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Wolf Administration Announces Student Winners of Art Competition to Raise Awareness About Ticks, Lyme Disease

Harrisburg, PA – Wolf Administration officials from the departments of Health (DOH), Education (PDE), and Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) today announced nine student winners of the 2022 Lyme Art Contest to promote awareness of the prevalence of ticks and the types of diseases they carry.

“Ticks that cause Lyme disease are found in every county and every green space, even in cities, which is why it is so important to know the proper steps to take, even at a young age, to avoid getting a tick bite,” said Dr. Wendy Braund, Deputy Secretary for Health Preparedness and Community Protection at the Department of Health. “This art competition offers an opportunity to educate students and their parents on where ticks live and how to prevent getting a tick bite and furthers our commitment to promoting healthy behaviors and preventing diseases in creative ways. This initiative serves as a consistent reminder to check yourself, your family, and your pets for ticks after spending any amount of time outdoors.”

The Lyme Art Contest was created in 2019 to educate children, scout troops, youth community programs, and their peers about where ticks are found and how to prevent encountering ticks in their habitat. Submissions were received in March 2022 from students in first through sixth grade statewide. All winning artwork will be on display in the capitol building outside the Senate Fountain Area from Wednesday, May 25 through Wednesday, June 8.

There were three awards for each of the following grade ranges totaling nine awardees:

First and second grade winners:

- 1st place – Theodore Smith, Camp Hill
- 2nd place – Kennedy Clay, Washington Crossing
- 3rd place – Abigail Wilt, East Berlin

Third and fourth grade winners:

- 1st place – Supriya Reddy, Orefield
- 2nd place – Shilpa Reddy, Orefield
- 3rd place – Emmalyn Matthews, Strongstown

Fifth and sixth grade winners:

- 1st place – Nolan Etters, Clearfield
- 2nd place – Hugh Shields, Lewisburg
- 3rd place – Magdalena Hess, New Providence

“As we rediscover the healing properties of nature and prepare to spend more time outdoors, it is important that we help educators and students gain access to proper health and safety measures,” said Acting Secretary of Education Eric Hagarty. “The annual Lyme Disease Poster Contest helps build awareness about nature’s friends and foes, understand tick habitats, and how Lyme disease is transmitted.”

In Pennsylvania, there are reports of up to 10,000 Lyme disease cases per year and more are likely unreported. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a short course of antibiotics. However, if the infection is left untreated, it can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system.

Ticks are usually found in shrubs, weeds, leaf litter, and tall grasses, but can be found anywhere there is grass. So, it is important to take the proper steps to decrease the chances of getting bitten. When outside, cover exposed skin, wear light colors to help detect ticks, and use insect repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET. Use permethrin spray on shoes, clothes and gear before spending time outdoors. After being outside, check yourself, your kids, and your pets thoroughly for ticks and remove any that are attached. Then, take a shower to help remove any ticks that you may have missed. You can also throw your clothes in the dryer using high heat to help kill any ticks that might still be left.

DOH, PDE and DCNR leaders encourage Pennsylvanians to be safe when enjoying the outdoors and remind people of the benefits of recreating outdoors despite the risk of tick-borne illnesses. Those benefits include:

- Improving cardiovascular health;
- Strengthening muscles and bones;
- Reducing chances of suffering chronic diseases;
- Reducing stress levels and improving mental health; and
- Becoming more socially connected.

“Raising awareness about ticks, Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses through this competition is a creative way to help let people know that if they take preventive steps, they can still be safe and have fun outdoors,” DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. “When in state and community parks and forests a few simple measures can help make sure our visitors have the time in nature so critical to our well-being. We are grateful for the partnership within our state agencies to help reinforce this important message.”

For more information on Lyme disease, visit the Department of Health's website at www.health.pa.gov or follow the Department of Health on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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