

# 2021 Utah PTA & National Guard Essay Winners

## "Why I am Proud of my Veteran"

Elementary School Winner   Kinley Faith Gorringer

4<sup>th</sup> Grade   Meadow Elementary

Kinley Faith Gorringer is nine years old and is in fourth grade at Meadow Elementary. She was born in

Orem, Utah and has lived in Lehi, Utah her whole life. She lives with her mom and dad and older

brother Colton. Kinley has a dog named Finn and 6 chickens that like to let her hold them. Her favorite

color is purple and her favorite treat is ice cream.

Kinley just started learning how to bake and she loves it! She likes to paint and play with her brother in her free time. Her favorite things to do with her family are play games and go camping. Kinley has

played the piano since she was 6 years old. She likes to help people be happy by making them laugh.

Her mom and dad think she is really funny and says a lot of hilarious things that make them laugh everyday. Something interesting about Kinley is that she has broken the same arm twice. Her parents say she needs to stay away from bikes and monkey bars!!! When Kinley grows up she wants to be a physical therapist some day.

### **KINLEY'S WINNING ESSAY**

#### **"Why I Am Proud of My Veteran"**

My name is Kinley and I am very proud of my veteran. My favorite veteran is my dad and he is in the Utah Air National Guard. I want to tell you about some of the reasons why I am very proud of him.

My dad is a very hard worker and when he gets to work he works really fast to get things done. I'm sure he gets tired some days but he does it anyway. The second reason I am proud of him is that he chose to be in the military and not many people want to be in the military. For example, me, because I want to be a physical therapist when I grow up and not a military girl. Third, he serves our community. I feel safe knowing that he is protecting our community. He also serves our family. He serves our family because he makes money so we can eat and have a house, clothes and electricity. Fourth, my dad is brave. He is brave because he has to go on



trips across the country alone. That would be really scary for me but not for him. Fifth, he makes a lot of sacrifices. Like the time he got deployed for six months

when I was four. I missed him a lot! I was happy we got to do video calls though because he was on the other side of the world.

Now I am going to share a little poem that I wrote for all the veterans around the whole world.

Thank you veterans here and there.

We love you more than we can share.

You are kind, true and brave.

And many lives you help to save.

We love you veterans here and there.

We love you veterans everywhere!!!!

THANK YOU VETERANS!!!!

Middle School Winner

Jaeli Adams

9<sup>th</sup> Grade Snow Canyon Middle School

Jaeli Adams is a ninth-grader at Snow Canyon Middle School in St. George. She loves animals. In her spare time, she likes to read, ride horses, and hang out with the family pets. She also enjoys attempting to write books. Jaeli likes running in both cross-country and track. She hopes that one day she can work with animals as a professional job, and is thinking about K-9 training with either the military or police.



Jaeli is proud to come from a long line of military veterans, and enjoys learning about their victories and challenges. Her mother, father and grandfather served in the Army and in the Marine Corps. They have suffered injuries, physically and mentally, but continued on. She is proud to be the daughter and granddaughter of strong veterans.

### **JAELI'S WINNING ESSAY**

My family has many veterans in it. Both my mother and father have served, as well as my grandfather. They have all been in wars, including the recent Afghanistan war. My family has served in both the army, and in the marine corps. They have suffered injuries, both physically and mentally, but they continued. I am proud to be the daughter of these strong people, who did hard things over and over again. Who fought for what they believed in, even when it was hard.

I am proud of my veterans because they are even in the military. The military has many trials that tests each soldier. Even through it was hard to continue in the military, every time their contracted time was up, they reenlisted because they knew they wanted to fight for their country. They knew that to make a change, you must be ready to make it happen, rather than rely on others to make it happen. They stood in what they believed in, and they believed in freedom so they fought for it.

I love hearing the stories of my family, of the struggles and the triumphs of their careers. I love hearing about the lessons they have learned, and honored to have them taught to me. They have taught me the importance of standing up to make a necessary change, but they have also taught me the difference of standing up for a reason, and standing up just to stand up. Hearing their stories teaches me lessons that I would not have been able to learn easily without their help. These veterans are the best teachers, because of the many struggles they have gone through. It is encouraging to hear about how they dealt with their problems, and their ideas on how to deal with other problems that maybe they have not faced.

I love watching how my veterans are not afraid of anything. When a problem comes their way, they deal with it with logic and reasoning, rather than opinion like most people. They back up their side with research, and they are always prepared. I love how they are ready and prepared for any situation, whether good or bad, and are always able to handle it.

I am proud of these people who did not give up. Military training is ruthless. It can be exhausting, it can drag you down mentally, but still these people have pushed through it. They have given training and the military all they've got, even when it seemed endless and impossible. I am proud to say that I have seen these people. I have seen the struggles that the military still has them going through today. I have seen them not only survive the struggles, but they thrive. They make the most of their lives, and I am proud to call these people family.

High School Winner     McKenna Dillingham

12<sup>th</sup> Grade   Viewmont High School

Hi, my name is McKenna Dillingham. I live in Centerville, Utah. I've lived here for 15 years. I am a senior at Viewmont High School. My dad is a captain in the Utah Air National Guard and my mom is a CPA. I am the oldest child in my family. I have two younger sisters. I also have a dog, a cat and a bunny.



I like to read, play sports, play card games and listen to music. I am currently doing an internship at a veterinary clinic, and I have two jobs. I also enjoy playing the piano. I plan to go to college after I serve a mission.

## **MCKENNA'S WINNING ESSAY**

At the bus stop I see a man in the distance wearing a field uniform, he waits for everyone to hop on before he gets on and takes a seat at the back. At the park I see an old man in a wheelchair with visible scars but who bears a wide grin. At the grocery store I see a young lady wearing combat boots cracked with mud, helping an old lady with an item on the top shelf. At school there is an old woman wearing an insignia pin, she is an onlooker, a protector who guides little children in the hallway. On my way to the local cemetery, I pass an office building where there is a young man with a high and tight cut opening doors for civies.

In the cemetery I stoop down to look at some headstones their pictures- a man in a uniform wearing it honorably, an old man with visible scars, in a wheelchair smiling, an old woman wearing an insignia pin proudly, a young lady with combat boots on her feet, and a young man with a high and tight cut. This is why I am proud of veterans. Because they put others first. They protect us and are the reasons for what we have today. They are honest and good. They respect civilians and are respectable themselves. They love their country and its people.

I am proud to have a veteran in my home. He is an example to me. He protects me. He is strong and brave. He is a hard worker. He pushes me to be better. He loves our family. He brings me joy. He is a peace maker. He is my friend. He is also my father. This is why I am proud of my veteran. This is why I love my veteran too.