

## Local Tampa Middle School Students Celebrate Earth Day by Illustrating the Importance of Recycling

TAMPA, Fla., April 23, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Tampa middle school students from Tampa Bay Christian Academy are well on their way to being the next generation of environmental leaders as they creatively displayed the importance of recycling in a recent art contest. In honor of Earth Day, fifth, sixth and seventh grade students participated in a Recycling and Science Poster Contest organized by Covanta, operator of eight Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facilities in Florida, and Step Up For Students, a nonprofit that administers scholarships for Florida schoolchildren.

The contest asked students to visualize their commitment to recycling and science by depicting a theme, such as Energy-from-Waste, composting, recycling, electronic recycling and more. For its participation, the school received a \$500 gift card to Staples to be used for school supplies.

Winners were honored for their outstanding design at a ceremony held on Earth Day.

### **Winners:**

- First Place – Aaliyah Lewis, Sixth Grade
- Second Place – Natalie Moreland, Seventh Grade
- Third Place – Jasmine Morgan, Sixth Grade
- Honorable Mention – Spencer Mitchell, Fifth Grade  
Zoelee Lopez, Fifth Grade  
Ester Pauline Martinez Bemal, Seventh Grade

Through Step Up For Students, Covanta has funded over 140 scholarships for deserving Florida students since 2016. The funds are donated through the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, which serves lower-income children in Florida by allowing them to attend the school of their choice.

"Because of companies like Covanta, Florida's lower-income students are provided the educational options they need to succeed," said Doug Tuthill, president of Step Up For Students. "We are grateful for their partnership, generosity and commitment to helping students in their community."

"We are proud of the impact we've had on Florida schoolchildren through our contributions to the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program and were thrilled to see the passion for the environment that each student displayed in their posters," said Tom Murphy, client services manager for Covanta. "It's fun activities like this one that teach kids the importance of reduce, reuse and recycle. This also includes educating students about the fourth R, recovery, which ensures that we recover energy from waste that cannot otherwise be recycled. We thank all of the students who submitted posters and encourage them to bring that same zeal and creativity to future opportunities to make a positive impact in their school and community."

Covanta's EfW operations provide sustainable waste management to Florida communities and generate enough renewable energy to power over 300,000 area homes and businesses.

### **About Covanta**

Covanta is a world leader in providing sustainable waste and energy solutions. Annually, Covanta's modern Energy-from-Waste facilities safely convert approximately 22 million tons of waste from municipalities and businesses into clean, renewable electricity to power one million homes and recycle over 600,000 tons of metal. Through a vast network of treatment and recycling facilities, Covanta also provides comprehensive industrial material management services to companies seeking solutions to some of today's most complex environmental challenges. For more information, visit [covanta.com](http://covanta.com).

### **About Step Up For Students**

Step Up For Students is a nonprofit organization that helps administer the income-based Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Students who qualify for the national free or reduced-price lunch, or those who are homeless or in foster or out-of-home care, may qualify. The scholarship program provides tuition assistance to the private school of their parents' choice or financial assistance to offset the transportation cost to an out-of-district public school. Since 2001, Step Up has awarded nearly 784,000 Florida Tax Credit scholarships.

In February 2019, the Urban Institute released results of a study on the effectiveness of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, the nation's largest private K-12 scholarship program. The study found that students on scholarship for four or more years were up to 99 percent more likely to attend a four-year college than their peers in public school and up to 45 percent more likely to earn bachelor's degrees.

Step Up also helps administer the state-funded Gardiner Scholarship for Florida students with certain special needs, plus two new scholarships, the Hope Scholarship for public school students who are bullied and the Reading Scholarship Accounts for third- through fifth-grade students enrolled in public school who struggle with reading.

For more information, visit: [www.StepUpForStudents.org](http://www.StepUpForStudents.org).

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