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Haiku Peters of Saegertown Junior Senior High School Wins PNA Foundation, AT&T Stop Cyber Bullying Essay Contest

HARRISBURG, Pa., April 28, 2021 – Haiku Peters, a senior at Saegertown Junior Senior High School is the 2021 winner of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation’s “Stop Cyber Bullying” writing contest.

Peters receives a \$500 cash prize and certificate which will be mailed in May. For the second year, the annual Student Keystone Media Awards luncheon where Stop Cyber Bullying winners are celebrated – along with other high school and college journalists – has been canceled due to pandemic restrictions.

Starting in 2020, the PNA Foundation, along with PNA and PNA member newspapers, partnered with AT&T to host a statewide “Stop Cyber Bullying” editorial writing contest to raise awareness about the dangers of cyberbullying. High school students were asked to write a column or editorial or produce a video that best explained, “Why cyberbullying is dangerous and should not be tolerated.”

Beginning last fall, PNA members hosted local contests and encouraged high school students to “write a wrong” through their words. A winner was recognized in each community and entered in the statewide contest, which drew dozens of entries from across the state.

In selecting Peters as the Pennsylvania winner, judges commented, “Haiku’s entry was poignant and impactful. We liked how she included the poetic letter to a bully from their victim reminding them that ‘words they hold all power’ while ending her submission with the plea to ‘spread love, not hate.’”

Additional students were recognized with second and third place awards. Reilly Martin, of First Baptist Christian School, Butler, receives second place honors, while LaWrynn Edwards, a Saegertown Junior Senior High School ninth-grader, places third. Martin was also recognized by The Butler Eagle. Martin and Edwards will receive cash awards of \$250 and \$150, respectively.

According to DoSomething.org, about 37 percent of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 have been bullied online and 30 percent have had it happen more than once. 95 percent of teens in the U.S. are online with a mobile device, making it the most common medium for cyberbullying.

Recognizing that online safety is needed for all, this contest encouraged positive change. Social media can be productive and helpful. But, words must be chosen wisely and with respect and compassion.

About PNA Foundation:

The PNA Foundation is an independent, non-profit corporation organized as a public foundation. Its mission is to provide training and resources to PNA members, to develop the next generation of readers and journalists, and to educate the public on the importance of the First Amendment and the role of a free press.

About PNA: The PNA, founded in 1925, is the nonprofit trade association for print and digital news media in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its mission is to advance the business interests of Pennsylvania news media organizations and to promote a free and independent press. It has more than

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300 newspaper and media-related members, including daily, weekly, and college newspapers and online publications.

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