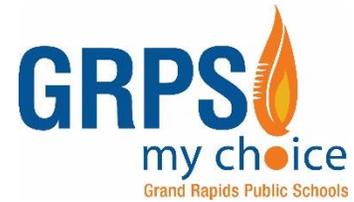




PROJECT
[1] Sept 7–Oct 27, 2019
By ArtPrize



Grand Rapids High School Junior Wins Top Prize in Consumers Energy-Sponsored Student Art Competition

Top 10 GRPS Finalists, People's Choice Winner Also Honored During Project 1

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Sept. 7, 2019
– A Grand Rapids junior's artwork emphasizing the importance of public awareness in using more renewable energy has earned a \$1,000 college scholarship and prominent display of her winning creation in downtown Grand Rapids as Project 1 by ArtPrize kicks off its inaugural year.

Cindy Mazariegos-Barrios' piece, "We Are All In This Together," was chosen by three professional judges as the top winner of the seventh annual SmartArt competition among Grand Rapids Public Schools' high school students, sponsored by Consumers Energy.



Mazariegos-Barrios, who attends C.A. Frost Environmental Science Academy, was first among the Top 10 finalists in the SmartArt (Students Making Art with a Renewable Theme) competition. The winners were announced today at Rosa Parks Circle as part of the opening ceremonies for Project 1 by ArtPrize. Consumers Energy has been an ArtPrize sponsor since 2011.

Presenting the \$1,000 scholarship check to Mazariegos-Barrios was Lauren Youngdahl Snyder, Consumers Energy's vice president of customer experience.

“In studying both the wonderful entries and their in-depth artist statements, it is clear these students understand the importance of renewable energy and its pivotal role in our future,” Youngdahl Snyder said. “Their understanding mirrors our Clean Energy Plan and how important the public’s involvement is in joining our Clean Energy Movement. We need every home and business that we serve to be part of the solution. Consumers Energy is partnering with the Michigan households and businesses we serve to save money, save energy and save the planet. By 2030, with Michiganders’ help, we can avoid building three new power plants.”

During her remarks today, Youngdahl Snyder asked customers to sign up to join the Clean Energy movement at www.MICleanEnergyPlan.com. The company will plant a tree in honor of each clean energy partner who signs up with an email address.

In her artist statement, Mazariegos-Barrios said “Drawing attention to cleaner renewable energy sources is important because public awareness is one of the main concepts of sustainability.... My art piece is trying to communicate to the audience that renewable energy is important and something that should always be in our minds.”

Until Oct. 27, the end of Project 1, a large banner with the Top 10 SmartArt finalists will remain on display along the side of Consumers Energy’s Ellsworth Substation at Fulton and Market streets downtown. Mazariegos-Barrios’ entry will be noted on the banner as the first-place winner.

In addition to the banner, the Top 10 entries are framed and on display inside the JW Marriott, 235 Louis Campau St. NW in downtown Grand Rapids.

For the fourth year, Consumers Energy’s Facebook page hosted a “People’s Choice” contest based on the number of likes, shares and comments. The People’s Choice winner is “Save” by Emilia Jasinski, with 378 votes out of a total of 1,513 votes cast. She will receive a

The SmartArt Top 10:

1. Cindy Mazariegos-Barrios, *We Are All In This Together*
2. Ruby Taylor, *Fabric of Our Future*
3. Kamryn Wezeman, *Energy Conscious*
4. Natalie White, *Code Blue*
5. Lux Howell, *Present Projection*
6. Jack McKellar, *Which Side Will You Choose?*
7. Nate Beurkens, *Crude*
8. Jaheem Aubrey, *Powering the Earth*
9. Emilia Jasinski, *Save*
10. David Johnson, *Two Different Worlds*
*** Winner of online People’s Choice contest**

View the Top 10: [Click here](#)

PROJECT 1 BY ARTPRIZE: Learn more about Project 1:

www.project.artprize.org

\$200 Visa gift card and her art teacher Meagan Whittle will receive a \$200 gift card toward classroom supplies.

Ronald Gorman, interim superintendent for Grand Rapids Public Schools, has been a staff judge of SmartArt entries for several years. He said interest among students and teachers has increased each year. “We are grateful to Consumers Energy for their support of our students to help them become tomorrow’s leaders. GRPS made a commitment to going green in our Transformation Plan, and this is a tremendous opportunity for our students to be educated about those efforts and participate through their art.”

Students created their entries this spring. In early May, GRPS officials selected the Top 20 entries from a record 81 submitted pieces. The Top 20 were judged by a panel of experts from Kendall College of Art & Design at Ferris State University, Grand Rapids Community College and Grand Valley State University. In mid-May, ArtPrize hosted Consumers Energy, the Top 20 students and their teachers at its hub in downtown Grand Rapids to announce the 10 finalists and to celebrate everyone’s achievements.

Project 1 is the first in a series of multi-site public art exhibitions in Grand Rapids. ArtPrize has shifted to a biennial competition to make way for the Project series of citywide art commissions. The two formats will alternate years moving forward, with Project 1 launching this fall.

“At ArtPrize, we believe that art is essential, and we value programs that enrich communities through art,” said Jori Bennett, ArtPrize executive director. “We’re thrilled to see the partnership between Consumers Energy and Grand Rapids Public Schools continue to grow and deepen year over year, offering children in our community expanded opportunities to explore their creativity -- and for the Top 10 SmartArt finalists to have the opportunity to display their work inside the JW Marriott during Project 1.”

Consumers Energy, Michigan’s largest energy provider, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and/or electricity to 6.7 million of the state’s 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

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For more information about Consumers Energy, go to www.ConsumersEnergy.com.

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