

PRESS RELEASE

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Hesperia High School student wins MWA essay contest

Apple Valley, CA — When shortening showers, removing grass, and turning off the faucet aren't enough, what other actions can you take to conserve water, regardless if we are in a drought or a deluge? This was the 2024 essay contest question posed to high school students living within the Mojave Water Agency's 4,900-square-mile service area.

Hesperia High School senior, Alexis Cisneros, rose to the top of 42 entrants to earn a \$3,000 scholarship. Oak Hills High School sophomore, Mariana Strong, and Oak Hills High School junior, Diego Cruz, came in as runners up to secure \$1,000 scholarships.



*Alexis Cisneros,
Hesperia High School*

“This was a very timely topic for the students to address,” said Mojave Water Agency Board President, Dr. Kimberly Cox. “Ever-changing state regulations continue to create a burden for water service providers and their customers to further cut back on water usage, and our students may very well have the answer to this challenge.”

Securing the first-place spot in this annual event is a multi-faceted process. Essays were reviewed by an independent panel of judges who determined the three finalists. This year's judges were Jisela Corona-Gonzalez, Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator for the Academy for Academic Excellence; Shannon Dunkle, Public Relations Specialist for the Town of Apple Valley; and Miriam Munoz, Public Information Officer for the City of Barstow.

All three finalists were then paired with a community mentor to steward them through the next phase of the competition, which included turning their essay into a presentation they delivered in front of the judges and an audience of friends, family, and Mojave Water Agency staff.

This year's mentors included Hesperia City Manager, Rachel Molina, who guided Cisneros to her first-place win; Terry Saenz, Public Relations and Marketing Manager for ICR Staffing, who coached Strong; and Chris Nunez, Director of Fund Development & Scholarships at Victor Valley College Foundation, who mentored Cruz.

In addition to her \$3,000 scholarship, Cisneros will reprise her presentation to an estimated 300 high school and middle school students at the Agency's upcoming Innovators High Desert Water Summit on Feb. 9. This event is free and open to schools within the Agency's service area. Bus stipends are available for schools to attend, and lunch is included. Contact efratt@mojavewater.org or call (760) 946-7000 ext. 7054 to register or for more information.

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