

# U.S. Senator Thomas R. Carper celebrates “Delaware Arbor Day” at Dover Air Force Base



U.S. Senator Thomas R. Carper helped plant an American holly tree at Dover Air Force Base to commemorate Arbor Day in the First State. (photo by John Petersen, Delaware Forest Service).

DOVER, Del. – U.S. Senator Thomas R. Carper joined public officials and schoolchildren to observe [“Delaware Arbor Day”](#) at Dover Air Force Base, which celebrated its 25th Year as a [Tree City USA](#). The last Friday in April is commemorated as Arbor Day in the First State, an occasion to encourage tree planting and highlight the numerous benefits that trees provide: cleaner air and water, natural beauty, valuable wood products and food, reduced storm water runoff, and improved property values. The ceremony also honored the [winners of the Delaware Forest Service’s annual school poster contest](#) and included a ceremonial tree planting of an American holly (*Ilex opaca*), Delaware’s state tree. Alaina Stecher, a fifth-grader at Christ the Teacher School in Newark, is the statewide winner of the Delaware Forest Service’s annual Arbor Day School Poster Contest. This year’s theme was “Trees are terrific... from acorn to oak!” The complete gallery of winning posters (with links to hi-res images) is at <http://delawaretrees.com/2017arbordaypostercontest>

[Established by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska on April 10, 1872](#), it is estimated that one million trees were planted on the very first Arbor Day.

Additional photos of the event can be found at the Delaware Forest Service’s Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/delforestservice>.



Col. Randy Boswell, 436th Mission Support Group commander, holds the 25th Year Tree City USA flag with Master Sgt. Donald Bourne, 736th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron airframe powerplant general section chief, and his family April 28, 2017, at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Bourne's daughter, Audriana, won the Kindergarten-level for Kent County in an Arbor Day poster contest. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Zachary Caciccia)



This poster by fifth-grader Alaina Stecher of Christ the Teacher School in Newark is the winner of the Delaware Forest Service's annual Arbor Day Poster Contest.



Statewide winner Alaina Stecher with (from left) Col. Randy Boswell, Dover Mayor Robin Christiansen, Delaware Agriculture Secretary Michael Scuse, and U.S. Senator Thomas Carper. (photo by John Petersen, Delaware Forest Service)

The annual school poster contest is open to all K-5 public, private, and charter schools as well as other organized youth groups and after-school programs. A total of 126 classrooms from 40 schools participated in this year's contest, with 3,647 students creating original posters. Winners were selected from each county in the following grade categories: K, 1 & 2, 3 & 4, and 5. Judging criteria were: originality, use of theme, neatness, and artistic expression. Each winner receives a tree-themed book and a print reproduction of their poster on fine art canvas. Thanks to corporate sponsor Delmarva Power, a free tree planting ceremony will also be

held at each winner's school. In addition, every participating classroom receives free pine seedlings for all participants. This year, students from the Middletown High School FFA Chapter and senior volunteers from the Modern Maturity Center in Dover wrapped thousands of seedlings for schoolchildren statewide.

This year's poster contest winners were:

### **New Castle County**

Kindergarten: Emily Najera – Robert S. Gallaher Elementary, Newark

Grades 1-2: Amy Tang – Jennie Smith Elementary, New Castle

Grades 3-4: John Chacko – Christ the Teacher School, Newark

Grade 5: Alaina Stecher – Christ the Teacher School, Newark

### **Kent County**

Kindergarten Audriana Bourne – Major George Welch Elementary, Dover

Grades 1-2: Isabelle Kim – WB Simpson Elementary, Wyoming

Grade 3-4: Haley Holderman– WB Simpson Elementary, Wyoming

Grade 5: Hailey McCutchan – Clayton Intermediate School, Clayton

### **Sussex County**

Kindergarten: Maryia Dorakhava – Rehoboth Elementary, Rehoboth

Grades 1-2: Shannon Scudder – Lord Baltimore Elementary, Ocean View

Grades 3-4: Amelia Meyer – Southern Delaware School of Arts, Selbyville

Grade 5: Samuel Winston – Winston Learning Academy, Milford

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