

CHARACTER INTEGRITY  
VALUES  
HONESTY  
TRUST  
FAITH

# Laws of Life



THE GEORGIA  
ROTARY CLUBS  
LAWS OF LIFE  
ESSAY CONTEST  
**2019**

***Celebrating 20 Years in Georgia!***

**Over Half A Million Laws of Life Essays Written**

## The Contest

Since 1998 the Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest has successfully been a leader of character education and ethical literacy for students throughout the state. The contest encourages students to see themselves and others in a new perspective so that they may live their best, most compassionate, and most courageous lives.

The contest encourages students to uncover their unique qualities and articulate how they demonstrate them in their lives. As a signature program of the Rotary clubs in Georgia, the contest takes Rotary's emphasis on ethics, education, and advanced literacy into schools and classrooms. The contest is offered free to high schools and fulfills the state of Georgia's mandated character education requirements for high schools.

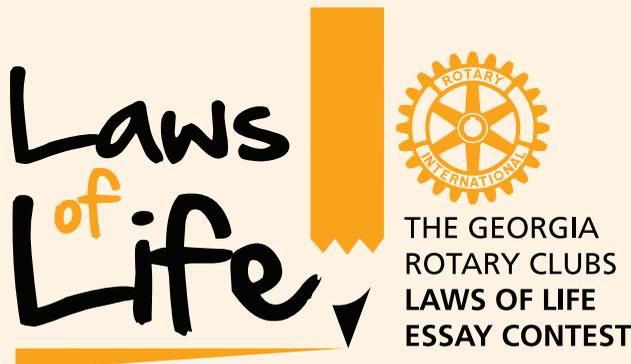
The original Laws of Life contest was started by the late Sir John Templeton, a pioneer in financial investments and a distinguished philanthropist. Templeton believed there are a set of rules, ideals, and principles, or "laws of life," that should guide one in living a full and joyous existence. He created the program to encourage young people to reflect on these principles. The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is the largest essay contest of its type in North America – over 675,000 essays have been written since 1998.

## Facts and Impact

For the 2018-2019 contest, **44,185** students from **69** high schools wrote a Laws of Life essay partnering with **53** local Rotary Clubs. More than **100** community volunteers selected the **193** school and state-level student winners, and the contest presented **\$21,100** in student awards and teacher honoraria.

Why are these numbers important? Today's youth make tough decisions every day; positive character traits, empathy for others, and self-awareness provide a strong ethical foundation for these decisions.

Research shows character development is most successful when repeated, wide ranging, emotional, and reinforced by a network of family, community, and social reinforcements. This perfectly describes the network and impact of the Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest.



*The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is an outreach program of the Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to transform lives by promoting positive values and by building ethical literacy in students.*

*“A kind word is like a spring day.”*

We are very pleased to present the state-level winning essays from this year's Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest. As with past years, they are inspiring and reflect the wisdom of their authors.

To all those that have helped with the contest – teachers, school administrators, Rotarians, parents, and the students themselves – we are grateful for all that you have done to make the contest successful!

As you read through these essays, consider the *impact* of the contest. Consider the process these students went through to reflect upon, express and share their life experiences, lessons learned, and personal visions.

In addition to these state-level winning essays, the 186 grade and school-level winners are to be commended as well. Most of these school-level winners will be recognized at a local Rotary meeting and will recite their essay at that meeting. Consider the *impact* that recognition has on these students. Think also of the *impact* to those hearing their stories.

Of course, it is not just the winning essays that *impact* the authors. Each of the 44,185 essays written this year involved a student reflecting on a personal life lesson and character value important in their lives. For many of these students, there is a life-changing *impact* from the process of writing a Laws of Life essay.

Consider further that the Laws of Life Essay Contest is celebrating 20 years in Georgia! Over 675,000 essays have been written. Over half a million students, their parents, teachers, friends, and family have felt the power of this experience.

The *impact* of the contest also extends beyond just the students and schools. Rotarians and our community-at-large have also been inspired. They have shared a glance into the challenges, knowledge, hopes, and dreams of today's youth.

We hope that you, too, will be positively impacted by these essays.

Sincerely,

Ed Outlaw  
Board Chair, Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc., Member, Peachtree City Rotary Club

Carol J. Gray  
Executive Director, Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc & Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest, Member, Midtown Atlanta Rotary

# Reagan Parrish

Northside High School (Columbus) – 12th Grade

# State Winner

I have always been an early riser, and it's often dark as I drive to school. This day was no different, my hectic schedule looming. Following behind a truck, I saw something hurtling from the woods. Upon closer look, I could see an owl gliding directly towards the truck. Praying he would veer course, I watched in horror as a plume of feathers rocketed down the side of the truck. I knew he must be dead.

His body tumbled down the highway, landing in the ravine. I had to be sure he wasn't suffering, so I pulled off the road and grabbed my phone. Clicking on my flashlight, I went to search. He wasn't far, laying deathly quiet as I approached, his graceful wings folded at his side and his orbed eyes closed. It made me so sad, but I was glad I was at least there to give dignity to his passing. Kind of like a funeral, with me being the only attendee. Should I call animal control and at least have his body picked up? I knew it would be awful to drive by him that afternoon, or the days that followed.

Quickly, I took off my jacket to wrap him in. I reached toward him and was startled to see two huge eyes slowly open and stare directly into mine. Pain reflected in liquid pools, but he didn't try to move. I gently pushed my jacket under him, as he kept a steady gaze on my face. Surely he was paralyzed? I looked at his razor sharp talons. He could hurt me if he wanted to, but remained passive. As I fashioned a sling, he remained still, watching my every move. I carefully lifted him, expecting a fight, but he remained compliant. I struggled to the car under his weight and the weeds. Managing to get my car door open, I placed him on the seat. He still watched me, as if he knew that I was trying to help him.

When rescuing birds of prey in the past, we always took them to Auburn, so that's where I would go. If he was strong enough to survive a hit by a truck, he deserved a chance. They could either help him heal or help him transition peacefully. My mind raced at the thought of missing school; however, I knew what had to be done. As I drove, my passenger calmly watched me, as if he was silently rooting me on. I drove a bit faster.

The sun was coming up, and I raced my unlikely patient through the sliding glass doors. My owl passively laid in his makeshift sling watching my face as I turned him over to the Vet student, and they disappeared to the back. I stood there for a moment, wondering what to do next. Hours passed, and I heard nothing. Finally, the veterinarian poked his head out the door and waved. I entered and saw him, secure

## Law of Life

*"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."*

*-Theodore Roosevelt*

now in a metal cage, tubing coming from under his massive wings, monitors assessing his vitals. I walked over, noticing his eyelids were once again covering his wide, beautiful eyes. I could see his chest gently rising and falling. As I watched him, once again those lids slowly slid open, and his magnificent eyes trained on my face. His injuries included a broken wing, a concussion, and abrasions. The veterinarian assured me all were treatable providing he didn't go into shock. I gazed down at him, and slowly he closed his eyes, then opened them, as if he was affirming to me that he will fight and was thanking me for giving him a chance.

As I drove home, I knew I would suffer the consequences of an "unexcused" absence, but it was worth it. As Theodore Roosevelt surmised, "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing." I knew stopping to help the injured owl was the right thing, and doing the right thing, even when no one is looking, is always the correct choice.



### *Law of Life*

*“Be the catalyst of a memory someone loves.”*

I made an old woman cry. Now, I know what you are thinking, “What? How dare you make an elderly woman cry? How could you live with yourself?” I promise this did not occur because of the disrespectful actions attributed to my generation. Has anyone ever told you that you remind them of someone they knew? Whether their recollection is a good or bad memory, it is significant to whomever you are interacting with, and how this could impact them overall.

It was another day at my job, Walmart, when I noticed an elderly lady enter in our side door seeming lost. I put whatever I thought was more important to a halt and greeted her with Walmart’s customer service “ten-foot rule” (going up to the customer within ten feet of you with a big, happy smile and asking if they need any help finding anything). “How are you doing today, ma’am; may I help you find anything?” She stood still, staring at me as if she had just seen a ghost. (I am sure my monotonous tone was not too welcoming either.) Uncomfortable by her mannerisms, I asked again in a stern tone, hoping to strike her attention this time, “Ma’am, may I help you?” She quietly spurted the words, “y-you remind me of my granddaughter.” This did not help me understand this situation at all, and I was left even more puzzled than before. So many questions began to swirl in my head, and I became anxious

about what I should do next. I thought to myself, “Why would seeing someone that reminded her of her granddaughter make this poor old woman so distraught? Should I continue the conversation and comfort her? Is this any of my business? Should I just tell her to have a good day and go back to what I was working on earlier?” I needed to respond quickly, but I could only stand there, paralyzed, with the same dazed and confused expression she had upon our first encounter. I snapped out of my trance when soft tears began to shed down her sorrowful face. In this moment, I stopped trying to move her along into the store so that I could be left alone watering the plants or whatever was on my to-do list that day. I began to see her not just as a customer, but as a human.

I gathered my thoughts and asked her, “If you do not mind me asking, ma’am, why did me reminding you of your granddaughter shake you up so badly?” After a long pause, she sighed and explained to me that her granddaughter was one of the three victims of bullying at her high school. This tragically resulted in her suicide just this past Christmas break. I was lost to find the right comforting words to say, and I was heartbroken for this poor grandmother’s loss. She looked at me desperately and quietly asked me, “...May I hug you? I just want to hug her one last time...” Leaning in towards her, an overwhelming feeling of peace surrounded us.

I see plenty of customers come and go every single day at my job. Some faces I never see again while others I see a bit too much; now, however, I try to remind myself that first impressions are often wrong and that I, actually we all, have the power to be a catalyst of a memory someone loves: the power to leave a mark on someone’s world. Break the barrier by just asking how someone’s day was and actually engage on the routine conversation starter. This grandmother will forever change the way I interact with not only customers, but the general people I encounter every day outside of my job. A simple act of kindness could mean the absolute world to a suffering stranger.



# Christopher Thomas

Bremen High School – 11th Grade

# 2nd Runner-Up

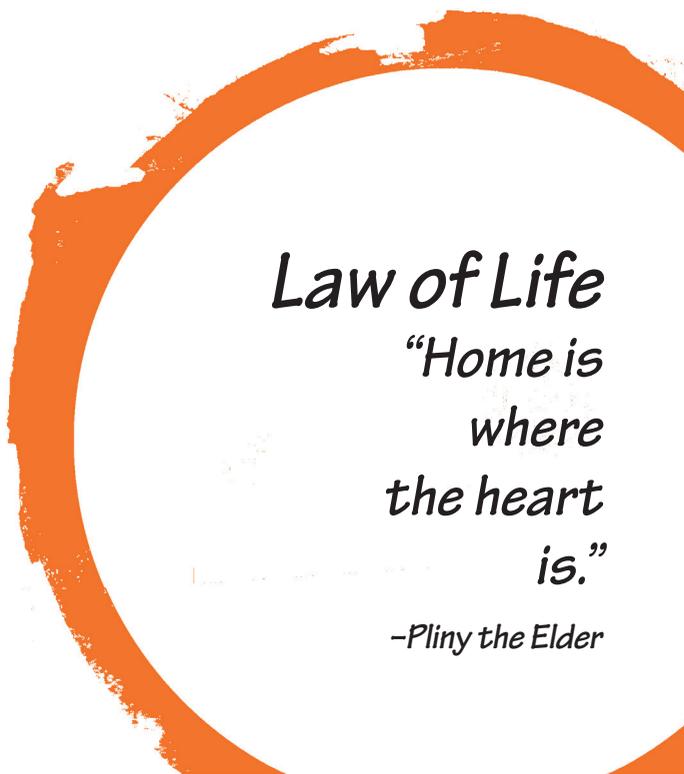
Just a Little Wind...

Roman philosopher Pliny the Elder is credited as coining the proverb, "Home is where the heart is." Although this proverb is over two thousand years old, I have recently found a great deal of validity within it. The morning of February 7th started out like any other school day: I woke up, got ready, and headed for school. "You might want a jacket; it looks like it's about to storm," my mom suggests as I head for the door. "I think it will be okay," I reply, half rolling my eyes. It looked like a normal storm, with maybe a little more wind. This was my first strike of ignorance.

When I got to school, I was informed that the school was under a tornado watch and that everyone is to follow the procedures for this situation. As I am sitting in the hallway, playing on my phone, I think to myself that this is a huge overreaction for just a little wind. My second strike of ignorance. The tornado watch eventually concluded, and I went about my day as I always do – that is until lunch. I am returning to lunch from getting some water when a friend of mine steps out of class. "Hey Chris, how is your house?" he questioned. I look at him puzzled, "Good, why wouldn't it be," I respond, confused as to why he would ask such a random question. Before I can get an answer, the teacher pulls him back into the classroom. I walk back to lunch, blowing off that entire encounter; surely it's not because of the little wind we had earlier that morning. This would be strike three, and I was about to be out. Eventually, my friend's question dug at me so much I finally called home. And this is when my world got turned upside down.

My mom picked up, promptly telling me that she and Dad were packing up what belongings they could and moving into a hotel. My jaw dropped. How could this be happening? This was my childhood home, the only place I had lived for the ten years I had been in Georgia. No matter how much I thought about it, I could not change the facts. My house was gone. Later, I would discover that the tornado had knocked a nearby tree over, causing it to land on our house and total our car. After school, my parents picked me up in a rental car, and we proceeded to where we would stay for the next couple of weeks – a local hotel near the highway. Who knew an old, dying tree could change a life so drastically?

I expected everything to be okay, that we would overcome this situation eventually, but what I did not expect was the immediate support our community showed us. Not moments after we got settled in the hotel our phones began to explode with calls and text



## Law of Life

*"Home is  
where  
the heart  
is."*

*-Pliny the Elder*

messages, asking what we needed or what they could do to help; some even just came by with supplies to help. I was blown away, never would I have imagined the response the community had to help us. Our measly hotel room, which only moments before was empty besides the few belongings we had brought from the house, was now crammed full of baskets overflowing with food, clothes, and home-cooked meals. One family even graciously opened up their home to us, leaving me speechless and flooded with emotion. At this moment I knew that I had not lost my home, but rather just a few walls and a roof which I had mistaken for a home.

Since this incident, I have had a different perspective on my community. I don't see it as a town of strangers, but rather an extended family, here for me no matter what happens. Even though I had thought that the old house was my home, this experience has taught me otherwise. My home is this community where I am loved and cared for, no matter what physically surrounds me. Home truly is where the heart is, or in my case, the hundreds of hearts that make up the community around me.



### *Law of Life*

*“The strongest man  
in the world  
is he who  
stands alone.”*

*–Henrik Ibsen*

#### Gone and Gone Again

As I see him walking down the long, almost endless walkway, my heart is a shattered glass vase. I promised myself I wouldn't cry, but tears fall down my face like a rushing waterfall, clearly expressing the pain that is ingrained in every single part of my body. I want to run to him, tell him I love him just one last time, and feel the comfort and protection of his hug, but my feet feel as if they turned into stone, and I am unable to move. I am left standing there, speechless, at the idea of my father walking away from me. The idea of me never seeing him again haunts my mind and every thought. I am horribly terrified of him leaving, and being gone forever. He has left me once before. The year was 2005. I was 3. Even as an adolescent, my father leaving is unbearable. No past experiences, memories, feelings, or moments even, could have prepared me for coping with the pain again. The year is now 2009. I am 7, and for the second time my father has been deployed to Iraq.

The nine months he was gone were dreadfully long. I remember every night watching the news with my mother and my brother to see if anything new had happened to his unit. I remember seeing the excruciating pain in my mother's eyes from not being able to talk to the man she loves for so long, and not even being able to decipher his condition all the way

across the world. Seeing her in pain made times even harder for me, and made the time waiting to see him again feel almost imperceptible. But I knew, even as youthful as I was, I would have to be strong for my mom. As slow as time was, I knew my father would come home eventually, and nothing in this world made me happier than that.

When he finally came home, things seemed different about who he was. He wasn't the jovial and happy dad I remembered. He seemed quiet, and in some ways in his own universe, where nobody could get him and pull him out of it. When my father came home, the doctors diagnosed him with PTSD and hypervigilance. The dad I once knew had transformed into somebody no one could truly understand. I wanted to understand why he was who he was, but the more I wondered, the more hopeless I felt. I was in a black hole of despair, and the only way I could come out was by finding the dad I once knew, and having that connection with him that I longed for and missed for 9 agonizing months.

Years passed by and my old father was still nowhere to be found. I knew this was hard for him, too. I could see the pain in his eyes, the longing for answers on why he felt this way and why he was suddenly a different man, a different Dad. It was tough for sure, but my dad fought and he fought hard. A tough childhood and over 20 years of military experience never took him down, never gave him lost hope, and his new state of mind wouldn't either. He began searching for answers himself, looking inside the problems and finding ways on how he could gain access to his true self – the person we all longed for. He began taking medicine and talking to psychiatrists, and doing anything in his power to overcome all the diverse obstacles he was facing. Finally, after years of fighting and fighting, the old Joshua came back to us. My Dad, after years of waiting, was officially and finally home.

After years of struggling and hardship, I had the connection with my father again that started to seem like a distant memory. My dad is a fighter, and he is the person in my life that has inspired me to never give up and always persevere. My dad is the strongest person I know, and as Henrik Ibsen once said, “The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.”



# Hannah Hernandez

Apalachee High School – 12th Grade

# 4th Runner-Up

## Actions

It's a known metaphor that actions speak louder than words. I didn't learn this at home, school, or even the mall. I learned this lesson at my job, Zaxby's. Events can change a life forever. I had been struggling emotionally and often felt like nobody cared about me. One event changed how I view people altogether, and opened up my mind to an extent that I could realize that it isn't always words that show how someone feels towards a person.

I have been working at my job for almost a year, but I never had an encounter with a customer that truly changed me the way one woman did. Normally when a person comes into Zaxby's, they don't have a positive attitude. They come in, get the food, leave, whatever. One night I was on drive-thru taking payments from people through the window. It was not a wonderful night for me. I had been struggling with my emotions, the thoughts that I wasn't enough, that nobody truly cared for me. It was all quite overwhelming for me. Not only was I struggling with my emotions, it was also freezing. It didn't matter how many layers of clothes I packed onto my tiny body, it was as cold as Antarctica and I was a walking icicle. Not to mention my fingers were numb and my lips were as purple as a plum. I had been dealing with the breath of Jack Frost stinging my skin for four hours. I had thirty minutes left before I could feel the kiss of warmth from the car's heater.

I opened the window and read the order. The woman in the warm car, bundled up in two coats, a scarf, fuzzy hat, gloves, and earmuffs, let out a muffled "Yes, ma'am." I giggled at the sight of her, but boy was I jealous of how warm she looked. I told her the total, and as I reached out to retrieve the money she was handing to me, she noticed my purple hands from not wearing any gloves. She instantly asked me with a serious face, "Where in the world are your gloves?" I smiled at her with my chattering teeth, "I haven't had the chance to buy any yet. I'm just too busy I guess." She pulls her hands back from mine, along with the money and she set it down. I looked confused and wondered what she had been doing.

As she struggled for a second I couldn't see much. Suddenly she stuck her bare hands outside her car window, holding the gloves and tried to put them into my hands that were still sitting there in the cold, waiting for her payment. Still confused, I looked at her with a blank face. Less muffled, she said, "Take these right now, put them on, and get yourself warm.

## Law of Life

*"Actions  
speak  
louder than  
words."*

You need these more than I do. Take them." I shook my head and denied the gloves respectfully and gratefully. "No ma'am, I'm okay. Thank you for the offer, I appreciate it though." She shook her head and insisted that I take the gloves from her. I denied again. She finally asked, "Why won't you take my gloves? I want you to be warm. You need these." In that moment, I realized she cared about me. A woman I had never met before, showed me she cared about my warmth. That night it registered in my head that words don't always mean everything. Sometimes it really is actions. She kept pushing her gloves to me so I would be able to finish the shift warm. Every day I would struggle and wonder if anyone truly cared for me. This woman changed my views on life. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of her and realize how grateful I am that she was able to show me that actions speak louder than words.



# 5th Runner-Up

Morgan Stroud

McIntosh High School – 10th Grade

## Law of Life

*“When we meet real tragedy in life, we can react in two ways—either by losing hope and falling into self-destructive habits, or by using the challenge to find our inner strength.”*

*—Dalai Lama XIV*

### Don't Forget Me

“Innocent,” “self-absorbed,” a “little careless” described me when I was around ten. “Careful,” “mature,” “grown-up” describe me at sixteen. Looking back, I cannot believe the personal growth I’ve encountered. People need to know the “new me,” who would do just about anything for my loved ones.

It was my ten-year-old Christmas morning. My family was sitting around the fireplace preparing to open presents when I suddenly said, “Wait! We can’t open presents until Grandad is here!” So my dad called his father who lived ten minutes away. My little sister and I were anxious and wanted to open our gifts, but not until Grandad came. “I’m sorry, girls, Grandad is sick and he doesn’t want to come over, so he’s just going to stay at his house for this Christmas,” announced my disheartened dad. My sister and I were extremely sad that he was missing Christmas with us for the first time ever, but we soon got over it as we ripped open the gifts from Santa Claus. Now, five or six years later, I realize that Grandad wasn’t sick in the way that we had thought. It wasn’t just a simple cold like we had previously believed. He had forgotten it was Christmas day. He forgot that he had to come over and watch his two precious granddaughters – his only grandchildren – open the presents Santa had

brought the night before. He forgot because of the vilest thing in the world: Alzheimer’s.

Alzheimer’s is the cruelest disease, not only to the person who has it, but also to the people around him. For my grandad, we had to move into a bigger house with him because he was not able to do everyday tasks himself anymore. He simply forgot how to do activities like making dinner or even taking a shower. We, his family, had to sacrifice living next to our best friends. For two young children, that was very hard to wrap our heads around. But we did it anyway to help our grandfather remain alive and well. Looking back at the circumstance we were in, it is the best thing that could have happened to me.

All of the self-growth I’ve accomplished over the last few years is just insane. Because my family has often entrusted me with watching out for Grandad, I have been forced to grow up. To be responsible for another human being is something that I’ve become used to. I’ve even picked my career path of neuropsychology because of my experiences with Grandad. I want to help more people just like him. Every day when I see my Grandad, I am reminded that he no longer knows who I am, or even who he is. These experiences have made me tougher; however, it also makes me vulnerable. I know how it feels to walk down to the basement and see my grandfather struggling to figure out what is going on and who these people in his house are. I struggle to understand how my dad can live with constantly having to tell his own father that he is his son and not “the devil in disguise.”

My family and I love Grandad, and we will do whatever needed to keep him safe. We have sacrificed so much just to keep him out of harm’s way. Dalai Lama once said, “When we meet real tragedy in life, we can react in two ways – either by losing hope and falling into self-destructive habits, or by using the challenge to find our inner strength.” I decided to find my inner strength and grow. Maturity and emotional growth are the key lessons to come from having to grow up with my grandad’s adversity toward the world.



# George A. Stewart Jr. Character in Action Award\*

**Haley Walker**  
Spalding High School – 12th Grade

“Disability does not mean inability.” This is a quote that has changed my life. I have a learning disability that affects my reading, writing, and spelling abilities. My second grade teacher realized that something was wrong. She met with my parents and asked for approval to have some testing done. It was then that we learned I had a learning disability. Each year my teachers and parents would meet to discuss whether I was ready to move on to the next grade.

I have always had a hard time accepting this personally. The fear of my classmates finding out and not liking me was always in the back of my mind. During elementary and middle school, there were many days that I would go home and cry because I felt I would never be as smart as my classmates. In elementary school, students had to read a total of 25 books and pass tests over them. My ability to read was not the best, so my lexile level was always a lot lower than the grade I was in. While most everyone in my class was getting books on grade level, I was having to select books that were several grade levels below my grade level.

At the beginning of my freshman year of high school, I read a report about my disability that was sent to my parents. I was crushed and devastated and felt like a failure. My family cried with me. My grandfather told me I could give up or I could prove everyone wrong. I believe that was a turning point in my life. My grandmother gave me a sign that read:

*When something bad happens, you have three choices:*

- 1. Let it define you.*
- 2. Let it destroy you.*
- 3. Let it strengthen you.*

I chose to let it strengthen me. I still have it on display in my room and use it as encouragement during difficult times. I have been very blessed to have a family that has loved, encouraged, and supported me. My grandmother and my aunt are both educators and have encouraged me my entire life. My aunt is a Special Education Director and has helped my mom, who is a nurse, to understand more about learning disabilities. They have also helped me with projects and strategies to overcome or work through my disabilities. Because technology came easy for me, I was encouraged to use it to my advantage in areas related to reading, writing, and spelling. My family has always encouraged me to believe in myself and my abilities.

I never wanted anyone to know about my learning disability, so what did I do? I always made



*Law of Life*  
*“Disability  
does not  
mean inability.”*

sure I turned in my work early when possible and made the best grades I could on my assignments and tests. I did every little bit of extra work that I could, especially during my high school years. I learned that I had to work extra hard and go the extra mile on classroom assignments and projects because classroom tests and standardized tests were very difficult for me. I also did all I could to not draw negative attention to myself. I was motivated and driven to be the best I could be in class and to give one hundred percent.

I am now beginning my last semester of my senior year. I feel I have had a successful high school experience. I am thankful for my family and teachers that have believed in me. I have even had some teachers in high school that have expressed surprise at my learning disability. This year I am in the Criminal Justice Program at the Griffin Regional College and Career Academy. Experiencing these successes has renewed a belief that my disabilities do not have to define my ability to be successful. Whether I go on to work in the criminal justice field or go into some other field, I know with hard work, courage, and determination I can find success by not letting my disability mean inability.

\* The George A. Stewart Jr. Character in Action Award, which carries a \$1,000 prize, is presented in conjunction with the Dunwoody Rotary Club to honor Dunwoody Rotarian George Stewart for his dedication to student character education and for his long-time service to the Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay Contest.



## 2018-2019 School Winners

### **Allatoona High School**

Issac Jacobsen, 12th Grade

### **Alpharetta High School**

Adriana Leger, 9th Grade

### **Apalachee High School**

Hannah Hernandez, 12th Grade

### **Arabia Mountain High School**

Mikayla Tucker, 11th Grade

### **Bainbridge High School**

Mikayla Kincaid, 10th Grade

### **Bremen High School**

Christopher Thomas, 11th Grade

### **Brookwood High School**

Hannah Kim, 11th Grade

### **Brunswick High School**

Chase Cody, 12th Grade

### **Carrollton High School**

Samantha Tumi, 12th Grade

### **Cass High School**

Anesiah James, 12th Grade

### **Cedar Shoals High School**

Radwan Jammoul, 12th Grade

### **Central Gwinnett High School**

Taylor Williams, 11th Grade

### **Central High School (Carrollton)**

Carlos Martinez-Perez, 12th Grade

### **Cherokee High School**

Sierra Blanton, 12th Grade

### **Clarkston High School**

Michael Robinson, 12th Grade

### **Columbus High School**

Kaylen Blankenship, 9th Grade

### **Dawson County High School**

Ethan Holtzclaw, 11th Grade

### **Deerfield-Windsor School**

Rishi Patel, 12th Grade

### **Dunwoody High School**

Mia Whitehurst, 10th Grade

### **Eagle's Landing High School**

Kamaria Horton, 12th Grade

### **East Cobb Ombudsman**

Gabriel Garuba, 11th Grade

### **Evans High School**

Jordan Marksberry, 11th Grade

### **Flowery Branch High School**

Alejandro Campo, 11th Grade

### **Forest Park High School**

Ashari Calloway, 9th Grade

### **Forsyth Central High School**

Cole Cochran, 11th Grade

### **George Walton Academy**

Swhani Rama, 10th Grade

### **Gilmer High School**

Tyler Kirkland, 9th Grade

### **Haralson County High School**

Gracie Dooley, 12th Grade

### **Hardaway High School**

Josephine Blackman, 10th Grade

### **Heritage High School**

Elizabeth Lee, 11th Grade

### **Independence High School**

Jade Williams, 12th Grade

### **Jackson High School**

Hunter Turner, 11th Grade

### **Kennesaw Mountain High School**

Mary Cannon, 10th Grade

### **LaFayette High School**

Lastasia Hyatt, 12th Grade

### **Lakeview Academy**

Celia Wilson-Patino, 9th Grade

### **Lamar County Comprehensive High School**

Brianna Jones, 11th Grade

### **Lambert High School**

Cindy Aiu, 11th Grade

### **Lassiter High School**

Neel Iyer, 10th Grade

### **M.E. Stilwell School of the Arts**

Abigail Bales, 10th Grade

### **Marietta High School**

Ella Schnatmeier, 10th Grade

### **McIntosh High School**

Morgan Stroud, 10th Grade

### **North Cobb High School**

Jack Fekete, 11th Grade

### **North Forsyth High School**

Zachary Feeney, 12th Grade

### **North Springs Charter High School**

Kayla Howell, 11th Grade

### **Northside High School (Columbus)**

Reagan Parrish, 12th Grade

### **Parkview High School**

Nathalia Rojas, 12th Grade

### **Pickens High School**

Pete Bryant Jr., 10th Grade

### **Redan High School**

Derrick Thomas, 10th Grade

### **Rockdale High School**

Niqoia Cohen, 10th Grade

### **Rome High School**

Laura McCurry, 12th Grade

### **Roswell High School**

Rhea D'Souza, 9th Grade

### **Shaw High School**

TaQuarus Eberhart, 12th Grade

### **Shiloh High School**

Cayla Giabriele, 9th Grade

### **South Forsyth High School**

Tarini Gajelli, 11th Grade

### **Spalding High School**

Haley Walker, 12th Grade

### **Thomas County Central High School**

Megan Schminky, 11th Grade

### **Thomasville High School**

Carson Cochran, 9th Grade

### **Thomson High School**

Jackson Hardy, 9th Grade

### **West Hall High School**

Ashlyn McLeod, 12th Grade

### **Westover High School**

Jacob Coleman, 9th Grade

### **Winder-Barrow High School**

Shawn Lee, 12th Grade

### **We would also like to thank the following schools for participating:**

Clarke Central High School  
 Habersham Ninth Grade Academy  
 Henry W. Grady High School  
 Lovejoy High School  
 Milton High School  
 New Manchester High School  
 Paul Duke STEM High School  
 Sequoyah High School

# 2018-2019 Georgia Laws of Life Teachers of Distinction

**We salute the school contest chairs who achieved an 80 percent or higher student participation rate.**

**Bremen High School**

Jessica Allen

**Forest Park High School**

Stephenia T. Hill

**Lamar County Comprehensive High School**

Carol R. Parrish

**Carrollton High School**

David Bryson

**Forsyth Central High School**

Antonia Alberg-Parisi

**Lambert High School**

Woody Van Treek

**Cass High School**

Amanda Ward-Wilborn

**George Walton Academy**

Wrynn Carson

**Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts**

Andrea Conaway/Lauren Mains

**Dawson County High School**

Lindsey Luchansky

**Haralson County High School**

Carol Fasick

**Northside High School (Columbus)**

Sonya Trepp-Fuller

**Deerfield-Windsor School**

Irmgard Schopen-Davis

**Hardaway High School**

Laura Clack

**Rome High School**

Amanda B. Howell

**Eagle's Landing High School**

Shannon Vessell

**Independence High School**

Linda Legros

**Thomas County Central High School**

Kensey Edgar

**We would also like to congratulate the English teacher of our State Winner:**

Ms. Jennifer Sparks-Gizzard,  
Northside High School (Columbus)

**As well as the English teacher of the George A. Stewart Award Winner:**

Mr. Mario Gilbert, Spalding High School

**Additionally, we congratulate our teachers that had 100% participation:**

Ms. Sonya Trepp-Fuller of Northside High School (Columbus)  
1,580 students wrote a Laws of Life essay

Mr. David Bryson of Carrollton High School  
1,547 students wrote a Laws of Life essay

**We would like to thank the following Rotary Clubs whose members volunteered their time to read essays:**

Rotary Club of Athens

Buckhead Rotary Club

Rotary Club of Columbus

Rotary Club of Conyers

Rotary Club of Dunwoody

Rotary Club of East Cobb

Rotary Club of Forsyth County

Rotary Club of Griffin

Henry County Rotary Club

Rotary Club of Jasper

Rotary Club of Lafayette

Lake Spivey/Clayton County Rotary Club

Lanier-Forsyth Rotary Club

Rotary Club of Lawrenceville

Marietta Metro Rotary Club

Marietta Rotary Club

Martinez Evans Rotary Club

Midtown Atlanta Rotary Club

Muscogee Rotary Club

North Columbus Rotary Club

Oglethorpe Rotary Club

Roswell Rotary Club

Rotary Club of South Forsyth

Rotary Club of Stone Mountain

Rotary Club of Vinings Cumberland

Rotary Club of Winder

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Laws  
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THE GEORGIA  
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