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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee and AZ529, Arizona's Education Savings Plan, Announce Statewide Essay Contest Winners**

**PHOENIX, AZ** – Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee honored 20 Arizona 5th and 6th grade students as winners of the 5th annual AZ529 Essay Writing Contest. The 20 winners represent different schools among district, charter, private schools, Bureau of Indian Education and homeschools, representing all of Arizona's 15 counties.

AZ529, Arizona's Education Savings Plan together with the Arizona State Treasurer's Office asked Arizona fifth and sixth graders: "What Is Your Dream Job and How Do You Plan on Achieving It in the Future?" The winners were selected from 627 essay entries from across the entire state. The essays were reviewed by a panel of judges and scored based on the ideas, organization and originality of the content provided.

"This year's contest reached every corner of our great state to emphasize that Arizona students are planning for their future education and preparing for their dream careers. It was inspiring to meet these ambitious student winners today as they are the future of our state," said Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee. "Each of the winners was awarded \$529 in an AZ529 savings account to advance their education and start the pathway towards their future careers."

The winners received \$529 towards a new or existing AZ529 Education Savings Plan. The amount \$529 was selected to pay homage to Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code, which created the AZ529 plan. The funds may be used for future educational expenses such as tuition for college, trade schools, or workforce development training.

"We received overwhelming participation from across the state with 627 essays received by students, all of which highlighted the dreams and aspirations of Arizona's next generation," said Arizona Treasurer Kimberly Yee. "Since I began administering the AZ529 Plan, a remarkable 46,600 new AZ529 accounts have been opened in only 48 months. More families are seeing what a difference it makes to set aside funds for their child's future education and the endless opportunities that come with savings."

The AZ529 Education Savings Plan offers a tax-free approach to setting money aside for college, community college, vocational training, trade school and other educational avenues for high school graduates. Arizona residents can receive a dollar-for-dollar state tax deduction for contributions made to an AZ529 account each year, of up to \$2,000 per beneficiary or \$4,000 per beneficiary, depending on filing status. Funds earned over time will remain tax-free when used for a wide variety of covered educational expenses. Additionally, 529 plan beneficiaries can now rollover unused funds into a Roth IRA, up to a \$35,000 lifetime limit free of income tax or tax penalties. Friends and family members may also add to a child's AZ529 Plan at any time and earn the same tax benefits for themselves.



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## **2024 AZ529 Essay Writing Contest Winners:**

### Apache County:

- Allison, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Round Valley Elementary School

### Cochise County:

- Judah, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Homeschool

### Coconino County:

- Raegyn, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Marshall Elementary School

### Gila County:

- Lewis, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Rice Intermediate School

### Graham County:

- Florence, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Homeschool

### Greenlee County:

- Payge, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Blue Elementary School

### La Paz County:

- Marthena, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Salome Elementary School

### Maricopa County:

- Ananya, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, New Vistas Center for Education
- Ethan, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, BASIS Chandler Charter School
- Grace, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Desert Trails Elementary School
- Patrick, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Gilbert Christian School

### Mohave County:

- Carson, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Starline Elementary School

### Navajo County:

- Asu-Ebob, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dishchii' bikoh Community School

### Pima County:

- Aaron, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Basis Oro Valley Charter School
- Abigail, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Esperero Canyon Middle School
- Jasmine, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Twin Peaks K-8 School

Pinal County

- Kazimir, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, ASU Preparatory Academy in Pinal County

Santa Cruz County

- Daniel, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Wade Carpenter Middle School

Yavapai County

- Sophia, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Pronghorn Ridge Middle School

Yuma County

- Juancarlos, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Harvest Preparatory Academy

To read the winning essays, visit <https://az529.gov/essaycontest-winners/>.



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