



Cambium Learning Technologies Announces 2011 Winner of Courage in My Community Essay Contest.

Natick and Boston, MA

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Cambium Learning[®] Technologies, and The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc., are proud to announce that William, a seventh grader from New York, is the winning author of the 2011 Courage in My Community essay contest. This national essay competition challenged middle school students to reflect on and write about the nature of courage and how it manifests in their community.

“We received more than 400 essays from more than 10 states this year and are pleased that the contest continues to generate such a widespread response,” said Alex Saltonstall, general manager for Cambium Learning Technologies. “With so many quality essays submitted, it was hard to pick just one. However, William’s essay stood out among the competition and we are delighted to have him as our 2011 Courage Winner.”

The competition was designed to provide middle school students with a deeper understanding of the concept of courage, while reinforcing literacy skills and the writing process. Many of the school districts that participated in this contest chose to integrate the use of technology into the essay writing process, using Kurzweil 3000[™]. Kurzweil 3000 is literacy software with tools designed to assist students in every stage of the writing process from generating and organizing ideas to reviewing and publishing their final product.

Each “Courage in My Community” essay was read by a panel of judges who sought to choose an essay that clearly demonstrated the student’s understanding of the nature of courage, and one that stood out as being both compelling and true to the student’s voice. William wrote about his brother who has Tourette syndrome and the courage he shows every day to live with this disorder. What made this story even more touching, was the way William wrote about his courage to stand up for this brother when other students made fun of him for his nervous “tics.”

“After several rounds of judging, our team of panelists chose William’s essay because we felt he grasped the meaning of courage and articulated his brother’s and indeed his own courageous acts well,” said Mr. Saltonstall.



We are pleased to share an excerpt from William's essay:

Sometimes I think that I am more upset by his disability than he is. Sometimes he says that it isn't such a big deal, and that he can handle it. Isn't that something! He really tries to live through every day, every week; every month like any "normal" person would.... Maybe you guessed it. The person I am writing about is my twin brother. If its strength and courage you want in a person, he is an ideal match.

To view the essay in its entirety, please visit our website at www.cambiumtech.com.

William's school will receive a Kurzweil 3000 Network license with a full-day of training, in addition to a half day training from program staff of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, valued at more than \$3000. William will receive a Kurzweil 3000 Pro Color USB Edition, and an iPod Touch, which will be presented during a special ceremony at his school.

Preparations are underway for the 2012 Courage in My Community essay contest. If you would like to receive an official set of guidelines, please visit: www.courageinmycommunity.com

For more information about The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, a language arts and character development program, please visit the organization's website at www.maxcourage.org.

About Kurzweil Educational Systems

Kurzweil Educational Systems, with more than 30 years developing educational software, is the leader in assistive technology, text-to-speech and software literacy solutions. Kurzweil Educational Systems has been serving the needs of the nation's most challenged students, including individuals with special needs and learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder or those who are English Language Learners. Driven by the vision to serve the needs of the nation's most challenged learners and enabling students to reach their full potential Kurzweil provides complete reading, study skill, and writing support for students grades 3-college and adults with academic challenges and/or who are blind or visually impaired.

About Cambium Learning Group, Inc.

Cambium Learning Group, Inc. operates three business units: Voyager, a comprehensive intervention business; Sopris, a supplemental solutions business; and Cambium Learning Technologies, which includes ExploreLearning, IntelliTools, Kurzweil and Learning A-Z. Through its core divisions, Cambium Learning Group, Inc. provides research-based education solutions for students in Pre-K through 12th grade, including intervention curricula, educational technologies and services primarily focused on serving the needs of the nation's most challenged learners and enabling students to reach their full potential.

2011 Courage in My Community Winning Essay

Essayist: William S.
School: Grade 7
Location: New York

A person can show courage in many ways, and in many different activities. You can show it on a baseball field, talking in front of an audience, in a hospital or in a war. But there is another way to show courage. I see it every day.

There is a young boy I know who lives with a disability known as Tourette's syndrome. I watch him, and it has to be challenging for him not knowing what the day will bring. Tourette's syndrome is a disability that affects the nerves so much that the person who has it can have severe involuntary movements, like blinking the eyes quickly. These movements and noises are called "tics."

When he was 9, this boy's Tourette's exploded and he was out of school for many months. He had to have a teacher come to his home because the ticking was so bad. Months later, he went to a school where he did not fit in. Then, he was admitted to an excellent special school where he is still a student. Some days when he returns from school, you can see from the expression on his face that he is exhausted and sleepy. However, he always does his homework and is worried about his marks. When we play together or when he is reading quietly, many times you can see how hard it is for him to concentrate and focus on what he is doing. Still, he keeps on trying his best to succeed.

About 3 months ago, his tics got really violent, and he has to take increased medication. He has also missed a number of days of school. He is very angry and disturbed about the absences, but it can't be helped. Despite everything, he still wants to go to school. He tries to do everything he can in the mornings to attend school even if he is so tired that he is dragging himself.

We are the same age, so when we were five, we had some of the same activities together. Other kids would make fun of him because he would make very small involuntary movements and tiny noises. The sounds were never that loud or annoying anyway, and I never understood why some of the other kids were so unkind. To this day, I attempt to defend him, and I feel good about it.

Sometimes I think that I am more upset by his disability than he is. Sometimes he says that it isn't such a big deal, and that he can handle it. Isn't that something! He really tries to live through every day, every week, every month like any "normal" person would. He's a very kind, sharing person (he always shares his food and snacks with me). Besides that, he's a very intelligent boy with a great sense of humor (he tells jokes every day during dinner). Believe it or not, he loves eating tasty organic food. He is fascinated about Alaska, maps (he loves to discuss geography), clothes, and a special computer game called Roblox, which he enjoys a lot. He maintains his talents and friendliness, and never lets his disability stop him.

Maybe you guessed it. The person I am writing about is my twin brother. If its strength and courage you want in a person, he is an ideal match!