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2026 Virginia Aviation Art Competition Winners Advancing to National Stage

RICHMOND, Va. (February 24, 2026) – The Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV) proudly announces the nine winners of the 2026 Virginia Aviation Art Competition. These outstanding student artists will advance to the national competition in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the National Aeronautics Association (NAA).

The theme for the 2026 competition, **"Fly to Save Lives,"** invited students to explore how aviation supports emergency response, medical transport, disaster relief, search and rescue, and humanitarian missions. Students from across the Commonwealth submitted artwork reflecting this powerful theme, demonstrating imagination, technical skill, and thoughtful interpretation.

All artwork submissions were judged blindly to ensure fairness and impartiality. Entries were evaluated on originality, use of color, relation to the theme, and overall composition. DOAV's panel of judges brings professional backgrounds in aviation, engineering, and education, ensuring a well-rounded and knowledgeable review process.

If any of these students win on the national level, they will then progress to the international competition in Lausanne, Switzerland, sponsored by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), where student artwork from around the world will be showcased and judged.

Entries were recognized in three age-based categories:

Junior Category Winners (6 - 10 years old)

First Place: Seren Shen – Great Falls, VA

Second Place: Aria Gu – Vienna, VA

Third Place: Alex Zheng – Vienna, VA

Intermediate Category Winners (11 – 14 years old)

First Place: Jennifer Xia – Great Falls, VA

Second Place: Aiden Zhang – Falls Church, VA

Third Place: Callie Hu – Great Falls, VA

Senior Category Winners (15 – 18 Years old)

First Place: Annie Chen – Fairfax, VA

Second Place: Daisy Ying – Great Falls, VA

Third Place: Christina Hou – Arlington, VA

The DOAV also celebrates the remarkable achievements of Virginia students in the 2025 competition. In last year's national contest, three Virginia students earned top honors: Andrew Yang of Great Falls received First Place in the Junior category, Aspen Xing of Vienna received Second Place in the Intermediate category, and Lalitha Kuchipudi of Chantilly received Third Place in the Senior category. Kuchipudi went on to win the **gold medal at the international competition** hosted by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, distinguishing herself as the top student aviation artist in the world.

"These students' achievements reflect not only their remarkable talent, but their dedication and imagination," said Greg Campbell, Director of the Virginia Department of Aviation. "We are proud to see them share their creativity with the nation—and potentially the world—and to represent the very best of Virginia on the national and international stage."

The Virginia Department of Aviation extends its appreciation to participating students, families, teachers, and schools for their continued support of aviation education and the arts.

For more information about the Virginia Aviation Art Competition and other educational initiatives, please visit **www.doav.virginia.gov**.

About the Virginia Department of Aviation

The Virginia Department of Aviation serves the Commonwealth by promoting aviation growth, safety, and education. Through partnerships with airports, schools, and industry stakeholders, DOAV works to strengthen Virginia's aviation system and inspire the next generation of aviation professionals.
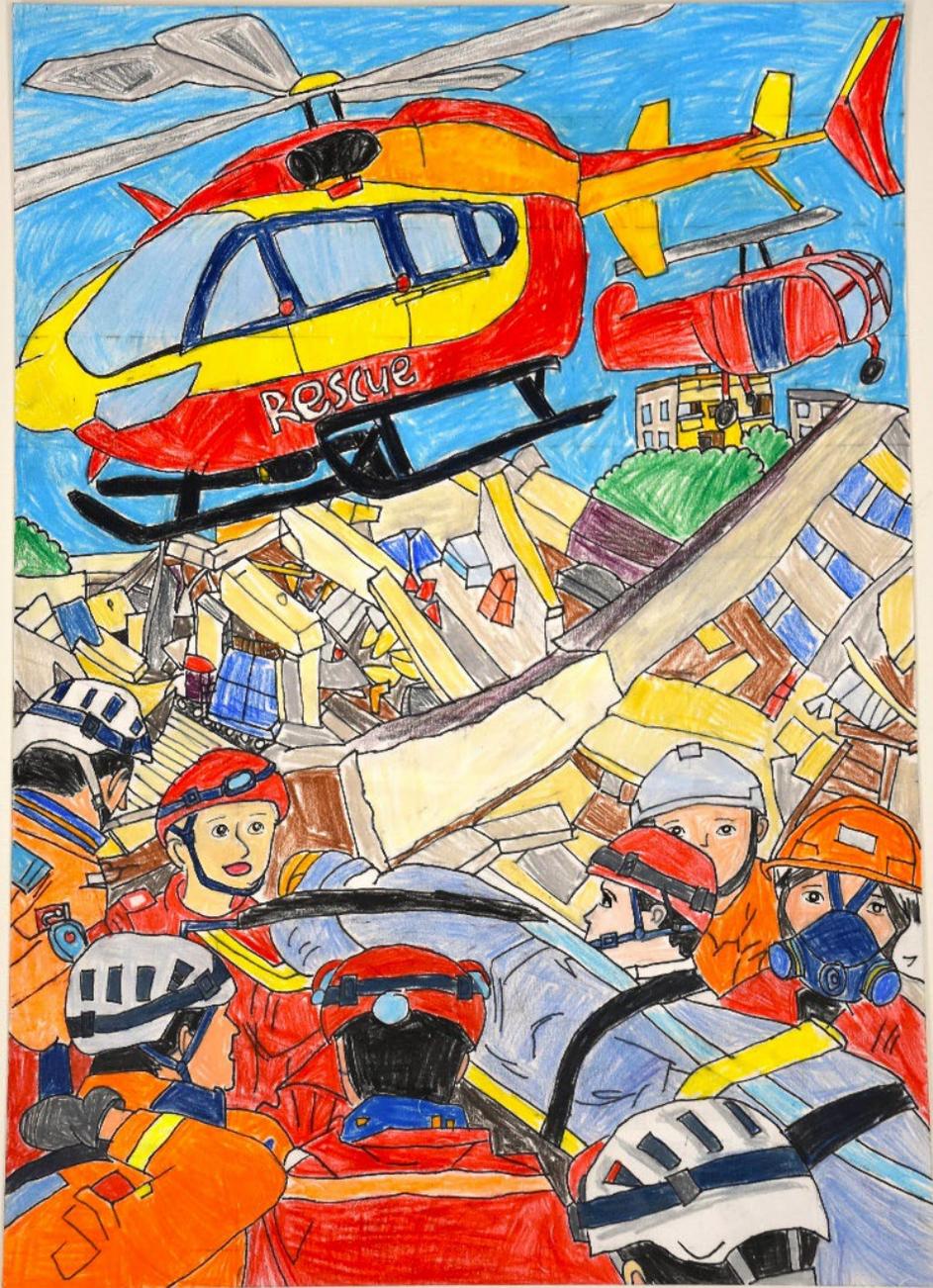
Photos of art below...

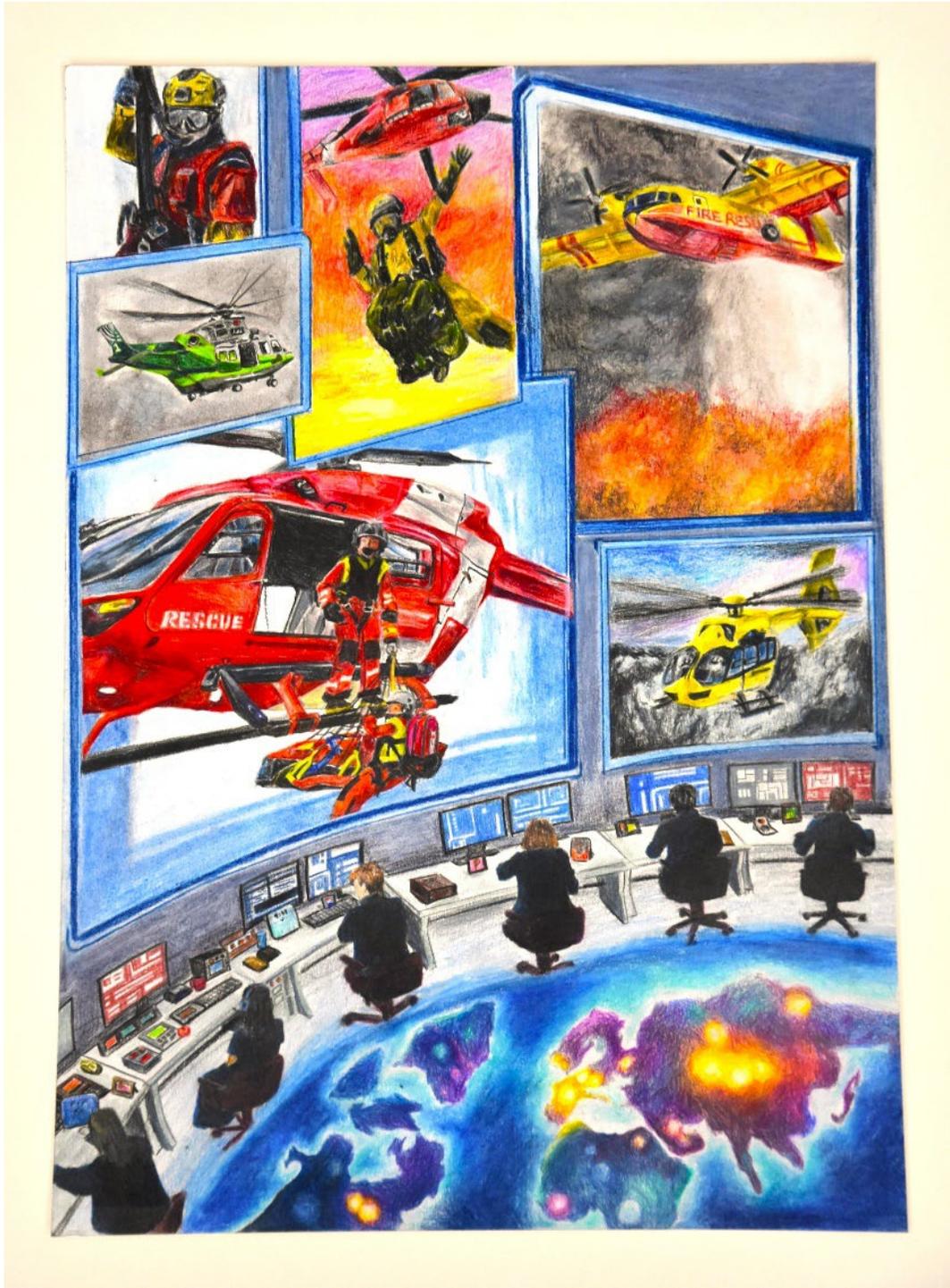**First Place, Junior Category:** Seren Shen – Great Falls, VA

Second Place, Junior Category: Aria Gu – Vienna, VA

Third Place, Junior Category: Alex Zheng – Vienna, VA

First Place, Intermediate Category: Jennifer Xia – Great Falls, VA

Second Place, Intermediate Category: Aiden Zhang – Falls Church, VA

Third Place, Intermediate Category: Callie Hu – Great Falls, VA

First Place, Senior Category: Annie Chen – Fairfax, VA

Second Place, Senior Category: Daisy Ying – Great Falls, VA

Third Place, Senior Category: Christina Hou – Arlington, VA