



Date:  
Contact:

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Joe Stinebaker  
Communications Director  
O) 713-755-4027  
C) 713-503-2610  
Joe.stinebaker@cjo.hctx.net

# NEWS RELEASE

## HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE EMMETT TO RECOGNIZE STUDENT FINALISTS IN “DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE”

*Junior High School Students Share Their Ideas To Stop Violence*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett will honor more than 200 student finalists in the 2014 Houston/Harris County *Do the Write Thing Challenge* at an annual recognition ceremony this weekend. Author, motivational speaker and radio personality Dayna Steele will be the keynote speaker.

The Houston/Harris County *Do the Write Thing Challenge* will be from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, June 1, at NRG Arena in the newly renamed NRG (formerly Reliant) Park. The *Challenge* is an educational initiative of the *National Campaign to Stop Violence* that encourages seventh- and eighth-grade students in the community's public and private school systems to examine the impact of violence on their lives and to write about their experiences. The *Challenge* gives students an opportunity to share their stories and ideas with a large audience in hopes of making a difference in their community.

Coordinators for the local 2014 *Challenge* received submissions from nearly 13,000 students attending 119 schools in 40 school districts. Among the 216 student finalists, two were chosen as national finalists. The national finalists are invited to attend recognition events in Washington, D.C., on June 14, along with one parent/guardian and teacher of each student.

As chairman of the Houston/Harris County *Do the Right Thing Challenge*, Emmett also recognized the *Challenge*'s two national finalists along with all finalists' parents and teachers at the event.

The national finalists are Connor Carpenter of Woodrow Wilson Junior High School in Dayton ISD and Fatima Menendez of Burbank Middle School in the Houston Independent School District.

“It’s a great honor and humbling experience for me to recognize these young students for their outstanding ideas and insights into our community,” Emmett said. “Their experiences can be heartbreaking, but their writings and suggestions may provide them with healing and may also highlight ways for others to make better decisions when faced with difficult or violent situations.”