

IDRA Valued Youth Partnership Congratulations to our 2023 Essay Contest Winners!



High School First Place

MARIAH RODRÍGUEZ

11TH GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL •
ECTOR COUNTY, TEXAS

"Every time I walk into their classroom and see their excitement coming to me, to read or work on their sight words or help them understand brings me so much joy. It shows me I'm doing my best, and they actually want to learn with me."



High School Second Place

CARLY OLIVER

10TH GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL •
ECTOR COUNTY, TEXAS

"Before VYP, I would never talk to anyone I didn't know, and I was always scared to speak my mind. Answering simple questions during class was challenging. But now, I know that my opinions are important, and I won't get anywhere if I keep my questions to myself. I am more brave now and have more confidence. Being in VYP has shown me that my presence matters, and I do have a meaning in a student's life one way or another. This class has shown me how much meaning I can have in the world, and it makes me extremely proud."



High School Third Place

ALINA LOZANO

10TH GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL •
ECTOR COUNTY, TEXAS

"What people don't understand – and I wish everyone could see it from my point of view – is that the little kids you get assigned aren't just little kids, they become a family. You form a special bond with the littles throughout the year of working with them... Getting into the program has made me realize that I want to continue working with kids in the future. I am so glad and thankful that I was introduced to the program, because it has shown me a different perspective of how teachers actually deal with us."

High School Honorable Mention

BRIANNA RODRÍGUEZ – 12TH GRADE • ODESSA HIGH SCHOOL • ECTOR COUNTY ISD, TEXAS



Middle School First Place

MICHELLE RAMOS

8TH GRADE • ABRAHAM DWIGHT MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

"When I started encouraging my tutees, I saw their confidence level rise. As an example... I was grading their papers when I realized that all my tutees got 100s... They all looked at me in disbelief. They couldn't believe that they had accomplished such a thing... Their faces lit up, and they were as happy as they could be... It made me happy because when I think back at my younger self, I didn't have anyone who congratulated me for my accomplishments, no one was happy for me, and now I realize that me being their tutor and congratulating them will help them feel better about themselves and will help them be even more confident."



Middle School Second Place

DAYNAH RAMOS

8TH GRADE • ALAN B. SHEPARD MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

"The IDRA Valued Youth Partnership is an amazing program... I have learned things from my students too, because when I was in elementary, I was not the best kid. But I have learned from that. They [my tutees] have really made me a better person. They have made me more kind, respectful and patient. I now keep my grades up only to A's and B's to set a better example for them."



Middle School Third Place

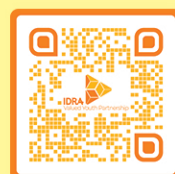
BRIANNA GARZA

8TH GRADE • ALAN B. SHEPARD MIDDLE SCHOOL • SAN ANTONIO

"I've always wanted to be able to help kids with things that I used to struggle with as a kid. The whole experience being a tutor makes me feel great. But the thing that sticks out to me the most is the way the kids [tutees] light up when they see me and how they thank me for helping them throughout the day. The thing that gets me up in the morning is the kids. Every morning I get up because I know I have to tutor them, and they depend on me to help them with their work... I think it's what makes the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership amazing."

Middle School Honorable Mention

HAILEY AL-KAYALI – 8TH GRADE • ABRAHAM KAZEN MIDDLE SCHOOL •
SAN ANTONIO



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