

**Media Contacts:**

Sheila Noone

[snoone@varsity.com](mailto:snoone@varsity.com)

901-251-5959

Brad Carmony for Varsity Brands

[bcarmony@archermalmo.com](mailto:bcarmony@archermalmo.com)

901-260-4277

**Vista Murrieta Recognized as America's Most Spirited High School**

*Varsity Brands awards Vista Murrieta High School with \$25,000 grant to recognize and reward the power of school spirit*

**MEMPHIS, Tenn. – September 25, 2015** – Varsity Brands, the recognized leader in team athletic gear, the driving force in cheerleading and dance, and the most trusted name in celebrating student milestones, today announced Vista Murrieta High School, from Murrieta, Calif. as the winner of its America's Most Spirited High School Contest. The announcement today coincides with National School Spirit Day, which was recognized by Congress last year.

"Our students feel connected to Vista Murrieta and have an engrained sense of school pride," said Mick Wager, Principal of Vista Murrieta, "The family atmosphere and sense of community is apparent and genuine."

High schools across the country were invited to enter the contest, which called for each school to submit a 90-second video, a 500-word essay, two letters of recommendation and several photos demonstrating its school spirit. High schools from 33 states were represented in the contest. Vista Murrieta's [video submission](#) won based on a nationwide vote and included footage from games, pep rallies, and student activities that epitomize a robust school spirit environment that seeks to include all students. Vista Murrieta estimates that 85% of their students are involved in at least one activity, club or sport, and their video was a true testament to the power of school spirit and its effects on high school students.

Vista Murrieta made the list of finalists September 10, along with Enterprise High School in Enterprise, Ala., Greenwood High School in Greenwood, Ark., and Richardson High School in Richardson, Texas. Fans across the country – from nearly every state–were then encouraged to vote online at [nationalschoolspiritday.org](http://nationalschoolspiritday.org) through September 22, when Vista Murrieta earned the title of America's Most Spirited High School.

"We're proud to host this contest after our research last year confirmed the connection between school spirit and student achievement, involvement and confidence," said Varsity Brands CEO Jeff Webb. "We are on a mission to expand student involvement and promote school spirit in America's high schools, and we're pleased to honor Vista Murrieta's pride and achievements. Their submission truly represented their unique school spirit and dedicated student body, in every activity from marching bands and pep rallies to community service and student government."

National School Spirit Day was first founded in 2009 by Varsity Spirit as a way to shine a spotlight on all the ways cheerleaders and dancers make a difference in their schools and communities. And while cheerleaders and dancers are still drivers of school spirit, Varsity Brands has conducted additional research which illustrates a direct correlation between overall school spirit, community and school involvement, academic achievement and self-confidence. According to a Harris Poll and subsequent [white paper](#) published last year, 92 percent of principals agree that high school

spirit is tied to high academic achievement, and 90 percent of students with high levels of school spirit are more likely to be leaders. This search for America's Most Spirited High School went beyond spirit teams and sporting events and included the important roles academics, community involvement and overall engagement played in driving school spirit.

Full details regarding the contest and the finalists are available online at [nationalschoolspiritday.org](http://nationalschoolspiritday.org).

### **About Varsity Brands**

With a mission to inspire achievement and create memorable experiences for young people, Varsity Brands elevates the student experience, promotes participation and celebrates achievement through three unique but interrelated businesses: **Herff Jones**, A Varsity Achievement Brand; **BSN SPORTS**, a Varsity Sport Brand; and **Varsity Spirit**. Together, these assets promote personal, school and community pride through their customizable products and programs to elementary and middle schools, high schools, and colleges and universities, as well as church organizations, professional and collegiate sports teams and corporations. Through its 4,200 dedicated employees and independent representatives, Varsity Brands reaches its individual and institutional customers each year via catalog, telesales, e-commerce sites and direct sales channels.

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