



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 15, 2023

Contact: Paul Brubaker  
973-518-2298

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

*Students throughout the City of Paterson awarded top prizes*

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

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

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

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

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

The winning students are as follows.

### **Art – Elementary School (K to 8)**

#### **First Place**

Mia Diaz, 7th grade

Public School No.13

Liaisons: Principal Nicole Booker and Counselor Cedenia McCollum

#### **Second Place**

Kayla Sayegh, 2nd grade

# PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow  
Together We Can



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

## **Third Place (Tie)**

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

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

## **Honorable Mention (Tie)**

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

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

## **Art – High School (9 to 12)**

### **First Place**

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

### **Second Place (Tie)**

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

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

### **Third place**

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

### **Honorable Mention**

Elliona Gaskins, 11<sup>th</sup> grade

# PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow  
Together We Can



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

## **Art – Judges' Special Recognition**

### **John F. Kennedy High School**

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

### **International High School**

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

### **Paterson STEAM High School**

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

## **Essay – Elementary School (K to 8)**

### **First Place**

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

### **Second Place**

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

### **Third Place**

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

### **Honorable Mentions**

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

# PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow  
Together We Can*



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

## **Essay – High School (9 to 12)**

### **First Place**

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

### **Second Place**

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

### **Third Place**

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

###