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# Junior Gazette

A PUBLICATION OF THE EASTERN REGION OF JACK AND JILL OF AMERICA, INC.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>GREETINGS FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR</b>	5
<b>TEEN TALK</b>	6
<b>MEET THE 2016-2017 REGIONAL TEEN EXECUTIVE BOARD</b>	7
• ARUNDEL BAY AREA TEENS EXPLORE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD	10
• BALTIMORE COUNTY TEENS TAKE FLIGHT AT AVIATION MUSEUM	11
• BLACK FAMILY DAY TRIBUTE SHEET	12
• CENTRAL NEW JERSEY TEENS CELEBRATE FUNDRAISING SUCCESS	12
• MY 2016 DNC EXPERIENCE	13
• CAREER PREPARATION	14
• LOVE UPON THE TRACK	14
• WHAT "BLACK LIVES MATTER" MEANS TO ME	15
• MANASSAS-WOODBRIDGE TEENS EXCEL	16
• MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND TEENS KICK OFF FALL PROGRAMMING WITH WORSHIP AND LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY	17
• THE PAPER BAG TEST: AN EYE-OPENING EXHIBIT AT THE NEW SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM ON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE	17
• REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM	18
• MONTGOMERY COUNTY (PA) TEENS PARTICIPATE IN 10TH ANNUAL OVERNIGHT RETREAT	19
• METROPOLITAN CHAPTER TEENS VOLUNTEER AT FUN AND FRIENDS CAMP	20
• METROPOLITAN TEEN RAISES \$25K FOR ERITRIAN WATER PROJECT	20
• NASSAU COUNTY TEENS HOSTED ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL PARTY ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD	21
• NEW CASTLE COUNTY: FINANCIAL FORTITUDE EXPLOSION	22
• PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY TEENS: COMMUNITY SERVICE WITH A SPLASH!	23
• PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SENIOR TEENS ON THE RUN	23
• SPIRITS BEHIND THE TRAPPED DOOR	24
• DISCRIMINATION	24
• SOUTHERN MARYLAND CHAPTER TEEN RETREAT AND CAROLE ROBERTSON DAY FESTIVITIES	25
• SUFFOLK COUNTY TEEN RETREAT	26
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIINGS</b>	27
• L. I. F. E.	28
• WE ARE BCPS!	28
• NEW FAMILY	28
• 2016 CAROLE ROBERTSON TOLERANCE CONFERENCE	29
• RUSH HOUR	29

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

• MONKEY AND FLOWERS IN VASE	30
• COLUMBIA MARYLAND JR. TEEN MEET & GREET	31
• WHAT "BLACK LIVES MATTER" MEANS TO ME	31
• MY GIFT FROM GOD	32
• JACK & JILL	32
• GREATER ESSEX COUNTY CHAPTER MOVIE UNDER THE STARS	33
• TIMID BUT CONFIDENT	33
• THE RING	34
• LASAGNA	34
• A REVIEW OF MALCOLM LITTLE	35
• GOODBYE ELEMENTARY	35
• CONFIDENT	35
• THE SILENT LEAVES & WALK AWAY	36
• JOSHUA AND NISA	37
• MY NAME	37
• PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY JR. TEEN RETREAT @ CAMP WABANNA	38
• POETRY IN MOTION: APRIL SONG & WINTER	39
• THE REASON I LIKE ICE CREAM	40
• WHY EVERY VOTE IMPACTS AN ELECTION	40
<b>KIDDIE CORNER</b>	41
• HOPE	42
• ALEXANDRIA-MOUNT VERNON CREATIONS	43
• THE ALEXANDRIA-MOUNT VERNON CHAPTER VISITED GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON ES-TATE	44
• JELLY FISH & SEA HORSES	45
• LIVING IN THE CITY: A GIRL'S VIEW OF BALTIMORE	45
• IN THE WINTER TIME	46
• ENEMIES CAN'T WIN	46
• KENDRA KING'S KINDERGARTEN KREATIONS	47
• KOEBE KING & TIA GASKIN'S CREATIONS	48
• FLAG & CAT	49
• I AM THE BLACK CHILD	49
• CATERPILLAR, OWL, SOCCER BALL AND CITY SCAPE	50
• CREATURE, AUTUMN IS HERE & HARBOR LIFE	51

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

• WHAT "BLACK LIVES MATTER" MEANS TO ME	52
• YOUNG PREACHER	52
• MUSIC IS MAGIC!	52
• MY BLACK LIFE MATTERS	52
• TRACY REESE, THE STELLAR FASHION DESIGNER	53
• PUDDLES	53
• RABBIT	54
• PRINCESS TIANA	54
• MALCOLM X	54
• MY FISH (WATERCOLOR AND TEXTURE)	55
• CHALKBOARD DRAWING OF MOMMY	55
• TANNER	55



### FEATURED COVER IMAGE:

#### PEN AND PAPER ABSTRACT LETTER M

*Miles Haynes, 4th Grade  
Prince George's County Chapter*

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Dear Teens, Middle Schoolers and Children,

Welcome to the Fall issue of the 2016-2017 *Junior Gazette*! As the mother of two lively, intelligent and opinionated boys, one of my personal mottos is to “Never underestimate the power of children!”

The *Junior Gazette* was born from that motto last year, because this is an opportunity for you to share your creative art work, drawings, poems and articles with others in Jack and Jill of America, Inc.

The sections include Teen Talk, Middle School Musings and the Kiddie Corner. It was a pleasure to see so many of you at Mothers Cluster and I look forward to seeing you at the Teen Leadership Summit on Jan. 14-15, 2017, Teen Conference, March 30-April 2, and Children’s Cluster on April 29 — so mark your calendars!

Thank you for sharing your talents with us.

Enjoy!

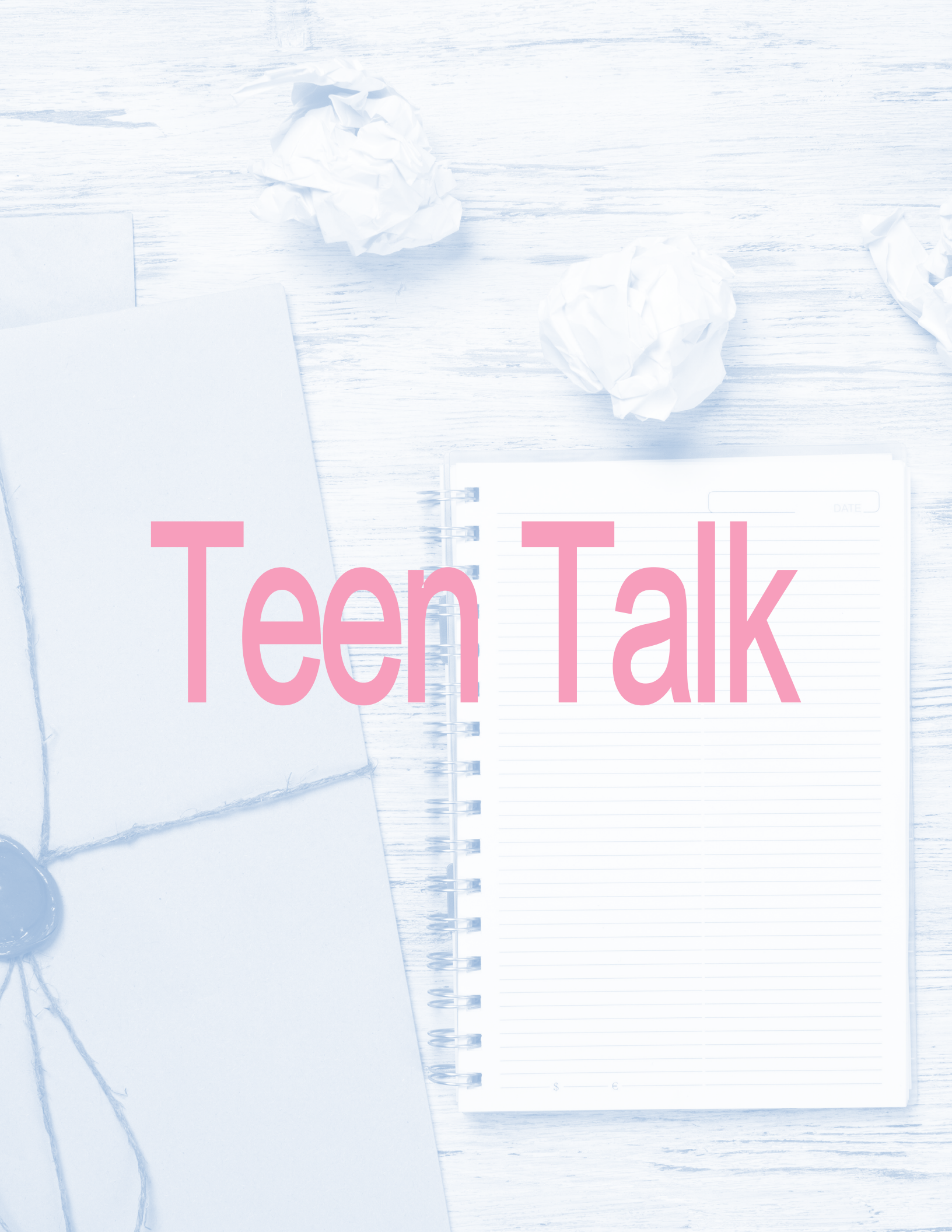
*Best,*

*RD Mondri*



**THE** POWER  
to make a  
**DIFFERENCE**

# Teen Talk



## MEET YOUR 2016-17 REGIONAL TEEN EXECUTIVE BOARD

I am, **Maya Long**, your Teen President. As a proud member of the amazing Arundel Bay Area Chapter, I



have served as the Teen Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and was elected as the 2016 Distinguished Teen of the Year. On the regional level, it was phenomenal serving as your Teen Chaplin last year. I cannot wait to reach new heights together this year! I attend Arundel High School in

Gambrills, Maryland, where I am a senior. I am a member of SGA and serve as an AMP which is a freshmen student mentor. I am both proud and humbled to be serving as your 2016-2017 Eastern Region Teen President as we continue to be "Unapologetically Black!"

My name is **Jada Thorne** and I am proud to be your Eastern Region Teen Vice President! I hail from the



amazing Nassau County Chapter, where I have served in many positions such as Secretary, Foundation Chair, and head of several committees. I am a senior at Great Neck South High. I have played three varsity sports (volleyball, basketball, and lacrosse), been president of my

Back Student union, TESL connect club and midnight run. I have also served as secretary of the Key club and Gay Straight Alliance. I am also Vice President of the Mary Brennan Inn Youth Group. In addition to the community service performed with my Jack and Jill chapter, I also volunteer at a hospital and an intern under my assembly-woman. I look forward to the journey we will be taking together this year as a Jack and Jill family!

My name is **Caitlyn Hughes** and I am proud to serve as your 2016-17 Eastern Region Teen Treasurer.



While being an active member of the New Haven Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. and various other community organizations, I have experienced many opportunities to build limitless networking opportunities and

friends throughout the region. As a rising senior at St. Luke's School in New Canaan, Conn., I am a member of the Black Student Alliance, BKind Club, and participate on two varsity teams. I also participate monthly with my local soup kitchen as well as in the ASCEND Enrichment program with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Tau Xi Omega Chapter. I am looking forward to seeing us come together yet again to celebrate and focus on our given talent to be "Unapologetically Black" at our Regional Clusters and at Teen Conference. Thank you again for this amazing opportunity and let's make this year amazing!

My name is **Lauren Smith**, and I could not be more grateful to serve as your Regional Teen Secretary for



the 2016-17 program year. I am proud to be representing the Stamford/Norwalk chapter in Connecticut where I previously served as both Historian and Recording Secretary. Jack and Jill has created so many new relationships that I honestly believe will last forever, and I am intensely thankful for everything this program has

done for me. Outside of the organization, I enjoy participating in choir and theatre at my school due to my intense love for the arts, especially music. I also love helping out my community by volunteering at St. Aloysius Church by assisting in many different ways including aiding Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) teachers and helping with after-mass festivities. I look forward to meeting many of you during Clusters and Teen Conference.

I am **Channing Russell** your Eastern Region Foundation Chair. I am a former Foundation Chair, Vice



President, and President-elect of the Essex Hudson Chapter. As a junior at The Pingry School in Martinsville, NJ, I am a three-time varsity football player and also play on the basketball team. I am an active member of Pingry's Politics Club and serve as Co-President of the school's

Sports Podcast Club as well as have my own sports

blog. Additionally, I serve as a Student Government Representative. In the past, I have volunteered at the New Jersey Food Bank and served at the Church of the Epiphany during the Thanksgiving holiday. I am very excited to serve as your Eastern Region Foundation Chair. I see so much potential in the teens of the Mighty Eastern Region and you all are, truly, “*Unapologetically Black...*”

My name is **Jordan Ruffin Walton**, and I am proud to serve as your **Teen Parliamentarian** for the 2016-



2017 program year. I am a member of the Bergen Passaic chapter in New Jersey, where I served as Vice President. I am a junior at St. Benedicts Prep, New Jersey, where I participate in Varsity Water Polo and Counseling for 7th and 8th graders. St. Benedicts is committed to brotherhood and

service, our motto is “Whatever hurts my brother hurts me.” From this experience I have learned the power of collaborative leadership. I have worked as a first aider for the freshman 55 mile hike on the Appalachian Trail. I am the eldest of four brothers who make my life exciting every day. Through them I have learned what it means to responsible and a good role model. I look forward to bringing my experience to the position of parliamentarian.

My name is **Jared Bethea** and I am happy to serve as your **2016-17 Teen Sergeant at Arms**. I am from the



Chester County, Pennsylvania Chapter and have been a member since the age of 2. In my chapter, I have served as Teen President, Teen Vice President, Teen Program Director and Teen Foundation Chair. I am a senior at Downingtown West High School in Downingtown, Pa. I am

on the varsity football team and track team. Upon graduation I hope to attend an HBCU, play college football and study Sports Broadcasting.

I am **Ariel Talbert** and happy to serve as your **2016-2017 Teen Protocol Chair**. I am a proud member of



the Loudoun County Chapter where I served as President. I attend Stone Bridge High School. I am a section leader at our marching band, a very active member of the student council and Amnesty International; as well as an officer in several honor societies. In addition to commu-

nity service with Jack and Jill I often volunteer at my local library and hopeless shelter. My future aspiration is to start up my own non-profit organization. My interests include music, politics, philosophy, and neuroscience. I look forward to serving the all our Eastern Region teens this program year!

I am **Jaden Thornton** and am proud to serve as the **2016-2017 Teen Legislative Chair**. I am an honors



and advanced placement student with a heart for volunteerism and working with children. I was the Class of 2017 Vice President at Franklin High School, where I also participate in Jazz Band, Science Olympiad, It's Academic, Mock Trial, and Varsity Track & Field. I'm an avid saxophonist,

play recreational basketball, and enjoy reading, writing, and event planning. I have won a myriad of honors and awards for leadership, community service, and my oratorical ability. I aspire to study Business and Political Science at the collegiate level and to move towards my dream of becoming a criminal defense attorney. I am a proud member of the Baltimore County, Md., Chapter, where I have served as Teen Treasurer and Chair of the Teen Holiday Party Committee. I was the 2015 Eastern Region Southern Cluster Oratorical Contest winner and the 2016 Chapter Distinguished Teen. I produced an entry for the PSA Literacy Challenge that won first place at the 2016 National Convention.



My name is **Gabrielle Stevenson** and I hail from the Alexandria- Mt. Vernon Chapter in Virginia. I am



honored to serve as your Regional **Teen Chaplain** for the 2016-2017 program year. I have enjoyed being a servant leader through my years in my local chapter. I have been honored by my peers to be selected as my chapter's Distinguished Teen. I

have also been elected as the Teen Treasurer, Teen Vice President and Teen President. I am currently a senior at Elizabeth Seton High School in Bladensburg Md. I serve communities around my school by participating in bilingual interpretation for non-English speaking parents and their children's teachers. At Elizabeth Seton I am a member of the Onyx Club, Student Ambassadors, Tri-M Music Honors Society, Varsity Swim, Gospel Choir and Student Council as the Vice President of the Senior Class. I look forward to meeting all of you throughout the 2016-2017 Program Year.

My name is **Dahyo Coleman** and I am honored to be serving as your **Teen Nominating Chair**. I am from



the South Jersey Chapter where I served as Teen Editor and Corresponding Secretary. I am a senior at Cherry Hill High School East in Cherry Hill, N.J., where I participate in Track and Field, DECA, Mock Trial, Athletes against Bullying, and the African American Culture Club. I volunteer at

the Weisman Children's Hospital as an adaptive swim instructor and a playroom attendant. I am passionate about photography and filmmaking, and I was recently accepted into the New York University Future Filmmakers Workshop, which heightened my knowledge of film. I cannot wait to see what the 2016-2017 program year holds as we express how "Unapologetically Black" and beautiful we are!

## ARUNDEL BAY AREA TEENS EXPLORE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

In May 2016, the Arundel Bay Area teens took a step back in time and participated in a simulated Underground Railroad experience in Sandy Spring, Maryland. They were led by a volunteer “conductor” who guided the teens along a wooded, natural surface trail which ran alongside the Sandy Spring. While learning about African American history, the teens learned about various techniques that freedom seekers used to elude trackers, find food, and navigate their way north to freedom. By asking the teens questions and explaining important concepts, their conductor helped make the hike interactive and engaging. The teens reported that they really enjoyed the hike and learning about what it was like for enslaved individuals to try to escape and gain their freedom.



## BALTIMORE COUNTY TEENS TAKE FLIGHT AT AVIATION MUSEUM

Five teens from the Baltimore County Chapter — Tori Holland, Kendall West, Marcus Smith, Lenny Willis and Kaili Beverly — participated in the *First Flight Program*, sponsored by the Glenn L. Martin Maryland Aviation Museum.

We were honored to have the pleasure of participating. It was not only educational in the formal sense, but it also opened our minds to allow for new experiences. None of us were truly sure what was in store, yet we allowed our imaginations to run wild; and, the program far exceeded any expectations we had already developed. The detailed lessons were presented in a unique fashion and provided a new experience for all of us, mothers included. The extensive lessons were more than just learning about the influence of “wind on the wings” of a plane, instead it became a career consideration/opportunity. Schools encourage us to become only a few things like a doctor, lawyer, or your average desk employee. This experience reminds students that there is so much more to the world than that! We felt the overwhelming need to give the program our thanks because it reminded us we can be anyone we want and there are definitely other pathways to success.

Now while the educational portion maintained our full focus, none of us could deny the thrill and excitement that accompanied the hands on activities! In the beginning there was tension in the air as we all had been slightly nervous approaching the

activities. When we sat in the parked small plane, we further received an individual lesson on the basic functions of the plane and how it might differ for newer models that prompted us to relax, as it reminded us of systems in place to ensure safety. The lesson inside the plane allowed us to connect the vocabulary taught to us earlier and displayed it in a more memorable fashion. The information we learned had begun to click. The exploration of the control tower revealed the high paced excitement that the flight field contains. Even though all of us have flown commercial, we were still surprised at the importance of the control tower. Subsequently, the flight itself was an entire awesome experience, all of it's own. Everyone was nervous and excited at the same time. Our hesitation surprised us as the quick flight in a small plane suddenly had our hearts racing. Overall, we all learned not to let fear consume us, instead let it drive our ideas to new heights; and that's what we did!

We were also pleased that our own Baltimore County Chapter “Uncle”, Retired Commander, Wayne T. Lockley, helped make this opportunity possible and was instrumental in us receiving great lessons.

Submitted on behalf of the Teen Group,  
Tori Holland  
Public Service Chair, BCCJJ  
Catonsville High School, Grade 11



**BLACK FAMILY DAY TRIBUTE SHEET****12PM MAY 14, 2016 MOTHERS****Written and performed by 'Nate**

As we gather today let us pray that the days our  
mothers took the time to pave a way in order for us  
to become not just good but great is appreciated  
every single day that you wake

I pray that the moments your feelings tend to bend  
against the only friend who had the ability to turn  
us into women and men

That you remember all of those who are not  
fortunate enough to have that one special friend to  
say goodnight to in the end

That you remember that love is kind love is patient  
it does not envy it does not boast

A mothers love does not weep it does not cry it  
does not mope

A mothers love is the glove that fits snug on our  
dreams

You only want what's best for me

Nothing less than what I need

A mothers soul is warm and never folds

Her love for her son can never be sold

And her love for her daughter can never go cold

They are the definition of repetition and show us  
that to get us to where we need to be is their  
mission

Good and faithful servants of the lord Nothing less  
and nothing more (needed)



Care takers of the world  
Deep down into the core

You all have arranged a single bit of me  
that not only has given me the courage  
and the strength to not feel bitter sweet,  
but the ability to appreciate all that you  
have given me

You always kept it real with me even  
when I was down, when no one was  
around you were the realest G

You are the epitome of the strong  
illustrious women your daughters look to  
be

And the depiction of what your sons  
choose their wives to be

Our queens forever and always  
our dearest precious pearls

Thank you

We love you dearly

Our mothers

Our worlds

*Nate Corpening  
Bucks County Chapter*

**CENTRAL NEW JERSEY TEENS CELEBRATE FUNDRAISING SUCCESS**

As the 2017 program year begins, the Central New Jersey Teens are planning to continue last year's success. At the 2016 national convention, the teens were recognized and received an award for second place in the Eastern Region for fundraising. This achievement is due to The CNJ Summer Kickoff Dance held in May 2016. The teens raised \$2,750.

The Central New Jersey Chapter President, Toyi Price Ward expressed her admiration of the teens for their fundraising accomplishment. "Our teens are exceptional in their commitment to service, and partying for purpose," she said. The money was donated to the Jack and Jill Foundation and the Kessler Foundation, a New Jersey-based organization dedicated to helping patients who need rehabilitation services.

The Central New Jersey teens also have a host

of other activities planned for this year. Along with completing modules on leadership and teen conference awards, the teens have participated in activities to promote bonding.

At our Worship Brunch and opening picnic, our teens led the charge from leading the younger age groups in games to inspiring them at our Worship Brunch. They are also looking forward to teen conference and are planning to create an outstanding display board, banner, and scrapbook, which they hope will put them in the winner's circle.

The Central New Jersey teens are excited about the 2016-2017 year, and plan to demonstrate through their actions that they are "Unapologetically Black."

*Evan Peale, Teen Editor  
Central New Jersey Chapter*

## MY 2016 DNC EXPERIENCE

Prior to the official start date of my volunteering, the DNC demonstrated their gratitude by throwing a “thank you” party for the volunteers. The attendance was impossible to count and everyone was partaking in the activities, whether it was exploring the C-SPAN bus, enjoying the concert, listening to speeches, or just plain socializing with other volunteers. The C-SPAN bus gave people a chance to view the results of every prior presidential election and gain information on the two current major candidates: Hillary Clinton (Democratic Party) and Donald Trump (Republican Party), and third party candidate: Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party).

As the “thank you” party neared its end, a wonderful opportunity occurred. The Mayor of Philadelphia, Jim Kenney, was in attendance at the event and I was able to take a picture with him. It was a nice event and I’m thankful for Mayor Kenney being willing to take a moment to Take the picture, in addition to his polite and amiable attitude.

My volunteer assignment was at the Philadelphia Airport as a greeter on Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. My time volunteering consisted of assisting delegates in locating their designated transportation which would take them to their hotel. There was a good amount of different states that the delegates came from, but they all shared a common enthusiasm for their shared role of being delegates. Any physical differences (Young or Old, Black or White, etc..) did not distract from their role in the electoral process.

Many of the delegates were interested in exploring Philadelphia with many curious about where the best cheesesteak place was. Tons of delegates sought to have their pictures taken by signs or in group shots. All of the delegates had a courteous attitude which was relieving and helped the time fly by. I noticed that many delegates had a level of excitement which reached the point of wearing clothing reflecting the candidate they supported.

I recall a delegate wearing a shirt covered in faces of Bernie Sanders, another wearing a hat composed of various buttons that proclaimed support for Hillary Clinton, as well as more subdued clothing that simply showed slogans such as: “Love Trumps Hate” and “Feel the Bern”. My part was a small part, but it was



one that served the people and kept me involved in the political process.

Voting is the duty of every eligible American. My time volunteering introduced me to many excited and dedicated supporters, delegates, and fellow volunteers who showed clear interest in having involvement in U.S. politics. My experiences were educational, fun, and a public service. It is my goal to get more youth involved with the political process to ensure more develop an interest in being an active player in change.

Every vote matters on every level. One can wait an eternity for others to bring change, but it can take only a moment for one to become change.

*By Jefferi Andrew Strong  
Chester County Chapter*

NOTE: Jack and Jill of America, Inc., is a nonpartisan organization and we do not advocate for any particular candidate. The views expressed in this article belong solely to the author and do not reflect the position of Jack and Jill of America, Inc.

## CAREER PREPARATION

At the end of August, many of us are about to start a new school year and some have already started. I'm entering my junior year and I've given a lot of thought towards what I want to do after high school graduation. I want to become a cardiologist, so I took the initiative to arrange a day to observe the daily routine of a cardiologist.

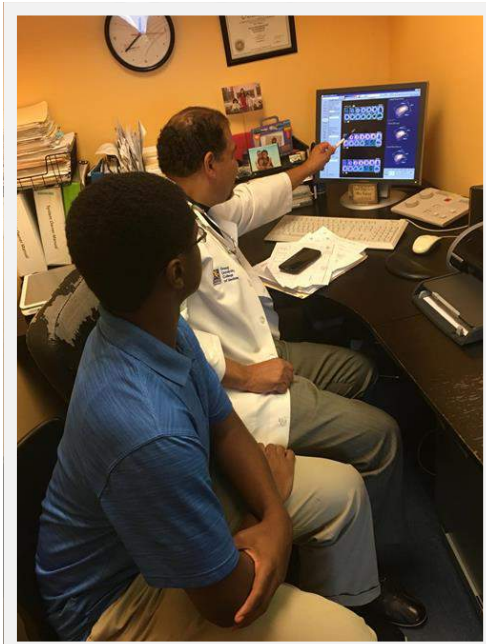
My day at New Life Cardiovascular Care was fascinating and fantastic. I started my day at 9:30 AM. From the very beginning of the day, I was able to see the complexity and the focus needed for the job of the being a cardiologist. Throughout the day I was able to meet patients and observe the interactions between Dr. Milbourne and his patients.

During my observations, I saw him make his diagnosis with suggestions of: aspirin therapy, an ACE inhibitor, and continuing a diet of little to no salt. Fol-

lowing these interactions, I noted the amiable conversations held between doctor and patient, careful consideration of the patient's own feelings, and genuine attempts at giving clear explanations of the issues bothering the patient. I also learned more about the condition of the heart following a heart attack such as how a heart can "remodel" itself.

During my time shadowing Dr. Milbourne, I was able to have a one on one period to ask various questions. I was able to learn about places to complete medical school, residency and fellowship as well the time required for this specialty. I was able to view an echocardiogram and see the heart working. I was able to learn about branches of cardiology such as clinical, electrical, and nuclear.

I would recommend to everyone who believes that they know what career they want to



enter to try to seek out someone in that field to see the inner workings of that career.

*By Jefferi Andrew Strong  
Chester County Chapter*

## LOVE UPON THE TRACK

I walk onto the track, and see my fate.  
Girls from everywhere with one goal in mind.  
While on my mind is not walking in late;  
My palms sweaty from the nerves I soon find.  
I look around and see the crowd shouting,  
Never have I ever been this nervous.  
Coach told me there was no time for pouting;  
He told me that everything was for this.  
I took a deep breath and tried to focus.  
This moment is something I've waited for.

I realized that this sport was my motive;  
Jumping makes me feel like I'm in the air.  
Nothing else mattered except for floating.  
The trophies didn't matter to me now,  
I love this sport the most and nothing more!

*Morgan Alston, 10th Grade  
Chester County Chapter*

## WHAT “BLACK LIVES MATTER” MEANS TO ME

When I hear Black Lives Matter, it reminds me of all the horrific crimes that have been committed against black people and other people of color in America. It reminds me of how rigged the system is against us, how much some people don't want us to succeed, and how hard it is to stop the cycle and break free. This country has made great steps to attempt to fix these problems, but there is an underlying infection. There is racism imbedded into the roots of this country because of its history. This is why even after the Civil Rights Movement the mindset of “white supremacy” and subtle racism are still lingering. Despite these setbacks, this country needs to work together much harder to defeat the prejudice.

However, the Black Lives Matter movement also gives me hope for our future. The movement has given new light to old issues and has empowered a new generation to make a change in a way no other generation could. With the use of social media the Black Lives Matter movement, and other ideologies like it, have been able to spread like wild fire and reach people all around the world in a matter of seconds. The movement brings people of all ages, races, and genders together to make a difference in society. With this new power, millions of people join together in harmony to protest against the injustices that happen everyday in the United States and across the globe.

The Black Lives Matter movement is attempting to revolutionize the social injustices in our country, but with every revolution there will be those who oppose the ideas. For this movement those who oppose us are trying to continue their tradition of keeping the victims ignorant to what is truly happening to them in this country and in the court systems. They want to keep the people voiceless. Their main method of doing this is to try to discredit what Black Lives Matter stands for. This includes comparing it to terrorist organizations. At the same time most of

these people wouldn't associate the word terrorist with the Ku Klux Klan or Dylan Roof. Another method is crossing out a single word to change the meaning of the social media hashtag - #blacklivesmatter to #alllivesmatter; however, if only one word is causing a problem then ultimately you think that word is a problem, and *all* of those who associate themselves with that word. The oppressors will try to blame the whole movement for the sense-

less actions of certain individuals who share one similar quality - being black such as Micah Johnson who killed police officers in Dallas, even if that person has no ties with Black Lives Matter. This is the same type of judgment that Muslims receive because of people who twist their sacred scripture to fit their agenda. Similarly that is also what people are doing to Black Lives Matter; they are disre-

garding the ten point agenda of the movement. They want to distract the public from what the movement is trying accomplish so that no change will be made. The truly terrible thing about those who oppose Black Lives Matter is that with their opposition they are setting the country backwards and turning us in the wrong direction deliberately.

With Black Lives Matter, and other movements like it, the cycle of oppression and injustice could come to an end. This will only happen if everyone puts their differences aside, and listens to what each other has to say.

By McCall Brown

Columbia Maryland Chapter



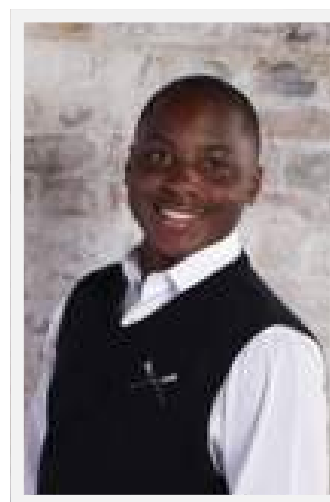
## MANASSAS-WOODBRIDGE TEENS EXCEL

On Aug. 13, **Jamal Jalen Carter**, (pictured on the far left), was inducted into the National Society of High School Scholars at George Washington University, in Washington D.C. Jamal is in the 11th grade at Potomac High School in Woodbridge, Va., and is a member of the Manassas-Woodbridge Chapter teen group.



Senior teen group vice-president, **Jordan A. Adams** was selected for the second time to serve as an intern for the Prince William County (PWC) Democratic Party. Jordan worked with the Prince William County Virginia Campaign Organizer leading up to the Nov. 8, elections. Jordan is a 12th grade student at CD Hylton High School.

**Leah Morton** was chosen by her principal along with a few select students from Fauquier County high schools to participate in the Superintendent's Counsel. This committee was tasked to address the social and educational concerns and needs (to include technology enhancements, gender identity issues, alternative learning environments and school food quality) of the students in the county's four high schools. She was also chosen by her principal to be part of Fauquier County Public School's Advisory Committee for the modernization and revitalizing of two of the county's oldest middle schools. This committee was established to facilitate discussions surrounding the planning process and to recommend continued action.



Leah worked with committee members and an educational planning firm since late August to discuss the details of this project and met with members of the community to get their input. Leah worked with the committee to review and analyze demographic and facility data, educational trends that would affect building structure and design and continues dialogue with community members to address the needs of each facility. Leah is excited to take part in the planning and research on this project that will affect current and future students and educators at these middle schools.



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## MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND TEENS KICK OFF FALL PROGRAMMING WITH WORSHIP AND LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

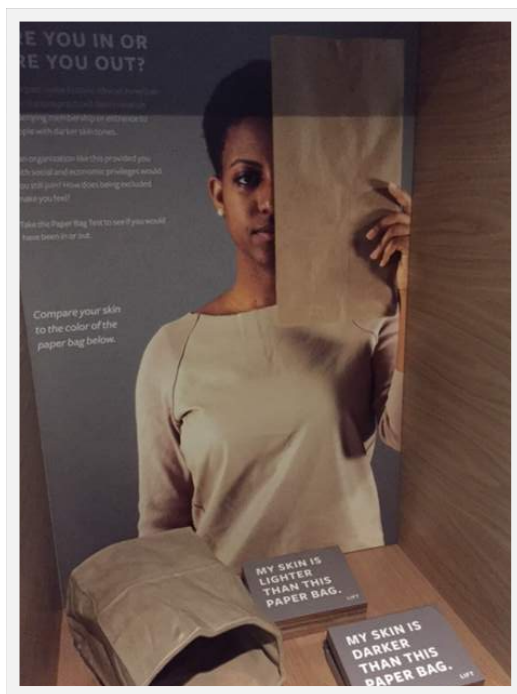
In September, the Seniors Teens of the Montgomery County Maryland Chapter gathered at Reid Temple AME Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, for The Remix, a full youth worship experience designed for students in the 8th grade and up. Held the first Saturday of each month, Remix features a full band and a youth-focused sermon, and sometimes a live DJ. Afterwards, we met at IHOP and shared a meal.

At our business meeting the following weekend, we completed a few Leadership Modules, including one on Legislative Advocacy.

On Oct. 5, JJMCMC Teens attended the Montgomery County Maryland Council's Student Town Hall Meeting. Led by Teen Legislative Chair Isiah Wells, the teens prepared an issue paper and presented their recommendations for closing the student achievement gap in Montgomery County. They spoke eloquently to County Council members and received advice from Councilman Craig Rice on how to get their recommendations implemented.



## THE PAPER BAG TEST: AN EYE-OPENING EXHIBIT AT THE NEW SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM ON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE



I had the pleasure of visiting the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture this fall. One of the many sections of the museum that caught my attention was the Brown Paper Bag test. The way the test was run back in the day was that different prestigious and non-prestigious organizations would ask you to hold a brown paper bag up to your skin. If you were lighter than that brown paper bag, you were accepted. But if you were darker, you were cut short. And honestly, although that was a horrible test, it didn't surprise me that white organizations did it; what shocked me was that 'we' used to do it to ourselves! Jack and Jill used to be one of these organizations! But I am very blessed and glad we've changed from our past history.

*Hillary Cyrus, C/O 2017*

*Teen President*

*Montgomery County Maryland Chapter*

## REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM

On July 21, I had the unique opportunity to tour the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture pre-opening while contractors were in the process of meticulously installing the display artifacts. As Senior Preconstruction Manager for Smoot Construction of Washington D.C., one of the premier minority owned construction managers in the country, my mother, Jacquelyn Sykes-Washington, arranged for us to see every corner, from the mechanical rooms to the kitchen where the culinary art of Sweet Home Café is crafted to the office of Executive Director Dr. Lonnie Bunch and his staff.



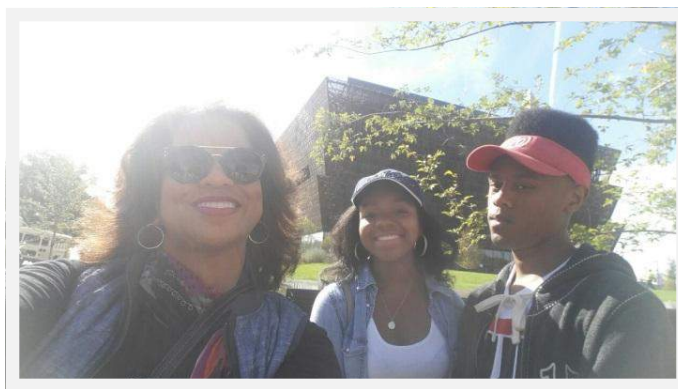
In July, I could not have imagined how it would all get done in time for public opening by Sept. 24, and I was amazed by the expansiveness of the building. Walking up to it, I had no idea that nearly two thirds of the building is below ground! Workers were gently placing the individual exhibits in their display locations while we walked through. Michael Jordan's Bulls jersey and Wheaties box, Michael Jackson's sequined jacket, Chuck Berry's red Cadillac, the Tuskegee Airmen plane, the restoration of the rail car and slave quarters could all be seen at various stages of placement.

On Oct. 12, we had the opportunity to visit again as tourists and with a friend. After visiting the museum during construction, I had a pretty good sense of what and where everything in the museum was. But when we all went together to see the finished product, it was a height-

ened experience. Although I had seen the interior once, I never thought I'd be even more amazed.

The technology and audio visual displays and interactive exhibits blew me away. Aside from the exhibits themselves, one of the highlights of the museum was the cafeteria, Sweet Home Cafe. The cafeteria is unique in that the menu is rooted in African-American Culture and region specific cuisine, far from your basic traditional museum food court offerings.

The exhibits were interesting beyond my imagination and I especially loved the two upper floors. The sports and music sections were my two favorite exhibits and featured authentic memorabilia from icons that changed the face of today's society and culture. From Michael Jackson to Michael Jordan, and from costumes and wardrobes to jerseys, and from hop hop to dance to television and stage.



The most riveting experience in the museum is underground, and the surreal feeling you get from exhibits tracing history from the transatlantic slave trade through emancipation to civil rights to black pride and black power are very stimulating and thought provoking. It is quite an emotional experience and you are transported to our earliest experiences as we unwillingly traveled to North America. It actually feels as if you're living in that time period when in the lower section, but as you make your way up throughout the building, it's amazing to see the evolution and uplift.

Everyone should take the time to visit the NMAAHC because from the exhibits inside to the bronze paneled exterior, it's nothing like any of the other museums on the national mall. You must go for yourself to find out why.

*Jordan Washington, C/O 2018*

*Teen Vice President*

*Montgomery County Maryland Chapter*



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY (PA) TEENS PARTICIPATE IN 10TH ANNUAL OVERNIGHT RETREAT

The Montgomery County, PA Chapter Crown Jewels kicked off the year participating in the 10th Annual Teen overnight from Sept. 9–10. There was a strong turnout with 34 out of 40 teens in attendance. The overnight was designed by our teen advisors to create a unique bonding experience among the teens through programming focused on leadership development, cultural awareness, goal-setting, and community service.

Upon arrival, Teen Community Service Chair, Jade Kemp, collected an overwhelming number of school supplies for Cradles to Crayons and Teen President, Madison Sanders, opened the event with a business meeting.

Saturday evening, a career fair was held with the

caveat that it be interactive and engaging. Teens moved to different tables in ten minute rotations. They learned about various careers ranging from multimedia and journalism to STE(A)M while interacting with 10 of our accomplished Montco Moms and Dads. They graciously agreed to participate and continue dialogue with the teens in the future, if they are interested.

The teens realized all business and Teen Conference Committee meeting objectives and had a fun ice-breaker conducted by Vice-President, Chelsea Wyche on Sunday. The first official meeting sets the tone for the rest of the program year!



## METROPOLITAN CHAPTER TEENS VOLUNTEER AT FUN AND FRIENDS CAMP

Teens from the Metropolitan chapter volunteered and worked as counselors at the Fun and Friends Camp. The camp supports the mission of providing a culturally rich curriculum which celebrates the accomplishments of current day African-American heroes. Jack and Jill teens served as mentors for the campers, sharing with campers their collective experiences of attending independent schools and exposing them to role models of color. The teens were instrumental in developing the curriculum and agenda which focuses on developing leadership and community.



## METROPOLITAN TEEN RAISES \$25K FOR ERITRIAN WATER PROJECT

Tsion Yohannes Syoum, 17, is Metropolitan Jack and Jill Teen, who has been on the spotlight on the Eritrean media outlets and the social media networks, including a live phone interview with the Voice of America's Tigrinya Program for the water project she opened in Eritrea. She is a senior at the Chapin School in New York City and is the president of the Coding Club, an active member of the dancing and Chinese clubs at the Chapin School. Tsion is also a **staff writer/contributing writer** for the school newspaper. For a year, between the inception and the inauguration of her water pro-

ject in 2015, Tsion was playing two important roles in her life. The student she is and the founder of the water project. It demanded every ounce of fiber and concentration in her. She was multitasking fund-raising, designing and managing her water project website, <http://www.theretawprojects.com>, communicating and networking with the personnel in charge of the construction of the water pump in Eritrea; keeping abreast of her homework and studies and also being a dutiful daughter and sister. She was able to raise \$25,000 for her project, mainly through a



GoFundMe account. In her inauguration speech, Tsion said that she intends to continue on working in such projects.

## NASSAU COUNTY TEENS HOSTED ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL PARTY ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD WITH SASHA OBAMA IN ATTENDANCE AGAIN

The Nassau County Chapter Teens hosted their 3rd annual 'All White Party' on Martha's Vineyard in August this summer. Every year the party is a tremendous success. This summer, the party was moved to Lola's, a much larger venue, because it was sold out weeks before the teens arrived in Oaks Bluff. All the teens looked amazing in their all white attire and many asked how it was possible for the Nassau County teens to pull off such an event from miles away.

Close to 400 teens, representing all seven of Jack and Jill Regions, were present and just about every Chapter in the Eastern Region and teens from the Seattle Washington Chapter and from chapters in California had an amazing time.

Returning for the second year in a row, our special guests included the President's daughter, Sasha Obama, her crew of friends, and of course the Secret Service. We partied all night and it was a highlight seeing Sasha Obama enjoying herself.

Even though the party allowed us to meet new Jack and Jill teens from all over, and to have tons of fun reuniting with our old friends, most importantly the funds were raised for the Mary Brennan Inn, a local food pantry, to help children and families in need of food, clothing, and other necessities.

*By Evan Howell  
Teen President  
Nassau County Chapter*



## NEW CASTLE COUNTY: FINANCIAL FORTITUDE EXPLOSION

Noontime approached as we stood at the entrance of Seeds of Greatness Ministries and Bible Church in New Castle, Del., for the *Financial Fortitude Explosion*, hosted by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. New Castle County teens were invited to educate themselves on keys to success in college and in life.

Kamysha Martin, Creative Founder and CEO of the non-profit ART Fusion, elucidated her keys to success: keeping God first, dreaming big, defining success for yourself, and identifying those who helped her achieve her

dreams and goals. After, we were separated from the adults for workshops and introduced to D. Michael Edge, the assistant principal at Hodgson Vocational Technical High School.

Mr. Edge showed us the Common Application, FAFSA, and scholarships as he encouraged younger teens to start preparing for the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests. Next, Stand by Me, a Delaware based financial empowerment group, emphasized the importance of saving money with interest. For example, they demonstrated how \$45,000 could

and would be exhausted by a retired 62-year old woman in less than three years.

The events listed above were just a few of the lessons from the *Financial Fortitude Explosion*.

By Ashleigh Brady, C/O 2017  
Teen Editor  
New Castle County Chapter



## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY TEENS: COMMUNITY SERVICE WITH A SPLASH!

On Aug. 27, the Prince George's County Senior Teens said goodbye to the lazy days of summer and reunited for a fun-filled retreat and pool party. The retreat took place at Belair Bath and Tennis Club in Bowie, MD from 4-8 pm. The day kicked off with a service project to pack school supplies for donation to a local school followed by a quick meeting to finalize the calendar for the program year. Then, the fun began! During the remaining time, teens enjoyed a delicious meal and had an opportunity to relax and socialize by the poolside, take a dip in the pool, and play a few games of basketball. All of these activities were accompanied by the light sound of music nearby. All in all, the teens had fun mingling with their peers, and are very excited for the upcoming program year.



*By Giselle Mathis, Teen Editor  
Prince George's County Chapter*



## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SENIOR TEENS ON THE RUN

On Sunday Sept. 25, the Senior Teens of the Prince George's County Chapter met at the National Harbor for our monthly business meeting. After talking about preparation for the major events in the program year, we then broke into six groups for our scavenger hunt. We had to take a picture of or with people and places around National Harbor and collect specific items. In our groups, we worked together as a team and raced to find as many as 30 items in an hour. The winner of the scavenger hunt, the group that had the most points after meeting at the end of the hour, won a cash prize of \$20 for each person in the group. Although my team didn't win, it was a great way to kick off the 2016-2017 year!

*By Olivia Mitchell, Teen Corresponding Secretary  
Prince George's County Chapter*



## SPIRITS BEHIND THE TRAPPED DOOR

I am a spirited and daring girl who sees things people don't anymore.  
 Every dark corner is alive, breathing for more victims.  
 I hear laughter from every child's face, but I see the sadness consume their eyes.  
 I can't see the souls that wish they had more time for risk,  
 yet I can hear their cries and whispers through the silence.  
 I want to be free from the sharks that invade the depths of the oversize sea.  
 I am a spirited and daring girl who sees things people don't anymore.  
 I pretend the mountains and the hills whimper because no one seeks for the adventure that lies within the  
 caves. I feel as if the world is a piece of paper that has a lot of words on it,  
 but no one can comprehend them.  
 I am afraid I will fall before seeing the sunrise from the highest peak.  
 I howl when I see people drown.  
 I am a spirited and daring girl who sees things people don't anymore.  
 If I were to understand that this world is full of life, then it would be easier to breath.  
 The life I choose is on a runaway train without me; however, that doesn't mean I stop chasing it.  
 I dream of the times that passed by now into memories that only come alive when the books are opened.  
 I am still in a black and white world trying to add color.  
 I hope I will risk it all and someone will be there to save me.  
 I am a spirited and daring girl who sees things people don't anymore.

*By Imani Perry  
 South Jersey Chapter*

## DISCRIMINATION

1. Discrimination one thing that goes on throughout the nations, anything from Asians to Haitians, while the things people say could cause character dismay or defamation, causing altercations through a powerful yet misleading world of Alienation.
2. Let's go back through History, where to me things seemed like a mystery. Like in the South in 63 I couldn't walk after dark or take a leisurely stroll without a hosing in the park. Where I was raised we went to church to worship and turn-up, but in the South four little girls went to church and were blown up.
3. Cynthia Wesley, Denise McNair, Little Addie Mae Collins and Carole Robertson was there. 4 little girls down in history as martyrs or should I say the faces of discrimination is what matters.
4. A prolific piece of history that also found, in addition to the churches, houses burned to the ground. How can this be in a country made for me? Or should I say it's simply a façade channeling a victory of those known to be highly educated, artfully decorated, self-motivated while I'm being discriminated.
5. Let's look at today when I'm walking up the street, a young man like me will be sure to meet Women clutching their bags and holding them a little tighter, or are they saying I'm an animal and simply gonna to bite her? Or every day in my classroom the perception is clear, I'm supposed to be a failure and my families name I'll smear.
6. Even now to wear a hoodie I have to think twice does this mean I can't be warm or have to pay With my life? Trayvon Martin, yea its clear, wrong place, bad time but it's your character they'd smear. Or Michael Brown just like me, simply walking in his hood, but when the media finished he was still no good.
7. So how do we fix the way America has turned? Or should we just "Spark a fire and let it burn?"

*Ivory Carroll Jr.  
 South Jersey Chapter*



## SOUTHERN MARYLAND CHAPTER TEEN RETREAT AND CAROLE ROBERTSON DAY FESTIVITIES

The Southern Maryland Chapter of Jack and Jill, Inc. teens excitedly set aside time over the summer and early in September 2016 to plan our energetic and exciting year. Our teen group, the Admirals and Pearls, participated in our first teen planning retreat in Northern Virginia. We discussed the calendar, our community service projects and our timeline to prepare for the Teen Conference. Our first major activity was celebrating Carol Robertson Day by participating in tailgating and attending the AT&T Nation's Football Classic on Saturday, Sept. 17, at Washington D.C.'s RFK Stadium where for the second consecutive year, Hampton University faced-off against Howard University. It also provided the perfect back drop to remember Carole Robertson and the other children who lost their lives in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Ala., on September 15, 1963. Meant to slow the growing civil rights movement in the South, the killings, instead, fueled protests that helped speed passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Each September, Jack and Jill of America honors Robertson with an activity highlighting the goals of human rights, civil rights and, racial harm that she did not live to enjoy. We are definitely "Unapologetically Black!"

*Reported by Hayli Tucker, Teen Editor*



## SUFFOLK COUNTY TEEN RETREAT

Every September I look forward to our annual Jack and Jill Suffolk County Teen Retreat, despite the fact that the retreat symbolizes the end of summer and the start of the new school year, classes, examinations and deadlines.

This year, however, the 2016 retreat took on a new meaning. Our Suffolk County Teen Jacks and Jills participated in a presentation by Jack and Jill Nassau County Mom and Dad, Donyshia Boston-Hill and Kevin Boston-Hill, which required us to be separated by gender in order to engage in “some real talk.”

I was able to gain insight into what my fellow Jills were feeling about being an African-American teen girl in today’s world. We discussed everything from self-esteem to career options. I was surprised to learn that I was not alone in my feelings, concerns and insecurities. I was also told by my fellow Jacks that their conversation about dealing with the police and authority figures was relevant and insightful.

In addition, during our retreat we filled backpacks with donated school supplies for local children in need, engaged in an oratorical workshop and planned our calendar for the year. I am grateful to our teen advisors for such a great retreat.



*Kiara Starling  
Teen Editor  
Suffolk County Chapter*





# Middle School Musings

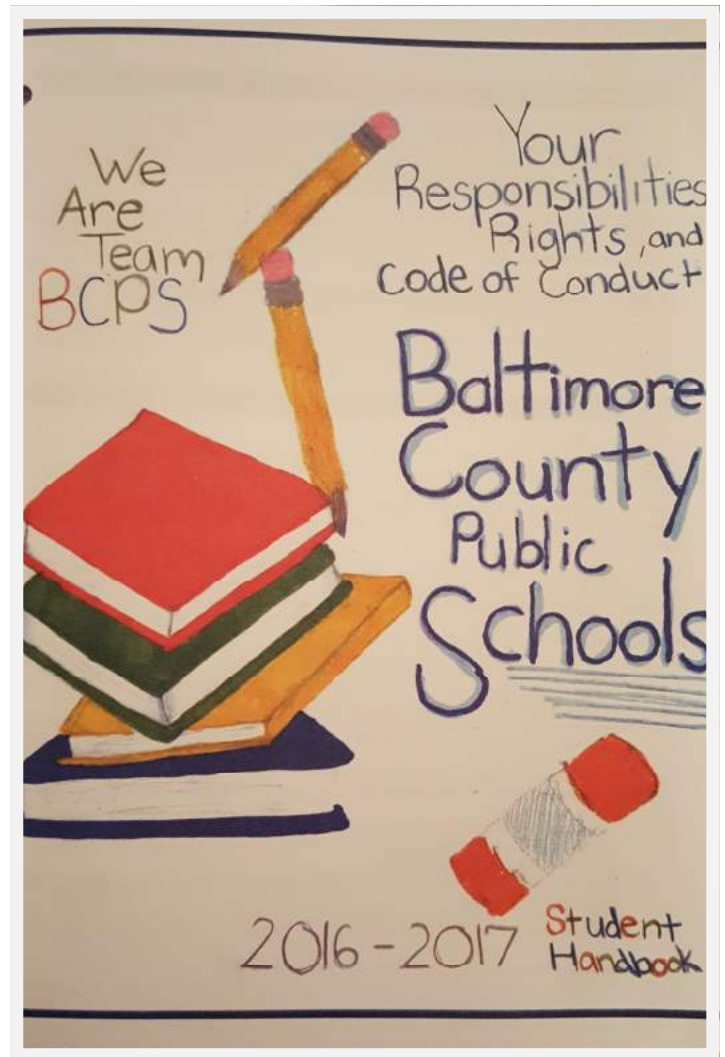
L.I.F.E.

Life is fully exciting  
It gives hope, laughter and kindness.  
I have never understood life,  
Until I thought of this.

If you need a friend,  
Someone will be willing,  
Someone that will enjoy,  
Someone that will love.

Friendship is the most important thing in  
my  
Life,  
Love life,  
So it can love you back.

*Madison Brown  
Arundel Bay Area Chapter*



*Sophia Geddie  
Baltimore County Chapter*

NEW FAMILY

Aunt, Uncle, Cousin, Sister, Brother,  
Grandparent, Mother, Father.  
We are all connected by the holy blood of  
Jesus.

We have received His forgiveness.  
He made us.

We are to deliver His message  
To help our new family members.  
To help them join the good fight-  
The fight against good and evil.

We do it not for the glory or fame,  
But to save them from Eternal Death.

Brothers and Sisters-  
Help the lost be found  
And the blind see.

For we do it all for our Mighty Lord and Sav-  
ior.

*Jurnie Imani Brayboy, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Alexandria-Mt. Vernon Chapter*

## 2016 CAROLE ROBERTSON TOLERANCE CONFERENCE

On Saturday, Sept. 24, our Burlington-Willingboro Chapter of Jack and Jill commemorated the life of Carole Robertson. In honor of Carole Robertson, we learned about what is happening in the world and what we can do to “Be the Change You Wish to see in the World.”

Tolerance is when you can accept something that you do not agree with. In the world, there are things we have to accept. A tough discussion right now is how much progress our county has made since the Civil Rights Movement. In 1963, our country would have never thought of having a gay marriage law passed, or transgender people coming out to the world, or the United States having a Black president.

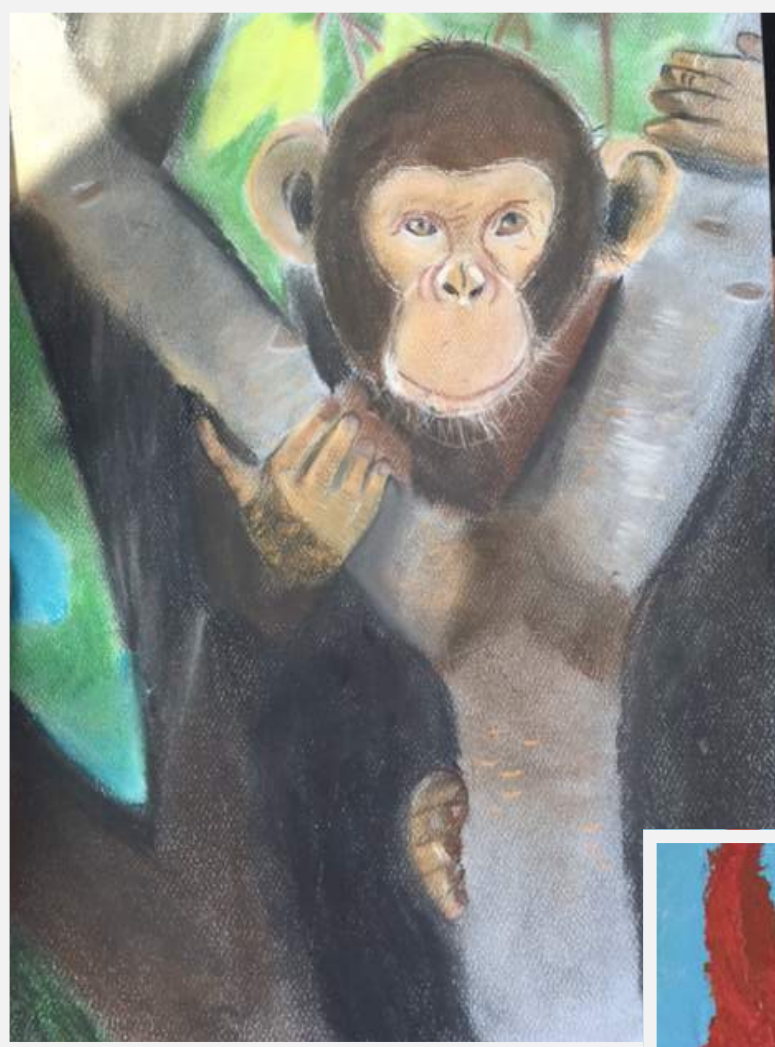
People need to learn to be tolerant of one another and accepting. It's okay to be different. We must show respect for each other. As Jack and Jill of America, Inc. works to educate future leaders, we are learning that we have come a long way in this country, but we still have a long way to go. The world is changing and we have to change with it.

*Submitted by Jada Walker, Grade 8  
Burlington-Willingboro Chapter*



### RUSH HOUR

*Marcus Williford, 7th Grade  
Burlington-Willingboro Chapter*



*Juliade Montagna, 6th Grade  
Central New Jersey Chapter*



This year Jr Teens started Jack & Jill for the year with a meeting to get to know everyone better. Being new to the Jr Teens it was a good idea. It was nice to hear what everyone did over the summer and a fun fact about them. I would recommend this activity in the future. My one recommendation would be to have another activity in smaller groups than just paired up with one other person. Or try a game where you have to learn everyone's name. I think this will be a great year in Jack & Jill

*Kester Crosse, III, Grade 6  
Columbia Maryland Chapter*



## WHAT "BLACK LIVES MATTER" MEANS TO ME

Black Lives Matter everywhere and all the time; black lives don't deserve to be taken. Black Lives Matter to me because of who I am and who I will be in the future — a black adult male. I think the reason police sometimes feel the need to use their weapons or use forceful actions when it is not necessary is because of the stereotypes that are communicated about black people. The police officers that are doing these things usually get no punishment aside from a paid suspension. This is basically a paid vacation for killing another person. The officers most likely feel untouchable whenever things

like this happen because so far nothing has happened. As a community, we need to come together and fix the reason why a police officer would even want to use their weapon as a first resort.

I believe and hope by the time I am an adult the problems that we are having with police brutality will have gone away almost fully, but that is just a dream. For now I will try to live my life as safe as I can. There are many people in my life that have helped me understand how to stay safe if I ever get into a situation with a police officer or anyone else like my parents, uncles, grandparents, family, friends and even police themselves who visited my age group in the Jack and Jill program.

I got the opportunity to speak with one officer and ask questions. He was open to talk with me and the rest of the kids in my group. So I guess that shows you that not all cops are bad like the ones we see on the news, because they can be very helpful. In the future I hope to have fewer of these moments because it gives a bad reputation for the people and cops that do nothing wrong. For now all we can do is hope.

*Alex Brown  
Columbia Maryland Chapter*



MY GIFT FROM GOD

My gift from God is writing.  
I find the idea exciting.  
I can live in a world that is my own.  
And it's a good activity for being alone.  
I can use writing to inform  
People of things that cause a reform.  
Of a being that is all good.  
And can make anyone feel understood.  
The being I am talking of is the Lord.  
And into his kingdom, faith is the password.  
And I will use my power as he would like.  
To inform children and adults alike.  
Now that there is nothing left to do.  
The only thing I have to say is, Thank you!

By Jefferson Cooper, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Chester County Chapter

Jack



Jack

By Nina Gil

Jill



Jill

By Nina Gilbert

By Nina Gilbert  
Chester County Chapter



GREATER ESSEX COUNTY  
CHAPTER MOVIE UNDER THE  
STARS

The Jr. Teens kicked off the program year with a “Movie under the Stars” themed meet and greet. The event was a structured social activity. The Jr. Teens connected and rekindled as they were introduced to an initiative that aims to cultivate their bonding. We call it “My Brother’s and My Sister’s Keeper. “



TIMID BUT CONFIDENT

A confident woman enjoys  
Life without worries  
Light and free  
Tries new things  
And does not stop  
Running to the finish line

But a timid woman carries  
A heavy load  
Like an over-stuffed grocery bag  
Worries and stress  
Fill her brain  
Fear her closest friend  
Always accompanies her  
As she stumbles  
Across the finish line

The confident woman  
Discovers new doorways  
Presents herself to the world  
Nothing is impossible  
To her everything has hope  
And her ride through life  
With the windows open  
Is smooth and scenic

While the timid woman,  
trapped in a dark forest  
Is always on the watch  
Never sure of the outcome  
Taking the safest way out

The confident woman  
Flies through the air  
Soaring on the wind  
Enjoying the breeze  
Nothing brings her down  
An obstacle  
A new opportunity  
She never stops  
Trying  
Living life like a musical  
A sold out show

The timid woman never  
Glides through the air  
For every mile of her life  
A six-foot wall blocks her way  
Unsure how to get around  
Until someone lends her a hand  
Always searching for  
Someone to pick up

Her confidence  
And help her fly

But we are neither  
Confident  
Nor timid  
We are both  
One morning you fly  
But the next you hide  
Confidence and diffidence  
Are two sides of the same face

*Ananya Alleyne, 7th grade  
Greater Hartford Chapter*

## THE RING

“Marty, don’t you dare throw out my roller skates!” Sheila called from the kitchen.

He chuckled and packed her skates into a box, “Dear, they’re fifty years old.”

“Don’t touch them. They are my 1969 roller derby . . .”

“Championship winning skates, I know,” Marty finished in an exhausted huff. He quickly taped up the box and pushed it into the “throw out” pile, hoping that his wife wouldn’t notice that they were missing until after the garbage truck came and put them out of their misery.

The old man gripped on the arms of his rocking chair, the wood splintering his hands. He pressed his lips together in anticipation of the pain that would shoot through his body the second he put pressure on his knees. After he had managed to get up, he hobbled over to the next pile of boxes to sift through.

Marty had made his way through all of his daughter’s toys from the early 70s. He was halfway through her disco phase, when he saw a something jutting from behind her KC and the Sunshine Band poster. At first, he didn’t recognize it. After all, he

hadn’t seen it in over forty years. But once he had gotten a better look, it brought back memories like the “Ghost of Christmas Past.”

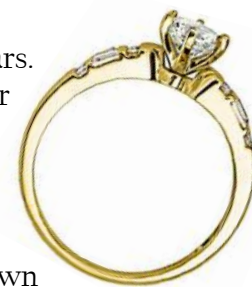
The feeling of excitement rose in his chest as he leaned down and moved the poster to the side. There it was. All those years of searching were finally worthwhile. He scooped it up between his fingers. It’s iridescent gold band glistening against the sun streaming in from the skylight overhead. It’s diamond still as magnificent as ever.

“Honey!” Marty called.

“You didn’t throw them out, did you?” Sheila said automatically, still worried about her roller skates.

“No, honey, come here.”

He took a deep breath and smiled, preparing to propose to his bride once again as he did so many years ago.



*Jenna Smith, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Greater Union County Chapter*

## LASAGNA

When I visualize lasagna, I envision a hot casserole pan exuding rich ricotta cheese and mozzarella with onyx colored burnt spots. Under the first blanket of cheese, there is a spaghetti textured noodle, saturated in water and oil. Then, below the noodle, there is ground beef and tomato sauce. The two ingredients work in unison to magnify their strengths and fortify their weaknesses. This is an amazing display of the sweet and salty combination. The noodle is still impregnated with the dripping oil of the beef and mozzarella cheese. The marinara in the bottom of the casserole looks like the color of dark oak ground beef, mixed with a golden coating of the remains of oil.

Watching the marinara drip down the layers of food is like watching rain fall down to the bottom of your windowsill. This particular tower of Italian goodness repeats twice. I enjoy this oil infused totem pole mixed together so I can surprise my mouth for what awaits me. This experience is greatly enhanced by the atmosphere of a dimly lit kitchen with the clock ticking and the fire on a mere, medium low. The sound of the knife, fork, and plate clashing together as if it was a fight to the death, slowly drains me of my pain and anxiety. I conclude my meal with a sigh of relief and happiness for what I have just eaten. I have eaten Lasagna.

Lasagna is my favorite home

cooked meal, sprinkled with a dash of freshly ground black peppercorn and best served on a cold winter’s night with a side of steamed jasmine rice. It is a spectacular potpourri of my favorite foods in one dish – pasta, cheese and meat sauce – and a family recipe my mother’s made since she was 14 years old.

*Leopold M. Dorilas, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Greater Union County Chapter*

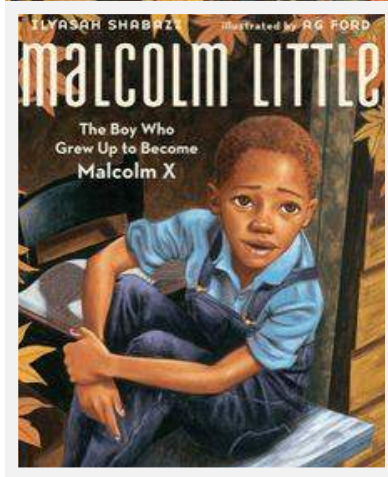
Note: This essay was a winner at the 2016 International Youth Food Culture Contest; see [www.youth-food.org](http://www.youth-food.org).

A REVIEW OF MALCOLM LITTLE

I recently read “Malcolm Little” by Ilyasah Shabazz. This book was based on the famous activist and leader named Malcolm Little. He grew up to become one of America’s most influential leaders that we call Malcolm X.

The major conflict in the story was that Malcolm had to be strong, be his own person and be self-reliant. For example, somebody burned his family’s house down when he was 4 years old. As a result, Malcolm’s dad Earl purchased six acres of land and rebuilt their house in a field in Lansing, Michigan.

In addition, Malcolm got taken away from his mom. The local offi-



cial took him away from his mom because when his dad died, his mom could not take care of her 7 kids + Malcolm. The Great depression was going on as well. There-

fore, Malcolm went to live with his mom and dad’s friends who lived near their home.

Lastly, his father got killed by the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK did not believe that African Americans should have equal rights. This experience really made Malcom grow up to overcome many obstacles in his life and remain strong. He ran for class president to stand for equal rights in his classroom.

*Kyle Cousins, 7th Grade  
Mid-Hudson Valley Chapter*

**GOODBYE ELEMENTARY**

Graduating Elementary school is **Magnificent**.  
It's like swimming with sharks and dolphins  
Like going skydiving on a daily basis

Graduating Elementary school is **Shocking**.  
Like figuring out you have lots of spiders in your bed  
Like figuring out you're having a baby brother

Graduating Elementary school is **Exciting**.  
Like beating the opponent in Clash Royal  
Like flying to outer space

Graduating Elementary school is **Frightening**.  
Like losing your phone and never seeing it again  
Like getting in a humongous car crash

Graduating Elementary school is **Sad**.  
Like having your lollipop stolen by your teacher  
Am I going to be ready for middle school?

Graduating Elementary school can be many emotions  
The excitement of experiencing new things  
And the shock of how different it is  
Goodbye Elementary, and hello Middle school!

**CONFIDENT**

Smells like fresh cookies  
Tastes like a well done burger  
Sounds like a rehearsed marching band  
Feels like you're on top of the world  
Feels like you could do anything  
Feels like you're unstoppable  
Confident

*Both poems by Celina St. Vil, 6th Grade  
Mid-Hudson Valley Chapter*

## THE SILENT LEAVES

The black and white backgrounds fill the page  
Straight stripes run through the body  
Shaped to perfection  
Breathtaking to the Earth  
Quiet and peaceful  
Light shows within each separate leaf  
Bundled tightly with no differences  
Elegant and graceful  
Smooth and soft  
But one's different  
Not green but blue,  
Not straight but curved  
Not humorless but blissful

*By Amira Shakur, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Montgomery County (PA) Chapter*



## WALK AWAY

Walk away from echoing voices of fear that shadow your soul  
Start running and leave the shadow behind  
Cradle the only thing that's left

The fear that you will die before the end of time  
Clenching the silky rose that your palms touched once  
Let it explode like your heart

Sing songs of sorrow and let the rose form liquid  
As the blood soaks into the flower, kiss the remains of it  
Watch as the petals disintegrate and red takes over its lifeless body

Listen to dark days of wonder  
Let the equality struggle reach you  
Remember this many voices make a difference

Lift your legs  
Leave your reality behind  
Soar higher and fly  
Break free from the wind

Your future awaits in the clouds

*By Amira Shakur, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Montgomery County (PA) Chapter*



## JOSHUA AND NISA

Joshua Allen (National Harbor) and Nisa Ellis (Prince George's County) who is the Great-niece of the late Carole Robertson took a brief moment at school to pose for the camera. Joshua and Nisa, who are now in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, have known each other since 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Joshua and his family participated in the "Remembering Carole" webinar held on Sept. 20. Imagine the surprise on Joshua's face when he heard his fellow classmate, Nisa, on the webinar. He was very happy and it was an educational experience for him that he will never forget.

*Joshua Allen, 7th Grade  
National Harbor Chapter*



## MY NAME

People say my name is common, two of the most common words;  
 People think my name is boring like a tree, or a squirrel, or some birds;  
     But I know that my name is special, at least it is to me;  
     That is why I'm proud of my name, my name is Jackson Lee;  
 My mom believes my name means strength, the strongest of all kind;  
 I believe my name means adventure, the adventure I will find;  
     But I think that I'll make my name, in very special ways;  
     It's special to me, and it better be, for I'll have it all my days;  
 I think my name means the future, the future that lies ahead;  
     Will I spend it to the fullest, or just laying around in bed?  
 However, I know my name is great, and I think that that's the key;  
     For my name is Jackson, and my name just means me.

*By Jackson Lee, 6th Grade  
North Jersey Chapter*

## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY JR. TEEN RETREAT @ CAMP WABANNA

On Sept. 10-11, I attended my first Jr. Teen Retreat at Camp Wabanna. This was also the first Jack and Jill age group activity for the year, and it was awesome! I'll admit, I was a little scared at first because I didn't know what to expect. But once I got there and saw many familiar faces, I knew this was going to be a good time.

Day 1 included non-stop fun! After we arrived and got our rooms set up, we were put into teams and competed in outdoor relay games. This was our ice-breaker activity, and it helped us get to know each other better. Afterwards, we had our first meal in the dining hall. It was cool because we got to eat with other youth groups who were at Camp Wabanna for the weekend. The food wasn't too bad either. The rest of the afternoon included a workshop on setting goals, a little free-time fun, and dinner. Later that evening we had a bonfire. This was the event everyone looked forward to the most. We took our flashlights down a dark trail to the bonfire area. Moms roasted marshmallows for s'mores, while the kids made a huge circle and played the telephone booth game. The message we needed to get through was, "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for any-

thing." Did we get the final message right? Not even close! The final message out of the telephone booth was ... Pokemon. So much for our listening skills. The night ended with a game party with music, food, and a nail station for the girls. Day 2 included breakfast, morning meditation, and a scavenger hunt. We concluded the retreat with awards and recognition.

Overall, Camp Wabanna was a great way to kick-off our activities for the year. Every Jr. Teen should make sure they attend next year's retreat. Remember, this is just a snapshot of all the fun we had. And what happens at Camp Wabanna, stays at Camp Wabanna! Next up, the Jr. Teen Middle School Bash.

*By Matthew Crittenden, Jr. Roving Reporter  
Prince George's County Chapter*



POETRY IN MOTION

APRIL RAIN SONG

Let the rain hit you  
Let the rain beat upon your head  
with powerful drops  
Let the rain make you a storm  
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk  
The rain makes running pools in the gutter  
The rain knocks you to sleep on your roof at  
night  
And I love the rain

WINTER

Frogs burrow the mud  
Snails bury themselves  
And I air my quilts  
Preparing for the cold  
  
Dogs grow more hair  
Mothers make oatmeal  
And little boys and girls  
Take father johns medicine  
  
Bears store fat  
Chipmunks gather nuts  
And I collect books  
For the coming winter



*By Samuel Miller, age 13, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Prince William County Chapter*

## THE REASON I LIKE ICE CREAM

(an homage to Nikki Giovanni's poem  
"The Reason I Like Chocolate")

The reason I like ice cream  
is I can choose from many toppings or scoops  
and nobody tells me what the limit is

I especially like piano  
'cause I can go into a whole different world while performing  
or use my heart to play each key

I like to play soccer sometimes  
'cause everybody says "It's your thing that you love to do"

and I like softball too  
for all those reasons  
but mostly 'cause they just make me  
feel confident about myself

and I really like to have confidence

By Victoria Cowens  
Rochester Chapter



## WHY EVERY VOTE IMPACTS AN ELECTION

We all have some sort of opinion on this year's presidential election, but it all comes down to how you act on that opinion. Many citizens do vote but we should not have to say that, what we need is for EVERYONE to vote. Just take a second to realize that if you don't vote you could be helping the candidate you don't support.

If you support Hillary Clinton then you should go vote for her. President Obama said if you stay home and not vote then that's a vote for Donald Trump.

Your vote could make the difference. This year the election is more heated than ever. Some people are die hard Trump fans or die hard Clinton fans. What you need to know is that it's your duty as a citizen to vote and that not doing so is failing your country. If the African American and Latino community are not getting registered to vote, than that politician you fear is likely to win.

So come out and vote this year and put your imprint on the election.

Malcolm Solan, 8th Grade  
Rockland-Orange Chapter



NOTE: Jack and Jill of America, Inc., is a nonpartisan organization and we do not advocate for any particular candidate. The views expressed in this article belong solely to the author and do not reflect the position of Jack and Jill of America, Inc.





# Kiddie Corner



*By Selah Brashear  
Arundel Bay Area Chapter*



*Campbell Herbert, Pre-K  
Alexandria-Mt. Vernon Chapter*



*Lincoln Herbert, Pre-K  
Alexandria-Mt. Vernon Chapter*

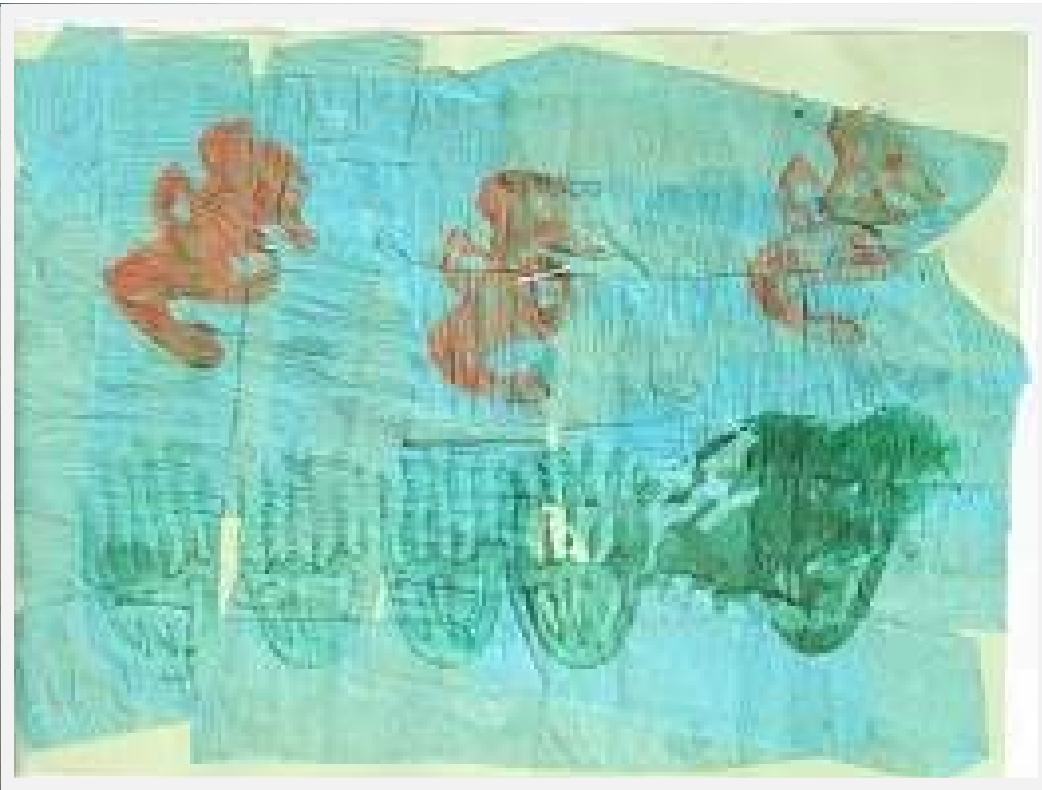


*Taylor Moore, Age 5  
Alexandria-Mt. Vernon Chapter*

## THE ALEXANDRIA-MOUNT VERNON CHAPTER VISITED GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON ESTATE

The Emeralds (ages 5-9) of the Alexandria-Mount Vernon Chapter visited George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. The children learned about our first President's life through the lens of the enslaved people he owned. The visit began with a walk through the visitor's center and continued with a guided tour of the Estate that included the slaves' quarters and the gardens they maintained. During the tour, the Emeralds learned about what life was like for enslaved people to include the clothing they wore and typical diet of cornmeal and salted fish. Through narration, they also learned that slaves (children included) were required to work from dawn to dusk. The tour also included a walk through the mansion where the Emeralds got to see where George Washington entertained his guests, slept, worked, and the bed on which he ultimately passed away. The tour ended on the lawn with a magnificent view of the Potomac River. The trip to Mount Vernon provided an opportunity for the Emeralds to see a piece of American history from the perspective of our enslaved ancestors. The Emeralds were exposed to an aspect of African American history and heritage that is so important to know and understand.





**JELLY FISH &  
SEA HORSES**

*Jacob Barnes, Age 4  
Baltimore Chapter*

**LIVING IN THE CITY:  
A GIRL'S VIEW OF  
BALTIMORE**

*Campbell Anderson, Age 8  
Baltimore Chapter*



### IN THE WINTER TIME

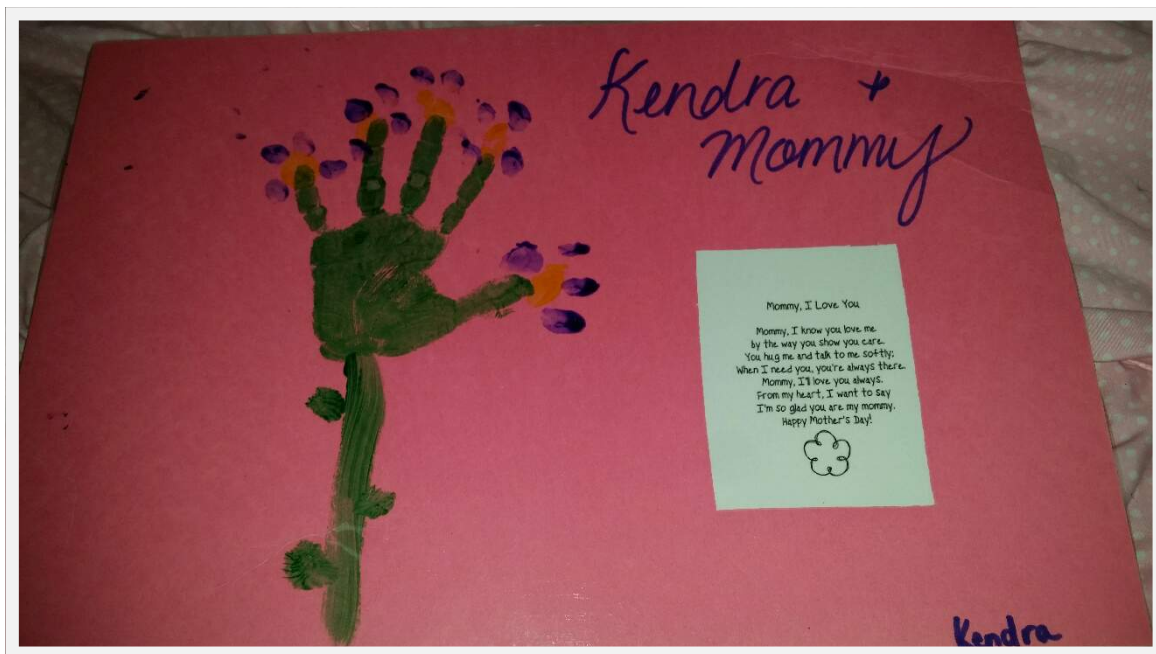
Hard wind blowing on all living things  
Flowers dying  
Sigh  
Trees giving up  
They can't make leaves anymore  
Sigh  
The must get ready for the fast falling snow  
All the seeds have fallen from every flower  
To make more flowers grow soon  
Waiting for trees and flowers  
Waiting again for summer

*Campbell Anderson, Age 8  
Baltimore Chapter*

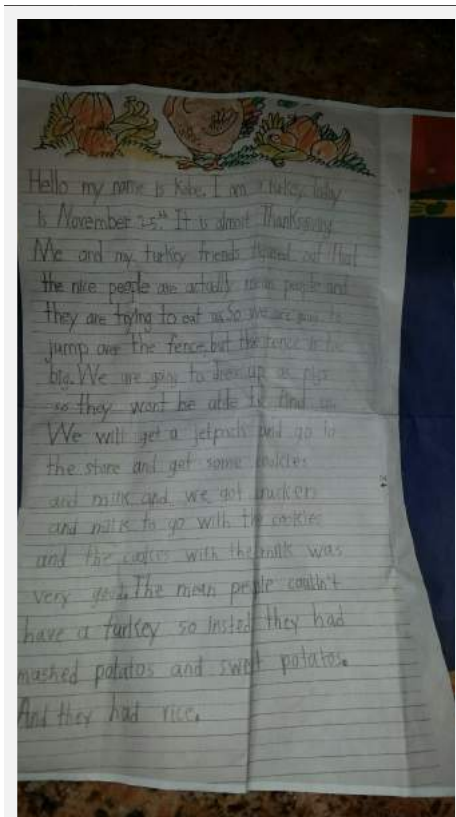
### ENEMIES CAN'T WIN

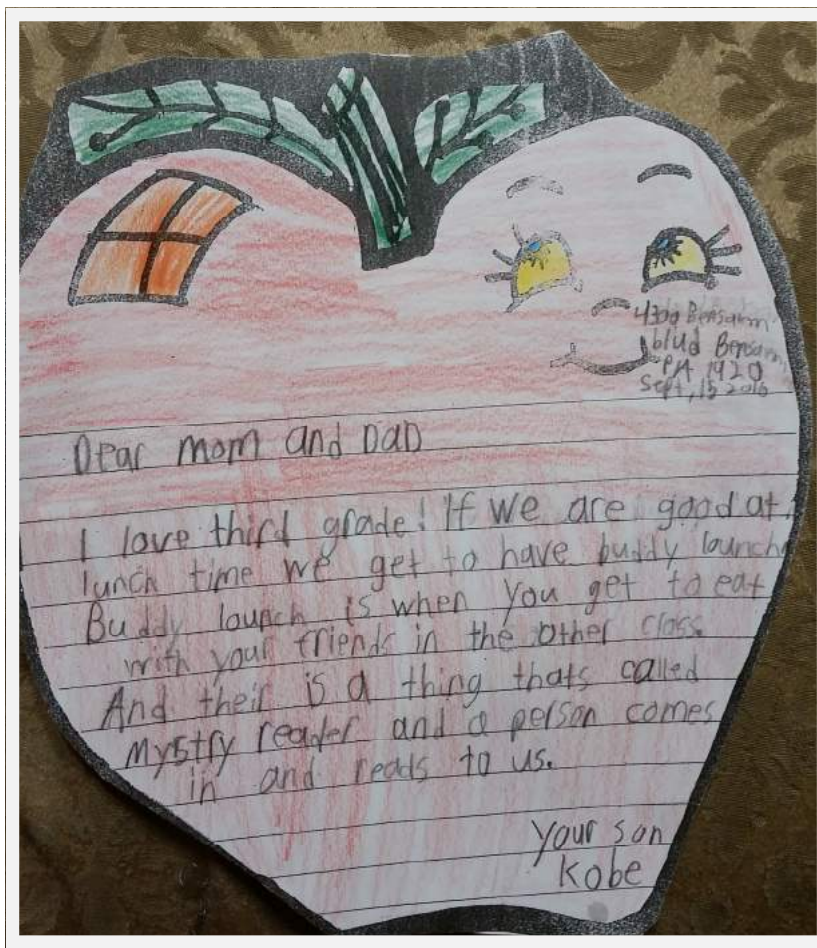
Enemies can hurt you  
They can make you cry  
It can make you feel like you are all on your own  
I know what it feels like  
It's what I'm going through right now  
So just ignore  
What enemies do to you  
And smile  
They will try to bring you down  
They will try to make you frown  
But I know that there is strength in you  
Let it bloom  
Let it bloom!  
Live your life your own way  
It doesn't matter what they say  
Be you and don't let anyone bring you down  
Live your life your way  
Your own way  
Be the person you want to be  
And let the whole world see  
All you can be is you.

*By Dana Thompson, Grade 4  
Baltimore Chapter*



Kendra King, Kindergarten  
Bucks County Chapter





Koebe King, Kindergarten  
Bucks County Chapter



Tia Gaskins, 3rd Grade  
Bucks County Chapter





Tia Gaskins, 3rd Grade  
Bucks County Chapter



Alessandra Moore, 4th Grade  
Bucks County Chapter

Poem read at Bucks County 2016 – Black Family Day

### I AM THE BLACK CHILD

I am special, ridicule cannot sway me  
I am strong, obstacles cannot stop me  
I hold my head high, proudly proclaiming my uniqueness  
I hold my pace, continuing forward through adversity  
I am proud of my culture and my heritage  
I am confident that I can achieve my every goal  
I am becoming all that I can be  
I am the black child, I am a child of God

By Mychal Wynn





Jaden Moton, 2nd Grade  
Central New Jersey Chapter



MacKenzie Daly, 3rd Grade  
Central New Jersey Chapter



Jordan Moton, 2nd Grade  
Central New Jersey Chapter



Mark Moton, Jr., 5th Grade  
Central New Jersey Chapter



Donald Williams  
Chester County Chapter



Mason Whitley age 6, Kindergarten  
National Harbor Chapter



Madison Gresham, Kindergarten  
National Harbor Chapter

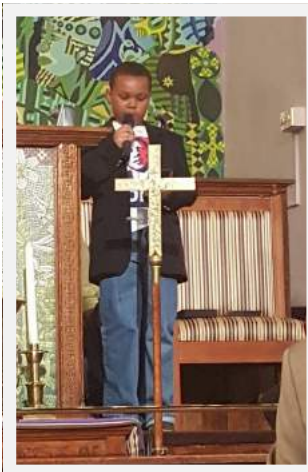
## WHAT “BLACK LIVES MATTER” MEANS TO ME

Black Lives Matter because we are human beings. People are killing other people for no apparent reason. There have been shootings in Dallas, Ferguson, and Baltimore, which is near my home. To me Black Lives Matter means that a change needs to come because no one should have their loved ones taken away from them or hurt when it could have been prevented.

By McKenna Brown  
Columbia Maryland Chapter

## YOUNG PREACHER

Antonio Hardy, age 9, of the Columbia Maryland Chapter performing the welcome at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church. The oldest African American church in Baltimore, Md. Antonio writes, “I want to be a preacher or public speaker and this helped me practice my gift. I was very nervous but I conquered my fear.”



## MUSIC IS MAGIC!

On Feb. 14, I attended a Peabody Concert at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab. I have been a student at the Johns Hopkins Peabody Preparatory for five years (since I was 4), so when my parents told me that the concert would be a celebration of black musicians and their music, I was very excited! My favorite performance was when a pianist played the piano and performed a song that he wrote for his brother. I also enjoyed listening to a jazz musician who performed “Giant Steps”, a song written by John Coltrane. The music was inspiring and my five year old brother Geordan enjoyed himself too! I am thankful that I was



able to attend the event with my family and Jack & Jill friends. The Peabody musicians were amazing and the concert was unforgettable!

Gabrielle Ward, Age 9  
Columbia, Maryland Chapter

## MY BLACK LIFE MATTERS



When my mom told me about the black lives Matter rally, I didn't know what to expect. We started making posters and she explained to me why what we were doing was so important. She told me that someone had gotten hurt by police because they were black.

It made me sad. I didn't understand why everyone can't be equal and treated the same by police. My mom also told me about people who were working with a group called “Black Lives Matter”. They wanted to make a difference and help people.

When my mom and I got to the rally, I saw a lot of different people there; black, white, and Asian. There were adults and kids. We all had signs that said *Black Lives Matter*. My sign said, *Everyone's Life Matters*. I was really surprised that people were honking and waving at me. They all agreed with the signs and supported us. It made me feel proud to be a black boy.

I really learned a lot and had a great experience. I really hope that things change and everybody's life matters soon.

By Jayden Hernandez, Age 8  
Columbia Maryland Chapter

## TRACY REESE, THE STELLAR FASHION DESIGNER

Who is Tracy Reese you might ask? She is an African-American fashion designer who has made many contributions. Reese was inspired by her family because her family would compete in contests to sew and make their own clothing. Her mother enrolled her and her sisters in enrichment programs at the city's art museum. Later, she attended Cass Technical HS, which focused on academics and arts. One of her teachers encouraged her to apply for a scholarship at a summer program at New York City's Parsons School of Design.

In 1984, Reese started working as an apprentice for a French designer. Reese's hard work paid off in the 1990s and she got her own label called Tracy Reese for Magaschoni. In 1995, she started working with The Limited to design sportswear clothing. This helped her gain funds for her new label called Tracy Reese Meridian.

With determination and hard work in 2004, she launched her own company, called Plenty Home. This company sells curtains and bedding. One of the most significant moments in her career was when First Lady Michele Obama wore one of her dresses at the 2013 Democratic National Convention.

Tracy Reese mentors young fashion designers. I am inspired by her designs, and one day hope to wear her dresses.

*By Reagan Chelsea Squire, Age 9  
New Castle County Chapter*



*Tracy Reese*



*First Lady Michelle Obama at the 2013 Democratic National Convention, wearing a Tracy Reese design.*

## PUDDLES

One day there was a dog named Puddles, her owner's name was Mr. Marvin. Mr. Marvin lived in Denver, Colorado. Puddles is a very small dog. The reason why Puddles is named Puddles is because she loves walking in puddles and jumping in puddles.

One day, Puddles was home alone, but before Mr. Marvin left he said, "Do not open the cabinets". Puddles was wondering, "what is in the cabinets"? As soon as Mr. Marvin left, Puddles barked, "home alone!!".

Puddles barked so hard the other dogs heard in the neighborhood, but her BFFF (Best Dog Friend Forever) came to the front door, so she let Mason in. "Hello Mason" said Puddles. "I overheard your owner said something about not go-

ing in the cabinet", said Mason. Before asking, Mason ran over to the cabinet then they saw something beautiful. "Treats!!!" said Mason. Then they all started to eat up.

*By Brisco Anderson, 5th Grade  
North Jersey Chapter*



Brenda Oliver, 5th Grade  
North Jersey Chapter



MaKayla Wakefield, 5th Grade  
North Jersey Chapter

## MALCOLM X

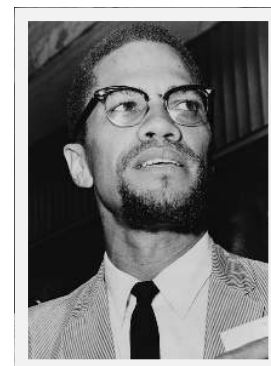
I became interested in Malcolm X when I saw him in the movie Selma. So, I decided to stage a picture of him for my MLK day Instagram. MLK Instagram is when you take a picture related to Black History Month and make it look like it is on Instagram. My class did this project in the month of February. Get ready to learn facts about this Civil Rights Activist.

Malcolm X was a human rights and civil rights activist. He was born with the name Malcolm Little, on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska. However, he changed his name to Malcolm X because he wanted to reject his slave

name. After 8th grade Malcolm X dropped out of school and started a life of crime. Crime soon put him into jail for 6 years. After jail he thought of blacks and whites in a different way, and tried to be less violent, like Martin Luther King Jr. His life was cut short when he was assassinated on February 21, 1965 in New York City.

Malcolm X is a person who I look up to.

Bryce Anderson, 5th Grade  
North Jersey Chapter



References: [history.com](https://www.history.com)



**MY FISH  
(WATERCOLOR AND  
TEXTURE)**

*Bria Parker, Kindergarten  
Prince George's County Chapter*



**CHALKBOARD DRAWING OF  
MOMMY**

*Miles Haynes, 4th Grade  
Prince George's County Chapter*

Talented  
Artistic  
Nobel  
Nice  
Energetic

Really funny ... and he's my twin brother.  
Can you guess which one he is? (Hint... he's  
wearing my favorite color Red) .

*Tyler Dean Riobe-Taylor  
Age 5, 1st Grade  
Rockland Orange Chapter*