



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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STUDENTS DISCUSS CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HISTORIC FANEUIL HALL ON SUNDAY, APRIL 29. LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK AWARDS EVENT WILL ALSO FEATURE MAYOR THOMAS MENINO AND ALAN KHAZEI, CO-FOUNDER OF CITY YEAR.

This Sunday, April 29, 2:00 – 4:00 P.M., the winners of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts 8th Annual Online Student Essay Contest for grades 4-12, sponsored by Stop & Shop, will read their essays on issues of citizens' rights and responsibilities in Faneuil Hall. Following in the footsteps of the notable great orators of our great democracy, these young people from across the state will speak about their understanding of basic challenges facing our democracy from the historic podium in Faneuil Hall.

Madhu Sridhar, President of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, stated, "This is a critical juncture when so much is at stake, it is vital that our next generation of voters and leaders be active, responsible, informed and engaged citizens. We applaud all the students who submitted essays and their teachers and parents who encouraged and guided them in discussions about democracy and government."

This year, thousands of young people participated from all parts of Massachusetts. The essay contest winners are from Boston, Hopkinton, Lexington, Weston, Topsfield, Walpole, Wilmington, and Worcester. They attend public and private schools. One of the winners participated in the essay contest as part of a scout project to earn a badge in citizenship.

Attendees at the Making Democracy Work Awards Event will be welcomed to Boston by the Mayor, the Honorable Thomas M. Menino, who recognizes the value of citizen participation for people of all ages. The keynote speaker will be Alan Khazei, co-founder of City Year, which today serves in 16 communities across America and in Johannesburg South Africa. City Year offers young people an opportunity to make a difference in communities when they undertake a demanding year of full-time community service, civic engagement and leadership development.

Rounding out this exciting and uplifting afternoon, the Andover Wood Hill Middle School Hand Bell Choir will perform the National Anthem as well as other musical selections and a troop of Girl Scouts from the Patriots' Trail Girl Scout Council will present the colors. There is no charge for this event, and it is open to the public.

"This is a special afternoon," said Ms. Sridhar, "Every year I look forward to hearing young people addressing vital issues facing our democracy. I also want to express the League's gratitude to Stop & Shop, our corporate sponsor for this event, who has demonstrated their commitment to the next generation and recognizes that citizen participation is a cornerstone of our democracy."

The League of Women Voters is committed to educating and working with the next generation of voters and leaders to help ensure that our democracy will flourish. A nonpartisan political organization, the League encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

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Winning essays will be available in press kits at Faneuil Hall on April 29, 2007 or through the League office at 617-523-2999.