

**CULTURAL ARTS COMMITTEE
CITY OF PALM DESERT
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: July 9, 2025

PREPARED BY: Debbie Thompson, Administrative Assistant
Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Approval of the 2026 Student Art and Essay Contest Theme and Vinyl Wrap Competition

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve theme for the 2026 Student Art and Essay Contest.
2. Approve continuation of the vinyl wrap competition as part of this annual program.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The City of Palm Desert's Student Art and Essay Contest is entering its 39th year and continues to be a fun and creative way for students in grades K–12 to express themselves through visual art, murals, and writing. Students from all Palm Desert schools are invited to participate, and all entries will be proudly displayed for the community to enjoy.

After a great turnout at last year's event, we're excited to once again partner with the University of California, Riverside – Palm Desert Campus (UCR) to host the 2026 contest. Artwork and essays will be on display in Building B from February 9 through March 27, 2026. The awards ceremony will take place on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

DISCUSSION:

Each year, the Cultural Arts Committee selects a theme to inspire student creativity. Below are a few suggested ideas for 2026:

- Under the Sea
- In the Garden
- My Neighborhood
- A Walk in the Park
- Things I See on the Way to School
- People Who Help Us
- Imaginary Animals (no AI-generated images)

Staff will begin outreach to schools at the start of the 2025–2026 school year. All student submissions will be due by January 30, 2026.

We also recommend continuing the vinyl wrap component of the contest. This popular element allows selected students artwork to be featured on traffic signal cabinets around the city. After

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judging, staff will bring the top entries to the Committee to choose one or more designs to be professionally reproduced and installed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost to produce and install the vinyl wraps will not exceed \$6,000 and is included in the approved Public Art budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026.

ATTACHMENT:

Past Contest Themes