



ChildSupport.  
It's more than just money.

2023

# About The Teen Media Contest

The theme of the New Jersey Office of Child Support Services' 2022 contest encouraged students to illustrate – through art or the written word – *what is your dream and how are your parents/loved ones helping you get there?*

This annual contest is open to all middle school and high school age students in New Jersey.

For more information about the contest and to sign up for contest updates visit [www.NJTeenMedia.org](http://www.NJTeenMedia.org).

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# Congratulations to our 2022 winners

## Hand-Drawn/Hand-Painted Art

### High School

1st Place: Olatomi Gabriel, Freehold Township High School  
2nd Place: Yaxuan Wang, Livingston High School  
3rd Place: Erin Park, Bergen County Academies  
Honorable Mentions: Lily Hyman, Academy of Allied Health & Science  
Eunice Lee, Dwight Morrow High School/Academies at Englewood

### Middle School

1st Place: Yoojin Jeon, East Brook Middle School  
2nd Place: Sharon Lee, East Brook Middle School  
3rd Place: Hajin Kim, Brookside Middle School  
Honorable Mentions: Yuna Lee, Benjamin Franklin Middle School  
Yaritzza Villegas, Point Pleasant Memorial Middle School

## Written Word

### High School

1st Place: Samma Faragalla, Dwight Morrow High School  
2nd Place: Ayah Abbassi, Pillars Preparatory Academy  
3rd Place: Soojin Kim, Dwight Morrow High School  
Honorable Mentions: Adriana Facusse, Jose Marti STEM Academy  
Mariam Muheisen, Pillars Preparatory Academy

### Middle School

1st Place: Chayenne Rojas, Soaring Heights Charter School  
2nd Place: Victoria DeVito, Bernardsville Middle School  
3rd Place: Vinaya Vittal, Academy 1 Middle School  
Honorable Mentions: Anna Getcliffe, Memorial Middle School  
Shahd Talbeh, Pillars Preparatory Academy

See the showcase online at [www.NJTeenMedia.org](http://www.NJTeenMedia.org).





Dad

I'm so proud of you big guy!

Sent at 3:04 PM

Mom

Be the artist you DREAM to be!

Sent at 3:24 PM

YOU ARE DESERVING

Mom

Don't let anyone stop  
you from chasing your dreams!

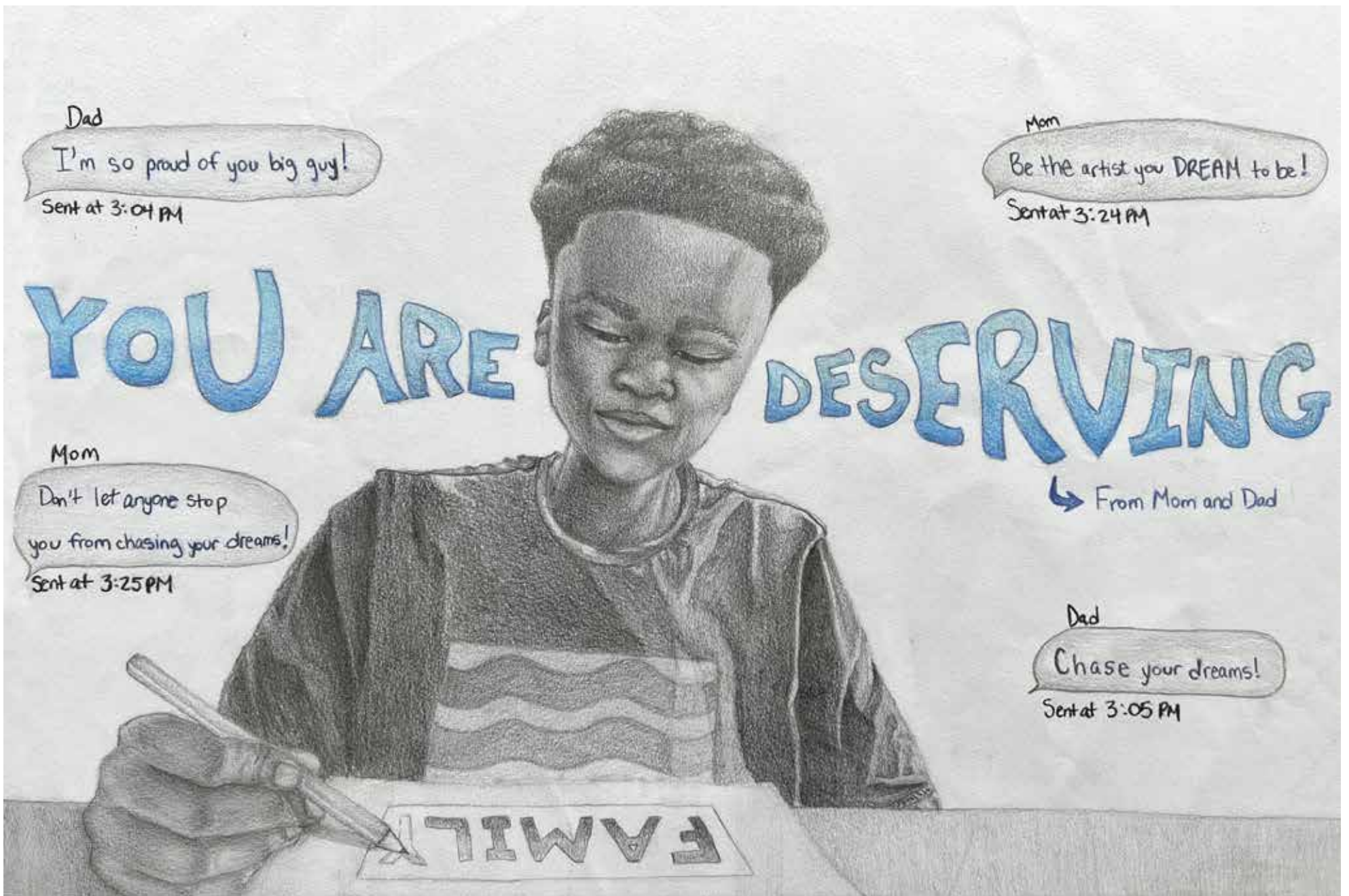
Sent at 3:25 PM

↳ From Mom and Dad

Dad

Chase your dreams!

Sent at 3:05 PM



# january

**Olatomi Gabriel**  
"Words of Encouragement"  
1st Place Hand-Drawn Art  
High School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## December 2022

			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	31	

## February 2023

			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					

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# My Hair and I

Wow, it feels exactly like the silver sponge my mom uses to clean our pots. Those words hit me so hard. I could remember all the times the girls in my predominantly white elementary school would make remarks about my hair. Even though their intentions were not bad, those words affected me so much that I still carry the weight of their words.

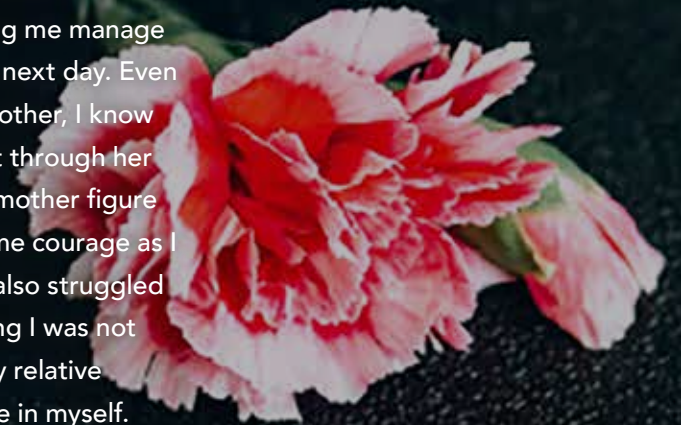
I have never had a materialistic dream; instead I have always dreamt of gaining confidence in my hair. To me, my hair has consistently been what has defined me. It is the most important feature of my melanated body. Coming from African descent, our hair has always been used as a symbol in societies. A simple hairstyle could tell you so much about a stranger. That one hairstyle signifies marital status, age, religion, wealth, and rank in society.

Growing up, my mom never knew how to style and take care of my hair as she had manageable silky, wavy hair. I was on my own. Due to this, I would beg my mom to straighten my hair. I hated my natural curls. I would spend hours getting relaxers and being extra cautious making sure I didn't sweat or let water touch my hair. I wanted to be like all the other girls in my school, with long blonde or brunette hair. That was not me, though, that was not the real me. But regardless of all my efforts to abandon my true colors somewhere deep down within me, the real version of myself was waiting for me, but I was too scared of loving her. My insecurity did not just feed on my peers' words but also on my family. My mom made

unkind comments about how my hair looked, not understanding the connection between my hair and self-esteem. Instead of helping me love myself, she further aided my self-hatred.

So, I constantly thought about how people saw me and imagined how they would treat me if I looked like them. I had an obsession with people's opinions, but I never once thought about my feelings. I longed for self-acceptance and I knew that one day I would completely love myself. I always wondered that if my parents had helped or reassured me in any way the outcome would have been different.

My parents never used to be there for me. My parents and I have a struggling relationship and always seem to disagree no matter what. This made me turn to my sister and friends for the support I needed. I applaud my sister and my friends for so much as they both aided my journey. I could recall the time my sister stayed up all night helping me manage my hair as I had an important event the next day. Even though we rarely say I love you to each other, I know my sister truly cares for me. It is evident through her actions. My sister, Saba, has become a mother figure in my life. As time went on, I gained some courage as I started seeing actors and models who also struggled with their hair. It made me relax, knowing I was not the only one who struggled. Despite my relative insecurity, I have now gained confidence in myself. I have been able to accept the fact that I do still struggle with negative comments, however, now I can openly discuss my feelings. I know that one day I will be able to fully love myself.



# february

**Samma Faragalla**

"My Hair and I"

1st Place Written

High School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
			1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 Presidents' Day	21	22 Ash Wednesday	23	24	25
26	27	28				

## January 2023

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	31				

## March 2023

			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	31	

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# march

**Yaxuan Wang**

“Journey of the Music”  
2nd Place Hand-Drawn Art  
High School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Daylight Saving Time Begins					Saint Patrick's Day	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	First Day of Spring			Ramadan Begins		
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## February 2023

			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 2023

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

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## With the Help of a Promise

Many years ago,  
When I was about five or so,  
On a warm summer evening,  
I discovered what I now know.

There were glowing rays of light,  
Shining into the night,  
And my heart filled with wonder,  
At this dazzling sight.

Though the stars I do adore,  
It is my parents who helped me soar.  
Mom and dad, you always had time,  
To stand by me and watch me shine.

Journey to journey, star to star,  
Each told their own story,  
Each gleamed from afar,  
Filling a distance from here till Mars.

Lining the sky like spots of gold,  
Like a tale, waiting to be told.  
Shimmering through even the dark,  
Admired by both young and old.

I was amazed, and I was astonished.  
I wanted a telescope to explore.  
So my parents did what they promised,  
And they gave me just what I wanted.

With this telescope I could see,  
All the stars on top of me.  
Reappearing every night,  
A constant reminder of my dream to be.

Enchantment piercing in the sky,  
Arrays of color all around,  
And this vision I will describe,  
When someone decides to ask me why.

Why is it an astronomer you want to be?  
Why not a doctor, a lawyer, something special?  
Why on Earth would you choose astronomy?  
Well it was this summer night that inspired me.



# april

**Ayah Abbassi**  
 "With the Help of a Promise"  
 2nd Place Written  
 High School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
						1 April Fools' Day
2 Palm Sunday	3	4	5 Passover Begins	6	7 Good Friday	8
9 Easter Sunday	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Tax Day	19	20	21	22 Earth Day
23 30	24	25	26	27	28	29

## March 2023

			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	31	

## May 2023

				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	31						

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# may

**Erin Park**  
 "Supporting Hands"  
 3rd Place Hand-Drawn Art  
 High School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
					Cinco de Mayo	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Mother's Day						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
	Memorial Day					

## April 2023

							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	

## June 2023

							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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# Teas, Herbs, and Love

Over the years, my mom has curated our home kitchen to be full of cabinets neatly lined with herbal medicines and tea packets. She intentionally organizes them this way. Every morning she prepares vitamins for us to start the day with energy, and every evening she boils herbal tea for us to wind down. Her care and dedication to not only her kitchen but also to those around her—myself gratefully included—truly amazes me. But she doesn't only care for her family; she's just as dedicated to her community.

Even on holidays or special occasions, it is common for most people to gift neighbors and family friends with chocolates or wines, for example. However, it is at these times of year that my mom specifically chooses teas and herbs that will help alleviate the pain of my elderly next-door neighbor who suffers from arthritis or my friend's mom who struggles with back pain.

Moreover, every day my mom teaches me a new word in Korean, usually words about nature or food. A lot of the Korean words I learn from her are Hanja. Hanja is the Korean name for Chinese characters. Even though Korean and Chinese are two distinct languages, Hanja refers to the Chinese characters that were borrowed from Chinese and were incorporated into the Korean language with Korean pronunciation long ago.

So, my mom not only teaches me about medicines and herbs but also about language and culture. In fact, ever since the Covid-19 pandemic started, I spent most of my time at home as the rest of the world did. This meant I was able to spend more time with my mom, learning how to cook, navigating the kitchen better, and intentionally having more wholesome conversations together.

It is my mom's consistent consideration for other people's wellbeing and her occasional language lessons in the kitchen that always culminate in the daily doses of joy and knowledge I receive from her. This inspires me to pursue Eastern medicine, or Traditional Chinese Medicine, in the future. My mom wholeheartedly supports me and my studies. From making me plum tea to green tea to oolong tea, she always knows how to support me when I'm studying, when I'm tired, and even when I'm stressed.

In the future, with a TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) license under my belt, I hope I can help my mom when she is older. In the meantime, I will study what low-oxalate herbal teas she can drink despite her kidney stones and I'll research the best brand of kitchen cabinet organizers to buy for her next batch of herbal medicines.





# june

**Soojin Kim**  
"Teas, Herbs and Love"  
3rd Place Written  
High School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Flag Day	15	16	17
18 Father's Day	19 Juneteenth	20	21 First Day of Summer	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## May 2023

	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	31			

## July 2023

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<del>23</del> / <sub>30</sub>	<del>24</del> / <sub>31</sub>	25	26	27	28	29

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To my future  
artist  
♥  
From Mom

To Yojin,  
You are the  
best artist  
From Dad



# july

**Yoojin Jeon**

“Encourage for the Artist’s Future”  
1st Place Hand-Drawn Art  
Middle School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
						1
2	3	4 Independence Day	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	31				

## June 2023

			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			

## August 2023

			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	31				

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# Steadfast Dad

A line

The string that never ends

Family,

The connection never ends.

A line and a family,

A sacred thing never to be messed with  
something that could never be broken

No matter what

Encouragement, support, peace, happiness. These are the things that helped me get to where I am now. This is all thanks to my parents, especially my father." Practice makes perfect" he says, "Try before you give up". My father has helped me all my life. He stays at home and helps me with my homework, while my mother goes to work. Helps me get ready for school in the morning. So busy, so stressful. Lots of things to get done with two kids in the house. A bond that would last forever. From a newborn to a teenager, my father is still my very first love. My father is my hero.



# august

**Chayenne Rojas**  
"Steadfast Dad"  
1st Place Written  
Middle School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
		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	31		

## July 2023

							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	

## September 2023

							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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# september

**Sharon Lee**

“Precious Support”  
2nd Place Hand-Drawn Art  
Middle School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6	7	8	9
10 National Grandparent's Day	11	12	13	14	15 Rosh Hashanah Begins	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 First Day of Fall
24 Yom Kippur Begins	25	26	27	28	29	30

## August 2023

	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	18
20	21	22	23	24	25
27	28	29	30	31	

## October 2023

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	31				

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# Dream Dust: Elongated Haiku Poem

I am a light dream.  
Ancient stardust that shines bright,  
Dust that flies through air,  
Dust that flies through time—  
Or settles underneath beds,  
Colors are hidden.

Who will pull the rug,  
That lets stardust fill our breaths.  
And inside our minds,  
Orbital planets,  
Kaleidoscope images,  
Deep, dark-sea diving.

Only when it's lit,  
Can average eyes see dust.  
Who is by your side,  
To send it blazing.  
The two halves that become one,  
Lift up your stardust,  
Into the time clock,  
And when the last grain is gone,  
With hands holding you,  
The two beside you,  
Your stardust begins to rise.

# october

**Victoria DeVito**  
"Dream Dust: Elongated Haiku Poem"  
2nd Place Written  
Middle School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Columbus Day	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 Halloween				

## September 2023

					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

## November 2023

			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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caring

support

compassion

companion

Together



# november

**Hajin Kim**  
 "Love of Family"  
 3rd Place Hand-Drawn Art  
 Middle School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Daylight Saving Time Ends		Election Day				Veterans Day
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
				Thanksgiving		
26	27	28	29	30		

## October 2023

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	31				

## December 2023

					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
<del>31</del>						

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# Seams of My Support

I have many dreams,  
Wishes of my own to create,  
These dreams are elaborate seams,  
Very pleasant and ornate.

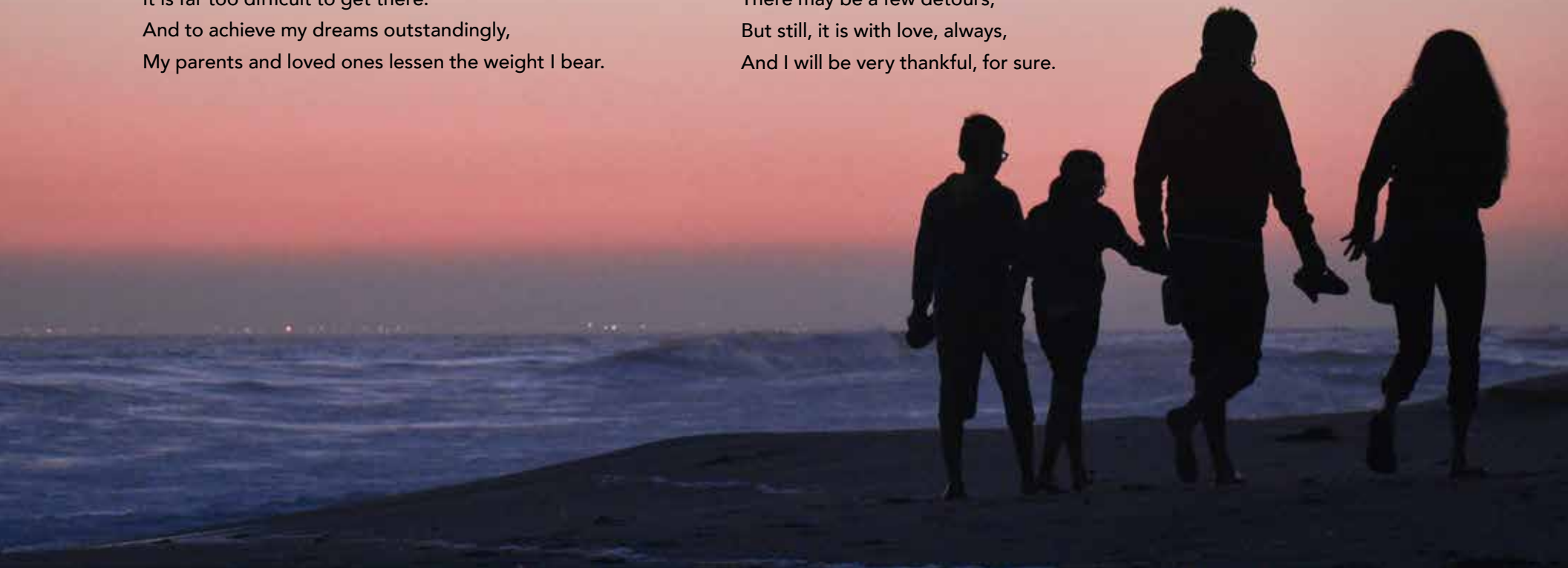
However, these dreams are not easily stitched,  
Into the fabric of my intricate life,  
The threads are often switched,  
And the needle stitches with strife.

I, myself, cannot complete the task single-handedly,  
It is far too difficult to get there.  
And to achieve my dreams outstandingly,  
My parents and loved ones lessen the weight I bear.

It is their help that I am grateful for,  
They are there every step of the way,  
From every spool of thread to every thimble on a sore,  
They are there to always save the day.

It is their assistance,  
That brings me to my desired destination,  
They have helped me to go the distance  
While I held myself from procrastination.

This journey will be strenuous both ways,  
There may be a few detours,  
But still, it is with love, always,  
And I will be very thankful, for sure.





# december

**Vinaya Vittal**  
 "Seams of My Support"  
 3rd Place Written  
 Middle School



sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Hanukkah Begins	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23
24 Christmas Eve	25	26	27	28	29	30
New Year's Eve 31	Christmas Day	Kwanzaa				

## November 2023

			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		

## January 2024

	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	31			

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**ChildSupport.**

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Protector.  
Teacher.  
Monster Checker.  
**Dad.**

1.877.NJKids1

[njchildsupport.org](http://njchildsupport.org)



**PensiónInfantil.**

No se trata sólo de dinero.

Amigo.  
Compañero de juego.  
Chofer.  
**Papá.**

1.877.NJKids1

[njchildsupport.org](http://njchildsupport.org)



The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Office of Child Support Services recognizes the importance of child support to the economic well-being of NJ families. This calendar is one example of how we get information out to families across the state about our child support program and to share our message that "child support is more than just money." It's also about time – and teaching, protecting, playing, mentoring – being there to care, share, celebrate and support.

Call 1-877-NJKiDS1 or visit [www.njchildsupport.org](http://www.njchildsupport.org).

Listener.  
Buddy.

Jungle Gym.

**Mom.**

**ChildSupport.**

It's more than just money.

1.877.NJKids1

[njchildsupport.org](http://njchildsupport.org)



Hero.  
Nurturer.  
Boo-boo Fixer.  
**Dad.**



Parents have so many roles.

Each one is important. And each one requires time, patience and love.  
Whether you live with your children or not, support them in every way possible.  
Remember, child support is more than just money.

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

[njchildsupport.org](http://njchildsupport.org)

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New Jersey Department of Human Services  
New Jersey Judiciary

**ChildSupport.**

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[www.njchildsupport.org](http://www.njchildsupport.org)

Phil Murphy, Governor | Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor  
New Jersey Department of Human Services  
Sarah Adelman, Commissioner