



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois EPA Celebrates Earth Month by Recognizing Young Environmentalists through Annual Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest

Students Recognized for Creativity on the Topic of Water

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency today honored a group of creative fifth and sixth grade students selected for their artistic and writing skills used to express environmental awareness, as part of the Agency’s Annual Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest. The students selected from throughout Illinois were recognized at a ceremony at the Illinois State Library in Springfield.

Each year, fifth and sixth grade students in Illinois take part in the Poster, Poetry, and Prose contest as one of the agency’s environmental education initiatives. As part of the contest, participating schools study environmental concepts with an emphasis on the current year’s environmental theme. Many teachers round out the classroom instruction by having the students create posters or poetry/prose works to illustrate what they have learned and submit these to the Illinois EPA. Participating schools can select four works in each category to submit for competitive judging. This year’s theme, ***“Where Does Water Go? How Can We Slow the Flow?”*** focuses on understanding how rain moves through the landscape, the effects of droughts and floods, and how we can adapt to help protect our water resources.

“The works created by these students are an excellent display of the knowledge they gain when environmental education is incorporated in the classroom,” **said Illinois EPA Director John J. Kim.** “We continue to be encouraged by the interest these students and teachers have to learn more about protecting our environmental resources.”

Poetry/Prose Top Award Winners

Lila Cohen

St. Giles School, Oak Park

Kelci Macklin

Beecher City Grade School, Beecher City

Brigid Reid

Somonauk Middle School, Somonauk

Avery Schoonover

Beecher City Grade School, Beecher City

Grace Tomasik

St. Alphonsus/St. Patrick Catholic School, Lemont

Tristan Ward

Providence St. Mel School, Lemont

Posters Top Award Winners

Ada Bright

John B. Murphy School, Chicago

Hannah Cachola

Prairie Crossing Charter School, Grayslake

Amelia Guillaume

John B. Murphy School, Chicago

Adrian Gwizd

*St. Alphonsus/St. Patrick Catholic School,
Lemont*

Emma Muñoz

Omar E. Torres Elementary, Chicago

Jolie Smith

John B. Murphy School, Chicago

Students, their families, and teachers were invited to today's awards ceremony at the Illinois State Library, where the top award 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 complete list of winners by school is attached. The top twelve entries will also be displayed on the Illinois EPA's website at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/education/contest/elementary/2024.html>

Information about the Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest can be obtained by contacting Kristi Morris, Environmental Education Coordinator for the Illinois EPA at Kristi.Morris@Illinois.gov.

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
2024 Poster, Poetry, and Prose Winners**

Beecher City Grade School, Beecher City

Kelci Macklin, Top Award Winner
Avery Schoonover, Top Award Winner
Aria Ervin, Honorable Mention
Luka Howell, Honorable Mention
Colton Gregory, Special Recognition
Luke Roadarmel, Special Recognition
Isabella Smigiel, Special Recognition
Jadyn Wright, Special Recognition

John B. Murphy Elementary, Chicago

Ada Bright, Top Award Winner
Amelia Guillaume, Top Award Winner
Jolie Smith, Top Award Winner
Adeline Schmidt, Honorable Mention
Ricardo Garcia, Special Recognition
Brianna Gowdy, Special Recognition
Nicolas Soriano, Special Recognition

Mary Morgan Elementary, Byron

Sylas Mendoza, Special Recognition
Vivian Scheer, Special Recognition

Omar E. Torres Elementary, Chicago

Emma Muñoz, Top Award Winner
Shelly Espinoza, Honorable Mention
Angelica Solis, Honorable Mention
Alexa Dominguez, Special Recognition
Erik Hernandez, Special Recognition
Daisy Ramirez, Special Recognition

Prairie Crossing Charter School, Grayslake

Hannah Cachola, Top Award Winner
Isabelle Manzanga, Honorable Mention
Julia Pejsach, Honorable Mention
Elle Brown, Special Recognition
Ryan Brzezinski, Special Recognition
Alayna Farooq, Special Recognition
Marina Gonzales Vargas, Special Recognition
Quinn Nieder, Special Recognition

Providence St. Mel School, Chicago

Tristan Ward, Top Award Winner

Somonauk Middle School, Somonauk

Brigid E. Reid, Top Award Winner
Devaun Towne, Special Recognition

**St. Alphonsus/St. Patrick Catholic School,
Lemont**

Adrian Gwizd, Top Award Winner
Grace Tomasik, Top Award Winner
Lauren Edwards, Honorable Mention
Olivia Cornejo, Special Recognition
Gabriel Koenigsmark, Special Recognition
Luke Laning, Special Recognition
Hazel Repta, Special Recognition
Dominic Tristano, Special Recognition

St. Giles School, Oak Park

Lila Cohen, Top Award Winner
Emmie Clark, Honorable Mention
Chris Marshall, Honorable Mention
Adalyn Nold, Honorable Mention
Connor Yaffe, Honorable Mention
Erin Brady, Special Recognition
Cameron Kelecus, Special Recognition
Elena Yager, Special Recognition

Trinity Christian School, Carbondale

Charlotte Andersen, Special Recognition
Justice Holevoet, Special Recognition
Ivy Kirk, Special Recognition