

For Immediate Release

Press Release

Local Student Honored by Peabody Essex Museum

Takes Home Award in First Annual Student Essay Contest

SALEM, Mass.— Isabella Frontado, a 7th grader at Milton Academy, was recently honored by the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) for her award-winning essay "Yin Yu Tang's Skywell: A Reflection of Community Life in China." Frontado's essay won first place in the category 1 division of the Peabody Essex Museum's first-annual Yin Yu Tang student essay contest.

Yin Yu Tang is a late Qing dynasty merchant's house that was originally located in Huizhou in southeast China. Through a remarkable cultural exchange project with Huizhou, the Peabody Essex Museum dismantled and moved the over 200-year old house to Salem, Massachusetts. The house was re-erected at the museum as part of the PEM's transformation and expansion in June 2003.

Frontado wrote her essay after visiting the museum. In it, she describes the resemblance Yin Yu Tang has to her grandmother's home in Venezuela. Frontado focuses on the skywell, an opening in the middle of the home that allows light to flow into the courtyard. She contemplates how this skywell illustrates the values of both Chinese and Venezuelan culture, which tend to place importance on family life versus life within the larger community. Frontado then addresses the difference between those cultures and American culture, where people are more likely to look outward for a sense of community.

Frontado was selected from a pool of 129 submissions from both middle school and high school students in public, private, and home schools in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island. Applicants had to be in grades six through 12 and were required to answer the question "How do architectural features and objects in Yin Yu Tang reveal the way people lived in the house," in 1,500 words or less. Additional criteria included a well-reasoned consideration of the topic, an understanding of Chinese art and culture, effective use of primary and secondary sources, originality, and proper grammar.

The Peabody Essex Museum will be holding another Yin Yu Tang student essay contest during the 2006-2007 school year. For more information, or to view this year's winning essays, visit the museum's Yin Yu Tang website at www.pem.org/yinyutang.

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About the Peabody Essex Museum

The recently transformed Peabody Essex Museum presents art and culture from New England and around the world. The museum's collections are among the finest of their kind, showcasing an unrivaled spectrum of American art and architecture (including four National Historic Landmark buildings) and outstanding Asian, Asian Export, Native American, African, Oceanic, Maritime, and Photography collections. In addition to its vast collections, the museum offers a vibrant schedule of changing exhibitions and public programs, plus a hands-on education center. In 2006, PEM was named one of the nation's "Top 10 Art museums for Kids" by Child Magazine. The museum campus features numerous parks, period gardens, and 24 historic properties, including Yin Yu Tang, a 200-year old house that is the only example of Chinese domestic architecture in the United States. The Peabody Essex Museum is open daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. General museum admission: Adults \$13; seniors \$11; students \$9. Additional admission to Yin Yu Tang: \$4. Members, youth 16 and under, and residents of Salem enjoy free general admission and free admission to Yin Yu Tang. Special exhibitions may require an additional fee. Location: East India Square, Salem, MA 01970. Call 866-745-1876 or visit our Web site at www.pem.org.

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