



New Jersey Division of Fire Safety

FIRE FOCUS



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Washington Community School of Bayonne Captures 2026 NJ FIRE Bowl Title

On May 15, 2026, the 19th Annual New Jersey FIRE Bowl program culminated at Kean University's STEM Building with the top four teams responding to questions during a single elimination tournament. The team from Washington Community School of Bayonne edged out Dwight D. Eisenhower School of Freehold in the final round of a hard-fought competition.



Photo Caption: The team from Washington Community School (Bayonne) accepts the NJ FIRE Bowl Championship Belt for the 2nd consecutive year.

The 2026 edition of the FIRE Bowl proved to be the most competitive ever, with 38 teams of 7th- and 8th-graders battling throughout the spring to see which school knows the most about fire science, history, prevention, firefighting, and safety.

The program, which began as a partnership between the NJ Division of Fire Safety and Dr. Frank Field to promote "Fire Is" educational videos, continues to grow each year. The goal is to instill life-long fire safety practices through spirited competition. In addition to studying fire prevention, students study fire science, firefighting operations, the history of fire/firefighting, as well as fire in current events.

Since 2005, over 2,400 middle school students have participated in the New Jersey FIRE Bowl, several of whom have gone on to pursue careers in the fire service.



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NJDFS Welcomes New K-9 Team **Following Retirement**

The DFS Fire Investigation / K-9 Unit is pleased to welcome K-9 Cash to our team. He is partnered with Fire Investigator Scott Royle, who also joined our unit back in February. Together, they have been training for the past three months to become certified as an Ignitable Liquid Detection K-9 Team in accordance with the NJ Attorney General K-9 Standards, and they are expected to be fully certified by the time of this article. When not training or responding to fires, they have recently been busy performing many K-9 lecture / demonstration programs, including the NJ FIRE Bowl competition and DCA's annual "Take Your Child to Work Day."

The appointment of the Royle and Cash K-9 Team comes following the retirement of Fire Investigator Rod Meyer and his partner, K-9 Hank, after Meyer's 22-year career with DFS. He was one of our original three K-9 Handlers since 2004 when we started our K-9 Ignitable Liquid Detection Program. Meyer had four K-9 partners through the years: K-9s Taz, Ashes, Merwin, and Hank. Their impact upon the state's Fire Service and residents was impactful and memorable, so we hope that they enjoy their well-deserved retirement.

In addition to K-9 Cash, the unit has two other veteran K-9 Teams: K-9 Remi, who is partnered with Fire Investigator / K-9 Coordinator Stephen Letts, and K-9 Mila, who is partnered with Fire Investigator Joe Jackson. Currently, additional unit personnel are Supervising Fire Investigator Jason Spiecker, and Fire Investigator Braulio "Woody" Villegas, but the unit anticipates filling another staffing vacancy soon.



Fire Investigator Scott Royle & K-9 Cash form the newest team in the Fire Investigations / K-9 Unit.



The NJDFS Fire Investigations / K-9 Unit, 2026, with their partners training at the Atlantic County Fire Academy in Egg Harbor Township.



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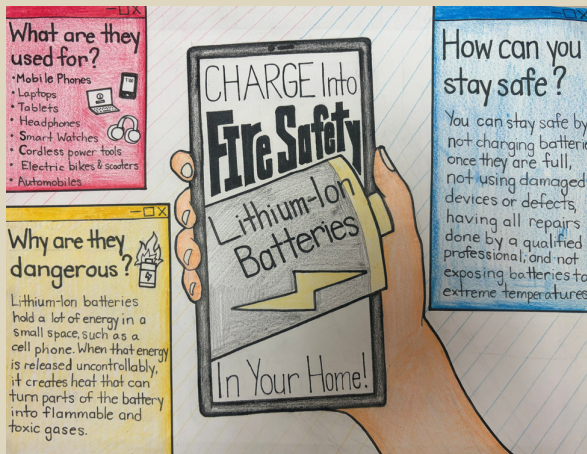


NJDFS Selects State Winners of 2025-2026 Fire Safety Poster Contest

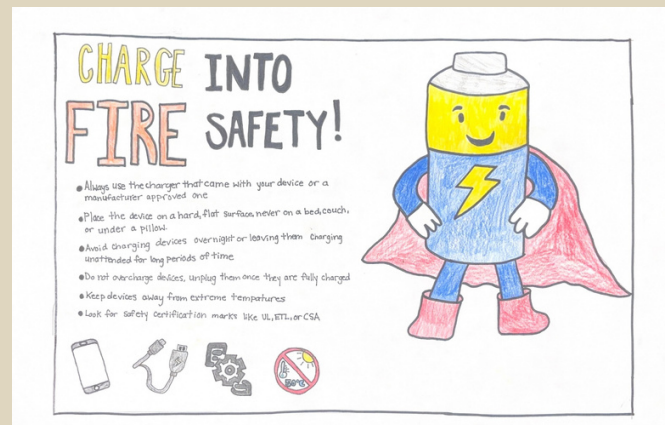


Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, artistic students from around New Jersey created original artwork to promote fire safety messages in their schools. Using the past year's Fire Prevention Week theme - "Charge Into Fire Safety - Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home" - young artists from kindergarten to 12th grade submitted thousands of entries into the New Jersey Fire Safety Poster Contest.

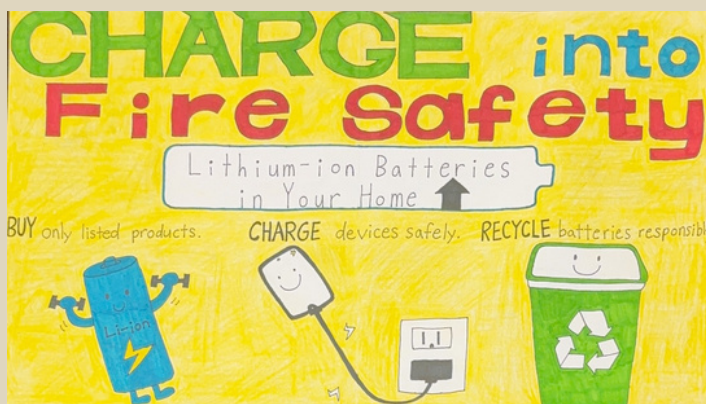
The contest is a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety and the New Jersey Fire Prevention & Protection Association. The winners shown below will be featured in the 2027 New Jersey Fire Safety Calendar.



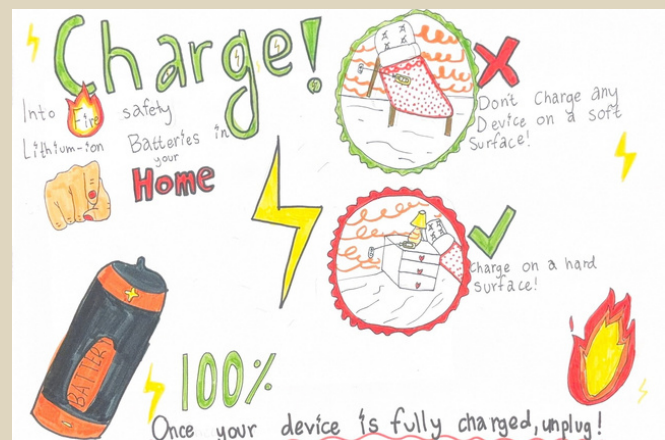
Erin Wang
Central Regional Middle School
Town, NJ



Ryan T.
Veterans Memorial Middle School
Brick, NJ



Ariel Im
Millington School
Millington, NJ



Ava Carvalho
Woodland Elementary School
Warren, NJ

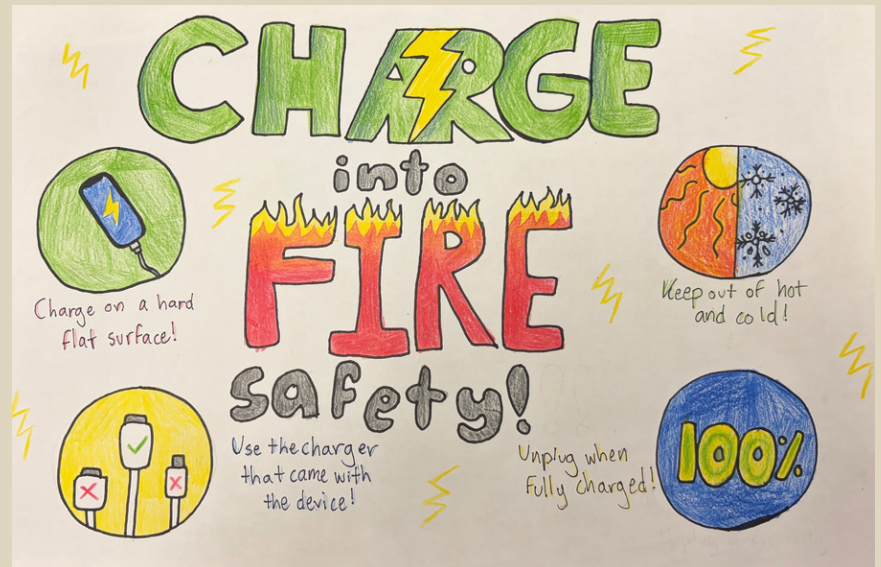


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2025-2026 Fire Safety Poster Contest Winners (cont.)



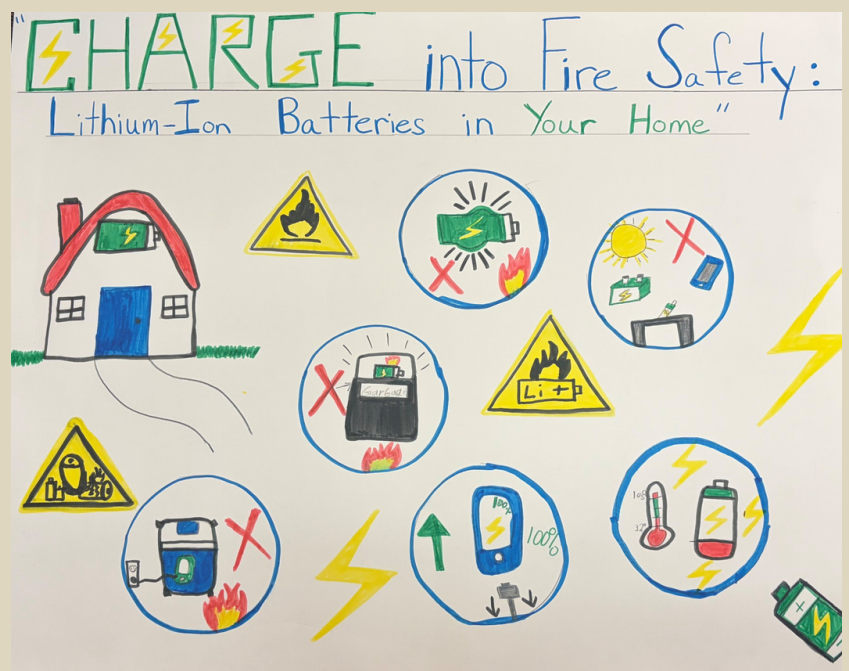
Dylan DeSantis
Kearny HighSchool
Kearny, NJ



Sydney Dudzak
Veterans Memorial Middle School
Brick, NJ



Karas Hanna
William Shemin Midtown Community School
Bayonne, NJ

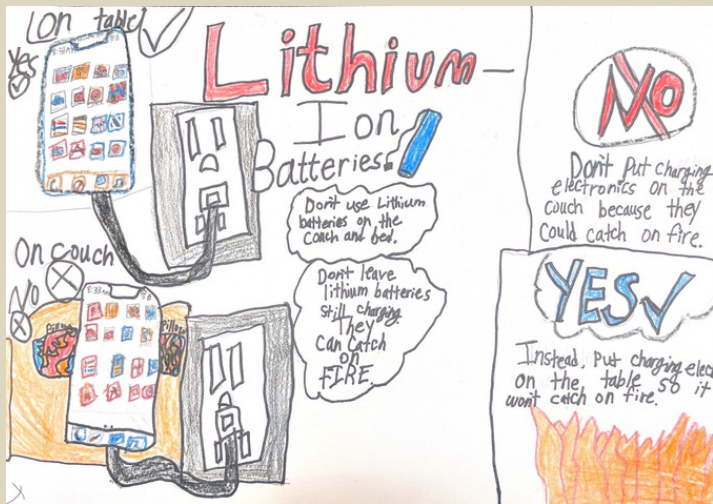


Melanie Magalski
Barclay Brook School
Monroe Twp., NJ



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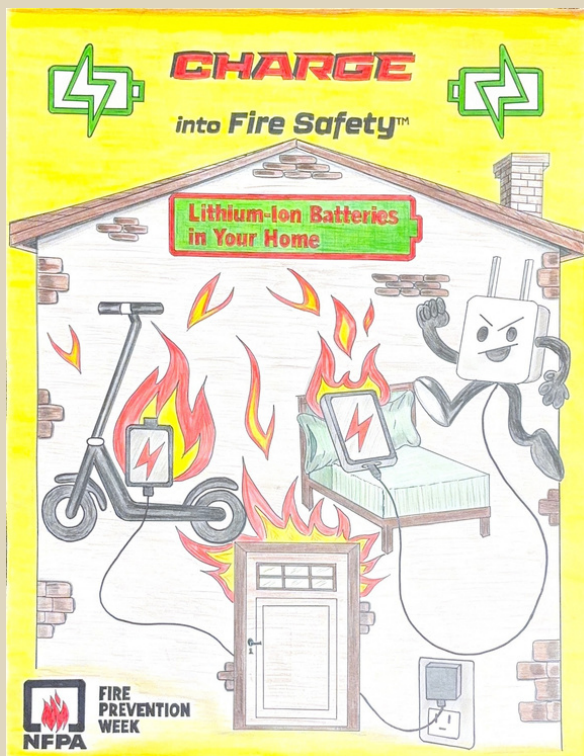
2025-2026 Fire Safety Poster Contest Winners (cont.)



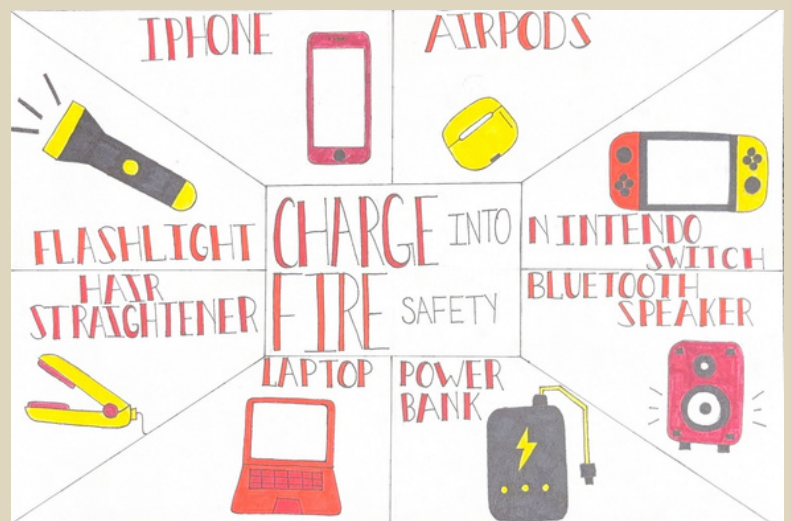
Chloe Edwards
Marian Emmons McKeown School
Newton, NJ



Vivian Westlake
New Albany School
Cinnaminson, NJ



Jeunir Meshreky
Lincoln Community School
Bayonne, NJ



Mackenzie Sessa
Brick Township High School
Brick, NJ



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SUMMER FIRE SAFETY

As the seasons change here in New Jersey, so do the hazards that could potentially cause fires. Here are some tips that your fire department, or fire prevention bureau, can promote in your towns this summer season:

Fireworks

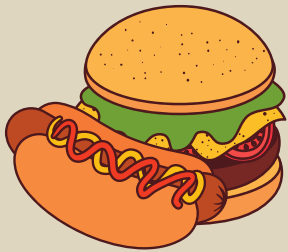
***To enjoy fireworks this summer, the best way is to see a public show put on by professionals.**

***Be aware of how dangerous even simple fireworks are at home. Sparklers can reach 2,000 degrees F and cause 3rd degree burns.**

***NEVER allow young children to handle fireworks.**



Grilling



***Before you barbecue, make sure all elements of your gas grill are working properly and not leaking gas.**

***Keep your grill well away (at least 10 feet) from your home or anything that can burn.**

***NEVER leave the grill unattended. Closely monitor what's cooking.**

Campfires / Fire Pits

***Build campfires at least 25 feet away from tents, shrubs, and anything that can burn.**

***Use fire pits OUTDOORS ONLY. Put them on a flat, level surface.**

***Fires for recreation should never be lit on balconies, underneath eaves or overhangs, and away from railings or siding.**



As with all seasons, focus on having and practicing fire escape plans and stress the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home.

If we're all fire smart, Jersey is *shore* to have an amazing summer!



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