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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Belleview Announces Winners of the 2024 'If I Was the Mayor' Essay Contest as Part of Florida City Government Week

The City of Belleview is excited to announce the winners of the 2024 'If I Was the Mayor' Essay Contest, held in honor of Florida City Government Week—a statewide initiative organized by the Florida League of Cities. This contest invited students in 4th-5th and 6th-8th grades to share creative ideas about how they would lead Belleview if they were mayor, encouraging them to think about the responsibilities of leadership and community service.

The contest brought in several essays, reflecting the creativity of Belleview's youth, as they envisioned ways to improve the city. The City is incredibly proud of all the participants for their thoughtful contributions and dedication.

4th-5th Grade Winners:

1st Place: Eyan Antich
2nd Place: Elliott Stephenson
3rd Place: Charles Small
Honorable Mention: Vivian Larroque

6th-8th Grade Winners:

1st Place: Abigail Stephenson
2nd Place: Lilla Smith

Each winner will receive a Certificate of Achievement signed by Mayor Christine Dobkowski and City Administrator Sandi McKamey. First place winners will have their essays read aloud during the City Commission meeting on Tuesday, November 5th at 6 PM at Belleview City Hall, where they will be formally recognized for their achievement.

Mayor Christine Dobkowski praised the students for their imaginative ideas and their commitment to thinking about Belleview's future:

"It is truly inspiring to see the vision these young leaders have for our city. The ideas shared in their essays show how much they care about the future of Belleview and what it means to them. Their creativity, and concern for our community give me immense hope for the future of our city. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and dedication, and I can't wait to share their voices during our upcoming City Commission meeting."

City Administrator Sandi McKamey highlighted the importance of fostering engagement with local government at a young age:

"This contest is a wonderful way to help students understand the role local government plays in shaping their community. It gives them an opportunity to think about what they would do if they were in a position of leadership, and it also opens the door to ongoing civic engagement. We are thrilled to see the level of thought and care that went into these essays, and we hope this experience inspires them to continue participating in the civic life of Belleview as they grow."

Robert Vass, Bellevue's Events and Promotions Manager, expressed his appreciation for the students' enthusiasm:

"The energy and creativity these students brought to the contest were amazing. It's clear they have a love of Bellevue and want to contribute to making it an even better place. I want to thank all the participants, their families, and teachers for supporting this initiative. I encourage all the students to stay engaged with the city and to keep sharing their ideas. The future of Bellevue looks bright with such thoughtful young leaders."

The City of Bellevue invites the community to attend the City Commission meeting on November 5th at 6 PM to celebrate these talented young citizens, or listen to the meeting through online at www.bellevuefl.org.

Each winner will be formally recognized, and the 1st place essays will be read aloud by the Mayor. This event is part of the larger Florida City Government Week celebration, which aims to educate citizens about the role of local government and the services it provides.