

# Stratford Celebrates America with Words, Photos and Videos

We are seeking submissions that reflect the many histories that make up Stratford, including: Stratford's many churches; industries, farming, museums, immigrant communities; languages spoken; and, neighborhoods across the town.

Teens could consider answering any one of the following questions:

- When is a time you felt like an “explorer” in your own life, and how does that connect with Stratford's past and your future?
- What lessons from Stratford's past should guide yours and the country's future?
- What parts of Stratford's history are overlooked or misunderstood, and why?
- How are you carrying Stratford's history forward — or challenging it?
- How do stories from past generations influence the way you see America today?
- Who are the noteworthy Stratford people in your life today — the people building, creating, leading, or changing something for others?

Your work should be personal. Everyone has an opinion. Think of topics on which you are uniquely qualified to speak on. The answers should connect to Stratford's or America's past and/or future. Make sure the audience of your essay, photos or video will understand your position immediately.

Whether your story is about family, land, culture, religion, migration, protest, or belonging, we want to hear from you.

## How to participate:

- Submit a draft of your essay, photo(s), or video by July 31<sup>st</sup> to [dwright@townofstratford.com](mailto:dwright@townofstratford.com)
- We will contact students whose work fits our guidelines. If you need additional clarification, we will schedule a time when we can meet and discuss your needs.
- Chosen students will receive \$250 and their work will be published through various town social media channels and on the town's website.
- A \$250 prize will be awarded to the winner. The prize will be awarded at our October 3rd **Stratford Celebrates America at 250** event at the Blackhawk Country Club.
- Questions? Reach out to us at [dwright@townofstratford.com](mailto:dwright@townofstratford.com) with the subject line **Stratford Celebrates America**.

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## **Submission guidelines:**

### **Submissions should:**

- Reflect authentic personal or community experiences
- Connect in some way to Stratford, its people, or its histories.
- Be appropriate for public exhibition and educational audiences.

### **Submissions may not contain:**

- Graphic violence
- Explicit sexual content
- Plagiarized material
- Copyrighted material used without permission

### **Essays:**

- 650 words or less.
- Must be original, first-person storytelling. AI generated essays are not allowed.
- English submissions are encouraged; bilingual or multilingual submissions are welcome with an English translation attached.

### **Photos:**

- Up to 10 photos. Must include captions and up to a 250-word explanation of the work.
- Images must be original and taken by the participant.
- Minor editing, such as cropping and toning, is permitted.
- AI-generated or substantially AI-altered images are not allowed.
- Submit as jpg or png.

### **Final short video submission rules:**

- 3 minutes or less for vertical videos.
- Must include original narration, interviews, or storytelling elements.
- Participants must secure permission from anyone appearing on camera.
- Music and media must be original, licensed, or copyright-free.
- Submit as a. MOV or .MP4 file.