

JCRC Hosts Pluralism Awards Ceremony At City Hall Honoring Toby Nussbaum

On Wednesday, June 7, the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC) hosted an awards ceremony at City Hall for the winners of the Toby Nussbaum Jewish Heritage Student Essay Contest. Toby Nussbaum was the former vice chair of the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty and vice president of the JCRC. Schoolchildren's writing addressed the vital issue of cultural pluralism. New York City Deputy Mayor Richard Buery welcomed the assembled guests, and Toby Nussbaum's family spoke as well. *New York Jewish Life* is pleased to print the winning entries below.



HIGH SCHOOL FIRST PLACE
 Jackie Dong
 March 10th 2017
 Essay Contest

Mr. Waxman Global
 Stuyvesant High School
 Manhattan

Cultural Pluralism

Today, America is looked at worldwide as one of the most diverse countries. Cultural pluralism is the idea that Jewish and other religious and ethnic groups could both maintain their culture and maintain society. Immigrants and people all around the world move to America in hope for a better life and more opportunities. And so, the joining of cultures from all over the world shapes American society and enriches it. This is shown through food, language, as well as the relationships of people from different cultures.

"American society is like a symphony orchestra, each instrument playing its own tune in order to create a richer overall sound."- Theory of Jewish American Scholar Horace Kallen(1882-1974). This quote is a simile comparing the individual unique cultures of American society to the wide range of instruments in an orchestra and the richer overall sound to the enrichment the different cultures. Each individual culture provides its own significant effect on American society. I can relate to this quote because throughout the fourteen years of my life, I have been able to blend in with American society being born in a family with Chinese origin. Me blending in with American society is an example of cultural pluralism because I maintained many aspects of my Chinese backgrounds but also adapted to many customs of America. In addition, I was able to provide the people around me a different view of society because of my Chinese background.

"American culture is like a stew. It is composed of many different ingredients, spices, beliefs, and often a secret ingredient to give it the unique flavor that people crave. It is the land of opportunity, and it tastes good." -Author Unknown, 2011. Just like the other quote, this quote compares America to a stew. It compares certain aspects of America to a stew's components. For example, it compares the ingredients in a stew to the cultures of America, the spices of the stew to beliefs in America, and the stew's secret ingredient to pride and freedom in America. Jewish people are a big part of America's society today and they have lived up to the concept of cultural pluralism. They have both maintained their culture and also enriched today's society. For instance, the Jewish culture has been widely accepted in America, and their culture has provided many of its aspects on American society, such as religion and jobs. In the case of religion, synagogues have been built around the nation in order for Jewish worship. Additionally, Jewish people have been able to create their own businesses, enroll in government jobs, and take part of the education system.

All in all, the concept of cultural pluralism is lived up to by the different cultures in American society. Each culture remains its cultural identity while also adding to American society. As stated by the Jewish American scholar Horace Kallen, America is like an orchestra, and the individual cultures are like instruments in the orchestra. And with the instruments the orchestra produces a better overall sound.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL FIRST PLACE

Moriah Ramcharran
Public School 232, Queens Cultural Pluralism

The tranquil fusion of all ethnicities and cultures,
 Are what give America its title.
 The land of the free and the home of the brave.
 Seasoning the once bland country.
 An orchestra that works in tandem
 with each instrument playing its own unique tune.
 Enriching America and influencing other countries to do the same.
 Skipping down the path that once consisted of only one ethnicity
 Is now a vast and beautiful mixture.
 Each culture represents an iridescent color,
 they come together in the dazzling rainbow and
 shine euphoria amongst all living things.
 Fighting past massacres and organized riots
 the Jews persevered.
 They slowly adapted in the Lower East side of Manhattan
 In an "incubator" that supplied all their needs.
 Other cultures shadowed.
 As fierce as a lion but as calm as a lamb,
 the Jews became a puzzle piece to America.
 As years passed, the posterity acclimated to American life
 They dispersed throughout New York city
 They began to influence culture politics and business
 They helped sustain New York City's legacy
 as a thriving metropolis for centuries to come.
 Welcomed by all,
 "united we stand, divided we fall"
 Every corner you turn,
 There is a novel language to learn.
 Around every curb,
 is an exotic and cultural delicacy to try.
 Philanthropy, benevolence and humanitarianism
 Are traits we must show to make them feel as if they belong
 America is their home away from home
 America is the land of freedom
 America is their comfort and protection
 America is stirred with cultures and religions.
 Don't be afraid, let your colors shine.
 Home to over 100 different ethnicities, America,
 the melting pot.