LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CENTER FOR THE BOOK INDIANA AFFILIATE

First Place - 2025

Marichka K.
Greenwood, Indiana
Johnson County
North Grove Elementary School
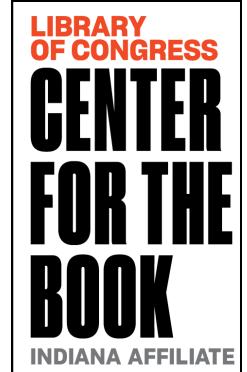
Exploring Indiana

When I first came to Indiana from Ukraine, I was very nervous. Our family started learning about Indiana, since we would be here for a while. There were many places that we grew to love, but the ones we were most amazed by are the Children's Museum, Indiana's public libraries, and Brown County State Park.

The Children's Museum is a place for everyone to explore. The exhibit about Anne Frank is my favorite because it shows a girl facing injustice, hatred, and war. This reminded me of Ukraine, which is going through war too. It also shows how she battled it with powerful words in a diary. This really touched my heart and inspired me to be kind and appreciate what I have. The Children's Museum has many exciting exhibits that help kids learn.

Because I am a bookworm, Indiana's public libraries seem like a home to me. I love spending time there, reading about puzzling mysteries and imaginary worlds. Unlike libraries in Ukraine, Indiana's public libraries have many educational programs and play areas in the kids section. The library helps me explore anything and everything about Indiana and the world.

Finally, Brown County State Park is a great place to go hiking. My family loves going there in the fall. We have spotted many creatures including chipmunks, birds, beetles, and even some frogs! The trails were long and led us to many secret nooks and hideouts. The beautiful landscape is colourful and breathtaking. Overall, Brown County is a great place to enjoy Indiana's nature.

The Children's Museum, Indiana's public libraries, and Brown County State Park have helped me go from nervous to comfortable. Now, three years since we came here, Indiana became my second home that I love.
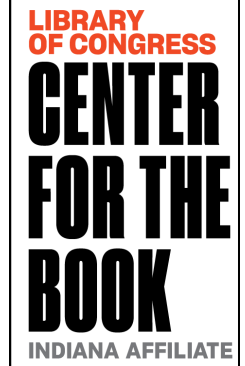
INDIANA STATE MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITES

WE DO HISTORY. INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INDIANA STATE LIBRARY

Indiana Statehouse TOUR OFFICE

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CENTER FOR THE BOOK
INDIANA AFFILIATE

Second Place - 2025

Juliet M.
Nashville, Indiana
Brown County
Homeschooled

Incredible Indiana

Indiana, with its beautiful countryside and its modest little towns, is a sight to see for both visitors and citizens. We are going to be exploring three amazing topics – nature, history and our resources. Let's go on an adventure to explore all about our beautiful Indiana.

First stop on the list is nature! One of my favorite hikes is in Brown County State Park. It gives me so much joy to see the beautiful nature around me. Every year my family and I take a big hiking trip to Turkey Run State Park. We have the best time ever and even rent a super cool camping spot surrounded by amazing valleys and woods. We also have a National Park in Indiana! I've never been there, but I bet it would be pretty exciting.

Next, we will be exploring amazing history! Did you know that Indiana was part of the Underground Railroad? It isn't really a railroad but was a secret way to help slaves escape to freedom. Another cool historical fact is that Abraham Lincoln lived in Indiana for seven years in his childhood. You can even visit Lincoln's boyhood home in Lincoln City, IN.

Last on the list, we are going to explore a natural resource of Indiana. What if I told you that limestone from Indiana was used to make the Pentagon and the Empire State building? It's true! I bet you could find pieces of Indiana limestone all over the US.

Thank you for spending time exploring Indiana with me! I hope that you can visit some of the exciting places in Indiana to celebrate its 209th birthday. Start your engines up to go explore our great Hoosier state!

INDIANA STATE MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITES

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Third Place - 2025

Zoey Z.
Carmel, Indiana
Hamilton County
The Sycamore School

Exploring Indiana

Indiana is more than just an amazing state — it's a place where communities grow, learn, and cheer together. When I explore Indiana, I see how much there is to discover: our exciting sports teams, inspiring hometown heroes, and the breathtaking nature that makes our state one of a kind.

Cheering for our incredible sports teams teaches me that exploring isn't only about places — it's also about learning life lessons. When the Pacers made it to the finals this year, they showed us what teamwork, effort, and courage look like. Even without a championship trophy, they reminded us that success comes from never giving up.

Exploring Indiana's history is like meeting heroes who built our state's spirit. Jim Davis from Marion turned his time indoors into the funny cat Garfield that makes the world laugh. Mark Honeywell from Wabash invented better ways to heat our homes, and Colonel Eli Lilly created medicine that helps people everywhere. Michael Jackson from Gary, known around the world as the "King of Pop," used his voice, creativity, and dance moves to inspire millions. Long before them, Abraham Lincoln grew up in southern Indiana and learned honesty and courage here — lessons that helped him lead our country.

When I explore the outdoors, like the Indiana Dunes or the forests and rivers across the state, I feel connected to the land that has shaped so many lives. Climbing the sandy hills teaches patience, and watching the waves reminds me how nature and people work together.

Exploring Indiana has taught me that discovery doesn't just happen in classrooms — it happens in every corner of our state. Whether through sports, heroes, or nature, every adventure helps me appreciate what it means to be a Hoosier.