Burcham Wins National Essay Competition

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Each year, the Armed Services YMCA invites children of U.S. service members to participate in the national ASYMCA art and essay contests. This year, a local 12th-grader was awarded top honors in the 11th and 12th grade category of the essay contest.

Seventeen-year-old Linzee Burcham, who recently graduated from Kodiak High School, is the daughter of U.S. Coast Guardsman Terry Burcham and Jody Carman. In her winning essay, she wrote about a story her father once told her of a night rescue he performed in Hawaii. However, she said it was her mother who urged her to enter the competition. She said her essay was a tribute to both her parents.

-- (Burcham 1 24 sec. "My mom was just looking ... in there too a little bit.")

Burcham said it was an honor to win the award, especially against national competition. She said she was surprised to learn that she'd captured the top prize.

-- (Burcham 2 10 sec. "I was really excited ... weird, I don't know.")

Burcham, a three-sport standout athlete at Kodiak High School, will attend the University of Alaska Anchorage, where she intends to run track. She said she will put the 1,000-dollar U.S. savings bond she received for winning the contest toward college tuition. She emphasized that she is grateful to her parents for providing constant support and inspiration for all that she accomplishes, whether on the volleyball or basketball court, the track or academically.

-- (Burcham 3 8 sec. "Thanks to my mom

and dad ... to be the best I can.")

According to ASYMCA, the contest promotes reading, writing and the arts, and provides young people with a medium to express the emotions and unique experiences and challenges they face growing up as children in the military. There were 14 winners chosen in the essay contest's six categories, which are based on grade level. Winners were announced last Wednesday at a luncheon on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

I'm Erik Wander.

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