

Local high school students reflect on community and the benefits of immigration

Winners of the regional How My Community Benefits From Immigration essay contest announced

MALDEN, Mass, May 23, 2023 / Young writers from Everett, Malden and Medford high schools competed in the annual essay contest sponsored by The Immigrant Learning Center (The ILC) by sharing their unique perspectives on immigration in these diverse communities.

The awards ceremony held at The Immigrant Learning Center's headquarters in Malden on Monday, May 22, 2023, was attended by the winning students and their family members, members of The ILC staff, and local government and school officials including: Mayor Gary Christenson, High School Principal Christopher Mastrangelo and Public Schools Superintendent Ligia Noriega-Murphy from Malden as well as High School Principal Paul M D'Alleva and Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn from Medford. Two of the contest judges, Dr. Carmel Salhi of Northeastern University and Jodie Zalk of Malden Reads, were also there. The third judge, *Brazilian Magazine* founder Mark Puleo, was unable to attend.

First place winner, Malden High School student Makeila Scott, moved everyone in attendance with her stirring reading of her winning essay, *Breaking Social Divisions and Inspiring Togetherness*.

She shared her belief that the diversity immigration brings to Malden creates opportunities for unity and understanding and that freely sharing differing opinions and perspectives can break down social divisions. As a result, she describes Malden as “a community that fosters, from a young age, the importance of togetherness. Malden is a community raising a generation of open-minded individuals that are not afraid to learn nor afraid to ask questions. Malden is a community fostering future leaders and empowering each person to utilize their voice and utilize their story. Malden encourages this as I sit here writing this essay utilizing my own voice to bring light to the gifts Malden has to offer.”

Mayor Christenson echoed Scott's sentiments and the spirit of the contest, joking, “If only I was eligible.” The sincere message he had for the Malden students present was, “I wanted to be here personally, not only to congratulate you, but to also say thank you for the positive impact you've had at Malden High School as well as the rest of our city.”

Cash prizes from \$50 to \$500 were awarded to first through fifth place winners. Malden High School students Miaoyi Hu, Anna Yak, Bakoma Itoe took second through fourth place respectively and Lily

Nguyen and Hadjar Yousfi took honorable mentions. Medford High School student Danny Le was awarded fifth place, and Khando Thoulutsang secured an honorable mention.

Winning essays from this year's and last year's winners are available on The ILC's website at www.ilctr.org/essaycontest.

About The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.

For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>. The ILC can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Photo Caption:

Front row, from left to right: Medford School Committee Member Paul Ruseau, Medford Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Malden High School student Hadjar Yousfi, Malden High School student Lily Nguyen, Medford High School student Khando Thoulutsang, Malden High School teacher Jennifer Clapp, Malden Mayor Gary Christenson, Malden School Committee Member Jennifer Spadafora and Malden Public Schools Assistant Superintendent Emilys Peña

Second row, from left to right: Malden High School Principal Chris Mastrangelo, Medford High School Principal Paul M D'Alleva, Malden High School student Miaoyi Hu, Malden High School student Makeila Scott, Malden High School student Nyandeng Yak, Malden High School student Bakoma Itoe, Medford High School student Danny Le and Malden Public Schools Superintendent Ligia Noriega-Murphy

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