

IEMA, American Lung Association announce winners in student video, poster contests

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SPRINGFIELD – Students from across the state recently used their creative talents to increase public awareness about the health hazards of radioactive radon gas in homes. Nearly 122 posters and 138 one-minute YouTube videos were submitted to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the American Lung Association (ALA) for consideration in the annual contests.

“These contests help us spread the message about radon and the importance of testing homes for this health hazard,” said IEMA Acting Director William P. Robertson. “As students learn more about radon, they often encourage friends and family to test their homes. The posters and videos also help people understand the importance of testing their homes and taking steps to reduce high levels of radon if it’s detected.”

The winning entries are available on the IEMA Radon website at www.radon.illinois.gov and on the ALA-IL website at www.lung.org/radon.

Winners in the video contest include the following:

- 1st place – Luca Warren, Wheaton North High School, Wheaton (\$1,000 to winning student plus \$300 to the school)
- 2nd place – Luke Fritz, Wheaton Academy, West Chicago, (\$750 prize to winning student, \$200 to the school)
- 3rd place – Matt Dujardin, St. Charles East High School, St. Charles (\$500 prize to winning student \$100 to the school)

In addition, seven videos received honorable mention. A \$250 prize will be awarded for each of the following entries:

- Elizabeth Mueller, Metamora Township High School, Metamora
- Patrick Zerrudo, Fremd High School, Palatine
- Alex Burandt and Ken Kanwischer, Wheaton North High School, Wheaton
- Justin Riddle and Joshua Woodall, Wheaton Academy, West Chicago
- Garrett Austin, Bradyn Kaiser, Lanee McNary, Megan Kern, Matthew Hobler and Connor Satterwaite, Vandalia Community High School, Vandalia
- Jalan Lee, Richard Lester and Emily Stadelmyer, Zion Benton Township High School, Zion
- Noah Curtin, Wheaton Academy, West Chicago

Poster contest winners and their prizes include:

- 1st place – Lucy Clary, St. Athanasius School, Evanston, \$200
- 2nd place – Kimberly Gallegos, Triopia Elementary, Arenzville, \$150
- 3rd place – Lila Moore, homeschooled, Vienna, \$100

The first place poster will compete against posters from across the country in the 2018 National Radon Poster Contest sponsored by the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors.

The prize money for all winners was provided by the ALA.

“It is estimated that approximately 21,000 deaths in the U.S. each year are caused by radon-induced lung cancer,” said ALA Vice President of Environmental Health Angela Tin. “Radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer and can be prevented by simply testing, and, if necessary, mitigating your home.”

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that comes from the radioactive decay of naturally-occurring uranium in the soil. It can enter homes and buildings through small cracks in the foundation, sump pumps or soil in crawlspaces. Approximately 1,200 people in Illinois die each year from radon-related lung cancer.