



**CLIMATE
INNOVATION
CHALLENGE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Media Contacts: Liliana Castillo at 575-219-9619 or liliana@cavu.org

Phil Lucero at 505-469-1514 or phil@cavu.org

NM Students Win Awards for Climate Adaptation Solutions

Santa Fe, Las Vegas students earn top distinctions and cash prizes

Santa Fe, N.M. – New Mexico students and their climate adaptation solutions took the stage during Tuesday’s [Climate Innovation Challenge](#) (CIC) Virtual Student Showcase. The CIC Showcase was the culmination of a science-based climate adaptation and resilience curriculum created and produced by Climate Advocates Voces Unidas (CAVU).

Santa Fe and Las Vegas students took the top spots in the Challenge, winning Best in Show and Outstanding Entry awards for the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The CIC Student Showcase included a virtual screening the top 13 student video projects and presentations, award presentations, and a keynote address by nationally-renowned youth climate activist Delaney Reynolds of the [Sink or Swim Project](#).

“All over the planet, youth are standing up and using their voices to speak on behalf of our Earth. Because we’re fed up, we’re tired of the inaction. That’s why we’re all here today. And that, to me, gives me the greatest hope for our future. Hope that the youth we see all over the world will one day replace our current politicians, implement your fantastic innovative projects, and we will finally see progress in the right direction,” Delaney Reynolds said to students during the event.

“This has been a tough year, but we are seeing students thrive. The climate crisis is real, but so are our youths’ imagination, creativity, and intellect,” says Phil Lucero, education director at CAVU. “Our youth will be the most impacted by the climate change our world is experiencing. CIC presents this challenge to students as an opportunity for them to lead and create change in their communities.”

The CIC program cultivates student leaders who can think innovatively and communicate effectively about adapting to our changing climate. Students produced three-minute videos or presentations that evaluate a specific climate vulnerability or impact and present a creative adaptation solution. In its second year, CIC grew to work with 40 teachers from 30 schools around the southwest. In total, 435 students submitted 155 projects, a 200% increase in project submissions from the inaugural year.

All entries were judged by a panel of scientists, educators, and visual media professionals. Judges recognized the overall top outstanding projects in the elementary, middle and high school categories (listed below) and outstanding projects in the following categories: Efficiency, Engagement, Practicality, Storytelling and Style.

Top prize winners are listed below. [Winning projects](#) are available to view online. Last names have not been included for the safety of the underage participants.

- MacGyver Award: Best in Show
 - ["Saving Water with Aquaponics"](#) by Santa Fe Preparatory 7th grader Benjamin B.
 - Teacher: Robin Koval
- Outstanding Entry: Elementary School
 - ["Milkweed"](#) by Santa Fe's Gabriella D., 5th grader at Amy Biehl Community School
 - Teacher: Malcolm Smith
- Outstanding Entry: Middle School
 - ["Microbes for Earth"](#) by Santa Fe Preparatory 7th grader Maggie L.
 - Teacher: Robin Koval
- Outstanding Entry: High School
 - ["Seagrass for Climate"](#) by Emma H., 11th grader at Armand Hammer United World College of the American West in Las Vegas, NM
 - Teacher: Aaron Yang

*Nonprofit Climate Advocates Voces Unidas (CAVU) uses visual storytelling and community engagement to support local solutions to the global climate problem.
Learn more at CAVU.org and ClimateInnovationChallenge.org.*

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Climate Advocates Voces Unidas (CAVU), State Farm, LANL Foundation, Sandia National Laboratories, PNM, McCune Foundation, Los Alamos National Laboratories, Livingry Foundation, Positive Energy Solar, MacGyver Foundation, Liberty Ranch, Santa Fe Farms

Full list of award winners:

- MacGyver Award: Best in Show
 - ["Saving Water with Aquaponics"](#) by Benjamin B., 7th grader, Santa Fe Preparatory, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Robin Koval
- Outstanding Entry: Elementary School
 - ["Milkweed"](#) by Gabriella D., 5th grader at Amy Biehl Community School, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Malcolm Smith
- Outstanding Entry: Middle School
 - ["Microbes for Earth"](#) by Maggie L., 7th grader at Santa Fe Preparatory, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Robin Koval
- Outstanding Entry: High School
 - ["Seagrass for Climate"](#) by Emma H., 11th grader at Armand Hammer United World College of the American West, Las Vegas, NM
 - Teacher: Aaron Yang
- Outstanding Entry: Individual Project
 - ["Adapting to our Present, and Changing Futures"](#) by Renata G., 11th grader at Armand Hammer United World College of the American West, Las Vegas, NM
 - Teacher: Aaron Yang

- Outstanding Entry: Group Project
 - ["Trail Blazers & Water Harvestors"](#) by Seth A., Jameson A., Jaedyn B., Geanna B., Symphony G., Dominic G., Colton H., Maya P., Eli P., Natalie G. Aubree R., Noah S., Jacob S., Percius T., Austin T., Siena V., and Mercedes L. 4th graders at Amy Biehl Community School, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Tara Dayton
- Best Style: Presentation
 - ["Don't Play With Fire"](#) by Gina R., 10th grader, New Mexico School for the Arts, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Acacia McCombs
- Best Style: Film/Video
 - ["Unnamed"](#) by Madelyn J., 5th grader at Amy Biehl Community School, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Malcolm Smith
- Most Engaging Project
 - ["DJ \\$ilva Money"](#) by Brody S., 9th grader at New Mexico School for the Arts, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Acacia McCombs
- Most Practical Concept
 - ["Climate Adaptation Strategy on Extreme Heat in Ganado, AZ"](#) by Samarie T., 6th grader, Ganado Middle School, Ganado, AZ
 - Teacher: Charo Dolom
- Most Effective/Efficient Concept
 - ["Water Conservation through Xeriscaping"](#) by Jayden H. 11th grader at West Las Vegas High School, Las Vegas, NM
 - Teacher: Erika Guaba-Roldan
- Most Effective Storytelling
 - ["Soil Care is Climate Repair"](#) by "Alex H., Adrian H., and Athena H., 6th and 4th grade homeschool students, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Anni Hanna
- Most Innovative/Creative Concept
 - ["Trees Reimagined"](#) by Siri K., Phoenix A., Rosie J., 9th and 10th graders from New Mexico School for the Arts, Santa Fe, NM
 - Teacher: Sativa Cruz