

Cynthia Yuxin Huang, 9,  
Oakton, Sunrise Valley  
Elementary, grade 4,  
Ms. Jennifer Gualtieri

# Oak Hill ♦ Herndon CONNECTION



## Children's Connection 2015

DECEMBER 30, 2015 - JANUARY 5, 2016

ONLINE AT [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# RESTON'S 3RD ANNUAL CAMP EXPO IS BIGGER & BETTER THAN EVER!

## Reston Camp Expo

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016

Reston Community Center • 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston, VA

Don't miss your chance to learn about hundreds of Reston-area summer camps – all in one place! Bring the whole family out for a fun and informative morning of snacks, music, games, prizes and camp resources:

- **Fingerprinting**  
Protect your child by visiting the Sheriff's Office free Child Fingerprinting and ID table.
- **Win a FREE Week of Camp**  
Win amazing door prizes including a free week of camp or discounted registration fees.
- **Activities for the Kids**  
Enjoy the "camp experience" with four rooms full of hands-on kids games and crafts.
- **Scholarships**  
Discover camp scholarship opportunities.
- **Summer Employment**  
Find out about summer camp employment and volunteer opportunities.
- **Learn More**  
Learn camp information like registration dates, requirements, locations, and costs while meeting camp directors and staff members.

**NEW**



### The event will feature more than a dozen camp providers including:

Boy Scouts of America, Cornerstones, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, Fairfax County Office for Children/SACC, Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax County Public Schools, Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE), Rec-PAC, RecQuest, Reston Association, Reston Community Center, Reston Regional Library, YMCA Fairfax County Reston, and more!

*This event has been coordinated by Serving Reston Youth, a community initiative comprised of local non-profit organizations and Fairfax County government agencies.*

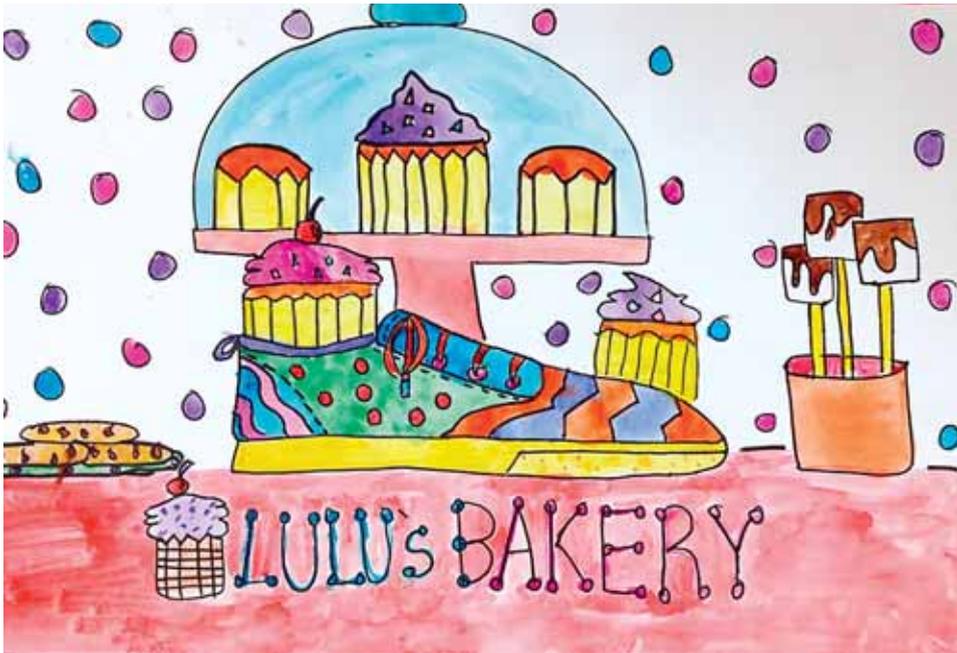


[www.restoncommunitycenter.com](http://www.restoncommunitycenter.com)

2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston VA 20191  
To request reasonable ADA accommodations,  
call 703-476-4500, TTY 711.



# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Dyanela Rivarola, Dranesville Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Anne Nagy



Leah Wu, 7, Herndon, Oak Hill Elementary, grade 2

## Welcome

**D**ear Readers: This week, the Oak Hill/Herndon Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students. We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

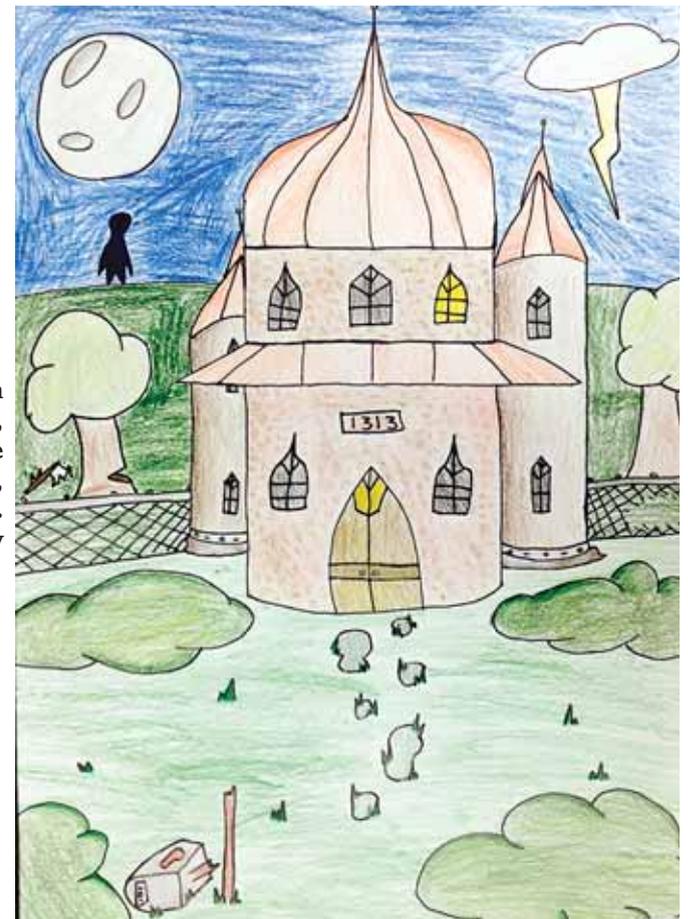
We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2016 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Connection.

Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

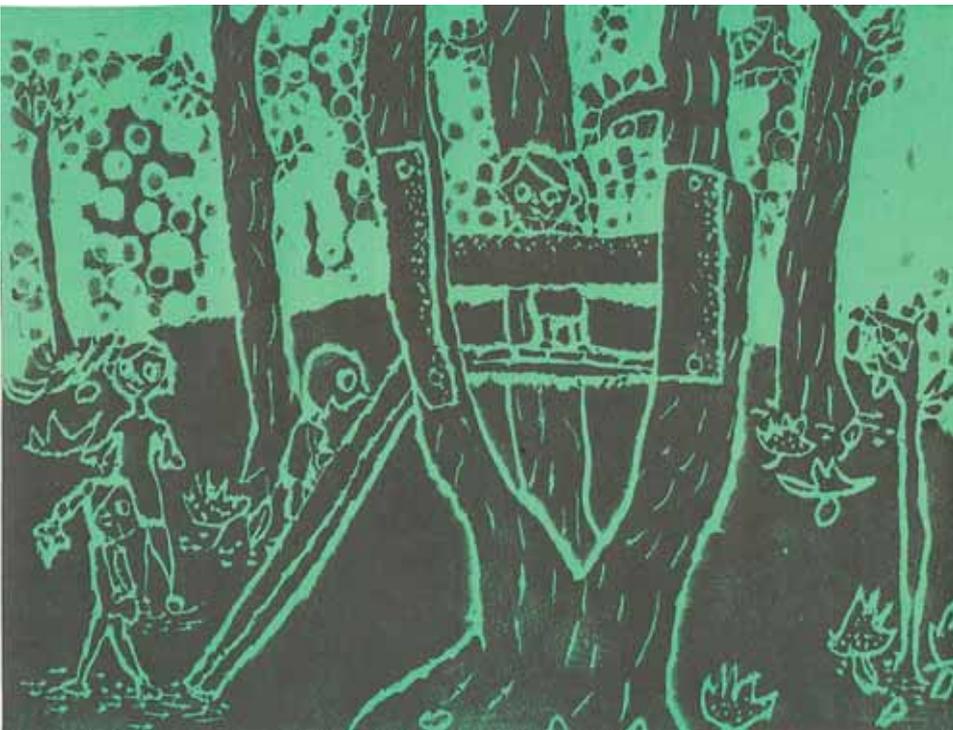
The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to [north@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:north@connectionnewspapers.com), but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC



Angelena Agustin, Dranesville Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Anne Nagy



Lillian Duan, 7, Crossfield Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Clarke, "Tree House"



Katie Wang, 9, Floris Elementary, grade 4, Ms. Molitor

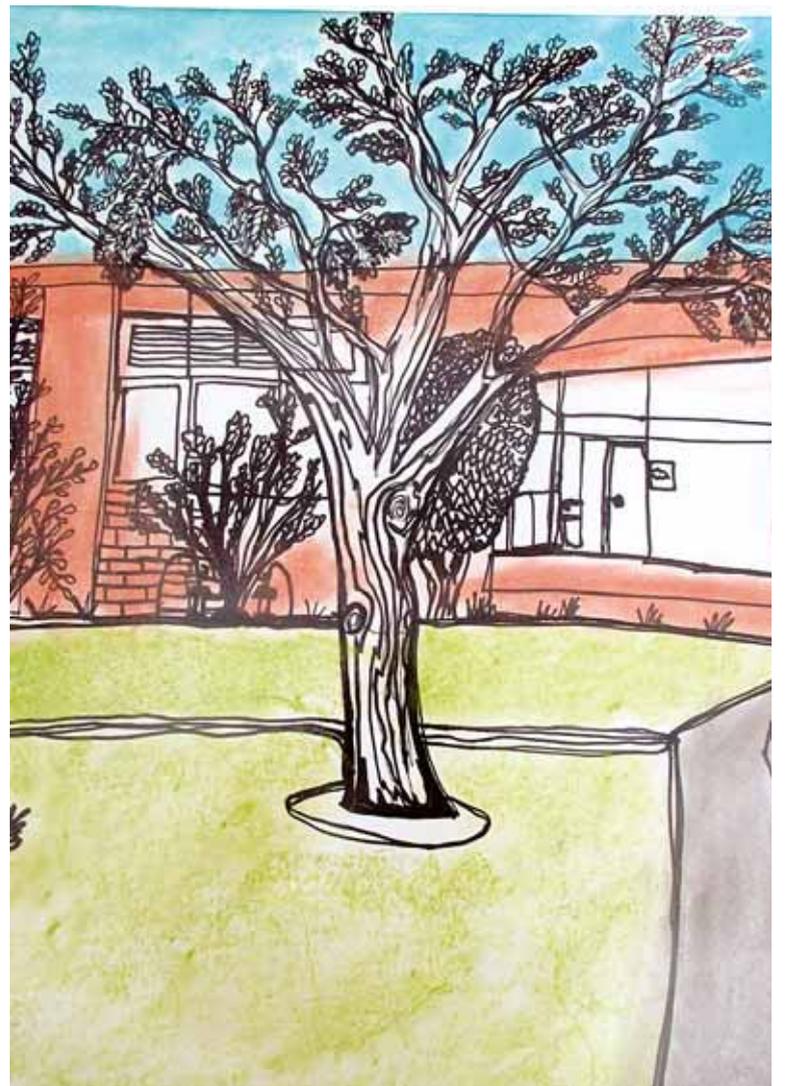
# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



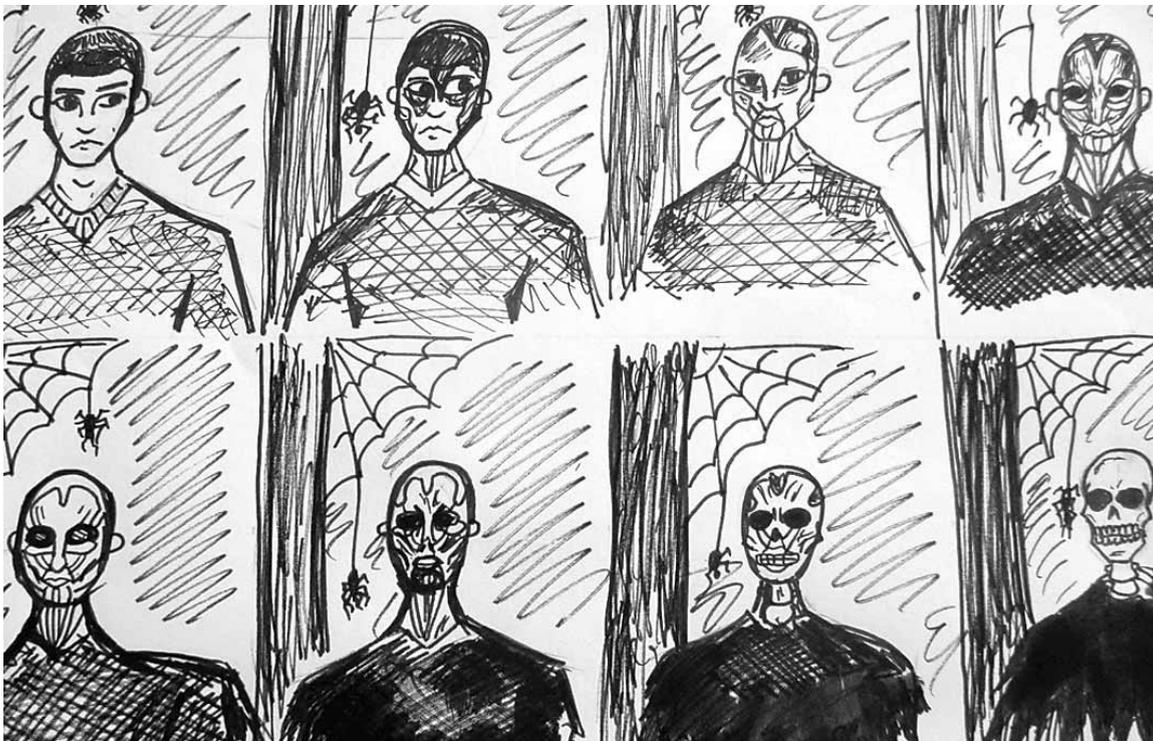
**CARSON MIDDLE ARTWORK**  
**Adryana Soto, Carson Middle School,**  
**grade 8, Ms. Cali Couch**



**Justin Kim, Carson Middle School, grade**  
**8, Ms. Cali Couch**



**Chanagun Saengsuriyothai, Carson Middle School,**  
**grade 7, Ms. Ruth Fulpahs**



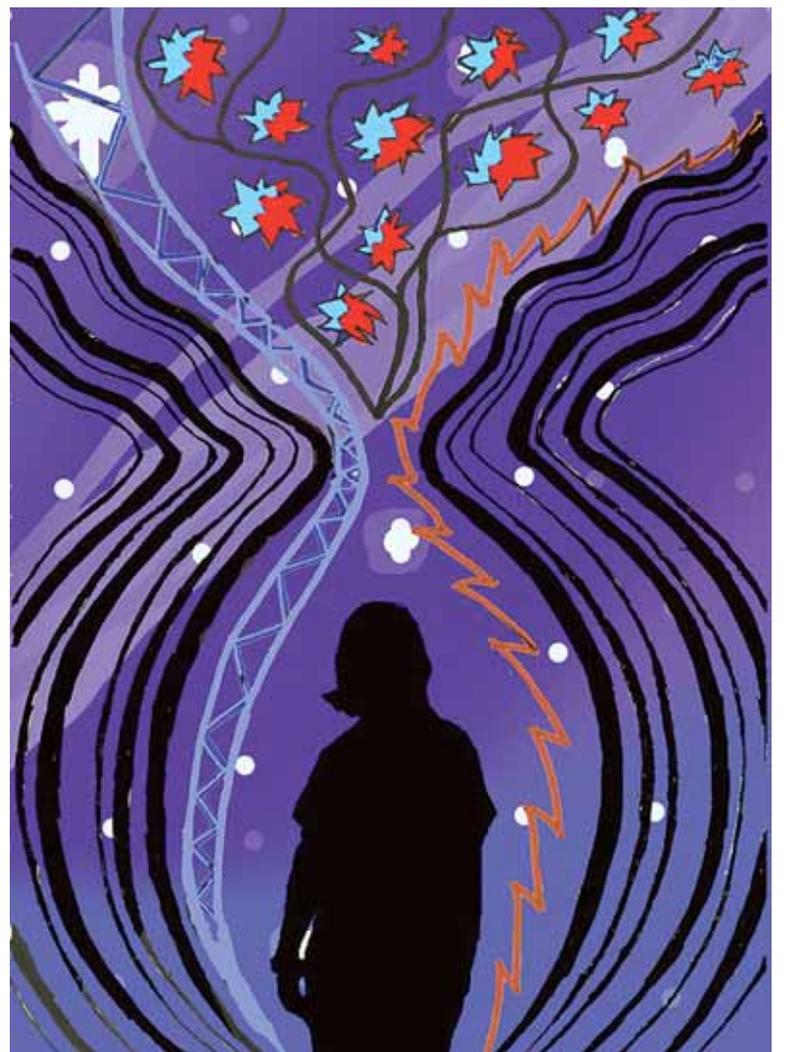
**Aaron MacDonald, Carson Middle School grade 7, Ms. Ruth Fulpahs**



**Anna Pacia, Carson Middle School**  
**grade 8, Ms. Ruth Fulpahs**



**Sahitya Jammula, Carson Middle School**  
**grade 7, Ms. Ruth Fulpahs**

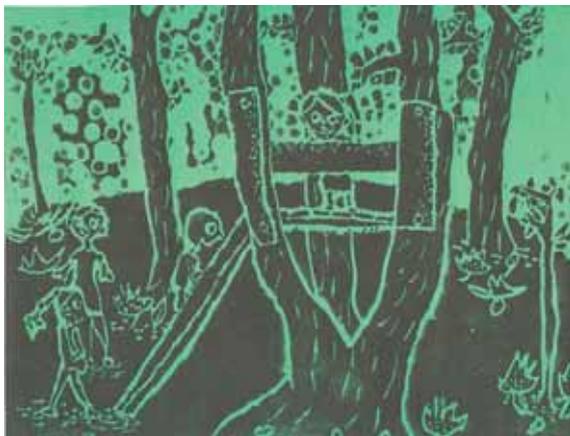


**Piper Johnson, Carson Middle School,**  
**grade 8, Ms. Cali Couch**

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Lillian Duan, 7, Crossfield Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Clarke, "Tree House"



Michael Lin, Crossfield Elementary, grade 2, Mrs. Dean

## SPLIT-LEVEL REMODELED HOME TOUR

Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 12pm-4pm

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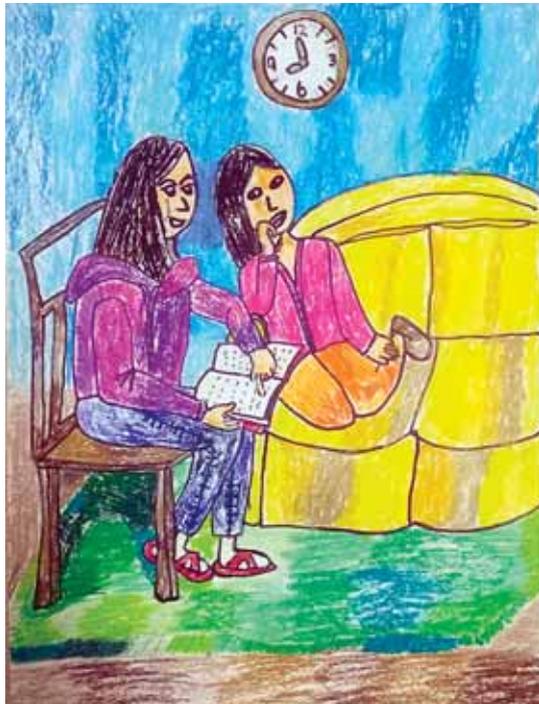
# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

OAK HILL ELEMENTARY  
ARTS GALLERY

Hannah Kang,  
Oak Hill El-  
ementary,  
kindergarten



Emma He, 8,  
Oak Hill El-  
ementary,  
grade 2, Mrs.  
Fredericks



Cecilia Qi, 9, Oak Hill Elementary, grade 4,  
Ms. Martha Cosgrove



Angela Wadden, Oak Hill Elementary,  
grade 4



Yuxin Ni, 8, Herndon,  
Oak Hill Elementary,  
grade 3, Ms. Snyder



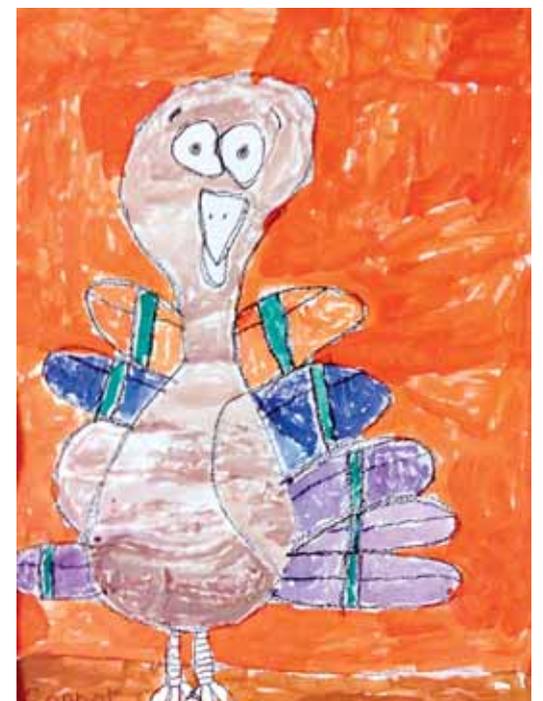
Chelsea Qi, 7, Oak Hill Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Sheryl  
Beckwith



Isabella Chu, 8, Oak Hill, Oak Hill Elementary,  
grade 3, Ms. Christine Crawford, "Bathing  
puppy Luna with her twin sister Sammi"



Gabrielle Dela Rosa, Oak Hill Elementary,  
grade 4



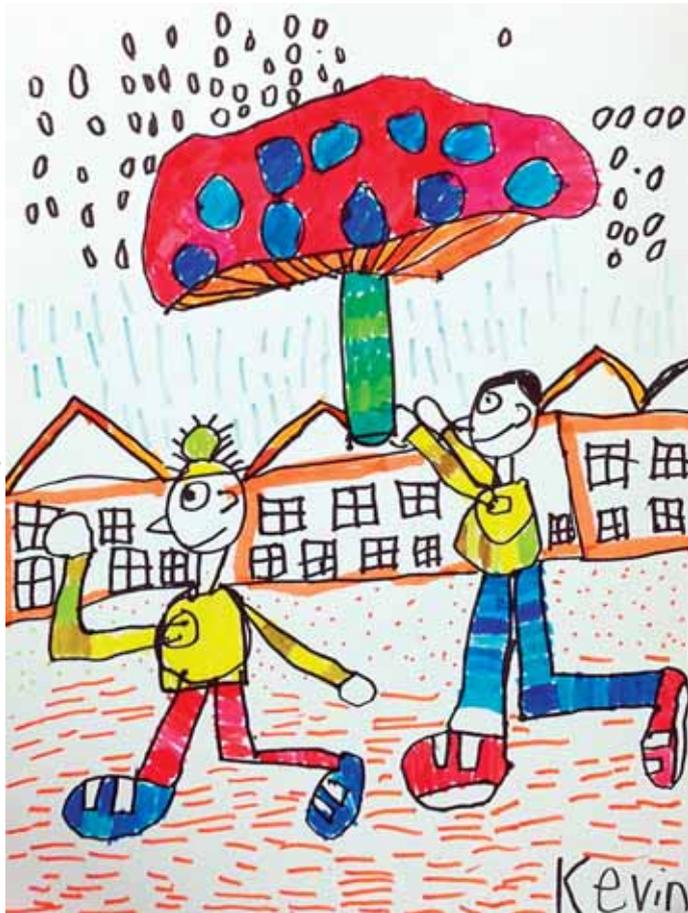
Connor Murdoch, Oak Hill Elemen-  
tary, grade 1

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## FLORIS ELEMENTARY ARTWORK



Katie Wang, 9,  
Floriss Elementary, grade 4,  
Ms. Molitor



Kevin Su, 7,  
Herndon, Floriss  
Elementary, grade 1,  
Ms. Jane Ann Cole



Arya Giri, Floriss Elementary,  
grade 2, Ms. Joan M. Hussey



Sofia Johnson-Quinchia, Floriss  
Elementary, grade 3, Ms. Joan M.  
Hussey



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Open Houses  
January 14 and 28, 11 am - 2 pm

Lunch and Learn  
January 19, 11:30 am - 2 pm  
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NYSMITH SCHOOL ART GALLERY



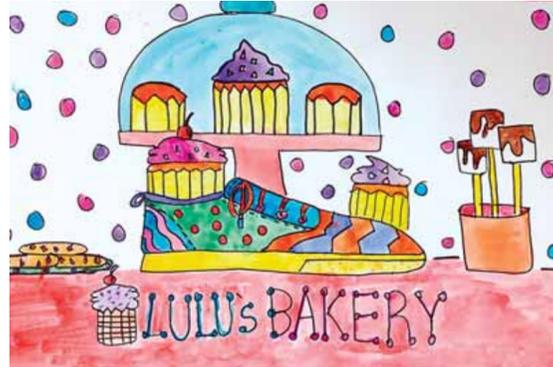
Zani Xu, 9, Nysmith School, "Yardsale"



Iyla Sharifahmadian, 5, Nysmith School, Mrs. Hand, "Iyla and Minal Visiting the Zoo"



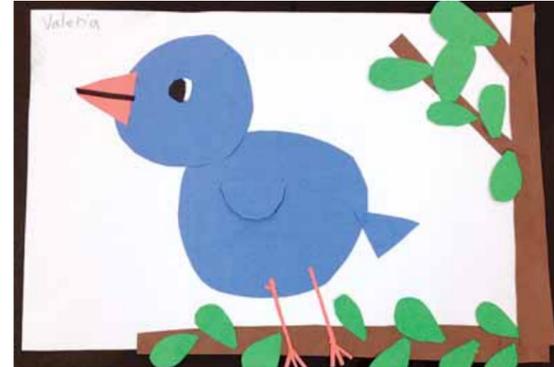
Kina Xu, 5, Nysmith School, kindergarten, "Winter Fun"



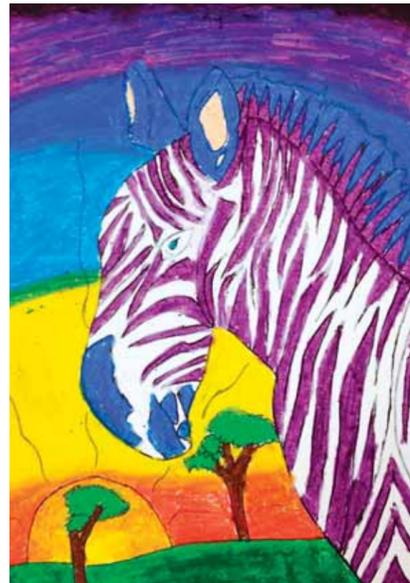
Dyanela Rivarola, Dranesville Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Anne Nagy



Addie Doud, Dranesville Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Anne Cadin



Valeria Verne, Dranesville Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Anne Cadin



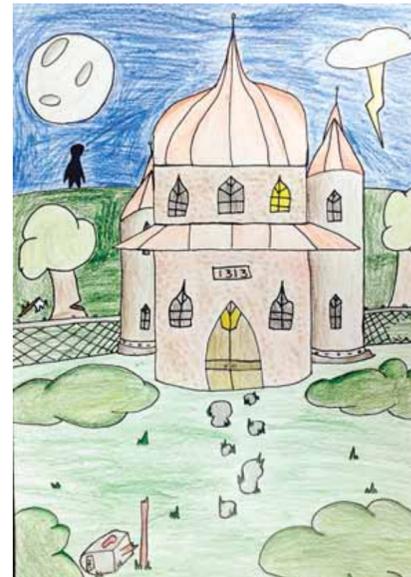
Maisha Hannan, Dranesville Elementary, grade 6, Ms. Anne Nagy



Morgan Douglas, Dranesville Elementary, grade 1, Ms. Anne Nagy



Lily Culbreath, Dranesville Elementary, grade 2, Ms. Anne Nagy



Angelena Agustin, Dranesville Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Anne Nagy



Thatcher Swinton, Dranesville Elementary, grade 4, Ms. Anne Cadin



Adeli Benitez, Dranesville Elementary, grade 3, Ms. Anne Cadin



Paige Dury, Dranesville Elementary, grade 4, Ms. Anne Cadin



Madie Clarke, Dranesville Elementary, grade 5



Here's What's Happening at MCC



At the Old Firehouse Teen Center  
**Unruly Theatre Project**  
**Improv Comedy Show**  
 Friday, Jan. 8, 7:30-9 p.m.  
 Free admission

Classic of the Silent Screen Series  
**Mary Pickford's**  
**"Sparrows" (1926)**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m.  
 \$12/\$8 MCC district residents

At the Old Firehouse Teen Center  
**5th and 6th Grader Party**  
**Winter Wonderland**  
 Friday, Jan. 15, 7-9 p.m.  
 \$35/\$25 MCC district residents

**Family Fun Bingo**  
 Friday, Jan. 15, 7-8:30 p.m.  
 \$10/\$5 MCC district residents;  
 Free for children up to 36 months old.

Onstage @ The Alden  
**Barter Theatre:**  
**"A Wrinkle in Time"**  
 Saturday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m.  
 \$15/\$10 MCC district residents

Martin Luther King Jr.  
 Day Celebration  
**Peggy Wallace Kennedy:**  
**"A Walk to Redemption"**  
 Sunday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m.  
 \$25/\$10 MCC district residents

The McLean Community Center  
[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)  
 Home of the Alden Theatre  
[www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)  
 1234 Ingleside Ave.  
 McLean, VA 22101  
 703-790-0123, TTY: 711

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION



Jesse Vasquez, Floris Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Joan M. Hussey



Kaitlyn Chen, Floris Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Joan M. Hussey

## Study in Leaves at Floris



Madeline Chang, Floris Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Joan M. Hussey



Michael Sun, Floris Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Joan M. Hussey



Nathan Cheng, Floris Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Joan M. Hussey



Reilly Lin, Floris Elementary, grade 5, Ms. Joan M. Hussey

### Forgive

When you say I'm not the person you want to be with I feel as if I am losing a piece of my heart. It doesn't matter if I dress like a prom queen or in a sweatshirt. Sometimes I feel like I could be better but I can't. I may not be the smartest or the best at sports. Everyone is good at something. I forgive you for what you say and do I might not say it very often but I forgive you. I might not tell you but I love you.

—MIA BOLLERER, DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY, GRADE 5

### What makes a Good Friend

A good friend is not hard to spot. You can see right through them and know they're ones to trust. I know this because I have friends like this. I have friends that are always kind and always honest, but once in awhile might even tell a lie to keep you from getting hurt. They keep your secrets and stick by you even when you're not quite fun to be around. They stand up for you when you can't stand up for yourself. Sometimes I wonder what life would be without a good friend. Bland probably... and boring.. but most importantly, hard.

Without a good friend by our side we wouldn't know what to do in those moments we can't stand

up for ourselves. I can't imagine not having my friends. I don't want to imagine that, so I'm quite glad I can't! Plus, without one good friend in the world, no one would know *how* to be a good friend. They wouldn't show us how to be a good friend, so we wouldn't tell the world. The world would be just a bunch of bad friends. I'm glad there's all of the good friends in the world. Without them.... what would the world even be?

—CHLOE BROKESH, DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY

### The Hot Sauce Queen

One day me and my family were shopping. My brother found a big toy store when I was about to walk in, I noticed a hot sauce store! So I walked in

and there standing right in front of me were two whole walls of hot sauce! I was so amazed that I almost screamed! The store owner said I could try some so I did. I tried sweet. I tried spicy. But I did not like them. Then I saw one more left. The owner was very surprised because it was Ghost Pepper Sauce! The spiciest pepper in the world! I did not mind how spicy it was. I was not walking out until I had that hot sauce. So my dad tried it just in case it was too spicy. My dad said it was fine so I tried it. It was completely fine! The owner was so amazed! I got free scorpion powder and I got to sign my name for being the youngest to have Ghost Pepper Sauce ever!!!

—RENEE DEROCHE, DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY, GRADE 2, MRS. LEE'S CLASS

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Annie Wang, 5,  
Herndon,  
Academy of  
Christian  
Education,  
Mrs. Barros,  
"Family Day at  
Beach."



Lauren Augustin,  
Herndon Middle  
School, grade 8



Alan Jiang,  
10, Herndon,  
Navy Elementary, grade 5,  
Mrs. Bridge



## There it Goes, Here it Comes

There it goes,  
Never to be seen again.  
Where the year went, nobody knows.  
So you might as well say good bye and amen.

That year is gone from our lives,  
And only the memories shall stay.  
Soon the new year arrives,  
Getting closer and closer with every passing day.

With this new year,  
Comes new memories to be shared.  
So give a cheer,  
And rest assured that this happy holiday shall  
be preserved.

—SATHIYA KANNAN, RACHEL CARSON  
MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

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**AND**

**MARCH 5**  
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5TH-8TH GRADERS

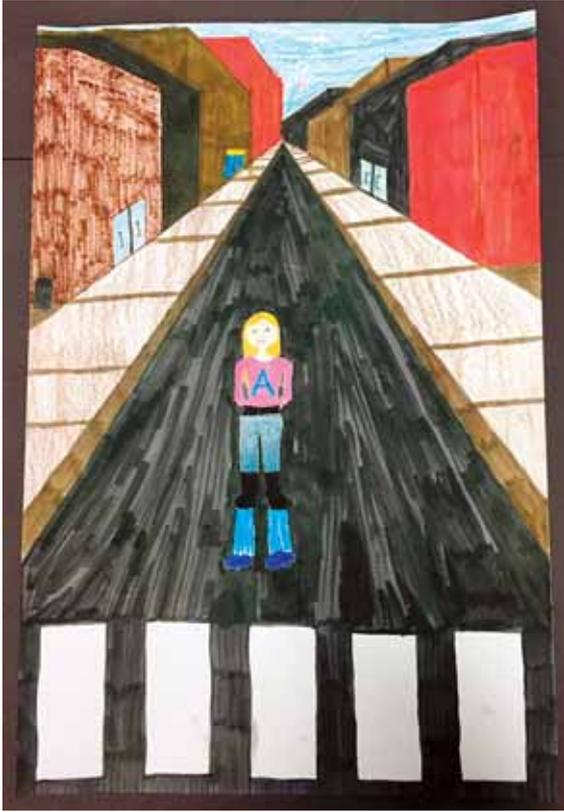
**Spring Break Theatre Adventures**

**MARCH 21-25**  
9AM-4PM  
1ST-8TH GRADERS

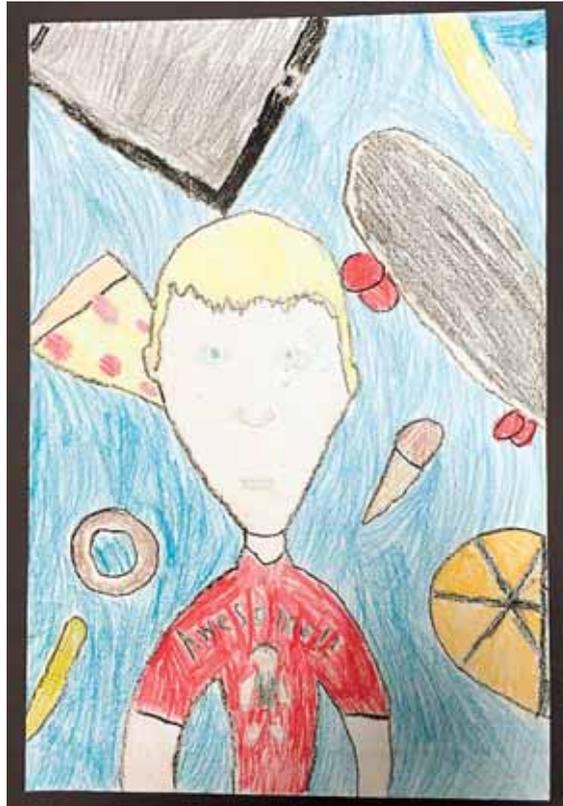
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# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## ARMSTRONG ELEMENTARY ARTWORK



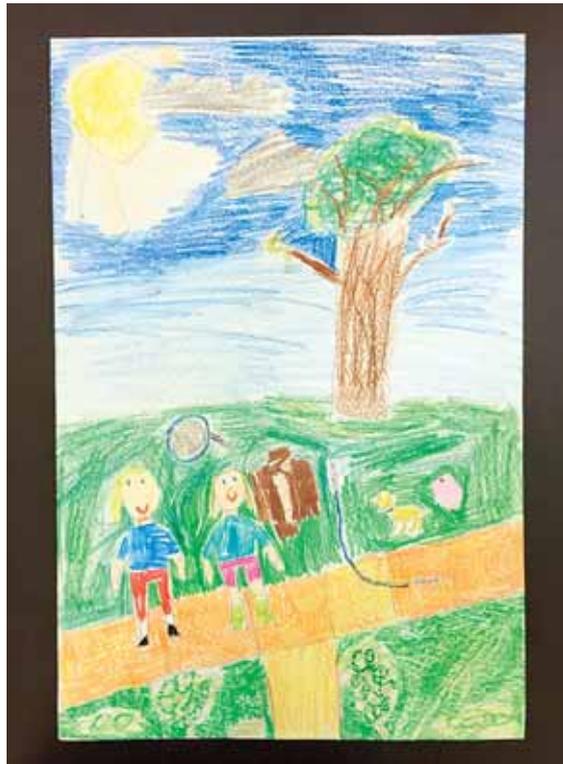
Abby Snowden, Armstrong Elementary, grade 6



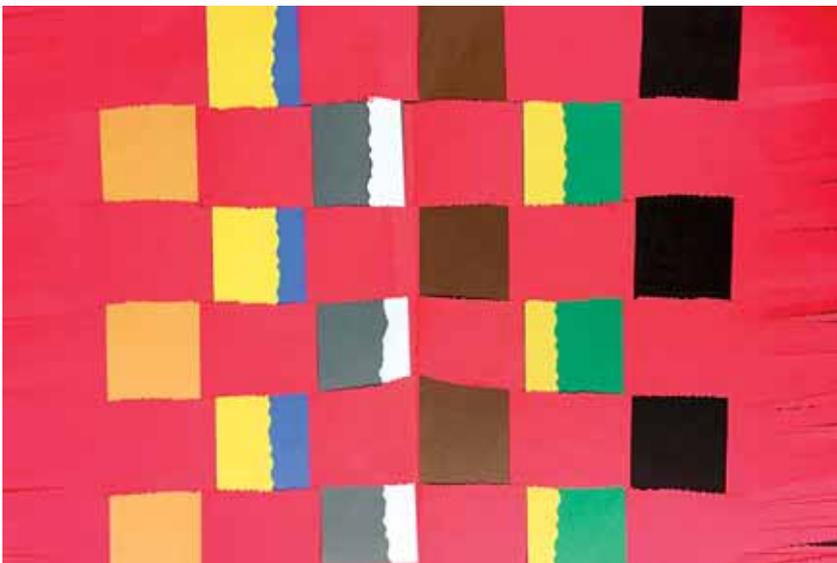
Will Hutton, Armstrong Elementary, grade 3



Margaret Semanchik, Armstrong Elementary, kindergarten

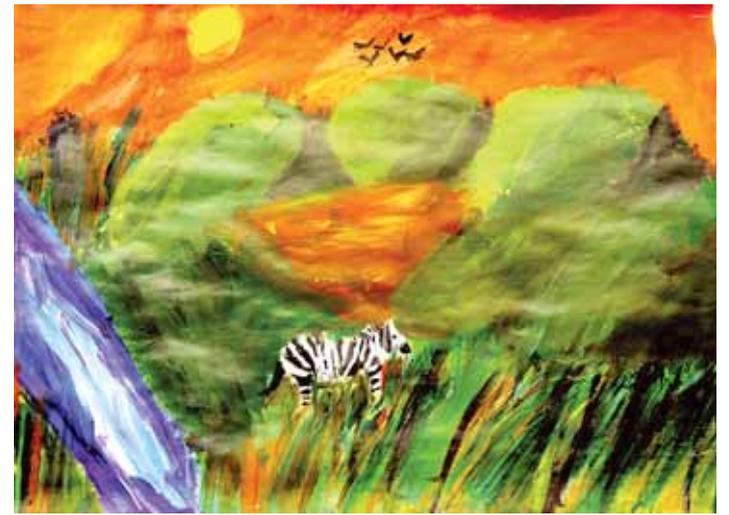


Ella Carlson, Armstrong Elementary, grade 2



Owen Morrison, Armstrong Elementary, grade 1

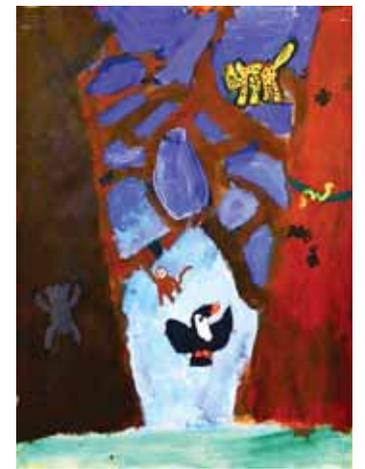
## HUGHES MIDDLE ARTWORK



Arwa Abdi, Hughes Middle School, grade 7



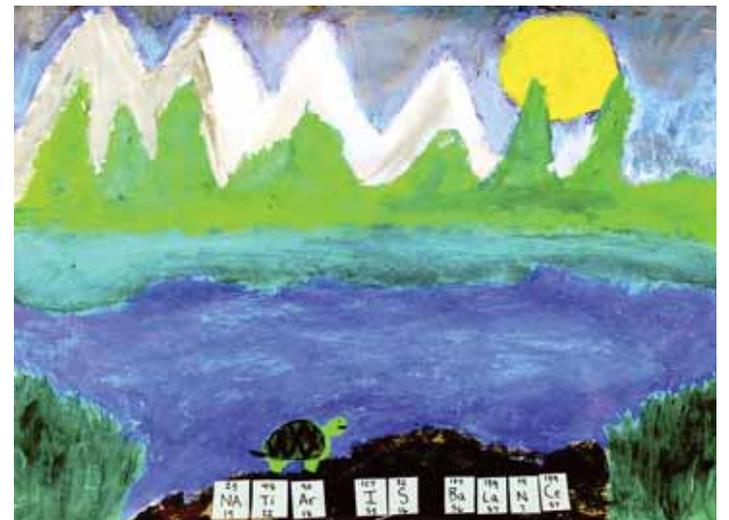
Ajayla King, Hughes Middle School, grade 7



Kailin Converse, Hughes Middle School, grade 7



Amelia Schultz, Hughes Middle School, grade 8



Jasmine Amaya, Hughes Middle School, grade 8

# CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

## If you could give your parents any gift what would it be?

If I could give my parents ANYTHING I would give them sleep for a MONTH. One of the reasons I would give them sleep for a month is because my dad is a teacher at Parkview High School and he has a homebound student and he sometimes doesn't get home until 8 at night. He sometimes has extra jobs and doesn't get home until 9 or 9:30!

My mom works part time and is also a "stay-at-home mom" and helps out all the time. For example: she helps Claire and I with our homework, makes dinner six days a week, does yard work 24/7 and every weekend she makes the best of it by SLEEPING IN. That's why my mom deserves sleep for a month, she never quits!

And that's why they deserve sleep for a month!

—HENRY HINDERS,  
DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY,  
GRADE 5,  
MRS. KRISTINE WOOTEN

I would like to give my mom and dad a vacation as a gift. My dad and mom work so hard for me and my sister. My mom wants a vacation to El Salvador. My dad wants to see a soccer game with me and my sister. My mom is not too interested in soccer, but I think she would like to see Barcelona vs. Madrid. I think that Mom and my dad should go to the beach, too. It would help them to relax. My dad loves to swim, so going to the beach would be great. If I could give them this vacation, I know they would be very happy.

—LUIS ESCALANTE,  
DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY,  
GRADE 5,  
MRS. KRISTINE WOOTEN

I'd give my parents the bestest gift ever! They deserve this because they're always hosting amazing par-

ties. And they deserve to have a party outside to make things more exciting. My Dad can also go into the biggest part of our land and practice shooting arrows. Plus my Dad can shoot arrows at the deer. Then when we dress the deer so we can eat it after. My Mom loves venison. We can make venison burgers and put barbecue sauce on the top. This is also a win win because when my Dad is shooting arrows in the backyard maybe I can shoot arrows with him. Also, I can help my Mom set up for a barbecue.

Then in the morning they could look out their window and they see the beautiful fields with the deers running through it. Then we can go outside and chase the deer back and forth. My dog, Mango, also has a lot of room to run around in. Now my Mom and Dad dont have to worry about walking the dog around the neighborhood.

—GABRIELLE CHERRY,  
DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY,  
GRADE 5,  
MRS. KRISTINE WOOTEN

A Vacation! Because I appreciate everything they do for me. Here are some reasons why I would give them a vacation. First, my Mom works hard everyday. I think she has, like, 4 jobs, and usually she comes from work at 8 p.m. She is tired from the work when she comes home everyday.

Next my dad works hard at two jobs and comes back home late at about 10 p.m. He is more tired than my mom. But now he has one job so me and my sister stay home all alone.

In addition, both of my parents are always working very hard so me and my sister will have an amazing future.

So this is what I'm going to end with—that your parents deserve

more than us kids that receive everything we always wanted.

—IAN MARTINEZ  
CASTELLANOS, DRANESVILLE  
ELEMENTARY, GRADE 5,  
MRS. KRISTINE WOOTEN

Dear Mother, I appreciate all the work you've done for me. Now it's my turn to help you, If I could give you anything in the world is a free two-year cleaning card sponsored by me. You've been taking care of me all your life, you're getting tired and ehh average old. You loved me all my life and you were always there for me. Now I'm going to tell you why I love you!

Why I'm doing this is because you always take care of me and I want to make up for it because you're my Mom. You always helped me and your loving to me, you worked for 40 years and you never get tired of me. You should just retire from working at home and I can be your servant forever. You know that you deserve this, I wish I can make it a endless card but I have to go to college and get money. Mom I love you and you're the best.

—RON REVELLE, DRANESVILLE  
ELEMENTARY, GRADE 5,  
MRS. KRISTINE WOOTEN

## What makes a good parent?

A good parent is a parent that understands you. A parent who has grown up with you, and who you can relate with, and who has shared memories with you. A good parent also teaches their child life skills and does what's best for the child. Most parents are good, but the truly great ones are the parents who understand how their child thinks and can react accordingly.

—SATHIYA KANNAN RACHEL  
CARSON MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
GRADE 7,  
MS. ALLISON CAREY

## "Life is Like a Magician"

Life is like a magician,  
Revealing its snow-white rabbits,  
That have returned from oblivion,  
Finding illusions and deceptions,  
To stop you in your path.

Life is like a magician,  
The sorrow of the gullible,  
Feeds its hungry soul,  
Absorbing them into a black hat,  
Where they forever stay.

Life is like a magician,  
Its creative performance,  
Has a twist that starts to bloom,  
That requires mathematics and memory,  
Which takes practice to perfect.

Life is like a magician,  
Which determines the destiny of its foes,

However life must be cautious,  
For its flaw could not be penetrable  
Or else its secrets would be revealed to all...

Life is like a magician,  
It sends its arsenal of minions,  
To invade the lost mind,  
Creating small detriments,  
That expand throughout time.

Life is like a magician,  
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**FEBRUARY**

2/3/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts I  
2/3/2016.....Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month  
2/10/2016.....HomeLifeStyle  
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NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices.

Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

## 21 Announcements

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Get Pie Enterprises, LLC trading as Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers, 1030 Elden St. Herndon, VA 20170. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Amit Mehta member

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices.

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## The Time Is Now, And Then Some



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I sit and write, I am 25 days out from my next CT Scan. Which ordinarily, wouldn't cause a blip in my thinking; having been scanned and "resulted" over 25 times in the last seven years (usually, once every three months). However, this time the scan will occur after a quarter in which I've changed my infusion schedule from every three weeks to every four, as written about in a recent column entitled "All Four It." In doing the math: 13 weeks divided by three; 13 weeks divided by four; as a result of this modification, I am now receiving one fewer dose of chemotherapy. And this change was made not because I was in remission or my tumors had shrunk. No, this change was made because of a less-than-desirable quality of life. Also, as written about in a previous column, one entitled "Slippery Hope," feeling miserable one out of every three weeks was not contributing much to the quality of that life so in sharing these feelings with my oncologist, the change in frequency was agreed to. But my CT Scan schedule remains quarterly. Ergo this column's angst.

Given this rather significant change – and the correlating reduction in medicine administered, this next scan is hardly just another few slides in and out of the computerized tomography. No. This may very well be a crossroads in my treatment. If the scan shows no growth, then off I can continue infusing into the wild blue yonder (at least for the next three months until my next scan). If, on the other hand, the scan shows growth and/or movement, then perhaps I have crossed over onto a path going who knows where. And since my frequency change was made without discussing the what-if scenarios (which my oncologist prefers not to do), I am free to speculate without the benefit of any professional insight. Presumably, we'll either go back to infusing every three weeks (continuing with Alimta) and see what appears – or not – on the CT Scan (three months hence) or we'll change medications/protocols entirely and then, as we say in Boston: "It'll be Katie 'bah' the door;" meaning, watch out/hang on for dear life (no pun intended) because new and different drugs don't necessarily equate to an improved/"normal" quality of life. In short, my situation/health could get worse. And my request/desire to alter my previously effective infusion schedule – so far as keeping my tumors stable is concerned – from three weeks to four, may be the direct cause. Wanting to improve the quality of my life may now have led to a reduction in the quality of that life. And though I certainly understand how unreasonable it is for a patient/survivor to expect to have his cake (sugar-free preferably) and eat it too; still, I was hoping I had a few more bites at the apple.

I'll know soon enough – not, and that's the point of this column. Unfortunately, I'm already worrying about the results and the consequences of my actions. Usually, the associated anxiety starts about two weeks before the scan. Now, considering the stakes, I am worrying about it nearly four weeks before. Double the trouble and none of the fun. And believe me, it's not as if worrying this far ahead of the next scan serves any purpose whatsoever. Nor will it speed up the process or affect the scan results. All that happens is that I will be nervous and anxious about something I can't control, and make worse a situation (the waiting) that I've previously been able to manage.

Well, at least I'm not blaming myself – totally, anyway. This is all premature and nothing is pre-ordained. And considering that I've been on chemotherapy for almost seven years, and survived way beyond my oncologist's original "13 months to two-year" prognosis, perhaps my tumors won't be effected and life will go on as-per-usual. Who knows? Maybe infusing less will actually help me more?

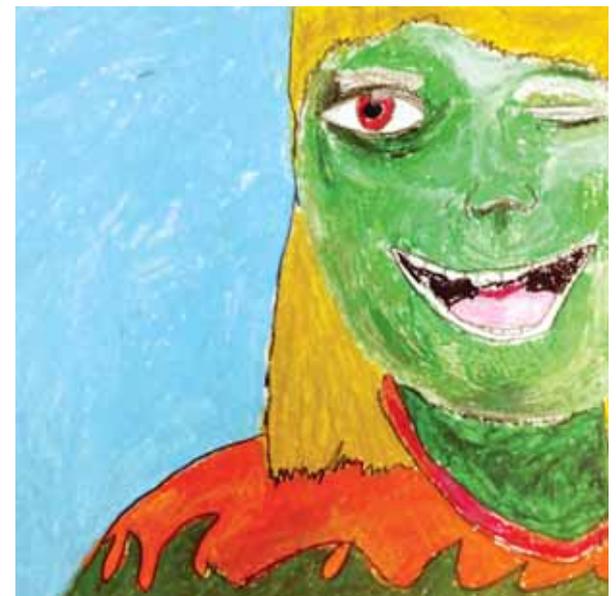
Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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LAKE ANNE ELEMENTARY ARTWORK

Samantha Burgess, Lake Anne Elementary, grade 6



Chase Yurkshat, Lake Anne Elementary, grade 3



Bridget Brennan, Lake Anne Elementary, grade 4



Grace Morgan, Lake Anne Elementary, grade 6

# Horse Show



**Aubrey Augustine, Cooper Middle School, grade 7, "Horse"**

I took a deep breath and stood on my toes, looking over my horse's thick, coal black mane. Hundreds of eyes were watching the group of riders that were already inside.

"Okay, you can go in and start fixing your girth," one of the instructors breezed past me, flashing me a smile and added, "Good luck."

"I'm going to need the whole state of Virginia's luck on my side if I don't want to go in there and make a fool of myself," I muttered under my breathe, lightly tugging my horse forward. "Come on Nacho, now's not the time for napping."

As I lead him through the arena gate, I stroked his soft, brown neck so I didn't have to look at the audience.

When I had led him to the arena and halted him, I finally dared to look up.

The bleachers were packed with parents, friends, and siblings coming to watch us ride.

"Good luck." Siri smiles at me as she leads Twinkie, the palomino gelding she often rode, past me.

I smile briefly at her, feeling the butterflies in my stomach erupt into giant moths.

Swinging the beat-up leather reins over my shoulder, I start to tighten Nacho's girth.

"Too loose," I murmur, my slick hands slipping on the smooth leather as I tighten the girth a couple more holes.

When I finish, I lead Nacho over to the dusty wooden mounting block. Climbing on, I had to steady

myself so I didn't fall off as it rocked back and forth.

Holding onto the saddle to steady myself, I stick my left foot in the stirrup and swing over and onto his back, gently lowering myself into the saddle.

Clicking to him, I directed Nacho over to where the two girls that I was riding with sat as their mounts stood quietly under them.

"We have to say our names?!?" Rachel squeaked as I got closer. "That's it, I'm outta here!"

Our instructor, Meredith, rolled her eyes, "Come on guys, you can do this, and you can't back out now, it's show time!"

Much to my dislike, I ended up being first.

Facing the crowd, I announced, "Hi, my name is Michaela, and this is Nacho," I say, surprised at how clear my voice sounded.

While I wait for the other girls to finish saying their names and that of their mounts, I fiddle with my brand new, purple and red riding crop.

"Okay girls, let's get started," our other instructor, Christopher, called out as she marched through the dusty ring to the center of the arena. "Tighten your reins and when I say 'three,' pick up your posting trot."

When she reached three, I give Nacho a slight nudge and tap with my crop.

Ignoring the sea of faces, I focus on rising up and down in time with his outside leg.

"Up, down, up, down," I mutter to myself, "Come on Nacho, you can do it!"

Gradually, I feel the myself relax and the tension leave my shoulders. *This is fun!* I thought.

As suddenly as it had started, the show ended and I was leading Nacho out of the riding ring and to his stall.

Wiping my brow, I circle him and began to take off his saddle and bridle. When I finish, I slipped on his faded orange halter and clipped on the lead rope.

Tugging on the rope, I led him out of his stall and to the area where you bathe your horse. "Come on boy, let's go take a bath." Nacho seemed to blink in agreement.

Leading him over to where a few spare hoses were laying around, I tied him to a steal circle in the wall, making sure to use a safety knot so that he could pull away, without getting hurt, if he got scared or spooked.

Grabbing an already soaked sponge, I started to rub it over his back where his saddle had been.

His back glistened from the wa-

ter, and I licked my dry lips. I was parched. Spraying myself with the hose was definitely a possibility.

Forcing myself to stay focused, I soon finished and led Nacho back to his stall.

I pull off his halter and I hug him. "Thanks boy, you were awesome."

Digging through my jacket pocket, I find a horse treat and hold it under his muzzle. He immediately stops trying to chew on my jacket and snatches the treat from the palm of my hand.

Crumbs fly everywhere as he chews on the treat.. "Piggy." I laugh and scratch his nose lightly with my finger tips.

As I watched him munch noisily on some hay that he found on the floor of his stall, I thought back to earlier today, *It was amazing*, I thought, *I hope I get the chance to be in another horse show sometime.*

—MICHAELA SVENSSON, CHURCHILL ROAD ELEMENTARY, GRADE 5, MR. DEPA'S

## A Good Person

The majority of people strive to be a good person, but not everyone knows what it means to be a good person. Yes, it is important to be kind to others and respect others rights, but there is more to being considered "good." The motive to your kindness is also a key component. A good person will be kind only for the sake of being helpful. A good person will feel it is necessary to be pleasant even when it seems impossible, and strives to make someone's day just because they feel like it. People who have a good attitude towards other people, and a sense of selflessness, are what I believe are good people.

—TATUM LOHMAR, COOPER MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

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### "The Little Snowflake"

KATIE RAUST, ALDRIN ELEMENTARY, GRADE 6, MR. O'DAY

Racing down the hill on my sled  
Zigzagging over the powdery snow  
Icy wind tugs on my scarf  
I crashed into one sled and then into another

"Make a choice whispers the snowflakes..."

Warm hands help me up  
Gazing at the faces of friends  
Laughter fills my ears  
I brush off the sparkling snow

"Make a choice" mumbles the snowflakes...

Grabbing my creaky sled  
He groans as I pick him up  
Turning my head to where the friendly faces once were

I see only footprints which are being painted by the powdery snow  
"Make a choice" huffs the snowflakes...

Chants and chatter echo around me  
Scrambling uphill the cold snow enters my boots

Smoke comes from my mouth, I push on harder  
I hear a little whimper

"Make a choice" demands the snowflakes...

Glancing at the bottom a hill, stands a little girl with a giant sled  
Eyes are lost and dark  
Her frail body shivering

I stare for a moment then trudge towards her  
"Make a choice" cries the snowflakes...

A chilling stare comes from the girl  
Tapping on the girl's shoulder she turns away

Shadows appear on the snowy hill  
I turn to see teasing faces  
"Make a choice" hisses the snowflakes...

Waving the faces away  
Snickers and whispers are spread on the hill

Turning back to the girl a small tear appears  
I place my hand on her shoulder

"Make a choice" shrieks the snowflakes...

Shadows slip back to the forest  
She looks up at me  
Whispering quietly as a snowflake drops

"I won't leave your side"  
"Excellent choice," echoes the snowflakes...