ChildSupport.
It's more than just money.

2020
2019 NJ Teen Media Award Winning Digital Art

Alyssa Morris
“Help”
1st Place Digital Art, High School

Benjamin Fernandez
“A Life Lesson for Parents”
2nd Place Tie Digital Art, High School

Jenna Clayton
“Thanks Mom and Dad!”
2nd Place Tie Digital Art, High School

Wellington Ochoa
“Untitled”
3rd Place Digital Art, High School
2019 Winners

Hand-Drawn/Hand-Painted Art

High School
1st Place: Darielle Moore, Piscataway High School
2nd Place: Mackenzie Jack, Hackettstown High School
3rd Place: Niaymah Trent, Cliffside Park High School

Middle School
1st Place: Esperanza Baquedano, Emerson Middle School
2nd Place: Lois Kim, Cliffside Park Middle School
3rd Place: Jolie Wong, Academy 1 Middle School

Written

High School
1st Place: Akansha Joshi, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South
2nd Place: Erin Hanlon, Ocean City High School
3rd Place: Elijah Cochran, Ocean City High School

Middle School
1st Place: Blake Cregg-Wedmore, Hazlet Middle School
2nd Place: Gabby Sebestyen, Thompson Middle School
3rd Place: Zayn Jaber, Pillars Prepatory Academy

Digital Art
1st Place: Alyssa Morris, Hunterdon County Polytech
2nd Place Tie: Jenna Clayton, Wall High School
2nd Place Tie: Benjamin Fernandez, Newmark High School
3rd Place: Wellington Ochoa, Cliffside Park High School

About The Teen Media Contest

The theme for the 2019 Teen Media Contest encouraged students to illustrate – through art or written word – the situations where they most need their parents. This concept could be taken literally, abstractly, or be left to the imagination. What you will find inside our calendar are the unique perspectives of students across the state.

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

For more information about the contest and to sign up for contest updates visit www.NJTeenMedia.org.
It was a typical morning, my mom sent me off to the bus stop with a wet kiss. My dad pulled me into a warm hug. "Good luck today," I managed to hear as I scrambled out into the freezing winter. The thin air sent a shiver down my spine and bit my face as I trudged through the snow covered sidewalk. I boarded the bus and went through my school day, an average one. It was the last day of school before winter break, and all the other 6th graders looked forward to a combination of holiday cheer to exotic vacations. I looked forward to a quiet holiday with my mom, dad, and sister. I also looked forward to the list that would be taped up to the window by the music room later this afternoon.

It was (finally!) the day to reveal the singers who made Spotlight. Ever since the middle schoolers in Spotlight performed for the 5th graders in the years prior, I dreamt of prancing onto the glossy, choral risers and singing with the girls who loved music as much as me. Since the audition, every day had become a countdown to the day the Spotlight roster would come out. So I waited, and waited, and waited patiently until the sound of the final bell seeped into my ears. I raced to the window by the music room in a fit of sheer joy, giggly and all. My eyes scanned the sheet one... two... three times.

My heart stopped. I did not make it. I ran, this time in a fit of panic, all the way to my bus and eventually, into the arms of my waiting mother. She asked me, "You didn’t make it?" with a weak smile. I sobbed into her arms and shook my head, my scarlet nose dripping all over her expensive, blue cashmere sweater. My whole body shook, What did I do that was not enough?? The thoughts running through my mind forced me into a seizure, I let a river out of my eyes while my mom simply held me. "Sometimes, no matter how bad we want something, life doesn’t go our way. Somethings are out of our control. However, we can control how we react. Ask for feedback, because I know you will bounce back." I sniffled, unable to process the words my mother was speaking. "Resilience," she stroked my hair and did not move while I drowned in my own tears. I later searched up what resilience meant, "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.” And though at the time, I felt powerless, just a pawn in life’s cruel game. One word consistently came back to me - Resilience.

I made Spotlight the next year, and my mom gave me the same type of never-ending embrace. “What’d I tell ya? You came back from last year, and this time no tears.” Suddenly I let out a giggle, and my mom giggled with me through the day.
Niaymah Trent  
"Black Love Within"  
3rd Place Hand-Drawn Art  
High School

February 2020

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Valentine’s Day

President’s Day

January 2020

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March 2020

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Notes

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Blossom

Tiny seed now flutter downward
To the ground where you will flower
Deep beneath the soil dreaming
Of a cherry tree

Two grown elders tower over
Sure to bring their young one closer
Murmur soft the timeless story
Of a cherry tree

Little seed, you now awaken
In the plangent wind, you’re shaken
Draped in sunlight, weaved with rain
Betwixt two cherry trees

As you breathe, you turn to face them
And you know you’re not mistaken
Love flows through them, just as water
Those two cherry trees

Sun morphs scarlet, fades to night
Stars creep slowly, pins of light
A sea of darkness falls upon
The weathered cherry trees

Ten years later ever growing
Branching, blooming, never slowing
Firmly rooted, petals shower;
Full-grown cherry tree

Springtime wind chilling no longer
China trunk grow ever stronger
Nurtured to stand, head held high
By two cherry trees

Faceless grins filled with affection
Giggles beamed with no inflection
Tender hugs through phantom limbs
Gleaming cherry trees

Another year, a tree has fallen
Dryad spirits come ‘a calling
Bone-white petals - solemn snow
Just two cherry trees

Tiny, little cherry tree
Hold each other, cry for me
Unmarked grave of root and rose
Weeping cherry trees

Three more years, you’re on your own
Tearless weeping all alone
Aching loss as strings unhitch;
Single cherry tree

There is no life without it dying
If they fall, you know they’re trying
Gave you everything, they did
Ghosts of cherry trees

For love requires sacrifice
Every day you roll the dice
They may leave, but never fully
Your own cherry trees

As you breathe, you turn to face them
And you know you’re not mistaken
Love flows through them, just as water
Those two cherry trees

Sun morphs scarlet, fades to night
Stars creep slowly, pins of light
A sea of darkness falls upon
The weathered cherry trees

Time progresses, seasons change
Baby seedling starts to age
Filled with joy, prepared to raise
Your own cherry tree

Together, you will learn and grow
How much they loved you, now you know
There’s no bond stronger than between
The members of a family

March 2020

1-877-NJKiDS1
www.njchildsupport.org
When Do I Need My Parents Most?

When do I need my parents most? Do they inspire me, try with me, or do they do both? When the world billows beneath my feet. When the ground starts shaking underneath. When I am unsure of what is right. When I may wake up in the night. My parents guide me even though, Sometimes I turn away and go. In my darkest hours of my day. When I am unsure of what to say. When I am onstage at a show. They cheer me on and never go. I am their child, and will always be. They always care and try for me. I always wonder how to see. When my only light isn't guiding me? So, when do I need my parents most? I may not know. Like a flower, they help me to grow.
A Father’s Presence

At a time when I was struggling,

I went to a place that was safe to go

To a family member, my father who could help me see clearly

Under the pressure of life and society, that added anxiety.

I felt alone, by myself and didn’t know where to turn.

After looking to all the wrong places and feeling empty,

I found comfort in my father who stood there for me.

He comforted me, guided me, and gave me confidence.

When I was walking down a path that would lead to deep consequences.

Without his presence in my life I might have turned to horrid things,

Things that scare families and cause separation.

But with the comfort of a father I was able to overcome these things

Open up about them and turn them into better things.

I was able to overcome anxiety and go back to being me.

The presence of my father was incomparably

The best thing that could’ve happened to me.

Elijah Cochran
“A Father’s Presence”
3rd Place Written
High School
Because You Took My Hand

Just coming home from school—seeing you waiting,
Creates a volcano of gratitude—no hesitating,
You speak to me with a contagious smile,
Holding my hand lovingly, all the while,
Always there to greet me each and every day,
Your caring face takes all of my worries away.

So take my hand, my dearest friend,
We’ll sail together ’till the very end,
But will we always remain in the same boat?
And will you still stroke my hair and button my coat?
Forever is a big word—so they say,
When my ship sails I know that you WILL guide the way!

You taught me how to handle this vast and complex ocean,
To have a unique personality, my own little potion,
You taught me how to jump right in, and learn to paddle,
How to reach for the stars, how to win life’s many battles,
But what good is a brilliant captain without her shining crew?
Through all of life’s challenges, I will fight in honor of you!

Do you know what keeps my ship steady on its proper course?
It’s your love and support—such a constant and powerful force!
So strong that it guides me through the most tumultuous seas,
And there on the horizon, rests all of our beautiful memories,
And our footsteps are etched forever in the sand,
My success is yours because from the very beginning, you took my hand.

Zayn Jaber
"Because You Took My Hand"
3rd Place Written
Middle School
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**Notes**

- Labor Day
- Grandparents’ Day
- First Day of Fall
- Yom Kippur Begins
October 2020

Jolie Wong
“Moments of My Parents”
3rd Place Hand-Drawn Art Middle School

Notes
1-877-NJKIDS1
www.njchildsupport.org
Section 46: In regard to the three children, a joint custody agreement will remain intact.

The unwritten agreement: In regard to the three children, both parents will be present on their graduation day.

Section 47: In regard to the three children, each parent will pay half towards all financial necessities.

The unwritten agreement: In regard to the three children, each parent will be present at their wedding day.

Section 48: In regard to the three children, each parent will receive an appointed weekend to spend time with their children.

The unwritten agreement: In regard to the three children, each parent will always be willing to answer a call at three a.m.

A piece of paper cannot define interminable love,
A contract cannot divide the role of a parent in a child’s life,
A legal document cannot prohibit a child’s development,
Unless you let it...
Choose love.
Choose a bond that can stretch over miles.
Choose to not define the role of a “parent”.

An Invisible Section

November 2020

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Election Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving

2020

Erin Hanlon
“An Invisible Section”
2nd Place Written
High School

Notes

1-877-NJKIDS1
www.njchildsupport.org
Dear Mommy,

You are such an amazing women for raising me the way you did. I know it wasn’t easy, being a single mom and working ten hours and six days a week. I admire you for who you are and what you do for me, even when you think I don’t notice, just know I do. I notice when you have to leave work early to see my games, or bring me to work because you don’t want me to walk alone. I notice when you put socks on my feet every night so they won’t get cold, and kiss my head and say “sweetnight” Sweet dreams honey. I notice you find time to talk to me and hear my nonsense, and how hard my day was if when you had a terrible day, you just want to sit on the couch and watch television. You make me so happy and I admire you and all that you do. I’m sorry if I take you granted, but please know that without your support I wouldn’t be the person I am today.

Love,
Your Daughter

Mackenzie Jack
“Dear Mommy”
2nd Place Hand-Drawn Art
High School

December 2020

1-877-NJKIDS1
www.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 mothers and fathers 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.

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.