

13-Year-old Raji Doshi named America's Top Young Scientist for inventing an algae-aragonite alkalinity system to reduce CO2-driven ocean acidification

ST. PAUL, Minn. and CHARLOTTE, N.C., Oct. 14, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- 3M and Discovery Education today named 8th grader Raji Doshi as the winner of the [2026 3M Young Scientist Challenge](#), the nation's premier middle school science competition. Raji lives in Farmington, Connecticut, and attends Stanford Online High School. She distinguished herself by engineering a natural algae-and-aragonite system, an inventive solution to address ocean acidification by increasing alkalinity and removing carbon dioxide from seawater. As the grand prize winner, Raji received a \$25,000 cash prize and the prestigious title of "America's Top Young Scientist."

Raji spent the summer competing against nine other finalists and ultimately secured the win during final Challenge events at 3M global headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota, on Oct. 12 and 13, 2026. The 2026 finalists, ages 11 to 14, each identified an everyday problem, developed an innovative solution, and pitched their project through a one- to two-minute entry video. Their proposals aligned to 3M technology platforms including climate tech and safety, and finalists were evaluated on their creativity, scientific knowledge, communication effectiveness, ingenuity, application of STEM principles, and demonstration of research.

Raji's project, *Engineering a Novel Durable Algae-Aragonite Alkalinity System to Reduce CO2-Driven Ocean Acidification*, tests whether macroalgae cultivation paired with natural calcium carbonate buffers could create a durable, low-cost system for reducing coastal acidification, a growing threat to marine ecosystems. The solution reflects the 3M Young Scientist Challenge's focus on encouraging middle school students to think creatively, apply the power of STEM, and develop real-world solutions that can make a meaningful impact. Through carbonite chemistry analysis, Raji demonstrated the efficacy of aragonite in increasing algae biomass, removing carbon dioxide, and substantially lowering dissolved carbon dioxide. She also developed a Michaelis-Menten computational model to identify an optimal aragonite dose, a step toward making climate solutions more practical for coastal communities.

"The 3M Young Scientist Challenge highlights the incredible potential of young people to tackle real-world challenges through science," said William Brown, 3M Chairman and CEO. "The talent and creativity displayed by this year's finalists was exceptional, and we congratulate Raji on earning the title of America's Top Young Scientist."

Each 3M Young Scientist Challenge finalist is paired with a 3M scientist who mentors and works with them one-on-one over the summer to transform their ideas from concept to prototype. This year's winner was paired with Deborah Isabelle, a product engineering specialist at 3M.

"Raji's project reminds us that when you're passionate about something, you can use that interest to change the world," said Isabelle. "She loves collecting seashells and was distressed that ocean acidification is starting to damage the seashells and the creatures that live inside them. It was that passion that led her to create ALKACORE to address the ocean acidification issue."

The second and third place winners from the 2026 3M Young Scientist Challenge also receive special recognition, including a \$1,000 prize. This year's runners-up are:

Aaisha Asif, a 7th grader from Sarasota, Fla., Pine View, Sarasota County Schools

Sharvi Mahajan, a 9th grader from San Diego, Calif., Westview High School, Poway Unified School District

The remaining top finalists from the 2026 3M Young Scientist Challenge, in alphabetical order by last name, are:

Ahmed Abdelsalam, a 7th grader from Cambridge, Mass., Darby Vassall Upper School, Cambridge Public Schools

Aiden Jo, a 9th grader from Houston, Texas, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory, Houston Independent School District

Roy Kim, an 8th grader from Beaverton, Ore., Whitford Middle School, Beaverton School District

Arika Kundu, an 8th grader from Shorewood, Minn., Minnetonka Middle School East, Minnetonka Public Schools
Millie Pradawong, a 9th grader from Fairfax, Va., James Madison High School, Fairfax County
Naboshree Santra, a 7th grader from Oviedo, Fla., Jackson Heights Middle School, Seminole County Public Schools
Abigail Stein, an 8th grader from Nashville, Tenn., Harding Academy, Nashville Independent Schools

"When students have the support to follow their curiosity, their ideas can grow into real-world innovation," said Brian Shaw, Chief Executive Officer of Discovery Education. "For 19 years, our partnership with 3M has paired students with working scientists who coach them from ideation to working prototype. We applaud Raji and every Young Scientist for the dedication and imagination they bring to this challenge, and we're grateful to 3M for helping us make hands-on scientific inquiry a thrill to watch."

Now in its 19th year, the 3M Young Scientist Challenge continues to inspire and challenge middle school students to think creatively and apply the power of STEM to develop real-world solutions. Former America's Top Young Scientists have given TED Talks, filed patents, founded nonprofits, and made the Forbes 30 Under 30 list. In addition, a 3M Young Scientist Challenge Alumni Network was formed in fall 2022 and includes more than 100 former challenge winners, finalists, and mentors, who take part in networking opportunities and more.

The award-winning competition 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. All the resources are also available on Discovery Education [Experience](#), the essential companion for engaged PreK-12 classrooms.

To learn more about the 3M Young Scientist Challenge and meet this year's winners and finalists, visit youngscientistlab.com.

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Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(2\)](#)

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