



NEWS RELEASE

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Pictures inspire words Thoughtful students craft haiku Three winners chosen

*Winners to receive framed haiku, gifts from The Charmery and The Ivy Bookshop,
free tuition at Maryland Writing Project summer camp*

TOWSON, Md. – April 17 is International Haiku Poetry Day and time to announce the winners of the 2024 Team BCPS Haiku Contest. Images of colorful jellyfish, a worn teddy bear, and cut flowers in a vase inspired the three winning poems.

Baltimore County Public Schools students were challenged to write haiku in response to a piece of student artwork selected from among [10 pieces](#). Nearly 1,800 entries were received from 111 schools, centers, and programs – including the Virtual Learning Program.

A panel of student and staff judges selected the following contest winners:

Elementary School Winner

Swirling and twirling
Undersea ballerinas
Moving gracefully

Rowan Chipkin, Grade 4

Pinewood Elementary School

(The haiku was created in response to art prompt #3, which was created by SaLaura Chamberlain, a Grade 5 student at Baltimore Highlands Elementary School.)

In selecting this haiku, the judges loved the writer's choice to refer to jellyfish as "underwater ballerinas." They felt the writing was youthful but mature and praised Chipkin's word selections for creating a sense of movement.

Middle School Winner

my bear sits alone
I watch as he wisps away
grayer than a storm

Lilly Crittenden, Grade 6

Arbutus Middle School

(The haiku was created in response to art prompt #4, which was created by Jaylynn Grinage, a Grade 8 student at Stemmers Run Middle School.)

This haiku was a favorite of all the judges, but especially the student judges. The judges felt that Crittenden's poem evoked emotion and the sense of moving away from childhood, particularly relevant at the middle school level. They liked that the writer invoked the color of the image and alluded to the turbulence ("storm") of adolescence. They felt that the unusual use of the word "wisps" was effective because it implies that childhood slowly wafts away.

High School Winner

Sitting clearly boxed,
flowers appear lifeless yet,
their lives are shown off.

Jasmine Marquardt, Grade 12

Lansdowne High School

(The haiku was created in response to art prompt #10, which was created by Aine Cooke, a Grade 8 student at Cockeysville Middle School.)

While other haiku conveyed similar messages, the judges felt this one did it more effectively. Judges liked the juxtaposition of the words “lifeless” and “lives” and the way the haiku explores the question of what we put on display and at what cost.

“This year’s haiku contest once again celebrates both student artwork and student writing,” said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Myriam Rogers. “I congratulate Rowan, Lilly, and Jasmine for their excellent writing, and I thank every student who entered the contest and all the teachers who encouraged their students to participate. Every year, through their entries, our students show us how deeply they think and how creatively they express themselves. Writing, like every skill, requires practice, and it is exciting that the BCPS community embraces this opportunity to focus on developing as writers. Many thanks, also, to the talented student artists whose beautiful work served as contest prompts.”

New this year, winners (who are in Grades 4 through 12) will receive a scholarship to participate in this summer’s [asynchronous writing camp](#) (June 24 – August 23), sponsored by the [Maryland Writing Project](#) at Towson University. Other prizes will include gifts from [The Charmery](#) and [The Ivy Bookshop](#) and a framed print of their haiku and the artwork that inspired it.

Contest judges included Communications Office Student Apprentice Habiba Lam, a Chesapeake High School senior; award-winning student writers – Lucy Bray, Maaz Ijaz, Jenna Nesky, Horizon Niroula, Chiemela Nwokoro, Alexis Robinson, and Lila Salter; and staff members from the Office of English Language Arts and the Department of Communications and Community Outreach.

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

The following six schools submitted the highest number of student entries: Hereford Middle School (205 entries), Arbutus Middle School (133 entries), Pinewood Elementary School (130 entries), Cockeysville Middle School (93 entries), Hillcrest Elementary School (77 entries), and Parkville High School (70 entries).

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation’s 22nd largest school system, engages and empowers its talented students, teachers, staff, and stakeholders and strives to build an innovative and collaborative learning community where all students excel and reach their highest potential.

Engage. Empower. Excel.