

## Do youth have a role in the future of the United States?

Written by Chris Lee

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Does my generation have a role in America's future? This question was asked and answered many times throughout the Veterans Day program held at the HHS auditorium Thursday, Nov. 11.

Veterans, both alive and deceased, were recognized all around the country for their bravery and willingness to serve their country. HHS students and faculty joined in the remembrance and recognition during the Veterans Day program.

Four students stood in front of their peers to read winning Voice of Democracy speeches that delved into today's youth and their thoughts on their roles for the future of the United States.

All four absolutely believe today's youth will impact the future in one way or another, even though the generation has often been called "Generation Y Bother."

First-place winner Sarah Heermann said, "We are the generation that is stepping up to the plate and filling the many roles. My generation will fill in the gaps left behind, not leave America an empty shell of what it once was, but build onto it, making it a country that is truly ours."

Third-place winner Catrina Krueger said, "We are not just a nation, but also an idea, a virtue and an ideal. We stand for freedom. Not only that but for the men and women that died fighting for that idea."

"America's future depends on us," Jordan Zeiler, second-place winner, said. "After we graduate high school or college, a majority of us will join the workforce. We will become teachers, doctors, architects, lawyers, and believe it or not, someone somewhere in the U.S. who is a teenager right now, will some day be the president of the United States."

Cody Fricke's speech placed fourth. He said, "Every generation has been predicted to fail at one point or another. If I asked someone to go find me a generation in history who was never doubted, I am confident they wouldn't return with an answer."

"Despite the fact we have already been predestined to fail by many, I keep hope within my

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generation,” Fricke added.

Heermann’s speech will advance to district competition.

Steve Millage opened last Thursday’s comments by telling a story about a fellow veteran he knows. He began by passing around a small case full of many highly distinguished military medals. Included were two silver stars, a purple heart and others.

The awards belong to Jerry Cegielski of Paoli, a shy guy, according to Millage. In fact, Millage said it took some convincing to have Cegielski let Millage use his name during the program. Millage told part of Cegielski’s story and his time spent in Vietnam.

Millage explained how Cegielski was assigned to cover a portion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail with 41 other soldiers. Cegielski was the medic for the group. After capturing a North Vietnamese prisoner, the group was led into an ambush and attacked by the North Vietnamese.

Millage explained Cegielski spent all day tending to fellow wounded soldiers while never firing a shot. A call for reinforcements was made but they didn’t show up right away. When all was said and done, there were only 19 soldiers left. Out of the seven original Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) there were only three left and the two tanks they began with were lost.

The next morning they were hit again. Events are blurry for Cegielski, according to Millage. Once back to the base, it was attacked. To this day, Cegielski doesn’t know what happened to the survivors from his group, Millage explained. But for his efforts he was decorated with the medals as he saved lives while being wounded himself.

Millage also briefly spoke about Boys and Girls State and encouraged any interested students to attend. He also noted it was a difficult year for judging the Voice of Democracy speeches, as there were many good ones. He encouraged students to incorporate patriotism into the theme of the speeches each year.

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Members of the select choir, under the direction of Marcia Dalton, began the program by singing the National Anthem and Shirley Kadlec led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The HHS band, under the direction of Stuart Potter, performed “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “God Bless America.”

Trumpeters Jack Wieland and Logan Bly closed the program by playing “Taps” as students and guests saluted the flag in honor of all veterans.