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San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Recognize K-12 and Delta College Students for their Creative Contributions to Innovative Countywide Illegal Dumping Campaign

Stockton, CA – As part of San Joaquin County’s aggressive, multiyear illegal dumping campaign, the Board of Supervisors celebrated winners of the recent K-12 Student Art Contest that created artwork for the next phase of the public education, eradication, and enforcement campaign focused on combatting illegal dumping and littering across the County. Delta College’s Fierce Mustang Media Group internship students were also celebrated for developing the photography featured on the campaign’s current billboards.

Following record levels of hazardous and pollutant trash inundating communities, the Board of Supervisors Illegal Dumping Task Force launched the innovative *See It, Report It, Stop It* campaign in May 2023 targeting the County’s nearly 800,000 residents. The County estimates more than 2,600 tons of trash are being dumped each year across San Joaquin County’s neighborhoods, parks, farms, and waterways like lakes, streams, and the Delta. The cleanup cost to taxpayers is \$1.3 million annually.

Utilizing a Three Es approach – Education, Eradication, and Enforcement – the campaign is educating the public on how to dispose of unwanted items responsibly and report unlawful littering; eradicating illegal dumping by informing residents about community cleanup activities and events; and enforcing through video surveillance, investigations, citations and other law enforcement measures.

As part of the Education prong of the campaign, the County partnered with the San Joaquin Office of Education in April to launch a Countywide K-12 Student Art Contest designed to use art to educate and motivate youth to prevent illegal dumping. Students were challenged to create artwork as a drawing, painting or mixed media and were judged based on creativity, educational content, and how well the message fit into the overarching *See It, Report It, Stop It* theme. The winners’ art will be displayed on freeway billboards, small displays, social media channels, and at the Lodi Grape Festival grounds.

“Our goal with the art contest was to collaborate with the educational community to get this work done while getting the County’s youth involved and excited about the effort,” said Suzie Saiers, Senior Deputy County Administrator, who is the County lead for the Illegal Dumping campaign.

"We tapped into the local youth hoping to mold minds so the next generation is aware of the harmful effects of illegal dumping on our environment and our County."

At its June 4 meeting, the Board of Supervisors presented a proclamation to the winning students for their valuable contributions: **Allie Lapachet**, 4th grade, **Harley Jones**, 4th grade, **Brody Koyama**, 6th grade, and runner up **Cain Meyer**, 6th grade. Participating schools included: St. Mary's High School in Stockton, Jefferson School in Tracy, Evelyn Costa Elementary School in Mountain House, and Lodi Christian School. In the coming weeks, the public will begin to see the winning artwork from the K-12 Student Art Contest on billboards Countywide.

Students from Delta College's Fierce Mustang Media Group were also recognized for developing the compelling photography and current co-branded billboards depicting illegal dumping in northern and southern parts of San Joaquin County. Grant funding provided by the Board of Supervisors to Delta College directly supports the Fierce Mustang Media Group's ExCel Internship Program focused on digital media literacy, career technical education, and workforce development for its students.

"This is our shared future. We are thrilled to recognize these multigeneration students of San Joaquin County for their inspirational and valuable contributions aimed at combating illegal dumping," said Miguel Villapudua, Chair of the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors. "The creativity and commitment to environmental stewardship is not only greatly appreciated, but their artwork also plays a vital role in promoting a cleaner and healthier community for all."

To learn more or to report illegal dumping, please visit www.SJCycle.org.

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