

Mixed Greens

An assortment of fresh tossed ideas.

002 Voting Education for Young Artists

Local voters' pamphlet cover design contest

The Cowlitz County Elections Department invited elementary school kids in the 4th and 5th grades to participate in the 2009 General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet cover design contest. Patriotic- or election-related designs or drawings relevant to Washington State or Cowlitz County were encouraged.

We created a flyer with information on the contest and an entry form. With the permission of the school district, we delivered the flyer to each of the Cowlitz County elementary schools. The teachers distributed the flyers to their students and invited them to participate. We received more than 100 entries, and a panel selected the top 6 entries.

The kids who submitted the top 6 entries were notified before the fair that their entries would be on the ballot at the Cowlitz County Fair. They were encouraged to "campaign" for their entry and get out the vote. The kids came to the fair booth to check out the competition. They asked their parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, and friends to vote. When the kids and voters came to the fair booth, we used the opportunity to talk about voting, the Local Voters' Pamphlet, and the election process.

Cowlitz County fair goers were the final judges and voted to determine the winning entry. Over 800 fair goers cast a ballot. The competition was good and the vote was close. The six finalists and winner all received a letter of congratulation from the Cowlitz County Auditor and special prizes donated by local businesses.

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Making the state voters' pamphlet art contest work for you

As you speak with groups of teachers or parents, be sure to let them know their 4th and 5th graders can participate in a free art contest and maybe even have their art published. The winning art will appear in the 2010 Voters' Pamphlet.

As a way to educate school children, OSOS holds an art contest every other year. This year's theme is, "Voting is for everyone." Go to www.vote.wa.gov/elections/just4you for more info.

The purpose of the art contest is to have future voters and their care providers ruminate on the topic of voting. Ideally they'll discuss voting with their parents or teachers as they create their entry.

Highlighting the art contest in your county increases the chances that one of your young citizens will win. If a student in your county does win, you'll be invited to visit the school with Sam Reed in order to surprise the young artist with the great news. Local papers frequently turn out for these happy events.

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