

Winning Essay



*Laura Vega Perdomo,
senior at John Overton High School*

Laura's essay begins at the moment she and her family are leaving Colombia for the United States, and reflects on the diversity she finds here and learns to love.

"When my family and I left our dear Colombia, we took the essentials. We said goodbye to our house, to our jobs and schools, to our culture, and above all, to the family we left behind; leaving people and things behind and moving on had become common but the feeling never changed... I missed them all, but the future gave me hope. As refugees, we expected the best and always prepared for the worst but, when we received the news that we were allowed in the United States, we all felt relieved and happy that the wait

and the constant fear were over. I felt a great responsibility that would only increase over time, with my family needing English in very different scenarios; I had to quickly adapt to this new world I was thrown into, full of new habits and traditions, full of new expectations and stereotypes, full of new problems to overcome. My 'American dream' is actually an international one....I want to fill a gap in this world and my passion and dedication brought by my Hispanic heritage will help me thrive in this American world."