



NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



NJ Human Services Awards Teens for Creativity Celebrating the Support of Family and Loved Ones During the Pandemic

State Recognizes Winners for the 2021 New Jersey Teen Media Contest

July 22, 2021

(TRENTON) – New Jersey Human Services is honoring 12 New Jersey high school and middle school students for their winning entries in the 2021 New Jersey Child Support Teen Media Contest, which celebrated the support of family, friends and loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students across New Jersey were asked to submit artistic visual and written portrayals celebrating how the teens, their family, and loved ones supported each other through the changes of the previous year, from remote schooling to finding new ways for families to stay connected during the pandemic. Teens enter the annual contest individually or through their school, and winners' works are featured in Human Services' Child Support calendar published each year. Winners are chosen based upon their interpretation of the year's theme.

"The last year and a half have been incredibly difficult for many families. It is wonderful to see young people have the opportunity to share their stories and experiences through art, and contemplate the importance of strong family bonds especially during challenging times," said Acting Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman. "I congratulate the winners and all who participated, and encourage everyone to see the works created by these young talented artists."

"It is exciting to see the creativity of these students, but also to understand their perspective on the pandemic and how they managed through it with the support of their families and loved ones. Having a strong support system is vital for young people, and I am glad they were able to reflect on that while creating their pieces," said Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira.

"This contest is one of the ways that we bring attention to New Jersey's Child Support program," said Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who oversees the Department's Division of Family Development. "By giving young people a family-related contest theme in the context of the very unusual, uniquely home-focused

world we have lived in for the last year, we are encouraging them to think about their support system and the important role their parents and loved ones play in their lives.”

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

- *1st Place*: Charvi Yetish, Pond Road Middle School
- *2nd Place*: Erich Nunez Viveros, JP Case Middle School
- *3rd Place*: Hannah Lee, Schuyler-Colfax Middle School

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

- *1st Place*: Andrew Kim, Montclair Kimberley Academy
- *2nd Place*: Suan Jeong, Bergen County Technical School (Teterboro)
- *3rd Place*: Julia Desderio, Cherokee High School

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

- *1st Place*: Amy Lin, Montgomery Upper Middle School
- *2nd Place*: Stella Gratcofsky, Sandyston-Walpack School
- *3rd Place*: Tian Hu, Academy 1 Middle School

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

- *1st Place*: Ines Avila-Mota, Cliffside Park High School
- *2nd Place*: Heather Murphy, Morris County School of Technology
- *3rd Place*: Matthew Givone, Morris County School of Technology

In addition to having their work featured in the 2022 Child Support calendar, students with winning entries will receive gift certificates and congratulatory plaques acknowledging their achievement. 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.

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