

# Statewide & Region 3 Winner Lily McClung

**Wilson Middle School  
Fishersville, Virginia**



## If I Were Mayor ...



*I would place emphasis on economic and cultural growth in the community.*

**Lily McClung**

Although Fishersville is a great place to live right now, there is always room for improvement. If I were mayor, I would place emphasis on economic and cultural growth in the community. As more people move to the area, it is important to create more business opportunities and to provide exceptional education for our students.

One of my personal objectives as mayor would be to expand the Fine Arts curriculum in our local schools. I would petition the state government for more money to fund additional programs such as orchestra, drama, and dance. Studies have shown that students who participate in the arts on a daily basis exhibit

fewer behavior problems and generally receive better grades. Although our local schools offer some classes in the arts, more choices would result in a greater chance of a student finding something to hold his or her interest.

I would also like to develop an area to serve as the downtown of Fishersville. Currently, there are restaurants and shops, but they are scattered throughout the area. My proposal would involve a small centralized area of locally-owned restaurants and specialty shops with an outdoor seating and dining area. Business offices would also be given the opportunity to build or relocate near the downtown area, which would provide the shops and restaurants with a customer base during the week. The size of the downtown area would be limited in order to give the citizens more choices for eating and shopping while maintaining the small-town feel of Fishersville. The downtown area could also be used for entertainment purposes such as parades, festivals, or live music.

As a relatively new resident of Fishersville, I believe our town needs some sort of outreach office to welcome new citizens to our area. The most recent census taken, which was in 2010, revealed that the population of Fishersville had grown almost fifty percent in ten years. As more and more people relocate to the area, it is important to make them feel welcome and help them transition smoothly into our community. From personal experience, I know that it would be helpful to have a way for new individuals or families to meet others. In addition to introducing new citizens into the community, the outreach office would guide new citizens through all the processes such as registering for school, updating their driving licenses, locating a physician, or other similar situations.

The most important thing I would do as mayor of Fishersville is to listen to the people. It is important to know how they feel about their town and what ideas they have to make it a better place to live. Unfortunately, people will inevitably have conflicting opinions; therefore, it will be my responsibility as mayor to use good judgement to help decide what is best for the future of our town.



# Region 1 Winner Sumer Grace Lloyd

Virginia Middle School  
Bristol, Virginia



## If I were Mayor...



*I believe environment comes before economy. Seven tons is way too much garbage.*

Sumer Grace Lloyd

“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”

*John F. Kennedy*

If I were Mayor, I would first make sure every person in the city is both safe and taken care of. I would make time to ask people what they need and try my hardest to make their wishes come true. I would make sure that EVERY person in Bristol was treated equally, even if they don't have a lot of money or they are different. Even though I lean towards the Democrat side, I would make sure I treated my fellow

Bristolians that lean for the Republican side equally. One of my main promises would be that all of the ordinances are followed through for everyone, even the higher in authority; our city would be a good example of rule of law. I would also make sure that I would have a regular meeting with my fellow council members, such as, Vice Mayor Bill Hartley, Councilman Jim Steele, Councilwoman Catherine Brillheart, Councilman Guy Odum, and of course, Councilman (Mayor now) Archie Hubbard.

One of the main issues I would take care of is pollution. Even though a lot of people don't recognize it; there is a lot. Since I do lean towards the Democratic Party, I believe environment comes before economy. I wouldn't make it a law to recycle, but I would definitely encourage it; I mean, seven tons is way too much garbage. Maybe we can stretch that twenty-five more years a little bit more.

Now for social programs, some people believe it should be from charity only. I think I side with both, give it from the government to the people who REALLY need it, but also have charities to help a little more.

If I were mayor I would make my main priority the city schools. Our youth are our future; if we make our future a priority, it just might be a bright one.

I would make our beloved city, Bristol, a very active city. Even though Bristol already has a lot of landmarks, I really want to put Bristol on the map.

I would visit schools and youth groups to talk to them regularly. I would want to know their opinion as well as the rest of the city. As a kid, I don't think young people are included enough; I mean we live here, too! I just want to make my wonderful city even better. Even though we have a great mayor now, I think maybe when I'm old enough, I would want to be mayor. Because in the end, we all love Bristol so much we want what's best for it. If I were mayor I would do my best to serve and make this city the best it has ever been! I love my city. That, my fellow citizens, is what I would do if I were mayor!



# Region 2 Winner Simran Kaur Gill

**Andrew Lewis Middle School  
Salem, Virginia**



## If I Were Mayor ...



*I would start a counseling camp at the homeless shelters to give people opportunities to learn a trade so that they could get jobs.*

**Simran Kaur Gill**

Being a Mayor has prestige, but also comes with a lot of responsibility. If I were the Mayor, I would want my city to be the best it can be.

Safety is one of the most important things for a community. I would encourage education about social media safety, anti-bullying, and self-defense in schools and how to remain safe even in the toughest times.

For a city to prosper, everyone needs to do well. I would like to reduce unemployment in my city. My grandfather often mentions this famous quotation,

“You give a man a fish, he eats for a meal; you teach him to fish, he eats for a lifetime.” I would start a counseling camp at the homeless shelters to give people opportunities to learn a trade so that they could get jobs.

I would encourage recycling and reducing waste. A recycling truck would go around the city, so it would be easier for all to practice it, and help create a better world. Once a month, I would open the City Hall for anyone to share ideas and concerns with me.

I would work to end discrimination between genders and encourage equal pay for men and women. I don't think it is fair to pay people differently for the same kind of work.

Some important residents are the elderly in the nursing homes. Visits from children usually light up their faces. I would propose school trips to nursing homes. This would be an educational experience for the children, and bring joy to the elderly.

There are many police officers, firefighters, veterans, teachers, and other public workers in my community. To show that we care about them, the city of Salem would hold a charity match and a bike race to benefit them.

We know the importance of eyes and ears. There are many families who cannot afford to get their child's eyesight and hearing checked. The city of Salem would hold a free vision and hearing camp to provide preventive screenings for vision and hearing problems.

I would work on improving the train service. Salem would be connected to other cities via the railroad. The train would reduce pollution, and lessen the traffic on the highway.

I would work with the Salem Recreation Department to build a park, which would have monuments of different countries. This would provide the residents an opportunity to learn about different cultures, boost tourism in Salem and help it flourish.

I would start a counseling camp at the homeless shelters to give people opportunities to learn a trade so that they could get jobs.

“Education is the key to success” is a famous quote. Salem is a town full of smart kids and adults. Many jobs look for people who know more than one language. I would offer a program at the Salem Public Library, for people to learn new languages.

I know that these things will be very difficult to do, but with determination, hard work, and the help from the community, one can overcome challenge.





# Region 4 Winner Grace Coover

**Kenston Forest School  
Petersburg, Virginia**



## If I Were Mayor ...



*We are going to start changing the world through our own local government.*

**Grace Coover**

It's true: the next generation is children my age. Since we are the next generation, we are responsible for how we change the world. Some think that we will change the world for the better, while others think we will change it for the worse. How we are going to start changing the world is through our own local government. If I were mayor, I would change the City of Petersburg in two major ways.

If I were the mayor of Petersburg, I would first clean up the city. I would not only request volunteer groups to pick up the litter, but I would get construction groups to repair the broken and abandoned houses and workplaces. Some of these consist of Lighthouse

Furniture and Alrod Enterprises. I would also urge the need to take care of historical museums and other sites. Some historical places and museums would include Siege Museum, Good Fellows Building, and the Hiram Haines Coffee House where Edgar Allen Poe had his honeymoon in 1836. I would also request improving and paving the roads in Petersburg except the old cobblestone roads in Old Towne. Another idea I would urge is keeping the Appomattox River Clean. The river could become a huge tourist attraction if properly cared for.

The second thing I would do if I were mayor of Petersburg is make more job opportunities and increase businesses. I would immediately increase the police staff to decrease crime. Decreasing the crime would make residents feel safer and lure tourists and new families to Petersburg. Many people don't have jobs because there are very few opportunities. With the crime rate decreasing, all we would have to do is lower the business taxes to lure businesses in. Once businesses started to come, I would propose we clear some of the trees near the waterfront to have a restaurant so citizens and tourists can enjoy a meal on the stunning Appomattox River.

The next generation, believe it or not, is intelligent. Look at all the young people who know how to work devices older people cannot. We are striving for goals that our elders never thought about or attempted to reach. We can change the world for the better; we just have to try. I've started my part in this big change with the City of Petersburg.



# Region 5 Winner Evan Lankford

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School  
Falls Church, Virginia



## If I Were Mayor ...



*Both young and old alike are choosing to live a lifestyle that doesn't include owning a vehicle.*

Evan Lankford

If I could be Mayor of the City of Falls Church, I would look forward to the challenge of addressing the generational differences and lifestyle shifts that are changing the way people live in the City. I would look for ways to provide funding for two initiatives that I believe would best equip our City for the changes to come. In addition, I would gather community input and support for these projects, along with looking at the use of available state and federal sources of funds for the following two initiatives:

### Revolutionize parking in the city

As the City continues to transform its downtown with condos and apartments, both young and old alike are choosing to live a lifestyle that doesn't include owning a vehicle. Instead, they are turning to vehicle sharing alternatives such as Zipcar and B-Cycle bike sharing systems. These types of shared transportation alternatives will require reserved street (or sidewalk) parking spaces or a centrally located parking center, including recharging stations for electric vehicles. I would propose funding for this type of infrastructure to create incentives for residents to make use of these transportation-sharing alternatives. Specifically, I'd request \$600,000 from the Downtown Reinvestment Budget to locate parking on North Washington Street in the downtown commercial district.

### Create sustainable and safe traffic lanes for cyclists in the city

With social networking and smartphone apps, City residents, students and parents alike are exploring ways to commute smarter and safer to school and work by bicycle. This has a positive environmental benefit by helping our roads to become less polluted and congested. Creating bike lanes in the City to accommodate cyclists will help make a better flow of traffic for all. Bike lanes also improve overall safety for pedestrians and bicyclists by reducing the likelihood of accidents that can occur if people ride on sidewalks instead of on the street. Specifically, I'd request \$200,000 from the Public Works Budget to expand bicycle accessibility along South Washington and West Broad Street commercial districts, and near MEHMS and GMHS along Haycock from Broad Street to Great Falls.

I hope to bring my enthusiasm and new ideas to the role of Mayor and the City of Falls Church.



# Region 6 Winner Brynley Meadows

**Culpeper Middle School  
Culpeper, Virginia**



## If I Were Mayor ...



*We are making finding a job harder than it needs to be.*

**Brynley Meadows**

A mayor of a town is a person who officially speaks for the government and the community together as a whole. The mayor is a presiding officer and a regular member of the city council. They speak on behalf of the people around them, making decisions that meet the needs of every citizen, working with the ones of those who do not agree. If I were ever made mayor, I would be like that.

If I were mayor, I would add donation services at every school. Some schools do canned food collections at Thanksgiving, but what about Christmas and Easter? Churches have food closets during the holidays, but I think that the kids should have a chance to contribute as well. Food shouldn't be the only donation. We all know that everyone has heaps of clothes that they don't wear anymore, whether they can't wear them or they choose not to. We shouldn't let them sit there in a box, we should give them to people in need. There are many people who aren't fortunate enough to have what we have, so throughout the school year, I would have every school have an open donation period, where students, parents, and staff could bring food, toys, and clothes for both children and adults. It needs to happen, but if we don't take action, it's not going to.

Another thing I would focus on is tourism. Culpeper has many historical features that could benefit the learning experiences of citizens. Yowell Meadow Park was a battlefield, and cannons are placed throughout it, symbolizing how it was a war zone. There are also many stands that hold information explaining what happened there. When it comes to tourism, Culpeper is located in a very convenient place. You can drive no more than two hours in any direction and visit the houses of at least four presidents. These presidents are Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and George Washington. Culpeper also has many scenic features. We are completely surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains, and in the fall they turn beautiful shades of red and orange that could attract more people and start new traditions.

The last thing I would do as mayor is make it easier to find work. Many teens have trouble finding jobs nowadays, and I want to end that. To legally work, you have to be fourteen. Many companies won't hire young teenagers because of "their lack of experience," but to me, if they have an interest in working, you should let them. I'm not saying if they walked through the door you should give them a job, but if they come up with a good resume and seem dedicated, you should hire them. There are many places that offer jobs to the youth, but we are making finding a job harder than it needs to be. If I, Brynley Meadows, were to attempt being the mayor of Culpeper, I would do my best to make Culpeper a better place.



# Region 7 Winner Alexander Elstun

**Tomahawk Creek Middle School  
Chesterfield County, Virginia**



## If I Were Mayor ...



*We need to pass a reasonable budget for the county and not go above this budget.*

**Alexander Elstun**

Chesterfield County ... the perfect example of a prosperous and thriving community. While Chesterfield may not be as well known as other counties in Virginia, if I were mayor, I would take Chesterfield County a step further economically, financially, and environmentally. Chesterfield has much to offer, and the following actions will make the county even more appealing to all citizens of Virginia.

As a fan of landscape and nature, I would promote programs focused on conserving the environment. I will fight for more funding to improve conditions, and increase activities in state and local parks, such as Pocahontas State

Park. In addition, I will make the James River more accessible to residents and support the expansion of river-based activities. I will pass laws increasing penalties for littering to help preserve the natural beauty of the landscape. The citizens of the county should always have opportunities to enjoy nature, as it relieves the mind and body. As mayor, I will strive to have Chesterfield recognized for all the grand views and landscapes the county offers.

Chesterfield could significantly boost revenues by increasing tourism. I will promote tourism by advertising Chesterfield's historical significance within the Commonwealth. For example, the mining industry was important to Chesterfield in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In addition, we are fortunate to be close to multiple battlegrounds, historic sites and famous cities, including history all the way back to John Rolfe and Pocahontas. Chesterfield is also home to the Richmond Metro Zoo, providing guests an opportunity to get up close and personal with many types of animals! There are numerous destinations for history buffs and families to explore, bringing more tourism dollars to the county.

The economy, arguably the most important factor, needs to be addressed. We need to pass a reasonable budget for the county and not go above this budget. I will help grow small businesses by opening up more advertising spaces, including park benches and other prominent places. I will encourage people to support local businesses in the area, such as the Sugar Shack. People traditionally like supporting the community and this extra attention on local small businesses will help them thrive. This support will encourage new growth and entice other companies to consider moving to Chesterfield.

I hope you agree with my reasons for running for mayor and believe the citizens of Chesterfield support my positions. Chesterfield has a beautiful environment, and I will do my best to preserve it. In addition, Chesterfield has potential to increase tourism and boost the economy through local businesses. Please vote for me and stand behind my recommendations, as I feel these three focuses will make Chesterfield a better place to live, work, and play. I assure you, I will do my best to make Chesterfield County prosper.





# Region 8 Winner Alyssa Levy

**Hamilton Holmes Middle School  
King William County, Virginia**



## If I Were Mayor ...



*It would increase the work force of King William and also give people a chance to get back on their feet.*

**Alyssa Levy**

The county of King William is a great place to live. But everything can be improved, from our educational standpoint, to the local park. I understand the county of King William doesn't have a mayor, but we do have a board of supervisors and if I were on the board I would improve King William and make the lifestyles of many better.

King William is a place where there is plenty of fresh air and tons of unused space. We have a recreational park that holds plenty of opportunities. Though it has seen better days, it is a spectacular place to be. The

playground is older and could easily be redone. I know King William has plenty of Girl and Boy Scout troops that I know need to earn community help badges, and would be happy to support. We could also run a fundraiser to earn the money needed to improve the playground. If we fixed the playground, it would make people want to bring their kids or grandchildren out into the fresh air and get some exercise. Improving the park would be one step closer to a better King William.

Our county suffers another overlooked problem; homeless people are discarded and ignored. Without food or a place to turn, they are forced to live on the streets. We do have canned food drives and Toys for Tots, but I would take it a step further. We could hold a "Find a Job Day." We could bring together a list of local jobs that require little or no skill and they could come to where we hold the meeting and look through the list. They could pick a job that would suit them and we could contact the employer. This would solve two problems at once, it would increase the work force of King William and also give people a chance to get back on their feet. The "Find a Job Day" is a simple and easy way to solve a huge problem.

Another problem I see in King William is our school transportation. All of the gas from the buses is causing our air to become dense and polluted. I think that we should lessen the amount of baggage students need to bring back and forth to school, therefore freeing more space on one bus for more students. We could also combine routes to decrease the need for as many buses. We could also make buses longer providing more seating. There could also be a speed limit for all buses no matter where they are to cut down on gas. I would also add seatbelts to make the buses safer. Doing this could save lives and air.

King William is an amazing place to be. But doing these simple things could make King William a more sufficient and better place to be. There are all the things I would do if I were Mayor.

