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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF OUR AMERICAN STORY STUDENT CONTEST**

*Grand Prize Winning Student Team from Matthew Fontaine Maury High School in Norfolk, VA*

Williamsburg, VA (April 17, 2019) – Today Virginia’s [2019 Commemoration, American Evolution](#) and [WHRO](#) announced the winners of the Our American Story national student contest. A student team from Matthew Fontaine Maury High School in Norfolk, VA was selected as the Grand Prize winner, earning the team’s school a cash prize of \$5,000 as well as 10 iPad minis, four of which will be given to the team members themselves.

The [Our American Story](#) contest was designed to foster creativity, cooperative learning, critical examination and discussion among students in grades 8 through 12. Working in teams, students developed their project submissions employing a variety of formats including video testimonials, documentaries, poems, drawings and paintings. A total of 11 teams were selected to receive prizes across the three category themes: Democracy, Diversity and Opportunity. Ten of the prize winners were selected by a panel of judges and the People’s Choice winner was selected directly by the public with more than 800 votes cast.

The Grand Prize winning team, Superior Productions, from Maury High School in Norfolk, Virginia submitted a multimedia project entitled Shaping Diversity, which paid homage to the Norfolk 17: the first 17 African-American students to integrate public schools in Norfolk in 1958. Members of the winning team are 11th graders Kobe Nguyen, Kaleem Haq, Jacob Hill and Javier Miranda-Castro.

“On behalf of the 2019 Commemoration, it is our pleasure to recognize these students who represent the next generation of our country’s leaders,” said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. “It is imperative that students establish a personal connection to the impact that today’s actions can have toward attaining our country’s ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity.”

In addition to the overall Grand Prize and People's Choice Award winners, First Place prizes and Honorable Mentions were awarded in each of the three theme categories. The [list](#) of the awards, winning entries and the schools is as follows:

- Grand Prize: "Shaping Diversity," Matthew Fontaine Maury High School, Norfolk, VA
- People's Choice Award: "Opportunity and the American Dream," Benton Middle School, Manassas, VA
- Democracy First Place: "Democracy," Plaza Middle School, Virginia Beach, VA
- Democracy Honorable Mention: "The Inequality of Equality in Democracy," H.H. Poole Middle School, Stafford, VA
- Democracy Honorable Mention: "Our American Dream - Democracy," Green Run Collegiate, Virginia Beach, VA
- Diversity First Place: "et al: Those Just As Important," El Modena High School, Orange, CA
- Diversity Honorable Mention: "Just Be You," Woodside High School, Newport News, VA
- Diversity Honorable Mention: "Cooking Our Culture," Green Run Collegiate, Virginia Beach, VA
- Opportunity First Place: "The American Dreamer," Skyline Middle School, Harrisonburg, VA
- Opportunity Honorable Mention: "Opportunity Is For Everyone," Broadway High School, Broadway, VA
- Opportunity Honorable Mention: "What happened to the American Dream?", Matthew Fontaine Maury High School, Norfolk, VA

The 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution, with the generous support of the [Virginia General Assembly](#), has partnered with notable Virginia institutions like WHRO to inspire student engagement in discussions and actions aligned with the themes of democracy, diversity and opportunity. The Our American Story contest was inspired by formative events which occurred in [1619 Virginia](#) that forever changed the trajectory of Virginia and America's history. These 1619 events include the First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first recorded Africans in English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers to the Virginia colony, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America and the launch of entrepreneurship and innovation in the Commonwealth. A full schedule of American Evolution programming, upcoming events, and educational initiatives can be found at: <https://www.americanevolution2019.com/events/>.

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### **About the 2019 Commemoration**

The 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™ highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. American Evolution™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Energy is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

### **About WHRO**

Since its founding in 1961 to support education, WHRO has employed creativity and technology to serve the residents of southeast Virginia in its mission to educate, inform and entertain viewers and listeners of WHRO's four public television and eight public radio stations. Owned by 19 southeastern Virginia school divisions, WHRO also delivers online educational and new media services to 286,000 students and 25,000 educators per month. To learn more, visit [www.whro.org](http://www.whro.org).