

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 15, 2023

Contact: Paul Brubaker
973-518-2298

**PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOSTS CEREMONY HONORING WINNERS OF
INNER FAITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER'S
BLACK HISTORY MONTH ART & ESSAY CONTEST**

Students throughout the City of Paterson awarded top prizes

PATERSON – Paterson Public Schools hosted the InnerFaith Performing Arts Center (IPAC)'s 2023 Black History Month Art and Essay Contest and announced 29 student winners today. It has been a banner year for the contest, with more than 600 students from throughout the City of Paterson participating in the annual competition.

“In addition to everything that is taught in our schools during Black History Month, 600 students went the extra mile to apply what they have learned into their own creative expressions,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “We are very proud of what they have accomplished, and very appreciative of the recognition they have received from Rahsona Patterson of the InnerFaith Performing Arts Center, and all who worked with her in holding this year’s contest.”

“We are thrilled to see so many students taking part in this year’s competition,” said Rahsona Patterson, founder and executive director of the InnerFaith Performing Arts Center. “It is an opportunity to inspire young people to learn more about the contributions of African-Americans and their impact on our society.”

A total of 29 students won honors in the contest, which has been an annual event in Paterson for more than a decade and is open to K-12 students in all schools throughout Paterson.

This year’s judges and volunteers included Paterson First Lady Farhanna Sayegh, Paterson City Councilwoman Ruby Cotton, Nancy Grier, Shanikwa Lemon, Rahsona Patterson, Imani Jarvis, Julia Gonzalez, Michael DeRosa, Robyn Spencer, Tia Holloway, Coach Stafford Patterson, Winnie Harrison, and Mohammed Khalil.

The winning students are as follows.

Art – Elementary School (K to 8)

First Place

Mia Diaz, 7th grade

Public School No.13

Liaisons: Principal Nicole Booker and Counselor Cedenia McCollum

Second Place

Kayla Sayegh, 2nd grade

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Paterson — A Promising Tomorrow
Together We Can*



Public School No. 28/Paterson Academy of the Gifted and Talented
Liaison: Principal Nancy Castro

Third Place (Tie)

Jazmin Ramos Santos, 7th grade
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Educational Complex
Liaison: Art Teacher Dwayne Beckford

Brian Bertucci, 6th grade
Public School No.13
Liaisons: Principal Nicole Booker and Counselor Cedenia McCollum

Honorable Mention (Tie)

Chris Sanchez-Perez, 6th grade
Public School No.13
Liaisons: Principal Nicole Booker and Counselor Cedenia McCollum

Malachi Spencer, 7th grade
Paterson Arts and Sciences Charter School
Liaison: April Brown

Art – High School (9 to 12)

First Place

Tiana Little, 12th grade
Paterson STEAM High School
Liaison: Dr. Jaymie Stein, Art Teacher

Second Place (Tie)

Sumyra Jimenez, 11th grade
International High School
Liaison: Chris Fabor Muhammad, Art Teacher

Jerry Cuenca, 11th grade
Paterson P-Tech High School
Liaisons: Dr. Jayme Stein, Art Teacher; Dr. Charla Holder, Principal

Third place

Giovanni Ramirez, 9th grade
John F. Kennedy High School
Liaison: So Yoon Lym, Art Teacher

Honorable Mention

Elliona Gaskins, 11th grade

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow
Together We Can*



Paterson STEAM High School
Liaison: Dr. Jaymie Stein, Art Teacher

Art – Judges' Special Recognition

John F. Kennedy High School

Liaison: So Yoon Lym, Art Teacher
Arieth Montero Burgos, 9th grade
Hails Martize Lara, 9th grade
Hank Willis, 9th grade

International High School

Liaison: Chris Fabor Muhammad, Art Teacher
Scarlett Lopez, 9th grade
Vanessa Hoyas, 12th grade
Leonna Kenner, 11th grade
Ah'Kiya Hodges, 12th grade

Paterson STEAM High School

Liaison: Dr. Jaymie Stein, Art Teacher
Isaiah Jacobs-Whitaker, 12th grade
Tiana Little, 12th grade
Jaheim Best, 12th grade

Essay – Elementary School (K to 8)

First Place

Anny Gomez, 7th grade
Public School No. 28/Paterson Academy of the Gifted and Talented
Liaisons: Nancy Castro, Principal; Melissa DiPrieto

Second Place

Na'rue Lee, 8th grade
Public School No. 28/Paterson Academy of the Gifted and Talented
Liaisons: Nancy Castro, Principal; Melissa DiPrieto

Third Place

Liliana Negron, 8th grade
Public School No. 28/Paterson Academy of the Gifted and Talented
Liaisons: Principal Nancy Castro/Melissa DiPietro

Honorable Mentions

Kasey Palma-Rayne, 6th grade
Public School No.13
Liaisons: Nicole Booker, Principal; Cedenia McCollum, guidance counselor

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Paterson — A Promising Tomorrow
Together We Can*



Entuela Haxhillari, 6th grade
Public School No. 18
Liaison: Kirsten Severino, Teacher

Essay – High School (9 to 12)

First Place

Thaddeus Chestnut Jr., 11th grade
Paterson P-Tech High School
Liaisons: Dawna Pazant, English Teacher; Dr. Charla Holder, Principal

Second Place

Amina Pleasant 11th grade
Paterson P-Tech High School
Liaisons: Dawna Pazant, English Teacher; Dr. Charla Holder, Principal

Third Place

Jesus Pimienta, 11th grade
Paterson P-Tech High School
Liaisons: Dawna Pazant, English Teacher; Dr. Charla Holder, Principal

###