

WITESOL Writing and Art Contest

2020-2021 Winners



Theme: Something Special to Me

WITESOL Grand Prize Art Winner (Adult Education)

Same as My Family

By: Ningning Yu



Note from the Artist: "It is park. I think they are same as my family. My family also many little ones. It is beauty."

WITESOL Writing and Art Contest

2020-2021 Winners

Theme: Something Special to Me

WITESOL is very proud to recognize the student winners and award them cash prizes for their creativity and hard work. Winners were selected after a panel of judges anonymously reviewed and scored their work. All of the students are multilingual learners who work with an educator who is a WITESOL member. The student winners attend school in different parts of the state like De Pere, Eau Claire, Fort Atkinson, Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Oak Creek.

Grand Prize for Art:

Ningning Yu - Adult Education

K-2 Writing:

1st place: Genesis Tomas

2nd place: Sofia Vega

3rd place: Yahir Payan Alvarado

K-2 Art:

1st place: Andrea Meza Garcia

3-5 Writing:

1st place: Yaneli Gonzalez

2nd place: Tonkhoa Daosuk

3rd place: Zuri Tomas

3-5 Art:

1st place: Alexander Garcia Hernandez

9-12 Writing:

1st place: Monserrath Julian Zuniga

2nd place: Rebecca Alvarado

3rd place: Shee Ku Paw

9-12 Art:

1st place: Clarissa Gonzalez Romero

Adult Writing:

1st place: Aida Jaber

2nd place: Jiji Lalisan-Michalski

3rd place: HaoChen Tang

Adult Art:

1st place: Nedaa Amro

1st Place Writing - Primary (Grades K-2)

My Church

By: Genesis Tomas

Do you want to know what is special to me?
This is my church. I love my church. I learn
plenty of things at my church. I love singing
there and seeing everyone. I like going
there. I'm very happy when I'm there. I feel
different but I like feeling like that!

2nd Place Writing - Primary (Grades K-2)

Trampoline Fun

By: Sofia Vega

My birthday is special to me. It's when I can spend time at Sky Zone and spend time with family. My favorite is to go on the trampoline because it's fun. I jump into blocks. I do front flips and back flips. I jump in it.

3rd Place Writing - Primary (Grades K-2)

What's Special to Me

By: Yahir Payan Alvarado

I like my Nintendo because it makes me feel special. It makes me cool. I play Minecraft. I love my Nintendo because it makes me happy to play it. It is fun to have a Nintendo.

1st Place Art - Primary (Grades K-2)

Special Snowman
By: Andrea Meza Garcia



1st Place Writing - Intermediate (Grades 3-5)

What is Special to Me

By: Yaneli Gonzalez

My hamster Tany is so special to me because he is one of my 3 hamsters that did not leave me in 1 day or 2 weeks. He is still alive. Plus he is small. He did not escape from his cage when I left his cage open. Tany makes me feel happy because when my sister doesn't want to play with me or she is being mean Tany will play with me. Plus he plays with me like he was one of my BEST FRIEND since forever.

2nd Place Writing - Intermediate (Grades 3-5)

My Religion

By: Tonkhoa Daosuk

Buddha is so cool and is something special to me. Buddhism is what our religion is called. It teaches us to calm down so here's a strategy. Close your eyes and breath in and out focus on your breath, make sure you are breathing, are you calming down? Clear your mind. Focus on your breath. The two snakes that Buddha are sitting on, protect the buddha from harm like demons. Now Buddha has done a lot of good things in his or her past life. Now they say it's really hard to get to be a human it's so hard to get to be a human it's like finding 1 needle in the Pacific Ocean. So Buddha said do good things in your life you don't know when you are going to die. Buddha has rules too.

Do not lie

Don't believe everything you hear

Do not drink

Control your emotion

Think happy thoughts

Be happy

Be honest

They're really not rules but you should do it like Buddha said. You do not know how much time there is in your life you can have accidents anytime. Let me tell you a story. Once there was a prince named Siddhartha he wanted peace. He wanted to be normal. When he was 16 years old he ran away from home. Then Siddhartha heard news that a guy meditated for weeks without food and he tried it. He did but Siddhartha was so skinny you can see his bone. Then a kind lovely woman came to give Siddhartha food. When he ate the food and the woman left Siddhartha learned a lesson by saying you need to do things in your life the right amount. So what lesson did you learn? I learned that you should be happy and do not spoil yourself either. Buddhism is so special to me, because it is my religion and I want to follow the religion because my family follows it. Let me ask you, did you like the story? Thank you for reading. Bye :)

3rd Place Writing - Intermediate (Grades 3-5)

Asian Elephants

By: Zuri Tomas

Hello their! I'm happy your reading my book. You may be wondering why I chose the Asian Elephant? I chose the Asian Elephant because they are cute, and my sister gives me so many elephant items and theyre important to me. Asian Elephants are very unique, and have some very useful body part they have to get use to. These are the body parts, the long trunk that helps collect food and water to eat and drink. The trunk also helps them hose off when they are dirty. Another helpful adaptation is their large ears shaped as fan that help fan themselves when they are hot because of the burning sun. I'm a "fan" of Asian Elephants! Asian Elephants are very unique animals, I hope you liked this book and that you learned a lot reading this book.

1st Place Art - Intermediate (Grades 3-5)

Art is in My Heart

By: Alexander Garcia Hernandez



1st Place Writing - High School (Grades 9-12)

La Cocina de mi Niñez

By: Monserrath Julian Zuniga

GRRRR!GRRRR! I could hear the sound of the molino. In the morning, I woke up at 5:30 because my mami made a lot of noise when she began to prepare the corn masa to make tortillas. I could hear the mill whirr as she ground the nixtamal, and then she used the metrapil to make the dough smoother. My mami formed the round ball of dough. She patted the masa into a flat tortilla with her quick hands, and then she placed the tortilla on the comal. The tortillas had a toasty aroma. This memory makes me melancholy now, and I wonder what my mami is doing, if she is cooking or if she is thinking about me.

My kitchen in Mexico is not that big, but it is like my home's heart since here I spent time with two beings that I love more than my life-- my mami and papi. In my kitchen, the brasero stood like a tall, wide stove, filled with earth and ashes on top. My papi built it so my mami can cook there. Next to the brasero, there was a small table where my mom put her metate to make her tortillas. I enjoyed it when we always sat down to eat together at every meal to have a good time talking about our day. Sometimes at dinner, my dad would tell me his stories about when he went hunting. When I remember the stories he told me, I can see him smiling and laughing, but I still feel sad because I miss him.

My kitchen is significant to me not just because of the things in it, but because of the memories of the people. This cozy kitchen will always have a place in my heart because it is the place where I spent 14 years of my childhood. Today I miss all this because my life took an unexpected turn and these memories are what keep me happy.

2nd Place Writing - High School (Grades 9-12)

The Prayer Box

By: Rebecca Alvarado

The Prayer Box is about the size of two dictionaries stacked up on each other. It has a hole on top of the box to put the slips of papers inside. It's placed on a cabinet with glass doors with flowers around the box. It serves as a place to store prayers and thoughts to God. Just think you put your prayers, meditations, wishes, dreams and thoughts to God in the box. The prayer box is a container where you can pray by writing a note to God--like a mailbox to God.

We all moved to the living room after dinner and that is when we usually do our prayer box. We sit down and I go to get the prayer box from the cabinet with glass doors. I set it in the middle of the table. Every night we make an opening prayer before putting a piece of paper inside the box. We then write down something we are thankful for or sometimes just thanking God for what we have and then someone says the ending prayer when we are all done. Some things my family and I write about are our concerns, fears, discouragement, and sadness, then we place them in the box for God's attention.

One of the prayers I have added to the prayer box was "Dear God, Thank you for guiding me in your truth and teaching me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. We ask you, Lord, to walk with us everywhere we go. Help us to keep your word in our hearts that we may not sin against you. You grant me strength. It is by your will that I live, oh Lord, and I know it is also by your will I do not go weak. Almighty God, thank you for giving us good health and glorifying your name, Through Jesus' name, we pray, Amen."

3rd Place Writing - High School (Grades 9-12)

What is Special to Me

By: Shee Ku Paw

What is something special to you? Well, you may have many things in mind like "Oh of course my family." Aside from family, what's precious to you? Many would say my bedroom, my house, some may even say the teddybear they slept with every night when they were a little kid. And some may even bring up objects they bought or got from a friend or family. Many say they don't have anything special to them. But what about your naturally long, curly hair? What about your straight hair many wish to have but don't? We all have something others don't have. If you were born rich and powerful, money could be precious to you. If you're not so rich, you could have a dream that you're waiting for to happen. It's taking time, but you believe yourself that you'll make it.

Still have nothing special to you? Well what about your natural features? You perfect brows, long and thick lashes, smooth rich lips, and a beautiful smile? Many may not have your features but want them. Our body itself is special.

For me, I say music is special to me. Music is basically my cure to any pain I'm feeling. Not the pain where you hit your toe on the side door and scream in horror. No, the pain where you feel deep down you can't explain with words. When someone judges you based on whether you're too skinny, too fat, too short, too tall, or your appearance. We all get judged once in a while. Or even the pain when someone tells you that you can't become who you want to be. That you can't play a certain sport, sing, or act.

I still love everything about myself and the people around me. Even if I can't change anything. They change me. I listen to music every night and whenever I have the chance. It helps you rebuild yourself. The best part is that you can listen to any type of music based on your mood. This is why music is special to me.

1st Place Art- High School (Grades 9-12)

Dia De Los Muertos

By: Clarissa Gonzalez Romero



1st Place Writing - Adult Education

Something Special to Me: Thobes

By: Aida Jaber

As a Palestinian I have many important cultural objects. We have lots of things in our culture like food, dances, clothes, etc. One of the most special things to me, as a Palestinian women, is the traditional dress that we call a “thobe”.

A thobe is a traditional dress for women. It is handmade by many of the seamstresses in Palestine. It requires many months of hard work. Some have been sold to buyers for thousands of dollars depending on the certain dress. Some people don't have the money to buy the dress so they learn to make it for themselves. Others start businesses making these dresses and selling them.

Depending on what you want/ are looking for, you can personally design each one however you would like. They all look different from each other. They also differ from person to person and village to village. The most common color that is made is the red and black thobe, otherwise you can choose whatever color and design you would like. We usually wear this in traditional wedding parties.

They started this beautiful tradition in about the 1940's and carried it on for centuries. That's why when we wear them we feel special knowing that it comes all the way from our ancestors. This tradition has been passed down for many generations of Palestinians and still continues to be passed down to the next generations. They started it a long time ago in the villages of Palestine where the women would work hard to hand make clothes for themselves.

When we come to wear the thobe we usually like to wear gold jewelry to go along with it. When you go to the wedding party some brides like to wear a simple headdress to go with it which also contains gold coins on it to match their thobe.

There are many reasons why the thobe is important to me and my culture and these are only some of them.

2nd Place Writing - Adult Education

Life is Like a Tree

By: Jiji Lalisan-Michalski

An Avid Gardener and Nature Lover From The Philippines

Born in the nineteen eighties
My mom gave birth to me
Like you plant a seed in the earth
We were a happy family

My mom took good care of me
When I was a child
She gave me food to eat
Like you water a plant every day

One day my mom got sick
And died from her disease
So my dad took over my care
And I continued to grow

Day by day my dad and I
Moved forward
He found his significant other
And I continued to learn and grow

Every struggle we faced together
We were strong every day
Whatever outcomes would be
Only God knew

Now that I am a woman
It's time to give love
In return for
My dad's unconditional love

A life that I will cherish
Until his last breath
As long as we live
No matter how far apart

We love and comfort
Each other
No boundaries or oceans
Can separate our love

Like the branches of a tree
Full of strength and beauty
That hold us together
With the guidance of Almighty God

3rd Place Writing - Adult Education

Something Special to Me

By: HaoChen Tang

Day by Day, I am I.
Look up, the sun is shining in my eyes.
Eagles flying over the wall.
I stare at the border door.

I ask Dad who is outside the wall?
He said they are demons, do hurtful work.
They are huge titans, they eat child.
And always want to destroy us in a while.

Then, father said:" Don't be afraid."
"We are strong enough to keep the face."
But he banned me through the wall.
And don't tell the reason what.

I'm curious, I'm scare.
I watched outside the wall in my eyes.
Walking slowly and pay attention,
No demons, only blue beautiful ocean.

This feeling moves me deep,
I get back and tell the people around me.
Why? They response me irony and laugh.
Angrily asked me why I went outside the wall.

I was tired, I was crying.
I'm sure I was right in doing.
So I keep the confidence and go outside in the eve,
That has become something special to me.

After years, I grow tall.
I know a lot of things on both sides of the wall.
I understand that special feeling called free,
It needs to be paid.

1st Place Art- Adult Education

Above the Deep Ocean

By: Nedaa Amro



Note from the Artist: "This is a seagull. I was waiting for the first moment to fly and took a picture, seeing its beauty, flying attention. I chose this because I migrate like a bird, I migrated from my country through a plane and passed over the oceans and it crossed like me over the oceans."