

MLK VOICE FOR YOUTH - CONGRATULATIONS NYANI!

First Prize \$2,000 - Nyani Scott, Dover High School (Grade 11)

Second Prize \$1,000 - Rishima Mall, Charter School of Wilmington (Grade 10)

Third Prize \$500 - Emily Chmiel & Lucia Gotera, Charter School of Wilmington (Grade 11)

*a boy in my school said white privilege was a myth
i told him that his humor considered of racism, sexism, and homophobia
and he could 100% still be a successful comedian ...*

That was how Nyani Scott, a junior from Dover High School, began her winning presentation that earned her \$2,000. The first prize sponsored by the Quintin E. Primo Fund for Racial Justice was presented by last year's winner, Deborah Olatunji. Second Prize of \$1,000 sponsored by WSFS Bank was presented by Shari Custin to Rishima Mall, a sophomore from the Charter School of Wilmington. Emily Chmiel & Lucia Gotera, also from the Charter School of Wilmington took home the \$500 third prize sponsored by the Rotary Club of Wilmington and presented by Kai Lassen, Past President. In addition to the cash prizes, all finalists received a \$50 gift card presented by Matt Meyer, New Castle County Executive.

Seven inspiring performances were presented by ten fearless contestants Sunday afternoon at the baby grand in Wilmington. The finalists were selected at the semifinals the weekend before in Dover and Wilmington. For the first time, a trio from St. Andrew's School in Middletown competed against five solo performers and one duo. Their creative, very powerful messages referenced Dr. King's lesser known speeches and captivated the audience. The other finalists were: Fanta-Jamila Barry, St. George's Technical High School (Grade 10); Messiah DeSisso, Stephanie Tanoh, & Bwembya Tembo, St. Andrew's School (all Grade 12); Lindsay Fomundam, Early College High School (Grade 9); and Da'Jour Jones, Cab Calloway School of the Arts (Grade 10).

The seven judges with the challenging task of selecting the winners were:

Rev. Dr. Lawrence M. Livingston, Sr. Pastor, Mother African Union Church & Assist. Prof. Africana Studies, University of DE

Senator Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman, 3rd District

Stacie Currie, Christina Cultural Arts Centre

Dr. Phyllis Chambers-Mobley, Pres., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Zeta Omega Chapter

Aris Watson, Delaware Blue Coats

Tyrek Traylor, 2017 Winner MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH

The Hon. E. Norman Veasey, Special Counsel, Gordon, Fournaris & Mammarella, P.A. &
Former Chief Justice of Delaware

Kaamilah Diabaté, MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH 2016 winner, hosted the event. In addition to the finalists speaking, the talented Walnut Street YMCA Junior Percussion Group opened the contest and students from the Culture Restoration Project, Beyond Those Bars Program, performed during intermission.

Following the event, contestants, judges, friends, and family members were invited to a reception hosted by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Zeta Omega Chapter held, in the lobby of the baby grand. The sorority also provided voter registration information.

To help students prepare for the contest, in December writing and presentation workshops were offered at no charge in Dover by Dr. Donna Blakey, Delaware State University and in Wilmington by Delaware's First Lady, Tracey Quillen Carney, Richard Raw, Hip Hop Artist and educator, Jayne Thompson, Widener University, and Deborah Olatunji, 2019 MLK winner. Hugh Atkins, Past Chair of English at Tower Hill, also provided one-on-one coaching sessions to several finalists as did Donna Blakey.

MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH is an opportunity for high school student voices to be heard about things that matter to them. It is their platform to creatively express their views on current issues, raise awareness for their passion, and share how Dr. King's legacy speaks to them today. For 2020, MLK VOICE challenged youth to reference Dr. King's lesser known speeches when considering questions as, If Dr. King was alive today, what would he say about global conflict, education, climate, and justice? Would he consider today's protests different from those in the 1960's or the same?

For those who could not be at the baby grand in Wilmington, the MLK finals welcomed a virtual audience, including students at Ferris School, via live streaming to the MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH Facebook page. Jane Rubini, Founder of the contest, expressed her gratitude to all contestants, past and present, for their courage to speak up and to the numerous volunteers, judges, and sponsors who make the contest possible and encouraged all high school students to continue to speak up "about things that matter."

Registration for 2021 MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH opens Peace Day, September 21st through the YWCA Delaware. For additional information please visit: www.christchurchde.org/mlk-voice4youth or www.ywcade.org/homepage/events/mlk-voice-4-youth-2020/

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH is presented by the YWCA Delaware and Christ Church Christiana Hundred and supported by:

Quintin E. Primo, Jr. Fund for Racial Justice

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Zeta Omega Chapter

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. & Gamma Theta Lambda Education Foundation, Inc.

The City of Dover, Office of the Mayor

The Grand Opera House, Inc.

The City of Wilmington, Office of the Mayor

Christ Church Christiana Hundred

WSFS Bank

Christ Church Dover

The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew & Matthew

New Castle County

Ben & Carol Osbun

The Rotary Club of Wilmington

YWCA Delaware