

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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FURTHER INFORMATION:  
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## HUMAN SERVICES AWARDS TEENS FOR CREATIVE DISPLAY OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

**TRENTON** — The Department of Human Services (DHS) today honored six New Jersey high school and middle school students for their winning entries in the Teen Media Contest, which helps promote parental responsibility in New Jersey's youth.

Celebrating its 16<sup>th</sup> year DHS' Division of Family Development, Office of Child Support hosts the event.

The contest uses the topic of parenting to engage tweens and teens in creative thinking through art. Students, who participate through their schools' art classes or faith and community-based organizations, create original artwork in their medium of choice to complement the Department's ongoing advertising and outreach campaign: "Child Support. It's more than just money." Winners are selected based upon their interpretation of the year's theme and their work is included in a calendar that is compiled and distributed every year.

"We have received - and used for our yearly calendars - some really professional-grade work from students who participate in this contest," said Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "It's an opportunity for them to showcase their talent and, the subject matter compels them to consider the implications and responsibilities of becoming a parent too soon."

"By illustrating what they have learned from their parents, teens get a small window into the hundreds of the things that parents teach their children every day," said Division of Family Development Director Jeanette Page-Hawkins,

This year's theme was for kids to illustrate a positive quality they have learned from a parent or guardian, such as how to be a good friend, how to work hard, how to make people laugh, or how to support others during tough times. The winners are listed below:

In the high school category:

- First place, **Josue C. Castillo**, Union County Vocational Technical H.S., Scotch Plains
- Second place, **Larissa Naegele**, Wall High School, Wall
- Third place, **Connie Yu**, John P. Stevens High School, Edison

In the middle school category:

- First place, **Caela Johnson**, William Davies Middle School, Mays Landing
- Second place, **Brooke Healy**, Schuylers-Colfax Middle School, Wayne
- Third place, **Violet Hoagland**, Long Branch Middle School, Long Branch

Winners received U.S. Savings Bonds, plaques of achievement and two day passes to Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, New Jersey. All winning entries will be displayed in the Statehouse from May 16 to May 20.

For more information about this program or the New Jersey Office of Child Support Services, please call **1-877-NJKIDS1** or log onto [www.njchildsupport.org](http://www.njchildsupport.org).