

Three Madera 5th Graders in Top 10 - Northern California Writing Contest

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When the top 10 winners of a Northern California creative-writing contest for fifth graders took the stage in San Francisco Wednesday night, three of them were from El Cerrito's Madera Elementary School.

The Northern California "Celebrate America Creative Writing Contest," now in its 10th year, challenged fifth graders to write essays or poems on the theme, "Why I Am Glad America Is a Nation of Immigrants."

The champion writers from Madera were Abigail Ilan in second place, Jennifer Mast in eighth place and Joonah Park in ninth place – all taught by fifth grade teacher Mary Timar.

Taking first place was Aedra Li of Miraloma Elementary School in San Francisco, who went on to represent Northern California in the national contest, where she received an honorable mention. The third-place winner in Northern

California was Kenyamarie Mahone of Hall Middle School in Larkspur.

The top three winners recited their entries at the awards ceremony Wednesday at the San Francisco Public Library, and all 10 were honored on stage with certificates and awards from Bay Area notables.

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Among those acknowledging the honorees on the program were Congresswomen Nancy Pelosi and Doris Matsui and state Assemblyman Tom Ammiano. The three are among this year's 21 judges, which also included four other

members of Congress – John Garamendi, George Miller, Barbara Lee and Jackie Speier.

The regional contest – which drew more than 350 entries from 17 schools this year – is organized by the Northern California chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association in cooperation with the national contest sponsored

by the nonprofit American Immigration Council.

KQED and the San Francisco Public Library also co-sponsored the local ceremony.

A full list of the top 10 winners and awards ceremony program is attached to this article.

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