

WITESOL Writing and Art Contest

2023-2024 Winners



Theme: My Favorite Place

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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.

Grand Prize Art Winner:

Ashley Rodriguez Velazquez
School District of Fort Atkinson

Intermediate 3-5 Art:

1st place: Davina Paulraj
School District of Fort Atkinson

Primary K-2 Writing:

1st place: Liam Payano Encarnacion
School District of Fort Atkinson

2nd place (tie): Christopher Sanchez
School District of Fort Atkinson

2nd place (tie): Neydi Sanchez Salcedo
Belleville School District

Middle School 6-8 Writing:

1st place: Aarush Howshetty
Elmbrook Public Schools

2nd place: Nhan Tran
Elmbrook Public Schools

3rd place: Laura Sarai Escamilla-Rangel
Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District

Primary K-2 Art:

1st place: Ainara Alvarez Palacios
School District of Fort Atkinson

Middle School 6-8 Art:

1st place: Evie Kizyma
Elmbrook Public Schools

Intermediate 3-5 Writing:

1st place (tie): Samanta Michell Duarte Rodriguez
School District of Fort Atkinson

1st place (tie): Victor Matute Diaz
School District of Fort Atkinson

3rd place: Sheryl Gadepally
Racine Unified School District

High School 9-12 Writing:

1st place: Jimena Martinez-Perez
Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District

2nd place: Shahd Salha
Verona Area School District

3rd place: Valerie Gomez Rojas
Verona Area School District

Grand Prize Art Winner

The grand prize art winner is the student with the highest score total from all age levels.
This year's winner was from the Intermediate Grades 3-5 category.

The Girl and the Falling Stars

by: Ashley Rodriguez Velazquez

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson



Note from the Artist: My favorite place to be is on my tree swing in the yard on our farm so I can enjoy looking up at the stars on summer nights. I used acrylic paint and a canvas to create this art.

1st Place Writing - Primary Grades K-2

Fun in the Sun!

by: Liam Payano Encarnacion

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson

Sand, sun, and the beach! You can find all of these things at my favorite place...the Dominican Republic! My family is from the Dominican Republic and we go back there to visit. It is my favorite place because there's a beach with smooth sand and calm water. I like to swim and go underwater. After a busy day in the hot sun I'll relax and drink coconut water and I'll eat pepperoni pizza. Yum! After enjoying good food I like to swim more with my cousin. It is always warm. We will sometimes stay in a resort. When we are in our room I can go out on the balcony and look out. I see lots and lots of peacocks with green and blue feathers everywhere. They walk the streets and show off their bright colors. Plus, there are a lot of pools in the resort. I can't wait to go back!

2nd Place Writing - Primary Grades K-2

This year, two students tied for 2nd place!

Trips to Target

by: Christopher Sanchez

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson

Do you know a place that is happy and has lots of toys? It's Target! My favorite place to go is Target because my mom buys me toys and candy when we go there. My mom will get a big cart to push around so we can put things in the cart. I go there to buy food and drinks like apple juice. My sisters get to come too. When I get to the store I go to the toy area. My favorite part of the store is the toys. There are Lego games and big stuffies! Also, I see lots of cars. I spend a lot of time looking at the car toys. Sometimes I can get a Sprite to drink or a special game for a PS5. It makes me happy to go to Target so I can look at lots of toys.

2nd Place Writing - Primary Grades K-2

This year, two students tied for 2nd place!

The Coffee Shop

by: Neydi Sanchez Salcedo

Belleville Elementary School - Belleville School District

The Lingonberry Llama is a coffee shop where you can buy coffee, desserts, juice and apples. The Lingonberry Llama is my favorite place because I get to go with my neighbor for special occasions. She is kind and a good friend. When I walk in I smell donuts and I see chocolate donuts and vanilla donuts and unicorn donuts. Every time I go there I get it. I hear orders and quiet talking. Sometime i see cookies in a little fridge and the cookies are inside the little fridge. The cookies are vanilla and soft and my neighbor gets them. The smell of the coffee in the Lingonberry Llama is everywhere. Usually my neighbor got coffee but she doesn't get it now. The coffee looks so good but I can't get it. She doesn't let me get it because I'm a kid . And I hope I can go there for my birthday.

1st Place Art - Primary Grades K-2

Fun at the Zoo

by: Ainara Alvarez Palacios

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson



Note from the Artist: I like to go to the zoo and watch the polar bears.

1st Place Writing - Intermediate Grades 3-5

This year, two students tied for 1st place!

Happy in Honduras

by: **Samanta Michell Duarte Rodriguez**

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson

Did you know that in my country Honduras it is very hot? My favorite place is my grandma's house in Honduras because it made me happy to be there. I love my grandma. When I was in my grandma's house in Honduras it was fun because she had a lot of flowers. I would help her plant fruits like avocados, oranges, and mangoes. I used to go grab some fruits from around the yard. I would climb trees with my cousin outside.

Also, my grandma's house was a beautiful pink house. It was pink like a pig. Her house would smell like coffee. The house was big because it had a lot of rooms. All Fridays we would clean the house. It was fun because all of my family loves to clean. My grandma is also kind and that's how I learned to be kind to other kids.

I have special memories from being at my grandma's house. When I was at her house I would hear cars and leaves falling and my mom making food in the kitchen. My mom and my grandma would make tamales. First, we would go grab some leaves to make the tamales. Then my mom and my grandma would make them. Also, at night we would watch a movie called Moises y los diez mandamientos. We would read a lot of books and that's why I love to read. I would play with my cousins every day. When it rained I would jump in the puddles.

I felt happy and excited to be at my grandma's house in Honduras. It was a place where I learned a lot, spent time with family, and had a lot of fun.

1st Place Writing - Intermediate Grades 3-5

This year, two students tied for 1st place!

Always My Home

by: Victor Matute Diaz

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson

The wind blew softly outside the open window while my family ate and drank in our home. We would all gather together on a beautiful sunny day at my home in Nicaragua. My house was a beautiful blue brick house. It was a relaxing and fun place to be. My home also represented my culture and my family. My favorite place in the world is my home in Nicaragua.

First, my home was a fun place to be with my family. For example, in my home I would go on adventures. Some days I would play with my cousin. We would play all the time in the yard and it did not matter how hot it was outside. Sometimes it was as hot as a blazing fire. After we would end playing, my sister would make us delicious lemonade over ice. Ahh! Refreshing!

My home is also my culture. My culture is beautiful and makes me feel safe. For example, the way that we go to church and then pray when we come home. Each day I would pray in my home and before bed. Everyone would laugh and talk in Spanish in my home. We would share stories and traditions.

Also, my home in Nicaragua was a place for my family to be together. I have lots of family members and we would all come to the house. Every Sunday we would make sopa de maggi. My home smelled like that soup because my family ate a lot of soup together. It would be so hot and we would drink fresh lemonade and enjoy the smell of lemons in the house.

I had to leave my home in Nicaragua. I still think of the house and miss it. If I have the chance to go back, I would love to go back. I miss my family members who are still there. In conclusion, my home in Nicaragua is my favorite place because of the fun we had there, my culture, and my family. It will always be my home.

3rd Place Writing - Intermediate Grades 3-5

Pochampally River

by: Sheryl Gadepally

Gifford School - Racine Unified School District

My favorite place is in Pochampally, India. My family and I go to the Pochampally River and drive up on top of the Pochampally Dam. The water rushes over the dam and sounds like an airplane taking off. When I stand on top of the dam and look down, it feels like I am falling into the river. The dam is full of people and cars. The people are taking pictures, talking, and looking at the water. This place is special to me because I go there with my family and we have a picnic of chicken biryani, fish, fruit, corn and juice. I feel happy and excited when I am there, and Pochampally is my favorite place in the world.

1st Place Art - Intermediate Grades 3-5

Out of This World

by: Davina Paulraj

Luther Elementary - School District of Fort Atkinson



Note from the Artist: While I haven't been to outer space (yet!) my favorite place to read, learn about, and watch is our beautiful solar system!

1st Place Writing - Middle School: Grades 6-8

My Favorite Place Is My Brain

by: Aarush Howshetty

Pilgrim Park Middle School - Elmbrook Public Schools

In the depths of my head, my brain resides,
My greatest possession, my internal guide.
A complex system, so cleverly designed
Over time, getting refined.

My brain is essential, for all that I do,
A requirement in life, quite true.
It's like a map, showing me the way
Guiding me through every day.

Mysterious creation, a requirement for everything,
The creator is unknown, given for something,
Shows me the path, in a world of lies,
Shows me the path, under the skies.

My brain is my greatest possession,
Helping me tackle life's questions.
With its wisdom, I can see
The person I'm headed to be.

So, I empower my brain, every part,
It's the essence of me, the core of my heart.
A miraculous creation, beyond compare
My brain, my companion, is always there.

2nd Place Writing - Middle School: Grades 6-8

When I Was a Child

by: Nhan Tran

Pilgrim Park Middle School - Elmbrook Public Schools

When I was a child
I only lived with my mom
She took care of everything
And always cooked food for me.

When I was a child
I cried for everything
My mom says I was really loud
And she cared for me even when I didn't listen.

When I was a child
My house was really small
Even my ground was sand and cement
And I tripped a lot of times on my knee
But I was loving my small house.

When I was a child
I was really optimistic and I felt happy
When I was hanging out with my friends
All the time after school

3rd Place Writing - Middle School: Grades 6-8

My Favorite Place

by: Laura Sarai Escamilla-Rangel

Wittenberg Middle School - Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District

My favorite place is the beach in MAZATLAN in Mexico, in the state of Sinaloa. It is close to Sonora and Chihuahua, to the east with Durango, to the south with Nayarit and to the west with the Gulf of California. The place is quiet, but at the same time a little noisy. The people go there to have fun. The people are friendly and fun. It's a fun place with a good atmosphere. You don't get bored easily, because you have the view of the sea and you can explore the beach. I go there because I like to see the ocean waves and also see how other people have fun with their loved ones.

We arrive by plane and then drive to the beach. It looks very happy, because there is the sea, the palms and the small restaurants with fabulous food and drinks. The food and drinks are delicious. My favorite food is the shrimp cocktail and of course my favorite drink is the coconut water with Pina Colada.

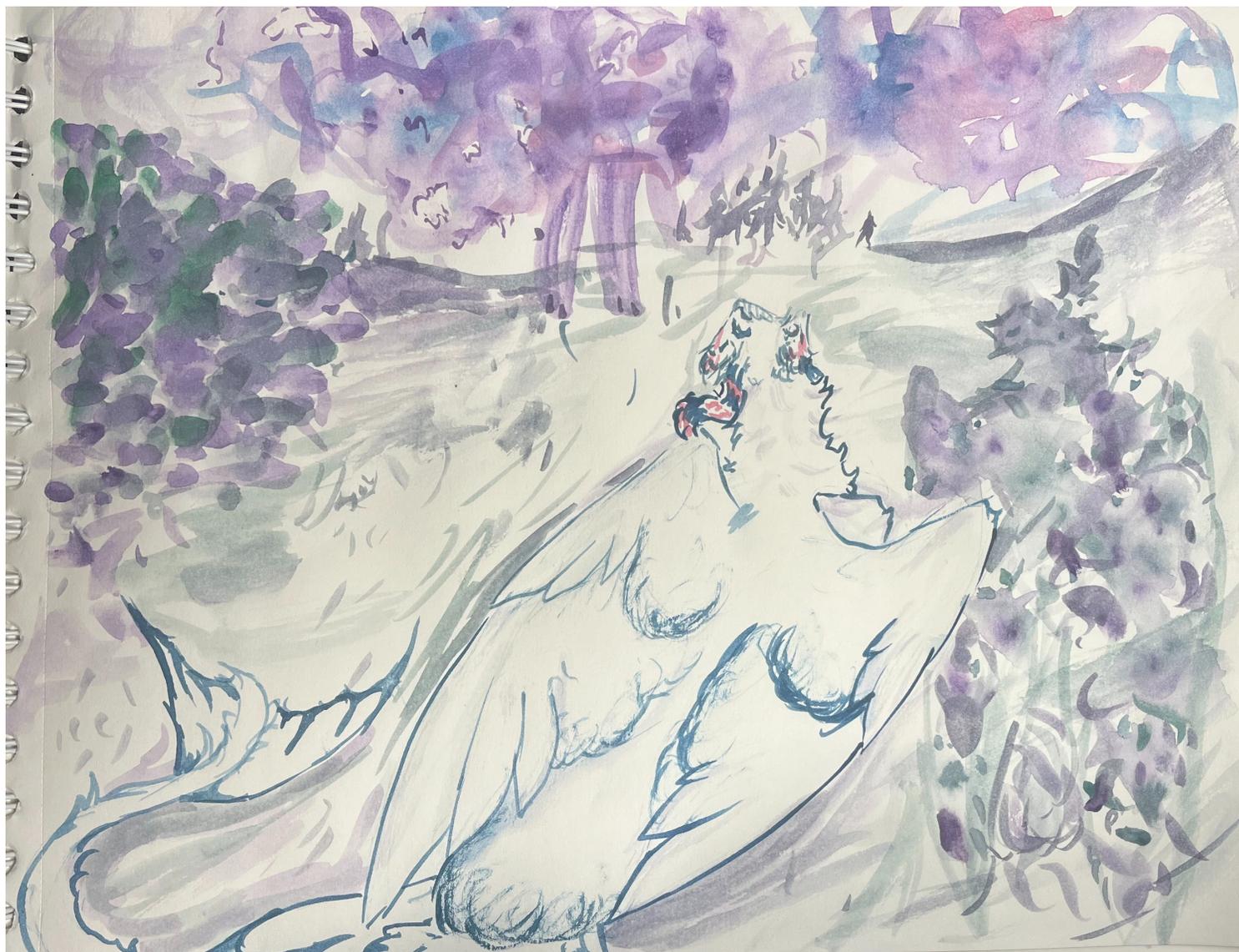
The sounds that can be appreciated are the sounds of the sea, the air made by the palm trees, birds passing by the beach and also airplanes flying overhead. My favorite part of that place is the smells. You can smell the delicious foods, the pretty plants, the palm trees, and also the wonderful smell of the sea.

1st Place Art - Middle School Grades 6-8

The Outside Beauty

by: Evie Kizyma

Pilgrim Park Middle School - Elmbrook Public Schools



Note from the Artist: My favorite place is being outside during the winter and I drew an imaginary dragon in the snow because that would be great!

1st Place Writing - High School: Grades 9-12

My Favorite Place

by: Jimena Martinez-Perez

Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School - Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District

My favorite place is “Los Azufres . This place is in the State of Michoacán. It is usually cold in the mornings and nights, but in the afternoon it is a little hot. Its waters are thermal and they have several “pools” depending on the temperature. The water can be hot to warm. There are cabins where you can stay, but there are also places where you can camp. They have a large and beautiful lake with very clear water. It has showers to bathe after being in the pools and also changing rooms. There are dining rooms where you can cook and eat outdoors. It is a hot springs spa. The people are usually very friendly.

It is usually a place that relaxes you a lot, because of its hot springs. This is why we usually go for vacations and to spend time with family. You can get there by bus or car. It is a place full of super large pine trees. There are many mountains, grass areas and lakes. There is a lot of nature. You can hear animals, especially birds, when you arrive the first thing you smell will be sulfur. Then you will smell the pine and sand.

2nd Place Writing - High School: Grades 9-12

My Favorite Place

by: Shahd Salha

Verona Area High School - Verona Area School District

How beautiful it is for a person to feel comfortable when mentioning a specific place that makes them feel reminiscent of their memories and happiness. And how beautiful it is for this place to be the place of one's birth and how beautiful it would be if it was near a sea with its bold and attractive waves. The beautiful sounds that make you feel the restoration of everything good. And how beautiful it would be to be Latikia. Latikia is beautiful and it is my favorite place because I have visited it before. It is not a place you can go to just rest. There are many feelings that you cannot feel unless you are there. Even more beautiful than this is the sound of the waves which takes your sense of hearing to imagination so you can see everything beautiful when you close your eyes. The sound of these waves is so calm that you can sleep peacefully, and this is in addition to the gentle wind that shakes your hair and moves your eyelashes without you even trying. When you walk or sleep on the sand of this sea you feel that this sand is better than a thousand feather pillows. This place is unimaginable in its wonders and that's why it is my favorite place.

3rd Place Writing - High School: Grades 9-12

Punta Cana

by: Valerie Gomez Rojas

Verona Area High School - Verona Area School District

In the eastern coast of the Dominican Republic there is a beautiful place. Is a place with water and sand. Where you can relax and be yourself. Is something else that a casual beach. There the anxiety, stress and all of the problems disappear. When you close your eyes you can hear the sound of the waves. You can feel the texture of the sand in you feet and the cold air drying the water from your body. When I was on the plane I felt excited to see a new place. It was great to go with my family and have fun together. I lived all this knowing that Punta Cana would be my favorite place. Punta Cana is a magical place for me.

