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Re: Local Third Grade Students take top honors in the second annual Great Tree Story Essay contest.

This year's grand and first prize winning authors, Jacob Coffey of Alice Carlson Applied Learning Academy, Roman Julian Mejia and Daniel Barnes, both from Daggett Montessori School and their classmates will spend a day at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge on **May 15 from 10:30am until 1:30pm**. Their day will begin with a videoconference connecting them with students across Texas to share their winning stories. **Guest of honor**, **Deborah Ferguson of Channel 5 News** will participate in the broadcast by reading Alan Zweibel's *Our Tree Named Steve* aloud. After a picnic lunch, the center's biologists will give students a tree tour of the 3600 + acre center.

The Great Tree Story Essay Contest is a part of The Great Tree Project. This essay contest allows third grade students to share personal stories, many heart-rending, associated with trees in their communities. Inspired by Dr. Nowell Donovan, provost of TCU, community partners came together to form the Great Tree Project as a program to educate and inspire the public to the environmental and psychological benefits of trees. The contest is but one of the many efforts supported by the Great Tree Ring, a consortium of local agencies, institutions, organizations and individuals. The Great Tree Ring also supports the Historic Trees and Champion Trees programs and the annual Tree Give-Away campaign at Mayfest.

View the winning stories at:
http://www.brit.org/education/great-trees/fort-worth-student-essay-contest/

Find out more about the videoconference at:
www.connect2texas.net

The Great Tree Ring:

The Great Tree Ring includes the following:
The Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)
Texas Christian University
Fort Worth Independent School District
Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council
City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services
- Forestry Section
- The Fort Worth Botanical Gardens
- Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge

Concerned Citizens

About the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)

Opened in 1991, BRIT is a nonprofit international botanical resource center open to the public. Its mission is to conserve our natural heritage by deepening our knowledge of the plant world and achieving public understanding of the value that plants bring to life. BRIT fosters respect for ecological balance and the interconnectedness of all living things, the conservation of biological diversity, the integrity of scientific investigation and intellectual pursuits, and the desire to discover the unknown to expand humankind's knowledge and understanding of plants in our natural environment.

BRIT has conducted extensive research in tropical rainforests in the Philippines, Costa Rica, and currently in Peru and Papua New Guinea. BRIT's exploration of the natural world through field study, scientific research, botanical analysis, and educational programs places it in the forefront of conservation and preservation of Earth's finite resources.

At the Fort Worth headquarters, BRIT's staff presents workshops and educational programs and provides consultation to research scientists, students, teachers, artists, plant enthusiasts, vineyard owners, ranchers, veterinarians, farmers, homeowners, gardeners, lawyers, physicians, businesses, government agencies, museums, schools, arboreta, hospitals, and poison control centers.

With a collection of approximately one million dried plant specimens representing most of the Earth's plant families, BRIT has one of the largest herbaria in the United States. It has the largest independent herbarium in the Southwest and one of the world's best collections of Texas plant specimens. Its botanical library houses approximately 100,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and journals from 100 countries.

BRIT's primary facility is in downtown Fort Worth in a restored historic warehouse at the corner of 4th and Pecan Streets.