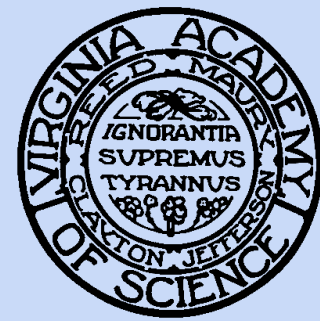




Virginia Junior Academy of Science Awards Ceremony June 16, 2025



WILLIAM & MARY
CHARTERED 1693

The Program Will Begin at 6:00 PM



VJAS Awards Ceremony

Welcome Students, Sponsors, Parents, VAS Members,
and Ferrum College Representatives



VJAS Partner in Education Award

Mirta M. Martin, Ph.D.
President, Ferrum College





Thank You



FERRUM
COLLEGE





Virginia Academy of Science

Chris Osgood, VAS President



A Few Words from the VJAS Student Officers





Middle School Section Awards



Animal & Human Science

First Place	Deen Lateef Benton Middle School
Second Place	Aarav Saxena George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Siddhant Naavaal George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Anushka Misra Gainesville Middle School
Honorable Mention	Aditya Singhal George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Bhavya Uppalapati Rachel Carson Middle School



Chemical Sciences - Section A

First Place	Ajooni Kaur George H. Moody Middle School
Second Place	Umika Mahesh George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Divit Gangrade George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Helena Yellin Sabot School
Honorable Mention	Shreya Varma Sooraj George H. Moody Middle School



Chemical Sciences - Section B

First Place	Arjun Nair Midlothian Middle School
Second Place	Reya Bansal George H. Moody Middle
Third Place	Sarmed Ahmad Homeschool
Honorable Mention	Anjali Khemka George H. Moody Middle



Ecology & Earth Sciences

First Place	Rebecca Zee Kenmore Middle School
Second Place	Saanvi Bejugam George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Daksha Talluri George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Arhan Mahapatra Swanson Middle School
Honorable Mention	Sanjana Nath George H. Moody Middle School



Engineering & Technology

First Place	Arinjay Ghosh George H. Moody Middle School
Second Place	Advaith Atulasimha George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Taran Shivkumar George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Matthew Polkosnik George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Kayla Sibley Kenmore Middle School
Honorable Mention	Arjun Madaan George H. Moody Middle School



Human Behavior

First Place	Solace Shivelight and Ezri Smith Sabot School
Second Place	Rheeya Sureshkumar George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Ruthvik Manjunatha George H. Moody Middle School



Mathematics: Patterns & Relationships

First Place

Evie Elgart
Shawsville Middle School



Physical Science & Astronomy

First Place	Maedot Ayalew Kenmore Middle School
Second Place	Donald Almond George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Thomas Yap George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Yash Arora George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Leif Ledford and Miles Torres-Tresize Sabot School
Honorable Mention	Aaron Hayes George H. Moody Middle School



Plant Science & Microbiology - Section A

First Place	Samara Habib George H. Moody Middle School
Second Place	Rishwitha Chamarthi George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Sophie Guo George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Manan Nepal George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Sagnik Banerjee George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Esaam Uddin George H. Moody Middle School



Plant Science & Microbiology - Section B

First Place	Eshaan Patel George H. Moody Middle School
Second Place	Sreetoma Bag George H. Moody Middle School
Third Place	Anisha Mandal George H. Moody Middle School
Honorable Mention	Mahati Lella George H. Moody Middle School



High School Section Awards



Botany - Section A

First Place	Spencer Sloan Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Second Place	Marshall Blankenship Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Lucy Sloan Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Agam Agrawal Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Landon Pollard Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Amogha Anand Balaji Mills E Godwin High School



Botany - Section B

First Place	Abigail Fang Clover Hill High School
Second Place	Darsh Daddala Mills E Godwin High School
Third Place	Varnika Padmanabhan Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Ananya Sankepalli Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Evan Huizar and Kenn Wu Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Sage Lahmers Blacksburg High School



Chemistry - Section A

First Place	Anna Jane Reed Saint Catherine's School
Second Place	Serena Guo Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Phoebe Camp Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Chemistry - Section B

First Place	Hrishi Desai and Raghav Kasi Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Second Place	Avani Kaur Mills E Godwin High School
Third Place	Ian Walters Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Minhan Zhao Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Aditya Modi Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Aiden Wright Clover Hill High School



Computational Biology - Section A

First Place	Josiah Martin Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Second Place	Khartik Uppalapati Oakton High School
Third Place	Aarish Patel Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Connor Beasley Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Shiv Davay Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Juyeop Noh Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Computational Biology - Section B

First Place	Pranav Sundarrajan Mills E Godwin High School
Second Place	Aashritha Penumudi Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Jonah Schuman Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Sreeram Gourineni Rock Ridge High School
Honorable Mention	Srishanth Ravi Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology



Engineering - Section A

First Place	Gabriel Cohen Yorktown High School
Second Place	Ian Yu Blacksburg High School
Third Place	Devin Wanchoo Osbourn Park High School
Honorable Mention	Larah Clemons Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Ingrid Jora Blacksburg High School
Honorable Mention	Henry Pratt Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Engineering - Section B

First Place	Hart Miller Clover Hill High School
Second Place	Justus Gibbs Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Ian Jora Macrea Blacksburg High School
Honorable Mention	Apollo Guanzon Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Braeden Hall Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Erin Jansen Patriot High School



Engineering - Section C

First Place	Victor Cho Langley High School
Second Place	Rohit Rajakumar Lightridge High School
Third Place	Sanaya Bothra Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Honorable Mention	George Homiller Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Vivian Foutz Western Albermarle High School



Earth & Environmental Science - Section A

First Place	Alexandria Swenson Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Second Place	Abby Dobson Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Third Place	Aiden Eanes Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Jaeden Morgan Mills E Godwin High School



Earth & Environmental Science - Section B

First Place	McKenzie Duncan Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Second Place	Charlotte Phillips Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Third Place	Kathryn Simal Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Elijah Callahan Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Lucas Holland Southwest Virginia Governor's School



Earth & Environmental Science - Section C

First Place	Saanvi Jain Mills E Godwin High School
Second Place	Rhea Maruvanchery Mills E Godwin High School
Third Place	Hannah Kim Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Stephen Welch Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Ishaan Patankar Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Olivia Allen Chesapeake Bay Governor's School



Earth & Environmental Science - Section D

First Place	Devansh Kumar Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Second Place	Swati Aggarwal Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Third Place	Ann Holmstrom Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Jullian Abuan Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Anna Foster Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Zainah Malik Mills E Godwin High School



Earth & Environmental Science - Section E

First Place	Reed Hass Yorktown High School
Second Place	Alessandra Reyes Mills E Godwin High School
Third Place	Kristine Edassery Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Grayson Griffith Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Abigail Fannin Christchurch School
Honorable Mention	Braeden Musser Southwest Virginia Governor's School



Mathematics: Theoretical & Modeling

First Place	Aneesh Kandimalla Academies of Loudoun
Second Place	Nadia Lach-Hab Washington Liberty High School
Third Place	Mason Minkler Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Medicine & Health - Section A

First Place	Arinan Johri Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Second Place	Nuveena Sooriya Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Third Place	Persia Martinez-Goggins Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Claire Ramsey Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Eshan Nath Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Benjamin Ziegler Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Medicine & Health - Section B

First Place	Priya Kumar Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Second Place	Athithi Prakash Blacksburg High School
Third Place	Jerry Li Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Anandi Sarkar Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Nicholas Thompson Southwest Virginia Governor's School



Medicine & Health - Section C

First Place	Shaankari Ravulaparthi Mills E Godwin High School
Second Place	Adriana Mendez and Aysha Jafar Osborn Park High School
Third Place	Shadikshya Subedi and Song Huong Pham Osborn Park High School
Honorable Mention	Raya Kumareshan Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Aditya Kore Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Ceryiah Jean Mills E Godwin High School



Medicine & Health - Section D

First Place	Sofia Demchenko Mills E Godwin High School
Second Place	Ahana Goel Mills E Godwin High School
Third Place	Stuti Tiwari Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Aditi Nair Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Dhanvi Sheth Deep Creek High School
Honorable Mention	Suhana Sangerpal Mills E Godwin High School



Microbiology & Cell Biology - Section A

First Place	Bhoomika Kaur Mills E Godwin High School
Second Place	Noah Allyn Washington Liberty High School
Third Place	Kriesh Tivare Langley High School
Honorable Mention	Taarun Ganesh Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Deepanshi Kumar Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Lamarra Sales Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Microbiology & Cell Biology - Section B

First Place	Joshua Osemobor Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Second Place	Madeline Levorson Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Jasmine Chen Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Saanvi Sambangi Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Krithik Poondru Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Yana Dewan Mills E Godwin High School



Microbiology & Cell Biology - Section C

First Place	Saranya Manikandan Mills E Godwin High School
Second Place	Henry Amerson Clover Hill High School
Third Place	Ritvik Adusumilli Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Jeevan Gutta Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Aarush Burukunte Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Aaryan Tonpay Mills E Godwin High School



Physics & Astronomy - Section A

First Place	Anuj Dahal, Kevin DiMattina, and Oguzkhan Kutlan Governor's School @ Innovation Park
Second Place	Shane Bright Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Bryce Barron Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Kevin Zhang Academies of Loudoun



Physics & Astronomy - Section B

First Place	Minh Nguyen Blacksburg High School
Second Place	Joseph Legutko Collegiate
Third Place	Tre Booth Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Collin Pounds Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Lessa Bowers Clover Hill High School
Honorable Mention	Minnah Khan Clover Hill High School



Psychology - Section A

First Place	Molly Morris Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Second Place	Lorelei Maas Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Jillian Jurkow Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Anna McCloskey Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	John-Paul Mancier Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Psychology - Section B

First Place	Kendra Nguyen Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Second Place	Olivia Wilbon Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Third Place	Bisan Rai Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Kailey Eagle Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Honorable Mention	Smyan Sajish Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Elana Ordower Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology



Psychology - Section C

First Place	Rania Lateef Governor's School @ Innovation Park
Second Place	Paris Bacon Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Third Place	Hridhay Pothunoori Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Aarya Mishra Mills E Godwin High School
Honorable Mention	Maxwell Failmezger Chesapeake Bay Governor's School



Statistical Analysis & Inferences

First Place	Lyra Piche Blacksburg High School
Second Place	Gabriel Frias Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Tyler Chen Princess Anne High School



Zoology - Section A

First Place	Lilly Riffe Chesapeake Bay Governor's School
Second Place	Justin Kim and Nishka Shah Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Third Place	Priya Kumar Maggie L Walker Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Ethan Easter Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Honorable Mention	Ayaan Mohammed Mills E Godwin High School



Zoology - Section B

First Place	Emily Paul Southwest Virginia Governor's School
Second Place	Ngo Tan An Nguyen Mills E Godwin High School
Third Place	No Awardee by Decision of Section Judges and the VJAS Committee.
Honorable Mention	Sajeela Ahmad Osborn Park High School
Honorable Mention	Xavier Gitre Blacksburg High School
Honorable Mention	Elena Milsted Chesapeake Bay Governor's School



VJAS SPECIAL AWARDS and SCHOLARSHIPS



FIRST PLACE CATEGORY-SECTION AWARDS

These awards are given to the best papers, as determined by either the Section Judges or, if multiple sections, by a group of Special Award Judges.



VAS BOTANY AWARD

The award is given by the Botany Section of the Virginia Academy of Science, to the best paper on a botanical subject.

Abigail Fang

The Effect of Applying NO Capsules When Planting
Radish Seeds on the Resultant Radish Weight,
Plant Height, and Leaf Number of the Radishes



ANN M. HANCOCK CELLULAR BIOLOGY AWARD

This award is given to the best paper in cellular biology and is presented in memory of Anne M. Hancock who retired from Patrick Henry High School in Hanover County and who gave many years of service to the Jr. Academy not only by teaching but also serving on the Jr. Academy Committee.

Bhoomhika Kaur

RAGE: A Novel Therapeutic Strategy Against
AGE-Mediated Prostate Cancer Progression



RODNEY C. BERRY CHEMISTRY AWARD

The Rodney C. Berry Chemistry Award is given for the paper that evidences the most significant contribution in the field of chemistry.

Hrishi Desai and Raghav Kasi

Calcium-Doped Biochar for Optimized Glyphosate
Removal in Aqueous Media



VIRGINIA PENINSULA ENGINEERS ENGINEERING AWARD

The Virginia Peninsula Engineers Engineering Award is given to the paper that evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Engineering.

Hart Miller

The Effect of Varying Materials, Used as Obstacles
to Block a WiFi Signal, on the Resultant WiFi
Strength and Speed



MATHEMATICS AWARD

The Mathematics Award is given for the paper that evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Mathematics.

Aneesh Kandimalla

Identifying optimal metal-organic frameworks for
adsorption-based carbon capture using natural
language processing



PHYSICS AWARD

The Physics Award is given for the paper that evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Physics and Astronomy. The award was established through the donations of past Jeffers Memorial Lecturers.

Minh Nguyen

Optimizing Meta-Atoms for Large Scale Metalenses



PSYCHOLOGY AWARD

The Psychology Award is given to the paper that evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Psychology.

Molly Morris

The Correlation Between Milk Packaging Types and
Human Perception of Quality and Price



STATISTICS AWARD

The Statistics Award is given for the paper that evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Statistics.

Lyra Piche

English Place-Names and Viking Activity



VABE ZOOLOGY AWARD

This award is presented by the Virginia Association of Biology Educators and is given for outstanding research in the Zoology section.

Emily Paul

The Effects of Heavy Metal Contaminants on
Negative Phototropism Behaviors in
Ephemeroptera Species



SPECIAL INTEREST AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Students apply for these awards and they are judged by special panels. (If any awards are not given, we did not receive any papers meeting the standards of the award.)



CANCER RESEARCH AWARDS

These awards are to recognize outstanding science papers related to cancer research. These awards are provided by the American Cancer Society.

Athithi Prakash

Novel Engineered
Anticancer Biomaterial for
Non-Invasive Melanoma
Treatment

Pranav Sundarrajan

Computational Design of
Novel CD117-Specific RNA
Aptamers for Targeted
Therapy of Glioblastoma
Multiforme (GBM)



DR. AND MRS. PRESTON H. LEAKE AWARD IN APPLIED CHEMISTRY

The Dr. and Mrs. Preston H. Leake Award in Applied Chemistry is given to the author of a research paper which best exemplifies how chemicals, chemical principles, or chemistry have been used, are used, or might be used to enhance or even to save life.

Arinan Johri

Using SGLT2 Inhibitors to Treat Medically Induced
Nephrotoxicity and Kidney Injury



GAMMA SIGMA DELTA AWARD

Virginia Tech Chapter of the Honor Society of
Agriculture

Given to a student in recognition of excellence in
research dealing with the application of new
technologies and/or concepts in agriculture, forestry,
or veterinary medicine.

Sage Lahmers

Symbiotic Strength: Evaluating Mycorrhizal &
Nitrogen-Fixing Influences on Plant Fitness



ROSCOE HUGHES GENETICS AWARD

The Roscoe Hughes Award is given for the best paper in the field of Genetics.

Rania Lateef

Scents and Sensibility



DR. SMITH SHADOMY INFECTIOUS DISEASES AWARD

This award is given to commemorate Dr. Smith Shadomy by the Virginia Chapter of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases to the paper that evidences outstanding research in the field of infectious diseases.

Evie Elgart

Optimizing Combination Antibiotic Therapy for
Localized and Disseminated Lyme Disease



SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AWARD

Given by the Richmond Area Speleological Society for outstanding research addressing karst or topics related to speleology (bats, caves, carbonate geology, paleoenvironments, limestone fossils, sinkholes, etc.)

Shriya Bandla and Tess Vithoulkas

Using Modeling Methods to Analyze Environmental
Effects on Coral Regeneration



VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (VMNH) AWARD

This award is presented by the Friends of the Virginia Museum of Natural History in recognition of a significant contribution in the study and interpretation of Virginia's Natural Heritage.

Amelia Hanks

The Effect Biomes and Climates Have on the
Preservation of Fossils



VIRGINIA SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM AWARD

This award is given by the Virginia Sea Grant College Program for outstanding marine or coastal research.

Devansh Kumar

Evaluating Water Pollution Through the Effect of
Organic Kelp Fertilizer on Brine Shrimp (*Artemia
salina*)



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



BETHEL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship of \$1000 is awarded to a student (9-12 grades and not a team project) who has produced an outstanding written paper and is a first-place winner. The money is paid to the student's college or university in two equal payments during the first year. This scholarship comes from the interest earned from a \$10,000 endowment contributed to the VJAS by the students of Bethel High School, Hampton, Virginia.

Shaankari Ravulaparthi

A Novel Comprehensive Evaluation of Blood
Thinners: Alternative Non-Cardioembolic Stroke
Therapy to Minimize Gastrointestinal Bleeding



HENRY MACKENZIE ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP (VEE)

From Joe Maroon, VEE Executive Director

I am sorry that I am unable to be with you today but please allow me a brief word about the Virginia Environmental Endowment. VEE opened its doors for business on February 1, 1977 – before most of you here were born! The Endowment was the first philanthropic foundation in the nation to focus exclusively on improving our environment. Since then, VEE has made over 1400 grants that have resulted in over \$100 million of environmental improvement. If you are interested in learning more about the Endowment, I suggest you check out the website www.vee.org.

Every year since 1984, the VA Env. Endowment has provided two college scholarships to deserving high school students. To date, the Endowment has awarded \$660,000 in scholarship funds to 70 high school students. The scholarship programs are administrated by the Virginia Junior Academy of Science, and are named in honor of three founding members of VEE's Board of Directors.

The Frances and Sydney Lewis Environmental Science Scholarship is a \$5,000 four-year scholarship awarded to the student whose project presented at the annual Virginia Junior Academy of Science (VJAS) Research Symposium evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Environmental Science.

The Henry W. MacKenzie, Jr. Environmental Scholarship is also a \$5,000 four-year college scholarship that is awarded to the student whose project presented at the VJAS Research Symposium evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Environmental Science dealing with the James River Basin and Chesapeake Bay.

On behalf of VEE's Board of Directors, we congratulate this year's winners.





HENRY MACKENZIE ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP (VEE)

Henry MacKenzie Environmental Scholarship - This \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded to the twelfth grade student whose paper evidences the most significant contribution in the field of Environmental Science dealing with the James River Basin and Chesapeake Bay. The Virginia Environmental Endowment and VJAS offer this scholarship in tribute to the outstanding and generous services of Judge Henry W. MacKenzie, Jr., one of the founding directors, who has a great interest in the James River and the Chesapeake Bay.



Charlotte Phillips

Investigating Microplastic Trapping Efficiency of
Coral Reef Regrowth Structures in Simulated
Ocean Currents in the Presence of Modeled
Acropora cervicornis



FRANCES AND SYDNEY LEWIS ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP (VEE)

Frances and Sydney Lewis Environmental Scholarship: A \$5,000 scholarship for the best effort by a student in grade 12 in the field of environmental science. This scholarship is in the name of Frances and Sydney Lewis and is given by the Virginia Environmental Endowment.



Emily Paul

The Effects of Heavy Metal Contaminants on
Negative Phototropism Behaviors in
Ephemeroptera Species



BEST OVERALL PAPERS

These awards are determined by a panel of Special Judges from among the first place papers in each of the sections.



DOROTHY KNOWLTON AWARD

Given to the **middle school** student or team presenting the best project in the **life and earth sciences**. This is given in honor of Dorothy Knowlton, the former Science Coordinator of Arlington County, who was instrumental in advancing experimental design with the science curriculum.

Rebecca Zee

The Effect of Cadmium Selenide Quantum Dot
Diameter on Photocatalytic Water Purification
Efficiency



JOYCE K. PETERSON AWARD

Given to the **middle school** student or team presenting the best project in the **physical sciences**. This is given in honor of Joyce Peterson, an outstanding teacher in the Arlington County Schools.

Maedot Ayalew

The Effect of Solar Magnetic Flux and
Spatiotemporal Interplanetary Magnetic Field
Variations on Space Weather Prediction Accuracy



JONES/ELLETT AWARD

This award is given to the 12th grade senior student whose paper evidences the most significant contribution to science.

Minh Nguyen

Optimizing Meta-Atoms for Large Scale Metalenses



VJAS Delegates to AJAS

A panel of honor judges selects the honorees from among the students (grades 9-11) who won first place in a senior high section. The projects are ranked from "1" to "4". The winner is the first ranked project. Alternates are ranked in order 2nd, 3rd, and 4th.

The AJAS meeting in 2026 will be in Phoenix, Arizona on February 11-14.



VJAS Delegate(s) to AJAS

Phoenix, AZ

February 11-14, 2026

THE WINNING AUTHORS ARE

Hrishi Desai and Raghav Kasi

Calcium-Doped Biochar for Optimized
Glyphosate Removal in Aqueous
Media



VJAS Delegates to AJAS

THE ALTERNATES IN ORDER ARE

Pranav Sundarrajan

Priya Kumar

Boomhika Kaur



Ertle Thompson Memorial Endowment Award

The Ertle Thompson Memorial Endowment Award is established to honor Dr. Ertle Thompson, a long-term leader of VJAS and a former president of the VAS. When financial circumstances allow, these awards will be presented annually to the winner(s) selected as the VJAS Delegate(s) to the AJAS. The purpose of the funds is to help support attendance at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Junior Academy of Science.

Hrishi Desai and Raghav Kasi



AWARDS FOR SPONSORS



THE FRANKLIN D. KIZER FUND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IN HONOR OF E. C. L. MILLER

This award recognizes the exceptional contributions to VJAS of a STEM teacher.

Criteria:

- The recipient will be a teacher who has contributed to the VJAS by sponsoring student research projects, serving as a reader, judge, and/or member of the VJAS Committee.
- The teacher will be nominated and chosen by the VJAS Committee.
- The award of up to \$500 will be used for professional development, and the recipient will propose a professional development activity to the Director of the VJAS. Examples of acceptable proposals include attendance to a professional meeting, tuition for a science/math course, or software to enhance their teaching effectiveness.



THE FRANKLIN D. KIZER FUND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IN HONOR OF E. C. L. MILLER

The winner of the Franklin D. Kizer
Distinguished Service Award is:

Jason Powell

Ferrum College



THE FRANKLIN D. KIZER SCIENCE TEACHER OF TOMORROW AWARD

This award recognizes an outstanding Virginia science teacher and provides an opportunity for professional development through attendance at the annual VAST meeting.

- The recipient is a teacher with a maximum of 5 years as a VJAS teacher sponsor.
- The recipient will have sponsored student participation at the VJAS annual meeting.
- The recipient is nominated and chosen by the VJAS Committee.
- This award will be used to support the recipient's professional development by providing the funds needed to attend the annual VAST meeting. The maximum amount of the award is \$500.



THE FRANKLIN D. KIZER SCIENCE TEACHER OF TOMORROW AWARD

The winner of the Franklin D. Kizer Science
Teacher of Tomorrow Award is:

James Ramsey

George H. Moody Middle School



The Franklin D. Kizer Professional Development Stipend

This award will be presented to a teacher of the VJAS Best Research Paper Award winner.

The recipient is a teacher and is active with the VJAS.

Up to \$500 will be used to support the professional development of the teacher-sponsor of the VJAS Best Research Paper (Jones/Ellett Award) winner to attend professional development events in Virginia at the discretion of the VJAS Committee.

Katharine Davis



THE DEAN DECKER AJAS SPONSOR SCIENCE AWARD

The Dr. R. Dean Decker Honorarium award this year of \$500 is to go to the teacher/sponsor of the top student winner of the AJAS trip. The monies can be used at the discretion of the recipient as long as it is related to the attendance at the AJAS meeting. Guidelines and procedures for the recipient will follow later.

James Crockett

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology



OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARDS



VAS HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

This award which includes one year's membership in the Virginia Academy of Science including a subscription to the *Virginia Journal of Science* is awarded for outstanding service to the Junior Academy and the VJAS Committee.

Rania Lateef



VAS AWARD FOR DEDICATED SERVICE TO VJAS

The support of VAS makes all of this possible. In addition to several awards that have already been given by VAS, this award recognizes a past VJAS officer or a VJAS member who has continued to provide support as a volunteer to the Junior Academy even after completion of high school.

Kieran Wall

Elizabeth Eroshenko



VJAS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

A special certificate is presented to a person for exceptionally outstanding service to the VJAS and public recognition is given at the Research Symposium. This is the most prestigious award that the VJAS Committee gives.

Craig Lott



VJAS OFFICERS 2025-2026

Co-President	Madeline Levorson , Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology
Co-President	Kriesh Tivare , Langley High School
Vice President	Shriya Bandla , Mills E. Godwin High School
Secretary	Madilyn Marsden , Blacksburg High School
Secretary	Essam Shah , John Randolph Tucker High School
Communication Liaison	Danyal Mian , Thomas Edison High School
Communication Liaison	Priya Kumar , Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Editor in Chief	Anna Foster , Clover Hill High School
Editor in Chief	Sajeela Ahmad , Osbourn Park High School



See You IN PERSON Next Year at...



HAMPDEN-SYDNEY
COLLEGE

Saturday, May 30, 2026