Students Compete for Title of America's Top Young Scientist

3M Young Scientist Challenge Announces 2021 National Finalists, State Merit Winners, and Honorable Mention recipients

ST. PAUL, Minn. and SILVER SPRING, Md., June 24, 2021 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Today, 3M (NYSE: MMM) and Discovery Education announced the top 10 finalists, 30 State Merit Winners, and four honorable mentions in the 2021 *3M Young Scientist Challenge*. As the nation's premier middle school science competition, the *3M Young Scientist Challenge* features outstanding innovations from young scientists that utilize the power of STEM to improve the world.

Empowering young minds to solve the world's challenges through STEM is what the Young Scientist Challenge is all about.

The *3M Young Scientist Challenge* asks students in grades 5-8 to identify an everyday problem in their community or the world and submit their ideas for a solution in the form of a one- to two-minute video explaining the science behind their solution. An esteemed and diverse group of judges evaluates entries based on creativity, scientific knowledge, and communication effectiveness. The competition event will take place from October 18-19, 2021, at the 3M Innovation Center in Minneapolis.

"The *3M Young Scientist Challenge* demonstrates the transformative power of young minds to address global challenges by combining their unique and diverse perspectives on innovation, creativity, and a passion for a better world," said Denise Rutherford, senior vice president and chief corporate affairs officer, 3M. "The 2021 finalists, honorable mention recipients, and state merit winners prove the efficacy of STEM thinking. We are proud of this year's competitors and remain committed to building greater STEM-equity that unlocks the power of people, ideas and science and imagines what's possible."

The top 10 2021 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* finalists include students from public and private schools across the U.S. Each finalist will receive $1,000, along with a virtual mentorship with a 3M scientist. All 10 finalists will be evaluated on a series of challenges, including a presentation of their completed innovation. Each challenge will be scored independently by a panel of judges. The grand prize winner will receive $25,000, a unique destination trip, and the title of America's Top Young Scientist.

The top 10 2021 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* finalists are as follows in alphabetical order by last name:

Abhinav Anne, Naperville, Ill., Clifford Crone Middle School, Indian Prairie Community Unit School District 204
Samarth Mahapatra, Marietta, Ga., Dodgen Middle School, Cobb County High School Area 1
Snigtha Mohanraj, West Haven, Conn., Engineering and Science University Magnet School, New Haven Public School District
Veda Murthy, Herndon, Va., Rachel Carson Middle School, Fairfax County Public School District
Viraj Pandey, San Jose, Calif., Bret Harte Middle School, San Jose Unified School District
Sarah Park, Jacksonville, Fla., Bolles School-Bartram, Private
Moitri Santra, Oviedo, Fla., Jackson Heights Middle School, Seminole County Public School District
Danielle Steinbach, San Jose, Calif., Harker Middle School, Private
Aadrit Talukdar, San Jose, Calif., Basis Independent Silicon Valley, Private
Sydney Zhang, San Diego, Calif., Mesa Verde Middle School, Poway Unified School District

Additionally, there are 30 State Merit Winners, selected for their passion, innovation, and superb communication skills. Each State Merit Winner receives special recognition on the challenge website, along with a technology prize pack.

The 2021 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* State Merit Winners are listed below in alphabetical order by state:

[Alabama] Sophia Al-Halaseh, Fort Payne Middle School, Fort Payne City School District

[Arizona] Prisha Shroff, Accelerated Middle School, Chandler Unified School District

[California] Connor Chin, Ocean Grove Charter School, Private

[Connecticut] Xander Shavers, Beecher Road School, Woodbridge School District

[Florida] Noah Richardson, Oakstead Elementary School, Pasco County School District

[Georgia] Christina Jordan, Centennial Academy, Atlanta Public School District

[Iowa] Kalyani Bhat, Prairie Ridge Middle School, Ankeny Community School District

[Illinois] Aarushi Tiwari, Aptakisic Junior High School, Aptakisic-Tripp School District 102

[Indiana] Rohan Bhosale, Carmel Middle School, Carmel Clay School District

[Kentucky] Karthika Hariprasad, Jessie M Clark Middle School, Fayette County Public School District

[Louisiana] Maya Trutschl, Caddo Middle Magnet School, Caddo Parish Public School District

[Massachusetts] Amy Sun, Raymond J Grey Jr High School, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

[Maryland] Annika Balaji, Takoma Park Middle School, Montgomery County School District

[Michigan] Shreyas Ikare, Novi Meadows Elementary School, Novi Community School District

[Minnesota] Nithila Meganathan, Prairie View Elementary School, Eden Prairie Independent School District 272

[North Carolina] Prithu Kolar, Davis Drive Middle School, Wake County Public School Northwestern District

[Nebraska] Anuj Singh, Peter Kiewit Middle School, Millard Public School District

[New Hampshire] Nikhil Shokeen, Elm Street Middle School, Nashua School District

[New Jersey] Raunak Singh, Memorial Middle School, Fair Lawn School District

[Nevada] Vera van der Linden, Sage Ridge School, Private

[New York] Matthew James, Clear Stream Avenue Elem School, Valley Stream 30 Union Free School District

[Ohio] Kaavya Tatavarty, Seven Hills School, Private

[Oregon] Vihaan Paliwal, Carden Cascade Academy, Private

[Pennsylvania] Alexander Wang, Germantown Academy, Private

[South Dakota] Malya Chakravarty, George S Mickelson Middle School, Brookings School District 5-1

[Tennessee] Nipun Rajan, Houston Middle School, Germantown Municipal School District

[Texas] Arya Catna, Coppell Middle School West, Coppell Independent School District

[Virginia] Kriesh Tivare, Cooper Middle School, Fairfax County Public School District

[Washington] Alexander Lui, Odle Middle School, Bellevue School District 405

[West Virginia] Dhruvika Soltani, Suncrest Middle School, Private

For the first time in competition history, the *3M Young Scientist Challenge* will also recognize entrants with an honorable mention award. These projects were selected for their unique and innovative concepts and effective communication skills. The four 2021 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* honorable mention recipients are as follows in alphabetical order by last name:

Srinija Chukkapali, Tampa, Fla., Richard F Pride Elementary School, Hillsborough County School District - Area 8
Varini Kadakia, San Jose, Calif., Chaboya Middle School, Evergreen School District
Anika Pallapothu, San Jose, Calif., Harker Middle School, Private
Ella Reeves, Petersham, Mass., Petersham Center School, Petersham Center School District

"Empowering young minds to solve the world's challenges through STEM is what the *Young Scientist Challenge* is all about," said Lori McFarling, president of corporate partnerships and social impact at Discovery Education. "We celebrate each of the finalists and honorable mention recipients and look forward to the final event at 3M's global headquarters October 19th."

In its fourteenth year, the *3M Young Scientist Challenge* continues to inspire and challenge middle school students to think creatively and apply the power of STEM to discovering real-world solutions. America's Top Young Scientists have gone on to give TED Talks, file patents, found nonprofits, make the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, ring the bell at the New York Stock Exchange, and exhibit at the White House Science Fair. These young innovators have also been named Time Magazine's first Kid of the Year, featured in The New York Times Magazine, Forbes, Business Insider, and on national television programs such as Good Morning America, CNN's Cuomo Prime Time, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, and more.

The award-winning *3M Young Scientist Challenge* supplements the 3M and Discovery Education program – *Young Scientist Lab* – which provides no-cost dynamic digital resources for students, teachers, and families to explore, transform, and innovate the world around them. Additional digital resources, content, and professional resources are available through 3M's Science at Home series, an array of videos showcasing 3M scientists and guests performing simple, at home experiments for kids aged 6-12. All the resources are available within Discovery Education's [K-12 learning platform](#) and at [YoungScientistLab.com](#).

To learn more about the *3M Young Scientist Challenge* and meet this year's finalists, visit [YoungScientistLab.com](#).

About 3M
At 3M, we apply science in collaborative ways to improve lives daily as our employees connect with customers all around the world. Learn more about 3M's creative solutions to global challenges at [www.3M.com](#) or on Twitter [@3M](#) or [@3MNews](#).

About Discovery Education

Discovery Education is the global leader in standards-aligned digital curriculum resources, engaging content, and professional learning for K-12 classrooms. Through its award-winning digital textbooks, multimedia resources, immersive STEM experiences and the largest professional learning network of its kind, Discovery Education is transforming teaching and learning and improving academic achievement around the globe. Discovery Education's services are available in approximately half of U.S. classrooms and primary schools in the U.K. and reach over 5 million educators and 51 million students in more than 90 countries. Inspired by the global media company Discovery, Inc., Discovery Education partners with districts, states, and like-minded organizations to empower teachers with customized solutions that support the success of all learners. Explore the future of education at DiscoveryEducation.com.

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