



NEWS RELEASE

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Two BCPS middle school students earn awards at Maryland History Day

One to advance to National History Day

Towson, MD – Vedansh Sawhney of Parkville Middle School and Lila Kassouf of Dumbarton Middle School earned honors in the 2021 [Maryland History Day](#) competition.

Sawhney, a student of teacher Molly Ricciardi, won second place in the junior individual website category for research on Nazi propaganda. As a second-place winner, Sawhney qualifies to compete in the National History Day competition.

Kassouf, a student of teacher Kathleen Barry, won the junior division Award for Excellence in Legal & Constitutional History, sponsored by Cynthia Raposo and Joseph Furey. Kassouf researched “How Frederick Douglass Viewed the Constitution.”

Sawhney and Kassouf were among more than 300 middle and high school students who submitted extensive historical research projects online for the 2021 Maryland History Day competition. The competition, usually held in person, is the culmination of a year-long program from [Maryland Humanities](#) (an area nonprofit organization). Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, Maryland Humanities once again administered the contest in a digital format this year, with project evaluation across five categories taking place over several weeks.

“We are so proud of our students Vedansh Sawhney and Lila Kassouf for their achievements in the Maryland History Day competition and so proud of their teachers Molly Ricciardi and Kathleen Barry for preparing them to succeed,” said Baltimore County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams.

Maryland History Day, coordinated by Maryland Humanities since 1999, is open to public, private, parochial, and homeschool students in Grades 6 through 12. Working solo or in small groups, students create original documentary films, exhibits, performances, research papers, or websites exploring a historical topic of their choice on an annual theme, which this year is “Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.” Maryland History Day sparks critical thinking and helps develop skills in research and analysis, writing, and public speaking.

Competitors at Maryland History Day have already won first or second place in their category at school and/or district levels. Students from 11 counties and Baltimore City received special awards, designated for outstanding Maryland History Day projects that cover specific subjects.

Sawhney will be among students from six Maryland counties and Baltimore City to represent Maryland in the National History Day competition, where they will compete among 3,000 participants from across the nation and beyond. National History Day, held in June, will also be virtual in 2021. The competition involves students from all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and international schools in China, Korea, and South Asia.

Maryland History Day is an affiliate of National History Day, a nonprofit education organization that promotes an appreciation for historical research among middle and high school students through multiple annual programs, including the National History Day Contest.

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation’s 25th largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).