

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND SCHOLASTIC ANNOUNCE GRAND PRIZE WINNERS OF THE 2013
BREAKING BARRIERS: IN SPORTS, IN LIFE ESSAY CONTEST**

Students from Around the United States Submitted More Than 18,000 Essays

**Grades Four through Eight Grand Prize Winner and Grade Nine Grand Prize Winner to be
Recognized at the 2013 MLB All-Star Game and the 2013 World Series, Respectively**

Major League Baseball and Scholastic announced that **Luke Lunday**, a fifth grader from West Point, New York, and **Jennifer Wayland**, a ninth grade student from Chesterfield, Missouri, were selected as Grand Prize winners of the 2013 *Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life* Essay Contest. This year's contest, which was supported by Warner Bros. Pictures, garnered 18,700 essay submissions, the most ever for the Breaking Barriers program.

"The Breaking Barriers program is a wonderful way to honor Jackie Robinson's indelible legacy by educating young students about his life and values," said Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig. "The new feature film '42' has helped to further demonstrate how Jackie was a shining example of triumphing over adversity with honor. On behalf of everyone at Major League Baseball, I would like to congratulate Luke and Jennifer on their winning essays, and I thank all of this year's entrants for sharing their inspiring stories."

"This year's record number of essays was truly phenomenal," said Sharon Robinson, Jackie's daughter, Educational Programming Consultant for Major League Baseball, and author of the new children's book, *Jackie Robinson: American Hero*. "The volume and breadth of the essays speak to a number of challenges that many of our young people face, and I am honored that they used the values that my father instilled in me to overcome difficult situations in their lives. Luke, who has cerebral palsy, detailed his unyielding determination to learn to ride a bike without assistance and Jennifer, wrote candidly about her struggles with body image and her journey to self acceptance. I am so happy for all of our winners and I look forward to meeting them."



"The tremendous response to this contest shows how Jackie Robinson is an inspiration to students, encouraging them to write about their personal barriers in life," said Ann Amstutz Hayes, Senior Vice President at Scholastic. "Scholastic is proud to once again join Major League Baseball and Sharon Robinson to create a platform that lets students express themselves and engage in meaningful conversations with their teachers, peers and families."

Luke and Jennifer will join Sharon Robinson and will be recognized at the 2013 MLB All-Star Game at Citi Field and the 2013 World Series, respectively. The Grand and First Prize winners, along with their teachers, and

Second Prize winners will each receive a laptop computer, provided by Microsoft. All winning contestants will be given a set of Breaking Barriers T-shirts for their class and a book authored by Sharon Robinson.

The list of national winners is as follows:

Grand Prize

Luke Lunday, Grade 5, West Point, NY
Jennifer Wayland, Grade 9, Chesterfield, MO

First Prize

Xavier Morgan-Gillard, Grade 4, University City, MO
Steven Blodgett, Grade 5, Salt Lake City, UT
Olivia Hurley, Grade 6, Baker, FL
Arsema Tesfai, Grade 7, Chicago, IL

Second Prize

Megan Fortenberry, Grade 5, Richmond, TX
Griffin Miller, Grade 5, West Bloomfield, MI
Owen Smith, Grade 8, Princeton, NJ
Sydney Laws, Grade 8, Atlanta, GA

Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life was developed by Major League Baseball, Sharon Robinson, and Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education, and media company. Since its inception in 1997, *Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life* has reached more than 22 million children and 2.9 million educators in the continental United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. The Breaking Barriers essay contest asks students in grades four through nine to submit an essay about barriers or obstacles they have faced or are still facing in their lives, and how they overcame those obstacles using the values demonstrated by Jackie Robinson: commitment, citizenship, courage, determination, excellence, justice, persistence, teamwork, and integrity. This year the contest received additional support from Warner Bros. Pictures, which distributed the film "42," a production of Legendary Pictures. The true story of Jackie Robinson, the film is written and directed by Brian Helgeland and stars Chadwick Boseman and Harrison Ford. "42" is now in theaters nationwide.

Sharon Robinson is the author of several widely praised nonfiction books and novels for children. In her most recent book, *Jackie Robinson: American Hero* (Scholastic; March 2013), a biography and history lesson for young readers, Sharon Robinson pays tribute to her father's memory and introduces Jackie Robinson to a new generation of readers. For more information about Sharon Robinson, please visit www.sharonrobinsonink.com.

For additional information on Breaking Barriers, please visit mlbcommunity.org/breakingbarriers.

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