

# Chapter 34

## Young Voices: Through the Arts, Future Environmental Stewards Have a Global Voice

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**Abstract** Young Voices, Horseshoe Crabs and the Arts™, is a global outreach campaign directed toward students from pre-K through high school, but shared with people of all ages. The program has been operated by the Ecological Research and Development Group, Inc. since inception in 1999. During the past 15 years, the program has grown from a few hundred to participation by many thousands around the world. We celebrate these young environmental stewards whose compassion for the conservation of this remarkable species, expressed through art, has elevated and transformed our perception of this often-misunderstood mariner. To the artists and educators who have made this program possible, we give our heart-felt thanks.

**Keywords** Conservation • Education • ERDG • Student • Art • School

### 34.1 Introduction

The Ecological Research & Development Group (ERDG), founded in 1995, is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization whose primary focus is the conservation of the world's four remaining horseshoe crab species. ERDG's philosophy is that the foundation of a successful conservation program is effective public education and coastal community support, combined with conservation initiatives that preserve essential habitat and minimize human impact.

To support their mission, ERDG has an annual juried arts competition to which students from around the world submit poems, tales, and images in appreciation and celebration of the remarkable horseshoe crab. The competition is open to all grade levels (pre-K–12). Students may enter through their school or individually.

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## 34.2 Approach

Each year 30–50 student visual and language artworks are selected from several hundred submittals to appear in an annual anthology, “Horseshoe Crabs & the Arts™”, which is posted on the ERDG web site (ERDG 2015), where all works are publically available and can be viewed anytime. The reach of these young voices is further extended by ERDG’s global social media contacts by posting on the ERDG Facebook page (ERDG-Facebook 2015). The works also have been reproduced for a traveling art exhibition, which has been hosted in art and nature centers as well as at public conservation events throughout the United States, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

## 34.3 Results

In 2014 alone, the Young Voices program received 450 entries from 5 countries (Japan, Hong Kong, Norway, Mexico and the USA), of which 35 were selected from each grade level that entered. Here we share some of the most compelling works among the winning entries from the past 15 years, since the program began in 1999. Through the arts, our future environmental stewards truly have a voice, which is heard globally.

### Order of images:



Donald Hudson 2005, 5th grade, Spruance Elementary School, Philadelphia, PA, USA, medium: collage



Faith Schaffer 2009, 10th grade, Haverford High School, Havertown, PA, USA, medium: watercolor



Anneliese Olbrich 2013, 8th grade, Rodney Thompson Middle School, Stafford, VA, USA, medium: watercolor



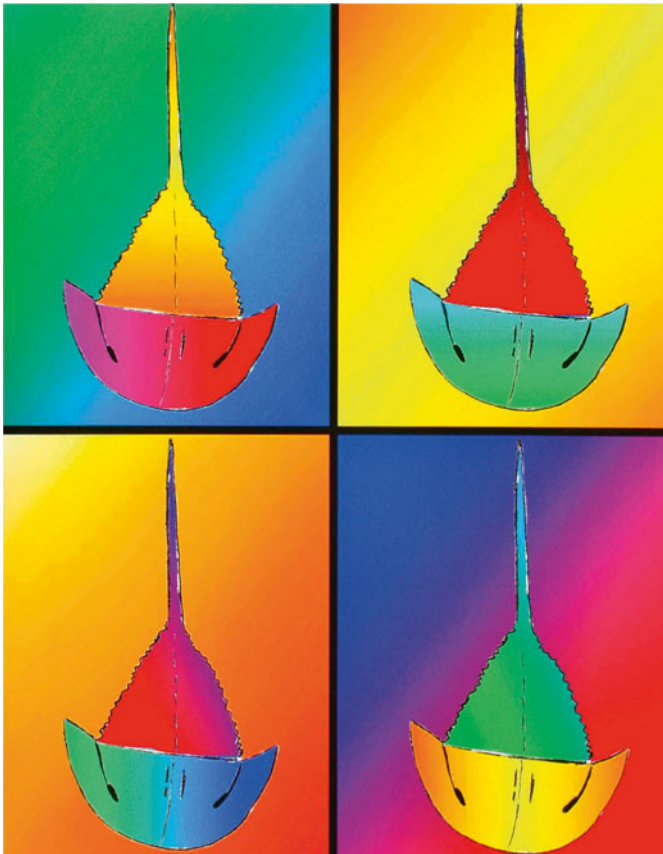
Aneet Mishra 2010, 8th grade, Kendriya Vidyalaya Port Blair, Andamans, India, medium: oil paint



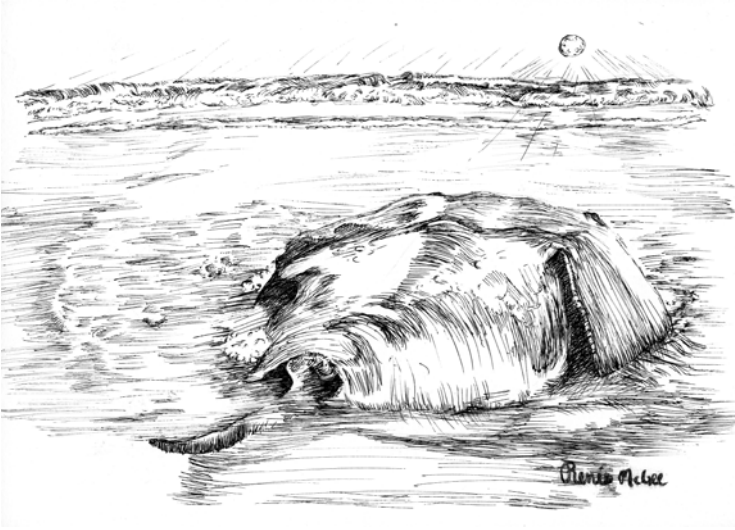
Carlos Bonilla 2005, 5th grade, Spruance Elementary School, Philadelphia, PA, USA, medium: collage



Madison McGlade 2005, 5th grade, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Cape May, NJ, USA, medium: watercolor



Mary Shoup 2010, 8th grade, Rodney Thompson Middle School, Stafford, VA, USA, medium: computer graphics



Renee McGee 2012, 8th grade, Rodney Thompson Middle School, Stafford, VA, USA, medium: ink drawing



Rosetta Silva 2014, 3rd grade, Field Street Elementary School, Carney's Point, NJ, USA, medium: water color



Ruby Tik Kei Ng 2014, 6th grade, Tsung Tsin Christian Academy, Cheung Sha Wan, Hong Kong, medium: colored pencil

## References

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