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Essay Contest Winners Announced

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Amy Alamillo and Sandra Estenger won the Center for Civic Engagement Essay Contest at the Get Out the Youth Vote Rally Nov. 6.

The Essay Contest challenged students to answer "What is at stake and why should I vote on Nov. 7, 2006?" in 500 words.

Essays were judged by three St. Petersburg Times editors. Alamillo won first prize and $250, while Estenger was named runner-up and awarded $100. Honorable mentions included: Emery Skolfield, Sally Henderson and Ryan Nevel.

"We received a lot of great submissions, it was hard to choose the final winners," said Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, assistant professor and director of the Center for Civic Engagement. "I am pleased with the participation and glad that students took the time to research the candidates and become informed participants in the election."

McLauchlan said that encouraging students to become active and engaged citizens is part of the mission of the new Center for Civic Engagement. "We hope that by sponsoring a campus-wide voter registration drive, a political campaign internship fair, a debate watch party, the essay contest, and the Get Out the Youth Vote Rally that we have encouraged students to become engaged this electoral cycle."

Leadership Florida sponsored the Essay Contest, Gubernatorial Watch Party, and Get Out the Youth Vote Rally in partnership with the Center for Civic Engagement.

"We are delighted that we saw such engagement and participation from students at USF St. Petersburg, we look forward to supporting similar projects in the future," said Cathy Martin, chair of the West Central Region Leadership Florida.

Winning essays, along with photos of the Debate Watch Party and Get Out the Youth Vote Rally, are posted on the Center for Civic Engagement Web site.