



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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Illinois EPA Celebrates Earth Day by Honoring Young Environmentalists for Poster, Poetry and Prose

Students Recognized for Creativity on the Importance of Waste Reduction

SPRINGFIELD — In recognition of Earth Day, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Alec Messina is honoring a group of creative fifth and sixth grade students selected for their skills used to express environmental awareness, as part of the Agency's 30th Annual Poster, Poetry and Prose Contest. The writers and artists selected from throughout Illinois were recognized today at a reception in the Old State Capitol building in downtown Springfield.

Each year, fifth and sixth grade students in Illinois take part in the Poster, Poetry and Prose contest as part of the Agency's Environmental Pathways program. Through the program, participating schools study environmental concepts with a particular emphasis on the current year's environmental theme. Many teachers round out the classroom program by having the students create posters or poetry/prose works to illustrate what they have learned, and submit these to the Agency. Each participating school is eligible to select four works in each of these categories to submit for competitive judging. This year's theme, ***How Can You Reduce Your Waste to Save Our Space?*** focused on the importance of reducing, reusing, recycling and composting instead of contributing to the waste in our landfills.

"Today is a great day to recognize the work of these students as we also celebrate Earth Day," said Director Messina. "We have made great strides in accelerating environmental progress since the first earth day, and we look to our young people to continue that progress. I congratulate each of our winners for their hard work in demonstrating the importance of reducing waste."

Poetry/Prose Top Award Winners

Annaliese Dorchinecz

St. Cletus School, La Grange

Yadhira-Isabel Gonzalez

The Willows Academy, Des Plaines

Natalie Kowalkowski

Washington Elementary School, Glenview

Sarah Phan

Washington Elementary School, Glenview

Tommy Robaczewski

St. Monica Academy, Chicago

David Torres

Schubert Elementary School, Chicago

Posters Top Award Winners

Daniel Esho

Washington Elementary School, Glenview

Andre Larios

Washington Elementary School, Glenview

Robert Los

Washington Elementary School, Glenview

Abby Schuler

St. Cletus School, La Grange

Lauren Tapper

Univ. of Chicago Laboratory School, Chicago

Annalise Williams

Countryside School, Champaign

A panel of representatives from the Illinois EPA judged all entries and selected the finalists, whose entries were then judged by an outside panel of authorities, to determine the top 12 winners.

The students, their families, and teachers were invited to today's awards ceremony and reception, where the top 12 and honorable mention winners received environmental reference books for their school libraries. The winners, along with all finalists, also received certificates and ribbons for their creative efforts. In addition to the awards, tours of the Old State Capitol were given to winners and guests before and after the awards ceremony.

A complete list of winners by school is attached, and a complete listing of winners by category is available on the Illinois EPA web site at:

<http://www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/education/contest/2017/index>.

The winning entries will be on exhibit at Illinois EPA's headquarters in Springfield through May 22; the top 12 entries are also featured on the Illinois EPA's web site.

Information about the annual event can be obtained by contacting Kristi Morris, Environmental Education Coordinator for the Illinois EPA at 1021 North Grand Avenue East, P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL, 62794-9276, or Kristi.Morris@Illinois.gov.

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**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
2017 Poster, Poetry and Prose Winners (by School)**

A-C Central Middle School, Ashland

Leedah Scheer, Honorable Mention-Poetry/Prose
Alaina Marr, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Gavin Arthality, Special Recognition-Posters
Will Boston, Special Recognition-Posters
Will Merwin, Special Recognition-Posters

Columbus Elementary School, Edwardsville

Alessia Heiser, Special Recognition-Posters

Countryside School, Champaign

Annalise Williams, Top Award Winner, Posters
Lin Gilbertz, Honorable Mention-Posters
Shawn Syed, Honorable Mention-Poetry/Prose
Sophia Libman, Special Recognition-Posters

Cumberland Middle School, Toledo

Makenna Daily, Special Recognition-Posters
Katelyn Shoemaker, Special Recognition-Posters
Lucas Smith, Special Recognition-Posters

Fearn Elementary, North Aurora

Carson Bantz, Special Recognition-Posters
Evan Luther, Special Recognition-Posters
Matthew Miller, Special Recognition-Posters

Galva Elementary, Galva

Olivia Jones, Honorable Mention-Posters
Jaxson Charles Meier, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Lexi Stone, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Paige Wexell, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Courtney Loncka, Special Recognition-Posters
Alexis Spivey, Special Recognition-Posters

Hellenic American Academy, Deerfield

Paul Apostolakides, Special Recognition-Posters
Marina Kokkalis, Special Recognition-Posters

Horizon Science Academy Belmont, Chicago

Maurice Johnson Jr., Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose

Jefferson Elementary, Charleston

Megan Heise, Honorable Mention-Posters
Josh Sipes, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose

Maple School, Loves Park

Lakiyah Jones, Special Recognition-Posters

Olson Park Elementary, Machesney Park

Kiley Bolter, Honorable Mention-Posters
Anna Jasmine Patel, Special Recognition-Posters
Ryan Phillips, Special Recognition-Posters
Braden Schuld, Special Recognition-Posters

Our Savior's Lutheran School, Springfield

Kenley Dirks, Special Recognition-Posters
Ella Reynolds, Special Recognition-Posters

PORTA Central, Petersburg

Hannah Schafer, Honorable Mention-Poetry/Prose
Toby Gallion, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Brooke Schnapp, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Jernie Shores, Special Recognition-Posters

Prince of Peace Catholic School, Lake Villa

Erik Stover, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Sajan Toms, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Sarah Gutknecht, Special Recognition-Posters

Ransom Grade School, Ransom

Denver Trainor, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Emma Berg, Special Recognition-Posters
Gracie Brewick-Pointer, Special Recognition-Posters

Scales Mound School, Scales Mound

Ella Distler, Special Recognition-Posters

Schubert Elementary School, Chicago

David Torres, Top Award Winner-Poetry/Prose
Lizabeth Escamilla, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose

Spencer Crossing, New Lenox

Alexis Youngren, Honorable Mention-Posters
Sophia Lukareski, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Ava Wandersee, Special Recognition-Posters

St. Cletus School, La Grange

Annaliese Dorchinecz, Top Award Winner-Poetry/Prose
Abby Schuler, Top Award Winner-Posters
Tommy Chopp, Honorable Mention-Posters
Tiernan Ziemba, Honorable Mention-Poetry/Prose
Julia Ludden, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose
Paloma Mena, Special Recognition-Posters

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
2017 Poster, Poetry and Prose Winners (by School) Continued**

St. Monica Academy, Chicago

Tommy Robaczewski, Top Award Winner-Poetry/Prose

Connor Sturt, Honorable Mention-Posters

Scholastic Academy, Chicago

Tess Giddens-White, Special Recognition-Posters

Ella W., Special Recognition-Posters

University of Chicago Laboratory School, Chicago

Lauren Tapper, Top Award Winner-Posters

Walt Disney Magnet School, Chicago

Levi Ferguson, Special Recognition-Posters

Dena Swan, Special Recognition-Posters

Washington Elementary School, Glenview

Natalie Kowalkowski, Top Award Winner-Poetry/Prose

Sarah Phan, Top Award Winner-Poetry/Prose

Daniel Esho, Top Award Winner-Posters

Andre Larios, Top Award Winner-Posters

Robert Los, Top Award Winner-Posters

Alonzo Larios, Honorable Mention-Posters

Yousif Akram, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose

Misha Patel, Special Recognition-Poetry/Prose

Willows Academy, Des Plaines

Yadhira-Isabel Gonzalez, Top Award Winner-
Poetry/Prose

Maria Georges, Special Recognition-Posters

Francoise Lechner, Special Recognition-Posters