



NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois EPA Honors Young Environmentalists for Poster, Poetry and Prose *Students Recognized for Creativity on the Importance of Water*

SPRINGFIELD — In recognition of Earth Day, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Lisa Bonnett is honoring a group of distinguished fifth and sixth grade students selected for their creative skills used to express environmental awareness, as part of the Agency's 29th Annual Poster, Poetry and Prose Contest. The writers and artists selected from throughout Illinois were recognized earlier this month 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 Agency's environmental education program – "Poster, Poetry and Prose Contest" – studying environmental concepts with a particular emphasis on the current year's environmental theme. Many round out the classroom program by creating 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, ***W.A.T.E.R. – What A True Environmental Resource! How will you conserve and protect it?***, focused on the importance of conserving and protecting water, including drinking water and storm water; both individually and as a community.

"Illinois EPA is honored to recognize these students for their creativity, which delivers an important message to their fellow students and community members," said Director Bonnett. "This year's theme focused on water as one of our most valuable environmental resources, and through their works, we are able to see how these students have learned important lessons on conserving and protecting our environment."

Poetry/Prose Top Award Winners

Dalal Hassane, Washington School, Glenview
Julia Jochum, Holy Cross Catholic School, Batavia
Vasiliki Kanellos, Hellenic American Academy, Deerfield
Katie Popp, Prince of Peace Catholic School, Lake Villa
Sara Schinker, St. Cletus School, La Grange
Samantha Speer, Olson Park Elementary, Machesney Park

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Poster, Poetry and Prose/2

Posters Top Award Winners

Amina Ahmad, Washington School, Glenview

Rhanda Halawah, Washington School, Glenview

Hailey Lange, Olson Park Elementary, Machesney Park

Sanaiya Luthar, Countryside School, Champaign

Makenna McBride, Jefferson Elementary, Charleston

Shawn Syed, 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 a reception at which 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. A listing of Honorable Mention and Special Recognition winners is attached, and a complete listing of winners is available on the Illinois EPA web site at: www.epa.illinois.gov. In addition to the awards, tours of the Old State Capitol were given to winners and guests before and after the awards ceremony.

The winning entries will be on exhibit in the atrium at Illinois EPA's headquarters in Springfield through May 9; 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
2016 Poster, Poetry and Prose Additional Winners**

Honorable Mention

Charlotte Chesser, Countryside School
Jessica Domian, Washington School
Jacob Gasior, Washington School
Pano Giannetos, Hellenic American Academy
Grace Kahler, Countryside School
Grace Koziol, St. Cletus School

Alianna Locascio, Maple Elementary School
Ethan Price, St. Monica Academy
Clare Prilutsky, Socrates Day School
Citlalli Rico, Maple Elementary School
Ryan Wang, Countryside School
Franciszek Wiercigroch, Schubert
Elementary School

Special Recognition

Poetry/Prose

Isabelle Bagley, St. Patrick School
Benjamin Chang, Countryside School
Eleni Chronopoulos, Hellenic American
Academy
Caleb Chu, Legacy Christian Academy
Leah Feldman, Hellenic American Academy
Toby Gallion, PORTA
Harmony Hart, Blackhawk Elementary School
Nick Hawk, Jefferson Elementary
Grace Jenkins, St. Patrick School
Nadiya Jones, Signal Hill School
Georgia Kokkalis, Hellenic American Academy
Michael Kosinski, St. Monica Academy
Olivia Kratschmer, St. Ambrose School
Kate Leak, Tri-Valley Middle School
Angelica Raine V. Malasig, Washington School
Natalie Markin, Blackhawk Elementary School
Payton Marr, A-C Central Middle School
Arianna Martinez, Schubert Elementary School
Natalie Retzer, St. Ambrose School
Allison Rial, Prince of Peace Catholic School
Kyla Roach, Olson Park Elementary
Henry Schafer, Schafer Homeschool
Max Schmid, St. Monica Academy
Brooke Schnapp, PORTA
Gabriel Szorc, Washington School
Amanda Toth, Old St. Mary's School
Sophie Turek, PORTA
Adam Valiji, Mark Twain Elementary
Lina Vazquez, Horizon Science Academy – Belmont

Posters

Clara Jane Barber, Signal Hill School
Kaleigh Bergschneider, Our Savior's Lutheran
Dorcas Bodunde, Walt Disney Magnet
Jovanni Cardona, Schubert Elementary School
Madelyn Ciampaglia, St. Cletus School
Anna Cogan, Scales Mound Jr. High
Diana Coliz, Rockford Environmental
Science Academy
Alexandra Contreras, Fearn Elementary
Gracie Dittamore, Cumberland Elementary
Niko Douvalakis, St. Monica Academy
Jeraline Garcia, Schubert Elementary
Coral Guardado, Charles J. Sahs School
Faith Holian, Richmond Grade School
Ana Izquierdo, Charles J. Sahs School
Ellie Jacobs, Jefferson Elementary
Leah Jones, St. Patrick School
Joshua Leemon, Marissa Elementary
Vivianna Madrigal, Northwest Elementary
Stamatia Memmos, Hellenic American
Academy
Brayden Meyer, Tri-Valley Middle School
Merfelia Moulongo, Rockford Environmental
Science Academy
Grace Nielsen, Prince of Peace Catholic School
Nate Noe, Tri-Valley Middle School
Melisa Omerovic, Mark Twain Elementary
McKenzie Rowe, Westhaven School
Aileen Salgado, Schubert Elementary School
Jacob Santiago, St. Cletus School
Austen Scott, Cumberland Elementary School
Nicholas Sheldon, Olson Park School
Ella Strong, St. Patrick School
Kendyn Syfert, Cumberland Elementary School
Justin Yoon, Washington School
Ripley Zanger, PORTA
Leilani Zavada, Ransom Grade School