Babylon 8th grader wins 2018 NYCOM ‘If I Were Mayor, I Would …’ contest

Western New York, Capital Region students finish second, third

Albany — Ryan Dunn, an 8th grader at Babylon Jr./Sr. High School on Long Island, won the 2018 New York Conference of Mayors “If I Were Mayor, I Would …” essay contest, the association announced Wednesday.

Dunn’s essay was picked from nearly 1,300 NYCOM received from students across the state detailing what they would do for their city or village if they were mayor. The purpose of the contest is to educate students about local government and encourage civic participation.

Dunn received his award at NYCOM’s Annual Meeting at the Gideon Putnam in Saratoga Springs earlier this month. Video of the award presentation can be found here.

“The taxpayers deserve their tax dollars to be used efficiently to target both small and large issues that need solutions,” Dunn wrote in his essay.

Dunn wrote that he would first tackle small problems facing the Village of Babylon, including making Southards Pond “a family-friendly pond by creating a space for kayak rentals” in an effort to promote good health and generate revenue for the village.

On a larger scale, Dunn wrote that he would invest in solar technologies by building solar canopies at the parking lot of the Long Island Rail Road station and other properties. He also would look to remedy street flooding in the village.

“This flooding creates havoc for commuters, school children and the vehicles driven,” he wrote. “By creating catch basins to collect the overflow from sewage drains in specified flood areas, this problem can be resolved.”

Besides brainstorming ways to tackle environmental issues, Dunn spends his free time as a member of the Babylon Panthers robotics club, plays on the tennis team and is an active participant in Boy Scouts.

Samanyu Janapareddy, an 8th grader from Lancaster Middle School in Western New York, won second place in this year’s contest for his essay about a four-step environmental plan, infrastructure projects and tourism promotion. The third-place winner was 8th grader Ella Costantino from Saratoga Central Catholic School in the Capital Region, who focused on a “green” parking garage that would aesthetically answer the need for more parking in her bustling city.

This year’s contest judges were City of Jamestown Mayor Sam Teresi; Liz Benjamin, host of Capital Tonight; and NYCOM Executive Director Peter Baynes. Essays were judged on clarity and implementation of actions, creativity, sincerity of thought, and proper use of grammar.
“Thank you to all who participated in this year’s ‘If I Were Mayor, I Would …’ essay contest,” Baynes said. “It is inspiring to read so many thoughtful ideas for how to improve municipal governments across the state. I am confident that among this year’s participants are future government leaders who will make New York a better place to live for all.”

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About the New York Conference of Mayors
The New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) is the association of, and for, cities and villages in New York. Since 1910, NYCOM has united local government leaders in an active statewide network focused on the singular purpose of finding the most effective means of providing essential municipal services. Through the active participation of our membership, which represents more than 12 million New Yorkers, NYCOM is an aggressive advocate for city and village interests before the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of state government. NYCOM is a readily accessible source of practical information touching upon every area of municipal activity and is also a leader in the training and education of local officials.