

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Safety contest winners honored

*Metra contest brings train safety lessons into the home and classroom*



Winners list: **Top Participating School** St. Francis Xavier School, LaGrange **First Place Essay** K-4 Division – Kavya Peter, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Maplebrook Elementary, Naperville; 5-8 Division – Madeline Trannel, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, Richard Bernotas Middle School, Crystal Lake; 9-12 Division – Luis Alfredo Ortega, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, Prosser Career Academy, Chicago **First Place Poster** Kindergarten Polina Kapkanova, Life Christian Co-School, St. Charles; 1st Grade Jacob Zhang, Skinner North Classical School, Chicago; 2nd Grade Leah Wong, Madison Elementary, Hinsdale; 3rd Grade David Kim, Betsy Ross Elementary, Prospect Heights; 4th Grade Allison Jung, Shabonee School, Northbrook; 5th Grade Maria Kadochnikova, J.B Nelson Elementary, Batavia; 6th Grade Habin Park, Wood Oaks Junior High, Northbrook; 7th Grade David Kang, Maple School, Northbrook; 8th Grade Alivia Gao, Marie Murphy Junior High, Wilmette; 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Yebin Park, Glenbrook North High School, Northbrook; 10th Grade Aaliyah Merrick, Marian Catholic High School, Chicago Heights; 11th Grade Kaylee Butler, Victor J. Andrew High School, Tinley Park; 12th Grade Angel Bahena, Kelvyn Park High School, Chicago

CHICAGO (June 17, 2020) – Today, winners of Metra’s 2020 Safety Poster and Essay Contest were honored at the monthly meeting of the Metra Board of Directors.

Every year, Metra looks forward to hosting and honoring the winners of the poster contest. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we cancelled the event. This year, the students introduced themselves in this short video, found [here](#), during the Board meeting.

Sixteen first-place winners from across Metra's six-county service area were introduced and recognized for their efforts to promote train safety.

"The cornerstone of this campaign has been to increase public awareness of the importance of safe behaviors around railroad tracks," said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. "These talented students used their creativity to help us reinforce this safety message not just with their peers, but with everyone in the region who interacts with the railroad."

The contest is designed to promote and reinforce railroad safety messages and keep our region's children safe around trains. In its 14<sup>th</sup> year, more than 520 students from 142 schools across the region participated, creating artwork and writing essays around the theme "Obey the Signs: Look Listen Live."

Metra's Safety Contest invites students in grades K-12 to submit poster designs and essays highlighting the importance of railroad safety. Tasked with selecting the winners was a panel of 14 judges, including government officials, first responders, representatives from safety and education advocacy groups, business and community leaders, media and railroad professionals.

First-, second-, and third-place winners were chosen from each grade level for the Metra Safety Poster Contest. One winner from each grade group – elementary school, middle school and high school – was chosen for the Safety Essay Contest. First-place poster and essay contest winners received an iPad, while second- and third-place poster contest winners received \$250 and \$100 gift cards, respectively.

The People's Choice Award winner is Kaylee Butler, an eleventh grader who attends Victor J. Andrew High School in Tinley Park. A total of 704 people voted for the poster they liked best online and selected her artwork as the favorite. For this achievement, she received an additional \$250 prize.

Metra also recognized the school with the most entries submitted in the poster contest. This year's winner is St. Francis Xavier in LaGrange with 274 entries. The school, recognizing the challenges faced by many families as the pandemic forced the transition to remote learning, chose to donate their prize to another school. Therefore, six Chromebooks will be delivered to Sacred Heart School in Melrose Park.

The first-place poster designs will be featured in Metra's 2021 safety calendar, on weekend tickets and on the Metra website. Winning safety essays will also be featured in the safety calendar, the Metra website and Facebook page. The second- and third-place posters will also be featured on the contest's Facebook page.

Metra's Safety Contest would not be possible without the support of its sponsors, whose generous contributions have helped Metra defray the costs of the contest prizes as well as the production of the safety posters. This year's contest sponsor is the Hubbard Radio Group, owners of Chicago radio stations 97.1 FM The Drive, 100.3 WSHE and 101.9 The Mix.

Information about the campaign, along with all the Safety Contest winners, is available online at [metracontest.com](http://metracontest.com).

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***About Metra***

*Metra is one of the largest and most complex commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane and McHenry counties in northeastern Illinois. The agency provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 242 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track. Metra operates nearly 700 trains and provides nearly 290,000 passenger trips each weekday.*

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