Exchange Club of Newport Harbor

**Young Citizenship Essay Award**

**2025 - 2026**

According to the National Exchange Club, the ***Young Citizenship Award*** is presented to students with a good attitude, academics, service, leadership, and sportsmanship, as well as the demonstration of respect for people, property, and the law.

**GENERAL PURPOSE**

The Young Citizenship Essay Award contest aims to:

1. **Promote Civic Awareness**: Encourage students to explore and understand the principles of good citizenship and the importance of civic engagement.
2. **Foster Critical Thinking**: Help students develop critical thinking and writing skills as they reflect on what it means to be a responsible citizen.
3. **Encourage Personal Reflection**: Motivate students to consider their own roles and responsibilities within their communities and how they can contribute positively.
4. **Recognize Excellence**: Identify and reward outstanding essays that demonstrate a deep understanding of citizenship and articulate well-thought-out ideas.
5. **Celebrate Diversity**: Honor diverse perspectives and experiences, showcasing the unique insights of students from different backgrounds.
6. **Inspire Future Leaders**: Encourage students to become active and informed citizens who will contribute to their communities and the broader society.

By participating, students gain a deeper appreciation for the values of citizenship and the impact they can have as engaged members of their community.

### REQUIREMENTS

Students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades are invited to write an essay on citizenship. The school site may decide which of these grade level participate.

This year's theme is " **What makes a good American citizen, and how can daring to dream help you make a positive difference in your community, school, or nation?”**

All students from the same school must respond to the same prompt.

### SELECTION PROCESS

School designates a teacher to review and judge entries. We have found teachers have a superior sense of selecting the winners based on the above specified attributes. We will recognize and award the 1st to 3rd place entries from each school.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

Our submission deadline is **March 13, 2026.** Please email the essays to Cynthia Strasmann, at Cynthia.Strasmann@gmail.com.

**STUDENT RECOGNITION**

We recognize and award students at a flag deck ceremony in mid – April to early May. During the ceremony, a few members will present prizes and certificates to the winners, briefly discussing the awards. Some schools may choose to have winners read their essays, with prior arrangement.

**FIELD OF HONOR STUDENT PROGRAM**

Let us know if you would like your 1st place recipient(s) to be considered in reading their essay at our annual Field of Honor Student Program at Castaways Park in Newport Beach on Thursday, May 21, 2026.