



KaBOOM! FEST!
2 NIGHTS OF MUSIC & FIREWORKS!
RED BANK, NJ

Excerpts from the winning essays

We are all pulling together today, even the kids. One thing I am doing to help make money for my family is to get a summer job. With school I cannot risk getting a job and having my grades drop. However, during the summer, when school is over, and I have all the time in the world, I give a few hours every day to help my family.

I realize that my family isn't the only one with problems. So, in time I am not working, I enjoy volunteering. I don't like the idea of demanding money everywhere I go. There are many people in my community who are elderly or have a full day at work, so to give to the community, I offer to do smaller things, like feed the fish, water the flowers, or cut the lawn and, in return, I require nothing. I do it all out of the goodness of my heart, and I do it so that they will be able to work and earn money to help them in this economic recession. It is all beneficial to everyone. I don't think it is right to siphon people's hard-earned money for doing meaningless or low energy tasks, especially in a tough economic time.

Essay by: **Jack Cole**

School: **Avon Elementary School**

Grade: **8**

Although my father may have lost his job, my mother may have a dangerous, possibly deadly disease, there's still hope in the world. My family can, and will do their best to survive in this tumbling stone of an economy. Although there are many bumps and turns that aren't expected, there is still a light at the end of the tunnel. These tough times just encourage us to do better and better every day.

Hope is hope within itself. Tough times will never take away our sparkle and shine. My mother is currently on medication that will keep her alive and my father is earning all the money our family needs. We as a family will always stay together, be it the toughest of times, or the best of times, we will never lose our sparkle and shine.

Essay by: **Zack Dresher**

School: **Memorial Middle School, Howell, NJ**

Grade: **6**



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We had to sell our house to cope with the tough economy. My mom was laid off and the bills caught up with her. We downsized to a three room apartment, it's a pretty big adjustment. I have a bedroom which is the biggest room in the apartment. On the other hand my mom doesn't have a room because we couldn't afford a two bedroom apartment. She sleeps on a pullout couch in the living room. We were able to take our cat, Bella, and the fact that we're all together is what matters most.

Even though things are hard, I know that there are families who are struggling more than me. I know we might not have all the things we want but we have all that we need.

Essay by: **Rocco Urgo**

School: **Mother Teresa Regional School**

Grade: **7**

As our economy grows, taxes are being raised and budgets are being cut. My mother is an independent and hardworking fifth grade teacher. The school district she works for's budget has been cut. ...couldn't have come at a worse time for my family. ...My father had passed away just three years ago.

Just when I was feeling sorry for my family, I was offered the opportunity to Sing the National Anthem at the opening ceremony for the national cancer organization's Relay for life annual cancer benefit. Standing on stage, looking out into the smiling faces of children who are suffering the harsh and terrible effects of cancer, I had this overwhelming sense that my fears and worries were minimal compared to the struggles and hardships their families would have to face.

Essay by: **Ricci Noel Bigelow**

School: **Ocean Township Intermediate School**

Grade: **5**



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If you met me on the street I would appear as the normal senior in High School. Like all high school seniors, the transition to college is difficult . . . However, I am facing two major challenges. I am learning disabled, and I have worked very hard to overcome and compensate for this learning disability. My other challenge is financial. My mother lost her job as a store manager when her company went bankrupt two years ago, and like so many other Americans in this difficult economy, she has been unable to find another management position. Therefore my parents are not able to support me financially through college. If I want to attend college, I must find a way to finance it completely on my own.

Essay by: **Melissa Rodriguez**
School: **Manasquan High School**
Grade: **12**