

Students honored for exceptional art

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EAST ST. LOUIS - A pair of East St. Louis Senior High School Students were recently honored as top performers in the Walgreens Expressions Challenge art competition.

Senior Myneisha Williams won the Visual Arts category of the contest for her work entitled “The Eye of the Beholder” while sophomore Janasha Paige was honored as the People’s Champ because her work “Suicide is not the answer” received the most ballots in public voting conducted across the St. Louis region.

Kim Jaoko, art teacher at East St. Louis Senior High, said she was amazed to have two students do so well in the same contest. The winners were announced Jan. 26 at the Cardinals Club inside Busch Stadium in St. Louis.

“Win or lose, we would have been proud of our students,” said Jaoko. “But I am so happy for them that they were recognized for their work.”

First place included a \$2,000 cash prize for the student plus a \$500 award for their school and \$500 for the teacher. Second place included \$1,250 cash for the student and \$500 for the school.”

The Expressions challenge was invented by Walgreens as a way to find positive solutions for common teen problems including bullying, self-esteem and self-worth issues, sexual responsibility while encouraging high schoolers 14-18 years old to exercise their creativity and communicate with each other.

The challenge began Oct. 1 and voting took place through November. Works went through two rounds of judging in November before finalists were announced Dec. 20. The contest includes creative writing categories for poetry, essays and short stories, visual arts categories graphic design, painting and sculpture and media arts categories including video, recorded song or rap and spoken word.

“Walgreens, a company dedicated to helping people get, stay and live well, is proud to help students find their authentic voice on these sensitive issues,” according to a company statement about the challenge. “We are equally proud Expressions has become a counterbalance for the sometimes-idealized images and unrealistic images around personal relationships. We think the peer-to-peer messages students are sending via the Walgreens Expressions Challenge are on point and being heard loud and clearly around the world.”