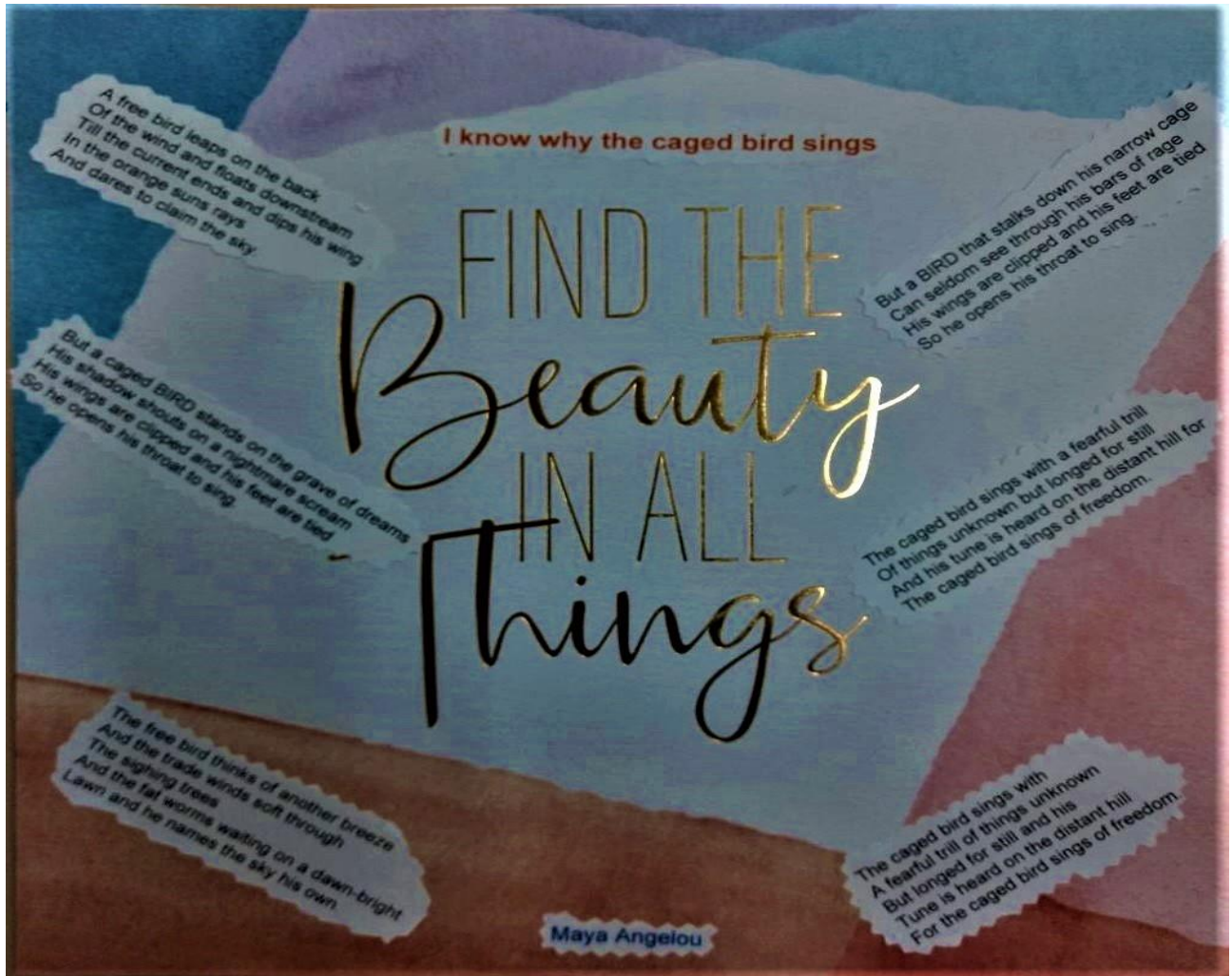


**The rhythms of music and words  
cause people to want to move,  
or be moved,  
in time to them.  
*Langston Hughes***



Art piece by Auvianna

Note from Mama Zahra

*When I first met the youth from the class of 2019, I appreciated their unique insightful perspectives on life. Working in partnership with the youth and Ms. Mason has been an amazing experience. We have been on a journey of artistic exploration together. I will be forever grateful for having the opportunity for us to grow as artists and agents of change in our own lives. Much love and success to you all!*

*Mama Zahra*



Alexa  
Alanna  
Janiyah  
India  
Jasmine  
Savannah  
Adonis  
Taijuan  
Auvianna  
Emerson  
Demetric  
Joshua  
Morgan  
Steven  
Alijah  
Kwame  
Sharon  
Tranise  
Dequan  
Darrius  
Kendall  
Gabari  
Tykarian  
Darnell  
Bianca

## Alexa

Music can help because music expresses how you feel.  
I use music to express myself every day.

I am middle child  
Stubborn  
Happy funny  
Always smiling  
Trustworthy  
Hurt  
Honest  
Great at masking  
African American  
Independent  
Emotional  
Cry baby  
Attention  
I am love.

The caged bird represents us being trapped in our personal hells and seeking help

If I could fix something in the world it would be gun violence, ban all guns, anybody who cares enough can help.

10 Chapters of my life  
Grief  
Love  
Pride  
Brains  
Smarts  
The Mask  
Is she I  
Stereotypes  
Race  
Society



**Alexa**

*"But the caged bird stands on the grave of dreams."*

The bird's dreams are shattered  
The bird feels trapped  
The bird feels lost  
The bird is dying  
The bird is hurting  
The bird feels broken  
The bird sees how other birds felt when they died  
The bird is standing in sorrow and misery  
The bird feels the grave is its next trip  
The bird feels the ancient energy of its ancestors  
The ancestors are encouraging the birds to fly and be free  
Because they never got that chance and so  
The bird sings as a plea for help.





**Alanna**

*Words of Encouragement*

Don't listen to what others have to say about you

Never give up

Practice makes perfect

I am the middle child

I have four other sisters

I was born in the suburbs

My biggest goal is to graduate 8th grade

Yes, I hope to go to college

Yes, I've experienced something that changed my life forever

Yes, I have felt like a caged bird

### **Janiyah**

Adults in the community say that teens are disrespectful.  
The news says that teens are disobedient  
Can't follow simple directions  
Disrespectful  
Cannot ask them one question without getting them angry.  
I want them to know that I am very respectful in that I follow directions  
And that not every kid is the same



### **India**

Music helps people who are sad  
Because music can cheer people up.  
When my uncle passed away  
I listened to music

Adults in the community say they that we are childish and need to grow up.  
The news says teens are killing each other and going to jail.





### Jasmine

*"But the bird that stalks down his narrow cage can seldom see through his  
bars of rage"*

Bars of rage

Bars of rage

Until he notices something that changed

He can't get out of his cage

But he can enjoy the view

To see what's new

To see what hasn't been seen

To notice the pot of beans

He tries to escape

Flying like he has a cape

He's flying freely around the room

Until he hits his head and it goes

BOOM!

## Savannah

Music can help people calm down  
By rhythm or beat or sound

I think I'm talented in dancing  
I think I'm talented in singing

I am the oldest child and it doesn't feel good at all.  
I am named after Savannah Georgia  
I was born in Chicago, Illinois  
I am mostly proud of graduating  
My favorite activities are sports

"A fearful trill of things unknown."

A girl is preparing to go onstage and sing. But she is excited and very nervous.

She never stood in front of so many people.  
So she is going to try her best and give it her all.  
She's got to make it through.  
She's afraid because she never did a solo.  
So she goes to get ready to go on stage.  
But before she goes she breaks out of her shell  
by thinking of how much her mother and grandmother  
Would be so proud of her.

She hears their voices sayings

Fantastic

Amazing

Creative

Successful

Classical

Amazing

Jazzy

Humble

She goes on stage and performs

And nails it

The crowd goes bananas.

## **Adonis**

Music is something that keeps the beat in place.

*" But a Bird that stalks down his narrow cage  
Thinking of leaving and being free"*

But is scared of experience and what it can be  
All the loud voices here makes it feel unsafe  
It asks why no one helps or speaks to it  
They say words it can't understand.  
It sees other birds flying high and free  
It thinks why am I Black?

It sees no hope so it cries and hopes it gets help  
From one of its kind.

I am the oldest child  
I feel like I've got more responsibilities than my younger siblings  
I was born in Chicago  
People say my city is bad but it's just right  
if you get to meet the people it's 'ight.

I am a hooper  
I'd like to play NBA

I hope to go to college.  
My biggest goal is to get RICH.

## Taijuan

Sound that matches and goes in a specific repetitive order.  
Music help me when I do my homework. It helps me focus and calm.  
It can help other people because if they have a favorite song  
They could listen to it and calm down.

I have heard adults in the neighborhood say that teens are  
bad,  
Smoking,  
Guns  
Showoffs.

I am the youngest child.  
It feels good because I know  
My older siblings will protect me.  
I was born in Chicago  
I want to know if I am going to get taller.

It feels good to be a teenager because I'm getting older.  
I'm playful  
I like swimming  
Basketball  
Football  
And fortnite game.  
I'm a good person.  
I want to know if anyone can stop the violence.



### **Auvianna**

Rhythm is the beat.  
It's important because you have to follow it.

Music can help people by enlightening  
Their mood  
Making them happy

One time my sister made me mad  
so I turned on some music to calm down

I heard adults in the neighborhood say  
Teens are trouble  
Irresponsible  
And act too grown for their age.

I heard the news say  
Teens are dying and being shot.



## **Auvianna**

I want them to know that I am  
Helpful,  
Responsible  
Kind  
Friendly  
Encouraging to others  
A leader and many more.

I can show it in my drawing by drawing me.  
I can show my style and beauty.

I am the third child but the favorite  
I was born in Chicago at twelve a.m.  
November 22, 2004

I am funny, cute, smart, friendly, artist  
I never got a D or F.

I draw, cook and bake.  
Engineering and a baker

Chapters of my life  
The day I came into the world  
Kids in my home  
My school life  
My talents  
Future plans  
Personalities  
Mom's in the family  
Dad's in the family  
My pets  
My entire life

## **Emerson**

Music can help people when they're sad  
Because some people have different types of music they like  
When they hear the music they like it can change feelings.

The news says teens are  
Getting shot  
Shooting people  
Having guns

I want people to know that I can show that I'm a good kid.

I am a middle child  
It feels good.

I was born at the hospital  
I like basketball  
And music

I am proud of getting all A's, B's and one C.  
I will keep pushing toward my dreams.

## **Demetric**

Rhythm is the beat and the flow.

*Words of encouragement*  
Practice makes perfect  
Never give up  
Dream big  
Don't listen to negative people  
Think before your actions



Demetric [redacted]

But a caged BIRD  
stands on the grave  
of dreams

Demetric [redacted]

- Naya Angelou

## Joshua

The free bird thinks of another breeze  
A free bird doesn't think of nothing except flying

I heard adults in my neighborhood say that teens  
Don't take things serious enough the way they should

I heard the news say that teens are unstable  
And need to be put down and controlled.

I want people to know that  
I am an athlete  
I wish to play soccer in professional leagues

I love playing video games and recreation activities  
I get mad when people talk about my family

I hope to graduate college  
I am an exceptional student

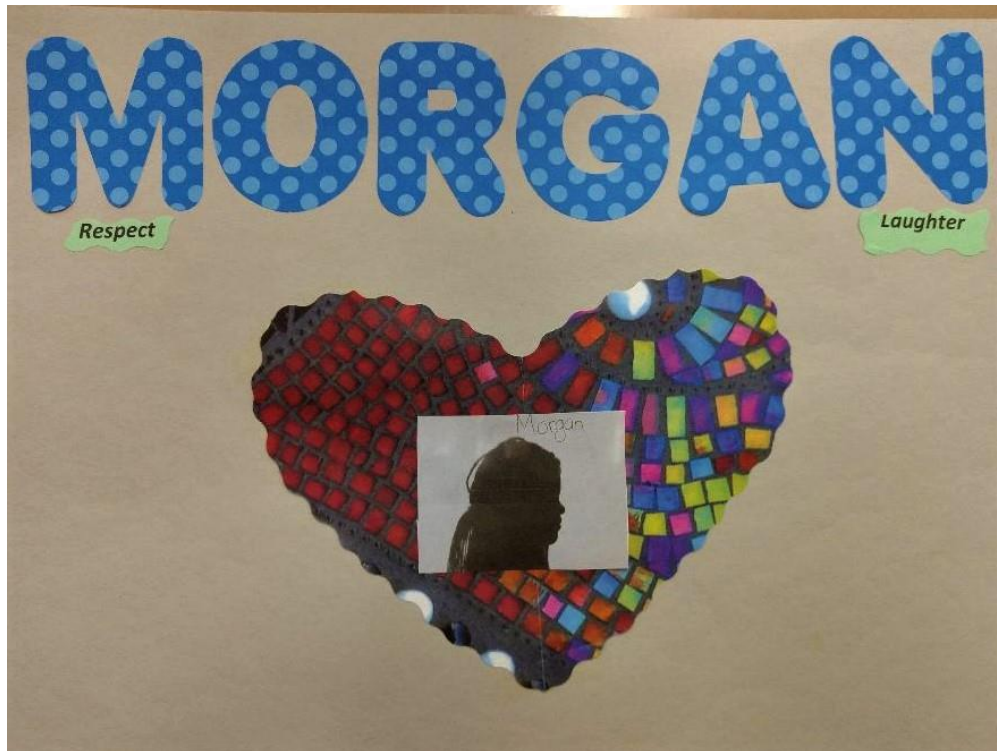
I was born on 31st August 2005  
Joshua in Nigeria

I want to know  
The mystery of life.



Joshua





## **Morgan**

*"But the caged bird stands on the grave of dreams his shadow shouts  
On a nightmare scream"*

His shadow shouts  
His shadow shouts  
To know what he's wondering about  
He was trapped  
His wings flapped  
But couldn't get out.

I heard adults in the neighborhood say  
Teens now days aren't like they used to be.  
I heard the news say teens are killing and getting killed

Music can help people because when people are in a certain mood  
It's music for the mood they are in  
which causes them to feel better  
when they listen to music

A few days ago I was in a sad mood  
So I was listening to music to feel better.

## **Steven**

Rhythm is when a beat is in a certain pattern

Music can help people when they feel sad  
Because it can change their mood of how they feel

People says teens need to grow up  
People say there is a lot of shooting in my neighborhood

I am the youngest  
It feels good  
I get more stuff than my sisters.  
I am named after my father

I play football and 2k  
It feels great to be a teenager.

## **Alijah**

I am a middle child  
I can do whatever I want  
Named after Greek God  
I play the game fortnite  
It makes me mad when people try to say something that they don't  
know what they talking about  
I do good in school  
I play football  
I'm good at throwing football  
I catch the most throws in a football game

## **Kwame**

I am the youngest

I was born in Chicago

My top favorite video games is fortnite

Call of duty

And 2k

I play basketball

## **Sharon**

Music can help people when they are having difficult times or are sad. If you listen to a particular song when you are sad the music can cheer you up and make you happy.

When I was at home and I had so much work to do and I was confused so I played some music and it helped me finish my work on time.

I have heard adults in the community say that teens are not supposed to be acting like that.

I want people to know that I am not like other people

I am myself

I can show my best.

I am myself

I'm myself, I can do my best

I'm myself, I can show my best

I'm myself, I can prove myself

I'm myself, I can be myself

I'm myself, I can stand my ground



### Sharon

*“His wings are clipped and his feet  
are tied.”*

The bird is not able to move  
because it is tied up

And its wings are clipped

There is nothing for the bird to do

But just to stay still and wait.

Stay still and wait for someone to  
come

Stay still and wait for happiness to  
come

Stay still and wait for a new song  
to come

Stay still and wait for a nice day to  
come

Stay still and wait for the future to  
come

Stay still and wait for and  
adventure to come

Stay still and wait for love to come

Stay still and wait for your dream  
to come

Stay still and wait for what you’ve  
been longing for

Stay still and wait for your voice to  
come



## Tranise

### My Life Journey

Leading the Way

Life Isn't Easy

Hidden Figures

Cautious Area

Fake Love



## **Tranise**

Rhythm is something that keeps the beat flowing.  
It is important because without it the beat wouldn't sound right.

Music can calm nerves sometimes  
Or make minds clear up the bad things that goes on in your mind.  
Or it can make you feel relaxed.

One time I was angry at a sibling  
I put headphones in and started to listen to music.  
It cleared my mind  
&  
made me calm and relaxed

I have heard adults in the community say  
That teens are bad and some are good.  
It's a lot of teenagers getting killed  
or doing things they don't have any business doing  
I have heard the news say that  
Teens are getting shot  
Kidnapped  
Killed.  
They have jobs for the summer...  
...for the summer

I am the oldest, it feels like I have to watch what I do  
Because the youngest siblings look up to me  
I was named after my aunties.  
Born in Chicago in the Humboldt Park Neighborhood.  
I play basketball

## **Alijah**

A human always has dreams it says  
“a caged bird stands on a grave of dreams”  
which means that people will have dreams that are dead and will not  
become true  
will never happen.

### ***Achieving dreams***

Dreams what are they?  
Maybe you have a dream  
Maybe your ancestors have a dream that they wasn't able to complete  
or accomplish  
But you can be the one to make their dream come true.  
It's hard to get a dream you want to come true  
You have to believe in yourself  
You can do it  
You have to have hard work and dedication  
And do whatever you can to get your dream  
Even block people out your life  
and don't let the people put you down  
and tell you that you won't accomplish your dreams



### **Dequan**

I am the middle child

I am named after my Dad

I am a good person

As a teenager I can do more stuff

Yes

I want to go to college

My biggest goal for myself

Is to accomplish getting better grades and going to a different school.

## Darrius

Rhythm is the sound of music and how the music flows.

Rhythm is important because we need it to make the music sound good. Music can relax you when you are going through something

And you can relate to it.

Music helped me when I lost my keys.

I have heard adults in the community say that teens were ghetto and not have home training or any respect.

I want people to know that I can make beats

I am the oldest

I have to be responsible

I believe my name is in the Bible

My favorite activity is to play fortnite and go outside.

My neighborhood is dangerous

Sometimes it can be fun and peaceful

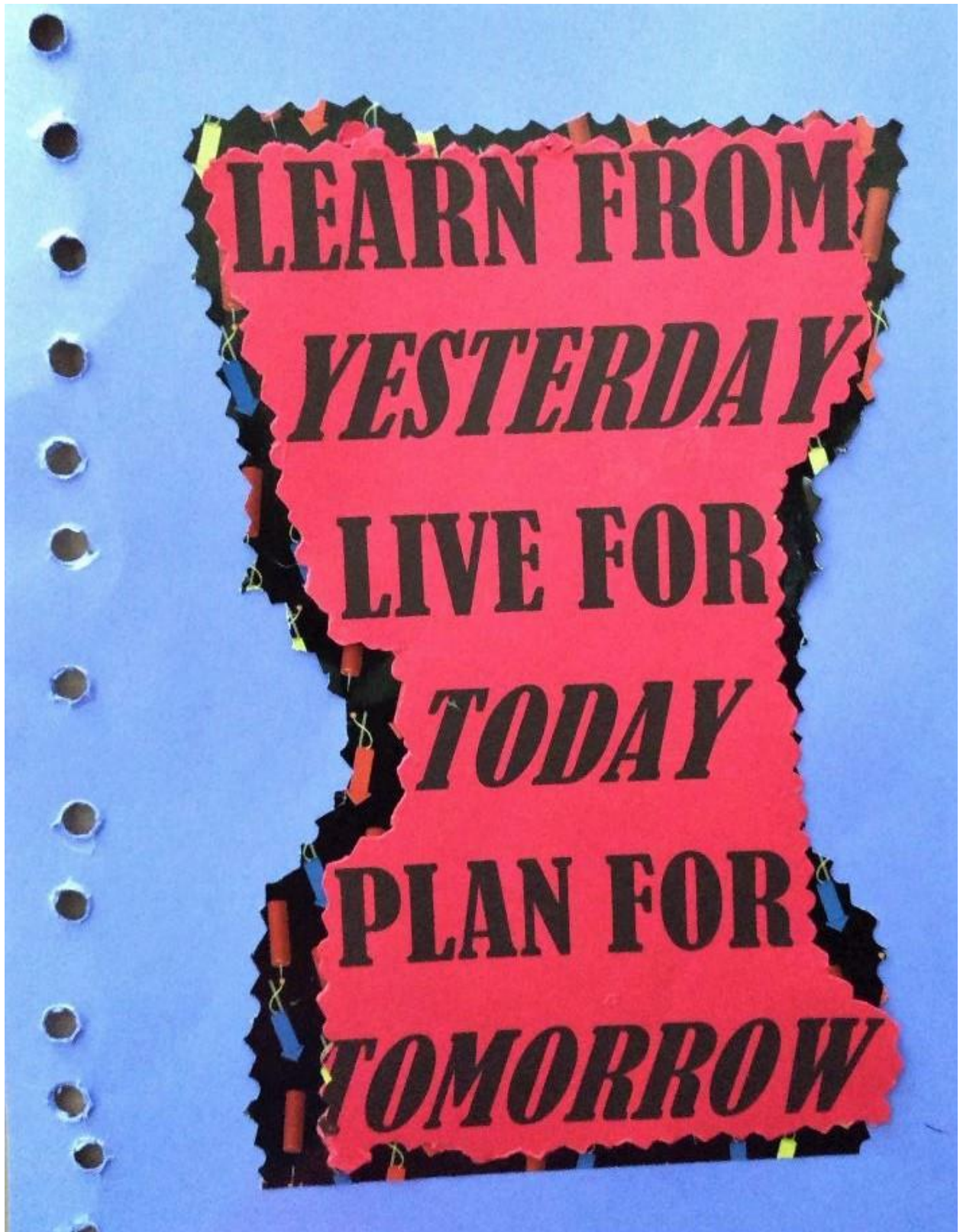
My goals are to graduate

Stop making bad decisions

I have a little knowledge

I miss being a kid.

The caged bird is a symbol for our society because people in America are caged birds.



Darius

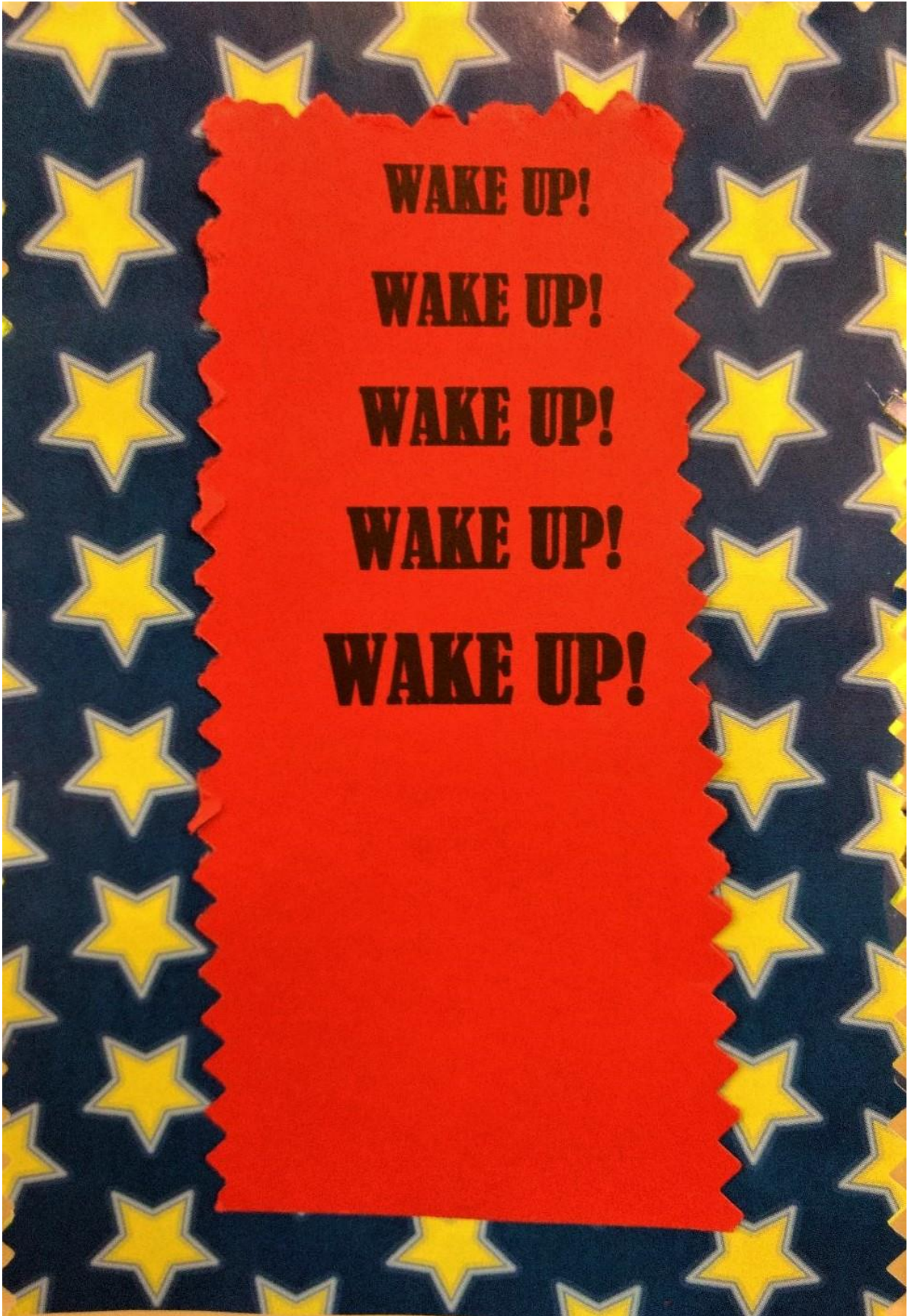


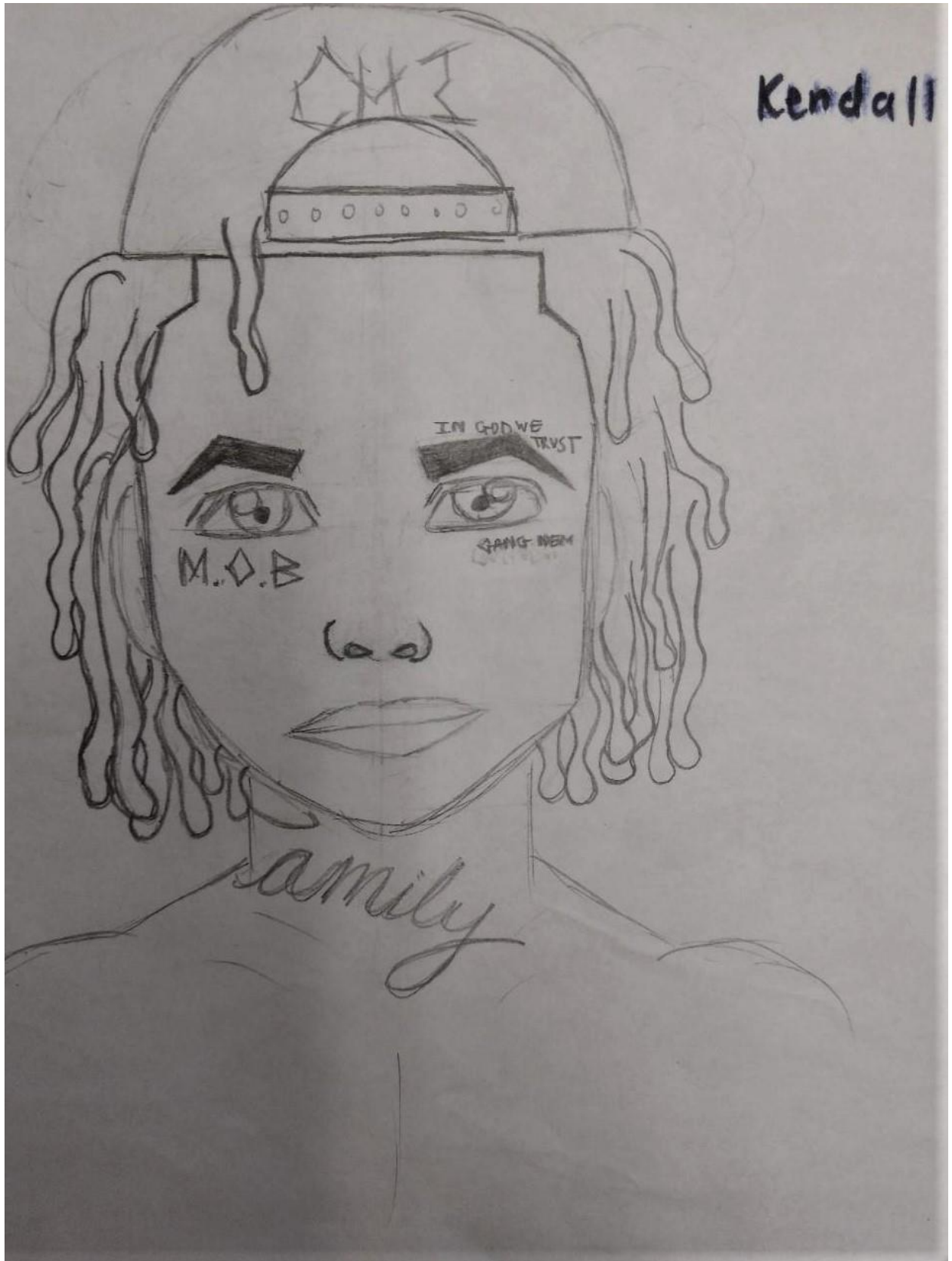
## **Sharon**

Rise up and be bold  
Rise up and be strong  
Rise up and be brave  
Rise up and be faithful  
Rise up and be happy

Rise up and be yourself  
Rise up and be calm  
Rise up and be a success  
Rise up and be champion  
Rise up and be active

Rise up and be an inspiration  
Rise up and be prepared  
Rise up and be free  
Rise up and be ready  
Rise up and be proud of yourself





Kendall

## **Kendall**

Chapters of my life

My background

Growing up

Hobbies

School

The Mask

Drawing

Cars

**MUSIC**

What it feels like being a teenager

My biggest goals

Music helps people when they have difficult times

By making them happy

And calming them down

Making them think about something else

Music helped me when

I was mad at my sister

And I started listening to music

It calmed me.





*Kendall*



## **Gabari**

Music can help people

Calm them down

Make them happier

hearing someone's good

voice

I have heard adults in the community say

Kids growing up doing the wrong things

Having babies and stuff like that.

I was born in Chicago at Jackson Park

My favorite activities to do is

Rap and play football

People say my neighborhood is bad

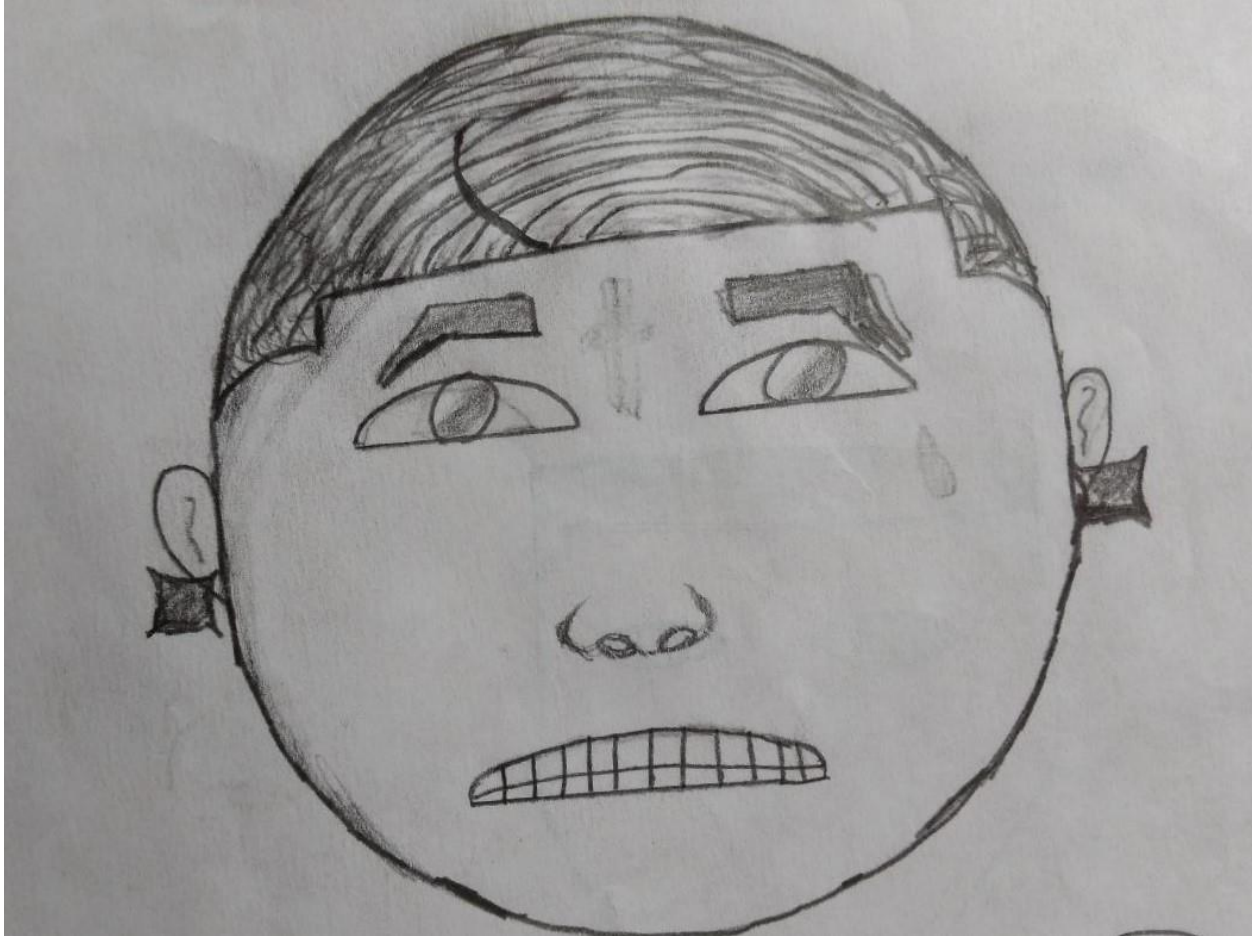
I want people to know that everybody not bad people

I want people to know that I'm a smart young man and it feels normal being  
a teenager

I want to go to college

My biggest goal is to make a lot of music and money

The first time I made a song it changed my life forever



**Tykarian**

I am the youngest child

Born in Chicago

I play basketball

2K

& Rap

I am proud of being the best basketball player in class

I want to go to college.

## Darnell

Rhythm is a beat.

Music can help people

Music can make people feel better.

The time music helped me  
was for my basketball game.

I scored 30 and we won.

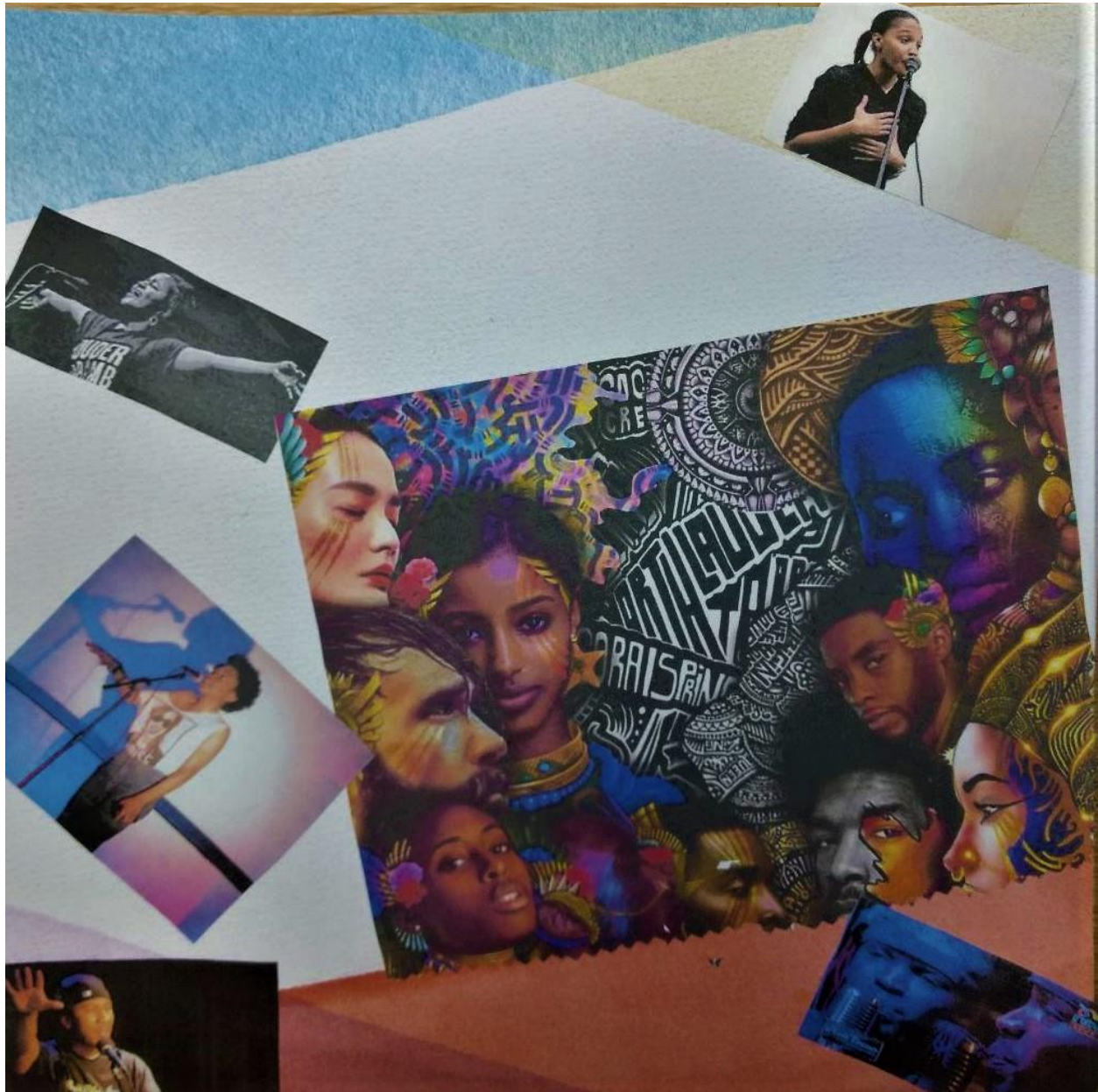


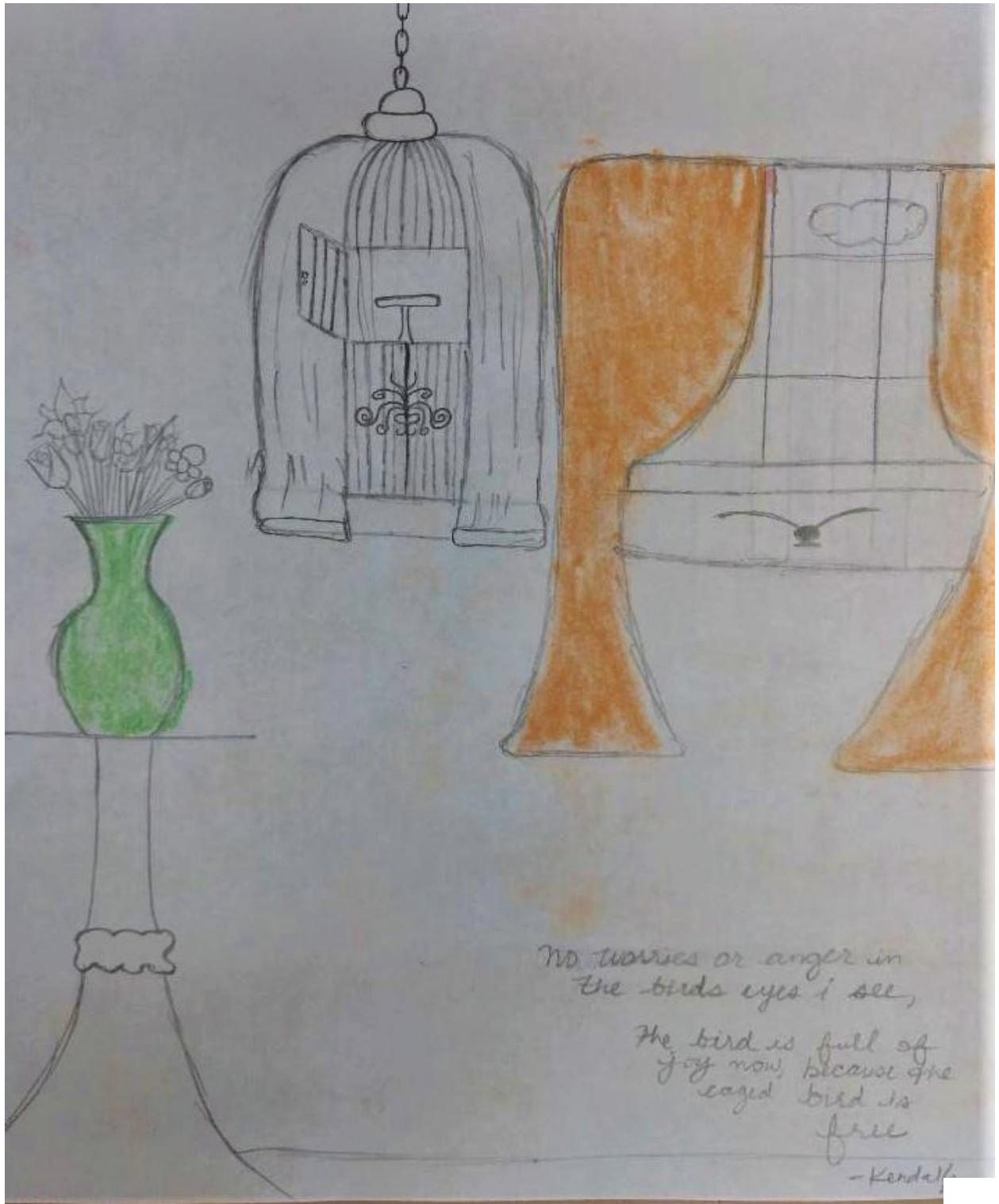
*Kendall*



## Bianca

Fearful  
The caged bird sings  
Freedom!  
His wings are clipped  
His feet tied so he can open his throat to sing  
If you don't use your voice you won't be heard





Kendall





Special Thanks to  
Urban Gateways, CPS Ingenuity Grant &  
Benjamin E. Mays Academy Staff and Community!