

## IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

# Congratulations to our 2012 Essay Contest Winners!



### High School First Place

## LANALA HAYES

9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • PHILLIS WHEATLEY HIGH SCHOOL • HOUSTON, TEXAS

"I was a kid with no thought of what I would be doing after high school, a kid who didn't care about my grades... But, soon enough, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program helped to change me... I was starting to think of what would happen if I didn't get my high school diploma or if I didn't get enough credits. What type of job or college would I get into? If I didn't go to a good college would it affect the type of job I could apply for? Would I have to work at a fast food place all my life?... I started trying harder in school, striving for A's and B's, and my teachers took notice."



### High School Second Place

## SADE HARNSBERRY

10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • E.L. FURR HIGH SCHOOL • HOUSTON, TEXAS

"Before I became a tutor in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, I lacked patience and I got upset if I had to wait for an absurd amount of time. I realized that my tutees are only in second grade and they are still learning, so they will get off task... I also had to remember to be slow to anger because it wouldn't be a good way to get the tutees' attention. My tutees will do what they see me do, so I have to do what I want them to do."



### High School Third Place

## OMAR GALVAN

10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • E.L. FURR HIGH SCHOOL • HOUSTON, TEXAS

"I finally got to see how teachers struggle just to teach, because I tutor younger students, and it's a struggle... I see all the little children eager to learn and that shows me that I shouldn't let go of opportunities that easily... The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has helped me change not only in the classroom but also helped me open up my eyes to the real world and how we need to change to leave a good example for the younger ones behind us."

### High School Honorable Mentions

**JACQUELINE DAVIS** – 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE  
SOUTH SAN ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

**BRITNEY SOLOMON** – 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE  
JAMES MADISON HIGH SCHOOL • HOUSTON

Scan this code to see the full essays and learn more about the IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program!



[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)



### Middle School First Place

## MARÍA ARMENDARIZ

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • DR. JAVIER SAENZ MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

"Pre-kinder kids calling me 'Ms. María' isn't something I thought I would ever hear. I felt important, wanted and needed by someone in a positive way. I have learned that it is a privilege to be in this program and not to mess it up because my tutees from the elementary school really need my help in order for them to succeed... My tutees not only served as a learning tool for me, but they also served as a motivation for me to want to be someone special in life. That's how my life changed since I got in this program."



### Middle School Second Place

## YAMILETH GONZALEZ

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • DR. JAVIER SAENZ MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

"I used to feel worthless and that I was not good at anything I did... Coming into this school year, things weren't looking so great for me. It seemed like no one needed me or wanted me... I see a lot of myself in my tutees because I also used to struggle with math and reading... They make me realize that I *am* needed and I *am* wanted by someone... I can honestly put my head up high and say proudly that Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has made a huge difference in my life."



### Middle School Third Place

## PEDRO SANCHEZ

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • DR. JAVIER SAENZ MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

"I was very nervous to start school because my English was not fluent... I often held my head down, almost ashamed of being myself... I was assigned to a teacher where I would have three kids who were impatient, stubborn and easily distracted – sort of like me in my regular classes. I soon began to comprehend that my behavior in school was something that needed to change because I was affecting not only my classmates and teachers, but also myself... I hold my head up high now, and I thank the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program for that sense of accomplishment."

### Middle School Honorable Mentions

**EMILY DURAN** – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

**RASHAARD SHEATS** – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • JOHN F. KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL • ATLANTA

**JOSUE REYES** – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • ANN RICHARDS MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

**ATZHIRY GUTIERREZ** – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

**AYLIN KOVAR** – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • ALAN B. SHEPARD MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

**ALBERTO MARTINEZ** – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • DOMINGO TEVIÑO MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

**JUANITA FLORES** – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • J.D. SALINAS MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

**JULIE ALDERETE** – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • LORENZO DE ZAVALA MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS

**FLOR RIVERA** – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE • IRENE M. GARCÍA MIDDLE SCHOOL • LA JOYA, TEXAS