

THE FOUNDATION FOR  
APPALACHIAN  
OHIO 

Fostering Access to Opportunity

*I'm a  
Child of  
Appalachia™*

**Essay Winners**

**2006**





THE FOUNDATION FOR  
APPALACHIAN  
OHIO 



Since 1999, we've worked to foster access to opportunity for the region's families and children through the power of charitable giving. As a 501(c)(3) public charity, the Foundation serves as a regional community foundation for the 29 counties of Appalachian Ohio. We attract contributions for programs and endowment; make grants for charitable and civic purposes; and support local and regional efforts for positive change. Celebrating six years and more than \$1 million in grants awarded, we have accomplished much – with more to be done. We recognize education and opportunity go hand-in-hand.

The *I'm a Child of Appalachia*<sup>TM</sup> campaign encourages our region's communities to invest and our region's citizens to expect, pursue and succeed in attaining post-secondary education. Through the lens of individual stories, the campaign encourages positive alternatives. *I'm a Child of Appalachia*<sup>TM</sup> promotes greater investment in the region to increase student access and success at all levels of education.

The Foundation would like to thank the sponsors of the 2006 *I'm a Child of Appalachia*<sup>TM</sup> Essay Contest, Edward Jones – Heath, Athens and Lancaster Offices.

**Edward Jones**<sup>®</sup>  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

**Zach Johnson (Scioto County)**

This paper will discuss the many advantages and unique opportunities of living the Appalachia Ohio. I will explain what it means to be a child growing up in this area, what is special about this place, and how I think this special place and people will help me succeed as I grow up.

I am a child of Appalachia. Growing up in Appalachia as a child means being able to participate in activities without the worries of violence which many metropolitan areas deal with daily. I can go to school and see the beauty of the changing leaves without the worry of them being destroyed by a developer the next day. Appalachia is the perfect place for a child who loves nature and the relative quietness of the rolling hills and rushing water as I do.

Having lived here for a decade and a half, I have uncovered many of the things that make Appalachia very special. We have a rich heritage where strong traditions flourish. This allows our communities to be closely intertwined in the history and culture of our area. Unlike most areas, we can exist in peace and tranquility and live life to its fullest.

This special place along with its people will help me succeed as I grow up by teaching me morals and values. My 4H advisors are perfect examples of these people. Every year they teach me what is right and wrong losing hundreds of dollars in the process. Living in Appalachia means living on land that is special because it has been passed from one generation to the next, farmed for its bounty, and enjoyed for its natural beauty.

I am a child of Appalachia. This is such a great place full of helpful people and undisturbed beauty. From the rolling hills and clear water to the biggest city, I live in peace and tranquility, Appalachia is an area where there is no limit as to what I can attain. That is why I am proud to be a child of Appalachia.

## 8th Grade Finalist

### Kailey Longpre (Ross County)

#### *Growing up in Appalachia Ohio*

I'm a child of Appalachia and I love it that way! I wasn't always a child of a small town though. I was born in LA, California, and moved here when I was five years old. Moving from a huge city in the Sunshine State to a small town where cornfields run for miles and miles was a huge difference. My first thought when I moved here was "Gosh it stinks out here!" I mean it literally stunk because of Mead Corporation (it still does). I will never forget my first best friend Brenna. We are still friends today! I think growing up in a small town keeps you closer to everyone.

In Los Angeles you never recognized any familiar faces in the local Wal-Marts like you do in Chillicothe. 5:00 traffic was ten times larger than what you get on Bridge Street. On Christmas Day it was 75 degrees out and sunny instead of 10 below with heavy snow falling from the sky. The little things like going out to eat in a restaurant were so much different in California. Every restaurant was packed full with many different ethnicities.

I still miss California sometimes. I wouldn't mind seeing all of my childhood friends again. We lived only minutes away from the beach, which was great, because I absolutely love to swim! The house we had in California was beautiful. I have so many memories in that house like when my best friend Joey let my bird fly away and he blamed it on me or when my sister locked my brothers out naked on the front porch and then called all of her friends to come over and see them. That was hilarious! We even had a pool in our backyard. There wasn't a day that I didn't swim in that pool. But my favorite thing to do in California was to sit on the stucco wall, while eating my brothers famous macaroni and cheese, and watching the sunset come out with my brothers.

But after moving out here I realized that it isn't so bad being a small town girl. You have advantages out here. Everyone knows everyone. There isn't a lot of crime. You have great schools and great friends! I have big dreams for the future and I'm still going to go after them even though I do live out in a small town. I don't think living in a small town will affect your goals and dreams. You just have to go after them no matter what!

Well overall I am proud to be child of Appalachia. I wouldn't change it for anything. Ohio is awesome! I love it and I have no regrets moving out here.

## Recognition and Appreciation

In September, 2006, the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio sponsored the first "I'm A Child of Appalachia Essay Contest" in an effort to encourage Appalachian children to begin considering the strengths of the geographic region which they call "home." Members of the FAO Board and Staff assisted in the application process and creation of the prompt. Students from the 29 counties of the federally defined area of Appalachia were invited to participate, and 735 individuals, representing 20 counties, responded to the following prompt.

*What does it mean to be a child growing up in Appalachian Ohio? Please tell what is special about this place, and how you think this special place and people will help you succeed as you grow up.*

The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio extends special thanks to Muskingum College for its significant support of the essay contest. English Education majors assisted in the screening of the essays, while faculty members designed the assessment process and identified the finalists.

Special appreciation is extended to:



**Muskingum College**  
**New Concord, Ohio**

Paul Reichardt, Vice President for Academic Affairs, whose idea it was to honor the student winners with this booklet;  
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#### Muskingum College Faculty

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#### Muskingum College Students

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Morgan Ford  
Kayla Hansel  
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Laura Taylor

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## 8th Grade Finalist

Eddie Torrero (Tuscarawas County)

*Growing up in Appalachia Ohio*

Imagine yourself in an incredibly beautiful, and peaceful land of pure enchantment. The place I'm talking about is Ohio but to be more specific Appalachia Ohio. Appalachia Ohio is a great place to grow up because growing up in Appalachia Ohio has taught me to be considerate, respectful, and I think has given me an advantage to life. I say this because so many of us take for granted that where we are located is more than just a place to live.

Being a child growing up in Appalachia Ohio may be one of the greatest things that I have ever experienced. Growing up here has also taught me that I live in a place where there are people who care about you and people who know you to be able to say hello everyday. Imagine a place where no one says hello or even looks at you. Living in a place like that would have children learning and growing up doing horrible in school because they wouldn't have any motivation. Children would also grow into adults who do the same for the next generation of children. Well that's pretty much the opposite of where I live and just imagining that would make me glad that I live where I do.

Not only are there great people but great sites are plentiful. In Appalachia Ohio there are many beautiful things to see such as the endless hills full of lush green tress. Not to mention the snow on the trees and the rest of the landscape. Also the leaves of the trees has a beauty of what you think you could get lost in when you just stare at them. The landscape helps you succeed while you grow up because the pure beauty of Appalachia Ohio is a sheer endless home of motivation. To people with great minds this kind of motivation could inspire them to take risks and follow their dreams and become important people to our society.

To be a child growing up in Appalachia Ohio not only means having people to help you and the beautiful landscape to motivate you but it also means being able to do things to their potential and to be successful as they get older.

8th Grade Finalist

**Stacy Stump (Gallia County)**

*My Life in Appalachia*

My name is Stacy Stump and I live in Gallia County Ohio. Gallia County is one of the 29 counties in Ohio located in the Appalachia region, or also known as the Appalachian foothills. This beautiful land is fruitful in its own way, although many people deny it. Everyday is calm and delightful. These days I am busy with school, but there are always opportunities to spend time with family and appreciate the real beauty of the Appalachian foothills.

There are a lot of things that people do here in Gallia County, which cannot be done in big cities, like Columbus. One benefit of living in Appalachia region is the amount of game that is located in the large forests around here. Hunting is a major activity that many people enjoy. A lot of my friends and I are hunters and I have to admit, it does give you a thrill. It makes you realize the beauty of our homeland, and the meat is not bad either. A lot of people refer to us country folk as “rednecks,” but I could really care less. Believe it or not, I am proud of it.

There are a lot of other qualities that make this area fun, like snow days in the winter. The one thing about the Appalachian region is the giant hills it provides. It usually snows a good bit here in the winter and those hills make for some awesome sleigh riding. That’s another good thing about southern Ohio. The seasons are always so perfect and precisely the way they’re supposed to be. In the fall, the trees are a wonderful field of gold, and in the winter they are covered with a glistening white blanket of snow. In the spring the hills come alive as new life moves about. The blazing hot temperatures of summer are perfect for outdoor water sports. Whatever the season there is always something to do here in the foothills of the Appalachians. Whether it’s the Bob Evans’ farm festival or the Gallia County fair. Even local sports events, but it’s a sure thing you’ll never get bored.

Many people in this area have an old-fashioned lifestyle. Farms are big in this area, and most people have blue collar jobs. When you go into town you don’t have to fight the traffic or live in fear. Most people in this area make you feel safe, but I am worried that even that will change in time.

I am proud to live here in the Appalachian foothills and it has really made me appreciate the value of life and the beauty of our land. Something as simple as stargazing in the evening reminds me of that. It may not be the most upbeat town in the world, but I love it, and when I grow up, I am not sure if I will ever be able to leave here. I would definitely miss my family and the love of this town. No matter what I do or where I go I will take the life lessons taught to me in this town and cherish them forever. My true home will always be here in the cool, crisp land of Appalachia.

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**Layne Gerbig (Tuscarawas County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

Tree covered hills, blazing with color spread across our county this time of year. White tailed deer frolic through the forest areas, playful squirrels scamper about, and birds soar through the skies. As the trees thrive and mature, their roots grow deep into the group of Appalachia Ohio. As a child of Appalachia Ohio, my roots also grow and deepen as I live and learn in this area rich in natural resources and heritage.

Our Appalachian heritage is shaped by the craftsmanship found in the pottery, woodwork, quilts and baskets of this region. As Appalachians, our love of nature and its resources are shared through folk music and art. The history of Appalachia Ohio is shared and recorded through folk tales and legends. As the oral history is passed from grandparent to grandchild so is the love for this land and its language. Our values of faith, friendship, and family bind our communities into tight knit groups that are ready to share and celebrate as well as help when it hurts.

As a child of Ohio Appalachia, I will grow and mature and be exposed to different cultures, different places, and different ideas. However, my roots are deep in Ohio Appalachia, and Ohio Appalachia will always be a part of me. The life lessons of perseverance and peacefulness, and the appreciation of simple beauty and song will go with me wherever I go. I might leave this land, but Ohio Appalachia will always welcome me home.

**Madison Bauer (Washington County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

Appalachian Ohio builds a foundation that helps me succeed in growing up and teaches me special things as a child living here. I think growing up in Appalachian Ohio, means that you have more learning experiences. This is because we absorb what happens in the other states around us such as Hurricane Katrina and 9/11 and try to help out. We learn to support disastrous events as they teach us a lesson about bonding and how fortunate one can be. Growing up in Appalachian Ohio also means you know more about the historical background here and what great achievers have come from Appalachia. On the other end, it means growing up in “Hillbilly” country compared to New York or California. Yet, I also think that we are underestimated at being “hicks” because Appalachian Ohio has many intelligent people living here.

There are many things special about Appalachian Ohio. One is that, the time pace is slow which means we are old fashioned. That may not sound important, but it gives us more time to appreciate family values and to be able to stop and look at the world around us. In addition, the cities aren't too busy or full, so there is a lot of land that we benefit from and goods we can make here. Farming was one of the first ways of getting food, and in Appalachia we still follow through with that and continue to produce those crops. As historical as this place is, there are many monuments and landmarks that teach us about the past and make us think more critically about what life could have been like back then. Appalachian Ohio may be slow on what is happening but the people and places here are fast on helping me accomplish many things as I grow up.

Going through the stage where you start to make more decisions, as you get older can be hard. As I am entering this now, I am starting to realize what Appalachian Ohio is doing for me. Also, I would like to practice law as an adult and living here may give me apathy for those who have grown up like me with the view of a “hillbilly.” Growing up in Appalachian Ohio has led me to discover that I am more fortunate than I thought. To conclude, I have never regretted being part of the Appalachian community even with the negative stereotype that goes with it. This is where my heart is and will stay.



**Alicyn Campbell (Tuscarawas County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

Appalachia Ohio is the only place I have ever lived and that makes it very special to me. That helps me understand its beauty and importance. This place has been very special to me and there are many reasons why.

I find many things in Appalachia Ohio beautiful. Some of those things include its rolling, green hills. I love going out into the country and seeing beautiful hills lined with sunrises and sunsets of vibrant colors. Also, the star-filled sky at night when you are lying on your back on a blanket on the dew covered grass, staring up into the radiant night sky.

Some things that make Appalachia Ohio special are being able to walk outside, sit on your front porch, and not hear the sound of a car zipping by. You can hear only the sounds of birds chirping and bees buzzing. You can walk down the middle of a street and not see one car pass you by. My school has contributed to me, and has given me so much, and I definitely appreciate all that it has given to me. Those are some things that make Appalachia Ohio special.

Some of the people of my town make Appalachia Ohio special also. My family will definitely help me succeed and grow as a person. My friends have made Appalachia Ohio special also. They have made me the person I am today, and they will help me grow too.

I think that if I had lived somewhere else such as a big city, I wouldn't be the same person I have come to be. I may not be as nice and generous as I am now. I wouldn't have the same friends. I may not have the same goals, so I may not succeed. I'm glad that I grew up in a small town, and I used to live in the country and it has greatly affected me.

Living in Appalachia Ohio has been a wonderful experience. Everything from its beauty, to its importance has been very good to me. I love living in such a beautiful place. I think I am very lucky and genuine and very grateful. That is why Appalachia Ohio is a beautiful and special place in my heart.

**Katie S. Lambert (Pike County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia Essay Contest*

To be a child of Appalachia Ohio is the greatest privilege one could ever imagine. To wake up every morning knowing that as soon as I step outdoors I'll have the view of a lifetime: lush green grass covered with tiny crystal-clear drops of dew and beyond the sunset, rolling hills so beautiful they take my breath away!

Appalachia Ohio is a very dear and special place to me. I think that growing up here will be the most memorable place in my childhood. I feel sorry for those not from a rural environment because they're missing out on the best education possible – lessons one could never learn in big cities, and tasks most others wouldn't attempt in their dizziest daydreams. Not just things learned from books, but experiences that city kids don't get: like 4-H clubs, the county fair, marching with the band in the small town festivals, corn mazes, Magic Waters Theatre, deer season, and living off the bountiful land.

To me, Appalachia Ohio is a very spectacular place, and that doesn't even begin to explain how much I owe my parents for allowing me to grow up here. What makes this place so special to me is the beautiful scenery, the excitement it brings to the soul to live here, the opportunities one has, and most importantly, the people here that support me. At school, the teachers are more than I could ever ask for. They are so supportive and helpful. One of the benefits of small-town living is our close-knit community. Our graduating classes are around 50-75 students. My mother had her own mother for an English teacher. That is an experience most kids will never have! My mother's best friend from high school was my music teacher last year! You can't hide in the crowd, because there is no crowd! There are very few secrets, because everyone knows everyone else!

Then there's close friends and family that I live with and around. They are nothing but loving and kind. Family traditions are passed down to the new generations – things like gardening, sewing and quilting, canning, baking, hunting, mushroom hunting, and growing herbs.

Living here in Appalachia and with these wonderful people will help me succeed in so many ways. I will succeed because I'm from Appalachia Ohio. I am glad that I awake to that lush green, witness dazzling sunsets, and sleep under twinkling stars. I am a privileged child of Appalachia.

4th Grade Honorable Mention

Mason Montgomery (Scioto County)

*Life in the Country*

This is what I like about growing up in the Appalachia area. I like to watch the deer run across the fields and it is nice to go out in the woods to hunt. In the afternoon, I like to listen to the crickets and the birds. At night, I like to play and catch the fireflies and when the wind shakes the trees, it makes a nice sound.

In spring, I like to help my dad plant a big garden. Then summer comes and I go camping with my family and go to family reunions. I like to play in the woods with my friends. When I play in the creek, my grandpa and I sometimes make paint out of rocks and pretend I am a great warrior. In the evening, I like to listen to the water hitting against the rocks. I also, like to play baseball with my friends. In the fall, I like to feel the cool draft in the morning and look at the colorful leaves that fall from the trees.

I think growing up in Appalachia will help me be successful because with all the experiences of being in this area it will help me get a good job. I think I am good at many different things. I like to take things apart and put them back together again especially model cars. Someday, I will go to college, get a good education and buy a big house here in the Appalachian area.

7th Grade Finalist

Jordan Lockhart (Washington County)

I am a child of Appalachia. I really like living in this area. I don't have to worry about being safe when I go outside. Not having to worry about being safe allows me to be outside more. I really like to play with my friends and family outside. Being outside also brings me closer to God and His creation. Religion is also a big part of this area. Living here has taught me to love God. The people around here are also nicer. They are friendlier, and you could go up to anyone in the store or some place like that and say hi and they would greet you back. I also like to live here because we don't have to worry about a lot of natural disasters other people have to worry about, such as hurricanes and tornadoes. A lot of us kids also have gardens and chores that we are responsible for. Having to take care of these things teaches us to be hard working and responsible. I also like living in this area because of the food. In this area most people know where their food came from, or they grew or raised it themselves. The food is also healthier. A big part of why I like living here is the good education. I love being in a small school. It lets the teachers give you more attention when you need it. You also know everyone in your class. There are no cliques, you are all just friends. You also learn respect for other people when you are in a small school. You don't have to worry about having the right clothes or hairstyle or listening to the right kind of music. Being in a small school and in a small town teaches you to be close to family. Family is a very important part of my life and my friends' lives. Being here also teaches us values that will help us be better adults and people when we grow up, like responsibility, being hard-working, and loving God. That is why I like being a child of Appalachia.

7th Grade Finalist

**Kate Gordon (Hocking County)**

Growing up in Appalachian Ohio has been great. People stereotype us as dumb hillbillies. It's not true. We're just as smart as everybody else!

We also have a great experience growing up. As a child of Appalachia, I get to fish, hike, go to the caves, go sledding, and horse back riding. I get to do the things many other kids don't get to do. I get to really enjoy being a kid.

Appalachia is really special that way. Appalachia is also special because of the landscape. The hills are so pretty covered in fresh, green grass. In fall, seeing the leaves change is amazing! Appalachia is also special because it has fairly small towns. No busy streets, there is not very much noise at night, and no constant fear of getting robbed. At night, I love going outside and look at the moon and stars. In some places, the city lights are so bright; you can't see the moon and stars very well.

This special place and its people will help me to succeed by encouraging me and backing me up. When I get older I want to be a vet. My mom will help me with that by paying for me to go to college. Growing up in Appalachia will help because it teaches me how to work hard for something I want to achieve. It also gives me a lot of experience with animals.

To be honest, it really bugs me that other people underestimate us. We're from pretty small towns, so what? We still go to school and get an education. We have career plans for the future, and we have plans how to achieve our goals. I will grant you that our schools might not have as much money as other schools, but we get educated just fine.

More people are moving here, so Appalachia is expanding. I hope there are never any huge cities. I'm glad I'm living and growing up in Appalachia. I have a ton of great friends here, and I know they love living in Appalachia too.

In Appalachia you build character. Even though you have to work, it balances out with a great place to live. I am a child of Appalachia and I'm proud!

4th Grade Honorable Mention

**Harlie Schaeffer (Ross County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

The beauty of growing up and living in Appalachia Ohio is great. Every morning when I go to school I see the sun coming up over Mt. Logan. This is the Great Seal of the state of Ohio. The hills and trees are beautiful in this area in all four seasons of the year.

I love my school. It is called Southeastern. It sets off a very quiet country road. On my way to school I can see deer standing in fields, a flock of wild turkeys or cows in their pastures on rolling hillsides. When I get to school I see tractors going by pulling loads of picked corn or hay wagons full of hay. Not semis and a lot of noisy traffic.

I have grown up camping in Tar Hollow. This state park and forest is close to my school and home. Camping there is like going to an outdoor school. We learn about the trees and nature. The teacher is the naturalist at the park. Her name is Amy Fenton. Once my brother wrote a letter to save her job that was going to be cut. He wrote the governor of Ohio, the chief of the state parks and the Tar Hollow staff. These people listened to my 11 year old brother. They cared. They wrote him and called him. Her job was saved. People in Appalachia do care.

Have you ever run bare foot in a field full of wild daisies? I have. What a beautiful sight. I don't envy the life in a big city. I love the quiet space of my Appalachia hills. It is the heartland of friendly and caring people. It is the love of family and people who have a love for the land, the beauty and nature of it. It is the people who live off the land that live here.

5th Grade Honorable Mention

**Conor Markins (Lawrence County)**

*Appalachia—A Great Place to Be!*

Riding a jet ski on the Ohio River...going into a cave to see stalactites and stalagmites...fishing in beautiful lakes and hunting in the hills...sound like things you'd like to do? Then you'd love to visit where I live in the foothills of Appalachia.

To really give you an idea of where I live in Appalachia, I wish we could climb into the Goodyear Blimp and float over our town. I live on the southern tip of Ohio in what is called the Tri-State Region. Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia all come together here on the Ohio River, and if we looked down we'd see barges and railroad cars loaded with coal. There are lots of hills, lakes, and forests. People here love the outdoors and have lots of things to do.

Lots of my friends have four-wheelers and like to ride in the hills. I like sports and play football, basketball, baseball, soccer, and golf. That's one of the great things about living here. Even though we live in the country, we can drive a couple of hours and see the Ohio State Buckeyes play football or the Kentucky Wildcats play basketball. There are lots of State Parks and golf courses here. It's really a great place to grow up.

I would like to go to college in a big city someday, but I don't know if I'll stay there or not. Columbus seems as big as New York City to me! I'll probably move back home after college. My family, my church, my school, my friends—they all make this a great place to be!

7th Grade Finalist

**Caden Brooker (Washington County)**

*I AM A CHILD OF APPALACHIA*

I am a child of Appalachia, and there are many benefits of that. All the benefits will help me when I am older, go to college, and begin working. One advantage of living in Appalachia is all the surrounding nature and good-hearted people who make me feel loved and safe. There is not much crime at all here and there are no gangs. There are no natural disasters here except for floods. Hurricanes do not reach us and tornados do not come because of all the hills. I think that not having those disasters in your childhood is important because then you do not have to worry about them when you are older. The people around here are very nice and friendly. I believe that friendship is very important in life because friends are always there for you, just like family. That brings me to another reason. Family and relatives are always there for you and relatives usually live nearby.

A wonderful thing about Appalachia is all the outdoor activity. People can hunt, fish, boat, or play any sport. The thing most people do in the area is farm. Farming is a big industry in Appalachia because it supplies a lot of food. I think farming is good because it makes kids like me have to work in my childhood and learn the value of hard work. All the forests and mountain ranges in Appalachia have many different types of wildlife. There are lots of deer, rabbits, squirrels, fish, bobcats, wild boars, coyotes, wild turkeys, and some bears. Many people in Appalachia use some of the wildlife as a source of food for their family.

Christianity is one very important aspect of my life. God and church help me all through my life (especially when I come from a place called "Churchtown"). Where I am from I do not have to deal with the hustle and bustle that takes place in a big city. It is quiet around here and it is not crowded at all. There is not a lot of traffic so you can get around the city easily and there are many stores and markets to visit. Marietta, Ohio is very old, and was the first city in the Northwest Territory. Some of the old streets are still brick. We are located right beside the Ohio River, so we do get flooded sometimes. Marietta is the sight of many Indian battles and has a lot of historical sites to visit.

The schools in this region are great. They are small schools so every student gets a lot of attention. My small school, St. John Central Grade School, has approximately one hundred ten students. The school is giving me a great education in a Christian atmosphere. These are just a few of the reasons why Appalachia is so great.

7th Grade Finalist

**Olivia Sprague (Washington County)**

I am a child of Appalachia and proud of it. People in the Appalachia's are generally thoughtful and kind and often have Christian values. I don't have to worry about gangs or getting shot when I am a completely innocent person. I know most of the people that live near me and I can trust them. On the news lately, I've been hearing about the terrible events that have happened to children about my age, but never once has it occurred to me to worry about it happening here. I feel safe going outside knowing that I won't be harmed or hurt by others. I feel secure in the environment around me. The scenery outside is so beautiful and serene here. With the rolling hills, mountains, and the twinkling stars at night, I can't help but feel closer to God. Around here, children don't have to grow up as quickly and they don't have the responsibilities that come with adulthood until they are actually grown up and are adults. They can be kids, as they should be, and enjoy every minute of their childhood, without being pressured into doing wrong or getting into uncomfortable situations which they regret later in life.

In the Appalachia region you can be your own unique person without being made fun of or being beaten up at school. The schools around here are much smaller than other schools which allow each individual to have the same amount of one on one time with the teacher. Due to this, students are more likely to succeed in life than to experience failure and are more likely to live a well rounded, happy, healthy life.

A large portion of the public are farmers in this rural area. Many children work on farms, which includes having to do chores and experience what it is like to have to work hard to contribute to the family. This teaches children good moral values and they will grow up and have a family of their own knowing what it is like to work hard for a living. You also know where your meat and vegetables are coming from when you are a farmer.

So, if you think about it, people really don't realize how fortunate they are to be living in the Appalachia region. Every day people take it for granted to be living here. It is a wonderful honor to be growing up in this region and to be experiencing the life that is taking place in this region. A large portion of my values come from the region around me to make up the person that I am today. I love being a child of the Appalachia region. It means the world to me!

5th Grade Honorable Mention

**Sarah Travis (Lawrence County)**

*Southern Ohio is My Home*

I think southern Ohio is the best place to live! Nature and wildlife here are among my favorite things. Summertime is my favorite season. I love hiking in the woods when the trees are green and lush. After a lot of rain, there are waterfalls cascading off the rock cliffs. Near my house there is a creek where my brother and I can wade in the water and fish from the bank. We have a favorite spot where the water is shallow and calm. Sometimes I ride my bike there and skip rocks along the creek. I love catching butterflies and I always name the first one I catch in the summer before I let it go! By growing up in such a beautiful place, I have learned to love and appreciate nature. I also love winter. The same waterfalls I enjoyed in the summer turn into giant icicles, hanging from the tops of caves. On cold days, I like to draw on the frost on my bedroom window. I love that I can still hear the birds, even in the winter. *Bob-white!* One of my favorite family traditions in the winter is going to the Festival of the Trees. I love running in the cold, picking my favorite tree, and drinking hot chocolate for a treat.

The people in southern Ohio are the friendliest people I've ever met. Whenever strangers pass you on the street, they still smile, wave, and say "Hello." Friends and family are close and help each other during tough times. Our family has a strong history here and lots of memories. My community has taught me how to be good, kind, and honest. I'm glad to live in southern Ohio!

## 6th Grade Honorable Mention

### **Paige Collins (Guernsey County)**

#### *I'm a child of Appalachia*

Well, as a child of Appalachia, I live out in the country. My family and I live on a 460 acre cattle farm. We have a dog, geese, bunnies, chickens and three goats. Actually, now that the local fair and 4-H are finished, we only have 1 goat. My brother brought back his broiler chickens from the fair because they were too heavy; my Mom will butcher them this weekend and put them in our freezer for Sunday dinners. My grandparents live on the farm too, but at the other end. We all get together and do chores together. The other day, we spent the morning vaccinating the calves and the veterinarian came to put special tags in their ears. It's a good life.

I have one brother and live with my Mom and Dad. My brother and I get up pretty early to do our chores...mostly in the dark with a flashlight. Afterwards, we come inside and get ready for school. We get picked up by the school bus and ride it almost over the entire line because we are one of the first kids on...and unfortunately, we're also one of the last ones off in the early evening. This time of year, the fall, cuts into our daytime quite a bit.

We used to live in the city...but this is so much better. In the city, you do have nice streets to ride your bike or skateboard, you can get to the stores and the mall quickly, lots of movies are available, and there's a ton of kids to play with all the time. But, you have to keep your doors locked all the time, you never really know who your neighbors are, it's hard to get to sleep because it's never quiet even at night, there's a bunch of traffic that takes a lot of time to get through so you spend your time just sitting in line on the road, you only have a tiny yard, and the sky is hardly ever clear enough to see the stars...or you can't see them from all the street lights being on. Even the birds get messed up with the street lights. They can't even decide when to sleep...they sing all night long because it's as bright as daylight through the night.

Living in the country, in Appalachia, is good because it helps me to succeed. I work beside my family, I know my neighbors, and I feel safe and secure. My time and energy can be spent learning in school and developing a solid work ethic that will help me grow into an independent adult. My Dad is constantly telling us how important it is to have a work ethic...to get a job done well. He says work ethic is what makes us different from many of the people in the city. He says we know what it means to break a sweat everyday and because of that we will be successful when we grow up. We work hard on the farm everyday, but we have fun too. And, my Mom has shown us that even though we live in Appalachia, we can still access technology and be a part of the bigger world. She is finishing her Master's degree where we live by taking her classes on-line. She will be a Nurse Practitioner when she gets finished.

People sometimes make fun of people from Appalachia, as if we're stupid or disadvantaged. In truth, they are the ones who are disadvantaged. I love waking up and letting the chickens out...picking vegetables for dinner straight from the garden...feeding the steer in the lower pasture knowing that he will be a Sunday roast soon...and just spending time with my family in the back yard, lying on a grassy hill, looking at all the stars of the Milky Way Galaxy. That's why I like being a child of Appalachia.

## 7th Grade Finalist

### **Gretta Reyer (Highland County)**

#### *An Appalachia Child*

Living in "these part of the hills" is not a total disadvantage. People think that just because we don't live in a major city we are uneducated hill-jacks and we have no chance in the world. Well we are educated and we have just as good as a chance as anyone.

I love living as an Appalachia child. There is so much natural beauty. There are sparkling lakes. Mountains as tall as the skies and as green as ever. Enormous trees that speckle the earth like freckles. There are windy streams that flow with strength through the valleys. The sights are just breath taking. There are also animals such as rabbits, deer, snakes, raccoons, fish, squirrels, chipmunks, birds and many others that speckle the land. Not to mention the vivid colors of all the sweet smelling flowers. It is a magnificent collage of scenery.

Over all the best things to me are things like running around outside playing tag or capture the flag with your friends. Camping and hiking or rolling down a hill or even going sledding in the winter. Admiring the wildlife or gratefully breathing in the scent of all the flowers. To me the best things of all are just enjoying the simple pleasures of life. We are kids that do the same things as every other kid in the world. We listen to the same music, and we wear the same clothes. We have the same dreams too and we can accomplish them.

Now don't get me wrong we have very poor communities and schools, we aren't all rich and fancy, but that doesn't mean that we are not educated. We are just as smart as every one else and we know how important it is to have an education. We have options for jobs just from our childhood experiences such as a vet from all the farm animals. Maybe a farmer or a landscaper. We could be a construction worker too. There are other options for us too. Most of us live on farms. You have to work extremely hard if you live on a farm. Hard work to me is mental and physical strength. Physically you grow stronger every day. Mentally because it will help us to take lots of responsibility and work hard when we grow up. It will also discipline us and inspire us to do well in the future. The hard work now will help us succeed later on in life.

### 7th Grade Finalist

**Jordan Ravine (Tuscarawas County)**

*Appalachian Child Essay*

What it means to grow up in the great place of Appalachia is very obvious to me. It is just plain amazing from the people here to the mountain tops! It means so much to be a child here because everything is so glorious! When you live here it is as if nothing could ever go wrong. I guarantee anyone who decides to live here will agree this is one of the greatest places on Earth, if not the best. I love where I live so much that I will probably live here when I grow up. When I think about leaving the Appalachian area it makes me sad that I would be leaving my childhood and everyone else who mattered so much to me behind. When I grow up to be an adult I will never forget all the good times sledding, running, and even sitting on the hills watching the sunset. I wish the mountains could stay here forever, but I know someday that nature will tear itself down. The sad part is that many people that are generations to come will never be able to witness the beauty I once encountered. It means so much to me that not everything is overcrowded like the big cities that I have traveled to in the past and it would mean a lot to me if the big cities don't overcome the mountains that I cherish so much. It means more to me growing up in Appalachia than it would to have one million dollars, which most people would probably pick. Money won't give me happiness, but the Appalachian Mountains will.

This unique and rural area of land along with its people will help me as I grow up by guiding me through a good childhood and leading me down the right path. They will guide me down this path by keeping me out of drugs, alcohol, smoking and other things that could wreck my life, making me a better citizen. The people here will help me succeed from teaching me right from wrong and manners that will make me enjoyable to be around when I meet others outside Appalachia. The people here mean so much as well as the area, that I hope it will stay this beautiful and peaceful forever.

Ohio is an amazing part of this country, and even the world, because of the amazing area that has the grandest mountains with the perfect people. With no big cities taking over the scenery it makes Appalachia that much more special. When I think about the Appalachian Mountains I think about everything that is calm and wonderful in life. I've been to far away places like Mexico and California, but they lack the calmness, are too overcrowded in places, and are usually crime ridden. These places are grand but Appalachia is something that most can't even find the words to explain the beauty. I call it home. Deep inside I will never forget the great memories of Appalachian Mountains.

### 6th Grade Honorable Mention

**Alexis Gribble (Tuscarawas County)**

Security, stability, safety and promise are just a few of the simple things that one may take from granted while growing up in our area. Lucky and lined up for a bright future is how life appears for me.

From my bedroom window I am able to see all sorts of possibilities. From the awesome view of my new school, which resembles a castle, to the clean streets and friendly neighbors, who are pillars of our community, I have hope and confidence of making a difference. I receive a good education, something my parents have encouraged me to apply myself toward, I am highly educated at my school. Thanks to all of my teachers, past and present.

My neighborhood is a crime and drug-free environment. My neighbors are friendly, appreciative, and very helpful, just as we are to them. My sisters and I do very well in and out of school, thanks to our single mother. She makes sure we get a good education and that we know what is right from wrong. I am lucky to be growing up here in Ohio. Out of the sunroom of our home I also see many loving and caring neighbors.

I have a stable home to come to after school and play, my school is very clean and is full of preservatives. I stay aware of what is going on in the world because I know I'm the future. Some day someone will depend on me the same as I'm depending on the many people in my life. My mom helps me succeed as I grow up because she provides me with everything I need, sometimes wants that aren't so important. She also frequently helps with my homework and tells when I'm wrong too.

My goals in life are to make the world a better place even though it is plenty good for my family and I.

## 7th Grade Honorable Mention

**Jon Cunningham (Monroe County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

I am lucky to be a child of Appalachia. Why am I lucky? The answer to that question lies in this essay.

One of the greatest things about the Appalachian region is the variety of weather and the changing seasons. On the rolling hills of Appalachia Ohio are beautiful multicolored flowers in the spring and the smell of fresh air surrounds you. In the summer it's warm and a perfect time for outdoor activities. The fall season is one of the prettiest times of the year with the red, yellow, and brown leaves all around you. Finally, winter arrives with the glistening frost and the beautiful white snow. No matter what the season, the region always has something to offer.

Quite possibly the greatest thing about this area is the people that live here. I have often heard it said that here in the Appalachia region, we are "backward" and "slow." If slow means that we move at a slower pace, one that allows us to stop every once in a while to just sit and talk with a neighbor then yes, we are slow and proud of it. If backward means that our priorities are not money, but time spent with our families and friends then yes, we are backward. In my home I see a world where you are never too busy to stop what you are doing to help someone else out. I can't remember how many times my dad has went out of his way to help a neighbor out with the only payment being a word of thanks and the promise that should the need arise they will be right there to help us out.

I may be and Appalachian child but one day I will be an Appalachian man. How will this special place help me to succeed in life? That is an easy question to answer. I know that success is not measured by the money you have or by fame. The true value of a man is much simpler and much more complex. With the values I have learned from my parents and the people all around me I have learned three key things. One, you can't be afraid of hard work. Two, you must have determination to keep going when things are tough. Three, you must always be willing to help someone when you can. I am not sure yet what I want to be when I grow up. I only hope whatever it may be that I can do it right here in Appalachia Ohio. For I truly believe that I am lucky to be a child of Appalachia.

## 7th Grade Finalist

**Bridget Kimes (Gallia County)**

*What it Means to Me to Grow Up in Appalachian Ohio*

Growing up in Appalachian Ohio has been a very safe place to live. I have lived here since I was two. Bidwell is special to me because you can see all the beautiful things in different seasons. In the winter where I live snow is on the trees and it's so beautiful because light shines down on the snow. In the summer when the sun goes down there is a beautiful sunset. It is purple, orange, and red. When it's fall there are different kinds of beautiful leaves like orange, green and other pretty colors. In the spring there are deer that come out with their young and the deer are so interesting to watch play out in the fields. Also our schools don't have to be fenced in like the city schools and we can walk down the road without getting hit and we can feel safe. We can also go hunting because we have a lot of hills and in the city people can't do that. Our teachers at Bidwell-Porter Elementary help us grow up in an educational school. The teachers help kids as far as education and with problems at school sometimes they even help with problems at home. I think of my teachers as if they were my friends because they are there when I need help. Maybe one day I can teach someone else what they taught me. My teacher will help me grow up and be successful in what I want to do and I know they will be there to back me up 100%. There are some other people that will help me to be successful, too, like my mom. Mom helps me when I need help. My grandma is the one that encourages me to do what I want to do and be who I want to be. The firefighters help me to learn what to do when there is a fire so that I will be safe. The police officer keeps away robbers and saves people from getting hurt. The doctors and dentists help me stay healthy. Our coal miners are doing a dangerous job to keep electricity going. The troops that are over in Iraq from Bidwell and all over are fighting for us. They are encouraging me to be in the Navy like my cousin. Bidwell and the people that live in it are what makes us a community. I am very proud to say that I am from a good community in Bidwell, an Appalachian area.



### 6th Grade Finalist

#### Alex Staron (Athens County)

##### *Growing up in Appalachia*

What does it mean to be a child growing up in Appalachia? It means hearing stories about the coal mines, hearing bluegrass and country music. It also means having dogs that roam freely around your house and the woods and dogs that follow you around wherever you go and are just good company. However, it also means a lot of misconceptions about the way you live and talk. I think the whole country needs to realize that we are just as smart as they are. We just live in two different worlds.

We could talk about the bad things that come with living in a city like having polluted air, having hardly any space, having to look out your window and see buildings, and having to deal with rush hour traffic.

Appalachia is a beautiful place filled with hills, valleys, and a countless number of trees. It also doesn't have that hustle and bustle that a city has; it has peace and quiet. I think that when I grow up I'll be thankful that I grew up in Appalachia because I'll have learned to be humble and considerate.

I am glad about growing up in Appalachia because of what it has taught me. Also, because of how different every inch of it looks and while I may move to a big city I will always come back from time to time.

### 7th Grade Honorable Mention

#### Rachel Nomina (Gallia County)

As a child I did not grow up in Appalachia but grew up in northwest Ohio. Last year I moved to Appalachia and have found a lot of things different than from where I came from.

One thing that is different about Appalachia is its landform. In Appalachia there are many hills and in northwest Ohio the land is flat and smooth.

In Appalachia it is dark and quiet at night because it is mostly country and there are no city lights to light the streets or lots of noisy cars or people making noise. Where I came from it is light and noisy at night because it was in the city and there were many lights, cars, and people.

Where I came from the fairs were mostly about games, prizes, and rides. In Appalachia the fair has contests, 4-H Club projects, and many other activities for people to participate in.

In northwest Ohio the schools focused mostly on local city schools and barely ever took field trips. In Appalachia there are county schools that people focus on and they take field trips to local parks and have students participate in many outdoor activities.

In Appalachia they have after school activities and programs for kids such as 4-H, Leads, On the Right Track, and many other physical and educational activities. In northwest Ohio the only after school activities there were, was a special after school sport or club.

The thing I like the most about living in the Appalachia now is not all the things and activities that make it up it's the people. They are kind and generous and are always willing to give to you a helping hand when you need it. They will work with you on stuff you don't understand and remember and praise you for your achievements. They'll talk with you about your troubles and laugh with you about your silly thoughts. The people of Appalachia are truly like family and friends.

When I first moved to Appalachia last year I have to admit I really didn't think I was going to like it. I thought the hills were weird and had to get used to it being dark and quiet at night. I had to make new friends and start my life over again. But now that I've become accustomed to the Appalachia ways and have made new friends I love it here. The hills I used to think weird now seem beautiful compared to the flat land I used to live on and because it's so quiet and dark at night I've found I get plenty more sleep. The friends I've made have helped me through a lot and now that I'm through it all I can truly say that I think Appalachia is a great place to be and for right now it is my one and true home.

## 8th Grade Honorable Mention

### **Robby Hinshaw (Lawrence County)**

#### *I'm a child of Appalachia*

Appalachia, my home sweet home. I feel that I have been blessed being able to grow up here. I love the rich culture and the wonderful dialect. I have so many reasons to be thankful. I couldn't imagine a better childhood than one of a child growing up in Appalachia.

I think the best part of Appalachia is the people. Most people are good natured with strong values and beliefs. Everyone knows everyone like family, and you have family everywhere all around you. It's not like a big city, which I like. A person is fairly safe walking down the sidewalk and there is just so much security. Most of all, the people are open and kind and you always feel safe.

The culture in Appalachia is very rich. The dialect in Appalachia is unique and I love it. People think that we are uneducated, but really, we are just as smart as anyone else. Our dialect uses many words from Shakespeare and the old English language so we have actually preserved the culture from our past.

My family has carried on many Appalachian traditions like canning food. Every year we grow a garden with cabbage, a variety of tomatoes, peppers, squash, zucchini, lettuce, beans, and occasionally carrots and eggplant. Growing the garden is lots of fun because my grandma always helps me and I love her very much. We can the tomatoes and beans and put them up for the winter. They sure taste good on a cold winter's day in a steaming bowl of vegetable soup! We also grow watermelons for a summer treat and pumpkins to carve in the fall. My favorite thing about the garden is that I can walk out and get a fresh tomato whenever I want, and I don't have to go to the grocery store to get it.

Appalachia Ohio is very scenic. The wooden rolling hills that are so many different colors in the fall, look beautiful next to the glistening Ohio River. It is so relaxing to walk through the woods and listen to the creek gurgle as you watch the animals such as rabbits, birds, turtles, foxes, deer, and many others go by. I love to sit in the woods and think about the beauty of the nature around me. I can't think of anywhere else like here. I don't have a huge paved city in my background, but I have beautiful, rolling hills right out my back door. It's great!

I don't mean to say that there is anything wrong with big cities, but there are just some things that Appalachia has that no other place has. Most everybody has a good childhood here and I am still enjoying mine. We grow up with strong ethical values and a sense of security and loving family and friends all around. Appalachia is a part of me. It is my home, and it's in my heart. I don't think it will ever leave me.

## 6th Grade Finalist

### **Elizabeth Schoeppner (Athens County)**

#### *Growing up in Appalachia*

Growing up as a child in Appalachia, Ohio means having a lot of people around that really do care. When you go to see people that you haven't seen for a really long time they say, "Look at how much you've grown. You use to be this big" making a hand gesture. Also, these people notice how much you've grown because they pay attention and try to be a building block to the next step of your life. At different games or assemblies the people you care about and know are there, right next to you, helping you take small steps to becoming mature.

Another positive thought about being an Appalachia child is smelling the majestic scent of home cooking as you waltz into the kitchen. It makes me leap onto cloud nine, it's like I'm walking on a hot burner! This is ONE, out of many special qualities of Appalachia, Ohio. Another quality is canning tomatoes and cucumbers, which are extravagant. In Appalachia, Ohio we have an abundance of different foods such as corn, wheat, and tomatoes.

Appalachia, Ohio will help me succeed as I grow because I could learn how to do many useful jobs such as cooking, and farming in one whole package. Also, the people around me care about me. As a result, as I grow I would become more responsible thanks to the teaching of others. Along, with all of this is the environment around has helped me. The environment has helped me by providing safe land and no litter.

6th Grade Finalist

**Zulfa Rizquiya (Athens County)**

*Living in Appalachia Ohio*

Growing up in Appalachia Ohio means that forever in my heart and mind, the surroundings and many memories of this place will always stay with me. This is the place where I'll keep my biggest mark on the world. This is the place I'll know forever because it is the land I was born and raised in. The Appalachian air is what I breathe in, so every breath I take in, is a little bit more Appalachian spirit in me. When I was little, I thought maybe I was in a video game and someone picked me to be living in here. I felt like my actions were being controlled, so where I'm living in now is where the player chose for me to live in. That player has chosen well because I've noticed so many fascinating landscapes all over the area, especially the Appalachian Mountains.

Appalachia Ohio is what many people would vision of the best place to live in. Long silky ribbons of clear mountain streams lay gently on the Appalachian land. The ancient land is a great place for farming. What's nice about this place is that there is a wide variety in the places you could live in. If farms aren't for you, there are towns and cities. Even though you live in the city or town, it's nice that you can travel a short distance to find a patch of nature's calming beauty to wash away your worries and troubles. Also, the knowledge and survival skills I've learned here are just enough skills for me to succeed in life's challenges. Those are some things living here has taught me, but what matters the most is that this place has changed me dramatically. With great care from everyone, Appalachia Ohio has grown with a new meaning for everybody.

8th Grade Honorable Mention

**Dylan Lewton (Tuscarawas County)**

*My Home*

There are so many beautiful places in the world, but to me my home is glorious. I have the privilege to live in the land of gracious rolling hills and magnificent wild life. I wouldn't change this wonderful place if I could.

I live in the country, so I get to enjoy the beauty of Appalachia Ohio every day of the week. I can look out my window and see a view that is worth a thousand words. I see the trees that are full of life and graceful young following their mother. Sometimes I will sit by the woods and listen to the sounds of the animals in the woods and I admire the beauty of the trees. This makes me think of how things might have been before people came to this area. From the country you will see some of the most beautiful sunrises, as the sun comes out from behind the rolling hills of green. The beauty of Appalachia Ohio is never ending.

When I walk out into the cool, dense air to wait for the bus it reminds me of why I love this land. I stand there for a while and then I spot colorful turkeys coming out of the woods to go on their morning hunt for food. When I make it to school I become surrounded by friends that care about each other. It is a very healthy environment to be in. I get to be with very kind teachers and learn all kinds of information that will help me as I go through life. Our school is a great place to be.

The people in Appalachia Ohio are very kind and generous, which makes it easier for everyone to get along. They are always willing to help one another if they ever need something. A lot of people here are well minded, so there is a lower crime rate compared to most states. The way everyone treats one another helps me and everyone else exceed and reach new levels as they accomplish more goals.

Appalachia Ohio is my home and it is the most beautiful place in the world to me. I love this area and I will continue to love it for the rest of my life. I hope you will come to the magnificent lands of Appalachia Ohio.

4th Grade Finalist

**Matthew Gray (Muskingum County)**

*I'm a child of Appalachia*

My name is Matthew Gray, I live in Zanesville, Ohio. My age is nine and I'm a child of Appalachia.

In Appalachia we do a lot outdoor activities. People come to Muskingum County just to hunt white-tail deer. You can hunt deer with a bow or a firearm. There is a bow season and a gun season and muzzleloader season. People camp in Appalachia, they have to set up a tent when they get to the camp ground. At night you cook delicious hotdogs and marshmallows. Then you get a good nights sleep in a warm comfortable tent. You can play games like cornhole. The object of the game is, the first team to get twenty-one wins. You try to get the bean bag in the hole, that is worth three points, it if lands on the board it is only worth one point.

There are many great places to visit in SouthEastern Ohio. We have an Art Center and places that make and sell pottery. There are only two Y-bridges in the world and we have one of them. The Y-Bridge is unique because it is where two rivers meet. Our bridge crosses over the Muskingum and Licking rivers. One of my favorite places to visit is The Wilds, it is over 9,000 acres of natural surroundings for animals. At the Wilds you take a bus tour to see many endangered animals, such as giraffes, rhinoceroses and antelope. There are also places to eat and buy gifts.

Living in Appalachia is great because I can do a lot of special things with my family. We like to go to eat at the River Grill in Coshocton. They have really good juicy cheeseburgers. We like to take walks on the trails and ride bikes at Dillon State Park.

Living in Appalachia is so much fun. There are many places to see and so much to do. I think living in Appalachia is the best.

5th Grade Finalist

**Nathan Parks (Jackson County)**

*A Redneck Kid*

I am proud to be a child of Appalachia. I have had many opportunities that other kids may not have had by growing up in Southeastern Ohio. For instance, there is beautiful land where I love to go hunting, and big hills on which to ride my four-wheelers.

I love living in Appalachia because I can look out my front door and see trees, deer, and wild turkeys in every direction. I am able to live on my farm and raise my cows and hogs for our local county fair.

By living in Southeastern Ohio, I have realized that the people around me, including my family and friends, are caring, hard-working citizens. I have learned that people count on me to work hard at home and at school by being responsible and dependable. I have also learned that I can count on them to help me whenever I need their help, or just some advice.

I love being a child of Appalachia, because I am able to do all the things that I love to do and not have to worry about being in a big city with cramped surroundings. If being a "redneck kid" means growing up in the hills of Appalachia then I am proud to be considered a "redneck kid."

5th Grade Finalist

**Cora Landrum (Jackson County)**

*The Joys of Growing up in Appalachia Ohio*

I am proud to be a child growing up in Appalachian Ohio. The region is special to me because we have lots of national parks, state parks, and campsites. We also have festivals, like the Apple Festival. It's great to live in Appalachia, because it's small communities and families. Also, we have little traffic and glorious trees, hills, and plants. We're lucky because we have many crops; our main ones are tobacco, corn, and wheat.

My ancestors played musical instruments, as my family does today. My grandpa lives in Appalachian Ohio, and he plays the fiddle and can also make them.

In Appalachian Ohio, we don't have to fear tornadoes as much as the people who live in the northern Ohio counties and our neighboring states.

In my hometown of Jackson, Ohio, in the third grade, I started with brand new teachers and a brand new school. I'm doing very well with my test scores.

In 2007, Jackson, Ohio, will have new schools, for every Appalachian child to attend. As a child in Appalachian Ohio, I will continue to get a good education, go to college, get married, and rear my family the way I was.

I am proud to live in southeastern Ohio, and plan to grow old and continue living here.

4th Grade Finalist

**Tyler Pisch (Muskingum County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

Living in Appalachia is both fun and exciting. There are a lot of adventures for you and your family to experience here in Ohio, so many places to visit and people to meet. My family likes to go camping at Spring Valley Campground in Cambridge every summer. We enjoy fishing, boating, swimming, and hiking. My favorite time is at night when we build a campfire and gather around to cook hot dogs, make smores, and roast marshmallows.

I like how the season changes here in Appalachia. I enjoy the snowfalls in the wintertime and going outside and building a snowman. In the spring I like to play soccer and ride my bike. In the summer I like to camp, swim and go on vacation. In the fall I like to rake up leaves and jump in them.

We have many interesting places to visit the Y-Bridge in Zanesville, the world's largest basket in Dresden. Dawes Arboretum and the Wilds are two places I have visited on school field trips. I also enjoy living close to Amish country and seeing all the nice woodwork that they do. These are some of the reason why I like living and playing in Ohio as child of Appalachia.

#### 4th Grade Finalist

##### **Zack Kelly (Lawrence County)**

###### *Appalachian Ohio*

Growing up in Appalachian Ohio to me is great. My parents have taken me all over Appalachian Ohio to visit state parks, to go hiking, and visit lakes. I have also been fishing in the Ohio River with my Papaw Johnny. He was the first to take me to the river to fish and I will never forget that experience.

The scenery of Appalachian Ohio is amazing. The beautiful view of the trees and hills make it a perfect place to live. You can hike through state parks, fish, hunt, and enjoy a relaxing golf game at one of the many courses available. The outdoor life that you can experience is one you can enjoy daily and becomes even more breathtaking as the seasons change.

Appalachian Ohio has a lot of business opportunities. My Dad works for a major company that brings in a great deal of business to the area. DOW Chemical in Haverhill, is a major producer of foam products. Having a company like DOW Chemical allows for people who live in this area to have a good life. They are able to live in a beautiful area of Ohio, and have a good job with a developing company. There are other great companies in the area that impact the growth and development of Appalachian Ohio.

In order to succeed no matter where you live you must have learned things from people who mean a lot to you I have learned many things from my father and mother, that have taught me how to be successful. One is to tell the truth, and the other is to work hard no matter what your job is. I have also learned a lot from the people who live in my community and surrounding area. These things will help me as I grow up and teach me the right thing to do.

When I grow up I want to live in Appalachian Ohio. I want to be able to look at the land and area when I am older and remember all of the fun times that I had as a kid growing and spending time with my family.

#### 5th Grade Finalist

##### **Devin King (Perry County)**

I'm a child growing up in Appalachia Ohio. I feel it is a lot different growing up here than in the suburbs. There is more peace and quiet here and the suburbs are very noisy and loud. I think it is special because I actually get to walk to school in my small town, and I don't have to stay on the bus for hours. Another nice thing is the pollution level here is lower, because we don't have a lot of factories around polluting the air. I love this area because of the farms that produce all the great foods I enjoy like corn and tomatoes. In Appalachia there is more countryside than the suburbs where there are more factories and large buildings. The traffic here is very small compared to the cities where they have traffic jams all the time. I get to see my parents a lot more than kids in other areas because they work right here in my town. They can pick me up from school when I call and need them. City kids don't have that luxury; they have to wait for their parents to travel to get to them. And they have to wait for the city to bring their parents back home at night. They have to depend on the trains and buses and sometimes they break down and cause problems for everyone. It is so much more beautiful here with the pretty flowers and trees. I can play outside and feel safe and play football with my friends in the grass.

By spending time so close to my parents and grandparents I know I will grow up with great values and memories. I live so close to my grandpa and get to watch him work with wood and fish with him. My grandma takes me shopping all the time and makes me feel special. Things like this other kids don't get to do because of their parents work schedules or how far away they live. My dad spends a lot of time with me teaching me about sports and playing football with me and my brother Chance, he also helps me with schoolwork. I enjoy when we get to be together. My mom comes to all my games and helps with school and makes sure I have what I need. These are the people I look up to. Family is important, and so are my teachers who help me everyday to do better in my schoolwork. We have small classes so they can work with me; I have heard the classes in the city are really big. They also have metal detectors to walk through before going to school that would make me feel very afraid. There are so many fun things to do here that I think not everyone gets to do all the time, like sled riding, baseball, football and just hanging out. We have such an open area that we can do whatever we want and we can feel safe. The city has a lot of crime that we don't have to deal with. I watch the news and I'm very happy I live in a small town. These are just my point of views that show my opinion about living in Appalachia Ohio.

5th Grade Finalist

**Brianna Tavoletti (Monroe County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

I love being a child of Appalachia. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. The Appalachia area has a lot of farming. My family farms our land. We grow alfalfa and make hay. We also raise cows and calves and keep a lot of horses. In Appalachia, there are a lot of beautiful places to go trail riding on our horses. We also like to go riding on our four-wheelers. Riding in the fall is one of my favorite things because the trees are so beautiful.

Fishing is another thing I love to do in our area. We have a lake on our farm where our family goes to fish. It's very peaceful and very fun. Hiking in the Appalachia area is also a fun thing to do. Another thing I like about our area is gardening. A lot of people have gardens and do a lot of canning. I also think about coal trucks. A lot of people work at the coal mines and I see a lot of coal trucks on the road.

There are some things I would like to see get better in our Appalachia area. There are a lot of people who have a hard time finding good jobs to make a living. I would like to see more jobs for people. We also have some roads that could be better. I would like to see some of these roads improved.

Even though there are some things that could be better in our area, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. My family from the city loves to come visit us here in the country. It's very different from the big city and they like it here. I'm proud to be a child of Appalachia.

4th Grade Finalist

**Ashley Irwin (Carroll County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

Growing up in Appalachia is special to me. I can see the sun rise every morning. Because there's not a lot of tall buildings. The second reason is I have a lot of space to ride my four-wheeler. Since I live in the country I can ride my four-wheeler in the woods behind my house. My sister and I can have a shooting range in the yard beside my house. We have room to set up targets. I really like living in Appalachia.

When I grow up I think I will be able to succeed. Because I know a lot from going to school. I will be able to tell time and I will know my math facts. I know how to cook because my mom taught me how to. I can make cookies, pies, and, pizza. I am a good helper around the house and at grandma's house. I help dust, vacuum, tidy up, mop the kitchen floors, and pick up the leaves in the yard. I will be able to succeed.

There are many beautiful things in Appalachia. We have beautiful lakes. People can fish and boat some of the water is clear. There are lots of beautiful trees in Appalachia. Most of the trees change colors in the fall like brown, red and yellow. The birds are beautiful. They are different colors like blue, red, yellow, black and brown. Appalachia is beautiful.

4th Grade Finalist

**Nicole Camponsechi (Ross County)**

*Growing up in Appalachia is Special*

To me being a child growing up in Appalachia is something special because I have lived here all of my life and I like it here. It is really fun here because most of my friends are here. People like my teachers, family, and friends will help me succeed because they care about me and teach me a lot.

My library teacher, Mrs. Ames, told me about this writing project. I like writing and Mrs. Ames is my favorite teacher so this is another special thing. The teachers here will really help you succeed because they teach you very well.

I do love growing up here because where I live is special. It is very peaceful and beautiful. I hope that it stays that way and I wish everyone would have that opinion. If people move here they will make lots and lots of friends probably as soon as they move here because people are friendly here. That is why I like it here. It is a special place and that is why I will succeed.

5th Grade Finalist

**Greyson Griffiths (Jackson County)**

*Who I Am*

I am a very lucky child to be living in the Appalachian part of Ohio. When my family goes on a drive in the country, we see outstanding hillsides with colorful tree tops. It looks like a painting, only it's real! When I go for a walk in my woods, I see amazing creations all around: turtles, deer, berries, woodpeckers, and lightning bugs. I can even hear the wild whippoorwills singing.

We are blessed that there are fewer chances of a tornado here. We also can go sleigh riding in the winter, and a variety of crops grow here. We are very blessed.

Some people might call us "rednecks," but that's okay. To me, being a redneck means that you stand up for what you believe, and family takes care of family.

The best part of living in Appalachia is celebrating family traditions. My family's traditions are shooting guns on New Years, hunting in the fall, fishing in the spring, and picnics in the summer. I am happy to be growing up in Appalachia, and it will always be a part of who I am.



5th Grade Finalist

**Sloane Massie (Jackson County)**

*The Beauty of Our Appalachian Culture*

Growing up in Appalachia has been a fun and exiting time for me.

Family means so much to the Appalachian people. Most families are very close and spend a lot of quality time together. Even our neighbors are like family. If someone needs help or is in trouble, neighbors and the community pull together and do whatever they can to help.

Most of Jackson County, Ohio make their living from working in factories that are either in Jackson or close to Jackson. These factories provide jobs for both men and women. This part of the Appalachian area is also home to many Amish people. They provide food and furniture to their surrounding neighbors.

The hills of Appalachia are full of beautiful trees, another of our many natural resources. Ohio, alone, is full of many wood mills or timber yards. The trees bring people from other states just to see their beauty. Ohio is home to many State Parks that provide safety for nature and the wildlife that live here.

My family and I lived in Logan, Ohio which is home to Hocking Hills or Old Man's Cave. This part of the Appalachian Mountains is known for its many caves, trails, and art malls. It is very beautiful.

I don't know if I'll spend the rest of my life in Appalachia, but I do know that it is a very beautiful place to live, and I am proud to call it my home.

4th Grade Finalist

**Austin Keefer (Carroll County)**

*I'm a Child of Appalachia*

Growing up in Appalachia is special to me in many ways. My first reason is that there is fresh air and it is not polluted. Appalachia does not have many factories to pollute the air where I live. Second of all I can see dogs. I like to see healthy animals and ones that are taken care of. Third, I like to see the stars at night. There aren't any tall buildings to block the view. So you see I like Appalachia very much.

I think I will be able to succeed when I grow up because I live here. I do not want to have to steal when I am older. There aren't a lot of bad people around here. Teachers can help you be successful. They will teach you math, science, social studies, and language arts. Your gym teacher can help you get your body working and keep you active. He or she might have you warm-up by exercising, doing relay races, and other activities. There are many ways to be successful.

There are many beautiful and fun things to do. There are lakes for fishing, boating, and swimming. The lakes close to me are Atwood Lake, Leesville Lake, and Lake Mohawk. Appalachia has beautiful flowers. We have violets, roses, and sunflowers. Appalachia has many places to play. We have Ann Green Park, the track, and Kiddie Land Park. So you see there are some beautiful and fun things to do and see in Appalachia.

4th Grade Finalist

**Sydney Marrs (Athens County)**

I am a happy child growing up in Appalachia.

I have seen unconditional beauty, with the flowers, high hills, and glowing sunsets of pink, orange, and yellow. I hear the beautiful bird's chirping constantly, and the emerald green trees swaying back and forth on the green grass lawn. I know that there is so much history about this beautiful Appalachian region we live in, right outside my front door.

I am an enchanted child of Appalachia.

One thing I most enjoy about where I live is the wonderful education provided by the well-trained teachers of great ability, the cultural history I learn at fun camps, the wildlife, the animals, and the friendliness of all the devoted citizens of Appalachia. Appalachia is a special place because it is a perfect region for farming, with clear air and nature with amazing beauty. The people here are special to this region because of their very nice way of being friendly and to live in harmony with the hills and their fellow citizens. Living here I am who I am because Appalachia will bring peace and harmony to anyone whom is engaged in its perfect beauty and bountiful wildlife. I believe that any problems forced into the Appalachian region can be solved by the help of the farmers and the helpful citizens.

I am a happily entranced child of the beautiful Appalachia.

5th Grade Finalist

**Corey Sherman (Scioto County)**

*Appalachia Mountains*

It is nice to live in Scioto County because we get to be open and we aren't crowded. We don't have buildings all around us, so we have hills and to me hills are much better than buildings because with hills we can play and do all kinds of things. Here we are able to go hunting, camping and lots more.

To me living in Appalachia Mountains is everything, because we are free and not all piled on top of each other. Also living here allows us to have fresh air and gas, smoke and food smells don't fill our air.

I think it is special to live here because we can play outside with our friends without being on a street while you play, like you would in the city.

We also have four different seasons while some states have the same season all year around. We get different types of weather like rain, hail, snow and lots of other things through out those seasons too.

I think that living here is going to help me succeed in growing up because living in the country you have more responsibility in everyday life.

In my opinion there is no other place to live but here in the Appalachia Mountains.