

From the Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Contest
Michelle Huang
Dulles High School

In my painting, I emphasize the significance of actively preserving our natural world by depicting the storybook myth that answers the question “Where do babies come from?” Storks, of course, but the myth will turn into litter-covered storks bringing babies before long if the ocean is not protected. What comes around goes around. What industrial stacks emit into our skies reflects the amount of trash released into our oceans, but we often turn a blind eye to what we can easily ignore. It’s easy to justify one water bottle when the ocean seems endlessly infinite; however, despite the vast worlds beneath its surface, the fates of a multitude of species and habitats lie in our hands. At this point, even if our actions do not directly harm the environment, sitting idly by while others do is just as detrimental. It's now our responsibility to protect our earth by effecting change. This mentality should be one that we follow from a young age, hence the focus on a childhood myth. I used plastic, pull tabs, and paper to represent the damaging impact of debris in our oceans, and I threaded string around the stork’s legs to tie it down, portraying the often fatal effects of trash on wildlife both in our natural waters and dependent on them. This painting should be a shocking wake-up call to the urgency of ocean protection, because if storks cannot fly freely due to litter, then where would our babies come from?