

# Philip F. Haxel, Sr. Patriotism Award 2014 Essay Contest

## Winners & Recipients of the Baton of Patriotism

Perry Morkovsky, Online Winner, 5th Grade  
Morkovsky Home School  
Bel Air, Maryland 21015



Perry - Honor & Courage!

“Love, Respect, Honor and Courage”

When I place my hand upon my heart, I am reminded of the love that I feel for my country. As I look up at the American Flag, I am reminded of the respect I have for what it symbolizes. For me, the white stars on a sky of blue represent the heavens above looking down on us. The stripes of red represent the blood that was, is, and will be shed by all who sacrifice to protect us, and the stripes of white represent the purity our nation should strive for every day.

When I recite "The Pledge of Allegiance," it is more than just words to me. It is a reminder of what a great honor it is to be a citizen of "the land of the free and the home of the brave." To maintain this honor, I must be willing to do something that will be difficult or even dangerous. By definition, this is what courage means. To say, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," I am promising to be courageous. I am promising to have the courage to be loyal to my country and the values it was founded on. I am promising to have the courage to be responsible and to actively participate in our government. I can currently do this by studying the history and foundation of our nation. Historical Knowledge will give me the courage to protect those values when I am able to vote. Having the courage to be a nation "under God" means that our Creator gives us the freedom to choose our own path on Earth, even though He has already chosen one for us. This is why it is important that we courageously stand by the values our country was founded on, so we will never be divided. Our freedoms will continuously be protected, and our rights will always be preserved. By performing these acts of courage, we will be helping to keep our country strong.

By reciting the Pledge of Allegiance daily, I am blessed with a constant reminder that it will always take love, respect, honor and courage to keep our home, the United States of America, indivisible and free.

\*\*Sources:

- [www.homeschoolpool.info](http://www.homeschoolpool.info)
- [www.americanflagfoundation.org](http://www.americanflagfoundation.org)
- [www.constitutionus.com](http://www.constitutionus.com)
- [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

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Irma Caguana, Grade 5  
John Ruhrah Elementary Middle School  
701 Rappolla Street  
Baltimore, MD 21224; Baltimore City  
Principal: Mary Donnelly



Irma - Proud American!

### What the Pledge Means to Me!

The Pledge of Allegiance means a lot to me. It means that I'm free and no one can judge me. When I say the Pledge every morning, I'm promising my country to be loyal to it. I'm promising to follow the laws. I'm promising to respect the Country and the people who live in the United States. We united, no matter where we come from or what our skin color is. We are one united nation, we help each other and have each other's backs. We believe God is with us and He blesses us. Nothing can hurt us because we are powerful. As hard as it is, we move as the great nation we are.

My family and I can live here peacefully because we have liberty. I can know that people will not judge me or where I come from. I love it here. The United States has Justice. Justice makes anything wrong right. Justice makes my family and me feel safe because if something bad happens, I know there will be justice. Also, justice is for all the people, not just for Americans who were born here.

We are one big family with God on our side. So the Pledge means a lot to me and my family. Every morning when I say the Pledge, I feel proud of being an American.

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Angel Scott, Grade 5  
Church Creek Elementary School  
4299 Church Creek Road  
Belcamp; Harford County, MD 21017  
Principal: Ms. Kim Spence



Angel - Pledge is a promise!

### What the Pledge of Allegiance Means To Me

The wording of the Pledge of Allegiance has been changed 3 times before its version today. I think the pledge means to honor those who have fought for our rights and freedom. It's a salute and thank you to the army of soldiers. Some words that changed include "the flag of the United States" which replace "my flag," "of America,"

and "under God" and I think they made the right choice of revising. To me, the pledge means to be proud of freedom (with liberty and justice for all). My rewording of the Pledge of Allegiance is: I promise and devote my love to this country with liberty and justice for all.

The pledge is showing respect for the United States of America. I think all people, not just schools, should recite the pledge because of respect. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America" to me means I am giving my allegiance to the freedom symbol of the country. "And to the republic for which it stands" means to the state and government. "One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all" means one nation, under God, undivided with freedom and fairness for everyone. Overall, the pledge to me means honoring the country, the government, and those who fight for us.

When I say the pledge, I think of 50 states united to keep our country together. I also think of freedom, rights, liberty and justice. The phrase, "I pledge allegiance" stands out to me because it's like a promise. In everyday life, we all make promises to people. But not all of us choose to keep them. The pledge is one promise that we should all try to keep. It is a promise that everyone makes and I think we all should strive to keep it. Promises can be anything, like a pledge or oath and we don't just say them, we can think about them. Freedom, liberty and justice are also words that stand out because without them, the United States wouldn't be what it is today.

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- *Kudos to Perry for **providing his sources**, as requested, for evaluating research.*
- *Kudos to Irma and Angel for titling their essay the closest to what it should have been.*

**NOTE FOR THE FUTURE:** *The actual title of each essay should have been **"What the Words in the Pledge of Allegiance Mean to Me,"** from the instruction letter. Please let your teacher know.*