



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **NINE DISTRICT STUDENTS TAKE WINNING HONORS IN THE 2022 YOUTH POETRY CONTEST**

*Students to be honored Sunday at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Paterson Poetry Festival*

PATERSON – Nine Paterson Public Schools students have been named winners of the 2022 Youth Poetry Contest and will be awarded their honors at this weekend's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Paterson Poetry Festival.

"Congratulations to all of our Paterson Public Schools students who participated in the 2022 Youth Poetry Contest. As anyone who has ever confronted a blank page knows, writing in and of itself is its own accomplishment and everyone who submitted their own work to the contest should be very proud," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. "To write with distinction shows very special talent, and I want to congratulate the student-poets who won recognition in the contest, and I thank Talena Lachelle Queen and everyone who worked with her for creating this opportunity for Paterson students."

Winners will receive awards during a ceremony on Sunday, October 2nd at 1:00 p.m. at the 5th Annual Paterson Poetry Festival, International High School, 200 Grand Street, Paterson. (The location has been changed to hold the event indoors.) Nearly 100 students submitted works to the contest.

Talena Lachelle Queen, the festival organizer, Paterson Poet Laureate, and an Eastside High School teacher, announced the winners through Word Seed, Inc., an organization Queen founded to give voice and support to writers of every age and skill level within diverse communities.

"This contest allows scholars to know that their feelings and ways of expressing themselves are valuable. At Word Seed Inc, we celebrate the many emerging literary artists and plan to continue offering a multitude of ways for emerging writers to express themselves. The contest is one of those ways," said Queen.

CavanKerry Press, which has supported the Youth Poetry Contest as judges and program support for the last three years, joined Word Seed, Inc. in announcing the winners.

"Our judges were wowed by all of the submissions and we encourage our youth to keep writing. This is a distinction given to participants who embodied the spirit of the poet: being Deliberate, Observant, Powerful, & Elevating," said Dimitri Reyes, Marketing & Communications Director at CavanKerry Press. "It was a close competition and there were topics from COVID, to gun violence, to global warming, and body positivity. This speaks to the intelligence and awareness of our youth and had our judges reeling with many different emotions."



## **2022 Youth Poetry Contest Winners**

### **Grades 3 to 5**

#### **1st Place**

Anayah Munoz, “A Choice to Make”

Public School No. 19, Grade 4 - Kristin Cash, teacher

#### **2nd Place**

Somadrita Paul, “Butterfly”

Public School No. 19, Grade 4 - Kristin Cash, teacher

#### **3rd Place**

Nylah James, “A Special Friend for Me”

Public School No. 19, Grade 4 - Kristin Cash, teacher

### **Grades 6 to 8**

#### **1st Place**

Kate Escamilla, “What Comes With ‘Perfection’”

Dr. Hani Awadalla School, Grade 8 - Mary Pickett, teacher

#### **2nd Place**

Joseph Negron Jr, “Gun Violence”

Dr. Hani Awadalla School, Grade 8 - Mary Pickett, teacher

#### **3rd Place**

Anny Gomez, “The Opposite of Okay”

Public School No. 28, Grade 6 - Melissa DiPietro, teacher

### **Grades 9 to 12**

#### **1st Place**

Jazlyn Lopez, “trash”

Eastside High School, Grade 10 - Talena Lachelle Queen, teacher

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xnkDm-8Vmbpew9VIWVMBpuYQ-bYxIdPg/edit>

#### **2nd Place**

Alana Fredericks, “I Am A Gun”

Eastside High School, Grade 10 - Talena Lachelle Queen, teacher

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/15VR0P\\_BaSVrtDXPq-5-jTv1frGm5LvbJ/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/15VR0P_BaSVrtDXPq-5-jTv1frGm5LvbJ/edit)

#### **3rd Place**

Amy Santana, “Dipped in the water...”

Eastside High School, Grade 10 - Talena Lachelle Queen, teacher\

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sD-ab34aNv1XwVzgarkXG9jvydE0RAVW/edit>