

# **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Steffen Thomas Museum of Art  
(STMA)**

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## **STMA AWARD CEREMONY FOR ART, ECOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECT**

On January 16, Greene County High School students participating in the ongoing STMA Arts Outreach Program©, “Op Art: Opportunities for Employment and Empowerment through the Visual Arts”, were invited to a special ceremony in the school auditorium, where winners were presented with ribbons and cash awards and all project students acknowledged and recognized with participation certificates. The first stage of the project, under the guidance and direction of this year’s STMA lead artist Karen Strelecki and with help from local artist and STMA docent Barbara Kimbrough, required students to produce individual sculptures made from recycled wire depicting the local flora and fauna found in and around Lake Oconee. First prize went to Lakiyah Brinkley, second prize to Lindsey Walker, and third prize went to Amanda Mann; honorable mentions were given to Kevin Benn, DeMarcus Peek, and Carrie Franklin; and teacher’s choice awards went to Sequandra Mapp, Amille Stephens, Carrie Franklin, and Chris Mitchell.

Julie Nolan and Margaret Hamrick had the difficult task of adjudicating. “It was a tough decision,” said Julie, adding, “the kids did a fantastic job – all of the entries were imaginative and each of the sculptures so different. We can’t wait to see what they produce next”. The completion of the school’s program will result in the production of a series of recycled wire sculptures depicting a lakeside scene, which will then be placed in an elevated showcase to be permanently and publicly displayed at Georgia Power’s Lake Oconee Parks Ferry Recreation Area. The unveiling reception of this environmental diorama will be at the end of the school year in May. The Director of the school’s vocational department welcomed STMA representatives, later noting that the STMA employment workshops on careers in the visual arts were helping Greene County youth determine their career paths as well as helping focus attention on the environment. The STMA “Op Art” Program is being introduced in turn to Putnam and Morgan County Schools and the Morgan County Madison Boys and Girls Club. Those interested in sponsorship of this STMA - Greene County High School Parks Ferry environmental diorama should call the Steffen Thomas Museum of Art Museum on 706-342-7557. STMA is grateful to Georgia Power – a Southern Company, the Francis Wood Wilson Foundation, and the Reynolds Plantation Foundation for their support and encouragement of the STMA Arts Outreach Program©.