



NEWS RELEASE

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Dream inspired haiku – Short poems reveal deep thoughts. Four picked for honors.

Winners to receive framed haiku and gifts from The Charmery and The Ivy Bookshop

TOWSON, Md. – The four winning poems of the 2022 Team BCPS Haiku Contest address aging, grieving, the war in Ukraine, and the pressure to succeed and meet others’ expectations, and they were written by Baltimore County Public Schools’ students in Grades 5 – 11.

A record 2,445 entries were received from 111 schools, centers, and programs – including the Virtual Learning Program. Students from every grade level interpreted the theme “dream” in myriad ways. While many students wrote about the nature of dreams and nightmares, other shared memories of favorite places and activities and visions of beauty and joy. Some students envisioned that they might become wealthy as athletes and YouTubers, while others expressed their hopes for peace, equity, and justice.

After a lengthy debate, a panel of judges selected elementary, middle, and high school winners. For the first time in the contest’s history, there was a tie. The contest winners are:

Elementary School Winner

I have a dream, where
when I am old I am loved
same as I am now.

*Juliet Wentzell, Grade 5
Mays Chapel Elementary School
Stephanie Stefanik, English language arts teacher*

Middle School Winner

"What?" my mother gasped.
"How will you make a living?
Go, be a doctor."

*David Yuan, Grade 7
Ridgely Middle School
Veronica Pessaro, English language arts teacher*

High School Winners (tie)

Oh what I would give
To see your face once again
When I am awake

*Grace O'Neill, Grade 11
Hereford High School
Jennifer Houseknecht, English language arts teacher*

How did I get here?
There's nuclear war outside.
But I'm playing cards.

*Yen Pan, Grade 10
Catonsville High School
Marie Thrailkill, English language arts teacher*

The four winners of the 2022 contest will each receive gifts from [The Charmery](#) and [The Ivy Bookshop](#) and a framed poster of their haiku from BCPS.

"This year's winning haiku took the 'dream' theme in imaginative and deeply thoughtful directions," said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams. "As with all good writing, these haiku invite thought and interpretation. I congratulate Juliet, David, Grace, and Yen for their excellent writing, and I thank every student from who entered and all the teachers who encouraged their students to participate. Every year, through their entries, our students show us how deeply they think and how creatively they express themselves. Writing, like every skill, requires practice, and it is exciting that the entire BCPS community embraces this opportunity to focus on developing as writers."

Contest judges included award-winning student writers -- Raja Arvin of Patapsco High School & Center for the Arts, Amelia Clark of Hereford High School, Yakhare Gueye of Perry Hall High School, Josephine Halushka of George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology, Allie Hill of Patapsco High School & Center for the Arts, Amna Maqsood of Towson High School, and Naia Smith of Dulaney High

School – and staff members from the Office of English Language Arts, the Department of Communications and Community Outreach, and the Employee Assistance Program.

All entries are judged blindly (without any identifying information about the writer), and haiku being considered for prizes are checked to ensure they are original works.

(Editor's note: Photos of the four winning students accompany this release.)

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation's 25th largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).