

FFWPU USA: S!NERGY New Jersey Waterways competition results

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October 6, 2021



Giant fish sculptures created from discarded plastic bottles in Rio de Janeiro

"In America, we generate more than 35 million tons of plastic waste," said J. Joo. "Only 10 percent of plastics in the U.S. are recycled and the rest ends up in our oceans and waterways."

J., a young Unificationist from New Jersey, was awarded first place in the S!NERGY New Jersey Waterways competition October 2 with her proposal, "Project: Plastic Scenery." The competition, co-hosted by International Youth and Students for Peace ([IAYSP](#)) and New Jersey Ocean Tribe, was streamed live on Facebook under the theme "Creative Solutions to Accessing and Protecting New Jersey Waterways." Students were able to present their theme-related ideas to improve society while supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

J.'s project proposal focused on "ferrofluid," a reusable substance to target microplastics in water. "Ferrofluid was developed by NASA and it was discovered to remove microplastics from water," she said. "It's a magnetic liquid that traps and clumps all the microplastics that are in water together. That clump is removable through magnets."

J. said that since ferrofluid dissolves in oil, compromised water could be processed through a special filtration system that skims oil before adding ferrofluid to it. She also proposed breaking down macroplastics like plastic bottles and cartons into plastic pellets to create benches, park sculptures, speed bumps and more to beautify public spaces.

"This is what I like to call 'plastic scenery,'" she said, "which is the true and final vision and hope of my project proposal. It is to truly beautify the places that have been tainted by plastic with plastic. It's about taking back the environmental harm we've done and giving back something beautiful instead."

Placing second in the competition, A. Maruyama and her team presented the "Trash Trend Project" to tackle trash dumped into local rivers.

"There is a lack of awareness with this and littering has been normalized," she said. "There is also limited access to properly throwing out trash."

A. proposed reversing the trash dumping trend through social media, referring to digital platforms as the "most effective way of sending a message to the world."

"The 'Angelic Yield' is a social media trend right now of giving back instead of taking," she said. "People post things under hashtags... so through this hashtag algorithm our environmental posts could get shared with groups that have similar objectives, which can spread globally beyond our local community."

A. said her team hopes to create a viral trend of trash cleanup from all rivers and oceans.

K. Schnetzer and his team, who placed third, proposed the project "Marine Life Stewardship" to address invasive aquatic species.

"Snakehead fish is an invasive species in our area," he said. "So our strategy is to host fishing tournaments at confirmed locations of where they are invading the Delaware River. This would start as a small fishing group tournament but could potentially grow into a bigger tournament involving many communities."

"We'd also like to collaborate with a professional chef who knows how to cook and prepare snakehead fish so that it can be consumed by all participants," said K.. "Since 2013, snakehead fishing has already been on the rise so there is a market for this that can be expanded."

The projects were evaluated by guest judges Marc Rogoff, lead education specialist for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; Jodi Jamieson, project manager with Hackensack Riverkeeper; and Laurie Howard, executive director of the Passaic River Coalition. Facebook viewers submitted their votes during the live competition, with the winners receiving a cash reward.

IAYSP was founded in 2017 by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon with the mission to advance world peace by empowering youth and students to become global citizens through character education and peace projects supporting the United Nations SDGs.

You can learn more about International Youth and Students for Peace [here](#).



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Sun Jin Moon, IAYSP Thailand Inaugural Address

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