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Four Seventh-Grade Students Win Statewide Contest

Essay contest encourages civic engagement

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Four seventh-grade students recently won the statewide “If I Were Elected Mayor” essay contest.

The essay contest, sponsored by the Florida League of Cities and Florida League of Mayors, was open to all seventh-grade students in the state attending public or private schools or who are homeschooled. Students were asked to write a 250-word essay describing how they would make a difference in their city if they were elected to be mayor and how Home Rule, the ability for local governments to address local problems with local solutions, helps make their city a great place to live. More than 600 essay submissions were received.

The contest winners are:

- **First Place:** Grace Kennedy, Pembroke Pines Charter Middle School (Pembroke Pines).
- **Second Place:** Mia Mayberry, Silver Sands Middle School (Port Orange).
- **Third Place (tied):** Amaya Aguiar, Six Mile Charter Academy (Fort Myers); Enna Walsh, Oslo Middle School (Vero Beach).

Grace’s winning essay explained that, as mayor, her goal would be to create a safe, kind and compassionate community for Pembroke Pines where everyone is treated equally and respectfully. To do this, Grace explains that she would focus her efforts on safety and citizen engagement, including forming a kindness committee as well as organizing neighborhood safety meetings for all citizens.

Contest winners were recognized by their mayors during recent meetings of their city commission/council. They also received gift cards and were presented with a joint resolution from the Florida League of Cities and Florida League of Mayors.

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Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida’s cities. Florida’s cities are formed by their citizens and governed by their citizens. The League is founded on the belief that local self-government is the keystone of American democracy. For more information, visit floridaleagueofcities.com.

The Florida League of Mayors is an organization for mayors, founded and developed by mayors. Only mayors are eligible for membership. The organization provides the mayors of Florida with the ability to explore, in great depth, areas of mutual concern and opportunity. Governed by a 21-member Board of Directors and staffed by the Florida League of Cities, the Florida League of Mayors forges a powerful voice that serves Florida's cities well. For more information, visit floridamayors.org.