

**Third Place Winner**  
**Aaron Carr – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – Beth Sefer Academy**

Hi! My name is Aaron. I am ten years old, and in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I want to tell you a little about air quality. I will write about the positive and negative effects of air quality, what ozone is, how it affects me, and how I can help keep the air clean.

What is ozone? Ozone is a colorless, tasteless gas that can be helpful, and dangerous. The helpful way is that it can block UV rays in the atmosphere. The harmful way is it can make you have trouble breathing, and will make you sick. Ozone can get too close to the ground and mix with other chemicals and can hurt you and me. We can keep track of ozone by using the Air Quality Index.

The Air Quality Index or, AQI is something that tells you how clean the air is. The AQI is color-coded from green to purple.

When the AQI is green, I can go outside and run around, play with my dog Max, ride my bike, and play tag without having problems breathing. There are no negative effects of air quality in the range.

When the AQI is yellow, I might have a little burn in my lungs when I play. But, still I can go outside and have fun!

When the AQI is orange, I can go outside, but I can't stay for long, or I might get a bigger burn in my lungs.

When the AQI is red, I myself, and other people cannot go outside as often as we'd like.

When the AQI is purple, I cannot go outside for even 5 minutes, or I can get serious breathing problems.

People a lot of times, smoke, burn plastics, rubber, and chemicals and unnecessarily leave their cars running. That can cause health problems too. Pollutants in the air caused by car exhaust or tobacco smoke makes the Air Quality Index rise to dangerous levels. Another gas found in these things is carbon monoxide, which is poisonous to your health. So don't smoke or leave your car running. People can get very sick if you do these practices.

Ways I can help are, I mow the lawn after 6:00, ride my bike, car pool, and take the bus. I can tell my mom to take one long trip to make deliveries, instead of going back and forth from home to someone's house and back home, again and again and again. When my dad burns yard waste, he only burns leaves and pine needles. I tell him not to burn things that can cause pollution.

So remember. Try not to pollute and find ways to keep our air clean. Good bye!