



NA Expression Contest Winners

K-3 Winners:

BWE - Hailey Trongo (K-3)

BWE - Luella Schwarzmeier (3rd)

FES - Hera Hickton (2nd)

FES - Nitya Bandaru (3rd)

FES - Irene Lee (2nd)

HES- Krishna Shinde (3rd)

HES - Brielle Ombres (2nd)

IES - Ayaansh Agarwal (3rd)

IES - Nora Fu (2nd)

McK - Theodora Gabbard - (KG)

McK - Yo-Shin Lin (3rd)

McK - Benjamin Chen (3rd)

MES - Ahaan Madken (3rd)

MES - Adhrit Parekh (3rd)

MES - Ishwarya Thigagaragan (1st)

PES - Dyuti Joshi (K-3)

PES - Emilia Evanitsky (K-3)

4-5 Winners:

FES - Elena Thees (5th)

FES - Joanna Tan (5th)

FES - Niharika Sri (4th)

Luke Lee (4th)

[HES - Rohan Shinde](#) Shinde (4-5)

McK - Joy Liu (4th)

6-8 Winners:

CMS - Aubrey Tierney (6-8)

CMS - Tamizhini Kannan (6-8)

IMS - Harini Vadlamudi (6-8)

IMS - Vihaan Agarwal (6-8)

MMS - Arshiya Potlari (8th)

MMS - Shivari Sathish (7th)

MMS - Natalie Christianson (7th)

9-12 Winners:

Hansini Vadlamudi (9th)

Nikethana Sri (9th)

Keelyn Mastronie (9-10)

Andrew Liu (9-10)

Anaya Pushkarna (11-12)

[Shanmukha Vasuki Gannavaram](#) (11-12)

Kyleigh Kramer (11-12)

Shanmukha Vasuki Gannavaram (11-12)

Our Stories Our Strengths



HARINI VADLAMUDI (6-8)

OUR STORIES OUR STRENGTH



NIKETHANA SRI (9th)

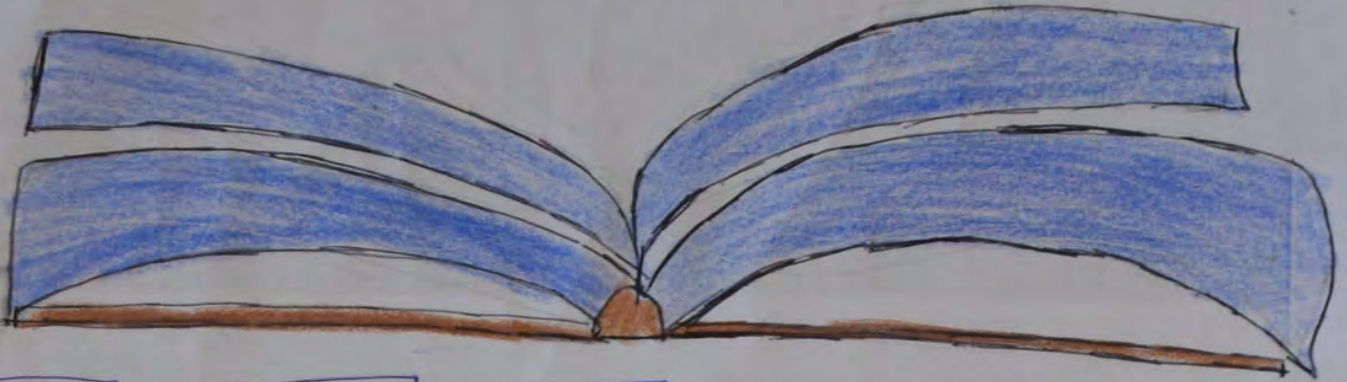
Martin Luther King Jr.



Hailey Tringo
3rd grade

OUR Stories

OUR Strength



I am Autistic

I have only 2 arm

I have only 1 leg

I am blind

I am Deaf

I cannot speak





NORA FU (2nd)

The Strength They Built

Strength doesn't always show itself in big, obvious moments—it often lives in the stories we carry with us. For me, those stories belong to my aunts, my mother's sisters, who have shaped who I am through their resilience and determination.

The first of these stories takes me to Mumbai, where one of my aunts lives and works as an English teacher. I remember the warmth of her home and the quiet confidence in the way she spoke. But her story began long before that. She grew up in a small village in South India, studying in a Telugu-medium school, surrounded by simplicity and familiarity. Then she moved to Mumbai—a fast-paced, overwhelming city—without knowing the language spoken there. Everything changed at once: the people, the pace, the expectations. Yet she refused to be held back. Step by step, she adapted, learned, and grew stronger. Today, she teaches English and has even written multiple textbooks. What once seemed like a barrier became her greatest strength, showing me that resilience is built by facing the unfamiliar and refusing to give up.

If my first aunt's strength was rooted in resilience, my second aunt's strength is defined by her ability to adapt. She lives in Hyderabad and works as a software engineer in a field that never stands still. In the early 2000s, when technology was rapidly evolving, nothing was certain. She had to constantly learn, adjust, and keep up with a world that changed overnight. She didn't begin with a clear path—instead, she took whatever small jobs she could find, building her career step by step. There were no guarantees, only the need to keep moving forward. Over time, she created a place for herself in the industry. Today, she holds a strong position in software and travels for her work. Her journey shows a different kind of strength—not just enduring change, but growing and evolving with it.

While one aunt taught me resilience and another showed me how to adapt, my third aunt's strength lies in her determination. She lives in Nellore, where I was born, and her story is one of hard work and persistence. She pursued a master's degree in physics, a subject known for its difficulty, and earned it through sheer effort. She worked day and night, filling pages with notes and seeking help, even without the best resources. There were no shortcuts—only discipline and determination. Despite the challenges, she achieved something extraordinary.

Together, my aunts' journeys form the foundation of my strength. Their stories are not just ones I admire—they are lessons I carry with me every day. They remind me that strength is not something you

are born with—it is something you build, step by step, and in learning their stories, I am learning to write my own.



நமது கதைகள், நமது பலங்கள்
우리의 이야기, 우리의 강점
हमारी कहानियाँ, हमारी ताकत

Οι Ιστορίες μας, τα Δυνατά μας Σημεία

Onze verhalen, onze krachten

Наши истории - Наша сила

Our
Stories,

Our
Strengths



Nuestras historias, Nuestras fortalezas

As nossas histórias, as nossas forças

Våra berättelser, våra styrkor

Ár Sce'alta, Ár Láidreachtáí

Amare Paramiče. Amare Zorale F

قصصنا، نقاط قوتنا Wo Saji. Wo Hewalei

Hadithi Zetu, Nguvu Zetu

Kisah Kami, Kekuatan Kami

Le nostrestorie, i nostri punti di forza

Willakuyinchiikkuna, kallpanchiikkuna

A cake decorated with white frosting, red frosting, and yellow flowers with red centers, sitting on a gold base. The cake is placed on a dark wooden table. In the background, there is a blue wall and a black office chair. A yellow paper with some text is visible on the table to the right.

THEODORA GABBARD (KG)

STORIES UNITE DIVERSE PEOPLE

VIHAAN AGARWAL (6-8)





YO_SHIN LIN (3rd)



People of different countries are coming together - My travels are my story

AVAANSH AGARWAL (3rd)



BENJAMIN CHEN (3rd)

Camila Finds Strength
Like Ilia on Ice



BRIELLE OMBRES (2nd)



Dyuti Joshi (K-3)



ELENA THEES (5th)

EMILIA EVANITSKY (K-3)



OUR STORIES =
OUR STRENGTH



Kind
Help
Share
Love
Smile
care

Our stories make us
Strong and Kind



JOANNA TAN (5th)

JOY LIU (4th)



Piano Competition

years old

JOLLY RANCHER

Ice

in the moment Redell

26

CATEGORY 1

CIRCLE

CIRCLE

Washed White

You can have all the colors in the world, but still look in the blank spots
Black, white, and red
Why is it always *red*
Why does red feel special
Like I'm not
The person with the world of black and white
Comes to life with the color red
So special, so seen
Why can't that be me?
It's always red...
At first, when writing this poem, I was hopeful
But now...
My colors have faded
But by what? By who?
Why of course, the problem is me
The black and white inside my mind
What changed?
Why does it come but not stay
It doesn't stick, just leaves its residue
The colors in my mind want something more
They want answers to these questions
But there's one thing they **Need**
They feel the need to be someone's red
In my black and white mind
The thing is...I am
Even though I have this...Need?
Why can't it be enough
I **know** it is...but why can't I feel it
Why? Why me? Why so many questions?
Why does life have questions but never answers
I don't understand
I **am** someone's red
But I feel black and white
They died for me...
And turned my sinful red to white
Did you see that?
This poem changed in meaning
You see, I was hesitant to write that part
But I strongly believe when God gives me color
It's for a strong reason
I think I know why I wrote this poem
Why **God** wrote this poem

It was to bring my questions' answers
I had it backwards
Yes, colors are great, but I only saw black, white, and red
I my love colors
White is pure and clean
Black is a mystery
But now I know when I see all the colors in the world
There will always be a white spot left for me
So I remember this poem
So that I remember God made my canvas with color
But I painted over red
And he washed me white, to start a new life
I know I have my colors, but I also have white!

KRISHNA SHINDE (3rd)



KYLEIGH KRAMER (11-12)

The Good Side of Life

Every single person in this universe has a story. Some good, bad, both. Growing up I had a hard childhood, my dad was never really around. He tried to be but was incapable due to his addiction. Alcohol took over his soul. Sadly, August 29th 2018 my father committed suicide. For a long time, I felt this was my story. I felt like whenever people saw or heard about me, I was known as the girl without a dad. But something changed in me when I embraced more into the Toltec Wisdom. Living in such a negative world where we deal with murders, selfishness, greed, wars, bullying, and so much more, it's hard to find the good side of life. But if you try for just ten minutes a day to sit outside and hear the universe around you, you'll hear life. The birds, cars, trees blowing, the wind. Do not be concerned about the future, just stay present in the moment during this time. Realize you can put your mind and self at peace. We have to realize we are more than just our minds. Every day we get caught up in work, school, drama, the depressing news, or social media. It drains our minds. And when something goes poorly, we gain negative thoughts, which then become our beliefs. Humans make assumptions and spread negativity because of our own trauma, attitude, and jealousy. This is something that you need to come to yourself about and make a change for the better. You will experience a happier life when you come to peace with your mind and voice. When something doesn't go your way, take a moment to step back and gather yourself on how you prepare to act upon your feelings. Will you react to this in a positive or negative way? My favorite quote from Don Miguel Rutz says, "We must forgive those we feel have wronged us, not because they deserve to be forgiven, but because we love ourselves so much that we want to keep paying for the injustice." When I got made fun of for having a deceased dad, I got angry, fought back. But when I took a moment to step back, I realized that the kids that were making fun of me also had poor family situations and either were in the same boat as me or even worse. I thought that was the end of my story. That's what made me who I am, and that's not the case. It's only a small part of my story. I'm so much more than that, I have so many values and dreams. I reflect on my past and am sad at times. But it's in the past for a reason. Eventually, I got the understanding that everyone in this world goes through something. The real question is how are you going to impact the world and those around you, positively or negatively? Importantly, how will you describe your story?

MJ book is MJ
LIFE



Chapter 23
The dog
was seen
at the
car
won't
how does

This
is
the

please
write

LUELLA SCHWARZMEIER (K-3)



LUKE LEE (4th)

Many Voices,
One Harmony

Surfing the High Seas

Sometimes I feel like I'm surfing the high seas
On an endless adventure through the brilliant sapphire waves
The salty air refreshes me as I glide effortlessly through school, friendship, and life
At first, it's exhilarating

But then the storm hits
The roar of thunder penetrates the blissful silence
Like the taunting voices of condescending teachers
The spiteful jellyfish bombard me
And they sting like the friends that hurt me
On top of it all a wave towers above me
It's the social and academic pressure
To be perfect
I'm thrown from my board, tossed around like a paper bag in the wind
I try to find the safety of my surfboard but it's gone

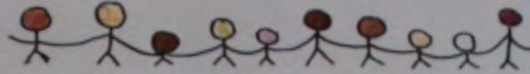
Down

Down

Down

I'm drowning in the dark, endless abyss
I'm running out of air and time, it's too much
And just when I can't take it anymore
I wash up on the shore

I breathe a sigh of relief, and my heart stops racing
Now I can forget the embarrassment and lies
The soft, golden sand swishes gently beneath my feet
I think about the people around me
My family, friends, and teachers
They'll support me when no one else does
I think about my dreams of Harvard and science
My goals of better education around the globe
Preserving libraries for centuries to come
They're not impossible
They make me who I am
I think about myself
I'm smart, honest, and kind
I can decide what defines me
I'm not an awkward, nerdy girl
I'm a mathematician, author, actress, and bowler
I can do anything



"We are the change we have been waiting for"
-Barack Obama



"Diversity is indeed a strength not a threat."
-Queen Elizabeth



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

-Nelson Mandela



"Be the change that you wish to see in the world."
-Ghandi

Our Stories Our Strength

ADHRIT PAREKH (3rd)



Every story helps us grow stronger.



AHAN MADKEN (3rd)



ANAYA PUSHKARNA (11-12)

Sailing the Zero

**I'll raise my heavy yet weathered sails,
Sailing while drifting past waves so pale.
Against the storm, my heart shall prevail,
I chase a shore where the silence fails.**

Close by,
A motionless fog,
It swallows my deck,
I claw back the time lost.

And I,
I stumbled upon,
A silent shadow,
As gray as the dawn.

But still,
I grip on a rope,
Beyond jagged bays,
To a flicker of hope.

Until,
Such salt is still stinging,
My compass keeps spinning,
My fingers keep clinging.

**I raise my heavy yet ready sails,
Sailing while fighting the void so frail.
Through the storm, my heart still prevails,
I chase a shore where the silence fails.**

Deafening silence in ears of sand,
The ocean's heart pounds on with echoes that shake.
Roaring waves sway my ship far from land,
I'm sealed in a barrel of silence.

Gale winds shred apart my paper map,
Soon, a voice rises as the ship's sole guide.
My weary heart hoists up a flag of pride,
Standing tall against all trembling tides.

But why won't the static answer my calls? When can
my cracked voice pierce through the static? Still, I
cling to planks to help steer my walk, A neural lifeline
of wired steel.

From the lens of my lone spyglass ahead, I
stare out beyond the ringing void. Though
my ship sails on decibel waves, I'll be the
spark of nerve through white noise.

**I've raised my heavy yet steady sails,
Sailing while gliding to lands so still.
Past the storm, my own heart prevailed,
I chase a shore where the silence fails.**

Yet I hear the hum of the harbor afar...



Dr. Marcia Martin
EXPRESSION CONTEST
 A Celebration of You!

2022-2023 **OUR STORIES OUR STRENGTH**

ENTRY FORM
 Complete and return the entry form with entry materials to each category.

EMPOWER

WRITING	CATEGORY 1 Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/> Short Story	9-2	ARTS	CATEGORY 2 Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Arts	9-3		
	WRITING	CATEGORY 1 Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/> Editorial		4-5	ARTS	CATEGORY 2 Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> Creative	4-5
			<input type="checkbox"/> Poem		1			<input type="checkbox"/> Music	6-8
			<input type="checkbox"/> Play		9-10			<input type="checkbox"/> Art	9-10
			<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Fiction		11-12			<input type="checkbox"/> Dance	11-12
			<input type="checkbox"/> News		11-12			<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	11-12
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Fiction	11-12			<input type="checkbox"/> Dance	11-12		
		<input type="checkbox"/> News	11-12			<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	11-12		

WRITING

ARTS

WRITING

ARTS

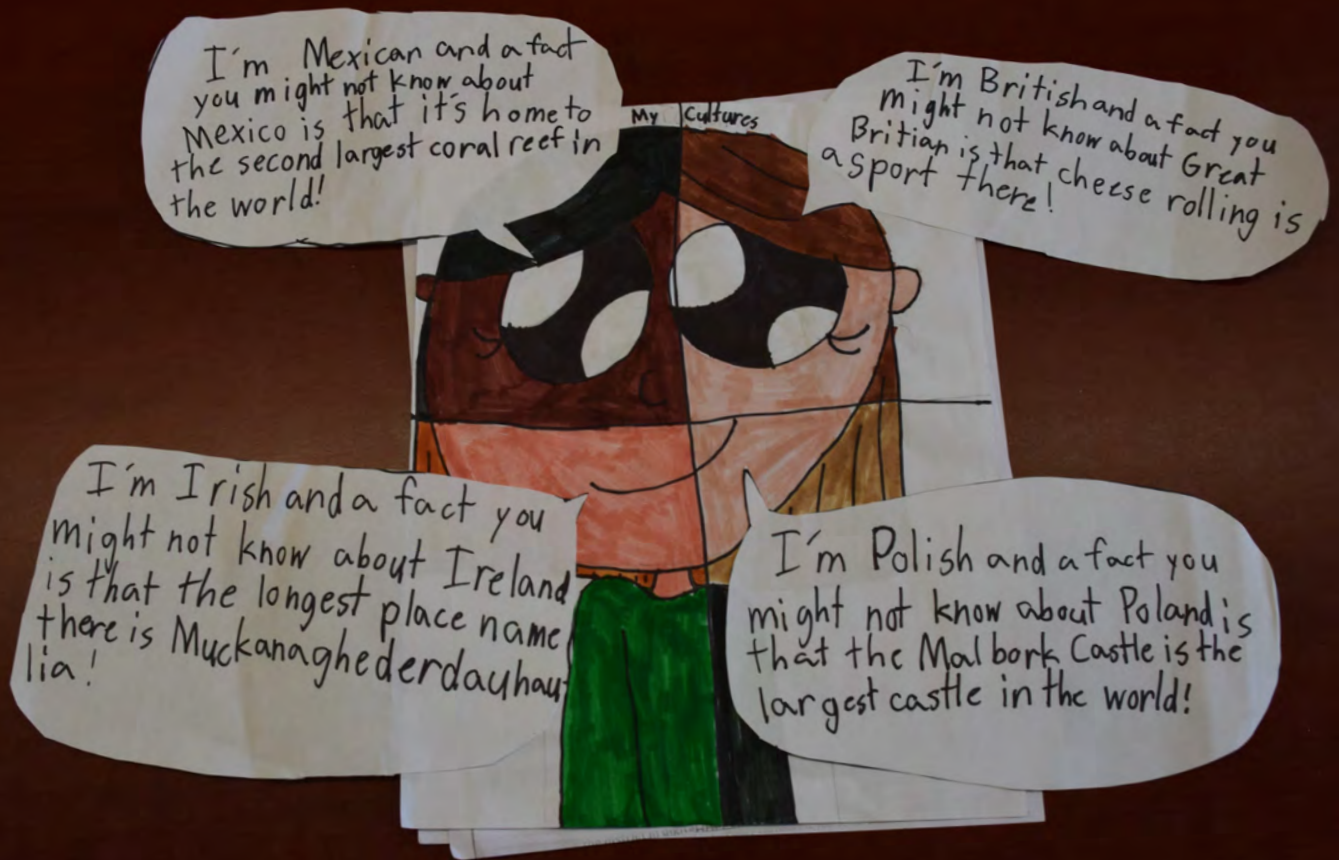


'Pride 2026'

Aubrey Tierney Sat


HANSINI VADLAMUDI (9th)





HERA HICKTON (2nd)



So Different, 
So Perfect Together



IRENE LEE (2nd)