

'Art for Earth' Fall 2026

An Exciting Opportunity for Your Students!

'Art for Earth' Information Sheet



Contest Reminder

- Submission Period: October 1–30, 2026
- Winners Announced: November 15, 2026
- Award Ceremony Dinner: December 2026

4CCF Art Contest
16 Jerome Road
New London, CT 06320 401.524.1638

INTRODUCTION

Program Overview

'Art for Earth' connects science with creative expression to inspire environmental stewardship, support student wellness, and introduce future career pathways.

- **Who Can Participate:** Students ages 5–19. With the pivotal support of foundations, sponsors, local businesses, and individual contributions, we're expanding this impactful program across southeastern Connecticut.
- **Participation Formats:** Individually or in collaborative teams (up to 5 students). Eligible groups include classrooms, homeschools, and afterschool programs.

Contest Details Important Dates (2026)

- **Fall:** Call for Entries
- **October 1–30:** Submission Period
- **November 15:** Winners Announced
- **December:** Award Ceremony Dinner

Prizes & Recognition

- 1st, 2nd, and Honorable Mention per age group
- Gift cards for art supplies or eco-stores
- Eco-Champion Art Award Certificates
- Featured placement in online galleries, the 4CCF website, social media, and print materials

Judging Criteria

- Creativity & Originality
- Connection to Theme
- Visual Impact & Craftsmanship

Art For Earth 2026 Themes



5–8-Year-Olds: "Where the Land Meets the Water"

Theme Overview: Think about places where water and land come together — beaches, ponds, rivers, marshes, puddles after the rain, or tiny streams in the woods. What animals, plants, colors, sounds, and feelings do you notice there? Create artwork showing how land and water help each other and why these places are special to protect. Have fun exploring nature through colors, textures, shapes, and imagination!

- **Focus On:** Wonder, observation, belonging, emotional connection to nature.

Big Question

Imagine: "If you were a small fish or frog living in our local river, what would your home look like?" What amazing things happen where water and land meet? Think about puddles after the rain, marshes, beaches, ponds, streams, rivers, or the ocean. What animals, plants, sounds, and colors do you notice there? Create artwork showing why these places are important and how they make you feel.

Writing Prompts

- "My favorite place where land and water meet is..."
- "If a puddle or pond could talk, it would say..."
- "I can help protect water and land by..."

Young Scientist Connections

Students in this age group begin learning how plants, animals, water, weather, and land work together in nature. Your artwork can show:

- Habitats and living things
- Weather and seasons
- Water movement
- Animal homes
- Caring for nature

Solo or Team?

Create your artwork by yourself or with up to five classmates. Working together means:

- Sharing ideas kindly; Taking turns; Listening carefully; Helping each other solve problems



9–11-Year-Olds: "The River Remembers!"

Theme Overview: Imagine if a river could tell stories. What has it seen over time? How do people, animals, weather, pollution, boats, storms, and communities affect the health of the water? Use your art to explore the relationship between people and waterways and show how our choices can help rivers stay healthy and strong.

Have fun exploring storytelling, history, community, and stewardship through your art!

- **Focus On:** Empathy, responsibility, teamwork, awareness of community impact on nature.

Big Question

If a local river could speak, what stories would it tell about its past, present, and future? Think about how wildlife relies on it, how humans use it, and what happens when pollution or storms arrive. Create artwork showing how human choices impact waterways and how we can work together to keep them healthy.

Writing Prompts

- "If our local river wrote a letter to our community, it would tell us..."
- "A change I noticed in the water or land near me is..."
- "Our community can help the river remember healthy days by..."

Young Scientist Connections

Students in this age group explore ecosystem dynamics, human impacts, and water systems.

Your artwork can show:

- Ecosystems and food webs
- Pollution, runoff, and water quality
- River flow, watersheds, and natural filtration
- Conservation and restoration projects
- Community action and stewardship

Solo or Team?

Create your artwork by yourself or with up to five classmates. Working together means:

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12–15-Year-Olds: "Fragile Connections"

Theme Overview: Land and water are deeply connected. What happens when one changes? Explore themes like erosion, flooding, pollution, sea level rise, habitat loss, conservation, or resilience. Your artwork can express both environmental challenges and hopeful solutions. Think about how communities can work together to care for fragile ecosystems.

Have fun pushing your creativity to show cause, effect, balance, and hope!

- **Focus On:** Reflection, resilience, collaboration, environmental identity.

Big Question

How does a change in one part of an ecosystem ripple through the rest of the natural world? Think about critical issues facing ecosystems today, as well as the ways communities respond to build strength and balance. Create artwork that highlights environmental challenges alongside inspiring, realistic solutions.

Writing Prompts

- "An unseen connection between land, water, and human life that I want people to notice is..."
- "When an ecosystem is damaged, resilience looks like..."
- "A solution that could restore balance to a fragile local environment is..."

Young Scientist Connections

Students in this age group study complex systems, environmental science, and climate impacts.

Your artwork can show:

- Erosion, soil health, and land changes
- Flooding, sea level rise, and extreme weather
- Habitat loss, biodiversity, and ecosystem collapse
- Nature-based solutions (e.g., wetlands, living shorelines)
- Community resilience and environmental management
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16–19-Year-Olds: "Reimagining Our Relationship with the Earth"

Theme Overview: Dream Big—create art that highlights bold solutions for a sustainable future. How can communities create a healthier balance between human activity, land, and water? Use art to imagine bold futures shaped by restoration, sustainability, equity, innovation, and environmental justice. Your work may explore climate resilience, cultural relationships to water, environmental activism, green design, or community healing. Challenge viewers to think differently about the future and inspire meaningful action. Have fun using artistic expression to challenge perspectives and spark meaningful change!

- **Focus On:** Visionary thinking, advocacy, innovation, environmental justice.

Big Question

How can we redesign our societal relationship with nature to build an equitable, sustainable, and resilient future? Think about how policy, technology, activism, and cultural wisdom intersect to repair environmental harm. Create artwork that pushes boundaries, confronts systemic challenges, and presents transformative visions for people and the planet.

Writing Prompts

- "The future I imagine where humanity, land, and water exist in harmony features..."
- "Environmental justice in my community means..."
- "My artwork challenges the viewer to take action by..."
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Young Scientist Connections

Students in this age group analyze advanced environmental policy, climate science, and interdisciplinary solutions. Your artwork can show:

- Climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies
- Environmental justice and equitable access to resources
- Sustainable urban planning, green design, and renewable technology
- Ecological restoration and indigenous/traditional ecological knowledge
- Environmental activism, policy, and systemic change

Solo or Team?

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Creative Expression Meets Mindful Reflection!

Art and reflection work hand-in-hand! By pairing hands-on artwork with thoughtful prompts, we give students a powerful, multi-sensory way to learn.

When kids share the story behind their creations, they move beyond simple art-making into deep, reflective thinking – building confidence, emotional awareness, and turning creative intuition into lasting insights.

How success manifests itself

- Peer-to-peer dialogues shifting from "I don't know what to make" to "What if we tried combining our ideas?"
- Students articulating complex local ecological concepts using their own accessible, creative terminology.
 - Parents and community members at exhibitions expressing surprise and pride at the depth of young artists' environmental insights.
- A shift in classroom atmosphere from hesitation or stress to grounded, focused creative flow.
 - A tangible sense of ownership and pride when students see their physical artwork displayed in professional public settings.
- An overarching feeling of community connection – reassuring youth that their perspectives on local environmental futures genuinely matter.



What Success Looks Like

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