

Turlock student's art featured in air district calendar

By Elizabeth Arakelian

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As the New Year inches closer consumers across the country will be tossing calendars into their shopping baskets at drug stores and books stores, but locals have the option to hang a free and education calendar on their wall courtesy of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The 2014 Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar is a bilingual, full-color wall calendar that showcases original works of art by children in each of the air basin's eight counties which includes Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern County. Over 20,000 calendars are printed each year with each month featuring a different clean air message.

"Messages can range from reminding people to check before they burn to encouraging bike riding, walking or taking the bus," said Anthony Presto, spokesperson for the Valley Air District.

Each year the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District hosts a competition for local kindergarteners through 12 graders from the valley and students are requested to draw a full color picture with messages about clean valley air. Hundreds of submissions are reviewed and this year 15 winners were chosen to represent the 12 months of 2014 and the first month of 2015, as well as the cover and back of the calendar. Art work from Emma J. of Osborn Two-Way Immersion Academy in Turlock is featured in the calendar, along with two students from Stanislaus County and one from Merced.

"This is a great tool for educating children in the San Joaquin Valley and we hope that every year we will have more submissions for the contest and that kids will use this opportunity to understand the importance of air quality in the Valley," said Presto.

The 2013 calendars can be reserved, while supplies last, at public.education@valleyair.org, and can be picked up at the local District office: 4800 Enterprise Way, Modesto (209-557-6400).

Students interested in submitting their work for the 2015 Healthy Air Living Kids Calendar Contest can find the instruction on this year's calendar. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District begins accepting submissions in May.

2 Valley organizations honored by EPA for environmental work

By Robert Rodriguez

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Two Valley organizations have received recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their efforts to protect the environment.

Among the eight winners of the EPA's Pacific Southwest Region's 2013 environmental awards was Curtimade Dairy in Tulare and Kings Canyon Unified School District in Reedley.

The dairy was recognized for installing one of the largest dairy solar units in the U.S. The unit will be capable of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 27,000 tons over the next 25 years.

Also a winner was John Clements and the Kings Canyon Unified School District for demonstrating the feasibility of zero emission, battery powered school buses and refrigerated lunch delivery trucks.

"Award winners are leaders who are going above and beyond to make big moves to protect the environment and support local communities," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's regional administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "Work by these groups will leave a positive, lasting impact on us all for years to come."