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Magical Monarchs Mini Poster Contest brings out the artist in JM's students

By Vera Kochan



Monarch Poster Contest finalists and their well-wishers stand in front of the poster gallery at Moraga Library. Photo Vera Kochan

had to be legible, and all entries had to be flat in order to fit into the display. To ensure fairness, no names were allowed on the entries. A Monarch Poster Academy was held by JM teacher Dawn Lezak to help students learn more about the monarchs and the message.

For the first time, the Moraga Garden Club/Moraga for Monarchs held a poster contest hoping to bring attention to the plight of the monarch butterflies by getting the students of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School to express themselves through art or poetry.

The object of the contest was to "create an informational poster for the general public, to help citizens of all ages understand the importance of monarch butterflies and the importance of Lamorinda supporting western monarch butterfly recovery."

Another mandate of the contest was to "create either a visual poster with original drawings and short captions OR a motivational poster written in poetry or essay format." Entries in both categories were allowed.

The poster paper's size had to be 9" by 12" using a font of 20 or more. All work had to be original and send a "bright, friendly, upbeat" message. Any written entries

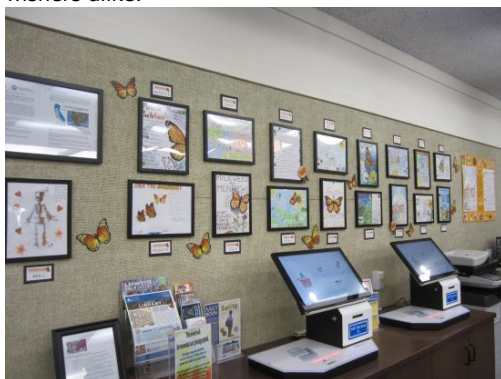
The JM staff judged the initial entries, sending the top finalists for each category on to the town's Art and Public Spaces Committee for a final decision. The judging criteria was based on the poster's "creativity and ability to convey the need for locals to support monarch butterflies."

Event organizers Julie Stagg from the Moraga Garden Club, and Holly Hartz and Suzanne d'Arcy from Moraga's Art in Public Spaces Committee, held the April 16, Magical Monarch Mini Poster Gallery Showing and Artists' Reception at the Moraga Public Library, where the 16 posters will be on display through the month of April. During that time, a sign featuring the winning posters, as well as portions of the other entries, will be on display in front of the Rancho Laguna Park's monarch garden.

Winners of the art poster, Naomi Lee (11) and Gabrielle Lee (12) -- no relation -- stated, "We had the option to do visual arts or poetry, and we chose art. It had to have monarchs and had to convey the value of them."

Poetry poster winner, Abbie Cunningham (12) said, "I like butterflies and art, and I wanted to participate." Cunningham was surprised to have won, but admitted that no one else turned in a poetry-based poster. Nevertheless, she went the extra mile by adding artwork to her verses.

After a few speeches, one of which was given by Mayor Teresa Onoda, who said, "The future is a canvas waiting to be painted with hope", the 16 finalists were all given monarch butterfly stickers, key chains, and Certificates of Appreciation, which were accompanied by applause from proud family members and well-wishers alike.



Monarch Poster Contest finalists' work on display at Moraga Library Photo Vera Kochan

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