



# Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

821 Chesapeake Ave. #3568 • Annapolis, MD 21403  
443.221.6844 • [LivingOceansFoundation.org](http://LivingOceansFoundation.org)

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## Winners of the 2021 Science Without Borders® Challenge Students from the United States, South Korea, and Slovakia win international ocean art contest

ANNAPOLIS, MD — The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation is thrilled to announce the winners of their annual student art competition, the *Science Without Borders® Challenge*. Every year, this international contest engages students in ocean conservation through art, encouraging them to create pieces that inspire people to preserve, protect, and restore the world’s oceans and aquatic resources.

The foundation received entries to the *Science Without Borders® Challenge* from more countries than ever before. A total of 680 students from 63 countries sent in artwork illustrating this year’s theme, “The Magic of Mangroves.” Mangrove forests are important marine ecosystems that protect the coast from storms, filter the water removing sediment and pollutants, sequester a surprising amount of carbon, and provide critical habitat for many species both above and below the waterline. The winning entries in each category are beautiful pieces of artwork as well as excellent illustrations of the benefits mangrove forests provide to people and the environment.



Artwork in the competition was judged in two categories based on age. Sharon Choi won first place in the category for 15-19 year old students in the 2021 *Science Without Borders® Challenge* for her stunning artwork, *The Guardians of the Sea*. A 16-year old student at Sunny Hills High School in Fullerton, California, Sharon created a piece of art that illustrates how mangrove forests provide a refuge for marine species, particularly in their early stages of life. “I really liked the idea of mangroves being a safe-haven for young fish, like a kindergarten, so that is what I wanted to portray in my piece,” she said.

Mangrove forests support an incredible array of wildlife. Many species of fish and invertebrates rely on the intricate network of mangrove roots for protection when they are young, before entering the open ocean as adults. Sharon said that she hopes her artwork shows the importance of mangroves. “I don’t think that most people know about mangroves, so I hope that my art raises awareness about this ecosystem, so that it is equally talked about like coral reefs,” she said.

Second place in the high school category of the 2021 *Science Without Borders® Challenge* went Lesana Behanova from Trenčín, Slovakia for *Protective Wings of Mangroves*, and third place went to Michelle Yang from Sacramento, California for her piece, *Stop, Let's Preserve Our Mangroves*.

First place in the category for students 11-14 years old went to 13-year-old Dana Chung, a Korean boarding school student at Indian Mountain School in Lakeville, Connecticut. Her piece, *Shelter*, shows how mangroves create habitat for other organisms and shelters them from storms. Dana says that she wanted to portray mangrove forests as a “shelter that protects sea animals” and that she wanted to show that “mangrove trees are valuable, not just to people, but also for the Earth.”



This competition introduced students around the world to mangrove forests and encouraged them to learn more about this critical coastal marine ecosystem. Dana says that the *Science Without Borders® Challenge* made her really interested in the environment and mangrove trees, and the competition inspired her to do more. “I’m so fascinated by this topic that I would like to learn more about mangroves and create a website to teach others about this ecosystem too,” she said.

Zihan Wang from New York City took home second place in the middle school category for her piece, *Propagules' Future*, while Chenyue Wang from Cupertino, California won third place for her artwork, *Seed of Hope*.

Each of the winners will receive scholarships of up to \$500 from the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation to celebrate their achievement and so they can continue to pursue their interests in art and ocean conservation.

Through this competition, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation hopes to educate students worldwide about the need to protect our ocean and inspire the next generation of ocean advocates. Amy Heemsoth, Director of Education at the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation, said that “students and teachers who participate in this competition continue to impress me with their evident passion for marine conservation and drive to make a difference. This gives me hope for our ocean’s future.”

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#### **The Science Without Borders® Challenge:**

The Science Without Borders® Challenge is an international student art contest run by the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation to engage students in marine conservation through art. The annual competition welcomes entries from all primary and secondary school students 11-19 years old. Scholarships of up to \$500 are awarded to the winning entries. Students and teachers interested in next year’s competition can learn more and apply at: [www.livingoceansfoundation.org/SWBchallenge](http://www.livingoceansfoundation.org/SWBchallenge)

**Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation:**

The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation is a US-based nonprofit environmental organization that protects and restores the world's oceans through scientific research, outreach, and education. As part of its commitment to *Science Without Borders*®, the Living Oceans Foundation provides data and information to organizations, governments, scientists, and local communities so that they can use knowledge to work toward sustainable ocean protection.

[www.livingoceansfoundation.org](http://www.livingoceansfoundation.org)

**High-Resolution Images of Winners and their Artwork:** <https://adobe.ly/3y9ujjN>.

**Available for Interviews:**

Amy Heemsoth

Director of Education, Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

[heemsoth@lof.org](mailto:heemsoth@lof.org), +1 443-221-6844 #2

**Media Contact:**

Liz Thompson

Director of Communications, Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

[thompson@lof.org](mailto:thompson@lof.org), +1 443-221-6844 #1