If I were Mayor, I would implement measures to help and prevent the issue of drug addiction and start a campaign to beautify the Village of New Paltz. My main goal would be to help clean and improve New Paltz and its citizens through positive reinforcement, as opposed to harsh punishment. In this village there are many issues concerning drugs and my aim would be to fix that.

In New Paltz, drugs find their way into people’s lives as early as middle school. Perhaps having a University in our village makes access to drugs that much easier. To try and prevent this problem, I would give more funding to the elementary, middle, and high schools, so that they could educate their students earlier and more effectively about the risks and dangers of drug use. Also, I would enable the use of cutting-edge drug detection technology, so that drug users can be found and helped. In conjunction, my next addition to New Paltz: drug rehabilitation centers. These centers would be open to anyone in need of help, and would accept donations and fundraise so that the cost would be affordable to those in need. They would help anyone who is struggling with drug addiction, no matter how mild or serious.

Tying into the beautification of New Paltz and the drug-rehab issue, the walls of the rehabilitation centers could be “free painting zones” where anyone, including rehabilitation patients, could paint whatever art they wanted on these walls. Utilizing these walls as canvases would cost no extra money. Also, I would encourage building owners to commission or allow artists to paint murals on their walls. As well as making New Paltz a more beautiful place, this would attract tourists, and increase the amount of money made by local business owners during tourist season. This would inspire the community to follow their passions or learn a new talent, with room for mistakes. Also, the arts have been proven to keep children out of trouble, so these free painting spaces would help reduce crime, especially vandalism. If the vandals had a place that they could tag or paint graffiti without consequences, then there would be less on the streets where it is illegal.

If I were Mayor, New Paltz would be pulchritudinous, and a safer place. The streets would be filled with colorful, creative artwork, and everyone would be safer and healthier. Children would be more educated about the consequences of drug use, and there would be a place where drug addicts could get help right in their hometown. Overall, the people would be happy and healthy, and New Paltz would be a major tourist destination.
Youth in our communities are looking for ways to be heard, get involved, and affect change. This essay contest challenged mayors to engage future leaders across New York State to provide insight and solutions to improving our cities and villages.

Nearly 1,100 essays were submitted on topics as varied as encouraging green communities, building and improving recreation and community centers, constructing parks and playgrounds, promoting kindness and fairness, repairing streets, sidewalks and bridges, creating alternative public transportation, installing solar and LED lighting, encouraging downtown revitalization, building affordable housing, combating smoking/vaping and drug use and looking for ways to help the less fortunate. These well-informed and inspiring essays show the future promise of these bright eighth graders.

If I were a mayor I would place a permanent ban on gas-powered leaf blowers. People everywhere take pride in their lawns and gardens, but Westchester residents in particular hire lawn care companies who often use a tool that does more harm than good: gas powered leaf blowers. Although a useful machine for blowing the last few leaves off a lawn, gas powered leaf blowers are a nuisance to neighbors, pollute the environment, and have serious health effects. Our health, and the future of our world, is more important than a few perfectly manicured lawns.

People come to Pelham for many reasons, including a sense of peacefulness that can’t be gained from city life. Leaf blowers constantly interrupt this peacefulness. They can make it hard for children to play outside, since there is a danger that a leaf blower will blow something into their eyes, or the noise can hurt their ears. In fact, leaf blowers are shown to contribute to hearing loss. The noise can become a nuisance to adults as well. But the noise isn’t what makes leaf blowers so dangerous - it’s the release of carbon monoxide. The amount of carbon monoxide gas blowers release in one hour is “…equal to the amount coming from the tailpipe of a current year automobile running for over 8 hours” (https://www.dec.ny.gov). Not only do they release eight times more pollutants than an automobile, leaf blowers deposit all the carbon monoxide in one yard instead of over a larger area. Gas powered leaf blowers also contribute to smog and acid rain. The chemicals they release don’t just harm the environment they harm people too contributing to conditions like cancer, heart disease, stroke, asthma, and premature death. The noise can also cause hypertension, learning problems, and other stress-related health conditions.

One of the reasons I would ban leaf blowers if I were a mayor is that it is a problem that is relatively simple to solve. Contrary to popular belief, there are other ways to get leaves off a lawn instead of raking (although a bit of exercise couldn’t hurt people). Cordless electric leaf blowers will not completely eliminate greenhouse gases, since the electricity comes from a power plant and more than 80 percent of our electricity comes from fossil fuels. However, they would significantly help. Power plants are “…equipped with scrubbers to filter out pollutants, the kind of technology that could never be attached to a hand-held leaf blower” (https://www.washingtonpost.com). Electric (or battery) leaf blowers would also considerably help reduce the damaging health effects of air pollutants.

If I were a mayor I would permanently ban gas powered leaf blowers from Pelham. For too long people have taken advantage of little luxuries, paying attention only to convenience and not looking at the bigger picture. It’s time to realize that seemingly little actions can affect the world in a big way. Banning leaf blowers is one small step to solving some of our largest problems.
If I were mayor of New York City, I would implement ACE, a strategy I created, each letter standing for something we can improve. A is for altruism - we need to take into consideration the people who aren’t as fortunate and help to make their lives better. C is for our carbon footprint - with climate change becoming an increasing threat to our society, we need to find ways to cut back on pollution. Lastly, E is for education - the NYC public school system is beneficial in many ways, but the quality of educational opportunity is uneven with more affluent communities often getting access to the best schools.

Altruism (A) can be achieved by supporting and creating more programs that give children of low-income families more opportunities, in terms of trips, tutoring, and scholarships. In a poverty stricken family, educational enrichment may not be the highest priority, so organizations like these can help insure the children don’t fall behind. This learning can be balanced out with fun, while still educational, such as trips to museums that the children would otherwise probably never visit. Programs like these, largely run by volunteers, not only help others but also give a sense of worth to the people lending their time.

New York has the second highest carbon footprint (C) in the world, which means we emit very large amounts of greenhouse gases. These gases contribute to global warming, causing sunlight to be trapped in the ozone layer and reflected back onto our Earth. In a world where climate change is a dangerous reality, we should be doing all we can to avoid adding to it. This can be done by planting more trees and also establishing more opportunities for solar panels. Trees have many benefits, but as relating to global warming, they can absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gases as well as releasing oxygen through photosynthesis. Solar panels will contribute a more eco-friendly city because they help cut back on the burning of fossil fuel for energy, which is another cause of pollution and climate change.

While we have some of the best public schools in the country, the education (E) system is flawed in that wealthier neighborhoods tend to have schools with more resources and better teachers. This is not a coincidence, and adds to the fact that students who aren’t as wealthy don’t have the same opportunities as middle and upper class students. As a result of the zone system, certain schools only accept students who live within the vicinity. This means that if a student wasn’t happy with the education they were getting in their local school, they may have to move which is completely out of the question if the family is low income. At the same time, students who aren’t as wealthy but also give a sense of worth to the people lending their time.

I would like everyone in the community to sign a kindness agreement. This can be done by planting more trees and also establishing more opportunities for solar panels. Trees have many benefits, but as relating to global warming, they can absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gases as well as releasing oxygen through photosynthesis. Solar panels will contribute a more eco-friendly city because they help cut back on the burning of fossil fuel for energy, which is another cause of pollution and climate change.

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Everyone deserves an equal chance at success - New York City

Everyone will make pie for a contest and I would be the judge of course because I am Mayor and I like pie - Wellsville

I would like everyone in the community to sign a kindness agreement - East Rockaway

**What Kids Will Say...**

Next time you go to litter think to yourself, “Maybe I should find the closest trash can!” - Shoreham