Champion also received a \$40 gift certificate for a pizza night at Duke's Pizzeria & Restaurant in Pittstown.

All nine winners will be invited to read aloud their essays at The Frenchtown Bookshop on June 25 at 6:00 PM. Family members and friends are welcome. Their essays also will be posted on the Rural Awareness website at [www.ruralawareness.org](http://www.ruralawareness.org).

Teachers of the winning students are Courtney Panerali, Janet Prassl, Susan Rainaldi, Tracy Strycky, Jeff Weinhold, and Alyssa Zollinger.

Rural Awareness, Inc. is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the historic and rural heritage of Franklin Township.

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**NOTE – ESSAYS BY THE GRAND CHAMPION AND TWO FIRST-PLACE WINNERS ALSO ARE ATTACHED**

### **CAPTION FOR ATTACHED PHOTOGRAPH**

**Rural Awareness Scholars for 2022 in Franklin Township**, whose essays were selected from 61 entries, are shown (left to right), front row: Lucas Morais, Olivia Hammer, Ross Stephens, Jack Armagast; back row: Anna Strauss, Timmy LaSasso, Payton Dickson, Scarlett Prendergast, and Vincent Randall.