



NJ Human Services Awards Teens for Creativity in Celebrating the Bond between Families

State Recognizes Winners of the 2023 New Jersey Teen Media Contest

June 7, 2023

TRENTON, NJ – The Department of Human Services is honoring 12 New Jersey high school and middle school students for their winning entries in the 2023 New Jersey Teen Media Contest, sponsored by the Division’s Office of Child Support.

This year, the contest, which celebrates the success of our state’s youth, asked students across New Jersey to submit artistic or written portrayals about how their parents make everyday things special and what their family does to acknowledge small milestones and achievements. Teens enter the annual contest individually or through their school, and winners’ works are featured in Human Services’ Child Support calendar published each year.

“Congratulations to the inspiring winners of our 2023 New Jersey Teen Media Contest! I want to thank each of the teens who shared their artistic talents for this contest. I’m grateful that we get to partner with young artists year after year to raise awareness about the child support program and I encourage everyone to visit www.NJTeenMedia.org to see the winning entries and appreciate the talent that New Jersey’s youth has to offer,” said Commissioner Sarah Adelman.

“This contest showcases the talent of New Jersey’s young artists, and highlights the impact a strong family support system has to help children thrive,” said Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Elisa Neira. “Thank you to all the participants for all the work put into their art and written work and congratulations to this year’s winners.”

“The New Jersey Teen Media Contest helps us bring focus and attention to the important role of New Jersey’s Child Support program,” said Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who oversees the Department’s Division of Family Development and the New Jersey Office of Child Support. “The program’s enduring slogan is

‘Child Support. It’s more than just money,’ and we use the annual contest to encourage our youth to think about their family support system and the important role their parents serve in their everyday lives.”

Winners in the Hand-Drawn/Hand-Painted category for *middle schools*:

- *1st Place*: Sadie Bober, Memorial Middle School
- *2nd Place*: Liam Wong, Academy 1 Middle School
- *3rd Place*: Yuna Lee, Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Winners in the Hand-Drawn/Hand-Painted category for *high schools*:

- *1st Place*: Gabriella Freeman, Piscataway High School
- *2nd Place*: Sophie Drechsler, Allied Health and Science
- *3rd Place*: Katherine Gomez, Frank J Cicarell Academy

Winners in the Written Work category for *middle schools*:

- *1st Place*: Ruqaiyah Hagigal, Pillars Preparatory Academy
- *2nd Place*: Avery Dravis, Memorial Middle School
- *3rd Place*: Eila Moran, Bernardsville Middle School

Winners in the Written Work category for *high schools*:

- *1st Place*: Chloe Care, Ocean City High School
- *2nd Place*: Brooke Liebrand, Ocean City High School
- *3rd Place*: Abigail Hays, Ocean City High School

In addition to having their work featured in the 2024 Child Support calendar, students with winning entries received congratulatory plaques and prizes acknowledging their achievement at an awards event at the New Jersey State House. Winning pieces may be viewed online at www.NJTeenMedia.org. For more information about the New Jersey Child Support program, call 1-877-NJKIDS1 or visit www.njchildsupport.org.



Pictured (L-R): FRONT: Patricia Risch, Assistant Director, Office of Child Support Services; Liam Wong, Ruqaiyah Hagigal, Yuna Lee, Gabriella Freeman, Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, Department of Human Services. BACK: Katherine Gomez, Abigail Hays, Brooke Liebrand, Chloe Care, Sophie Drechsler.

Not Pictured: Sadie Bober, Avery Dravis, Eila Moran.