

ChildSupport.  
It's more than just money.



2018



**1st Place**  
Middle School, Hand-drawn Art  
**Lydia Yang**

# More than just money

The tagline for New Jersey's child support program is "Child Support. It's more than just money." Of course, money is important when raising a family. But a family's resources and its strength are a combination of many factors. Shared experiences, family traditions, and just simply spending time together create family history – and that is a powerful resource.

This year's child support contest asked middle and high school students to depict or write about a favorite family weekend. It is fun – and interesting – to see what weekend memories stay with children. Frequently, it is the being together on the outing, trip, or visit, not the event itself, that creates the memory.

Every family has its own story and the artwork, stories and poetry in this calendar give us a creative glimpse into an afternoon of apple picking, a day at the beach, a trip to see relatives in Indiana. As you turn the page each month, enjoy the journey!

Natasha Johnson  
Director, New Jersey Division of Family Development



## 2017 Teen Media Contest Winners

### Hand-drawn Art

#### High School

- 1st Place: Sharina Kuo, Cherry Hill High School West
- 2nd Place: Jackson Giesin, Piscataway Township High School
- 3rd Place: Corey Hallam, Union County Vocational-Technical High School

#### Middle School

- 1st Place: Lydia Yang, Schuyler Colfax Middle School
- 2nd Place: Tanya Aravind, Academy 1 Middle School
- 3rd Place: Fajrhafza Sohail, Academy 1 Middle School

### Digital/Computer-generated

#### High School

- 1st Place: Gisselle Criollo, Piscataway Township High School
- 2nd Place: Kiyomi Sutton, Piscataway Township High School

### Written

#### High School

- 1st Place: Stephanie Padilla, Kenmare High School
- 2nd Place: Brittany Richardson, Point Pleasant Beach High School
- 3rd Place: Jude Lovgren, Point Pleasant Beach High School

#### Middle School

- 1st Place: Meghan Lepsis, Olson Middle School
- 2nd Place: Harsh Patel, Morris County School of Technology
- 3rd Place: Julie Ham, Churchill Junior High School

New Jersey  
**ChildSupport.**  
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**3rd Place**  
High School, Hand-drawn Art  
**Corey Hallam**



# Orlando

About two years ago, in 2015, after twenty-five years on the job, my dad pulled the plug on his job and all it entails, consequently becoming a retired firefighter. My family was aware there would be a slight decrease in our annual income, but we were prepared. A few months later, the business my mother worked for closed and left her unemployed. She quickly found a new job, but received less than her prior position. In no way, shape or form were we poor, however, my sisters, parents and I did learn how to cut back on our expenses.

My parents had booked me a trip to Orlando, Florida prior to the unforeseen income issue and although money was tight, they were still determined to supply the vacation we had all been looking forward to. Our timeshare, Orange Lake has always been our top spot to escape to, but usually we were always busy park hopping, this time was different though and actually served as a true vacation. We did things on our own terms, at our own pace.

It was the simple things that made this trip so memorable. My parents go above and beyond for me; their sacrifices are selfless and plentiful. They'll never know how much I truly appreciate everything they do for me and this vacation was just one example of their generosity. My family vacation to Orlando, Florida is an unforgettable memory that I will hold close to my heart for years to come.

Selected excerpt. Read full essay at [NJTeenMedia.org](http://NJTeenMedia.org).



**2nd Place**  
High School, Written

**Brittany Richardson**



# Trees

Trees grow in various ways

As branches stretch in one's gaze

Leaves change as seasons sway

Roots develop in the nightly days

However trees grow old and trees don't stay

However close the trees will fade

And when trees fade the close shall weep

They will sadden at the loss of thee

Yet, the cycle of life is sustained

And as a life ends another starts

A leaf falls as a seed is planted

A child is born into the family tree



**2nd Place**  
Middle School, Written  
**Harsh Patel**

# MARCH 2018

sun                  mon                  tues                  wed                  thurs                  fri                  sat

February 2018

		1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

April 2018

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

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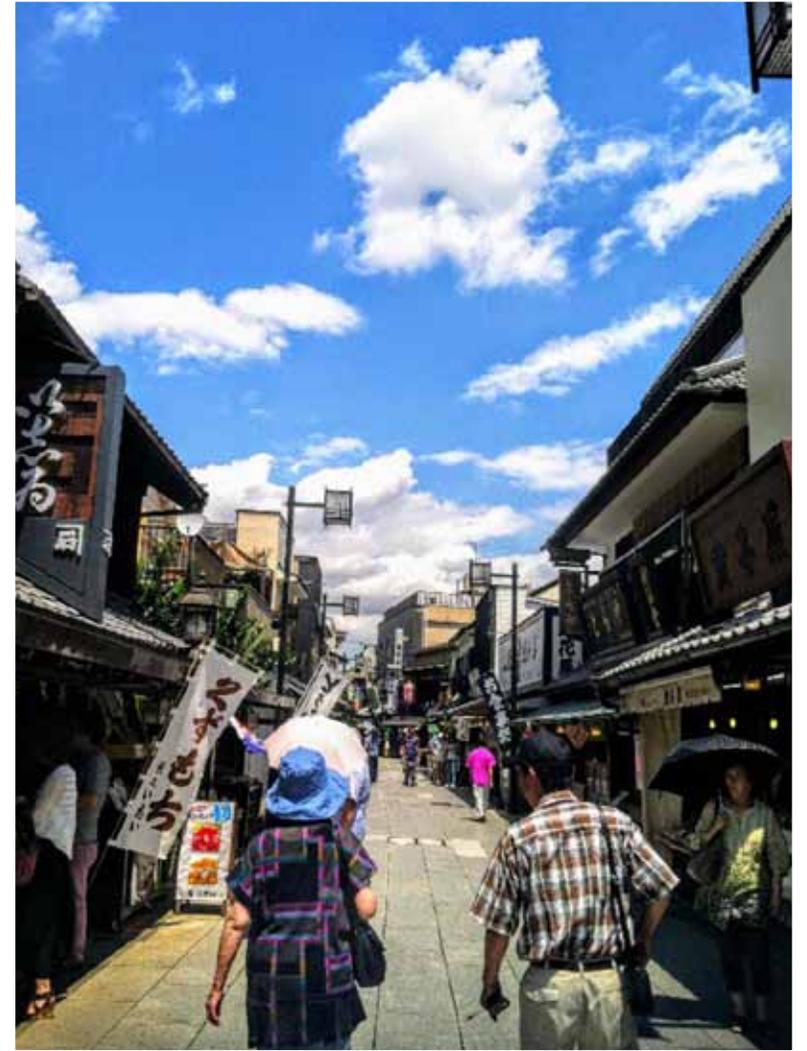
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				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Daylight Saving Time Begins						St. Patrick's Day
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		First Day of Spring				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Palm Sunday					Good Friday Passover Begins	

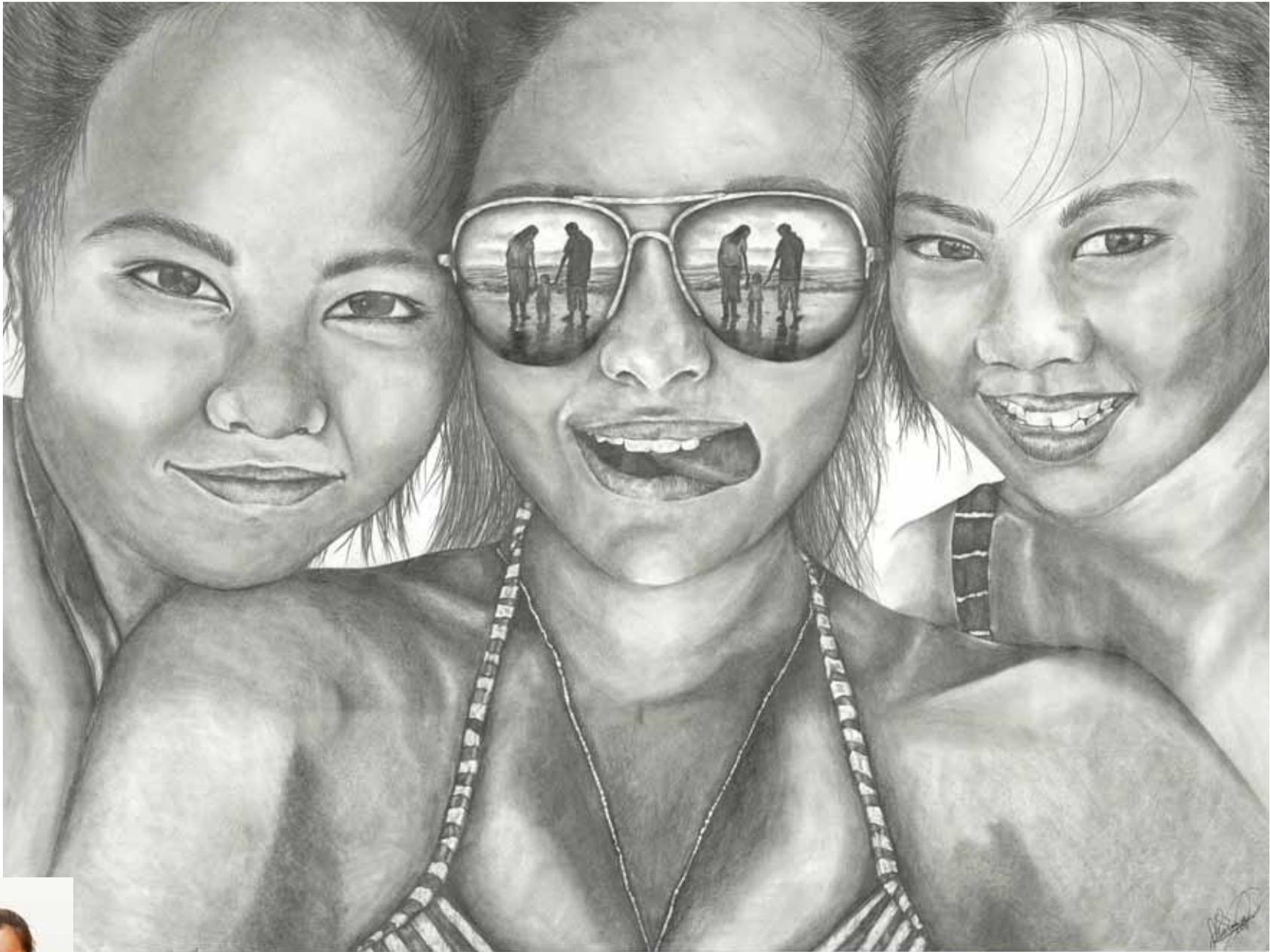


**1st Place**  
High School, Digital/Computer-generated  
**Gisselle Criollo**



**2nd Place**  
High School, Digital/Computer-generated  
**Kiyomi Sutton**





**1st Place**  
High School, Hand-drawn Art  
**Sharina Kuo**



# Indiana

“Are we there yet” I whined, but after two hours in a car, and two hours on a plane no one complains about it.

“Almost” my mom responded. I fiddled with the bracelet my mom-mom gave me on the plane.

I dozed off for about an hour before being awakened by my brother yelling, “We’re here!” Suddenly, I was awake and annoyed until I realized we were here, and in two seconds I was darting into the house thinking over and over again “turtle hunting, turtle hunting, turtle hunting!”

The second I reached the door I was welcomed by my Uncle Paul, Aunt Claire, Uncle Rick, and Paul’s girlfriend Natalie. We exchanged hugs and soon my mom-mom and Uncle Drew walked in, but I was too busy exploring the redone house to notice. “Can we go turtle hunting?” I asked.

“You are just like your mother,” my aunt joked. “Give us a minute.” I brought my stuff up to my room boiling with excitement. I lay down on the bed and thought of all the reasons I loved Indiana so much. I listed them in my head: It gets dark at 11:00 at night so we go to bed at 12:00 which really throws us off, but we love getting to stay up late, swimming in the crystal clear lake, riding in the pontoon boat to my 2nd cousin’s house, sleeping in, my aunts cookies, and best of all is the turtle hunting with my family.

Selected excerpt. Read full essay at [NJTeenMedia.org](http://NJTeenMedia.org).



**1st Place**  
Middle School, Written  
**Meghan Lepsis**







**3rd Place**  
Middle School, Hand-drawn Art  
**Fajrhafza Sohail**



# My Last Hoorah at Childhood

My brothers and I don't often get to spend much time with my dad because he is always out fishing and when he is in its hard to catch him between sleep and waking up at 3 AM. That being said, when he has time off he always plans fun stuff to do with us. When he proposed the idea of the water park and camping, my brother and I were thrilled. When we arrived in the Poconos, the first night was spent camping, roasting marshmallows, and watching movies. While all this was great fun, the real excitement we were waiting for was the water park the next day.

I didn't know why but the excitement of going on the rides over and over again just didn't appeal to me the same as I remembered when I was my brother's age. I came to realize that I was on the older side of kids at the park and the fruits of childhood began to fade.

As we headed home the next day, my brother and I were so tired we slept most of the way home. Heading down the dark empty highway I began thinking of our trip and realizing that it wasn't bad after all. Even though the fun of childhood wasn't the same as I remembered it in years past, it was a different kind of fun. It was the fun of watching my brother having the time of his life and spending time with my family.

Realizing that my childhood is slowly fading behind me, I am thankful to savor these special moments spent with my family. Although our trip to the Poconos wasn't the blast I had recalled in the past, it was a new kind of experience, one that I will always remember and my last "hoorah" of being a kid.

Selected excerpt. Read full essay at [NJTeenMedia.org](http://NJTeenMedia.org).



**3rd Place**  
High School, Written  
**Jude Lovgren**





**2nd Place**  
Middle School, Hand-drawn Art  
**Tanya Aravind**





**2nd Place**  
High School, Hand-drawn Art  
**Jackson Giesin**



# Enigmatic Relationships

“There is always an anticipation for perspiration whenever sports are involved,” father cried out triumphantly, holding his cobbled glass to an abrupt toast. There was a mist of drunken labs around the table as father looked around pleased with himself; no matter how radical the experiences were with the family, there was always a jubilant mood around the table at thanksgiving: with good food, nothing could go wrong.

Honestly, I never really took Thanksgiving seriously and I didn’t plan to anytime soon; when I was ten, I loathed the annual trip to Vienna and begged my parents to depart without me.

“This holiday is for celebrating family and food, Julie. You are as part of the family as the turkey is to the food,” mother lectured.

Selected excerpt. Read full essay at [NJTeenMedia.org](http://NJTeenMedia.org).



**3rd Place**  
Middle School, Written  
**Julie Ham**





# Wax Museum Rap

Yo, I'm just going put it to you like this-

If you don't listen carefully, there's things you will miss

I said my favorite memory's with my family when we went to New York.

We saw a man on the train eating pork with a fork

We saw different famous people made out of wax

It was pretty expensive when you counted the tax.

I'm not going to stunt.... it was pretty boring,

Because it was pouring.

I met "Jennifer Lopez" from down the block

Also....I had a conversation with "The Rock".

There was Alicia Keys... from the streets..... and we were making beats...

We went through the different sides... we saw a bride.

My mother said lets go and say "hi".

We walked up to her and all she said was "goodbye".

We had the best day ever all kidding aside!



**1st Place**

High School, Written

**Stephanie Padilla**



Buddy.  
Teacher.  
Playmate.  
**Dad.**  
1.877.NJKids1 njchildsupport.org

**ChildSupport.**  
It's more than just money.

Amigo.  
Compañero de juego.  
Héroe.  
**Papá.**  
1.877.NJKids1 njchildsupport.org

**PensiónInfantil.**  
No se trata sólo de dinero.

In addition to creating this calendar, the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Office of Child Support Services sponsors an ongoing advertising campaign to increase awareness of the importance of child support. Through digital and traditional media, we reach out to mothers and fathers across New Jersey with the message that "child support is more than just money." It's also time – and teaching, protecting, playing, mentoring – being there to care, share, celebrate and support. Call **1-877-NJKIDS1** or visit **www.njchildsupport.org**.

Fixer.  
Buddy.  
Mentor.  
**Mom.**  
1.877.NJKids1 njchildsupport.org

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## Did You Know...

- One in five children relies on child support nationwide. New Jersey families received more than \$1.2 billion in child support in 2017.
- Customers now have more convenient ways to pay their child support. To find out more about how to pay online and at participating retail locations across the country, visit [www.njchildsupport.org/paymentoptions](http://www.njchildsupport.org/paymentoptions)
- Customers can manage their case information through the New Jersey Child Support Mobile App, which is available on Android and iOS.
- Customers can chat live about their New Jersey child support case via the Case Information Portal on the website using their Member ID and PIN.

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