

## **1<sup>st</sup> Place**

**Ausia Van Holstyn**

**Miller, SD**

Coal Springs Where History Comes Alive.

Coal Springs, South Dakota

Coal Springs is a ghost town in the middle of nowhere in Perkins country, named for Coal Springs, (a Coal mine) South Dakota, it settled in 1908, it got its post office in 1909. but it comes alive once a year at the Coal Springs Threshing Bee. It's my favorite weekend of the year, because I can see history up close. When I drive up to Coal Springs the first thing I see is a bunch of antique tractors in a row. Then I see old cabins, and homesteads and buildings filled with things from the olden days.

Coal Springs matters to me because it's a ghost town that won't let history die. What other 11 year old girl has been in a real sheep wagon or ridden on an antique wagon, and used an iron like Ma Ingalls? No one tells me I am too little to learn history. I have seen the blacksmith make horse shoes, I have shelled corn with a hand cranked machine, I have seen the threshing machine and held the wheat berries in my hands.

Coal Springs needs to be preserved. People of all ages need a place to see history. Many kids think history is boring. I love history. I love to learn how they did things. My favorite stories are historical. But we need places where people can see history. The history of Coal Springs would never fit in a museum. Coal Springs keeps this stuff alive. If it is lost, history would only be something people read about.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Place**

**Helen Petree**

**Sioux Falls, SD**

The Farm.

Family Farm, Salem, SD

A place that matters to me a lot is "The Farm" or so we call it. "The Farm" is actually where my dad's parents live, my grandparents, and my great grandparents and great-great grandparents lived there before them. The acres of land holds orchards, trees, solar panels, wind turbines, fields, sloughs, streams and much more.

My dad is the new owner of the farm and has worked vary hard for many years on the farm. When I was younger my mom worked on the weekend so my dad would take me and my brother out to the farm. He was installing the wind turbines back then it was a very big job, after that he started working on the solar panels and a couple years ago he started a big orchard. My dad's biggest dreams are on the farm I see that he has worked hard for them. Also, he is going to put it in a trust so it will be preserved for future generations.

Every year in the summer my family gets together for the 4th of July on the farm and my dad always puts on the most spectacular firework show. We all sit around the yard and watch the fireworks in the field, it's my favorite time of year. Also, when my dad is out working on the orchard I go and get on my toy 4-wheeler and ride out to see my dad and then I ride around the farm. Right after the hay bales are made in the fields me and my aunt go and jump across them and it's so fun. Another happy memory is all

time in the kitchen spent cooking or baking. My grandma and I make treats like cookies and pies and with my other aunt we make the most delicious, scrumptious pizzas. One year my aunt made me a giant ice-cream bar for my birthday.

These are just some of the most fun memories on the farm. I hope one day I can share these experiences with my kids or future generations. It just makes me so happy to see all my aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, and family sitting together all so happy. In conclusion, the farm has been in our family for many generations and I hope it will still be for many more generations to come.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Place**

**Tirzah Johnson**

**Burke, SD**

Living Like Laura.

Ingalls Homestead, De Smet, SD

The sun was rising when I grabbed my sleeping bag, prairie dress, and bonnet to leave on an adventure I would never forget. When I was eight, I visited the Laura Ingalls Wilder Homestead in De Smet, South Dakota, where my cousins, sister, aunt, and I got to experience the life of this world-famous author and her family. We saw models of a school she attended and two she taught at and rang the heavy school bell. We also saw a barn built to replicate the Ingalls', a home dug out from the side of a hill (called, appropriately, a dugout), a tar house, and lots more. Pa's house, located in the existing town of De Smet, is a large, two-storied white house with Ma's real dishes inside. We got to play a ukulele like Pa's there. I even learned how Pa and his neighbors made barbed wire! My favorite was Ma's house - a house built for Ma by Pa. Inside were two small bedrooms, a kitchen, a stack of old Braille books like Laura's sister Mary used to read after going blind, and a rusty sewing machine. I especially enjoyed washing rags in a wash tub outdoors. First, we scrubbed the laundry with bar soap on a ridged sideboard. Then we fed it through stacked rollers before rinsing the rags in fresh water. After rolling them again, we hung them on a clothesline. (We washed the rags so many times I bet they were the cleanest clothes in America!) Some of the other experiences we had included pumping water from an old pump, sleeping in

a covered wagon, and feeling the peace of an old church. We got to craft corncob dolls and twist twine ropes.

Laura's books are loved by families and readers like me all over the globe. South Dakota is honored to have a place where she and her family lived. More than 20,000 people visit the Laura Ingalls Wilder homestead each year to learn more about Laura's life and sample nineteenth-century history in person.