

STOP WASTE

May the 4Rs Be With You Contest 2023

Hedy Liu, Pleasanton

Overall Grand Prize Winner

My 4Rs: Reflect, Rethink, Regrow, Rebuild, and Reuse



My (Re)Generation Action Story:

My four R's (actually 5) are Reflect, Rethink, Regrow, Rebuild, and Reuse. I chose "Reflect" because in order to make a better future for the earth and all the living things that depend on it and grow from it, we need to take wisdom from the past and combine it with the future. We can all imagine how clean and pure the earth used to be, without pollution, clean and bright, with nature taking care of all the living things with such gentle care.

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Hedy's Story Continued:

My second R, which is “Rethink” is because we cannot just put the earth aside and continue our own lives without even caring for the environment and earth which we live on every second and every day. Thoughts are really powerful, so if we all rethink actions, such as littering, wasting food, and creating pollution by wasting fossil fuels, it will help our community become very conscious of the environment we live around. Sometimes, thoughts can become a very powerful call to action. My third R, which is “Regrow”, means that we should all learn from our past mistakes and “rise” above it. What that means is that we need to learn about our environment and the problems we are facing and find solutions to them together, because us humans were the ones who created this problem so it will also be all of us now, the new and bright generations, to fix and regrow together as one. Finally, my last R, which is “Rebuild” means that we need to work together and rebuild the messes we have created, heal the earth and bring back the spirit of nature. Whether you are working by yourself or with a team, I hope that all of you believe in the tiny sprouts of hope, take action, like teaching, following your own R's, or simply just make your voice heard. These are my 4 R's.

If you just take a peek at my art, you might not notice any important details and just see some random picture of a glowing earth with some roots/ branches holding it down. Well, I chose to draw a picture of the original earth, the one we now dream of and the one of the past. I made it glowing with a tint of green just to show how truly pure and beautiful the earth had once been when Mother Nature took care of it. This connects to the R “Reflect” because this earth I had drawn represents how the earth used to be. As for the roots, they symbolize time and change. The roots are holding down the earth, which symbolizes time and history passing, and how the once beautiful and clean Earth is fading away, dragged down and down into the deepest roots of history until it will cease to exist. And why? If you squint your eyes and study the picture closely, you would see the grayish and dull trash around the roots, with some real pieces of trash glued on top. This represents all the pollution, litter, and waste of energy humans are creating. All the trash drawn underneath are all gray because it represents our blindness and careless actions towards the earth. I also drew a picture of a bird, who had gotten very sick because she couldn't eat with the bottle cap stuck to her beak. I chose the color of her feathers, once a vibrant orange full of life, now fading away and dying because of the blind and harmful actions we humans have done to all these living things. This connects to “Rethink” because we need to stop, and reconsider our actions and the effects it will have on all living things and Mother Nature and do the right thing. Finally, there is a person floating, or rising above the earth with a tiny little sprout sprouting from her heart and mind. This represents all the hope and courage humans have, and how we need to find our activism voice like those who have gone before us. You may also notice that on the roots there are also little shoots of green growing out of the roots. Those also represent the hope and courage that has been waiting for the right moment, to sprout a glimmer of hope for us to follow. This connects to “Regrow” and “Rebuild” because we cannot just think about our problem, but stand up for the earth and actually take action, no matter how small or how big the action is.

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Hedy's Story Continued:

By now you might be thinking why I chose the R "Reuse" when I didn't explain about it at all ! Well, I REUSED A LOT of the supplies I used for my art. I "reused" a piece of paper that had almost been thrown away but I managed to save. (If it weren't for the thick layer of color you would be able to see the first draft of my drawing which I quickly decided to change.) For the base of the color I reused the watercolor paint that I had bought a long time ago for my art class. On top of the watercolor I used color pencils to make the drawing have special glow effects and make the little details pop out. For the trash that I had stuck on are all pieces of trash I caught from blowing away or just "reused" it when I was done with it. For the frame, my dad had helped me "reuse" old leftover wood scraps from his carpentry projects he likes to do. Then, he made them into this gorgeous frame which I drew my 4 R's on! It is kind of hard to read each R so you will have to tilt your head at horrific angles. I should also note that there was no space to put the last R, but you can get the idea of it in the picture. (Also to mention, the special frame tape that was used to put my art on is also something that had been reused even though they are very old and kind of broken.) After all, I want my piece of art to be teaching and encouraging for young activists!