

Essay Contest – Win a \$2,500 Scholarship

Open to 11th and 12th graders in San Diego County

Your essay should thoughtfully answer any one of the following questions:

- 1) **Should the harbor seals be allowed to remain in the Children’s Pool in La Jolla?** Background: The seals that have dominated a section of La Jolla beach known as the Children’s Pool for many years were recently allowed to stay at least temporarily for fear that forcibly removing them would endanger their pups. The shore and sea wall constructed at the Children’s Pool were meant to create a protected swimming area but seals and seal lions discovered the advantages of the enclave. Their excrement has made the water in the area unhealthy for humans. A movement has fought for years to force the removal of the seals and a cleanup of the water, but the seals have their supporters, who see their removal as cruel.
- 2) **Should the government and taxpayers help pay for a new football stadium for the Chargers and San Diego State University?** Background: For years, the San Diego Chargers have advocated for a new football stadium and claimed that they will leave town if it is not built. Most other cities and regions that have constructed a new stadium in recent years have used some form of tax dollars to subsidize much of the construction. Should San Diegans pay for a new stadium? If so, how would you propose funding a new stadium? If not, would you prefer the Chargers leave or do you have a different idea?
- 3) **Should public school teachers be paid based on their performance? And, if so, how do you judge performance?** Background: School districts across the country are debating whether to pay some teachers more than others, based on how successful they are as teachers. It is called merit pay and it is highly controversial. Some say that the ways that teacher performance is often measured -- test scores -- are not a fair way to judge and pay teachers. Others believe that paying some teachers more will not change their performance or improve outcomes for students.

Official Rules:

1. Essays must be original work, typed, 1,000 words or less and must be received on or before Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009.
2. To enter, students must live in San Diego County, be enrolled in an accredited high school in San Diego County, and be in 11th or 12th grade.
3. The student must write the essay and any quotations or copyrighted material must be identified properly.
4. Scholarships can be used for any college, university, or trade school.
5. Each student may only submit one essay.
6. Essays will be judged on insightfulness, supporting facts and evidence, development of ideas and style.
7. Submit your essay preferably via email to camille@voiceofsandiego.org. You will receive a confirmation of receipt within 24 hours. If you do not, contact the voice office at 619.325.0525. We will also accept essays by U.S. mail to voiceofsandiego.org Essay Contest, 2508 Historic Decatur Rd, Ste 105, San Diego, CA 92106.
8. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, school you attend, and grade level (11th or 12th) in the email or, if mailing, on a cover sheet. Please do not have that information on your actual essay, as essays will be reviewed and judged without identifying information.

Questions about the process of the essay contest should be sent to camille@voiceofsandiego.org. Questions or guidance about specific essays will not be answered. Winner will be notified by February 11, 2009 and the five finalist essays will be published on the voiceofsandiego.org website during the week of February 20th. Thank you for your participation.