

STMS students express themselves in writing

By Kathryn Reed

Fifteen South Tahoe Middle School students proved their generation could express themselves in more than 140 characters. And they can do so about serious topics.

Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra honored the students last week at the annual Writing Festival awards breakfast. These aren't all overachievers. Some are English learners, other are average students. But what they have in common is they are the top writers out of a school of nearly 800 students.

Most of the first-place winners chose to read their essays. They did so in a room full of Soroptimists, parents, siblings and grandparents.

Eighth-grader Leah Marino was the last to go, but seemed to captivate the audience the most with her essay on the need for schools to be a safe place for students. She advocated for having surveillance cameras in schools to thwart the threat of violence.

"It's only a matter of time before it becomes normal," Marino said of school shootings.

She's not worried about stomping on the privacy of students.

"What privacy is there to invade at school?" Marino asked.

Marino said the cameras would curtail the use of guns, fights and drugs.

Seventh-grader Alexis Andersen wrote about the need to have a

teen curfew.



Alexis Andersen talks about teen curfews while Soroptimist Wendy David listens. Photo/LTN

“Is it better to be at a party or get good grades and have a successful life?” she asked.

Sixth-graders McKenna Beisel and Emma Aaron tackled the topic of homework.

“I strongly believe kids don’t have time for homework,” Beisel said.

She questioned the importance of hours of homework after spending the day in school. Beisel added that homework takes away from time for sports and family.

While Aaron believes in homework, she said there is such thing as too much.

“It’s important teachers give out learning work and not busy work,” Aaron said.

The Writing Festival winners are:

6th Grade High Point Program

- Diana Chavez – first

- Saintychelle Bascao – second

6th Grade Language Arts

- Emma Aaron – first
- Logan Chapman – second
- Anne Edwards – third

7th Grade Read 180 Program

- Danny Guillen – first
- Ervin Espino – second

7th Grade Language Arts:

- Alexis Anderson – first
- Chase Cunningham – second
- Riley Turner – third

8th Grade Read 180 Program

- McKenna Beisel – first
- Faith Brown – second

8th Grade Language Arts

- Leah Marino – first
- Mia Idzorek – second
- Bailey Segers – third.