



---

## News for Immediate Release

April 26, 2024

# Auditor General DeFoor, Harrisburg University, Members 1st Federal Credit Union Announce Winners of Statewide Student Financial Literacy Competition

**HARRISBURG** – Harrisburg University of Science and Technology President Dr. Eric Darr, Pennsylvania Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor and Members 1st Federal Credit today announced the winners of a statewide financial literacy competition for students in Grades 9-12.

“It’s hard to understate the importance of financial literacy in today’s world,” said Harrisburg University President, Dr. Eric Darr. “Young adults who know how money works are far better prepared to support their families and maintain healthy spending habits. We are grateful for the chance to continue this impactful collaboration between Harrisburg University, Members 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Credit Union, and the office of the Auditor General. I want to thank each and every student who shared their thoughts with us in this competition and extend hearty congratulations to our winners. You’ve made Pennsylvania proud.”

The top winners were selected out of 94 entrants across 24 counties who submitted poems or essays on the theme, “What Does Financial Literacy Mean to Me?” The winners are:

- **First Place** (\$2,500 prize): Neema Mwemera, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, Steelton-Highspire Jr./Sr. High School, Dauphin County
- **Second Place** (\$1,500 prize): Ashley Rodriguez, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, William Allen High School, Lehigh County
- **Third Place** (\$1000 prize tie): John Ademuwagun, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Milton Hershey School, Dauphin County
- **Third Place** (\$1000 prize tie): Caleb Masshardt, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Cedar Cliff High School, Cumberland County
- **Honorable mentions** (\$500 prize): Martina Ferriolo, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Louis E. Dieruff High School, Lehigh County; Savannah Harrell, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Bishop McDevitt High School, Dauphin County; Ava Santanna, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Bishop McDevitt High School, Dauphin County

In addition to the cash prize, every student who submitted an entry to the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Financial Literacy Competition will receive a \$1,000 tuition scholarship when enrolling as a full-time student at Harrisburg University.

“It’s never too early to start learning how to be smart with your money,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “If you know how money works, you’re in a better position to understand where it’s going and you’re able to hold government accountable for how it’s being spent. The winners of this year’s competition have shown they know the importance of being financially literate.”

“Having a strong grasp of personal finance is crucial for the next generation to make informed decisions as they grow older. Competitions like this play a pivotal role in teaching youth how to plan for their future and manage their finances effectively,” said Chad Adams, Chief Relationship Officer for Members 1st. “On behalf of Members 1st, we sincerely congratulate this year’s competition winners. Thank you to the Department of the Auditor General and Harrisburg University for hosting this crucial initiative and sharing in our mission of financially equipping our region’s youth.”

This was the 11th year that Harrisburg University of Science and Technology has organized this competition. Monetary prizes were provided by Harrisburg University; no taxpayer funds were used.

Learn more about the Department of the Auditor General online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://www.PaAuditor.gov). Pictures and video of the event will be posted online at [PAcast.com](http://PAcast.com).

###

**Media contact:** April Hutcheson, Auditor General 717-787-1381 [news@paauditor.gov](mailto:news@paauditor.gov)  
Jessica Warren, Harrisburg University 717-901-5146 or [jwarren2@harrisburgU.edu](mailto:jwarren2@harrisburgU.edu)  
Courtney McFarland, Members 1st Federal Credit Union, 717-829-3776 or [mcfarlandc@members1st.org](mailto:mcfarlandc@members1st.org)