

Intelligent and Wise: Out of the Mouth

by Sheeba Raj

The American Immigration Council (AIC) honored the first-place winner of its Community Education Center's 16th Annual 'Celebrate America' Fifth Grade Creative Writing Contest in San Francisco on June 28. Ten-year-old Erin Stark of Enetai Elementary School in Bellevue, WA, read her poem (featured right) titled, "[What Would You Miss About Immigrants if They Didn't Come to America?](#)" during AIC's Immigrant Achievement Awards ceremony. Chosen from



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among thousands of entries nationwide, the piece asks what one would do if immigrants stopped coming to the United States. Erin's winning entry will be read into

Winner Erin Stark accepts her certificate from AIC Executive Director Ben Johnson in San Francisco.

the Congressional Record and all top five winners will have a flag flown over the Capitol.

Erin's poem was inspired by her fifth-grade teacher Monica Chun's lessons about immigration. "I thought immediately about food, holidays and contributions [of immigrants]-like buildings", Erin said.

The second place winner is Julianne Capp of Las Vegas, the third

'Celebrating America,' D.C.-Style

Adding to the chorus of supporters of immigration to the United States are three Washington, D.C.-area fifth graders who participated in AIC's 16th Annual 'Celebrate America' Creative Writing Contest.

The Washington, D.C. Chapter's first-place winner, Revanth Vejju, addressed attendees at the chapter's dinner meeting on May 22. "Immigrants are the pigments that are used to color America. ... It is not hard to see, but immigrants are the very reason that American

food, architecture, and economy are not the same as they were 50 years ago." Revanth attends Greenbriar West Elementary School in Centreville, VA.

"A couple of days ago, I learned how Halloween was created," said Derek Chu, the D.C. Chapter's second-place winner and a student at Carderock Springs Elementary School in Potomac, MD. "It was created to celebrate a Christian festival and was once called 'All Hallow's Eve.' This shows that even though I am not Christian, I am able to learn about Christianity and others such as Judaism, Islam, Baha'i, Hinduism, Taoism,

Buddhism, and much more."

Third-place winner Alexandra Stone, who is enrolled in Holy Trinity School in Washington, D.C., shared an anecdote about her Italian great-great grandfather, who punched his college professor after the professor said, "You'll never make it, you dumb Italian!" After being expelled from that college, her great-



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s of Babes

place winner is Helen Agee of Dallas, and honorable mentions are Emma LaTendresse of Portland, OR, and Jeffrey Phong of Los Angeles.

The celebrity judges of the national contest are all immigrants including Olympic gold medalist Henry Cejudo, co-founder of National Organization for Women Sonia Pressman Fuentes, award-winning author Edwidge Danticat, and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Gerda Weissman Klein.

Twenty-one AILA chapters participated in the contest. ▽

great grandfather enrolled in another school and ultimately made his way through medical school. "Although my great grandfather shouldn't have punched his professor, my point is that he kept on trying and didn't give up."

The three winners each received a commemorative certificate, an educational savings bond, and a gift certificate. Revanth Vejju also won tickets to Six Flags. ▽



What Would You Miss About Immigrants if They Didn't Come to America?

Would you miss the food?

The pot stickers, sushi, and dumplings,

Pizza, spaghetti, curry, or crepes?

Just think about it for a minute or two,

Could you survive eating fish at every meal? Could you?

Immigrants are coming every day,

Variety is what they bring with them in every way.

Would you miss the holidays?

Day of the Dead, and Chinese New Year

Hanukah, Kwanzaa, and Ramadan, too?

Why did the Christians travel the distance,

Was it to share their beliefs and Christmas?

Immigrants are coming every day,

Variety is what they bring with them in every way.

Would you miss their art?

Painting, literature, and music?

Plays, sculpture, and design?

Life would be dull without art,

People might become sad and would get broken hearts.

Immigrants are coming every day,

Variety is what they bring with them in every way.

Would you miss the things they made?

Railroads, canals, communities, and skyscrapers,

Schoolhouses, highways, churches, and businesses?

What would kids do without schools?

We might turn into fools!

Immigrants are coming every day,

Variety is what they bring with them in every way.

Immigrants are coming every day.

They bring recipes, celebrations, talents, and skills.

Variety is what they bring with them in every way.

USA would be bland without immigrants,

Now our nation is colorful and the joy is infinite.