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Marine Corp Veteran Wins Holiday Blogging Contest for Teens and College Students



YORK, Pa., Dec. 21, 2010 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- What are teens and college students most thankful for this holiday season? That's a question [StageofLife.com](#), a blogging and writing resource for teens and students, poised in its latest monthly [writing contest](#).



(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20100929/DC73342LOGO>)

Over 3,550 students visited StageofLife.com during the month to review the writing contest.

From the essay and blog submissions, twelve major themes emerged about where teens and college students give the most thanks: 1) Family, 2) Friends, 3) Physical Abilities, 4) Health, 5) Their Pet, 6) Home, 7) School, 8) The Arts / Creativity, 9) God and Spirituality, 10) Opportunity, 11) Nature, and 12) Miscellaneous Topics, which includes giving thanks to things such as "Guardrails," for saving the lives of reckless teenage drivers (and older generations alike).

The winner of the holiday writing contest is 24-year-old freshman, Jason Geringer of Crestwood, IL, who started at Trinity Christian College after completing four years in the United States Marine Corp. After surviving two deployments in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, he offered a unique perspective on where to give gratitude this holiday.

In his essay entitled, "I'm Thankful for Quiet," Geringer writes,

"There are a lot of things I'm thankful for. I'm grateful to have a lovely wife who supports me and makes my life warm and more meaningful. I'm thankful for real food that is cooked in a real kitchen, running water, a real shower, and a comfortable bed at night. These things I used to take for granted... It is hard to imagine a world without these simple pleasures. For most of us we see a lot of these things as necessities. Yet the places I've been to in Iraq and Afghanistan, I didn't always get these things, and I witnessed other people who didn't have it as good as we do here. The sad truth of our society is, we don't realize how good it really is, unless we step away from it into a different world.

"Although I'm thankful for these things, there is nothing I am more grateful for than the solitude I feel as I write this (essay). Each morning I have the freedom to wake up and drive to this college. Every morning I get here early, so that I can find a quiet spot in the library where I can challenge and expand my mind in ways other than the ways of war. Here I can sit and read such things as literature or philosophy, and I am able to ponder the ideas of the scholars before me. I am no longer expected to be a warrior. And I am not so sure now what exactly I am called to be from now on, but for now I'll sit here quietly, soaking up the serenity."

For those interested in reading other essays about giving thanks this holiday season, StageofLife.com offers a [holiday writing contest summary page](#) featuring links to 100 of the student and teen blogger submissions.

When asked why he entered, Geringer said, "I found out about the essay contest through a Google search for [college writing contests](#) and Stageoflife.com was one of the results, so I looked into it and began writing. I am an aspiring writer, and this is a great way for me to practice writing...it helps to have a topic to write about. I love it."

The current [writing contest for college and high school students](#) deals with the topic of "Money." The writing prompt asks students, "What is your relationship with money? How do you spend (or save) your money...and why?"

The contest submission deadline is Dec. 31, 2010 - Midnight PST. Mint.com is recommended as a financial resource for the students and KodakGallery.com is providing the monthly prize. StageofLife.com is offering up SWAG and Featured Writer/Blogger status to the next student writing contest winner.

About Stage of Life™: StageofLife.com is a free, non-partisan grassroots project with a mission to make the world a better place, one story at a time. By hosting blogs, information and resources for teens, college students, Millennials, Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomer generations, its hope is that cross-generational story telling will weave a network of wisdom from which all can benefit. Specialized content includes [free lesson plan ideas and writing prompts for Language Arts teachers](#), [monthly writing contests for high school students](#) and [college students](#), [blogging resources](#), a free national platform for writers to [promote their blogs](#) and much more, including My Life Rewards, an area dedicated to providing relevant coupons and discounts exclusively geared towards each stage of life.

If you'd like more information about StageofLife.com or an interview with CEO/Founder, Eric Thiags, please us the [Contact Us](#) form on www.stageoflife.com or call 717-650-0699.

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