

RPECnews

The newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

May - June 2015

RPEC's Peacemakers of the Year for 2015

Dr. John V. Moeser, emeritus professor of urban studies and planning at Virginia Commonwealth University and senior fellow at the University of Richmond's Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, is an indefatigable advocate of efforts to foster peace and justice throughout the Richmond region.

The Thrifty Quaker thrift store, since its founding in 1996 by Quakers of the Midlothian Friends Meeting, has become an important supporter of non-profit groups in the Richmond metropolitan area.

RPEC is proud to honor Professor Moeser and the Thrifty Quaker as Peacemakers of the Year for 2015. The awards will be presented at RPEC's membership dinner meeting on Thursday, June 4.

Dr. John V. Moeser *'It's past time for debate.'*

Addressing a public forum at Virginia Commonwealth University in May, 2012, Dr. John V. Moeser cited a previous forum at which a speaker talked about issues in metropolitan Richmond, including poverty. That speaker, he said, "discussed the lack of public transit in the counties and how it affects people without a car who need an entry-level job, most of which are beyond the bus lines. He noted how gentrification leads to the displacement of the poor, whose only option for another place to live is another high-poverty neighborhood. . . ."

That presentation, Dr. Moeser said, was given 30 years before, on Sept. 17, 1980.

"I was the speaker."

"Thirty-two years ago," he said, "there were discussions about extending bus service to the suburbs. Thirty-two years ago, we knew about the growing numbers of Richmonders priced out of their neighborhoods, stranded and unable to find another place to live except in an adjoining poverty neighborhood. Thirty-two years ago concern was expressed about the lack of accessible entry-level jobs. Three decades ago we knew about the huge disparities between city and county.

"It's a disgrace that thirty years of talk have produced virtually nothing. There has been change, no mistake about it, but unfortunately the change has to do with our



Continued on Page 6

The Thrifty Quaker *A charity for all charities*

The Thrifty Quaker thrift store, located in a back corner of the Midlothian Station shopping center at the intersection of Midlothian Turnpike and Coalfield Road, shows a modest face to those who find it. But once inside, visitors find an extensive and impressive array of "gently used" goods to buy. And most important, purchasers of the Thrifty Quaker's wares are not just getting bargains – they are also assisting non-profit charitable organizations as well as needy individuals throughout the region.

Each month, the Peace and Social Action Committee of Midlothian Friends Meeting designates a local non-profit to receive a grant consisting of nearly 100 percent of the store's net earnings for that month.

A remaining portion of the net earnings goes to help individuals in crisis through a "FriendShare" program – the Thrifty Quaker's own "inside" charity – which provides emergency funds to individuals in danger of losing their homes, jobs, utilities or medical treatment.

FriendShare provides resources directly to billing agencies upon the recommendation of social services agencies or other trusted sources, as they help individuals to become stabilized and functioning in society.



Continued on Page 6

RPECnews

is a publication of the
Richmond Peace Education Center
3500 Patterson Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Phone: (804) 232-1002
E-mail: rpec@rpec.org

RPEC Web Page:
www.rpec.org

<https://www.facebook.com/rpec.org>

RPEC Staff

Executive Director: Adria Scharf
Asst. to the Director:
Paul Fleisher

Conflict Resolution Coordinator:
Santa Sorenson
Office Staff: Beth Holt

2015 Board of Directors

Ram Bhagat, EdD
Bunny Chidester
Gordon Davies, PhD (Treasurer)
Lisa Furr
Rob Gabriele
Jennifer Garvin-Sanchez, PhD
Renee Hill, PhD (Secretary)
Jennifer Lewis
Valaryee Mitchell
Robert Nelson, PhD
Zandra Rawlinson (Chair)
Josi Riederer (Youth Representative)
Grant Rissler
Charol Shakeshaft, PhD (Vice Chair)
Dan Shaw
Michael Stone

Newsletter Committee

Editor: Charles Robideau
crobideau@gmail.com
Jimmie Cloutier
John Gallini
Jennifer Garvin-Sanchez
Grant Rissler
Adria Scharf

Opinions and announcements
in RPECnews are those of the
individual writers and are not
necessarily endorsed by RPEC.

RPECnews is published 6 times per
year and has a circulation of
approximately 1,800. We welcome
article and calendar submissions.

Reflection

Adria Scharf
RPEC Executive Director

*“True peace is not merely the absence of tension:
it is the presence of justice.”*

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

RPEC’s Peacemaker of the Year award recognizes and celebrates a community leader or group whose work has advanced peace, justice and inclusion in our region. This year the Richmond Peace Education Center honors two extraordinary Peacemakers who put peace and social justice into action in our community: *Dr. John Moeser* and the *Thrifty Quaker*.

Honoring these two Peacemakers makes me reflect on how they both, in different ways, embody important qualities of leadership for social change. As unique as these two Peacemakers are, both have shown:

Sustained commitment

Dr. Moeser has worked for more than a generation to illuminate and challenge the institutional roots of racial disparity in Richmond through his extensive scholarship, teaching and community engagements.

Thrifty Quaker has steadfastly contributed to the community for nearly two decades, overcoming economic dips and challenges to quietly persevere in its mission.

Institutional change

Dr. Moeser’s work brings into focus the institutional arrangements and systems that divide our region, making visible the policy causes of racial segregation in our city, the way historic racism continues to bear on the present, and the roots of the city-county divide. His analyses help people to see the region as a region with a shared fate.

Thrifty Quaker has strategically supported organizations working for peace and equity in our region, bolstering the overall institutional capacity for peace and social change work locally.

Courage Rooted in Core Values:

Dr. Moeser has displayed courage in making visible our region’s painful and difficult history and naming its continuing divisions. He has spoken truth to power again and again, while remaining rooted in a core spirit of kindness and compassion.

The Thrifty Quaker has courageously supported pacifist, antiwar, and other groups that are unlikely recipients of grants, and grounds its work in the Quaker peace tradition.

These qualities—sustained commitment, a willingness to work for institutional change, and profound courage rooted in core values -- are features of leadership that our region, and our world, need more of. We thank our 2015 Peacemakers of the Year for all they have done and for inspiring us with their examples.

RPEC happenings

Annual Membership Dinner June 4

Please join us on Thursday, June 4, 5:30 p.m. at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, 3601 Seminary Ave, Richmond, for our annual Membership Appreciation Dinner.

At that event, we'll also honor this year's Peacemakers of the Year, Professor John V Moeser and the Thrifty Quaker thrift store.

Please RSVP by emailing rpec@rpec.org.



McCutcheon as Joe Hill

On June 19, at 7 p.m., John McCutcheon will perform *Joe Hill's Last Will* at VCU's Singleton Center, in a benefit performance for RPEC.

Joe Hill's Last Will is a one-man musical play that tells the life story of the iconic labor leader and songwriter, as he awaits execution in a Utah prison. Songwriter and labor historian Si Kahn created the play based largely on Hill's own words and using all of Hill's music.

McCutcheon's performance brings issues of labor, immigration, workers' rights, the death penalty and war from the annals of 1915 to the headlines of 2015.

Tickets for *Joe Hill's Last Will* are available at www.rpec.org.

Auction's Goal: Be The Best Ever

By Rob Gabriele

Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 7. This is the date for this year's auction, RPEC's biggest fun(d)raiser of the year. Once again, we'll be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Richmond. The silent auction will start at 5:30 followed by the live auction and a sit-down buffet dinner. Plan to come early to allow yourself time enough to browse the hundreds of items in the silent auction as well as socialize with RPEC friends whom you haven't seen since last year. To help the socializing we will again include a free drink in the ticket price as well as hors d'oeuvres and the dinner.

Tickets are again \$45, same as last year. Or organize a table of eight for \$360. Our goal is to have revenue from tickets cover the entire

cost so that every dollar of bidding will be devoted to supporting RPEC's programs.

Here are three ways you can help to make the auction a success:

1. Buy tickets, even if you can't come. Unused tickets will be donated to RPEC youth.
2. Donate an item to the auction. If you have a skill, vacation home, business, or a treasure you can bear to part with, donate it to the auction.
3. Help us solicit donations from area businesses. Many of you know local business owners. We can train and support you if necessary.

If every RPEC member did at least one of these three things, it would make this year's auction the best ever.

For more information on how to help email items@rpec.org or call 804 232-1002.

Tasty Opportunity To Support RPEC

Carytown Chipotle:

Get Sunday dinner, June 7 from 4-8 p.m. at Chipotle in Carytown Place.

They will donate a portion of their receipts to the Richmond Peace Education Center.

This was a very successful fundraiser for us last time, so be sure to mention that you want to support RPEC when you stop by to pick up dinner.

CAUSE AN EFFECT



Make dinner a selfless act by joining us for a fundraiser to support Richmond Peace Education Center. Just come into the Carytown Chipotle on **Sunday, June 7th**, from **4:00pm to 8:00pm**. Bring in this flyer, show it on your smartphone or tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 50% of the proceeds will be donated to Richmond Peace Education Center.



RYPY Youth Peace Summit a Success

The 11th Richmond Youth Peace Summit was held Saturday, April 25 at St. Paul's Baptist Church Southside Campus. This annual free event was attended by about 125 young people ages 12-19 from across the greater Richmond area and beyond.

The summit offered 20 workshops on a wide range of subjects including conflict resolution, anger management, drumming, building healthy relationships, gun violence prevention, yoga, healthy exercise and more. The young people who participated clearly had an uplifting, informative experience and learned new ideas and new ways of looking at their world. The summit also fea-

tured a performance by talented local youth and a panel discussion on racial justice in Richmond.

Thanks to the volunteers who offered workshops and assisted with logistics. We could not have held this event without your participation.

Apply Now to Join RYPY Leaders Class

We are now seeking participants for our 2015 Richmond Youth Peace Project leadership training, October 3-4. This training involves a full weekend workshop in nonviolent conflict resolution and group facilitation skills. The workshop is open to those entering 8th grade next fall through high school. It is free, and lunch will be provided both days.

To apply online, visit <http://goo.gl/forms/7HdKhTYdrM> or email rypp@rpec.org.

Peace Essay Winners

Almost 300 students entered the 2015 Peace Essay Contest. The list of winners can be found on Page 8.

Training Opportunity To Learn CR Skills

RPEC will offer a two-day training in July in conflict resolution for adults and educators. The training is basic for all of RPEC's conflict resolution programs. Educators taking part will earn at least 15 points toward recertification of their Virginia teaching certificates.

Training dates are Tuesday and Wednesday, July 7 and 8, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days, in the Fan Free Clinic, 1010 North Thompson St., Richmond. The training will be led by RPEC trainers Santa Sorenson and Ram Bhagat. Pre-payment is required. Tuition is \$175. Partial scholarships are provided if needed. Email rpec@rpec.org to pre-register. Mail checks in advance to RPEC, 3500 Patterson Ave., Richmond, VA 23221 with T4T in the memo line.

Trauma Healing for Female Veterans

This free 3-day workshop for female veterans is based on RPEC's Healing & Rebuilding Our Communities, HROC, a group-based model of healing that has been successful in supporting many to heal from the pain of combat, conflict, and trauma.

Dates: June 5: 6-9 pm; June 6 & 7: 9 am-5 pm. At Fan Free Clinic, 1010 North Thompson St., Richmond. Registration limited to 20. Email: rpec@rpec.org to pre-register.

CR Workshops Completed

Conflict resolution workshops have finished with Church Hill Academy and Albert Hill Middle School, and continue with Henderson Middle School and Armstrong's Leadership Program. Future workshops are scheduled with Kinfolk, Camp Diva and Richmond Co-Housing Group.

Behind 10 Years of EduConcerts

By Anne-Marie McCartan

RPEC has long used performances to express themes of peace, social justice, and non-violence. This tradition carries on through the EduConcerts, the first of which in 2006 featured Drums No Guns and a number of other musical and dramatic performances; in 2015 the 10th EduConcert featured about two dozen individual or ensemble acts.

The "Generation Dream" EduConcert is a program of RPEC's Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPY), which seeks to empower metro-Richmond young people to express their vision of a more peaceful community. Two performances are held annually each February/March in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I sat down with the three RPEC leaders who envisioned, grew, and produce this event-- Ram Bhagat, Paul Fleisher, and Santa Sorenson. (My questions appear in italics.)

Each year it keeps getting bigger and better. What changes have you noticed over the years?

Ram: We developed a process in the early stages when we didn't have seasoned artists, mostly youth from different countries, and we would have them respond to different quotes and they would develop a spoken word piece. We linked it to the annual MLK celebration around RVA, which is called Living the Dream, because we saw that the van-

Continued on Page 5

EduConcerts

Continued from Page 4

guard civil rights leaders were aging and we wanted to ensure a connection to the younger generation to make sure that we sustained the celebration of his legacy by making a formal connection with the week-long Living the Dream celebration sponsored by Virginia Union University.

Also the first EduConcert in 2006 was a community response to the tragic murder of the Harvey family. It was a kind of healing, coupled with MLK message of non-violence.

Santa: I need to say that there's one group not here in this interview – the youth. . . .we couldn't do it without the youth. The talent gets better partly because Paul and I have this system. We start coaching the kids in October, with rehearsals two times a week. The kids are already talented but we all have creative backgrounds, so we know how to bring that out.

Paul: This year's group was terrifically talented. We're learning from experience. Early on the show dragged; we now get kids on and off stage quickly, making for a better performance.

Santa, what has been Ram's contribution?

Santa: Ram started this along with Drums No Guns and formed RYPP in 2005. He had the vision, and it was up to Paul and me to carry it out. Ram also performs the grand finale (on the drums) at every single one. It wraps up the EduConcert in a nice big bow when he performs and talks about what the event means for RPEC and for the youth involved.

Ram, describe Paul's contribution.

Ram: Creative production, all the outreach and logistics, coaching. He

is one of the core pillars, an essential element in bringing the youth and the program together. And for making it possible for the vision to be translated into reality.

Paul, what is Santa's contribution?

Paul: Santa has a lot of experience in performing arts as a dancer and choreographer, so she has a strong sense of stagecraft. She coaches the kids on that and thinks through what the show is going to look like. Santa is also really good at getting all the logistics organized, making sure we have our tech needs met. We complement each other.

What benefits do the participants derive from performing?

Santa: One of main missions of RYPP is to respond to violence in a creative instead of a violent way. By performing, they get the satisfaction of being heard, and the public really listens because it's done in such an amazing way.

Paul: It is a great experience for the performers. For a lot of kids, it's the first time they've been in front of an audience presenting themselves. They learn a great deal about how to connect with the audience by speaking slowly and clearly so the audience has time to hear and think about what they say.

They develop confidence in making presentations as they will have to do many times in their lives, even if they don't end up going into the performing arts.

Ram: They get the benefit of knowing that their art is directed toward positive social change. Their creativity serves a greater good, to the whole community. And they have an audience that can absorb and reflect what they are expressing.

You have all been teachers. Through these events, do you continue to learn from these young people?

Santa: When I don't, I'll hang up my hat! They guide us. When we hear such tragic news as [the killing of] Michael Brown, we started discussing what they wanted to do. So they led us to do the "flash mob" die-in (an event in Monroe Park in fall 2014). We really listen to these teens and try to make it happen.

Paul: Absolutely. I think that my skills in being able to produce and direct have increased over the years. It's never failed to surprise me — the powerful content that the kids come up with. I love to see them thinking about these important issues and expressing themselves.

Ram: It's an intergenerational collaboration. From these young people, we have learned things like vulnerability, confidence, fear, learning from mistakes, and responsibility.

Several performers at this year's concerts chose to write, sing, or dance about the recent tragedies involving unarmed young black men and the police. Did you find these performances emotionally wrenching, uplifting, or something else?

Ram: I found them to be emotionally wrenching. They grabbed the audience and just clutched my heart, and I also was so inspired by the voice, the dance, the energy that was coming from those performers; it made me hopeful that the next generation has a dream, a clear dream. I felt compelled to open my sails and take wind from their energy.

Paul: I always find the show uplifting. It's very hopeful to see teenagers considering important social issues, addressing them and trying to make a difference in their world. That's what the show is about, so when I am recruiting kids to participate, we make it clear that the show is focused on issues of peace, non-violence, and social justice.

Continued on Page 6

Peacemakers of the Year

Dr. John V. Moeser — *Continued from Page 1*

problems getting larger. Not only has poverty increased, but it's now spread into the counties."

Dr. Moeser's 2012 address was the keynote for a convocation sponsored by Hope in the Cities and the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. The topic was "Unpacking the Census," a review of Dr. Moeser's comprehensive analysis of the 2010 national census statistics affecting the Richmond region. That analysis has become the starting point for efforts to deal with Richmond's social and economic issues.

At that same time, Dr. Moeser was a member of the Mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission, created by Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones in March, 2011. Dr. Moeser served on the Commission's task force on Transportation and Regionalism, which called for a regional transit system that "will embrace a future premised on the idea that the city and the counties share a common fate."

The anti-poverty program is now titled the Maggie Walker Community Wealth-Building Initiative, and Dr. Moeser is working to create a "wealth-building" program through which residents in high-poverty

neighborhoods could establish employee-owned businesses to produce and sell products to Richmond institutions like VCU, the University of Richmond and Dominion Resources.

On April 22, Dr. Moeser was a panelist on a Richmond Times-Dispatch forum on the topic, "Why is Richmond Still Segregated?"

"Today, Richmond is more segregated than it was in the 19th century," Dr. Moeser said, "this time by race, but more particularly by class. And the distances separating wealth and poverty are unprecedented."

Three years after the 2012 Convocation, the challenge Dr. Moeser gave that audience remains timely:

"It's way past time for debate. No need for more studies and fact-gathering. We either act now or we'll be here another thirty years with nothing to show for our labor."

"How long will it take to insure that all of God's people in Richmond, especially the people closest to God's great heart, the poor, are welcomed to live in any neighborhood, attend any school, and given the same opportunities for a full life as the rest of us? How long?"

— *Charles Robideau*

Thrifty Quaker — *Continued from Page 1*

During 2014, the 12 charities benefitting from Thrifty Quaker support received a total of \$16,810 in the monthly grants. Over the years, The Thrifty Quaker has donated more than \$400,000 in monetary grants to well over 100 peace groups and charities, and has provided an estimated \$2.5 million in goods to other thrift stores and individuals in need.

The store also provides employment for a number of workers from the local area, as well as opportunities for volunteering to support a number of mostly local charities through the store's mission.

For the Richmond Peace Education Center, the Thrifty Quaker grants have directly and measurably strengthened the Center's capacity and its work for peace.

EduConcerts

Continued from Page 5

What else should RPEC members know about the EduConcerts?

Ram: What they need to know is that by coming to the concert, it's a healing experience. They should come and receive the healing. Also to know that even though the venues are always packed, we need their support because this needs to be more widespread in our community. Our members can help us spread this on the larger screen of our community. Our members can help uplift the youth to a higher level.

Santa: As an adult, it's important to see how concerned the youth are about the issues of today. So we learn that we are more connected than we might realize. Come and hear what they have to say because they are not just their own voice but are speaking for a lot of people out there.

Paul: People should know how inspirational it is, how good the performers are, and how powerful the performances are. There isn't a single show when I haven't had tears in my eyes at least once. It's a really important way to bring young people to work on issues of peace and social justice in their own way. Some of the kids that perform are RYPP trainers, but for others, this is the way they can make a contribution toward making the world a better place, to express their feeling, longings, concerns. It gives them a voice.

Ram and Santa: And someone could step up and help us sponsor a cast party. It would be a closure for them, to be celebrated in that way. We'd love to have someone join us to take on the role of hosting and helping plan a post-concert party for these amazing young people.

(Interested in helping out? Write rpec@rpec.org to let us know!)

Consumers Corner

John Gallini

Our Only World

I have long appreciated the work and writing of Wendell Berry. His recent collection of essays "Our Only World" is no exception. In it Berry argues persuasively for better care of farmland and forests. I especially enjoyed his essay describing the work of several Pennsylvania foresters seeking to establish working forest lands that could maintain productivity for centuries. It reminded me of the work of Anthony Flaccavento, a good friend in Southwestern Virginia.

One important insight I gained from the book is that we should not let the difficulty of achieving the urgent tasks of our time keep us from doing the small everyday things that will be required by everyone if the urgent tasks are to be accomplished. This is how he puts it:

"Or maybe we could give up saving the world and start to live savingly in it. If using less energy would be a good idea for the future, that is because it is a good idea. The government could enforce such a saving by rationing fuels, citing the many good reasons, as it did during World War II. If the government should do something so sensible, I would respect it much more than I do. But to wish for good sense from the government only displaces good sense into the future, where it is of no use to anybody and is soon overcome by prophecies of doom. On the contrary, so few as just one of us can save energy right now by self-control, careful thought, and remembering the lost virtue of frugality. Spending less, burning less, traveling less may be a relief. A cooler, slower life may make us happier, more present to ourselves, and to others who need us to be present. Because of such rewards, a large problem may be effectively addressed by the many small solutions that, after all, are necessary, no matter what the government might do. The government might even do the right thing at last by imitating the people."

Another idea that runs through the essays in the book is that, if we are to maintain the health of our land — farm and forest — we should imitate nature and replace many of the annual crops that dominate our land. Berry calls attention to the "50-year Farm Bill" drafted by the Land Institute in Salinas, Kansas, with the concurrence of numerous allied groups and individuals. Berry describes the "50-year Farm Bill" well in his November 12, 2012 article in the Atlantic Monthly:

This bill addresses the most urgent problems of our dominant way of agriculture: soil erosion, toxic pollution of soil and water, loss of biodiversity, the destruction of farming communities and cultures. It addresses these problems by invoking nature's primary law, in default of which her other laws are of no avail: Keep the ground covered, and keep it covered whenever possible with perennial plants.

At present, 80 percent of our farmable acreage is planted in annual crops, only 20 percent having the beneficent coverage of perennials. This, by the standard of any healthy ecosystem, is absurdly disproportionate. Annual plants are nature's emergency medical service, seeded in sounds and scars to hold the land until the perennial cover is re-established. By this rule, our present agriculture, which gives 80 percent of our farmland to annuals, is in a state of emergency.

You can't run a landscape, any more than you can run your life, indefinitely in a state of emergency. To live your life, to live in your place, you have got to bring about a settlement that does not involve you continuously in worry, loss, and grief. And so the "50-year Farm Bill" proposes a 50-year schedule by which the present ratio of 80 percent annual to 20 percent perennial would be exactly reversed. The ratio then would be 20 percent annual to 80 percent perennial. And perhaps I need to say plainly here that the perennial crops would be forages and grains. Nobody at present is talking about the possibility of breeding and raising perennial table vegetables, though they should."

Berry points out, in his book, that Wes Jackson and the folks at the Land Institute have already developed a perennial wheat grain which they call Kemza™. They expect it to be "farmer-ready for limited acreage" by 2020. "Our Only World" deals with the difficult subject of planetary survival. And yet, I found it quite hopeful. One step that would also be hopeful would be that our local libraries would make the book easily available to the reading public.

2015 Peace Essay Winners

On Tuesday, May 12, about two dozen volunteer readers judged the 2015 Peace Essay contest. This year's contest asked students to think and write about a statement by the Dalai Lama which asked brings out the inspiration and motivates us to make our community and world a better place. Almost 300 students from across central Virginia and beyond sent in entries. And here are this year's winners:

Grades K-2:

1st Place: Kara Finley, gr. 1, St. Catherine's School, Richmond
2nd Place: Donnell Goode, gr. 2, Patrick Henry Charter School, Richmond Public Schools
3rd Place: James Bae, gr. 1, Colonial Trail ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools
Honorable Mentions: Emerson Callis, gr. 1, W. W. Gordon ES, Chesterfield Co. Pub. Schools;
Josephine Deaner, gr. 1, W. W. Gordon ES, Chesterfield Co. Public Schools;
Elise Mackey, gr. 1, W. W. Gordon ES, Chesterfield Co. Public Schools;
Belle Morgan, , gr. 1, W. W. Gordon ES, Chesterfield Co. Public Schools

Grades 3-5:

1st Place: Andrew Pratt, gr. 4, Twin Hickory ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools
2nd Place: Lauryn Kumpe, gr. 5, Rivers Edge ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools
3rd Place: Jack Hensley, gr. 5, J. B. Watkins ES, Chesterfield Co. Public Schools
Honorable Mentions: Perrin Gilman, gr. 5, Tuckahoe ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
John Kelleher IV, gr. 5, Colonial Trail ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
Nikki Kumar, gr. 5, Twin Hickory ES, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
Evan Kurtz, gr. 4, The Williams School, Norfolk VA

Grades 6-8:

1st Place: Grace Powers, gr.8, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools
2nd Place (tie): Caroline DiFrango, gr. 8, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
Maggie McKenna, gr. 7, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
Katie Taguchi, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools
Honorable Mentions: Beverley Arbogast, gr. 7, King George MS, King George Pub. Schools;
Sarah Bender, gr. 7, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
Megha Nair, gr. 8, Moody MS, Henrico Co. Public Schools;
Audrey Kate Taylor, gr. 6, Chickahominy MS, Hanover Co. Public Schools;
Yashodhara Varma, gr. 8, Moody MS, Henrico County Public Schools

Grades 9-12:

1st Place: Michelle Page, gr. 10, Patrick Henry HS, Hanover Co. Public Schools
2nd Place: Erin Strasser, gr. 12, James River HS, Chesterfield Co. Public Schools
3rd Place: William Ford, gr. 10, Atlee HS, Hanover Co. Public Schools
Honorable Mention: Ben Hazelton, gr. 9, Maggie Walker Governor's School

All the winning essays will be posted on the RPEC.org website. Congratulations to all our winners, and thanks to the volunteers who helped plan and score this year's contest.