

# Blackorby Wins ‘You Have a Voice!’ Speech Competition

by Submitted by Lewis and Clark Community College  
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**GODFREY** – Lewis and Clark Community College sophomore, Belle Blackorby, took first place in the 2024 “You Have a Voice!” humanities speech contest, held March 20 in the Ann Whitney Olin Theatre.

The contest, which is held annually by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society and hosted by PTK Sponsor and Speech Professor Elizabeth Grant, provides students the means through which they can share their thoughts and experiences on what it means to be human.

This year's competition featured seven participants, each of whom performed at a very high level.

"I really believe the level of competition was the best we have had," Grant said. "We wish we had more than three prizes to award."

Blackorby, who is a sophomore and PTK President, is the daughter of Amber and Brad Blackorby of Jerseyville. Her speech was entitled "Human Empathy."

She was in disbelief when her name was announced.

"I had just seen so many amazing speakers, each with incredible life stories to share, and entirely believed one of them would win," she said. "I'm still wrapping my head around the whole thing, but I am so grateful."

Blackorby credits two people, her best friend and her mother, for inspiring her speech.

"My best friend is an anthropologist who always tells me stories of humans being kind and self-sacrificial before they even had language to describe it," she said. "My mom is a highly empathetic individual and a role model for me."

A History student, after graduation, Blackorby plans to continue her education at SIUE.

The first-place win earned her \$100 and recognition at the upcoming Honors Ceremony.

Second place, and a \$75 prize, went to last year's winner, Madeline Bouillon, with a speech entitled "My Big Dream."

Third place, and a \$50 prize, went to international student, T.K. Queenster, with her speech called "The Journey." Queenster is from Ghana.

Other participants were Alex Hartmann, Josh Hodge, Jackson Lagerhausen and Everett Rosemann.

Judging this year's competition were Scholarship Program Coordinator Cora Gray, Student Activities Coordinator Jared Hennings, Foundation Relations Administrative Assistant Shawntaya Wagner and Alton Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Al Womack.

For information on L&C's Speech Department or PTK, contact Grant at (618) 468-4725 or [eegrant@lc.edu](mailto:eegrant@lc.edu).

L&C is enrolling now for Summer and Fall. To find out more, contact the Enrollment Center at (618) 468-2222 or [enroll@lc.edu](mailto:enroll@lc.edu).