

Stanislaus County students' art in free Healthy Air Living calendar

Bee Staff Reports

Modesto Bee, Friday, Dec. 11, 2015

A Modesto first-grader and a Turlock second-grader are among the 15 students whose artwork is featured in the 2016 Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar.

The bilingual, full-color wall calendar just released by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District showcases original works of art chosen from hundreds of entries from the district's eight counties. The drawings illustrate a monthly clean-air message in English and Spanish, such as "Clear skies, healthy lives" and "Use an electric lawnmower."

Althea Mumford, a student in the Turlock Unified School District at Walter M. Brown Elementary, did a drawing of four children arriving at school on foot or skateboard. She included the message "Healthy air living means walking to school."

Sophia Torres, a student in the Sylvan Union School District at Mary Ann Sanders Elementary, did a drawing showing a child out for a walk near a cat, a butterfly and a ladybug. Her message is "Live a healthy life, walk more."

Other elementary through high school students whose work appears on the calendar are from Merced, Sanger, Hanford, Visalia, Bakersfield, Lodi, Fresno and Oakhurst.

The calendars are distributed to schools, community groups, health care facilities, churches, civic organizations and nonprofit groups throughout the Valley. The district prints 20,000 copies of the free publication, which promotes Healthy Air Living throughout the year.

The calendars can be reserved, while supplies last, by emailing svapcd@valleyair.org, and can be picked up in any district office, including Modesto's at 4800 Enterprise Way, 209-557-6400.

Air district rolls out new programs for schools

Turlock Journal, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015

Surrounded on three sides by mountain ranges, the Central Valley acts as a pool for pollutants produced by the region's roughly 3.5 million residents—this results in some of the worst air quality in the United States.

Poor air quality can negatively affect overall health, especially in the sick, elderly and young. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is hoping to mitigate local school children's exposure to unhealthy air through a new campaign.

The Healthy Air Living Schools Program is an outreach effort to help Valley schools make informed decisions about outdoor activities in relation to air quality by offering support and tools including the Real-Time Air Advisory Network and the No Idling Campaign.

"What Healthy Air Living does is focus on educating students, parents and teachers on protecting children from exposure to air pollution as well as educating them about valley air quality issues through real time," said Anthony Presto, outreach and communications representative for San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "RAAN, which allows anyone to be able to check current air quality, is updated every hour."

Presto explained that being able to do hourly checks for air quality will help teachers and administrators decide when it is safest for children to participate in outdoor activities by determining what time of the day produces the best quality of air.

"Real-Time Air Advisory Network is health protective and does not rely on a forecast," said Presto. "It's looking at air quality 'right now' at local monitoring stations throughout the Valley."

A forecast gives an expectation of air quality for the entire Valley in one day, but because most counties in the Valley have a monitor RAAN allows anyone to check their local station and have hourly updates on when it is safe to be outside in that specific localized area.

Another segment of the HAL School Program is the No Idling Campaign that aims to reduce unnecessary pollution by encouraging parents not to idle in their cars while waiting to pick up their kids outside of school.

“Parents don’t realize that they’re creating an unhealthy situation for the students,” Presto added. “So much unnecessary pollution is created by idling their car for a half an hour; it just creates raw emissions that the students breathe in when they come outside.”

There are over 85 schools participating in the program, according to Destiny Rodriguez, director of communication and outreach at Central California Asthma Collaborative.

“Turlock Unified has agreed to be a part of this free program and we are looking to have a press conference Jan. 14 at Walter M. Brown Elementary School,” she said. “We are hoping to continue to get many of the local schools on board.”

For more information, visit HealthyAirLiving.com.

Air district seeks schools to participate in new program

By Kyla Cathey, staff writer

Lodi News-Sentinel, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015

STOCKTON — The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has joined forces with the Central California Asthma Collaborative to encourage local schools to join the Healthy Air Living Schools program.

The free program provides tools to local schools such as the Real-time Air Advisory Network, which shares air quality information via the web, email and text messages; the Real-time Outdoor Activity Risk guidelines offering recommendations about outdoor exercise; anti-idling signage and materials to remind drivers to cut their engines while dropping off and picking up students.

Schools enrolling in the program will receive materials, training and support from the Central California Asthma Collaborative.

For more information or to enroll, please call the CCAC at 559-272-4874 or the air district office in Modesto at 209-557-6400.