



NEWS RELEASE
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LOCAL STUDENT NAMED ESSAY CONTEST WINNER
Southfield, MI FEBRUARY 2022

Three students from **AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian School** in **Southfield** have been named local winners in the 53rd annual America & Me Essay Contest, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. The three students, who earned the first, second and third place awards for their school, are **Sofi Dakessian**, first, and **Sally Mikha**, second, and **Alexander Sus**, third. All three received award certificates for their achievement. As the school's first place winner, **Sofi's** name will also be engraved on a plaque for permanent display in the school.

Sofi's first place essay now advances to the state level competition, from which the top ten essays in Michigan will be selected. The top 10 statewide winners, who will be announced in April, will each receive a plaque, a medallion and a cash award of \$1,000. Farm Bureau Insurance will also be presenting each top ten statewide school with a \$1,000 check, along with an additional \$500 if the school was sponsored by a Farm Bureau Insurance agent. Farm Bureau Insurance is hoping to return to in-person events in 2022.

The traditional annual America & Me Essay Contest Awards Day is scheduled for Tuesday, May 31, 2022, in Lansing. The top 10 students and their teachers from across the state will be invited to participate in the day-long group recognitions. In the event we are not able to meet in person, the students still receive their awards and recognitions for their commendable achievement.

Several thousand eighth grade students from nearly 200 Michigan schools participated in the 2021 - 2022 America & Me Essay Contest, which was conducted with the help of Farm Bureau Insurance agents across the state. The topic of the 2021 - 2022 contest was "**My Personal Michigan Hero.**" **Sofi** should take great pride in advancing to the state level competition.

A team of finalist judges, including a top Michigan government official as well as the sponsoring teachers of last year's top two statewide winners, will determine the ranking of the top ten statewide winners this year.

Started in 1968 and open to all Michigan eighth grade students, the America & Me Essay Contest encourages Michigan youngsters to explore the greatness of America and its people. As sponsor of the contest, Farm Bureau Insurance has earned 11 national awards from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan was founded in 1949 by Michigan farmers who wanted an insurance company that worked as hard as they did. Those values still guide the company today and are a large part of why we are known as Michigan's Insurance Company, dedicated to protecting the farms, families, and businesses of this great state. Farm Bureau Insurance agents across Michigan provide a full range of insurance services—life, home, auto, farm, business, retirement, Lake Estate®, and more—protecting nearly 500,000 Michigan policyholders.

