

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Alison Martinsen

Phone: 408.445.5080

Fax: 408.445.7767

alison@sccaor.com

www.sccaor.com

## **REALTORS® Award Thousands in Scholarships to Local Students**

San Jose, Calif. – The Santa Clara County Association of REALTORS® (SCCAOR) has awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to area students this year through the South County REALTORS® Association (SCRA) Scholarship Program and the HomeWords Essay Contest, which is co-sponsored by the *San Jose Mercury News* and the California Association of REALTORS®.

The “American Dream” as it pertains to homeownership was the topic of this year’s HomeWords Essay Contest, in which 606 students from across Santa Clara County described their experiences, hopes and dreams of owning a home.

A total of \$10,000 will be awarded to 12 local middle and high school students and the teachers of the top three essay winners in each school category. First-prize winners Jamal Dixon, a senior at Foothill High School, and Karen Lin, an eighth-grader at Thomas Russell Middle School, will receive \$1,500 and \$1,250, respectively.

Dixon’s essay, which chronicled his and his grandmother’s difficult road to homeownership, was recognized yesterday by Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Sharon Chatman. After reading Dixon’s story, Judge Chatman, who began the organization Building Peaceful Families, invited Dixon and his grandmother to her annual Celebrating Grandmother’s Luncheon as honored guests.

“I wanted to give him the recognition, and help him realize that the ‘American Dream’ is still alive and that he can still achieve it,” said Judge Chatman. “It was all because you guys gave him the opportunity to write this essay.”

All of the winners and their teachers will be honored at the San Jose City Hall on May 20. SCCAOR’s Housing Opportunities Committee Chair, Tish Shaikh will present the scholarships. Mayor Chuck Reed and city council members will also present the students and teachers with letters of commendation.

“Scholarship programs are another way REALTORS® give back to the community,” SCCAOR President Dave Walsh said. “These bright young students are future homeowners, and we are so glad that we can help them come one step closer to the ‘American Dream.’”

Each year SCRA, a subsidiary of SCCAOR, awards scholarships to local high school seniors from the Morgan Hill and Gilroy Unified School Districts. This year, the association awarded a total of \$6,000 to six students based on financial need, grade point average, scholastic achievements and goals, community involvement and interviewing skills.

The scholarship recipients include; Tim Dronek, Kimia Ghaderi and John Yoon from the Morgan Hill Unified School District; and Octavio Duran, Johnny Kuang and Yesenia Gonzalez Mejia from the Gilroy Unified School District. Award ceremonies will be held at Live Oak High School on May 21, Ann Sobrado High School on May 28, and Gilroy High School on June 10.

Other HomeWords Essay Contest winners in the high school category include: A second place prize of \$1,250 to Daisy Manapsal, a junior at Andrew P. Hill High School, and a third place prize of \$1,000 to Sidney Moiwa, a senior at Oak Grove High School. Honorable Mentions of \$300 each go to: Ilona Molina, a senior at Milpitas High School; Jose Rodriguez, a senior at Oak Grove High School; and Stephanie Alvarado, a junior at Oak Grove High School.

Dixon’s teacher, Claudette Lindsay will receive \$300. Manapsal and Moiwa’s teachers, Ms. Kun-Szabo and Joyce Coburn, respectively, will receive \$250 each.

Other HomeWords Essay Contest winners in the middle school category include: A second place prize of \$1,000 to Amy Yu, an eighth-grader at Quimby Oak, and a third place prize of \$750 to Ly Tan, an eighth-grader at LeyVa Middle School. Honorable Mentions of \$250 each will be awarded to Quimby Oak eighth-graders Ritu Parekh, Vivian Tran and Christina Doan.

Lin’s teacher, Deborah Carson, will receive \$300. Yu and Tan’s teachers, Ms. Santos and Mrs. Phuong Nguyen, respectively, will receive \$250 each.

For more information, visit [www.sccaor.com](http://www.sccaor.com).

#### **About the Santa Clara County Association of REALTORS®**

SCCAOR, established in 1896, is California’s oldest and Northern California’s largest real estate association. We represent about 10,000 REALTORS® and affiliate members. SCCAOR exists to meet the business, professional and political needs of its members and to promote, protect homeownership and private property rights.

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