If I were Mayor, I would start with a few small specific problems affecting the Village of Babylon. Then I would address some of our bigger and more expensive problems. The taxpayers deserve their tax dollars to be used efficiently to target both small and large issues that need solutions.

First, I would work amidst the Parks and Recreation Department making Southards Pond a family-friendly pond by creating a space for kayak rentals. Families could hike, bike, fish and boat in the great outdoors of our own community. A lot of people would spend more time at Southards Pond if money was invested into cleaning up the pond and providing additional activities for families to enjoy. This investment would promote good health, as well as create revenue for the Village.

The second thing I would do is invest in solar. Making Babylon “green” by building solar canopies at the parking lot of the train station, municipal properties, government office buildings and parks. This will benefit the community by producing clean and efficient energy as well as reducing the fiscal cost of electricity. The monies saved could be utilized to fix some of the village’s infrastructure issues.

The most significant project is remedying the street flooding in Babylon. In the residential areas the streets flood from rainwater and bay water. This flooding creates havoc for commuters, school children and the vehicles driven. By creating catch basins to collect the overflow from sewage drains in specified flood areas, this problem can be resolved. These basins will be an environmentally friendly way to eliminate street flooding and prevent the flooding of homes, vehicles and property. This will allow all members of the community to function as usual during periods of heavy rain and coastal flooding.

The Village of Babylon is a beautiful, prominent and friendly coastal community on Long Island. It offers many opportunities and services to its citizens, however with these green and fiscally responsible additions to this great village, it would become a more environmentally friendly community. I would love to be the Mayor making these pivotal changes.
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 1,300 essays were submitted on topics as varied as encouraging green communities, building and improving recreation and community centers, prioritizing public safety, constructing parks and playgrounds, repairing streets and sidewalks, creating alternative public transportation, installing solar and LED lighting, encouraging downtown revitalization and beautification, finding best use of parking, building affordable housing, combating smoking 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 Mayor, I would work to connect all of Buffalo in a ring of equal interlocking pieces, where each piece supports the piece next to them, and the piece across from them. This goal of a united community will lead to a prosperous city where everyone benefits in a safe and enjoyable environment.

The first step in my plan is to improve the environmental state of the City of Buffalo. To accomplish this, I will instate one environmental-cleanup day aside from the standard Earth Day. This day will be called “A Greener Buffalo.” On every June 2nd, the Birthday of William H. Donaldson, the City of Buffalo will focus on cleaning up their environment around them and hopefully inspiring the participants to continue helping their environment outside of June 2nd. Also, I will implement a voluntary service similar to George E. Waring’s “White Wings” from 1895. The service would be called the “Green Wings of Buffalo” and is voluntary. Its goal is to clean up the streets of the City of Buffalo. You will need to be at least 16 years of age to participate. This service will help high school students, as they will need to complete their said amount of voluntary hours to graduate.

The second step in my plan is to emphasize on education spending of the city, with approval from the legislative branch. With this plan in place, I can improve our education services and the safety of that environment. With this focus, I can increase the number of extra-curricular activities after school for everyone in all schools. I will add new technologies in schools such as a Chromebook to every middle school and high school student. I will also increase the security of every middle school and high school by adding a police officer in each building, if not already there.

The third step in my plan is to advance the current infrastructure system for the City of Buffalo. I would invest in a team of experts to devise a way to avoid contaminating our water pipes with harmful impurities, such as lead. Due to heavy winter environment, it is very common to see potholes on the streets of Buffalo. Through a live satellite, a team of experts can locate potholes in the areas of Buffalo and determine the correct time and cost of repair for that particular pothole. With a viable and convenient time of operations, I can fix the problem of potholes in Buffalo almost entirely.

The last step in my plan is to attract more tourists to Buffalo, and in turn, generate more revenue. Being close to a world wonder is an immense advantage for tourism in Buffalo, but there are also other places tourists can stay to look at the falls. If I can open new attractions such as theme parks and historical exhibits, I can boost tourism in the city.

All in all, this four-step plan will lead Buffalo into a vibrant and pleasant community to live in.

SECOND PLACE WINNER
SUMANYU JANAPAREDDY
Lancaster Middle School
Teacher: Mrs. Danielle Wendel
City of Buffalo

Sumanyu Janapareddy is an 8th Grade high honor roll student at Lancaster Middle School. He loves learning about 19th century history and reading mythology books, particularly by Rick Riordan. He is a 1st degree Black Belt in Taekwondo. He spends his spare time writing poems and short stories, and likes to animate Legos. He enjoys playing the violin in his school orchestra.
THIRD PLACE WINNER
ELLA COSTANTINO
Saratoga Central Catholic School
Teacher: Mrs. Bridget Holmes
City of Saratoga Springs

Ella attends Saratoga Central Catholic. Academics are important to her, so she strives to do her best in school. She plans on pursuing Psychology and Law, and wants a career in the Behavioral Analysis Unit within the FBI. Ella also enjoys sports. She is a volleyball, golf and tennis player. In her downtime, she skis, plays the ukulele, and loves spending time with her friends.

If I were Mayor, I would create better parking in downtown Saratoga. Downtown Saratoga is such a busy place full of great restaurants, beautiful shops, and workplaces for many people. All year round, downtown Saratoga is moving non-stop. Track season is an especially busy time for little Saratoga. Everyone loves going downtown to grab a bite to eat with old friends or find the perfect place to park while they enjoy themselves. That being said, we don’t want to ruin beautiful land with an unsightly cement parking garage, or cause an uproar due to loud noises and extra busy streets full of construction workers. Parking is an issue, but we also need to take into consideration the lives of the people who we might be impacting.

In order to find a happy medium I would do something that appeases both sides. Saratoga Springs has a parking lot right by our police station. Why not expand on that? I’m not saying we should create an ugly five-story parking garage right smack in the middle of the city. As Mayor of Saratoga Springs, I would have this parking lot reconfigured into a “green” parking lot. This would not be your average parking garage. It would have a level underground for police officer parking and four more above ground. However, only three of these levels would be used for parking. The top level would be turned into a beautiful park with a panoramic view of Saratoga. There would be artificial grass so there’s no need for maintenance. It would have a 100% recycled cast acrylic railing all the way around the perimeter of the park, trees in special areas where dirt was placed and beautiful reclaimed wood swings for people to sit and relax. This would be an easy way to create more parking that is environmentally friendly and not an eyesore. The parking lot is already there so we wouldn’t be demolishing any existing structure and it’s not in a very busy area in downtown, so the construction wouldn’t cause too much of an inconvenience. This parking garage would cost $5 for 24-hour parking. There would be gates in the entryways of the parking garage which would prevent any unpaid parking. Access to the park above would be from a separate entry via an elevator. The elevator would run on solar power to keep a “green” energy theme. As Mayor of Saratoga Springs, I would create a beautiful answer to this ugly parking problem we have today.

Participating Schools
Allegany-Limestone Middle School
Babylon Jr. Sr.High School
Beecher River Central School
Carrie Palmer Weber Middle School
Charles A. Mulligan Middle School
Chittenango Middle School
Columbia Secondary School
Cooperstown Central School
Corpus Christi Holy Rosary School
Dake Junior High School
East Middle School
Eugenio Maria De Hostos School
Gloversville Middle School
Gloversville Middle School
Gloversville Middle School
Golden Middle School
Graham School
Hudson Junior High School
Irvington Middle School
Johnson City Middle School
Lake Pleasant Central School
Lancaster Middle School
Lewiston-Porter CS
Malone Middle School
Maple Ave. Middle School
Marcus Whitman Middle School
Menands Union Free School District
Mineola HS
New Hyde Park Memorial HS
New Paltz Middle School
Norwood-Norfolk Central School
Oliver W. Winch Middle School
Oneonta Middle School
PEARLS Hawthorne School
Pelham Middle School
Petrova Middle School
Pomonah Middle School
R.C. Murphy Jr. High School
Saratoga Central Catholic School
Sewanhaka HS
Sleepy Hollow Middle School
St. Peter RC School, Lewiston
The Magnet School For Math & Science Inquiry
The Wheatley School
Van Wyck JHS
Vernon-Verona Sherrill MS
Wellsville Secondary School
West Middle School
Westchester Hills School