



**Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum  
33rd Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest  
3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders**

## **2017 Theme – Native Californians: Food Lessons Learned From the Past and Applications to Today**

### **Background:**

The Los Altos History Museum's current exhibit, "Seaweed, Salmon, and Manzanita Cider: A California Indian Feast," explores traditional California Indian food sources and their extensive system of environmental knowledge underlying their use of food resources. The exhibit highlights the importance and continuing use of native foods in current California Indian communities. It also examines contemporary issues of eating locally grown foods, sustainability, nutrition, and environmental health. Foods important in the lives of Native Californians include fish, shellfish, seaweed, meat, vegetables, berries, fruits, flowers, nuts, seeds, and salt.

Every family eats food that is traditional to their culture. How could you apply past lessons learned from Native Californians to the current way your family eats today? Keeping in mind environmental issues of today, how can you apply these food lessons to your daily life?

To assist you with writing your essay, you may wish to visit this exhibit at the Los Altos History Museum. Also, there will be two children's workshops, with hands-on activities, on California Native American foods presented by museum docent, Mary Kuperman, on January 14<sup>th</sup> and February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### **Writing Prompt:**

Imagine you go back in time to learn food lessons from a Native Californian. Compare and contrast what you eat with the Native Californian diet. Share ways you can incorporate eating locally grown foods that are sustainable, nutritious, and environmentally healthy. How is it similar or different to what the Native Californians did? As you write, develop an essay with an organized flow of ideas, use interesting vocabulary, and communicate your story in a creative manner.

### **Win Cash Prizes**

**1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$50    2<sup>nd</sup> Place - \$30    3<sup>rd</sup> Place - \$20  
3 Winners Per Grade Level!**