

VFW Names 2022 National Youth Scholarship Winners

New York high school junior takes home first place \$30,000 scholarship

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Tonight, during the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) virtual Parade of Winners, the organization proudly presented more than \$211,000 in scholarships and awards as it named the national winners of its 2022 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth scholarship competitions.

For the the second year in a row, the VFW virtually hosted its Parade of Winners award show, sponsored by [Twisted X](#), live on Facebook. The event featured the 53 national VFW Department (state) winners, along with a virtual message from the Twisted X CEO and president, Prasad Reddy.

Streaming live from the iconic Statue of Liberty in New York, New York, VFW National Commander Fritz Mihelcic was joined by VFW Auxiliary President Jean Hamil to announce this year's national Voice of Democracy first place winner, Daniela Mare, and award her with the top prize of a \$30,000 scholarship. Mare, a junior at Sachem High School North in Lake Ronkonkoma, New York, was sponsored by VFW Post 9486 and its Auxiliary in Centereach, New York. [Watch as she delivered her winning essay](#) during this evening's ceremony on this year's theme, "America: Where Do We Go from Here?"

Second place winner Kinley Bollinger, a senior at Cody High School in Cody, Wyoming, sponsored by VFW Post 2673 and its Auxiliary, located in Cody, Wyoming, was awarded the \$16,000 Charles Kuralt Memorial Scholarship, while Crissa Esse, a senior at Inter-City Baptist in Allen Park, Michigan, who was sponsored by VFW Post 9283 located in Southgate, Michigan, was named the third place winner and awarded the \$10,000 VFW Scholarship. All other state winners received at least a \$1,000 college scholarship. [See the complete list of 2022 Voice of Democracy national winners.](#)

"While we weren't able to meet in person again this year, we didn't let that stop us from

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taking this presentation to Daniela to ensure we celebrated everything this year's winners have accomplished," said VFW National Commander Fritz Mihelcic. "This evening's event successfully shined the spotlight on both Daniela and all of our VFW Department (state) winners across the nation. The VFW was honored to present America's top high school students with more than \$211,000 in scholarships and awards, bringing this year's grand total to more than \$3.4 million presented at the national, state and local levels of our youth essay competitions."

Also featured during tonight's virtual awards ceremony was the 2022 Patriot's Pen first place winner, Syed Ali. Sponsored by VFW Post 1982 in New Iberia, Louisiana, Ali was awarded the top Patriot's Pen award of \$5,000 and [delivered his winning essay](#).

The Patriot's Pen second place winner, Josephine Althoff, sponsored by VFW Post 5331 in Cedar Hill, Missouri, will receive a \$4,000 award, while third place winner Eva Kolomyski, sponsored by VFW Post 9024 in Woodbury, Minnesota, will receive a \$3,500 award. [See the complete list of 2022 Patriot's Pen national winners](#).

[Learn more about the VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen programs here](#).