



Department of Human Services

Department of Human Services Awards Teens for Creativity in Celebrating Their Family Tree

State Recognizes Winners for the 2018 New Jersey Teen Media Contest

May 23, 2018

(TRENTON) - The New Jersey Department of Human Services on Wednesday honored 12 New Jersey high school and middle school students for their winning entries in the 2018 New Jersey Teen Media Contest, which celebrated the students' artistic and written word portrayal of how their family tree may look.

The contest hosted by the department's Division of Family Development focused on the topic of family to engage high school and middle school students in creative thinking through art and the written word. Students created original hand-made artwork and written works that reflected the contest theme and the Department's ongoing outreach campaign: "*Child Support. It's more than just money.*"

Winners were chosen based upon their interpretation of the year's theme, with the winning art and written pieces to be featured in the annual Child Support calendar. Last year's winners can be viewed at www.NJTeenMedia.org.

"We are continually amazed at the talent, thought and emotion that the students put into their entries," said Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson "The caliber of the entries is a testament to the students and their teachers and schools. The contest saw one of its greatest levels of participation this year, and we thank schools statewide for continuing to embrace this program. From a short story on the boundless nature of family to poems about the history of prior generations to visually captivating artwork, this year's winners rose to the top through their unique and personal perspectives on family and their ability to capture the theme through imagination, words and images."

"This annual contest, now in its 23rd year, is just one way that we provide support to family units and young people statewide," said Natasha Johnson, the department's Division of Family Development Director. "The slogan for New Jersey's child support program is 'Child Support. It's more than just money,' and we welcome the opportunity to provide our young people a medium to really think about their family unit in a completely creative way."

Winners in the high school artwork category:

- First place, Mia Tomasino, Piscataway High School;

- Second place, Avia Hurley, Piscataway High School;
- Third place, Miya Preyer, Point Pleasant Beach High School.

Winners in the middle school artwork category:

- First place, Bianca Lumang, Academy 1 Middle School;
- Second place, Krishna Patel, Academy 1 Middle School;
- Third place, Kacey Zuniga, Levitt Middle School.

Winners in the high school written category:

- First place, Sophia Ginet, Ocean City High School;
- Second place, Hannah Malcolm, Point Pleasant Beach High School;
- Third place, Lauren Mirsky, Ocean City High School.

Winners in the middle school written category:

- First place, Isha Shrivastava, Linwood Middle School;
- Second place, Davian Small, Memorial Middle School;
- Third place, Kelsey Besser, Olson Middle School.

In addition to having their artwork featured in the 2019 calendar, each winner receives a plaque of achievement, a gift card and a pair of day passes to Six Flags Great Adventure. All winning entries will be displayed in the Statehouse Annex Tunnel from May 29 to June 1, 2018.

For more information about this program or the New Jersey Office of Child Support Services, please call **1-877-NJKIDS1** or go to www.NJChildSupport.org.

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