

2026 AAPE Young Exhibitors Championship

Laurelei Fox, age 16, from New Jersey was crowned as 2026 Youth Grand Champion at the AAPE Young Exhibitors Champion of Champions (C of C) competition held during BALPEX held in the Greater Baltimore, Maryland area, August 7-9, 2026.

This year's event included 14 competitive exhibits created by youth aged 7 - 18. Exhibitors qualified for the Championship by winning AAPE Young Exhibitors Grand Awards at nationally accredited shows in the U.S. and Canada throughout the qualifying period (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026). Besides the designation of "Grand Champion", many other donated awards were presented. Awards consisted of gift cards and memberships; all participants received Merit Certificates, ribbons and memberships to the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors.

The complete listing of awards is as follows:

Young Exhibitors Champion of Champions - the Best Young Exhibitors exhibit shown in North America in 2025-2026. Donated by WESTPEX. Presented to Laurelei Fox (16), representing GASS, "Life and Celebrations of St. Patrick"

Reserve Champion - Donated by WESTPEX. Presented to Tabitha Fox (10) representing BALPEX, "History of Blarney Castle"

Traditional or Postal History Award - Donated by WESTPEX. Best traditional or postal history exhibit. Presented to Presley Whittaker (12), "Stamps and Saddles"

Howard Hotchner Award - For the best portrayal of North American philately. Donated by John Hotchner. Presented to Cooper Collins (14), "President Eisenhower in Philately"

ISWSC Award - Best use of worldwide stamps and material. Donated by International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors. Presented to Sahitya Setty (18), representing FLOREX, "Mango: King of Fruits"

American Topical Association Youth Award and Membership donated by the American Topical Association - Best topical exhibit. Presented to Ellen Tate (12), representing NOJEX "Swiftie Stamps"

Collectors Club of Chicago Awards

1. CCC Title Page Award - Presented to Charles Tate (16), representing OKPEX, "Path to Eagle"
2. CCC Synopsis Page Award - Presented to Genevieve Turner (11), representing Rocky Mountain Stamp Show, "Even More About Giant Pandas"
3. CCC Research Award - Presented to Tabitha Fox (10), representing BALPEX, "History of Blarney Castle"

WESTPEX Awards

1. WESTPEX Philatelic Write-up Award - Presented to Victoria Munoz (9), representing INDYPEX, "The Best Way to Own a Cat"
2. WESTPEX Creativity Award - Presented to Cynthia Turner (15), representing Rocky Mountain Stamp Show, "Beyond the Perf: Revolutionary Women "
3. WESTPEX Judges' Choice Award for Treatment or Material - Presented to Christina Esbeck (17), representing St. Louis Stamp Expo, "Sport Climbing"
4. WESTPEX International Award - Presented to Tabitha Fox (10), representing BALPEX, "History of Blarney Castle"

APS Membership Award - Donated by Ken Martin - Presented to Sahitya Setty (18), representing FLOREX, "Celebrating 200 Years of Florida's Capital 'Tallahassee'"

Most Improved Award - Donated by the Pinnacle Stamp Club, Little Rock, Arkansas. Presented to Victoria Munoz (9), representing INDYPEX, "The Best Way to Own a Cat"

Potentiality Memorial Awards - Donated by the Pinnacle Stamp Club, Little Rock, Arkansas. Presented to Johnny Itzkowitz (7) representing INDYPEX, "Peck Peck Postage"

WE Awards - Donated by Women Exhibitors.

- 1) Presented to Yumiko Ramirez (15), representing PIPEX "Big Horn, Big Mission"
- 2) Presented to Sahitya Setty (18), representing FLOREX "Butterflies, Nature's Flying Beauty"

All participants will receive a one year digital membership to the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors.

AAPE thanks all the generous individuals and organizations, which have so graciously donated these awards for our aspiring youth exhibitors.