

## **Rural Awareness Annual Essay Awards Recognize Franklin Township Students**

*Hunterdon County* – Winners of the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Rural Awareness Scholar Awards essay competition for Franklin Township students in grades 3, 4 and 5 were announced at an assembly held June 14 at Union Township School. The schools in Franklin and Union Townships share services.

Rural Awareness judges read all the essays and determined winners depending on which essays best convey the year's theme. This year students were asked to write about their favorite farm in Franklin Township, describe it in great detail and explain why farming is important to their rural community.

All nine winners are invited to read their essays aloud at the Frenchtown Bookshop, 28 Bridge St., Frenchtown on Saturday, June 17 starting at 6 p.m. Family members and friends are welcome. Winning essays will be posted on Rural Awareness's website, [ruralawareness.org](http://ruralawareness.org), and also sent to newspapers.

All prize winners receive gift certificates for the Frenchtown Bookshop. First place in each class gets a \$50 gift certificate; second, \$30; and honorable mention, \$10. The grand prize winner is selected from the three first-place winners and additionally receives a gift certificate for a family pizza night at Duke's Pizzeria & Restaurant in Pittstown.

First place winner for the fifth grade, and Grand Champion of the contest, is Anna Strauss with *Helping Hands* about her family's volunteering at the Grow-A-Row farm to help harvest food supplied free to people with food insecurity. She writes, "I am proud to be a part of this incredible group who are helping to make people happier and healthier...one apple at a time."

The fifth-grade second-place winner is Eden Thompson with her essay *Farms Forever* about the Bonacorsi Family Farm and how she is "glad they chose to run a farm filled with good food that my family and the community like to eat." As for the importance of farms to our rural community she thinks, "If those farms were not here anymore, it would not be as nice of a place to live. I hope that Franklin Township will have farms forever."

An honorable mention was awarded to fifth-grader Jack Armagast for *My Memories of Duncan Farm* about the year his family bought a tree from the farm that turned out to have praying mantis eggs in it. They hatched just as the decorations were being removed, "It was a fun and

somewhat gross time,” he says about having the “insects hopping all over our house.” He hopes “Franklin will always stay rural and keep farming as important as it is today in the future.”

Fourth-grade winners are Jackson Krehely, first, for *Two Barn Farm*, which he likes for its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that supplies his family with tasty local produce. Second-place winner Sophia Loewenstein asks, *What is my Favorite Farm?* and answers with Grow-A-Row where her family volunteers to help harvest food that is given to people in need. Olivia Hammer won an honorable mention for *My Favorite Farm*, in which she describes Cervenka’s Farm and its “delicious fresh produce” and writes, “I am thankful to have local farms where I live.”

First place winner in the third grade is Lily Winseck with *KingsBrook Farm: A Little Farm with Lots of Love*. She reports it doesn’t have fruits and vegetables, but does have horses to ride, sheep for wool, bees for honey, friendly chickens for eggs and a rooster that is a grump. She writes, “Farming is important to our local community because it provides fresh food and jobs and gives life to the land. Farming also brings together family, friends and neighbors.”

Other third-grade winners are Olive Luster, second place for *Peterson’s Farm* in which she wrote, “Without farms in our community, I’m not sure what Franklin...would look like.” Samuel Morgans won an honorable mention for his essay, *Bonacorsi Family Farm*. “Growing up surrounded by farms,” he wrote, “makes me want to learn how to grow my own crops and even raise animals.”

Teachers of the winning students are Sara Fortunato, Jon Huber, Jordie Kipp, Susan Rainaldi, Jeffrey Weinhold and Alyssa Zollinger.

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