



# SERT Spotlight



We Celebrate  
**#EarthDayEveryDay**  
*Because a good planet is hard to find.*

## Make Plans Now for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day

**APRIL 22, 2020** will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the very first [Earth Day](#) celebration. That remarkable day in 1970 is recognized as the world’s largest civic event. Since then, people around the world spotlight the planet’s environment by holding activities on or around April 22 to raise public awareness about the negative effects pollution has on Mother Earth.

The idea for Earth Day was proposed by Senator Gaylord Nelson who had witnessed the damage caused by a massive oil spill in 1969. Nelson was inspired by student involvement in the anti-Vietnam War movement and realized that if that same energy were to be focused on the environment, change would take place. In 1970, his staff organized a national “teach-in” that focused on educating the public about the environment. They were able to convince 20 million people across the United States to participate in protests, rallies, and other public events on April 22, 1970 to raise awareness about the environment and find ways to protect the planet. By 1990, the event had gone global with 200 million people in 141 countries participating. In 2016, the United Nations signed the Paris Climate Agreement into force on Earth Day, reinforcing its importance.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FEBRUARY 2020

# How Will Your School Celebrate Earth Day?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Through the years, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has shown its commitment to protecting the earth by making intentional, environmentally-friendly decisions in the areas of building construction and maintenance, resource conservation, transportation, materials and waste cycles, and information technology. MCPS continues to be a leader in “green” and healthy-schools initiatives and integrates environmental literacy into the curriculum at all grade levels. Those who support Earth Day understand that awareness and education are the foundations for progress. This is why we promote Earth Day within MCPS.

Our schools celebrate Earth Day with variety of activities. Some will hold special assemblies or have school spirit weeks that focus on the event. Other schools host community cleanup activities, plant trees, or work in community gardens. Last year, **Cresthaven ES** crafted a large “earth” surrounded by beautiful flowers. Smaller flowers were distributed to each teacher, then each class wrote one idea for helping the earth on their teacher’s flower. All flowers were then displayed in the hallways before spring break. **Rocky Hill MS** celebrated Earth Week with various themed days that focused on specific earth-friendly actions: Paperless Day, Waterways Day, Plastic Awareness Day, Clean Up Day, and Power Down Day. Students and staff wore earth colors on Friday. **Blake HS** celebrated Earth Week with different activities

including wearing green one day to promote “green” living, and gray on another to highlight the effects of pollution. On Friday, treats were given to everyone who properly recycled something. They also had a pledge tree and a station where students could learn about the school’s native garden.

All of these different actions not only help us make our earth a better place to live, but also teach our students to be responsible environmental stewards and future leaders.

## Earth Day’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is this April!

If you haven’t already made plans to celebrate this momentous occasion, now is the time to start! The first step in joining the Earth Day movement is to visit <http://www.earthday.org> and learn about the history of Earth Day and about present-day activities happening around the globe. A wealth of environmental information, including project resources and ideas, can also be found on the Environmental Protection Agency’s website, <https://www.epa.gov/earthday>.

You’ll find Earth Day activities and crafts suitable for young students at <http://www.kidssoup.com/EarthDay/EarthDaycrafts.html> and lessons/activities for all grade levels (K-12) at <http://www.educationworld.com/holidays/archives/earthday.shtml>. A few Earth Day songs and poems are posted at <http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems51.html>.

Let us know once you’ve finalized your plans for Earth Day. Email a list of your planned activities to [SERT@mcpsmd.org](mailto:SERT@mcpsmd.org) and we’ll share them on our [website](#).

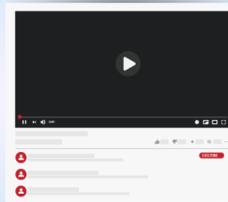
## #EarthDayEveryDay

Earth Day is not just about one day, it’s about being conscientious citizens every day and protecting the planet we call “home” Visit <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/outdoored/> to experience adventures in nature the MCPS way and [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) to get involved with the Nature Conservancy program. If your school isn’t a Maryland Green School, visit <http://maeoe.org/> to review the application process.

**HAVE YOU FINISHED  
FILMING AND EDITING  
YOUR CONSERVATION  
VIDEOS YET?**

**IT’S ALMOST TIME  
TO SUBMIT YOUR  
SCHOOL’S BEST WORK!**

**SERT  
VIDEO  
CONTEST**



**ENTRIES ARE DUE ON  
FEBRUARY 28TH!  
CLICK HERE FOR CONTEST DETAILS.**

# Meet Darae Kang

## Nine Questions for a Four-time “Watts Up?” Contest Winner

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Over the years, MCPS students and staff have submitted thousands of entries for SERT’s [annual poster contest](#). As you can imagine, we receive a wide assortment of pieces—from pencil sketches on notebook paper to glittery 3D arts and crafts projects. The entries also fall into a broad range of both talent and passion for saving energy and recycling. Some entries are obviously class assignments that whisper “I did this because my teacher forced me to” while others make us stop and take a moment to appreciate the thought, effort, and skill that went into the creation of the piece. The art we receive from Darae Kang, now a student at Wootton High School, definitely falls into the latter category. Darae is an extremely gifted young lady whose poster submissions have won first or second place four of the past five years. As a fan of her work, I was interested in getting to know a bit about her artistic process. Darae graciously accepted my request for an interview, which follows. [Linda McLaughlin]



DARAE KANG 2018

### What is your most important tool as an artist?

As simple as it sounds, I usually work with the materials that are available in any given situation. Tools aren’t the priority for me as an artist because, in my opinion, the most significant aspect in creating art is one’s imagination and creativity. Each tool and material that I use in my art has its own distinct quality and significance.

### What is the hardest part of creating a piece of art?

The most difficult process of creating SERT posters is the planning I do before putting anything to action. In reality, the amount of time I spent deciding on *what* to draw takes significantly longer than the actual sketching and coloring process. Once I have a complete idea, the rest of the process is fairly quick.

### Do you doodle on every blank surface you find or is drawing something you do intentionally?

I often find myself doodling on any plain surface, or even on the fogged windows of my school bus. When I was young, I enjoyed drawing imaginary friends all over the walls of my house and couch, which definitely was not something my parents encouraged! I realized that when I am holding a pen or pencil, I can’t seem to stop myself from doodling. It seems that I’ve developed a subconscious habit.

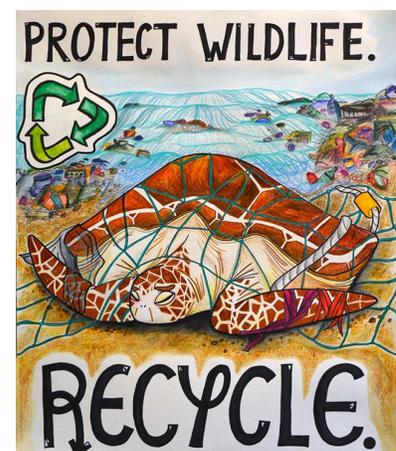
### Who has influenced your individual style?

My style has been shaped by numerous external influences over the course of my life. Memorable events, or even small things influence how I think, and therefore, how I draw. One major factor of my art style would be my mom. In my opinion, she is an extremely talented artist who inspired me at a young age to enjoy art. Although she is not a professional, I highly respect her art technique.

### What’s your creative process?

As previously mentioned, my greatest difficulty is thinking of a great idea. So before I start creating the poster, I always brainstorm ideas in a notebook. For a couple of weeks, I carry the notebook with me everywhere in case inspiration hits me. Ideas often come unintentionally, and they are bound to be forgotten soon. All of my posters have been created by unexpected ideas. Forcing myself to squeeze my imagination has never brought me good results. The very first step in creating posters is coming up with a captivating and impactful idea.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



DARAE KANG 2019

# Interview with Darae Kang

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

## What is it about being creative that excites you the most?

Art is a method of expressing oneself. Just as everyone is different, art can reflect the uniqueness of each individual. I love art because there is no standard rule for good and bad. Artistic interpretation is the reason why there is no limit to art.

## What makes you know you are finished with a piece?

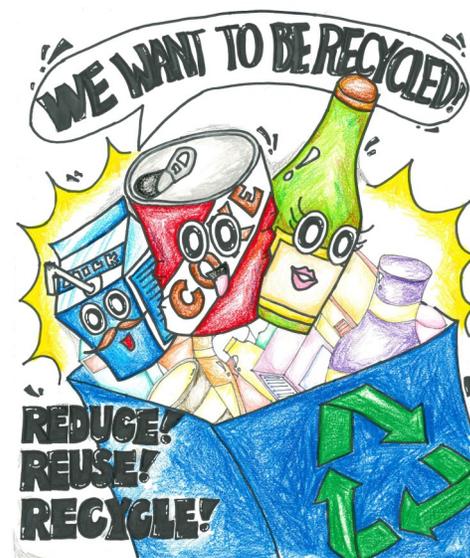
In all honesty, I never know when my artwork should be considered final. It is difficult for me to finalize my work because I would always see flaws that could be improved.

## Do you plan to study art when you go off to college?

Although I do enjoy art, I have always considered it as a hobby. I've never taken art lessons and I lack artistic knowledge and technique, but I am thankful that others enjoy seeing my artwork. My first time entering the SERT contest was when I was in the fifth grade, when there was a school-wide contest held in my elementary school. I had no clue that I'd win so many times! I'm extremely honored and lucky to be given the opportunity to promote recycling through my art.

## What is your advice for creating posters?

I think the most important part of creating a poster is to be successful in depicting the main message that the poster will convey. Forcing multiple ideas into one poster may dilute the impact, and be hard to understand or be memorable for viewers. Posters should be inspiring, even at a quick glance. It is effective to use bold colors that are captivating to the eye.



DARAE KANG 2015

I hope that my posters will make a small impact on the community by promoting recycling. Small efforts to help the environment can make a huge difference in the future. Global warming is real, and humans are the main cause of this effect. However, I also believe that we are capable of solving this problem. I'm thankful that through my artwork, I am able to communicate my love for the environment and raise awareness about the importance of conserving the world we live in.

02.20

REMEMBER TO HELP MCPS SAVE ENERGY BY DOING A LONG WEEKEND SHUTDOWN FOR PRESIDENTS' DAY! [Click here.](#)

**SERT SPOTLIGHT** is produced by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program and distributed to school-based SERT leaders and team members, building service personnel, and many others who are interested in conservation and environmental sustainability.

As part of the Montgomery County Public Schools Department of Facilities Management, the SERT program provides opportunities for all schools to participate and receive incentives and recognition for their energy conservation and recycling efforts. The SERT program supports a balanced environment for the integration of all students to work together in a culturally diverse environment. Our goal is to provide the resources, support, and vision of the future for a successful conservation program at each school. SERT's motto, "It's your world. Choose to conserve!" promotes the connection between human behavior and its impact on the environment. It reinforces our culture of conservation and encourages participation in our mission to conserve resources and recycle actively.

