



Winners of 2022 “If I Were Mayor” state essay contest announced

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Richmond – The Virginia Municipal League (VML) announced today the statewide winner and seven regional winners of the “If I Were Mayor” Essay Contest. The contest, hosted by VML, drew hundreds of entries from seventh graders throughout the state. The challenge to the students was to identify an issue in their locality, talk to others about possible solutions, and then identify what solution would best address the issue.

The winners are:

- Statewide winner: **Charlotte Lieu** of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School in Falls Church
- Region 1: **Olivia Wyatt** of Northwood Middle School in Saltville
- Region 2: **Jordin Hernández Machuca** of Martinsville Middle School in Martinsville
- Region 3: **Elizabeth Loring** of Sacred Heart Academy in Winchester
- Region 4: **Kailey Krotzer** of Kenston Forest School in Blackstone
- Region 5: **Rose Weatherly** of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School in Falls Church
- Region 6: **Hayley Lumpkin** of Culpeper Middle School in Culpeper
- Region 8: **Sophia Buckley** of Hugo A. Owens Middle School in Chesapeake

**Note – VML did not receive any entries from Region 7 this year.*

All the regional winners demonstrated a grasp of an issue affecting their community and developed persuasive proposals to mitigate the problem. In every case, it was apparent that these students cared about the people in their town or city and wanted to help them. If these young people are any indication, then Virginia will have a talented group of local leaders to draw upon in the future.

Of the statewide winning entry, VML President and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle said: “Ms. Lieu’s diligence in interviewing various members of her community made her essay stand out from the others. Congratulations to Ms. Lieu and all the winners and thanks to all the 7th graders who submitted essays this year!”

In addition to a plaque, each regional winner will receive a check for \$150. The statewide winner will receive a plaque and \$250. Plans for presentation of the plaques and checks are forthcoming.

All winning essays will be featured in the May issue of VML’s magazine *Virginia Town & City* and will be posted at www.vml.org/education/essay-contest.

About VML’s “If I Were Mayor” Essay Contest

The annual “If I were Mayor Contest” invites seventh graders from throughout Virginia to submit essays describing what they would do if they were mayor of their hometown. The essay contest is a key component of VML’s civic education programming, which seeks to teach school children and adults how local government works and how they can become involved in making their communities better places to live, work and play.

About VML

The Virginia Municipal League is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of local governments established in 1905 to improve and assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education and other services. For more information visit www.vml.org.