



## We Solve Problems ESSAY CONTEST

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### Second Annual “We Solve Problems Essay Contest” Winners Announced *Chagrin Falls Senior Benjamin Karyo Pens Winning Essay for His Problem Solving and Communication Skills in Tackling the Issue of Texting and Driving*

Cleveland, Ohio (April 11, 2017) – More than 150 Northeast Ohio business professionals, students, administrators and families joined together April 6 at the Chagrin Falls Performing Arts Center lobby to celebrate the winning students of the second annual [“We Solve Problems Essay Contest.”](#) Nearly 850 students from Chagrin Falls, Kenston, Newbury and Orange high schools participated in the essay contest, which focused on solving the issue of texting and driving.

Run by the [Gertsburg Law Firm](#) and [The Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce](#), students’ 600-word essays were judged by 175 business and government leaders, with Jeff Hoffman, co-founder of Priceline.com, serving as a final judge.

Grade winners include:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner/Overall Winner: Benjamin Karyo, Chagrin Falls High School
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Runner-Up: Christina Weber, Newbury High School
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner: Riley Kirkpatrick, Chagrin Falls High School
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Runner-Up: Abbey Cloonan, Chagrin Falls High School
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner: James Sadowski, Chagrin Falls High School
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Runner-Up: Alexa Paull, Orange High School
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner: Molly Sobota, Chagrin Falls High School
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Runner-Up: Chlose Barnes, Kenston High School

“The contest far exceeded all expectations,” said Alex Gertsburg, head of the Gertsburg Law Firm. “It brought business leaders and high school students together whereby the former trained the latter on solid communication and problem solving skills; it rewarded students and schools for their efforts in doing so; and, it focused the attention of thousands of people on solving a deadly problem.”

“This essay contest is such an important step in teaching our students to solve real problems in the world around them,” said Hoffman. “We are all so proud of how they stepped up, and of the many great ideas they proposed in the contest.”

A total of \$13,000 in prize money – funded by individual and corporate sponsors – was distributed among the finalists. Key funders included FirstEnergy, First Federal of Lakewood, Lantern of Chagrin Valley, Motorcars and Your Teen for Parents Magazine. Karyo received \$1,000 for his overall winning essay. Kenston, Newbury and Orange high schools also received \$1,000, with Chagrin Falls receiving a total of \$2,000 for the overall winning essay. School funds were provided for implementing the ideas brought forth in the essays.

This year's contest also included several in-kind donations for the students. Toshiba Business Solutions presented four laptops to the winning students in each grade; Pioneer Waterland provided complementary tickets to its park for each student who participated in the contest; Big Frog Custom T-Shirts printed essay contest t-shirts for each finalist; and, Burntwood Tavern provided food for the reception.

"I am so excited that these students will be members one day in my chamber or other chambers and the fact that they will be the future of the business world is even better," said Molly Gebler, executive director, Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce. "This contest allows our members to be involved in mentoring the future of the business world."

"We couldn't be prouder of our students and our entire community for their incredible effort in making this groundbreaking competition a reality, and we expect to keep it going next year," concluded Gertsburg.

The 27 finalist essays may be read at <https://www.gertsburglaw.com/essay.html>.

#### About the Gertsburg Law Firm

[The Gertsburg Law Firm](#) is changing the character of the attorney-client relationship in business from a cost-center to a trusted advisor. Drawing from their complex litigation experiences as members of large law firms, in-house counsel and federal attorneys, the Gertsburg Law Firm's award-winning attorneys provide clients the benefit of business lawyers with real life business experience in a wide variety of industries. This dynamic results in a comprehensive and innovative approach to business law that is proactive and consultative, ultimately saving clients money in fees and exposure before issues arise. Located in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, the Gertsburg team of lawyers and support staff leverages its knowledge, broad experience and steadfast dedication to both solving and avoiding clients' business problems, and helping them actually grow their businesses in a way that no other law firm does.

#### About the Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce

More than 500 members strong, the [Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce](#) offers an array of programs to help area business owners improve their bottom line. Serving 13 communities in the Chagrin Valley, the Chamber serves as a powerful regional force: encouraging business to relocate to the Chagrin Valley; presenting the interests of business and industry before local and state governments; supporting the cultural and civic life of the communities; and, working to make the Valley a better place to live and do business.

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