

Artist Narratives

Intersections Gallery

Numbers 1 – 25

#1

Artist: Vincent Nixon

Grade: 7th

Title: *The Art of Knowing Me*

Cost: \$100

*My mom.
She told me to never give up.
Even if your team isn't good,
Keep going.
Encourage them to get goals and stuff.
Never give up.
Don't let negative things affect your life.
Don't let the little things mess you up.
Don't let things that people say about you hurt you in any way.
If you fall,
Get back up and try again.
Try your hardest.
Try your best.*

*My friend from summer camp who introduced me to hockey.
He was like,
Yeah...
You can fight.
I said I wanted to try hockey.
I tried it because I could fight on the ice.
I have to wait until I am a banum.*

*A coach from summer camp.
Her name is Coach Maddie.
She was the goalie for Gilmore Academy.
She said that she has her old player gear.
She had everything I needed.
She gave it to me.
I was able to start.*

*My old coach, J. Teekes.
He was my second year coach.*

*He gave a jersey.
He gave me some hockey socks.
He gave me other things I needed.
Elbow pads.
I was using my bike elbow pads.
He gave me a hockey stick.*

*My grandma.
She shaped me.
With all my games.
She cheers.
She cheers with my mom.
She sees me.
She tells me to go "beat them."
My grandma helps my mom pay for my hockey fees.
My travel fees.
Tournament fees.
Equipment.
She helps anyway she can.*

*No violence.
No racism.
Treat everyone the same.
No guns.
Kids must be at least 12 to work.
They should only work certain jobs.*

*I am the skin color I am.
I love it.
I love being a hockey player.
I love being one of the first best on my team.
I am a good artist.
I am thoughtful.
I am smart.
I can play any sport.
I can at least be good at it.*

#2

Artist: Robert Major

Grade: 3rd

Title: *I Like to Play*

Cost: \$100

*I like to play around.
I like to play with friends.
I have a sister.
I don't really play with her.
She is usually in her room
I like to play.
I like to play Fortnite.
I like to play Roblox.
Things I like to do for fun.
I try to do stuff.
Make paper airplanes.
I like to play with water.
I like to color things.
Maybe...
Simple things like a plant.
I like plants and trees.
If I am bored,
I get on my phone.
I just learned kids spend 8-12 hours a day on their phone.
I don't think they should spend that kind of time on their phone.
I think it's unhealthy.
That's pretty much.
I like science.
I like all this cool stuff that can happen
when doing science.
Explosions.
Experiments.
I like learning about different animals.
And even animals I might get into a battle with.
I think when you see a bear,
play dead.
You are supposed to stand your ground.
Walk back slowly.
Look at them in their eyes.*

*Don't run.
You don't want them to chase you.
I like history.
I like learning about things that happened before I was born.
I like Egypt.
I like pyramid stuff.
My favorite part of school is dismissal.
I look forward to playing with friends on a game.*

*I want to end world hunger.
A lot of kids die from hunger.
I would also pay people's taxes.
I would pay their taxes on their homes.
I would help homeless people.
I would give them a house.
I would give them covers.
Blankets.
Everyone would have a home.
I would tell the president to make the country a good place.
Maybe.
I heard things about Chinese factories tracking people's homes.
I want the president to stop.*

#3

Artist: Jada Griggs

Grade: 7th

Title: *The Story of Me Changing*

Cost: \$100

*I am not sure people will listen.
I see people sometimes talking over me.*

I want them to...

Listen.

If you care,

listen.

I was bullied.

I was bullied in kindergarten.

It stopped,

but I had to go to another school.

Went to a new school,

in first and second grade,

the bullying stopped.

Started again in third grade.

Stayed with me until sixth grade.

I was called horrible things...

Fat!

Fat!

Fat!

This boy was the main bully.

He would touch my stomach.

This was third grade.

It happened in third grade.

I was eight years old.

Happened like almost every day.

I would tell him to stop doing.

He didn't.

I would tell the teacher.

The teacher didn't help neither.

I would go home,

tell my mom.

I forgot what my mom would say.

*Something changed in third grade.
I met my best friend.
We have been friends for six years.
I am smiling.
I am smiling because she is my best friend.
I have a best friend.*

*When I met her,
that was exactly what I needed.
It was a way to get away from the friends who really weren't my friends,
my new best friend.*

*When we did online school,
we didn't get to see each other.
In sixth grade,
We got close.
We have seen each other go through phases of our life.
She saw me go through a phase of pink.
Everything was pink.
I saw her go through EMO phase.
Wearing all black.
Painting her nails black.*

*In fifth grade,
My two closest friends,
One told me they didn't want to be my friend anymore.
It hurt.
She left.
The other one...
I didn't do what she said I did.
I wasn't even in school.
How could I do that?
It hurt my feelings to see her making stuff up...
or getting stuff from other people.
That hurt me.
We were friends for six years.
That hurt.
Why?
And over a text?
Why?*

*I learned something.
It doesn't seem to matter to some people how long you've known them.
Some people,
They just can't be friends.*

*I am a good listener.
I am a good friend.
I can understand other people's problems.
I can give advice,
if they want it.*

*I really like animals.
I like the way they look.
Whale sharks...
I know a lot about sea creatures.*

*I try my best...
always.
It's pressure.
It can be like on a test or something.
I try.
I try.
It takes a lot of time.
I run out of time.
I hurry up.
I feel rushed.
I get anxious.*

*I notice things.
I stutter.
I stutter a lot.
I think it may be because I don't like talking to people I don't know
or
Because I am nervous.
I trust.
I trust 10 people.
That feels good.
I like knowing I can go to someone and talk about my feelings.*

I don't know where I will be in the future.

*I see one.
Don't know what it is.
I am kinda nervous about it.
I am scared about dying.
Just being underground.
Will I be remembered?
I wonder about this.
It's like...
I hear my mom talk about it.
She had a dead rose in her car from her friend's funeral.
I started to think about it.
I try not to think about it.
I do have people to talk to about this.
Sometimes I do.
My mom doesn't know.
She should know.
I don't know when it's a good time to share that with her.
I can't just tell her, can I?
Sometimes my mom is joking and then gets serious another.
She told me I can talk to her.
I am thinking about if I want to.*

#4

Artist's Name: Kaden Whitfield

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Love Me*

Cost: \$100

*It's okay to be sad.
If you think you're a failure.
It's okay to be sad.
If someone says something mean about you,
It doesn't mean it's true.
It's okay if someone says something.
I want people to think that they are not a failure.
I want them to know there are beautiful things about them.*

*I am making a quote.
The quote is...
It's okay to feel sad.
Just ignore those kind of people.
Always remember...
You are kind
You are beautiful
You are caring
You matter
Respect your elders
Respect your parents*

*Things in life I love...
I love that I think.
I think of ideas.
I make up creative stuff.
I say things that are important.
I want people to listen to me.
I like how some people are happy.
I wish...
I love my family,
especially my mom.
I love that my mom is sweet.
She is kind.
She is funny.*

*She is always there for me.
I love that my mom has money.
She has money to put food on our table for me and my sister.
We have food on our table.*

*My grandma is funny.
I love her.
She shoots hoops with us.
She is fun.
I like when she plays with me.*

*I like my sister.
Sometimes we go outside.
We practice shooting.
We ride bikes.*

*When I am older,
I want to write a book.
I want to be an engineer.
I want to write a book.
The book is gonna be about fear.
It will be called,
"Never be afraid."
Don't be afraid to speak up for yourself
Or
When anyone needs to speak up if you feel endangered.
You should tell a teacher.
You can tell your mom.
Maybe, just maybe, they can help you.
It's okay to be scared.
It's okay to run to your mom or your grandma.
It's okay to tell them you're afraid.*

*It's okay.
It's okay.
It's okay.
It will all be okay.
There are people who care about you.*

#5

Artist: Karen Whitfield

Grade: 3rd

Title: *A Poem*

Cost: \$100

*I look up to my mom and dad.
I like how she works to make sure I get fed and I get clothes every day.
My dad.
He buys me stuff.
He is a great dad.
And my mom is too.*

*I am smart.
I am smart with reading and math and writing.
I am pretty.
I am good.*

*I want to be a teacher.
I want to be a teacher that helps kids.
I want to be a teacher who helped kids with math and reading and stuff... and writing.
I want to work with kids kinda garden through first grade.*

*I would like a good environment for the world.
I want good people.
That means to get a degree and go to college.
If you get an education you would be better.
You would be able to read and write and do more stuff.
And then you would be able to work when you were done with college.
I think people would have to work forward and earn it and maybe get a scholarship.
I would open up a scholarships or everyone can earn it.*

#6

Artist: Alex Badley

Grade: 4th

Title: *It Felt Good to Say Things About Myself*

Cost: \$100

Um

What I like about me...

Um

I play with my sister.

I like mac-n-cheese.

I like sleep.

I can't think of anything.

I struggle to say nice things about myself.

I don't say these things at all.

I don't say mean things.

I don't say positive things.

I would like to learn how to say nice things about myself.

I am a thinker.

I keep things inside.

I don't know what stops me from sharing.

I don't really say what I am thinking.

I don't think people would care.

It feels good to know Kaden and Christa care.

I have good manners.

I don't know where I learned them from.

I am a gentle person.

I am a good friend.

I like to try things.

It feels good to try things.

The last thing I tried to do was a back flip.

I didn't end up doing it.

I just fell back.

I tried to land on doing a front flip.

*I tried on a trampoline.
I hurt my neck.*

*When I am older,
I want to make drawings.
I want to draw things or whatever.
I feel good when I do art.
I feel peace when I do art.*

*I have people I can talk to.
I trust all my family members.*

*Uncles
Cousins
Aunties
Dad
Mom
Two Sisters
A Brother*

*I want everyone to have a house.
Everyone should have one because they will get
Rained on...
Nowhere to go..
There will be snow...
They will get cold...
They will get covered with snow.
They will die.
I don't want that to happen.
I think about this.
I think about this during the day, sometimes.*

*It felt good to do this.
I am not good at this.
I did do this now.
I am not used to this.
It felt good.*

#7

Artist: Kamyah Hunter

Grade: 8th

Title: *Self-Reflect*

Cost: \$100

*My older sister.
She shaped me.
Military.
Army.
Just got out of basic training.
Virginia.
I want to go in the Air Force.
My mom said I am a reflection of her.
I think that means that we are similar.
There is a list.
Both want to be in the military.
She has locs.
I am about to get them too.
We are both gay.
We both knew at the same time.
It was the age of six.
We just knew.
My sister told my mom at six.
She was glad she told her at the age she did.
My mom found out from my little sister.
My sister asked,
"Is there something you want to tell me?"
I told her I was gay.
This just happened.
My sister said,
"I am just glad that it came out."
Looking back.
I wish I would have told her sooner.*

*Ms. Regina.
She treats us like the other teachers.
We have a voice.*

*We have feelings.
She gives us a chance to talk.
She doesn't make decisions on her own.
She gives us opportunities to have a voice.
To say what is on our minds.
Most of the teachers,
They don't ...
Give voice.
They don't....
Listen.
They don't...
Value us.
Ms. Regina...
She does.
There is this thing.
ASR-After School Reflection.
We haven't gotten one.
Ms. Regina.
She makes me want to do better.
To reflect on myself.
And I try not to get in trouble.
I put my education first.
I value myself.
She does a lot.
This is abbreviated.
She cares for us more than other teachers do.*

*I see myself in the Air Force.
I want to be a medic.
I want to be a doctor or a nurse or a pediatrician.
I see myself in law.
A prosecutor.
I met a lot of them.
I think I understand them.
They told me how to do this and how to do that.
There is a situation where I have to talk to them.
I tell them I want to be a prosecutor or in the Air Force.*

*I would make more Wing Stops and Chipotle.
I would make the legal age to drive 13.
I don't want money to rule the world.*

Inflation.
Things cost too much,
especially when COVID hit.
I worry about this.
I pay for myself now.
It's not my money.
I get paid every two weeks.
Right now,
I am buying Christmas gifts for my mom and family.
Normally,
I put it in my savings account.
I put a little bit on my card.
I buy things like food or clothes.

Schools need to change.
They need to teach basic life skills.
Are we going to use this stuff when we are older?
Most schools don't do that.
I want to learn...
washing clothes
taking care of yourself
Brushing teeth
How to do it properly
Washing
Using deodorant
Using soap
How to talk to people
Financial class
How to save
How to invest
Have a therapist in schools so people can talk.
Yes, Lord please...
Learn to organize.
Learn how to carry yourself.
How you present yourself.
How to work through conflict.
How to believe in yourself.
To have confidence.
I wish we could stay on one topic until everybody gets it.
Half the class gets it and the other half doesn't.
We can't stay on one topic for two days.

We need more time to learn.

More ways to learn.

Play games.

Have a partner.

Do things in a funner way.

We get distracted easily.

Move around.

Project work.

What about learning something and applying it outside of school.

We did a vision board at the library.

I liked that.

I wasn't just listening.

I was doing work.

I like doing poster boards too.

I would tell the little child in me...

Remember,

Everyone ain't your friend.

You should have told your mama earlier that I was gay.

Be grateful.

Be humble.

#8

Artist: Maceo Diaz

Grade: 3rd

Title: *I Go to Church A Lot*

Cost: \$100

I don't know.

I have a disease.

It's called fabry.

I don't like it.

My hands and feet hurt when I play football.

*If I have a temperature change,
my feet and hands start to hurt.*

I take something every other Wednesday.

I can swallow a lot at once.

I can chug an apple juice thing in two seconds.

I like my strength.

I like my muscle flexibility.

I can crack my toe as many times as I need to.

I know how to drive.

I can drive my mom's car.

They won't let me.

I go to church a lot.

Everybody prays for me.

I am kind of insecure.

I was bullied.

When I was in daycare,

I was bullied.

They pushed me.

They called me names.

They kept calling me negro.

Some were White.

The Black kids pushed me.

No one stepped in and said anything.

*When another kid came there,
he started stepping up for me.*

We are best friends now.

*I don't like wearing glasses.
They hurt my ears.
My parents are buying me little soft things.*

I don't like feeling insecure.

*I have a big heart for my friends.
I don't make friends very easily.
I am a fun person.
I think a lot.
I don't share it.
I don't share because I think about all the things I do wrong.
Today,
I did three good things.
I minded my own business.
I respected my teacher.
I followed the rules.*

*I would give every person like if I had the type of money Elon Musk has...
everyone a billion dollars.
Some people need it.
People need money to pay rent.
They need money to buy food.
To take care of their children.
To put their kids in a good place.
A roof or a house.*

*I am insightful.
I figure things out.*

*I don't know how many poems I have written.
I feel good about this poem.
I like my words.
I feel good.
I feel normal.
I want to feel normal.
No pain.
Or
Not getting in trouble.*

#9

Artist: King Fields

Grade: 3rd

Title: *Nothing*

Cost: \$100

Nothing.

I can't think of anything nice to say about me.

It is hard for me to think about nice things about myself.

Nothing.

Nothing.

I can't think of anything.

My friend Wisdom said something to me.

He told me I was nice.

He gave me a compliment.

I don't get compliments at school.

My mom tells me at home that she loves me.

I feel nice and grateful when she tells me that.

I only need one I love you every day.

I would like one compliment from teachers every day.

Christa and Robert, my friend helped me.

I couldn't think of anything nice.

They told me things.

I told them if I agreed.

I am giving to my friends.

I have a lot of positive energy.

I am creative.

I don't trust a lot of people.

When I do trust them,

I'm all in.

I trust a lot of people except for strangers.

I have a lot of energy.

I have a great smile.

I am competitive.

I am a jolly guy.

I like to move, a lot.

I like to talk a lot.

I feel 99.1% better after I heard these nice things about me.

My heart is now more than halfway filled.

I feel this way after hearing these nice things about me.

I want to help the homeless.

I would like to feed the homeless.

I would feed all the foster kids and give them money.

I think all foster kids should have a family.

If the world was like this,

It would be friendly and nice.

#10

Artist: Makenzie Williams

Grade: 7th

Title: *Kenzie (Nickname)*

Cost: \$100

*My mom made me who I am today.
She influenced me to be better.
Don't get involved in mess.
Don't worry about nobody but yourself.
She said not to disrespect other people
Cuz if you do,
They won't respect you.
Treat people the way I want to be treated.
If I treat people badly,
They will treat me badly.*

*My family.
They have helped me be helpful.
They help me keep on track.
They help me understand more.
How to be respectful.
How to ride a bike.
How to walk away if people are mean to you.*

*I grew up without a father.
I still talk to him.
I don't really get to see him.
Sometimes I don't want to see him.
I get scared to see him in real life because I don't see him.
I don't know if I want him in my life.*

*Track.
It helps me.
I focus.
It helps me get all of my anger out.
Track is making me make more friends.
In the past,
I am making more friends.
I get to go to other schools.*

Anger.

I am mad.

I just mostly mad at my brother.

I don't feel like talking to nobody.

He tries to talk to me.

He tells me I am not fun.

I get angry.

I don't want to talk to him or his friends.

He took my friends,

But I still talk to him.

My friends help make me who I am.

To be a better person.

Don't get involved with bad people.

I find the right people.

They help me get good grades.

They help me make good choices.

They want me to graduate.

Mostly,

The help they give me is to be the best me.

I want the world to be a better place.

I don't want...

Guns

Violence

Drugs

No Criminals

Everyone would get therapy.

I know people are going through things.

I just want the world to be a better place.

Everyone should have someone to feel comfortable around and talk to.

If they had someone to talk to,

They wouldn't do bad things.

#11

Artist: Colin Floyd

Grade: 7th

Title: *Family is Everything!*

Cost: \$100

My family shaped me.

Mom.

Dad.

Uncles.

Aunties.

My mom says to always do my best.

She says to focus.

She tells me a lot of stuff.

My mom says to always do my work.

She shows me how to love others.

She shows me how to love myself.

My mom shows me how to appreciate things.

My dad.

He does the same thing.

He tells me to do my best at my work.

Try your hardest.

My dad says to be good in school.

I spend time with him.

He takes me to get my hair cut and stuff.

He takes me to my cousin's house.

To the movies sometimes.

He is funny.

I get my humor from him and my mom.

My mom and dad told me...

not everybody is your friend.

They both help me do my homework.

School is not the time to play.

They both told me that.

Uncles.

Tell me.

*Do good in school.
Do my best.
I see them doing their best.
My uncle does a nice job on my hair.
My barber does too.*

*Aunties.
They always ask how I am doing.
They make sure I do my work.
They say to try my best at everything.*

*School.
History.
Teach me what happened in the past.
Teaches me about the future.
Math.
How to count money.
Subtract it.
Add it.
Multiply it.
Language Arts.
Write.
How to.
Sports.
I learn to work hard.
I learn new skills.
Teamwork.
Sportsmanship.*

*I want to play sports.
I want to be an engineer.
I want to design buildings.
I want to make things people need.
I want to design cars.*

*I want peace in this world.
No violence.
People don't have to pay for houses.
The homeless.
They can live there as long as they want.
I want to help people in need.*

*Give them jobs.
Give them water.
Give them food.
Give them shelter.
Everybody.
There's a lot.
Help your family in need,
Especially if they don't have money.
It means a lot.
Especially when times get hard.
I want love for everyone.
Peace over homeless people.*

*I need to love myself.
I just love everything about myself.
I love my hair.
My eyes.
I am fast.
I am strong.
I care about my friends and family.
I like my music taste.
I am smart.
I am thoughtful.
I am playful.
I am creative.*

#12

Artist: Jalah Fleming

Grade: 3rd

Title: *All About My World and All About What I Think*

Cost: \$100

Um

I am taller than most kids in my class.

Um

Um

I am creative.

Um

I am smart.

I get mad fast.

I get mad fast because when people mess with me,

I just get really really mad.

That is how I am.

If I get messed with,

then I am going to mess with them.

I can't just let them talk about me.

If I let them talk about me,

Then I would not be sticking up for myself.

And then,

They think I won't say something back

And they think it's okay.

This class I am in...

They would yell or say something bad or not listen to me.

I didn't always have a hot temper.

It started when I was nine.

I turned nine last year.

I will be 10 on Thanksgiving.

I like that my birthday is on Thanksgiving.

I get to spend time with my family.

I get to eat.

My granny's macaroni is the best.

I have two grandmas.

I got one granny on my dad's side.

I am close to my grandma Payae.

She is on my mom's side.

*I am really really close to my mom's side.
I am going to my granny's house today.
I am going skating tomorrow.
Yeah.*

*Since my birthday is close to my cousins birthday,
We are going out to eat.
I will have a new cousin out of my auntie's stomach.
I am excited about that.
She has all boys.
She has no daughters.
She is like my mother,
But she is not my mother.
She got a new house.
She just had a baby shower.
I went.
It was fun.
My momma cooked chicken dip.
It was to hold us up until the real dinner.
We was helping out.
My mom had no babysitters.*

*I would take away the things so people can't do drugs.
I don't want any guns.
I would put positive things in their minds.
I would make people learn a lesson so they don't do that no more.
I would bless them.
I would let them know you don't have to rob or hurt people for money.
I would take down satin.
I would tell them not to give their souls to satin.
I would give poor people money so they can take care of themselves.
I would give more homeless shelters in the world.
I would make sure everyone had good food.
I will give money to the schools.
To my school.
To other schools.
I would give money to charities.
I don't want credit though.*

*If you be rude to someone because of how they dressed
or*

how they look.

I would tell them to dress like the person they made fun of.

Maybe this way they would learn what it's like.

I want everyone to go to church.

I want people to know why we should not put guns on each other.

They would learn how to love each other.

I would bring some good people from up there to down here.

I would do that to bring good people here,

so they can help.

Or

maybe bring the bad people back to give them another chance to be loved.

I would bring them back up and give them a chance.

#13

Artist: Demi Clay

Grade: 3rd

Title: *Love People and Love Earth*

Cost: \$100

*My eyebrows.
I like that it's curled.
Just like my great great grandma.*

And

I like doing gymnastics.

I like doing art.

I like singing.

I like to stretch.

I like to do cartwheels.

And

I love this school.

I love everything.

I like about myself is...

My hair is long.

I am special.

I love myself.

I am a nice friend.

I have kind words.

I tell people they're beautiful.

I tell them I missed you all this school year.

I might get a little bossy.

I like being sassy.

I would help people who's poor here

And people who's poor in Africa.

I would give people money to live so they can stay in their house.

I would give them food.

I would give them signs to live so they can get more money.

So, when they are standing on the street,

*then they would have a sign telling people what they need.
Give them some special stuff like jewelry, makeup, clothes, and their hair done.*

*Everyone needs help.
Everyone needs hope.
Everyone needs love.
Everyone needs courage.
Everyone needs to take care of the earth.*

#14

Artist: DeAndre Chapman

Title: *Kids Left Me Out*

Grade: 8th

Cost: \$100

*When I was younger,
I was in kindergarten.
I felt like it was actually school.
How school was depicted on television.
I was bullied.
I knew I would be made fun of.
Kids left me out.
I had really long hair.
I think that is why.
I was introverted and extroverted.
I am an ambivert.
I am both.*

*First grade.
Just wanted to be popular.
To me.
I wanted everything.
I didn't want to be a kid with nothing.
I wanted to be around people.
Have fun.
Make friends with teachers.
Make friends with as many people as possible.*

*I have a lot of friends now.
I feel wanted.
I feel like I mean something.
I mean something to people.
I am appreciated.
I don't want to feel left out.
That was an awful experience.
I feel like I have more emotions now.
I have depressing emotions.
This happened when I went online.*

#15

Artist: James Lee

Grade: 4th

Title: *My Superpowers*

Cost: \$100

I like that I wrote four chapters of the adventure of Steel.

I made this up.

Steel is from space.

He is from another planet.

He is the hero from a city.

I haven't come up with the name yet.

Maybe Steelville.

I created Steel because Brayilen wanted to be an animator.

That inspired me to make a couple seasons of Steel.

I want to make 20 seasons.

Right now, I have four chapters right now.

This means I have 80 chapters to make.

I have season one and season two.

The powers for him are

Freezing people

Seeing their weaknesses

Has the ability to be strong

When he powers up,

his skin is spikey.

He is a little like Superman.

Except,

his planet didn't get blown up.

I don't wish I was Steel.

I don't want to be a superhero fighting off thousands of monsters.

You are fending off an entire city?!

My super powers...

I am just okay with drawing.

I like to make books.

I like to draw.

That's it.

*It's a little hard for me to say positives.
A lot of people tell me positives things.*

Grandma

Mom

Dad

Brother (sometimes)

Aunt

Uncle

Christa said the things she sees in me:

I bring joy everywhere.

I have enthusiasm.

I am giving.

I am a risk-taker.

I take chances and try things.

I am a helper.

I am creative.

I am a good friend.

I have manners.

I am a thinker. I have a lot going on in there.

I take care of my things.

Can Christa hear my thoughts?

If I would not have known it,

I thought Christa knew me my entire life.

How did she know these things about me?

I'm smiling right now.

I don't understand why the government doesn't make sure

Everyone has food.

That everyone has a home.

*Can't they just give a few thousand dollars to them
instead of giving their money to the military?*

Why do we need all of that?

We can just have peace.

Make sure everyone has water.

Everyone has food.

I have a wooden gun, pistol.

I take such good care of it.

I got it at the air show.

I put chapter one of my book on my cast.

I modpodged it.

Steel is important to me.

I did a good job.

It was hard for me to say this.

I don't know why.

#16

Artist: Peyton Fryer

Grade: 8th

Title: *My Journey*

Cost: \$100

My mom.

She told me how to be a better person to people.

She does helpful things.

She taught me to start businesses.

She ran her own business.

She makes soaps and other stuff.

She taught me to be a better cook.

My mom makes loaded potato soup.

That's my favorite.

She's going to make it today.

I like cooking because of her.

I like to make eggs.

For lunch,

I like to make more eggs and grilled cheese.

For dinner,

"Every man for themselves"

She calls it that.

She cooks or we get takeout.

My dad.

He taught me how to do things on your own.

He is an engineer.

He works on cars.

He is really good at art.

He draws really really good like detailed drawings.

I get my art talent from him.

He taught me how to work on cars.

He taught me how to do math and stuff.

He taught me a lot of things.

He kinda helped me through my anxiety.

He is very protective of me.

He wants me to date when I am over 16 or at 16.

*I want a lot of peace in the world.
People to love each other.
I think I would like to help others out.
Everyone needs a home.
Everyone needs a job.*

*I am having a hard time thinking of things to say that I like about myself.
I am a good friend to people.
I think a lot.
I reflect.
I have a big heart.
I am thoughtful.
I express myself through music and art.
I think that I'm a nice person that sometimes expresses myself.
They have to earn my trust.
I just like have to get to know them.
I don't really like talking to people I never saw before.
I like my voice-talking.
My beauty.
Sometimes I get a lot of compliments in one day.*

#17

Artist: Tshaka Carnail

Title: *I Couldn't Think of Nothing Nice About Me.*

Grade: 4th

Cost: \$100

I look up to my brothers and my sisters.

One is twelve.

One is five.

One is seven.

Ava is in my mom's belly.

She is zero.

One is nine.

That is me.

I protect my brother's and sisters.

They get into fight.

I help my brothers and sisters.

I love that they play with me.

And I love to protect them.

Always.

They need protection from people bullying them.

They need protection in case somebody punches them too hard and blood comes out.

Then I come up.

I know when they fight.

My brain just knows when my brother and sister hurt.

I can feel that my brother's mad at somebody.

He just brung apple juice.

Nothing.

I like nothing.

You don't want to talk to me couldn't name anything nice about myself.

Christa started telling me things that she liked about me.

I told her what I agreed with.

I am charming.

I learned that it means very kind.

And, I learned it means to be helpful.

And, do not hurt nobody.

I have a fantastic smile.

I am playful.

I like to play with glue.

I am creative.

I have a phenomenal imagination.

I have great manners sometimes.

I have a very big heart.

Yep.

I do.

I like my face.

I like that I look good.

I like my hair.

If you know I take good care of it.

I want to rescue animals when I'm older.

Or I wanna be a firefighter.

Or I want to be police.

I don't know.

I would help everybody.

The helpless people I would give a lot of money.

They are lonely and don't have no food.

And water.

Everybody needs water.

I would make everybody kings with us.

Then, everybody would have a queen.

Then, everybody would have friends.

#18

Artist: Wisdom Davis

Grade: 3rd

Title: *I Would Share More*

Cost: \$100

*I live in Euclid Beach.
I can go to the beach from there.
It's close.
My mom lets me put my foot in the water.
It feels good.
It's cold on my feet.
I don't go often no more
cuz it's not summer.
Otherwise,
I would go every week.*

*My sister is smart and stuff.
She is younger.
My sister reminds me.
She reminds me of my grandma.
They both have October birthdays.*

*My grandma also reminds me of my mom.
They look the same.
My grandma is funny.
I don't think she wants me to tell anybody why she is funny to me.*

*My cousin is in my family.
He wants to play fight games with him.
I like him.
He looks like his dad.
I like that too.
They act the same.
I really like my uncle.
We went to Kalahari together.*

*My other uncle...
He buys me toys and stuff.
I like that he buys me masks and stuff.
I like spending time with him.*

*I like me.
It is hard to think about things I like about me.
I like that I can do stuff.
I can teach my sister stuff.
I like that I have clothes.
I like that sometimes I get to pick my own clothes.*

*I can't think of things I like about myself.
It's hard to think of things I like about myself.
I have a lot of stuff on my mind.
A lot.*

*In my body,
I made a room with a closed door.
I don't want to share the things that are on my mind.
I made the door closed on purpose..
I need respect to share it.
Let me talk.
All eyes on me.
If people did that,
I would share more.
People need to learn how to listen, really listen.*

*I like that my brother is coming home.
He is in foster care.
He is really my cousin,
but he is my brother now.
He be in foster care,
and I love him like my brother,
but he is really my cousin.*

*I am nervous.
Kinda.
They are supposed to do another inspection.
I want my brother to live with us.
I think on Thursday they do that inspection.*

*They are supposed to meet with him.
I am mostly excited about this...
A little nervous though.*

#19

Artist: Braylin Brown

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Am Special*

Cost: \$100

I am special.

I read Japanese comics.

*American comics have a punchline
and humorous jokes.*

*Japanese have heartfelt moments
and straight action.*

I am animating at the age of 10.

Usually, people start animating at the age of 11.

I am proving that anyone can do anything at their age.

I really like drawing.

I don't think most kids want to draw.

I don't think most kids know how to express their emotions.

I use art to express my emotions.

Happy

Mad

Sad

Joy

Fear

Surprise

Anger

Confusion

Nervous

Terrified

Peaceful

I like that I read more books with chapters.

I know I will read them eventually.

I like to read...

One Piece

My Hero Academia

Dragon Ball Z

Dragon Ball Super

*One Punch Man
Hunter Hunter
Demon Slayer*

*I touch things that no one would touch in their life.
I kinda like that.
People have said,
"Black people can't read Japanese comics."
"You can't read that because you're not White or from Japan."
One adult.
One kid.
Said that to me.
I felt like I couldn't read it.
I didn't want to get bullied for it again.
"Japanese people didn't create Superman or Batman."
"You should be in touch with your own culture."
I stopped bringing my Japanese comics to school.
I didn't want to hear...
"We only speak American here."
"That's stupid."*

*I want the world to accept other cultures.
I want the world to accept Japanese people and other cultures.
I would try to stop all wars.
I want North Korea to be better.
I want other controversial countries to be like good countries
and not nuke people.*

*I would get rid of guns and tanks and bazookas.
I would get rid of racism
and bad people
like the mafia.*

#20

Artist: Taylor Thomas

Grade: 3rd

Title: *I Am Not Sensitive*

Cost: \$100

*I like that people call me pretty.
I know people call me pretty.
It's because my mom is pretty.
I take that as a compliment because
my mom is pretty.
But she is always mad at me.
I don't cry.
I am not sensitive.
I don't cry.
I am not like other kids.
My mom said I was born a different way.
I was born to be a good kid.
I am my mom's baby.
I don't know.
Normally, I don't cry if I am hit.
I don't cry.
My heart doesn't feel nothing.
I say,
"I don't care."
They gonna be making fun of me.
It ain't gonna hurt me.
Sometimes it makes me feel weak if I cry.
Or if I'm hurt.
I tuck in my emotions most of the time.
I don't cry in front of people.
I don't want to be embarrassed.
I cry in front of my family.
But sometimes I do.
I see them cry sometimes.
I ask if they are okay.
They tell me to go in another room
because they don't want me to see their feelings.*

*I saw a teacher share feelings,
but normally those teachers will leave.
Sometimes my teachers get stressed out.
Sometimes I feel bad,
but not all the time.*

*I am strong.
I am strong for my family.
I think I am pretty.
I am smart.
I am beautiful.
People say I don't have friends.
I have 15 friends.*

*I want to be a doctor.
My grandma was a doctor.
She is 79 now.
My mom is a doctor.
I want to be just like me mom.
She has a HUGE heart.
Sometimes she cares.
I need to be strong.
I feel I need to be strong
cuz not too many people care about how I feel.*

#21

Artist: Zayden Hadiayway

Grade: 4th

Title: *Me*

Cost: \$100

*I like my nickname.
My nickname is Zay Zay.
My siblings gave that name to me.
I have more siblings on my dad's side than my mom's side.
Some of them live with me.
My baby sister.
My little sister.
And my big brother
live with me.*

*I don't like my allergies.
Trees.
Cats.
Dogs.
Grass.*

*I like school.
I like dismissal.
I kinda like recess.
I like to stay inside.
I like to stay at home.
I don't really like to go out.*

*I like my middle name.
Doniey.
One of my family members had that name.*

*I like Christmas.
I like presents.
Snow.
I like to make snow angels and snow fights.
I jump in the snow like it's water.
Last year and this year*

*I told everyone that I'm 10.
But really,
I am just nine.
My birthday in February.
I wanted to be in a higher grade.*

*I am funny when you start to know me.
I like to be goofy.
I like to wear my Goofy shirt.
I went to Disney World.*

*I am scared of heights.
My cousin has a dog.
It doesn't shed.
I can pet it.
Bailey.
I don't know if it's a boy or a girl.*

*I like my sibling's names.
Sophia.
Savannah.
Kelvente.*

*I like to drive my parents' cars.
They always let me drive them.
It's fun to be behind the wheel.*

*I don't know how to swim.
I don't want to learn.
I don't want to get wet.*

*There is a place called Wolf Lodge.
It has games.
It is a hotel.
It has a swimming pool.
I kinda go in.
They have a bowling alley too.
I like to bowl.*

*I have another nickname.
The Flash.*

*That's a DC character.
My friends call me that.
I am faster than them.
When I really try to beat them,
I go faster than a human being.*

*My niece has a nickname.
Sonic.
Her friend tried to race her.
She ran fast.*

*I like to play football and basketball.
I used to play football.
I was a linebacker.
I like it.
I like catching the ball.*

*Walking.
I like it.
I walk home.
I walk to my bed.
I spend a lot of time in my room.
I make funny faces and make jokes.
I spend a lot of time by myself.*

*I want to give every homeless person food and a house.
I want them to have clothes.
I want them to have money.
It is important to me that everyone is kind.
Kindness matters.*

#22

Artist: Jonathan Davis

Grade: 3rd

Title: *Dedicated to My Cousin*

Cost: \$100

Huh?

What do I like about myself?

I don't know.

I am good at football.

I am a quarter back.

My coach taught me.

I have been playing for four years.

I got my own room.

I got my tv.

I watch YouTube on there.

I pray for my cousin.

He passed away.

It was a car accident.

I was eight years old.

It happened in Cleveland.

I don't know what happened.

I was mad.

He passed.

I didn't get to go the funeral

because I was sick.

I didn't get a chance to say goodbye.

I didn't get to tell him how I felt.

I would have told held him.

I would have said

Goodbye...

You're going to heaven.

I miss you.

I loved that you took me to the store

He used to by me stuff.

Chips

Candy

Juice

I spent time with him.

He was 19 years old when he passed away.

He was too young to go.

I wrote him a letter.

I put it in my body cast for my art.

He is a part of me.

I want him to know he is always in my heart.

Always in my heart...

Forever.

This is my first poem.

It's good.

I'm smiling.

I am smiling because I got this out.

I feel happy.

#23

Artist: Damyah Davis

Grade: 3rd

Title: *The Love of Myself*

Cost: \$100

*I like about myself that
I have a great time with my parents.*

I am nice.

Kind.

Neat.

I like that I like people.

I like that I help my parents.

I help people.

I like to be just me.

I like to be straight and calm with my teachers.

I like about me is that I actually make jokes with my family and friends.

I like to be with my dad.

He makes me feel special.

I like to be with my mom.

She makes me feel special.

*I like that I have family and friends who are there for me
if I am feeling sad or alone.*

I like that myself is different

That to people are nice.

I like that Ms. Ashanti is nice to me when I am sad or feeling alone.

I would help people.

I would give them money.

That is kind and nice.

I would give my family some money.

I would let my mother have some money too.

I would give my father money to give money so he could go where he wants to go.

I would give my stepdad money.

I would give everybody some new shoes.

I would give Ms. Ashanti and Christa money too...

and my family and friends.

Everyone needs a good life.

I would make sure everyone has one.

A good life is when you have...

Blessings.

Good people around you.

Someone is being very, very kind to you.

Everybody has a family.

Everybody has friends.

Everyone has love.

This is my first poem.

I love my first poem!

#24

Artist: Lyric Peterson

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Love Myself*

Cost: \$100

*The great things is
I have a lot of things in common with my cousin.
We have a lot great memories.
I have a lot of great things about him.
He has great things about me.
Going to Skyzone.
Go cart riding.
Going out to eat.
Going to get seafood.
It is like to this place next to Five Below.
We be paying for this stuff most of the time.
We have our birthday savings and stuff like that.
I like how smart I am.
How intelligent I am.
I let people get to me when they mess with me.
I am learning how to control that.
I have good grades.
I have all C's.
Those are A's at this school.
And I have one B.
I am a very smart person.
I can control myself.
I know manners.
I know how to be respectful of teachers.
I like doing art and gym.
I like being in P.E. a lot.
I like being in Ms. Mohammad's class.
I like the opportunity to do these casts.
I like this art.
I am happy for Jesus.
He gave us an opportunity to be here.
He died on the cross for us.
Some people don't believe in Jesus.
Some people don't believe in Santa Claus.
I still believe in Santa Claus.*

*I would like to see that people give people third chances,
Not just seconds.
I know people ask God for more chances.
Doing it twice is not enough.
Maybe forgive yourself three times.
And. Then be a good student.
I would make jail.
I would give people opportunities to fix their mistakes.
Like,
If you get a ticket.
You don't go to jail.
You get a chance to make it up.
You get a chance to be forgiven for your sin.
I don't feel people give other people more chances.
Everyone needs different chances.
You know when people say,
"back in the day."
My mother didn't have things to do.
When I need a break,
then I ask permission so I can get a break.
There are some people who wish death on people.
People have done that to me.
I would never do that to them.
I don't want to say bad things about people.
Maybe I could ask my principal if we could have a space to yell and scream.
He might say, "Sure. I need to find a place where you all can do that at."
That would help me.
That would help other kids.
Some people say things out loud in front of other people.
That's how kids get in trouble.*

#25

Artist: Kyngstyn Chapman

Grade: 3rd

Title: *Things I Love About Me*

Cost: \$100

What I love about myself is...

I like creating.

Math.

My parents.

Beyblades.

I like the color blue.

I like playing with my ears.

It calms me down.

I like Christmas.

I can get anything I want.

I can have 20,000 presents.

I think that would be too much for your house.

I want people to be kind.

I want the world to not be disrespectful.

No evil.

No mean stuff.

*Everyone should have air,
because some people can't really breathe.*

*I want them to have good air,
not bad air.*

*Everyone should have water,
not sewer water.*

It should be clear water.

People should also have favorite colors.

Everybody should have a family.

Everybody should have love.

Everybody should have hugs.

Sometimes they should.

At least one hug a day.

A place to live...

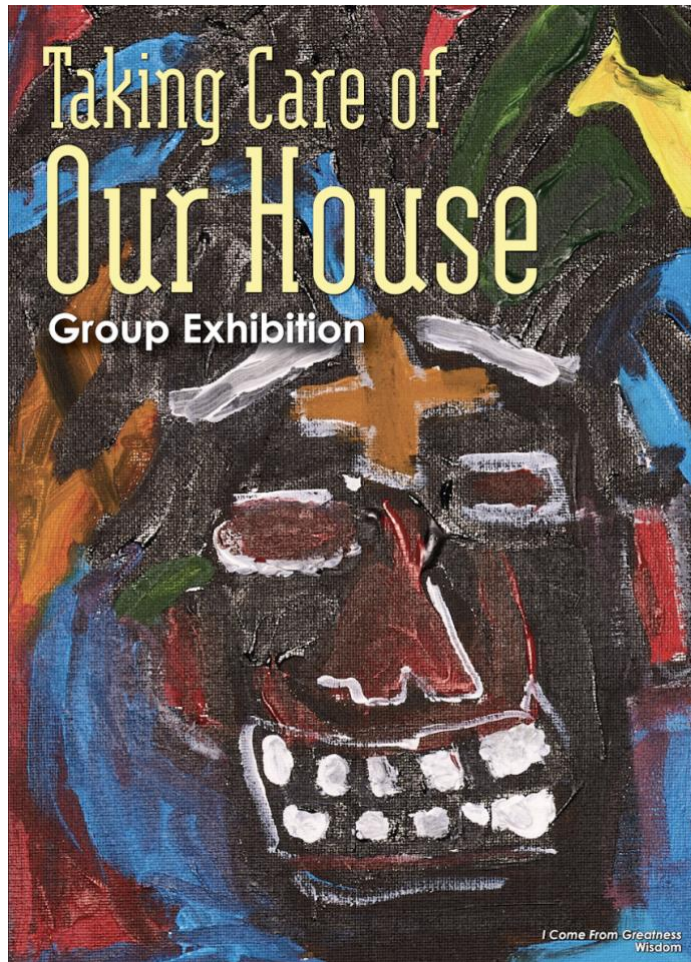
Everyone should have one.

And,

we should all have phones.

They need to be able to call for help.

*I feel good writing this.
I wrote everything by myself.
This is second poem.
And I am eight years old.*



Artist Narratives

First Floor

Numbers 26 – 31

#26

Artist: Damarion Mitchell

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Like That I Take Care of Me*

Cost: \$100

*I am tall.
I have a good family.
I like that they can take care of me.
They acknowledge me.
They pay attention to me.
They know I am there.
They take me to school every day so I can get an education.
I like that I have a brother.
He is younger.
He is fun to play with.
He is caring.
He is funny.*

*I can do a lot of stuff.
I can walk.
I can talk.
I can move.
I am grateful for that.
I can see.
I can hear.*

*There are a lot of people who can't do those things.
I am grateful I have food on my plate to eat.
I am grateful.
I think about this whenever I am eating,
or taken to school.
I think about how grateful I am every time good things happen.
I see the good things in the world
instead of the bad things.
If I pay attention to more good things,
then good things will happen.
I don't look at the drugs, fighting, guns, and killings.
If you look at the good stuff,
you can have a good life.
I have always been real positive.
My teacher knows I am positive.
It feels good to know my family knows,*

*My teacher knows.
My friends know.
I am positive.*

*I want world hunger to end.
I want to cure cancer.
I want to cure rabies.
I would make sure there is no bad stuff.
Everyone would be nice to each other.
People are not shooting people.
I want everyone to feel safe.
I want everyone in every state to feel safe.
I would want people to stop being so mean.
That leads to fights and shootings.
I wish every state would be nice to each other.
Peace.
Just peace.
Peace.
That's what I want.*

#27

Artist: Londyn Wilhoite

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Love Trying*

Cost: \$100

*I like that my good clothing.
I like my appetite.
I am allergic to pineapple.
Fajitas
Mac-n-cheese
Barbecue ribs
I am grateful.
I love my friends.
I have a best friend, Taylor.
We are strong together.
I am nice.
I don't like to be mean.
Mean is another type of bullying.
I love trying.
I want to be an artist.
I want to be a hair stylist.
I do try my best.
My grandma doesn't always know that.
I need hugs.
My friends are there for me.
I try to make peace with people.
I want to go to church.
I love spreading the word of God.
I want to make my own jewelry.
I want a hair salon.
I keep setting goals for myself.
I want to make people happy.
I want to make myself happy.
I want to make my family happy.
I want to make my friends happy.
I am strong.
I am smart.
I am a colorful person.
I am all the things I can name me.
I am inspired by people all around me.*

*Like my art teacher said,
"You can inspire people.
And when you do,
people copy off of you."*

*It's important to be me.
It's important to have lotions and perfumes for your friends.
They may not have these things because they can't afford them.
You gotta have these things to share with them.
I give hugs to my friends.*

Life is all about trying.

#28

Artist: Isabella Charlton

Title: *I Don't Like Nothing About Myself*

Grade: 7th

Cost: \$100

*I cannot think of anyone who has shaped me.
I kinda look up to my mom.
She wants me to be a nurse.
I want to be a nurse.
They get paid some good money.
I just like helping people.*

*I don't have any teachers who influence me
I don't like them teachers.
I don't have any friends who influence me.
I have a couple people I can count on.
Matilda.
I just like her.
I don't know what I like about her.*

*I don't like nothing about myself.
When I was younger I believed in myself.
I just changed.
I was like eight.
That's when it changed.
I just got bullied in school.
I don't know why I got bullied.
I was the nicest kid in that class.
I don't remember what they did.*

*I'm not sure what I'd wanna change in the world.
I think I would change people being mean to others.
I would like them to be nice.
People show it like helping each other out.
Just be nice.
Everybody should be friends.*

*I have my own personality.
I guess.
I may be agree that I am a hard worker.*

I guess.

Sometimes I'm patient.

I guess.

I am very creative.

I guess.

I have some manners with some people.

I guess.

It's hard to say nice things about me.

#29

Artist: Damonte Davis

Title: *My Future Hoop Career*

Cost: \$100

Ja Morant

He is a basketball star.

He is in the NBA.

He does great things like sports.

He does a lot of dunks and stuff like that.

He wants to dunk on LeBron James but he can't do it yet.

I want to become a basketball star like him.

Mr. T.

I admire him.

When we fall short,

he finds a way to pick us up so we don't fall.

I asked him for help.

He's helping me do better in basketball.

I know that I like myself

because I am strong.

I love hating myself.

Since I was 11 or 12,

I just started to feel this way.

My strength.

I don't want to use that to hurt someone.

I kinda of feel I have nothing good about me.

Maybe I have a shot.

I some positive things.

I am funny.

This is hard for me.

My friend is helping me.

I like my hair.

I like my smile.

I like how I act.

I like being me around people I know.

I would want the world to end anger.

No more disasters.

*No world hunger.
I want people to have self-control.
Someone stabbed another woman.
I saw it.
Right in front of my eyes.
This happened over break.
I don't want chaos.
I want peace.*

#30

Artist: Jaden Griggs

Grade: 7th

Title: *The Mind of Happiness*

Cost: \$100

My mom.

She's been here my whole life.

She has been here on my ups and downs.

I keep her close by me and close to me.

She has always been there for me.

My grandma.

On my mom's side.

She's just been there when I needed it.

I needed it.

And just all around.

She helps me be a young man.

She helps me do a lot of things.

She fights for me.

She stands up for me.

My grandma looks over my family to make sure they are okay.

My dad.

We bond through sports.

He tells me how the Browns and Cavs need to do better.

He does so much for me.

I really appreciate him and all that he does.

He takes me out.

Red Lobster.

His favorite.

Buys me shoes.

Goes to the mall.

I like how physical I can be on the football field and basketball court.

I like how I can get through anything.

I know I always have help if I need it.

I am a great artist.

I am creative.

I always hope with somebody.

I can think of over a dozen things I have done.

For example,

There was a guy who needed sugar.

#31

Artist: Kennis Talton

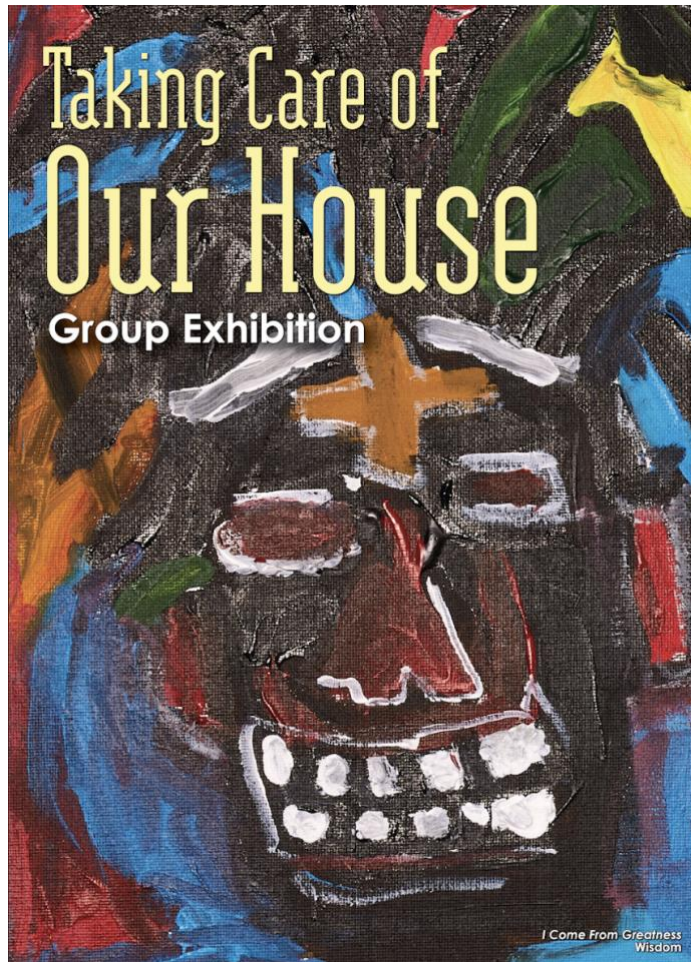
Title: *Dedication and Motivation*

Cost: \$100

*My mom.
She has been with me my whole life.
She is the reason I have my life.
She provides.
She cares.
She helps.
She loves.*

*I like my skin color.
I like my personality.
I'm loyal.
I'm honest.
I'm dedicated.
I'm insightful.
I'm a good friend.*

*I want the best for people.
Like...
Make sure everyone has a safe place to live.
Not the streets.
Food.
Clothes.
Love.
Friends.
Peace.*



Artist Narratives

Second Floor
Numbers 32 – 39

#32

Artist: Liam Thompson

Title: *The War of the Berry*

Topic: When you are young, you focus on your slice of life and don't often think about where things come from.

Cost: \$100

When in school, I thought about myself and school and thought about whether the work sheets were being done. I was anywhere from 7-16 years old. I am seventeen years old now. Where is everything going to lead to? Where am I going to go? I am worried about that? Who is with me? Who is not? I realized that as every second passes, everything actually matters. There is more to this world than just me.

I think most teenagers think about themselves. In this last year, I think thinking about college and the world started to help me to think about other things. I realized there are conflicts going on outside of the conflicts I think about with myself. We have Ukraine, Israel, Mexico, and hostile countries with things going on. I decided to focus on one of these issues, which is about farmers in Mexico. For my friend from Mexico, there is so much more he has to do to go back home than I ever had to do. I have known him for five years. I have not met his family. He has some family in Mexico and some family here.

I chose this topic on avocados because of a National Geographic film on television. I watched this a while ago. I did not talk about this with my friend, but I didn't ask him any definite questions. He doesn't know he inspired me to make my art on this. It shows kinda how crazy the world can be at times. While you are worried about a test getting done in school, there are farmers worried about being killed or losing their crops. It contrasts the examples of two totally different lives. One thinks about living and thriving and the other thinks about a test or completing something.

I was shocked. I was surprised. I never heard of this before. I am not sure why. We never talked about this in school. I did try to bring it up to an old history teacher, but I cannot recall the details. From the documentary, I learned avocados are one of the healthier things to eat in life. I also learned about the growing process. It costs the lives of innocent farmers and families every year in Mexico. You see, since avocados are expensive to grow, the cartel found a massive work around. If they just kidnap the farmers or steal the avocados, that eliminates all the work! The families are stolen from their homes, they are tortured, and maybe not killed if the cartel sees further value in them. After all that, the cartel demands money, or just the avocados directly in order to cut out the middle man. The total costs of avocados are quite lucrative, and it is totally

legal to sell and buy avocados; making easy work for the seller of the product. The war has been going on for years, forcing the families to live in fear and misery.

My work is done with a mixture of pencil and sharpie. It was done after trial and error with attempting to get some form of perspective correct. The avocado represents the product that is being stolen, and the pin with the price tag represents the price to pay for dealing with the comically large berry. The fat of the avocado means the materials it takes from the land as it grows, much like the cartel stealing from the farmers who have lived there for generations. The gun in back is a blatant show of the violence that the cartel uses to get their way. The money bundle shows that the fighting has been going on for years, and it is not ending soon.

According to Forbes magazine, Mexico produces just about 80% of the avocados sold in the United States (Flannery, 2023). Aside from the drug industry, avocados are seen as the second most violent work possible. There have also been well over 10,000 killings while under Andres Manuel Lopez Obradors regime. The cartel has no will to give any product up, going into shootouts with local authorities killing cops and many other innocents. One of the major things is also that there is not one singular cartel in Mexico. There are many, all fighting for that ever that can get. Another reason why the cartel is so frightening are the "soup makers". While the name is not frightening, the job they perform is thought only to be demonic. Their job is for any person that truly needs to go missing. They use a strong mixture of acids and other chemicals to fully dissolve the corpses. With flesh and bones melting, it is near impossible for any proper evidence to be found. Without evidence, there can be no conviction, hence a long repeating cycle of crimes without proof, and more violence.

Artmaking

This is an avocado. It is at the center of the drawing. It is large on the page. It brought my attention to the issue and how big it truly is when people my age are thinking often about themselves. This is black and white because most people tend not to think about this issue and it may come across as blan. This means the media didn't think it was important, but I do. This is why I made the avocado so big. It was meant to capture your attention. The avocado is a grenade. I drew a pin to the grenade on top. This symbolizes the possibilities for violence. The little pin nailed to the side has a tag on it. Even though this is dangerous, it is still very sought after. The end result or goal is to have more money and power. This is important to the cartel. Why? Whoever has the prettiest penny holds the key to the kingdom. It is nailed in to represent it's instantaneous. It was meant to be a temporary fix, but no one has really changed anything. This is still happening in Mexico. Farmers are scared. On the left is a wad of bills. This represents the profits from stealing avocados and kidnapping or killing the farmers. On the bottom right I drew a gun. The gun symbolizes the violence and chaos this invokes on the industry, families, and farmers.

Conclusion

I think it would be helpful for students to have projects where they investigate what is going on in the world. You get a chance to look at things that interest you. You get to learn new things and share with other people. You get to learn there are things going on outside of school. It is important to me that kids know that not everything is perfect. There are things we may not be able to fix. They can learn that the world is more complex than they think and maybe they can do something to change.

I think that teachers should be learning new things and adapting to learning. Students could learn with their teachers on some things. Teachers can learn how to do this.

References

Flannery, N. (2023, April 11). Are U.S. avocado buyers financing the cartel conflict in Mexico. *Forbes*.

#33

Artist: Addison Chard

Title: *SPEAK*

Topic: People my age don't speak up because they are afraid of being left out.

Cost: \$100

I don't speak up. Especially, when things get tough. I am afraid of what other people would think. Because we have learning differences, other people make fun of them. I want to say something because other students would ask, "Why are you defending them?" I feel this way especially in our girls' group. We have a group for girls to empower them. It is only for certain grades, but now it's only for senior girls. We have about 10 girls in the group. We meet every Friday morning for 30 minutes. We talk about difficulties they have with bullying or with guys. I chose not to be in it before. I like it this year and I like the teacher. I made friends with the majority of the girls. I like talking to them, to have a little group to talk to. I just like spending time with them. I enjoy the stories. I don't enjoy interrupting each other.

Many people underestimate the power of words, but there's another way of communication that also has a big impact on our emotions and the way we think. That type of communication is silence. But silence can be quite negative to yourself and your emotions. Silence can tell someone how you're feeling. It can also affect us in a negative way because we choose not to express ourselves.

I think everyone has a right to be heard. If there are group ideas, we can learn new things from each other. We can use discussions to make deeper connections with each other. We can function as a community. I wish we could get to this point.

I read a Ted Talk called "To Speak or Not to Speak." We were taught to be afraid to speak up. We are not taught to speak up or why it matters. I think this might have to do with a parent's perspective. Maybe it's a generational thing. Maybe it's trauma for them. I said my political views in school. I was in sixth grade. The Clinton and Trump vote was a difficult time for me. Everybody was about vote for this person or that person. I asked my mom who she voted for. I thought to ask questions. I didn't really watch the news or read. I was questioned by my friends why I supported the candidate I supported. It was a pivotal moment, I thought, to keep my thoughts to myself. Now, with political stuff, I don't want to participate. I only hear things from my family. I know there was pressure to register to vote.

I learned that speaking up can also help others, especially like bullying. I regret not saying anything in the moment. Children who are afraid to confront authority can also be afraid to say things to other people, stand up for themselves, or stand up for others. They might avoid talking about politics or problems or they may not speak up when they see or experience a form of harassment.

As a society let's make awareness of the negative effects of staying silent and teach the younger generations about speaking up for themselves and others. I read an article about why high school students are afraid to speak up in class. Two hundred and fifty students responded to a survey. They learned students felt other students were uncivil with each other, especially when it came to sharing thoughts that are not part of the majority. The findings also said students are afraid to share their thoughts in school and this can create a toxic environment. We need to learn how to agree to disagree. People shouldn't put someone down because they disagree. It is not okay to take it out on someone else. We need to support what is true or not. Tik Tok can't be your only source. You need to read articles or watch the news or look at things because things can change. Or, what if you read something wrong? Look up what things mean so you can speak about it.

When not speaking your mind can lead to some mental and emotional distress. Suppressing emotions, nightmares, low self-esteem are just to name a few negative impacts of speaking your mind. Not speaking also has a negative effect on society with the cases of bullying. As someone who doesn't speak my mind very much it hurts to see others around me getting built for just being themselves or because they look different from others.

A study done by a German Political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann theorized the spiral of silence. She believed that society isolated others due to their opinions. As a communicative species, the last thing that we want is to be isolated or excluded. To stay in the group we tend to stay silent out of fear. In school, classmates tend to be silent against bullying or not supply support to victims, which could really help.

Artmaking

I painted the art black in the background. The color black makes it represent fear. Black is about darkness. Silence can be a cover up, more so. You can use black to cover things up. This could be like covering up speech. So, you can see the cover on the canvas. It doesn't cover everything. It's like a blanket. You can still see the white. The speech isn't totally silenced or covered.

When I wrote the word SPEAK, I am telling them to speak. I want them to get out. The silence can be broken. I made the white circle like a ball shattering the black away to allow for others to speak. It's like an open space. It's like therapy. It's anonymous. It's respectful. It's a safe space.

I painted the person as a shut eye because this person is filled with fear. The person is looking at the megaphone like asking, "Should I speak?" The megaphone is black with white outlines. Even if you pick it up, the fear is still there. Will anyone hear me?

Conclusion

I think schools need to have little groups of students with lots of different perspectives. We need to learn how to communicate and debate. This should be taught to everyone, even adults. College students should be learning this. These are skills to be learned. They are important to know. People need to learn how to speak up, speak their minds, and do this so we can learn how to learn from others. Maybe we can have more debates. We need to learn how to agree to disagree. Maybe bring up topics that interest students so they learn. Maybe families can learn how to do this too. I think we can learn how to counter an argument, but we can't do that if the adults don't know how to do this.

#34

Artist: Ella Kloppman

Title: *Blurring*

Topic: Heteronormativity and Gender Norms in Western Society

Cost: \$100

I can't remember when I learned the term "heteronormativity." It means assuming there is a "straight" culture that is more prevalent. For example, the assumption that just because you don't think you are queer or don't know yet, then you must be straight.

I asked my parents if I was gay.

They asked if I liked girls.

At the time,

I didn't like anyone.

I went 13 years thinking I was straight.

I didn't think to revisit it until I was 16.

It was difficult.

I felt like I was trying to be something I was not.

I was constantly being assumed.

I was assumed to be something I was not.

My adolescence.

My adolescence would have been easier.

It would have been easier to be nothing

instead of being in a box I didn't belong.

Taking heteronormativity would have been easier.

Taking queerness out of the equation would have helped.

Gender norms or roles are mostly made by men and have been around for ever and ever. Men tend to have more power (see Zhu & Chang, 2019).. White women got the right to vote in the early 1900's and Black women got the right to vote much later. These norms tend to hold men higher and portray women as weak. These norms also influence people's health and decisions made (Fleming & Agnew-Brune, 2016).

This topic is important to me. I believe a non-gender society is the best kind of society. A non-gender society means no one assumes anything about anyone else. Your gender identity has nothing to do with what you are able to do or what people think you are able to do. A bunch of stuff had me thinking...like abortion being overturned. When Roe v. Wade was overturned by the Supreme Court, that made me think that the government can control my body. Boys talk over me or ignore me because they think they are more important. When guys get praised for saying something that I just said, but they say it in a different way. When all shows have like predominantly straight casts as long as television has existed. If there is one queer character, straight people get upset and think the LGBTQ community is shoving it down their throats. Books are getting banned. Straight people are forgetting that churches are predatory towards children and they have issues with drag queens. They accuse them of being predatory?

It is not about being non-binary, it's about being non-gender. I don't think people should not pass judgment. There are stereotypes about men and women, but we don't need to blow that out of proportion. Non-binary people don't identify with either gender or they are their own gender. To be a non-gender society, they can identify however they want: clothes, jobs, speech, behaviors. The gender gap in teaching and nursing is not just about women having a job. I know a guy who is going to be a teacher. He was told he will have an easy time getting a job because he is a man going into elementary education. Men don't tend to teach younger grades. They make more money when they teach older students. A lot of this is about me getting interested in things and reading old books. I kinda came to my own conclusions about this. Minds change. I think it is healthy to have ideas develop with new information. And, if you don't develop, I don't think that is very healthy.

It is hurting us.

Hindering us.

This gendered society.

So much more to learn.

It hurts.

Queer people are trying to grow.

Not knowing.

Constantly living under heteronormativity.

Artmaking

This is one canvas. I used two mediums: acrylic paint and air dry clay. First, I thought about how these gender norms are colored in our own heads. Blue is for boys. Pink is for girls. These specific things are for boys and these things are only for girls. It is an instinctual assumption people still make. I think people have a mix of these thoughts in their heads. It is not half and half. It is a blend. These are their thoughts and actions. Even if we think we are fully gendered in our head, they are being blended and switched all the time. For example, when you see in the 80's or 90's a lot of bands, predominantly Queen and Prince, they were challenging gender norms, they influenced how men could dress or express themselves. When men were dressed back in the day, royal men elevated themselves with heels. They wore makeup. They wore wigs. These would be stereotypical things for females. When these things were feminized, then men didn't want them anymore. Women were adapting that fashion. Same thing with shoulder pads. We think of women in the 90's. They thought this was feminine, but women got this from men's fashion.

I painted blues on the left and pinks and reds on the right. These are thoughts flowing. Religion plays a role in this. He took a rib from his left side to make Eve. Therefore, I put blue on the left. I blurred them together in the body because we have both masculine and feminine parts of us. Full binary is a myth. Like, everyone is completely one thing. I don't think that is true. I assume everyone has a gay celebrity crush. Everyone I talk to says this.

I put the bones in my art because when we are stripped down after societal norms or expectations, we are all human. We need to understand this. We need to believe this. If we don't dismantle these societal gendered norms, then children are going to continue to be put into boxes as they grow into adults. People will get hurt. Our society will crumble. We don't need to put people in bubbles. We all need to be loved and accepted. It is important.

The bones have colors on them to show we are aging and as a culture we are growing and changing. My hope-the bones will be dark brown. We need to continue to grow as a society.

Conclusion

For one, stop gender talk. Teachers and principals, don't assume anyone is a he or she. Refer to people as a "they" or "them" until they are told otherwise. I would not like being told I am a "they" or "them" because I love identifying as "she" and "her." However, there are people who feel the opposite.

I think teachers should be able to share their thoughts. I think it is important for teachers to feel comfortable sharing their feelings or thoughts because they can offer another perspective. For college, I think people who want to be teachers should have opportunities to learn about this and how important it is to bring equal representation to the classroom.

People in the television industry, put more emphasis on equal representation of straight and queer people.

References

Fleming, P. J., & Agnew-Brune, C. (2015). Current trends in the study of gender norms and health behaviors. *National Library of Medicine, 5*, 72-77.

Zhu, N. & Chang, L. (2019). Evolved but not fixed: A life history account of gender roles and gender inequality. *Frontiers in Psychology: Secondary Evolutionary Psychology, 10*.

#35

Artist: Liam Speaks

Title: *Blip*

Topic: Existentialism

Topic Stance: Obviously, we're all relatively insignificant in the grand scheme of everything, but you don't have to be sad about that.

Cost: \$100

Anyone can feel like a blip. I mean, anyone. I am using it as a matter of understanding that we are all super tiny. We don't live very long. As an adolescent, it is like a middle space. You are in a process of finding out who you are and where you belong, and how you fit in your group. Finding a community you belong in. The purpose of my art was to kinda show how big the universe is and how tiny we are, but we are still significant. People say, "Nothing matters. What is the point?" Because we are going to die, and if things don't matter, then they don't last. I don't think that doesn't make sense. Being temporary, that's all that matters? It doesn't make sense. What we do matters.

*I say things sometimes,
to sound smart.
I use words sometimes,
fancy words,
So people don't always know
that
I may not really know something.
The fancy words can hide
That I don't know.
That is like the blip.
The blip can feel insignificant,
but it is important for the blip to know,
They matter.*

It seems kind of obvious when you talk about how big the universe is to think that since we're so small and everything else is so big, nothing matters in the grand scheme of things. I mean, we're all gonna die, and everyone will be forgotten eventually, so a popular way to react to this information is by coming to the conclusion that nothing matters. I mean people there. It can mean anything. I think that logic is flawed though, and even if nothing truly mattered, it wouldn't help anybody to live their life being sad about it or not feeling of value. However, I view this as a way of being optimistic. If you want to live better, in my opinion.

There are people who say "screw it," because in their mind, nothing matters. Everything is meaningless. Not everyone who views that way is pessimistic. I started to research this. It doesn't help to look at the world that way. If you want something to actually help you, then you can find a way to know you do have meaning.

Nihilism-nothing has an objective meaning. We all just exist, and that's it. The concept of nihilism has been thought about and discussed since ancient times, a notable example unsurprisingly being the Ancient Greeks (see Vazquez, 2020). The actual term "nihilism" wasn't developed way up until the 1800s, when Russian author Ivan Turgenev coined the word in his book *Fathers and Sons*. Pessimism is probably one of the key traits that come to mind for most when talking about nihilists, since the core beliefs of nihilism are how life itself has no objective meaning and to generally reject any value we put on literally anything. Existentialism is a similar school of thought, but what makes it differ from nihilism is its perspective: existentialists also believe that life is essentially meaningless, but you can create meaning in life yourself (see Wild, 1960). That's the belief I align the most with and was basically the inspiration behind the art.

Artmaking

It may look simple, but it's not a pretty simple piece. It's a black and white artwork with the white outline of a person floating in a void, surrounded by a ton of stars. I thought it was a cool way to show how little we are in this mass of some kind of representation of something larger. If we look at this as the universe, then stars can be a way of looking at how many there are of them. People can be like stars, and be authentic, like they are. This is what stars are made of-internal energy. Each of us have some kind of internal energy so we can shine.

I made the floating human as small as I did, because I want it to look like this person is really tiny compared to everything else around them. I made this human bigger than the stars. Why? You matter more than you think you do.

It's like the human is floating in space, surrounded by billions of stars. The floating could symbolize going about life. You are just trying to find something to cling onto something...trying to find yourself. I guess you could say this captures the feeling of how small people may feel. You are compared to the rest of the universe.

I am 18. Even though I am legally an adult, I don't feel that way on the inside, no way. When I tell adults that, they often say they feel like adults. I think they say this because they may not feel like they have everything figured out. I guess, they look in the mirror and feel like a kid inside. Sometimes I feel kinda off. It doesn't feel right and then sometimes it does. The fact that I will be 20 in less than two years, feels strange.

I am scared.

Responsibilities.

Being an adult.

Managing money.

Managing time.

Managing relationships.

Trying to balance a lot of stuff.

Trying to be useful to society.

It's good to be useful.

I am scared.

Disorganized.

Messing stuff up.

Putting pressure on myself.

I don't sleep very well,

sometimes.

Not during the school year.

Sometimes I am too busy.

Sometimes I just don't manage.

Sometimes I feel like the human in my drawing.

Yes,

of course.
My generation feels that way.
Especially, my generation.
COVID.
Screwed stuff up.
Delayed development.
It was a crucial period.
I should have been out more.

Conclusion

Schools need to have patience with us. Don't be a jerk. Remember when you were that age. What would you have wanted to happen? Teachers can help students feel they matter. Students want to feel valued. I guess I had teachers like that. I haven't had too many bad teachers. Colleges should be teaching teachers how to do this, especially when students don't feel that way.

We'll most likely never know why we're all here and what this all means, and even though we seem insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe, because we're temporary and the universe is forever, that really wouldn't make much sense. This is because if the reason we're insignificant compared to everything else is because we're all temporary, then the only way we'd matter according to that logic would be if we all lived forever, and obviously that can't happen. So I guess I'm trying to say that from this perspective, we matter *because* of the fact that we're all tiny and temporary. And even if that isn't true, it's probably just a healthier way to live life I think.

Reference

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Wild, J. (1960). Existentialism as a philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy*, 57(2), 45-62.

#36

Artist: Echo Blanc

Title: *Connection*

Grade: 12th

Topic: Everyone has a connection to death

Cost: \$100

I and a lot of people in my family are connected to death. We have very unique experiences to death. These experiences aren't explainable. It is not explainable by science, but by experience. For me, like for one, my friend had died in 2020. His dad killed him, his sister, his mom, and himself. They lost their dog and the dad lost his job. The dad was depressed. The father's dad alerted the police and told them to go to the house because he thought his son committed suicide. What the police found was beyond a suicide. The father killed the whole family. When I found out my friend died, I had a sort of vision. I was like a ghost witnessing it. For a while, I was so confused. I wondered why I should tell anybody about this. It didn't make any sense. I didn't tell anyone for years. I started to talk to people. I learned other people keep quiet about death too. It is something that happens to all of us. It seems like it was taboo to talk about death. I am learning a lot of people have a relationship with death. And, I am also realizing probably everybody has a relationship with death.

My dad, he had his brother die before any of me or my sisters were born. He died in 1999. My dad, my uncle was in hospice at the hospital from lung cancer. My dad was with him late at night. He had a meeting. He went to bed. He woke up. The dog was staring at something. He saw his brother standing there. He believes his brother was saying goodbye. He wanted my father to know he loved him and valued him. After that, my dad got the call to let him know my uncle had died. Like, he just had a bad feeling about his other brother and that something bad was going to happen and he thought there was something going on with his health. The next week, his brother died from a sudden heart attack. Both him and I get these kind of feelings about death is coming to someone.

When I get that feeling, I never share that with the person who is going to die. I tell my loved ones and their loved ones that I have a bad feeling about them. I would tell them to call them.

Most of the time they call. It hasn't happened about death, but I have gotten the feeling something bad is going to happen.

Like, when my uncle died, I heard the phone ring. I knew my uncle died. My dad was talking to his other brother. This brother doesn't call. The little voice in my head told me my uncle died. I saw something on my father's face. I could tell he was in pain. My dad told me my uncle just died. I told my dad I knew it. This is how I learned my dad also had a bad feeling about his brother's death.

When my dad's mother passed, she died a couple months after my oldest sister was born. She called my dad. They had not taken my new born sister to be taken to see my dad's mom. She called my dad one day. She asked her to bring my sister and see her. She loved all of her grand kids. She had so much love in her heart. The day she called was the day she died. My dad didn't get the chance to take her. He didn't get to say goodbye. He got to the hospital and said she just died. My dad says his mom knew she was going to die soon. She didn't know when. She died too soon.

My dad did tell me a story about his aunt. His aunt was staying watching over her husband. She was in the living room. She saw two of his dead relatives at the bottom of the stairs. She asked what they were doing there. They said they were there to get her husband, Mike. She followed them up the stairs. They disappeared. My dad's aunt found her husband dead.

I always say.

I have a connection to death.

So many people my age have not even gone to a funeral.

I think that is weird.

My parents.

When I was growing up,

they took me to funerals with them.

Both of my parents met people who were terrified to go to funerals.

*Chances are,
Maybe it's your funeral people will attend.*

Death is not taboo in my family.

We are aware.

We talk.

We understand what death can mean.

We might not understand the concept as children.

I did understand it was a thing.

It is normal.

It happens to everyone.

My peers.

They just seem to have an understanding of death.

I told my story of death to them.

They don't seem to understand.

But

When I talk to adults,

They seem more understanding.

Grief

Loss

Multiple people

They are much more open to death.

My peers.

They don't seem to get it.

They don't understand how death of someone they love affects us.

My parents.

They didn't have a choice.

They had to tell me about death.

My grandparents.

My uncles.

They couldn't just bounce around the subject.

They had to tell me they were dead.

I could not grasp the concept as a child.

I did know about it at a very young age.

It wasn't shocking.

To hear about it.

Someone I knew died.

Death was and is a possibility.

I think especially knowing my uncle died.

In his 30's.

You can die at anytime.

I learned it was a possibility.

Because of that.

I think I have always been more open and that might be the reason why I have...

a connection.

A connection with death.

Death is not something to avoid.

Really.

If anything,

You should talk about it more.

It might be sad to know someone is gone.

Talking about them keeps them alive.

The thought of them might die with you.

Keep them alive with your thoughts and talking about them.

Our memories.

Right now I am reading a book by a hospice nurse. They know when it's your time. They will be missed, but it is their time to go. The name of the book is "The In-Between" by Hadley Vlahos. I highly recommend this book. I think most of my knowledge comes from my dad with his experiences. Him talking about his experiences affirms I am not crazy. What I saw might be unexplainable, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen.

Artmaking

I painted the background black. I guess because people usually see death as a negative thing. I put a white ring around the skull, and even though it is a very sad and deep subject, death can be a very wonderful thing. But so many people keep death in the dark. Few people get to see it as a ring of light or hope. Obviously, it is sad, but it is not as bad as everyone else sees it.

At the bottom, I painted a waterfall. I made the skull cry and the waterfall is from his tears. I put a lot of people in the water because we are all connected to death and at the beginning of the waterfall are not connected to death, but the ones at the end of the waterfall are close to death. Some are trying to move up the waterfall, like a near-death experience. Once you fall off the waterfall, you have died. This is how we are connected to death.

On the left side, this is the moon on fire. The crescent moon means death in some cultures or the end. And then, I put it on fire because I wanted all four elements included in the painting (fire, water, earth, and air). Earth is represented in the grass and rocks. Fire is in the crescent moon. Air is in the sky with all of the souls floating in. Water is the waterfall comprised of tears from the skull representing death.

Conclusion

I think families should talk to their children about death. We all have the same beginning and same end. Obviously, this is the way it should be. I think it would be a very good thing for young people to talk about death. The grieving process is very hard. It doesn't end. It doesn't go away. We need spaces to talk and think and reflect. I think these spaces would be very beneficial. It is such a powerful thing that death can either grab your hand and hold it tight or you and death can grab each other's hands. And if death grabs your hand against your will, then you don't really know how to accept it and how to deal with it. You are just overcome by this grief. And, that's why death is holding onto you. Death has an enormous amount of grief. Understanding it is the key. This is how death and you can reach for each other's hands.

#37

Artist: Cole Kierspel

Title: *Transgenderism Dragon*

Topic: People who go through being trans, come out stronger.

Cost: \$100

At first, I had a hard time thinking about a topic I would like to focus on. Being a White male myself, I wasn't sure what other people might go through as a young person. I thought about people who are transgender. For me, transgender is not just about genitalia or chest. It means someone can be comfortable presenting themselves in any manner, such as hair, makeup, clothes, name, pronouns, etc. (Human Rights Campaign, 2023). I mean, most of the people who are trans, they are funny, smart, and embrace themselves as a person. They know who they are and look at life at the very best-to enjoy every moment you have. Definitely, no one accepting it, well, no one likes that. The whole thing of it is, whenever they overcome those people who aren't accepting, then you come out on top. It's like exercising. You tear up your muscle and then it rebuilds and comes back.

Did you know that 1.6 million people in the United States, who are 13 years or older, identify as transgender? And, 300,000 youth identify as transgender? According to the Williams Institute (2022), there are many people who identify as transgender. In Ohio, there was a bill that passed stopping youth who are transgender from getting affirming healthcare and are not allowed to play in sports because of who they are (see Henry, 2023). I don't think sports should not be gender specific. Boys and girls should be playing sports together.

Artmaking

I chose to draw because it is the medium I know the best and I wanted to portray the topic as best as I could. This piece is representative of Transgenderism (I made up that word ;)). This means that it is the whole subject of being transgender...include everyone...how you dress...physical modifications...trans masc (someone transitions to be male)....trans fem (someone transitions to being female)...nonbinary (someone who does not identify as male or female).

Why a dragon? The whole idea is that people who come out as trans come out better than before. I was into dragons a lot as a young person. Like the spectrum of transgenderism, dragons also vary in shape and size and change who they are to be who they want to be. There

really is not a certain way. You can have wings, tails, and legs, and can have as many as they want. Bottom line- THEY ARE ALL DRAGONS! Dragons are cool!

The two heads show each of the spectrums of transitioning from female to male, and male to female (trans masc and trans fem). One was chiseled and one was extended. There is a mustache. There are modifications with the chest. One breast implant and one with top surgery. Going outward, the wings are the color of the trans flag. I will explain more later.

The reason for combining transgenderism with a dragon is to show power. People who have transitioned and express that this is them are so powerful, only comparable to the mythological strength of a dragon. I, myself, not being transgender can't speak on the behalf of everyone who is. But from what I've seen from people who are trans, whether friend or not, are all some of the funniest, kindest, smartest, talented, empathetic and creative people I have ever seen!

The color palette used is borrowed from the trans flag itself (see below), with an addition of purple for neutral ground. And both the heads focus on the primary colors of the transmasc and transfem flags respectively. The fire also symbolizes the trans flag. One of the most common symbols for a dragon is fire. Fire breathing dragons symbolize power and strength. I used fire to symbolize that. Both dragonheads are breathing fire.

Their eyes are open. People who are trans are experiencing the world. They are in full view of the world and their experiences.



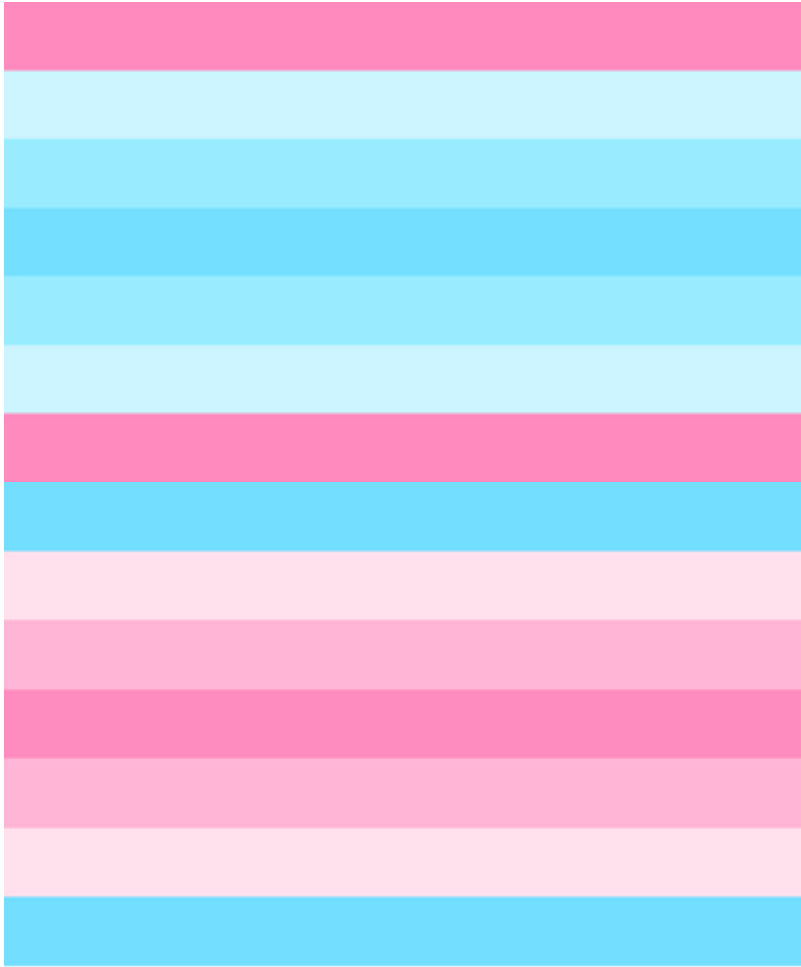
The transfem has a primary color of pink with blue additions; and vice versa for the transmasculine head. Other key details include the horns, chest, wings, and tails. The horns are representative of a penis, where the female head had it removed, and the male head and an extension of it; of course not all transgender people have these procedures, I found it as a nice addition. The chest is also representative of both spectrums, primarily with the scar sometimes apparent with breast reduction surgery for those transitioning from female to male. Possibly the most noticeable aspect is the wings, and how the membrane is colored as the transgendered flag. And lastly, the tails are the transgender symbol split up into three parts (see below).



Each of those little symbols are separate. The male and female symbols are found and are corresponded with their gendered side respectively; and the third segment works as a middle ground, utilizing purple to show how it is no more one side than the other.

The dragon heads move into blue or pink respectively. The trans masc flag has blue on the inside and pink on the outside. This represents how they were female and now male. And the trans fem has blue on the inside and pink on the outside. This represents they were male and now identify as female.

Trans masc flag:



Trans fem flag

Conclusion

I think that in some areas, schools are getting better at accepting transgender people. Women can wear pants and come out as a man versus a woman. There are some people bringing this to a halt. They are not allowing people to be who they are on the inside. I think we need to be more accepting of people. If someone knew the answer, maybe we would be a different world by now. We need to keep fighting the suppression. I mean, sometimes there are things you can do like the Pride parades. If you haven't met someone who is trans, see who they really are. They are just like you and me. One of the hardest things a human can do, well, admit that you are wrong...that you have something to learn...that you are not right all the time. If we were all more open, and not enforce these made up rules, they would be so much happier. The world would be a better place for young people in schools.

References

Henry, M. (2022). Ohio house passes bill blocking gender-affirming care and trans athletes. *Ohio Capital Journal* see <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2023/06/22/ohio-house-passes-bill-blocking-gender-affirming-care-and-trans-athletes-from-playing-sports/>

Human Rights Campaign (2023). *Ohio houses passes multiple anti-LGBTQ+ bills; Human rights campaign condemns passage & urges against senate passage*. See <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2023/06/22/ohio-house-passes-bill-blocking-gender-affirming-care-and-trans-athletes-from-playing-sports/>

#38

Artist: Riley Putt

Title: *Depression*

Topic: Depression and Teens

Cost: \$100

Five million. That's right, five million teens had at least one major depressive episode ((National Institute of National Health, 2021). And, that is just the number of teens who reported this. Doesn't surprise me. Cuz it is more common than people think. Teens can be affected by it the most. Their brains aren't fully developed. I think I am probably scared. Like the people that are affected by it, they don't know who to turn to. They don't know what else to do, and they kill themselves. Sometimes people think teens are attention seeking, but they are serious. They are ATTENTION SEEKING because they want someone to care for them. It is a lot more than just getting attention. They need help. It is also just not something I have observed. I have gone through this too. My art is personal. It's about me. I am making myself vulnerable. That makes my art more powerful. I opened up.

The purpose of my art is to make sure people understand:

This is not fun.

It just doesn't affect you on the inside.

It affects you on the inside.

It affects the way you live.

It may be hard to get out of bed.

Do self-care.

Brush your teeth.

Exercise.

It makes it twice as hard.

Medication affects it too.

You can lose motivation from the side effects.

You can flare up in rashes anywhere on your body.

Paranoia.

Chills.

Hot flashes.

Vertigo.

Losing your balance.

Itchiness.

Mortification.

Different medications.

Feelings of bugs crawling on you.

It is not fun.

It is not fun at all.

Long story short.

It's not just the inside.

It's also outside.

Depression.

I say this: Depression is a common mental disorder characterized by persistent sadness and a lack of interest in pleasurable activities.

For my art, I try to make what I see in my head....whatever is going on with me...I want to make someone feel and see what is happening in my head. I don't tone it down. I put whatever I experience...see...feel...imagine...think...I put it down...or a dream, like yeah. It is easy for me to do this because I just like I don't have a problem with people knowing what I see in my head. I can explain it. I can talk about what I am going through. It's a like a bridge. I use my art and hope someone asks me about it. I want to actually explain it. If you don't struggle with understanding my art, that's a problem. I do what I do because it's my truth. The average person might think a middle school student did this art because of all of the different designs on it and randomness of it. Why is there a bone on it? That's the point. It's hard for some people to want to grow up...being in the mindset of being an adult...some teens want to be 10 the rest of their lives...that you still had childlike traits...like just thinking of the most random things...not being able to like neatly do something...if you look at children's drawings, you might notice messy

designs or drawings...I wish I could go back in time and not grow up...growing up so fast...and then, all of these responsibilities on your plate.

All I wanted to do was grow up.

To be the age I am today.

I thought...

If I grew up,

Maybe I wouldn't feel this way...

Depressed.

I spent most of my life

Trying to focus on wishing the days went by faster.

Wishing...

I could stay 15...

Even though 15 was a horrible year for me.

I was sent to a mental hospital.

I had never been.

I know a lot of people have.

I hadn't.

It felt like I was being arrested.

I couldn't wear my jewelry.

I was patted down.

I gave up my phone.

I had to have a metal detector.

I wore scrubs.

I was in a room.

A small room.

A rubber couch.

Nothing sharp.

Blank walls.

No windows.

Alone.

How does this help me get better?

It didn't help me get better.

I was isolated.

I already felt that way.

I don't understand this.

I don't understand the system.

Do they know how to help?

If you want your life to be over...

Putting them in a room...

No furniture.

Metal door.

Doctors coming in and out.

They did nothing.

Put in a room.

Taken out.

I was alone.

I saw people.

My age.

Scared.

I was scared.

It was insane.

There were kids there.

People hurting.

Screaming.

Scratching the walls.

It sounds made up,

But that was our reality.

My mom.

Not allowed to be with me.

Only when asked certain questions.

I wanted her to be with me.

I was there for a day

It felt like two weeks.

I refused to sleep.

I think they had a sleeping pill to take.

I refused.

I was afraid they would make me take it.

I don't want my mind being altered.

If I was home,

Then I would feel safe.

I didn't feel safe.

That is depression.

I didn't feel safe in my mind.

I didn't feel safe in my body.

My friends told someone at school.

It was a whole thing.

It was an interesting time.

Now.

I have learned skills to manage it.

I am on different medications.

I am always trying to find different ways to feel.

I go to therapy.

I am trying to be honest.

I want to be open.

*My art helps me.
I have been honest.
It's nice to have that space...
To feel safe.
To share what I am thinking and feeling.
This is what everyone needs.
We all need to feel safe.
We all feel.
Holding it in is not healthy.
We just need spaces to share and feel safe.*

I wanted to do this art on depression because it is not talked about a lot. And as you saw, five million teens are affected by it. It is embarrassing to talk about. Luckily, I have a very supportive mother. We have similar experiences growing up. And more people should know that depression affects people, and specifically teens. It affects everyone, but in my art, I am sharing what it is like to be a teenager today.

How I am affected by depression...

I am a 17 year old male and a senior in high school. When I was around 13 or 14, I was medically diagnosed with something called major depressive disorder, also known as MDD. MDD is when an individual has a persistently low or depressed mood, feelings of worthlessness, lack of energy, poor concentration, appetite changes, and sleep disturbances.

Artmaking

My brown paper is not appealing to look at. When you look at art, people expect something pretty to look at. I think people expect white paper, like it's standard. Or, maybe a canvas. I also have ragged edges. Being depressed isn't pretty. And, symbolically, the ragged edges show life is not smooth. There are raggedy edges...and life can tear away at you...it looks like someone tore it...and then someone had to put it back together again. The putting it back together again is like having a romantic partner...having someone who can help me put things together...I am realizing that people sometimes think they have to be in a relationship to feel better. But reality...reality tells you that you don't need to be in a relationship with someone to be complete...to be happy.

There are symbols on the outside of the image in the middle. This is about wanting to stay young. I tried to make things look like a kid drew those. I wanted to stay a kid. If I didn't want to do a worksheet or do the actual work, I actually made those drawings as a kid. I drew bones, swirls, and questions...because I didn't care. I didn't care about school. I didn't want to grow up and deal with being an adult.

The middle image is depression on the outside...the top. It's what it can look like. I made the eyes look like they were drawn by a child and then by someone my age. I wanted to make it clear that people of all ages can go through this. This is what people say to other people...depressed pose...I must have looked depressed...someone asked, "Is this your depressed pose?" On a daily basis, I have people asking if I am okay. My mom tells me to "call a friend." She wants me to hang out with people my age. Another quote was "just tired." If people ask me if I am okay, I just say, "I am tired." Sometimes it works. I say this so people will leave me alone. I have also been called "a mess." I just roll my eyes. I have been made fun of since elementary school. I have dealt with this since I was younger. They made fun of my body, face, hair...and before, I just let it affect me. I stopped caring about everything. And now, when people say stuff to me, I am kinda a smartass. I get myself in trouble for saying something back. I hit below the belt sometimes. But now, I ignore people. What is the point? I realize over the years, they are just trying to get a reaction out of me. There was one time I felt bad because someone cried. They were so mean to me. I said something I should not have said. I said something. I wanted to protect myself.

The eyes are different emotions. I made different color eyes- blue for sadness...red for anger...black is for feeling empty...green is for envy....and the eyes with "sober and rehab," people used to tell me...or ask me, "Are you high?" And this is because I don't sleep very well. Someone asked me, "How was rehab?" I didn't understand. I wasn't in rehab. The depressed mode is how my eyes look. The black eyes are about being quiet...numb...I don't talk. I don't talk in class. I am filled with anxiety. I think honestly, I think it is getting better. I am asking more questions and talking to people more.

I have had a lot of practice talking about this. I want my art to be used to talk about this.

Being a male. I hate that men are not supposed to talk. They aren't supposed to share their feelings. It is important to get this out-depression. I generally think that the majority of my friends are girls. I find it difficult to talk with guys. So many are mean to me. This is not talked about with males. I feel like it is about the fathers of my generation who are not supposed to cry or show any emotions. Fathers or my generation were tough men...hard workers...we don't cry...this is where it comes from. My generation-I think many males are buying into this belief. I

think anyone should cry. It should not be frowned upon. Sadness and crying just happen. We are human.

In a way, my art is me. But, it is also about other people. It's not perfect. It's not messy. It is life. It looks distorted. To be honest, I haven't felt like myself for years. This art represents how messy it actually is or how distorted depression can make you look at life.

Conclusion

I don't know if I can speak about public or private schools. I think teachers are more accepting at my private school. I think we get to have a connection with our teachers. They like it here. They like us. This gives us that bridge or connection. They talk about this stuff and even them just asking if I am okay. Just the asking...that's amazing. At my old public school, none of this would have happened. The main priority was not to check in on their students. They didn't ask questions. It sucked. It felt like the only reason they were there was for a check.

I feel like teachers and principals need to actually care about their students. If you get a mean student or they are mad for students not doing their homework, what is going on in their lives? Do you know? Do you care?

Know this, those who get teachers into schools. Be patient. Actually take time to care about your students. Teachers need to know their parents or whoever is looking after them...legal guardians...someone they are close to...grandparents...anyone who cares about them. Do the teachers know them?

Maybe teachers and principals should take an every other day course to learn how to care about students. Do they know what kids go through? Do they understand my generation? Do they understand the power of technology and how it influences how we look at the world? How we look at ourselves? Maybe take a survey and be like...what do you think is like the biggest struggle students face? How can you help them? Have you actually taken the time to talk with your students? Talking to the people who take care of them? Do they think you are a good listener? A good support? If they fail, they can take the course again. I think people can be taught to care. Maybe the students should be involved in some sort of way with colleges. It involves them, so yeah. Students should be part of this process to find out if teachers and principals really care.

If schools really care, then they know their teachers really care about us. We are more than a paycheck. We are humans trying to figure out how life works. That's in their name, right? They

are “teaching” us what we need to make it in life. Do I really need algebra to work at McDonald’s? No. What we need are people who really care about us. This caring...it should really be applied to high school. I think teachers think we don’t need to be cared about because we are older.

We need hugs.

We need stickers.

I need hugs.

I need a sticker.

I love Ms. Hall.

She has taught me so much.

She is just one of the best teachers I ever had.

I think a lot of people can learn from her.

#39

Artist: Joy Hall

Title: *The Flower*

Topic: Parental divorce is never “over” for the child.

Cost: \$100

My parents divorced when I was five years old. I recall being taken out of school and driven to our home, where my parents said their final goodbyes. I will never forget my mother having me ask my father (on her behalf) if that was truly the end. I was FIVE. Feeling confused and guilt ridden, I was truly traumatized. The events that took place throughout my childhood are still unfolding struggles even for me today as a middle aged adult.

I grieved the loss of my “first family”. My parents moved on to new lives and romances. I was expected to move along as my parents did and feel the same type of closure. My father ended up building a “new family” and I struggled with my sense of home and belonging. As a mother now myself, it seems unimaginable to leave a child out of family portraits, family vacations and major life events. That is exactly what happened to me. I had to hear about vacations after being left behind. I had to look at portraits above the fireplace that I was not in. My half siblings had taken my place. Out with the old, in with the new. I was shocked and confused by the disintegration of my family. I survived the divorce, but the fall-out wasn't pretty. As a child and young adult, I was plagued with abandonment issues and assumed that “love stops” and that conflict leads to permanent separation. It has taken me a while, but I have learned that this is not true.

“Kids are resilient”. I feel like people who say this in the face of divorce are trying to rationalize adult decisions. I tried my best as a child and I empathize with those I meet who come from a divorced family. I have students who are living with divorced parents and I pray they have not suffered to the extent that I have. I hope they feel like they belong. I hope they trust people. I hope they know love can last.

The isolation but ubiquitous pain of divorce on a child is the most under-reported story of our time. The help and understanding that should come to children in the wake of a divorce rarely comes. Adult children of divorce do not see the world the same way that the children of intact families do. Those who have grown up with divorced parents struggle with the sense of having ‘no real home’ anymore, even well into adulthood, and they must forever navigate two separate worlds by being “two different people” depending on which parent/family they are with. (see Miller, 2017)

Artmaking

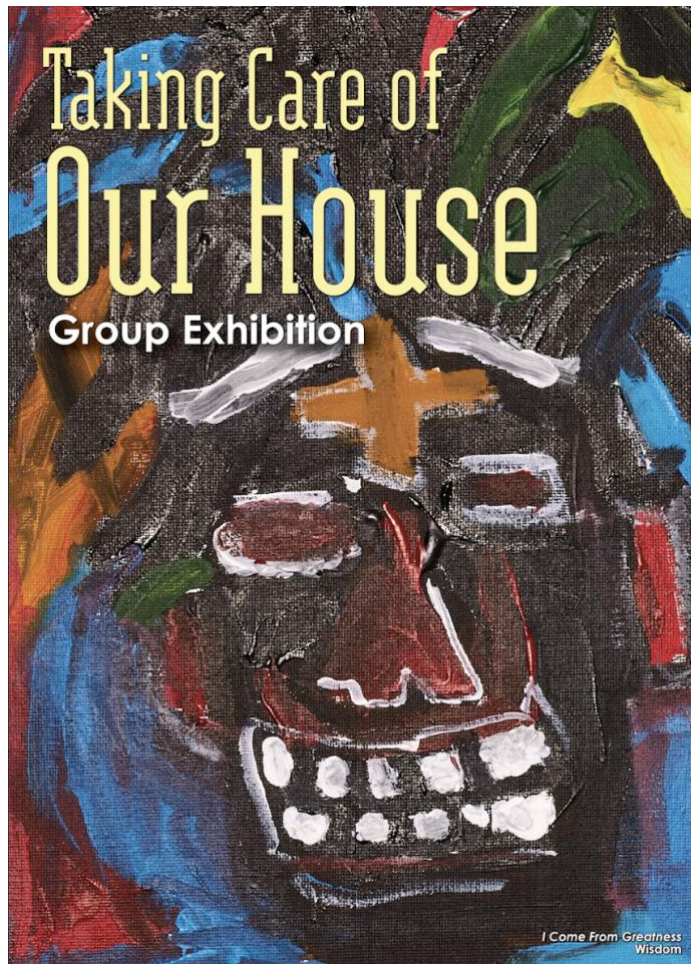
My mixed media piece is meant to look dingy and dirty because divorce isn't always neat and pristine for the child involved. The flower represents the child. It is fragile and does its best to stand. The petals don't match, making the flower different and out of place. Petals have been plucked and are falling. They are puzzling. The child does not understand. "He loves me, he loves me not" is on ripped paper. The edges are rough. Sadly, these are words that fill the child's head. Shards of glass are sprinkled throughout the space. The idea of family has been shattered.

Conclusion

My world was forever fundamentally split by my parents divorce. I was devastated, but stuck with the narrative given to me by my parents (i.e., "This is better for everyone") and spent the ensuing decades managing and being ever mindful of my parents' feelings. They moved on, why can't I? I could not make sense of many of my childhood experiences and sometimes the pain resurfaces now as an adult. In short, I have learned that parental divorce and its effects are never over. Parental divorce affects millions of adult children, but nobody talks about it. As author Leila Miller puts it, "There is a wounded, bleeding elephant in our cultural living room that we must stop pretending doesn't exist."

References

Miller, L. (2017) *Primal Loss: The Now-Adult Children of Divorce Speak*.



Artist Narratives

Third Floor

Numbers 40 – 44

#40

Artist Name: Dinozzo Andrews

Grade: 3rd

Title: *Love Can Stay Forever*

Cost: \$100

*I like about dinosaurs.
And also,
I have friends.
And also,
I like my shoes for my birthday.
I know I am smart.
I like monster trucks.
I like that I know how to count.
And I also,
I want to become a police officer.*

*I like the flashing lights and how they zoom.
They follow the law.
I want people to slow down
because it is too fast.
I will fly out if I don't have my seatbelt on.
I get car sick.
I could throw up.
But I don't.*

*Police have a dangerous job.
They have to do their best to stay alive.*

*I like I am strong.
I am physically strong.
I am a good friend.
I try to do what what they say.
I listen.
I play with them.
I am helpful.*

*I am curious.
I ask lots of questions.
I like to learn things.*

*I would just like people to just be nice.
Be nice.
Be peaceful.
Everyone should be fed.
No one should be hungry.
Everyone needs money.
No poor people.
I would give everything to those people.
I don't want people to go hungry.
I would like them to stop bossing people around.
What if people say mean things to them?
What if people tell them to give them \$500 in two days?
What if they don't have that?
Everyone should have a family.
No one should be on the streets.
They need to have a house.
They need to have a car.
I am going to raise their allowance.
I am doing this because money doesn't stay forever.*

*Love can stay forever.
Yeah, love can stay forever.*

*This is great!
It is actually amazing!*

#41

Artist: Morgan Goshen

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Am Unique*

Cost: \$100

*I am unique.
I was made unique.
I am just different from everybody.
I am just myself.
I am talented.
I do different things.
Gymnastics.
Soccer.
Dance.
Art.*

*When I am older,
I want to be police.
I want to be a detective.
My dad is a detective.
He likes take away the bad people.
Sometimes he tells me.
He knows I want to be a detective.
He said,
"I don't know about that."
Sometimes, I guess, you can hurt from that.
He works for the city.
He helps people.
My dad gives people for Christmas...
He feeds the homeless.
He gives people who can't afford Christmas presents,
Presents 'cuz they don't have the money.
I want to give to other people.*

*I am grateful to be alive.
I am joyful.
I am grateful for my family.
To have a house.*

*To have a car.
And peoples who love me.
I wish this for everyone...
People who love them.*

#42

Artist: Marilyn Burns

Title: *Take Care of Your House*

Cost: NFS

No one really knows this about me. I don't tell people this. I was abandoned and left on the doorstep. I was discovered because I was crying. The people found me in a basket. My biological was White and famous. It wasn't appropriate for a White woman to have a Black child. I did find out the name of my biological mother. I didn't go and knock on her door. I am the Black version of her. I didn't want her to think I was going to see her because she had money. That would have crushed me. You have to go through some articles or something and when I told my mother who raised me...I never heard a louder silence in my whole life...I was 18...the look on her face...she wondered if I would leave her because my biological mother had more money...a mother is someone who sticks with you...I was adopted by an interracial couple...I could write a book...there are some things in my life that could hurt my children...I don't want that to come and bite them in the ass...there are some things my parents took to their grave...and even though I grew up in privilege, that doesn't mean there isn't trauma...my dad was an alcoholic, he was abusive...very abusive to my mother...not to us...he had a drinking problem...trauma was involved...he was a chauffeur...what happened was...he was driving out on a residential street and a kid jumped out onto the street...he hit him and the child died...he couldn't live with that...alcohol eased his pain...it tore him down until he passed away. I found out in 1978 the day I was pregnant with my daughter...I didn't get a chance to tell him he was going to have another grandchild...I have been through a lot...a lot of ugly things...there is a lot of ugliness here...they need an advocate...someone they can talk to...do you know how many times I sit outside and they come up to me and they tell me their stories...and find myself asking why are you telling me? But God wants me to hear that story...just when you think you have it bad, come and listen to their story. I hug them...someone might ask me to pray for them.

My mom died when I was 33. She died in the mid-80's. That was devastating. Our house burned down. She slept on someone's couch. She died of a broken heart. My son loved her. He just ran there. I think she was climbing the stairway to heaven. I knew she was gone. He was 10. He was trying to get in the ambulance. He wanted to be with her. I named him after my dad. Even when we came home from the hospital...my mother came and took him out of her arms...she was in there with the baby...even when my dad passed, Robby was 2...she burst into tears...that was her heart. They were married for 42 years...it took some time...I saw her every day for a long time...she died of a broken heart...she had expressed going out and people were liking my mother...she said I never want to be with another man...I saw every day...I saw her looking off...his death...the house burning down...all those things played a part.

My life fell a part after that. It was hell down here. God asked me to do this work and told me He has me. I said I was grateful I have a roof over my head. When I get food, I give my food to people in need. I can give clothes away to people. Home is what you make it. It is what you make out of it. I stay in my peace. I am grateful. It has been different for me. I could be a junkie...an alcoholic...but I know I am a daughter of a King. I was doing something on ABC and they called me the Queen of Woodhill and then the next person called me the Mayor of Woodhill...inside I smile. People try to tear me down...but that won't happen...people spit on me...told me I was dirt...I struggle being worth...I was adopted...they threw me away...I struggle with that...why would you throw me away?

I was born and raised here. I have been here all my life. I lived here at Woodhill Homes for a little over 20 years. The first time ever experiencing public housing or subsidized housing...I hate that word...project housing...I was appalled shocked and dismayed...to see all of these misgivings...I saw people living like this in public housing. I think the first thing was the domestic violence...I witnessed it...break ins and robberies in broad daylight...they just didn't care...the gun violence...it used to be at night and now it doesn't matter what time of day they do it...I witness the bullying of the kids more so than the adults...the language...the dirty language of the kids and they cuss more than sailors as they would say...and the disrespect for each other...I have seen more bad than good....they are like crabs in a barrel...no one else can succeed...they try to pull each other down...I watched some kids go to college and their significant others would not watch their own children so they could go to college...so I watched them...I started asking questions...I met a gentle Robert White...he was a manager at the community center...we became close...I told him how I felt...he told me to go back to school. I enrolled in every class I could and volunteered. I worked in Metro Health as a volunteer and then got involved in their programs. And then I got involved with Case Western University and got involved in research. I went to school there. I started asking questions about public housing and what I could do. I am a very spiritual person and started listening to the voice of my Father...why out of all circumstances did he pick this place...and I started to accept it...the veil was lifted, and I understood why I was called here...I was here because of my life. I started doing more and more volunteer work. It just grew. I became a community leader and advocate. They were getting an unfair shake and started speaking for them. I had a lot of pushbacks here. Why is she here to upset the apple cart. I had all sorts of things done to me that weren't nice. I have the name Queen or Mayor of Woodhill and I humbly accept that. I am the leader of this little piece of land here. I see a lot of brokenness here...damaged souls...I had to fight for recognition...they thought I was a joke...people tell me my name is recognized across the city...I see your picture on the West side...on the East side...this is His work, not my work. It's gotten me to the point where I am now. And hopefully the changes here are going to change people's hearts and minds...how did we build the hearts and spirits of people...we need to look at those houses...lets talk about fruits of the spirit...to enlighten...to empower...we need a revival...all these things for the people...for myself, I want to see people grow and be happy and healthy...I don't have an agenda out of what I can get out of this...I hope to see a rebirth or rejuvenation...it's in the Bible a 144

times...that's what I want for the people in Woodhill...love...kindness...be giving...we are all in this together...we need to have this because these fall under the fruits of the spirit.

I wasn't born in public housing. My family was middle class/upper class. I had a nanny. I didn't want anything. I learned...I was a victim of a scam. I raised my children. I met someone and that person took ...that person was involved with someone else...I was in love...I got involved...and it ended up being very serious...everything from me. I even lost my relationship with one of my children. I lived in a car...bus stations...during the day I would go walk and visit someone I know...it lasted a little while...if I couldn't give up any money...some people did a barter system...I watched her son...she came to me because she met someone...her boyfriend said if I stayed there then he would "F" me...I didn't want to be raped...it was devastating...it was a mistake...is being in love all that it is wrapped up to be? It wound up in the courts and I was indicted...he even went to court and told the judge I didn't do anything...I lost money...the place I lived...that man was taking care of me...lost my job...I had nothing left. I cried. I begged. I pleaded. I was in a shelter for a while. This journey I lived prepared me for the work I am doing now. I am at the potter's wheel...I have been beaten beyond recognition...I was in domestic violent situations...HE prepared me. I can truly say, I know what you mean because I have been there. Don't be judgmental...there is a difference between judgement and opinions...in the blink of an eye, watch what you say...this can happen to you...remember the Great Depression and the crash? They were jumping out of windows...but my experiences have brought me to the place where I am today...it is like a broken mirror...when you put the pieces back, what a beautiful masterpiece that becomes.

I learned about public housing. When it was set up, how it was set up, and all of the circumstances around it...red lining...what it meant...and what it did to a certain population of people. I learned about segregation and racism. It was designed to keep a certain population segregated...literacy...really designed for People of Color. It pissed me off because they felt like People of Color weren't deserving of certain rights that other people deserved...we were an undeserving people...it affected rent...economy...education...it was a domino effect...we weren't allowed to experience certain things other people experienced...and even if were a part of an elite group of People of Color...there was still segregation...say White people's neighborhoods...we were kept out. I want to say it's changed, but it's an invisible red line. I see People of Color who work at universities. People are treated different than their White counterparts...we are in public subsidized housing...and just one street separates us...but they still feel separated...segregated...and this has been going on for over 50 years...they make this difficult for us...it is just a street that divides us...but if we decide to move into that area...just across the street...they still do it...even though it is illegal, there is a system that still keeps that in place. Larchmere is separated by MLK. That's that line...the rent is so extremely high...they can't even afford that rent so that keeps us separated out of their areas...out of their neighborhoods...they wear this mask of welcoming and wanting us there...and say, "We really want to rent to you...but you don't qualify." Smiling in our faces, but it's false...very false. We are working on Elevating the East...I don't like to pretend...it's like grinning and stabbing them in the

back...I can't be my true self...where do you have the opportunity to do that? Sometimes you have to wear a mask to be accepted...there is an old saying to go along to get along...but it's just an act...I don't like that...I don't like the whole thing of wearing a mask.

They don't work through it. It's a lot of bullshit. Sometimes they just want to take your place. It's jealousy. When I talk to the powers that be, sometimes you just gotta put it all out there and you give someone a title and a little power, and they just do that...but people still try to undermine me and others. It's like how much authenticity do you show yourself to an individual? You don't want to say too much because it will come back and bite me in the ass. It can be authentic but limited. Other people shut down and feel helpless. People who are helping me with this trivia activity...and when the calls are returned, no one is answering their questions. People say they want to be a part of something, but then you don't show up. We try to engage...what do we have to do to get people to engage...but the system is designed for us to fail. People here are lacking a sense of empowerment...if I step outside of my comfort zone, will I fail? They need to learn to try...but people here have been stripped of their hope...how do you reveal their power? How do you build people up? That's like voting. You have to know you make a difference...if you aren't educated, then you think why should I even try...whatever happens to me will happen to me...it is just not true...one man...one man...one man stood up...he had people behind him...it was a movement...I know this was a struggle...doing stuff to our family...and if we are in that mindset, we stay in this prison society built for us and now we build it for ourselves. How do we get out of that prison?

People are confused. When someone approached me about the residents moving, I was asked about the relocation process. There is a tavern around here and they have trivia. There are a series of questions asked so I took that process and tried to make it applicable to this relocation process. People might feel this is boring, but I am making this fun...win prizes...win money and then you tell someone else so they understand too...and encourage people to come...how many people sit at the table, the people with the most answers...they get the money and prizes...I have been hustling to get these things for people and if you show up, we are feeding you, have music...and everyone gets a prize. We might brainstorm other ideas because right now, it's not what is supposed to be. People don't want to make their situation better. The steering committee are professional people and don't want to come out of their comfort zone. I don't know if they think they have better things to do. Sometimes they seem like they are here just because, not for the people.

My hope. My hope is that when this is said and done, they will have a better idea of what will happen when they leave this place. Fear of the unknown is scary. Some of these residents have been here longer than me. Some of their families and friends are here. Some of them have generations here. They don't know where they are going. How will I get from point A to point B? That is a very scary situation. My hope is that they will be reassured. I want them to be ready to move on and to know who is my safety net and reassure me in the wee hours? Is there going to be a safety net? People have lost faith. They stepped out on empty promises. Are they just trying

to get me out of the way? Are they moving older people to just watch me die? You are giving us a new space, but what about the feelings we have inside? There should have been the case of discussing two houses: the first house is ourselves...and taking care of our house...ourselves...and the second house is the brick-and-mortar house...I trust the process because I trust my Father. No one took any of this into consideration. It's housing and neighborhoods, but what about the people...how they feel? Hell, they don't remember who they saw...who they talked to...they just don't know...there is a disconnect...

Maybe I am a little weary...sometimes I feel the weight of the world is on my shoulder, but He would not give me more than I can handle. Sometimes we talk about foundations...but nobody talks about the cornerstones...what are those cornerstones? There were no cornerstones put in place...and even when I was in construction for many years...there needs to something to consider when putting the foundation down...you don't look to the left or right...just put your head down and move forward...people are so excited they got the money...we did our thing...so we just move forward...I called these red flags and status quo is not peachy keen...and then everyone started seeing these are not succeeding the way they thought it would...in order for everything to be successful, everything must be considered. I brought to the table, the Hispanic population. There is only one person who translates...what is lost in translation? What about our seniors who are house bound? Deaf? Mute? How are you communicating this to people. Are we really about the people? Or are we just about the move? I need answers to this...I need to be reassured...I want you to be comfortable in your own skin...

It's all supposed to be done in five years. I want them to feel hope...experience hope...I plan on coming back...I hope their fears change for the positive...I want that light to shine...I want people to say this is a great area.

My Artmaking

The roof. Everybody's looking at and wondering, "Why is this roof on top of this woman?" I believe my body is my house. We often have been told our body is our temple. Well, my body is my house, and made my house out of plastering my body. Where are the rooms in my house? I made rooms throughout my art, which is my house, to showcase my journey. The roof covers my body and protects it, just like God. My house - This is where we are. This is my spirit. This is my house.

There are many rooms in a house. I often think about the Bible that says my Father is the keeper of my house. "O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells." God shall hide me and set me high upon a rock.

This house, well, there are many rooms. My Father said He goes to prepare a place for me, so I think of my house as an extension of His spirit and am thankful for all of the things that God has given us.

After talking this through with Christa, I decided to make my body my house. The roof over my head represents the need to protect my house. The house, the body, the life God gave me. The rooms. There are many rooms that I will take you through so you can better understand my journey. Each room depicts a place, experiences, spaces in my body, which I call my house.

My art is floating above the ground. This symbolizes me being lifted by God. I am lifted up because I came from dark spaces. I was literally on the ground in the beginning of my life. I lived in darkness. Horrible things. Horrible things I experienced and witnessed. So, when you see my body, look at the bottom left leg. You will see where I modpodged stones like gravel. That represents the lowest parts of my life. The experiences that weighed me down in life. But, you can see the transition from darkness to lightness as we move through the rooms.

In my art, I capture how I transitioned through the all the things that happened to me. I began to be lifted off the ground by the hands of God. This is why my arms are stretched and reaching upward. This motion symbolizes the hands of God that has lifted me up and has elevated me into of His marvelous light. My feet no longer touch the ground. Because of His love, He has elevated me to a different space.

I wanted little lights to symbolize where I am going in life. I suppose you are wondering why I chose these lights to be put under my arms and around my head. I started out from a very, very dark place. The light symbolizes the hands of God lifting me up. Giving me hope. His love has brought me to new places.

I modpodged lyrics of several spiritual songs across my entire body.

Believe for It

This Little Light of Mine

I'm Grateful

These lyrics symbolize my life, struggles, spirit, journey, hope, and purpose. I have the lyrics from the song "This Little Light of Mine." I know where I came from and where I'm now. God is my light. Remember, the hand of God is light, so the lights symbolize my life rising from the darkness...the darkness I came through. Through His love, I came into His marvelous light. His love has changed me in so many ways. The lights honor God, my creator, and the lyrics remind me He lifts me up to His marvelous light.

The song "I'm Grateful" means so much to me especially knowing where I've been and how I've overcome. This Little Light of Mine... my gosh, that song came to me because I've heard that song since I was in the church choir, and it brings me alive. It might seem like a small light, but it still shines as bright as ever.

Everything that has happened in my life, the bad as well as good, led me to where I am today. As you look over my art, you can see and experience how everything in my life is coming together. Life and the doors opened to me are working in my favor. God has always worked in my favor. I just had to be patient.

I picked the song "Believe for It" because I do believe I've seen Him work in my life. I've seen the transitions from coming from Him. I struggled, and my art, my house is like I'm climbing up a mountain. I feel at night right now that I've almost reached my mountain top.

I covered my whole body because I think my Creator created me and surrounds me with His love. He created my whole body, and I covered it with spirituals that guide me through my darkness and into the light. I have been through so much. These lyrics, His love, they just cover me, and cover my soul. He covers my spirit it covers my body.

Room One-The Rocks

On my body at the lower part of my body close to my feet. I put a room with rocks in it and the rock symbolizes struggles. The darkness I went through...the rocks I have climbed over, and those rocks became mountains, and I climbed over those too. I thought that I wasn't able to overcome the darkness, but I did. The times that I fell down, I was able to get back up even though the road was rugged, and I walked and stumbled over many rocks.

Room Two- Homeless

The second room on my right leg symbolizes me being homeless. I lived in shelters and slept in cars. The cardboard I used represents those times I lived on the street...those times I was homeless...there are so many people out there just trying to live. The cardboard represents how many people live in cardboard boxes, but they keep trying.

Room Three- The Fire

The third room in my house is red. It symbolizes the three fires my children and I have been through actually been through in a short period of time. This is how we ended up in transitional homelessness and housing. I always manage to find a place for my children. Every time I see fire, it symbolizes loss. The first fire we had was when my children very, very small and I had went out to buy some school supplies for the kids. We had lost everything. When I was at work, somebody contacted me at my job. Our house caught on fire and my daughter had to jump out the second story window. When we went back home and saw we just had what we had on our backs...(started crying)...we lost everything. And, the third fire, we lost everything again. I can say that my Creator is good because no matter what I lost, He gave me everything back to me two-fold.

Room Four-My Son

The fourth room...my God...I am crying...I have to stop...I am crying...this was hard. I lost my son in 2011...my only son. Robby was so brilliant. His death... I've never get over that. Loss... they say it gets easier, but when I speak of him, and think of it...it seems just as fresh as the day that he passed. For me, I don't think it'll ever get easier. I miss him so, but he still lives on in my heart.

My son was born in 1975. He died in 2011. He was very young. He died of cancer, my son. I didn't know that my son was ill because my son had moved to Philly so it was very easy for him to hide a lot of things for me and when I found out, my daughter kind of said it didn't seem like my son. I'm like... I'm trying to call your brother and he is not answering his phone... that's not like Robby. In my mind, I'm thinking he has a cold or the flu. My son was very very sick, and he did not want me see him this way.

I guess for him....my son wanted to take some of that burden away from me. He knew he was sick. He knew he was beginning ready to die, so he had planned everything out. I didn't have to be worried about his funeral or plans. He took care of everything before he died. This is why I

made this room. It symbolizes his life. It symbolizes the love that I have for him. I put several pictures in this room of Robby. I made a tombstone for him. He is surrounded by moss. The moss is living. He will live in my heart forever.

Room Five- My Mother

My mother. This room symbolizes my mother's death. You see all the broken wood pieces, and you see the word "mom" in there. That room symbolizes the death of my mother. I was devastated. This is why all of the pieces are broken and glued on top of each other. I lost my mother way before I lost my son Robby. I lost my mother around the early 1980s.

She was my best friend. She was an amazing woman. I just did not ever think that I would ever recoup from losing her because this is a person, I have known all my life... all my life... and to lose somebody, my mother...when she died, I sat down and thought... What are you going to do because that person is gone?

I had 3 small children to raise. I could not fall apart because there are 3 lives, I am responsible for. Every day of my life that goes by, I never forget the name of Hazel Gertrude Burns, my mom. I am crying. I need to stop for a moment.

So, when you look at that room and wondering why the room is filled with broken pieces of wood, it symbolizes the brokenness that represents the brokenness I have felt ever since I lost her. It's the devastation that I felt. It represents the pieces that I had to pick up...pieces of my life...knowing I had to go on for my children. The brokenness of everything...the brokenness me and my children felt since my mother's death.

Room Six- Learning to Love Myself

When you look at the room with the red stones around it, the red stones make a red frame around the room. Inside the room, there is my picture in it. This was part of my destiny... trying to rebuild myself... that picture of me smiling represents that. I took that photo from a time I did an advertisement for the city when COVID started. I did a cover commercial trying to encourage other people that their lives can be better by getting the vaccine. This room...well, it represents the fact that I'm better. I am loving myself. I am believing in myself. I have traveled a long road...climbing over mountains...getting through traumatic experiences... I'm getting better every day that I wake up. I'm getting stronger every day that I live, that I wake. I think we all know about this saying... what doesn't kill us will make us stronger... and I'm living proof of that.

Room Seven-My Son and Daughter

The room with the flowers is filled with my children. This is my son and daughter. They are my heart. My son lives after he died.

I still have two daughters that are living, and one is my oldest daughter. She has a daughter and a son. Isn't that funny how that worked out. Her son was also her first born and then came a girl. When I look at my son and my daughter in this picture, my son is still very much a part of my life and my daughter's life. And so, he lives on for her too. I still have spirit with me...his spirit continues to live on even though he is not really physically here in this world anymore, he is here with us.

Room Eight- Hope

The room at the top of my body is surrounded by living moss. It's green and represents new life. This is why I filled this room with more living moss and photos of my children, myself, and people who matter to me. It has pictures of my kids, accomplishments that I have achieved, and the word "HOPE" because it has been a long road.

This room I titled "HOPE" plays a significant role in my art, in my life. There were times in my life that I didn't even think I would make it. But here I am...and it HOPE that led me to where I stand today. The word HOPE is a word I have clinged onto my entire life.

I talk to people about holding onto HOPE. Remember, God gave us life...and there is nothing we cannot overcome without His love and faith in He will help me through my struggles. HOPE is what I put in the very top room because I this is what I've been waiting for all my life.

You know my situation...where I started from... the struggles I faced as a child...as an adult...as a parent... from homelessness... to the death of my mom...to the death of my son... the fires... the devastation of losing what mattered to me. I still held onto that word HOPE. I know I will make it another day. I want you to please hold onto HOPE. It is a powerful word.

When I was first approached and asked if I wanted to do this project, I was like, okay. I never experienced anything like this before. Christa and I met several times to plan out what I wanted to do. This art took almost a year to do. It was well worth the hours and hours put into this.

We sat down and we had a conversation about what I wanted my art to look like. I wrote my story, my narrative, and we used that to think about how to tell my story through art. In addition to writing my story and thinking about how to make this into a powerful and moving piece, we needed a space to create the art. We contacted everybody. We could not find a space. So, I eventually came up with an idea. I prayed on it. God spoke to me. I told Christa let's just do the art at my apartment. I didn't know what to expect. I have never worked on anything like this before.

This was a new experience. It was exciting. Being plastered...sitting still...plastering one leg or arm at a time...took patience...understanding...and I enjoyed watching it all come together. I couldn't envision it at first, but as we put the pieces together, I saw the initial vision.

I saw the rooms. I saw the vision happening right in front of me. We started putting it together. It was an emotional experience. It was healing. I grew more and more excited. This was something different. I told my story in ways I didn't know how to express myself...and then, it poured out of me...into my art...into my story...the rooms represent some of the experiences that have shaped me. I hope my art inspires you. I hope it inspires you to reflect on the rooms that influence who you are today...and where you want to go.

Conclusion

Please remember that our body is our house. Our body is our temple. There are many rooms in our bodies, our houses. We might not look at it our lives in this way, but each room in our in our body tells a story...a story that shapes us...this has been a powerful experience. I don't want it to stop. I am ready to do more art now. I want to continue working with Christa and doing more meaningful art. I want to inspire people. I want to inspire myself. I think people need these opportunities because they are critical to learning about yourself...connecting with others...inspiring people...and sharing yourself through art...because sometimes, most times, words are not enough.

#43

Artist: Cleander Stewart

Grade: 4th

Title: *I Make Smart Decisions*

Cost: \$100

*I am smart.
I get all the questions right in my class.
I make smart decisions.
I am intelligent.
I listen.
I like to learn new things.
I play sports.
Football.
Basketball.
Baseball.
Soccer.
Kickball.
I have a family.
Brother.
Cousin.
My dad.
My mom.
My grandma.
My aunties.
My uncles.
My stepbrothers.
My stepsisters.
My stepcousins.
I am kind.
I help people when they feel sad.
I listen and follow directions.
I help people out when they are feeling down.*

*I want to solve world hunger.
I want Africans to have food and water.
I would make schools safer places.
If someone would be a bully,
I would suspend them.*

*If it was in public,
I would send them to their house and put them on house arrest.
I want it to be a better place.
Everyone should have friends.
People need to have people who care about them.
Have them around them.
Everyone needs family.
Everyone needs love.
It would just come natural.
People who don't love other people,
then they can't love people.
Maybe something is going on at home with them.
There are kids who don't have love.
If they had love,
then they could love too.*

#44

Artist: Zoe Boggan

Grade: 3rd

Title: *I Am a Good Helper*

Cost: \$100

*Well,
I like math.
I like to eat fries.
Just some McDonald's.
I like to paint.
I like to paint with watercolors.
I like to go shopping.
I like to shop for clothes and shoes.*

*I am nice.
Sometimes...
I like the color blue.
I like to sleep a lot.*

I am not used to saying nice things about me.

*I am a good helper.
I help clean Ms. Ashanti's room.
I am a good friend.
I work with people.
I am very creative.
I make things cool and nice.
I am smart.
By listening and focusing.
I think a lot.
I have things in my head.
I think about my family and friends and the world.*

*I want people to be happy.
I want people to have everything that they want.
I think kids want squishies.
I think adults want laptops.
I think that is all people want.*

*I want everyone to be nice.
So,
Good to yourself and other people.*

*Don't give up.
Try your best.
Don't let yourself down.
It's okay to make mistakes.
This is how we do it.
This is how we learn.*

*That's good.
This is my first poem.
It was really long.
It is a good story.
I am proud of myself.*