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Student contest winners get Final Four tickets

BY CHASTITY PRATT DAWSEY • FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER • MARCH 20, 2009

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Four Detroit students were surprised at their middle schools on Thursday with prizes including free tickets to the upcoming NCAA Final Four basketball games at Ford Field.

The students' essays and posters were selected as winners from among about 250 essays and 150 posters submitted to the Middle School Madness contest. For the competition, they had to show how they demonstrate good sportsmanship in daily life.

The NCAA and Detroit Local Organizing Committee for the Final Four, along with players from the University of Detroit Mercy men's and women's basketball teams, visited the schools Thursday to surprise the winners.

Poster contest winner J'Nel Stephens-Dantzler, an eighth-grader who played center on the girls basketball team at Burton International, said she's never been to a college or professional basketball game.

"It was hard because sometimes you do things and don't put them under the title of sportsmanship," she said of the contest. Sportsmanship "is how I carry myself, the way I demonstrate how my parents taught me at home -- morals and values."

The prizewinners will also get six tickets each to Hoop City as well as sporting equipment for themselves and their schools. The other poster contest winner was Mylen Williams, eighth-grader at Michigan Technical Academy. The essay winners were K'yra Orton of Bates Academy and Malik Taylor, sixth-grader at Michigan Technical Academy.

Contact **CHASTITY PRATT DAWSEY** at 313-223-4537 or cpratt@freepress.com.



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cuzisaidso222 wrote:

J'Nel & the rest of the children congrats on your hard work & continued success in school & sports.

03/20/2009 8:06:25 a.m. EDT

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