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10 Miami-Dade County Public high school students win awards in Elie Wiesel Foundation Prize in Ethics Essay Contest
Miami-Dade County Youth Fair provides scholarships for third year

MIAMI, Fla. – May 5, 2016 – Ten juniors and seniors representing Miami-Dade County Public high schools across the county received scholarship awards as winners and finalists in the 2016 Elie Wiesel Foundation Prize in Ethics Essay Contest.

“The essay contest provides this young generation an avenue to contemplate the meaning of what is right to do, because our ethics and values as a people truly are the heart and the soul of who we are and guide where we are headed in the future,” said Roger Cuevas, chairman of the board of The Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition.

The Youth Fair contributed \$7,000 in scholarship money in collaboration with MDCPS, The Betsy-South Beach, the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, and the foundation’s corporate sponsor, LRN. Superintendent of Schools Alberto Carvalho personally contributed an additional \$450 for each of the last five finalists and an additional \$250 for each of the runners-up.

Wiesel, who with LRN selected the 10 finalists, sent his congratulations in a video presented at The Betsy-South Beach, host of the award event. The ceremony included remarks from Carvalho, The Betsy-South Beach owner Jonathan Plutzik, and Roger Cuevas, chairman of the board of the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition. School Board members Lawrence S. Feldman and Wilbert "Tee" Holloway also were in attendance.

Scholarship winners:

- 1st Place: Abigail Hurtado, junior, iPreparatory Academy; \$3,000
- 2nd Place: Isabella Vargas, senior, International Studies Prep Academy; \$2,000
- 3rd Place: Gabriela Ibanez, junior, School for Advanced Studies-North Campus; \$1,000

Two runners-up each received \$750:

- Augustina Nikolova, junior, iPreparatory Academy
- Julio Yanez, junior, Charter High School of the Americas

Five finalists each received \$500:

- Alejandra Gomez, junior, Miami Beach Senior High School
- Christopher Marrero, junior, IPreparatory Academy
- Henry Orama, junior, Hialeah Senior High School

- Hannah Selvam, junior, Miami Beach Senior High School
- Christian Shephard, senior, Miami Central Senior High School

The essay contest is based on a national college level contest that encourages students to apply Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel's call to action to "think higher, and feel deeper" about ethical issues facing our society. The MDCPS is distinguished as the only school district in the nation participating at the high school level.

Eliezer "Elie" Wiesel KBE, for whom the contest is named, is a Romanian-born Jewish-American professor and political activist. He is the author of more than 60 books, including "Night," a work based on his experiences as a prisoner in the Auschwitz, Buna, and Buchenwald concentration camps. Mr. Wiesel won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

The Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition (The Youth Fair) is the largest charity event in South Florida. The not-for-profit association is dedicated to promoting education and agriculture while showcasing and rewarding youth achievement and providing quality family entertainment, all without taxpayer dollars. The annual Youth Fair exhibits more than 53,000 student projects to more than 650,000 Youth Fair guests and awards more than \$300,000 annually in college scholarships, cash premiums and awards to students. To date, The Youth Fair has presented well above \$10 million to the Miami-Dade community. It was recognized in 2015 as the Leisure & Entertainment Services Firm of the Year by the Latin Builder's Association, the Non-Profit Organization of the Year by the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and was the Diamond Award Winner for Outstanding Hospitality Entity by the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. The Fair Exposition Center, which is the second largest convention center in Miami-Dade County, hosts an additional 70 community events each year. Visit fairexpo.com or call 305-223-7060.

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Photo cutline information:

Elie Wiesel Foundation Prize in Ethics Essay Contest

Winners of the Elie Wiesel Foundation Prize in Ethics Essay Contest winners are announced May 2, 2016, at an award ceremony hosted by The Betsy-South Beach.

Pictured, from left, are: Gabriela Ibanez, 3rd-place; Isabella Vargas, 2nd-place; Alejandra Gomez, finalist; Jonathan Plutzik, owner of The Betsy – South Beach; Hannah Selvam, finalist; Christopher Marrero, finalist; Christian Shephard, finalist; Alberto Carvalho, Miami-Dade County Public Schools superintendent; Lawrence S. Feldman, school board member; Marie L. Izquierdo, chief academic officer of the MDCPS Office of Academics and Transformation; Henry Orama, finalist; Julio Yanez, 5th-place honorary mention; Augustina Nikolova, 4th-place honorary mention; and Abigail Hurtado, 1st-place.