



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **SMMUSD Students Commit to Environmental Action in Go Green and Sustainability Challenges**

Santa Monica High School, in its first year participating in the international Project Green Challenge, placed 21<sup>st</sup> out of 758 schools and 85 countries, affirming their commitment to environmental advocacy and action.

The Project Green Challenge asked students to participate daily during October. On the broad theme of sustainability, they were tasked with taking and uploading items like photos and short answers to questions. The challenge is run by Turning Green, a global, student-led organization dedicated to environmental education and advocacy.



*Samohi sophomores (l-r) Giselle Avila-Hengsathorn, Citli Carrera and Hailee Matsui were members of a winning team called Happy Sprouts.*

Also, during October, the district sponsored the Go Green Challenge for K-5 students. In both contests, winners were determined by the number of participation days and subjective criteria like thoughtfulness, creativity and relevance.

Sixty SMMUSD students participated in the challenges.

“The participation in this was great to see, and we’re thankful for it,” said Austin Toyama, SMMUSD sustainability coordinator. “The students’ commitment to learning about environmental issues and sustainable living is important for their health and that of our communities and the planet.”

Students and parents provided great feedback about the challenge, launched during the pandemic. Among their thoughts:

- It added a level of joy during a time when “life isn’t as fun and interactive.”
- Families learned from the challenge and made changes at home as a result. Some said they were going to share what they learned with neighbors.
- It generated interesting and educational conversations for all household members.

Winners, listed below, won gift cards.



Above: Olivia Rizzo, Samohi freshman, placed second among grades nine through 12. At right: SMMUSD Sustainability Coordinator Austin Toyama with Theo Richards, third grade, Franklin, who tied for 4th place in grades K-5.



Team Green Teas, which won third place, comprises (l-r) Samohi sophomores Joaquin Martinez-Devis, Keira Yanez, Samantha Ramirez and Sofia Garban.

**Winners of the Fall 2020 (K – 5) Go Green Challenge!**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Isla Sroka - Grade 3 Franklin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Arabella Feldman-Milliken - Grade 5 Roosevelt
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place (4-way tie): Theo Richards - Grade 3 Franklin
- Delilah Prager - Grade 5 McKinley
- August (Augie) Williams - Grade 2 McKinley
- Seho Heo - Grade 1 McKinley



Seho Heo, McKinley Elementary, first grade and Yunho Heo, Lincoln Middle eighth grade.

**Winners of the Fall 2020 Project Green Challenge (Grades 6 – 8)**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Sahana Lindsey - Grade 7 John Adams Middle

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Yunho Heo - Grade 8 Lincoln Middle

**Winners of the Fall 2020 Project Green Challenge (Grades 9 – 12)**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Team Happy Sprouts (Halie Matsui, Citli Carrera Arenas and Giselle Avila-Hengsathorn) – Grade 10, Samohi

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Olivia Rizzo - Grade 9 Samohi

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Team Green Teas (Sofia Garban, Joaquin Martinez Devis, Samantha Ramirez, and Keira Yanez) – Grade 10, Samohi

District officials are proud of the contest participants and all students and families who take environmental issues seriously and contribute toward small improvements at home and in their lives. Congratulations to the winners and all students!

For more about the Project Green Challenge, go to <https://www.projectgreenchallenge.com/>

For more about SMMUSD's sustainability efforts, go to <https://bit.ly/3m6mPkk>

*Written by Chris Clonts, communications specialist*

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