

## **2009-2010 CONTEST INFORMATION**

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### Contest Information

Read complete contest information before applying. Please read all requirements carefully. Entries that do not meet ALL requirements will be automatically disqualified from the contest without notification to the student.

### Applicant Eligibility Requirements

The GFSA State Scholarship Essay Contest is open to high school seniors in Georgia who plan to further their education at a college/university or certified trade school in the United States. The scholarship is not based on financial need. Relatives of GFSA board members may not enter.

You must be a high school senior during the 2009-2010 school year who will attend a college/university or trade school in the United States starting with the fall 2010 semester.

Home-schooled students may apply as long as your course of study is equivalent to that of a senior in high school.

### Essay Requirements

All applicants must submit a text-only (no graphics included) essay between 700-1,000 words addressing the theme specified by the GFSA. Each essay must be an original work written by the applicant and must be accompanied by a bibliography citing all sources of information used. Only entries submitted through to the GFSA email address as stated in the application process are accepted. Only one essay per applicant is allowed.

### Essay Theme for 2009-2010:

Tell why fire sprinklers are important and how they have helped to save lives and property in Georgia; and why you would want to have them installed in your home.

## Bibliography Requirements (a.k.a. Works Cited)

The bibliography is the list of sources you used when writing and/or researching your essay. Essays without a bibliography will not be accepted. When citing a source within the essay itself, place the number of the source as it corresponds to your bibliography in brackets ([1], [2], etc.) instead of typing the entire bibliography entry every time.

Sample bibliography:

1. Blahz, John. Talk is Like Tango. FakeBook Publishers Co.; 2nd edition, 1998.
2. Fella, Heyder. Talkin' to Me? Seriously Printing House; Reprint edition, 1993.
3. Shush, Sally Mae. "All Talk and No Study"

Sample source identification in essay text:

Blahz presents this argument in the section he calls "This is what I think." [1] His point of view is strongly supported by Fella's assertion that "Everyone thinks what they want, that's life." [2] However, studies show...

## Plagiarism Notice

Plagiarism.org defines plagiarism as "the improper use, or failure to attribute, another person's writing or ideas (intellectual property). It can be as subtle as the inadvertent neglect to include quotes or references when citing another source or as blatantly unethical as knowingly copying an entire paper verbatim and claiming it as your own work." (www.plagiarism.org)

**IMPORTANT:** An essay containing any form of plagiarism will automatically be disqualified from the contest without notification to the student.

## Deadline

Contest is limited to first 500 eligible entries received through the GFSA email address.

Entries will be accepted from August 11, 2009 until 4:30 p.m. (EST), September 22, 2009. Late arrivals will not be accepted.

## Judging Criteria

Members of the automatic fire sprinkler industry, including those in the educational and professional/installation fields, judge entries. Essays are judged in four areas, and particular consideration is given to how well the essay addresses the specified contest theme:

Content

Accuracy

Creativity/Originality

Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation

### Prizes

A total of \$3,250 is awarded to three winners.

First place national winner receives a scholarship of \$1,500.

Second place national winner receives a scholarship of \$1,000.

Third place winner receives a scholarship of \$750.

The scholarship is paid directly to the educational institution in the student's account.

### Winner Notification

Winners of the scholarships will be notified through their high schools via email. All entries must have a functioning email address for an administrator within their high school.

All winners are required to provide a recommendation letter from a teacher/guidance counselor/mentor other than a parent upon notification of his/her prize. If a student does not provide a recommendation letter within the time frame given, he/she forfeits the prize. All information provided by the student is subject to verification by the GFSA.

Winners' names and essays will be posted on the GFSA web site in October 2009.

### Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am home-schooled, Can I still apply?

A: Home-schooled students are eligible for the contest as long as you are able to show you are on a grade level equivalent to that of a high school senior.

Q: I am taking some college courses, does that matter?

A: As long as you are taking college courses to supplement your high school education (whether you attend a high school or are home-schooled) and are not considered a college student during the 2009-2010 school year, you are eligible for the contest.

Q: Can I get the scholarship award paid to me directly if I plan to use it toward my college expenses like books or housing?

A: GFSA pays the scholarship money directly to the educational institution in the student's account for tuition and/or books. No money goes directly to the student.

Q: I will be skipping a semester or two before I go to college, can you hold the money until I start?

A: GFSA pays the scholarship money directly to the educational institution for the fall 2010 semester and does not hold any funds beyond that.

Q: How do I include graphics in my essay? I'd like to include some illustrations I drew and a chart.

A: You can't. The essay contest is for text-only essays.

Q: I am a foreign exchange student, Can I still apply?

A: You must be a legal resident of Georgia to be eligible for the contest.

Q: I do not own a home computer, can I still apply?

A: You can apply from any computer as long as you are able to submit the essay in the proper format (see Application Process).

Q: How can I start gathering information?

A: Three good web sites are [www.sprinklernet.org](http://www.sprinklernet.org), [www.nfsa.org](http://www.nfsa.org), and [www.homefiresprinkler.org](http://www.homefiresprinkler.org).

### Application Process

Applications will only be accepted online via the GFSA email address. Student must provide all information requested to be able to submit his/her entry.

Step 1: Read all contest information. You must agree that you have read the information and understand it before you can proceed to submit your essay. Entries that do not meet ALL requirements will be automatically disqualified from the contest without notification to the student.

Step 2: Type your essay and bibliography in any word processing program and save it as a text-only document.

Note: Do not include your name or address in the body of the essay. All special formatting/characters such as indents, italics, underlines etc. will be eliminated when the document is saved as text-only. Punctuation characters such as commas, quotation marks, etc. stay the same.

Step 3: On a separate page at the beginning of the document, fill out the following student information.

Students Full Name:  
Home Street Address:  
City, State, Zip Code:  
Home Phone (with area code):  
Home email Address:  
Parent/Guardian Name:  
Parent/Guardian Contact Number (with area code):  
Your School Name:  
School Street Address:  
School City, State, Zip Code:  
School Phone (with area code):  
Principal's or Counselor's Name:  
Principal's or Counselor's email address:  
Anticipated Date of Graduation:

Step 4: Email the student information, essay and bibliography to [essaycontest@georgiafiresprinkler.org](mailto:essaycontest@georgiafiresprinkler.org).

Due to the number of entries we receive, we cannot contact each entrant. Only the TOP THREE WINNERS will be contacted via email or phone in October 2009. Winners' names will also be placed on the GFSA website in October 2009.

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Past essay topics are as follows:

2001: Describe the history and impact of automatic fire sprinklers.

2003: Describe the History of Automatic Fire Sprinklers and how the recently proposed federal legislation HR 1824 may affect fire sprinkler installation in my community.

2005: What are fire sprinklers and what are the economic benefits of fire sprinklers to the community?

2006: Explain to your builder the value of sprinklers and why you want them installed.

2007: With the increase of apartment fire fatalities, how would you help the media to understand and to emphasize the value for fire sprinklers?

2008: Explain how and why fire sprinklers save more lives when added to an escape plan, smoke alarms, and fire rated construction.