

## SCHOOLS

### Students mark 9/11 with first essay contest

By Peggy Linton

*Special to My Life*

Volunteer Northwest Mississippi, a program of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, partnered with DeSoto County Schools for a 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance project.

Working with Emily Nelson, executive director of Leadership Development for the DeSoto County Schools, Volunteer Northwest Mississippi established "A Moment in Time Biographies/Memories Contest." The contest was open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade for this first-ever DeSoto County Schools Nonfiction Writing Contest.

"Students were to interview someone who remembers 9/11," Nelson said. "The top half of the page is the person's biography, while the bottom half is their memories."

More than 950 entries were received. Three judges read through each entry and chose first, second- and third-place winners. Volunteer Northwest Mississippi coordinator Anna Dickerson and Nelson made surprise visits to the schools to present students with their awards. The teachers of the three winners also were presented with awards. Each recipient received a gift card valued at \$30 to \$50 from Books-A-Million.

Following are the winners and their teachers: First place — Rachel Spiers, Center Hill High School; teacher Cynthia Stanley Second place — Rachael Vance, Lake Cormorant Middle School; teacher Ida Rohrbacher Third place — Isabella McCain, Center Hill Middle School; teacher Karley Watts "Volunteer Northwest Mississippi was pleased to partner with the DeSoto County Schools' Leadership Development Department in our 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance project," Dickerson said. "Not only was this a way to capture the memories of that day, but it also offered an opportunity for students to have published work, pay tribute to victims of 9/11 and armed forces, and reward teachers and students for their dedication."

The original entries will be bound and placed in the First Regional Library, Hernando Branch.

To learn more about Volunteer Northwest Mississippi, go to [volunteernwms.org](http://volunteernwms.org) or call (662)449-5002.

To learn more about the work of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, go to [cfnm.org](http://cfnm.org) or call (662) 449-5002.

*Peggy Linton is the community development director for the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi and director of Volunteer Northwest Mississippi.*



First place in the essay contest went to Center Hill sophomore Rachel Spiers (center). Joining her are Cynthia Stanley (left), Gifted AP English teacher, and Anna Dickerson, Volunteer Northwest Mississippi coordinator.



Second place went to Rachel Vance (center), a seventh-grader at Lake Cormorant Middle School, taught by Ida Rohrbacher (left), seventh-grade Pre-AP English teacher.



Third place went to Isabella McCain (center), a seventh-grader at Center Hill Middle School, taught by English teacher Karley Watts (left).