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PNC American Patriot Essay Contest

The QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning and PNC Bank are inviting New Jersey students in grades 2 through 12 to take part in the 15th annual PNC Bank "American Patriot Essay Contest" by writing a short essay on the topic "What the American Flag Means to Me."

The Grand Prize winner will receive a tethered ride in a gigantic, 75-foot-tall hot air balloon at his or her school in

June and a special VIP package at this year's balloon festival July 27-28-29, at Solberg Airport in Readington: a hot air balloon ride for two, four Blue Sky Club VIP tickets, and the opportunity to meet one of this year's concert headliners.

This year's winning student's immediate classmates will each receive one complimentary general admission ticket to the festival. Second- and third-place prizes consisting of festival admission and merchandise will be also awarded. The winning student's teacher and school principal will each receive two Blue Sky Club VIP tickets.

The essays must be 100 words or less. They will be judged by a panel of representatives from PNC Bank and the balloon festival. Winning essays will be selected based on creativity, poignancy and clarity with consideration given to the grade level of the contestant. Contestants are not required to be U.S. citizens.

Entries should be mailed to Essay Judges, QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning, 363 Route 46 West, Suite 200, Fairfield, NJ, 07004, or emailed to pncessay@balloonfestival.com. Entries should include the student's name, home or school address, home or school telephone number, grade, age, school name and the name of their teacher. The deadline to enter is May 1. Additional information may be found at www.balloonfestival.com/pncessay.