



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sterling Student Wins VFW Scholarship

Rachel Lahowetz, a junior at Ross S. Sterling High School, was selected as the winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Voice of Democracy competition for the state of Texas at the VFW Midwinter Roundup convention in Austin January 30.

In January, Lahowetz was selected as the first place winner for District 4 and spent a weekend in Austin with the other top 12 state finalists. The group visited the State Capitol, the Bob Bullock Museum, the Texas State Cemetery and LBJ Presidential Library.

At the awards banquet, Lahowetz was presented with the first place award for the state level that included a plaque and \$12,000 in scholarship money. She will now advance to represent Texas at the National Voice of Democracy competition in Washington D.C. She also presented her speech in front of the 450 attendees of the banquet.

While in Washington D.C., Lahowetz will join the other national finalists and spend four days visiting monuments, museums and the White House. The national winner receives an additional \$30,000 in scholarship money.

She has also been invited to attend the Spirit of America Youth Leadership Program at Valley Forge this summer. This is a four-day conference for high school students to interact with experts on citizenship, democracy, the free enterprise system, the judicial system and the American political process. The program includes thought-provoking lectures, historical tours and experiential workshops that are all designed to develop leadership skills.



Rachel Lahowetz, a junior at Ross S. Sterling High School, shows off the plaque presented to her as the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy competition winner for the state of Texas. She will advance to represent Texas at the national competition in Washington, D.C.

The VFW established the Voice of Democracy program in 1947. The competition is open to all high school students, 9th through 12th grade. Students write and record speeches on a specific topic. "My Vision of America" was the topic for this year's competition. Students submit their entries to their local VFW. The entries are graded on published criteria, and winners are selected at the local (Post) level. The winners move on to the district level, then to state and finally to the national competition. Information and rules are available at the VFW website, www.vfw.org/VOD.

This year there were 2700 entries in Texas. This is the first time that the Baytown post (Robert R. Tuck, Post 912) has had a participant win at the district level, and the first time the district has had a winner at the state level.

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