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# NEWS RELEASE

## HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE EMMETT RECOGNIZES STUDENT FINALISTS IN

### **“DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE”**

*Middle School Students Share Their Ideas To Stop Violence*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett honored nearly 300 student finalists in the 2008 Houston/Harris County *Do the Write Thing Challenge* at an annual recognition ceremony this afternoon. Community leader Jim “Mattress Mack” McIngvale was the keynote speaker.

The Houston/Harris County *Do the Write Thing 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 2008 *Challenge* received submissions from 17,876 students attending 149 schools in 46 school districts. Among the 298 student finalists, two were chosen as national finalists and two runners-up as state finalists. The national finalists are invited to attend recognition events in Austin and Washington, D.C., 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 and the two state finalists along with all finalists’ parents and teachers at the event.

The national finalists are Diamond Johnson of Teague Middle School in the Aldine Independent School District and Evan Masterson of Sartartia Middle School in the Fort Bend Independent School District. The two state finalists are Amy Fuller of Bondy Intermediate School in the Pasadena Independent School District and Quanzel Caston of Claughton Middle School in the Spring Independent School District.

“It was a great honor for me to recognize these young students for their outstanding ideas and insights to our community,” Emmett said. “Their writings and suggestions may provide solutions to help others make better decisions if faced with difficult, sometimes violent situations. I’m proud to chair the local *Do the Right Thing Challenge* and help give our youth a voice in helping create a safer Harris County.”