

**City Council
Agenda Item 6.A
Meeting of May 18, 2026**



Title: Recognition of 2026 Minnetonka Essay Contest award winners

Report from: Jayce Alexander, DEI Supervisor

Submitted Through: Erik Nilsson, City Attorney
Moranda Dammann, Assistant City Manager
Mike Funk, City Manager

Presenter: Mayor Schack

Action Requested: Informational

Form of Action: Other

Votes needed: N/A

Summary Statement

For the first time, the Minnetonka DEI Commission hosted an essay contest for area youth anchored around the theme of belonging. Members from both the DEI Commission and Senior Advisory Board selected award winners in April, to be awarded by the city council on May 18, 2026.

Recommended Action

Present award plaques to the Minnetonka Essay Contest award winners.

Strategic Plan Relatability

Community Inclusiveness

Background

This spring, students living or attending school in Minnetonka were invited to submit an essay about diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and how the city can help make all people feel welcome. There were two age categories, grades 6-9, and 10-12, and students were graded on rubrics specific to their age category by members of the DEI Commission and Senior Advisory Board. The contest was open January - April, and the commission received four submissions. The judges selected one winner from each age category, and the grades 6-9 winner is Halo Keller, and the grades 10-12 winner is Elenie Yange Mbarga. Blue Marble Review, a local literary journal, also recognized each award winner and will publish the essays in its June issue. Winners will also be recognized in the July issue of the Minnetonka Memo.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Addendum](#)