

First Place: Anna Parrish
Van Rensselaer Intermediate School
Rensselaer, Indiana

What Is Hoosier Pride?

What is pride? Pride is a full-up feeling when I and others give help and recognize the good in others. Let me tell you about Hoosier Pride in Rensselaer, Indiana!

Rensselaer is filled with people willing to help others. Some of my town's police officers and linemen have traveled to places where natural disasters, such as hurricanes and tornadoes, have caused damage to help clean-up and rebuild. Last year, there was an apartment fire in my hometown, and it left all of the families in that building without a home and one person died. Many people came together to help these families. A couple of summers ago, we experienced flooding. Many people, including the high school football team, helped fill sandbags. All of these actions make me proud to be a part of the Rensselaer community.

Pride is also seen when we celebrate. The Little Cousin Jasper Festival has a parade that showcases groups in our community. When our high school sports teams and activity groups do well in competitions advancing them to the state level, they are given an escort by our fire department so everyone knows about their accomplishments. Last year my town was lucky enough to have the Bicentennial Torch travel through and I got to watch a teacher in my school help carry it along. All of these events are exciting and make me proud to be a part of my community.

I come from a farming family and am very proud of how we support our community and state's agriculture industry. I also have several generations of teachers in my family and am just as proud of how they have helped prepare Hoosiers for their future. Hoosier Pride grows in my Indiana hometown.

Second Place: Ozzy Jankowski
West Terrace Elementary School
Evansville, Indiana

What makes you proud to live in Indiana?

As I was slopping through the mud in the Hoosier National Forest, sweat fell into my eye. I looked around as a pine tree tickled my cheek as I trudged past. I enjoyed the scenery as I marched up a steep hill. I heard a woodpecker drum on a nearby oak tree. It sounded beautiful. Then my pack pulled on my shoulders making me remember my climb up the hill. In my pack I had everything I needed to survive two days in Indiana's wilderness.

I'm proud to live in Indiana because there are many opportunities to get outdoors. In the Hoosier National Forest, there are many miles of forest waiting for YOU to explore. My favorite things to do with my family in the forests of Indiana are hiking and mountain biking. In Indiana's wilderness there are many species of animals like the cardinal, Indiana's state bird. In the woods, there are also many types of interesting plants and trees. If you want to hike in a place that looks like the ocean, you need to check out Indiana's dunes. You can march to the top of a sandy dune or you can explore around the steep edges. Last, but not least are Indiana's lakes and rivers where you can kayak or canoe in the smooth waters. In these waters, you can find many types of fish. One time while swimming, a catfish nibbled on my toes! I encourage you to get outdoors and do these adventurous things.

Today, families and kids aren't getting outdoors as much because they just don't know about the opportunities and adventures they can have in Indiana. I think hiking is enjoyable because every time you go, you see something different or unique. I encourage Hoosiers to hop off the couch and get outdoors.

Third Place: Nick Wiley
East Washington Academy
Muncie, Indiana

Hoosier Pride

The word “Hoosier” has a very debated origin, but recently at the Indiana Historical Society, I read that “Hoosier” means hearty and courageous. I thought this definition was really fitting because I believe that Hoosiers can endure almost anything. Indiana’s many communities stand strong through good times and bad. Throughout our different communities, some problems have occurred, but as Hoosiers, we work together to solve our problems and work through our differences.

I take pride in the experiences the State has to offer, such as museums, zoos, theaters, sporting events, and parks. They offer fun family experiences for Hoosier and non-Hoosier families. Some of my favorite experiences are the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis where I learn about Indiana’s history, the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo where many animals are showcased, and the Palladium in Carmel where I’ve listened to my great aunt play the clarinet with the Indiana Wind Symphony.

Within the 92 counties, there are many opportunities for family bonding and to encounter Hoosier pride. Each county has a 4-H program that teaches topics relevant to Indiana. I have participated in my county’s 4-H program and have competed at my county fair. This year, one of my projects was selected to be showcased at the Indiana State Fair. This was a huge honor and it made me proud to be a Hoosier.

As I said before, in Indiana there are many experiences to encounter Hoosier Pride.

Fourth Place: Tristian Holt
Ireland Elementary School
Ireland, Indiana

Why Indiana is Fun

Did you know that Indiana has 25 state parks? That's not bad for a state of only six and a half million people and a land mass of 36,418 square miles. What does that number mean? Well, it means that Indiana ranks in the smaller size of states and even though the Hoosier state doesn't have as many state parks as other states, our state has a park within a one hour drive for every Indiana resident. That's pretty awesome considering that fact helps support the state motto that Indiana is "The Crossroads of America".

Not only does Indiana feature state parks, it boasts 3 National Parks with two of them being just a short drive from us here in Dubois County. The George Rogers Clark National Historical Park is just a short drive to Vincennes where a monument to commemorate the surrendering of the British at Fort Sackville to American Colonel George Rogers Clark, sits next to the Wabash. Then in Lincoln City just a short drive past Santa Claus Indiana is the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial. This national memorial is my favorite because when we visit here I like to think what it would have been like to have been friends with President Lincoln when he was a kid. This park remembers the time Abraham Lincoln grew up from a boy to a man. Finally the last national park in Indiana is the National Lakeshore Indiana Dunes. Indiana Dunes is on the south shore of Lake Michigan and it's really far away from us. I can't wait to visit this park so I can try a new kite out that my mom got me this past summer.

For a small but mighty state, Indiana has so much to offer through its state and national parks. Living just a short drive from just one of these parks has to bring a smile to every Hoosiers face.