



Be the Change

2023 – 2024





Be the Change!

Lynden Sculpture Garden's **Be the Change** was designed to develop the leadership and self-advocacy skills of a cohort of young refugee women and girls through arts-centered programming. From September 2023 through May 2024, the group convened monthly for a three-hour workshop at Lynden, meeting and interviewing local women leaders and engaging in hands-on art and writing activities guided by refugee/immigrant artists.

Workshop Facilitator: Maryam Durani

Workshop Coordinator: Kim Khaira

with assistance from Polly Morris, Executive Director

We are grateful for the generous support of the HOME Refugee Steering Committee, the Rotary Club of Milwaukee – Amigos After Hours, the Woman's Club of Wisconsin Foundation, Our City of Nations, a program of the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the Brico Fund.

Be the Change!

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Lynden Sculpture Garden

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Kim Khaira by Kisanet Yosief

Belonging, Being, Be the Change!

Lynden has been working with refugee communities since 2016 to create space through arts-based encounters, projects, and programs. In 2019 we formalized these programs as HOME and established the community-based HOME Refugee Steering Committee to guide this work. In 2022-23, members of the steering committee began to discuss the gender-specific struggles of young women and girls. In 2023, we began to work with Maryam Durani, a world-renowned women and girls' rights advocate who had recently resettled to the United States, and a steering

committee member, to design Be the Change!

Be the Change! launched in September 2023 as an arts and leadership workshop for young women and girls from Milwaukee's refugee communities. Initially designed for a cohort of twelve, Be the Change! surpassed our expectations, attracting a core group of about 20 participants from an overall registration of 26. The group included participants from diverse refugee communities, including those who identify and/or migrated from the following countries: Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Zambia. All of these participants resettled to the U.S within the past 10 years, and a good number of our most active participants have been here for less than a year.

As an immigrant indigenous to the island of Borneo on my maternal side, and as someone who worked, as a young adult, within the grassroots Rohingya refugee community in Southeast Asia, I have been a witness to the migration of a global minority who are specifically selected (largely based on their heightened vulnerability risk according to UNHCR) to resettle from a second (or interim) country, such as Malaysia, to a third country, such as the United States. I have been able to

observe the particular impact forced migration has on women and girls on both ends of the journey.

The resilience of women and girls, and the support they receive from their families, communities, and public institutions—including arts organizations—contribute to their long-term success, and to the success of our society at large. The issues that they face—socioeconomic, psychosocial—are beyond the purview of any single person or entity to resolve. These include mental health, employment, education, and cultural and legal issues—all which require a holistic viewpoint, and an “all-hands-on-deck” approach that centers the voices of the people that are impacted by these issues firsthand.

Therefore, in addition to working with new and established female leaders and artists with refugee and immigrant backgrounds, Be the Change! aims to develop and encourage refugee women and girls’ voices through peer-to-peer support and mentorship.

As a long-time community organizer, I continue to be humbled by my peer age group: the women artists and leaders who participated in this pilot project have been forced to start over and over again. I am also moved (and not surprised) by the youth who teach us as we teach them. With their drawings, writings, expressions, translations, and more, they emphasize the very intention of the participant-led approach to Be the Change!: that the beauty and the art of mentoring and leading others is to be open to being mentored and to being led ourselves. They tell me that they, too, belong to the same village that it takes to raise a child—after all, many have had to raise themselves in this faltering global village—and that as refugee girls living in the world, they have long known the markers of resiliency.

We would like to thank the Refugee Steering Committee and our sponsors, the Rotary Club of Milwaukee – Amigos After Hours, the Woman’s Club of Wisconsin Foundation, Our City of Nations, a program of the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the Brico Fund. We could not have done this without their support.

Thank you to our guest presenters and community leaders, including leaders selected by participants to represent their communities. They came before the group as Mother, Lawyer, Chef, Tailor, Social Worker, Educator, and Professional.

Thank you to our guest artists, including student/youth leader/participant Khatera

Nazari, artist Gabrielle Tesfaye, businesswoman/embroidery artist Ashley Xiong, poet Brenda Cárdenas, assistant professor/artist Zuhair Feraidon, and Lynden's bilingual art and nature educator, Claudia Orjuela. Further appreciation to designer Yuliia Shevtsova who worked hands-on with the participants to help us put this publication together.

To each and every Be the Change! participant, including Khaterina, Josephine, Khatera, Kisanet, Lidya, Madina, Marwa, Mary, Nastaran, Nazmenah, Niyat, Sesen, Shazia, Tigisti, Veronica, Yosan, Zeagol, and others who have participated, thank you for trusting us throughout this process; thank you for your words and learning alongside us; and thank you for your beautiful artworks.

Last, but not least, to Polly Morris, Lynden's executive director, and to Maryam Durani, our workshop facilitator: one, whom I consider a mentor in the arts, and the other, a peer and a friend in the community. Both make this work challenging, enjoyable, and worthwhile. Thank you for also being an important part of my personal migration story.

Kim Khaira

Workshop Coordinator, Be the Change!

Community Engagement Specialist, HOME Program at Lynden

A word from Maryam Durani

I was once a girl from Afghanistan.

For more than twenty years, I have advocated for the rights of women and children, and freedom of expression in my country. However, in 2021, I was forced to leave and become a refugee in the U.S.

It was a very difficult time for my people—and for myself, I knew that everything that I had built throughout my professional career, with my community, would be over.

When I came to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I soon learned about the work of the HOME Program at the Lynden Sculpture Garden. In 2023, we gathered and decided to prepare a program called Be the Change! for young women and girls from the refugee community.

As the facilitator of this program, and for these 9 months, I had the chance to meet intelligent and hardworking refugee girls from many diverse communities in Milwaukee. Despite their many differences, these girls have worked to reach mutual understanding and cooperation with one another through the work of building their leadership skills.

Each of the guest speakers we collectively selected with the girls, as leaders in their own right, were wonderful to work with. They spoke in such a way about their life's work as though you were reading a heartwarming book. I witnessed the girls being equally engrossed through their listening to the words of these leaders.

We also organized art activities and invited guest artists in this program, which taught the girls the opportunity to learn a "language"—a language of art that invited conversation and understanding.

The leaders and artists that were selected and invited to speak to meet with the girls showed genuine interest in the girls' own knowledge and leadership skills, which further enhanced new skills they were learning.

I believe that leaders are those who learn how to help themselves and also help others do the right thing. Leaders see a vision and aim to create something new, by setting the path and taking that first step.

While I have been a leader to girls and women in my community for many years, through the work of HOME's Be the Change! program, I am further convinced that we need more girls and women leaders if we want to see a positive change in this world and guarantee peace to our future generations.

Maryam Durani
Facilitator & HOME Refugee Steering
Committee Be the Change!, HOME at Lynden



من دختری از افغانستان هستم و بیشتر از بیست سال از حقوق زنان و کودکان و آزادی بیان در کشورم دفاع کرده‌ام. با این حال، در سال 2021، من مجبور به ترک و پناهندگی در ایالات متحده شدم. زمان بسیار سختی برای مردم من و همچنان برای خودم بود.

می‌دانستم که همه چیزهایی که در طول زندگی حرفه‌ای‌ام، با جامعه‌ام، با خانواده‌ام، به پایان خواهد رسید. وقتی به میلوکی، ویسکانسین آمدم، به زودی بر مورد کار برنامه خانه در بایج مجسمه میلزی لیندن مطلع شدم. در سال 2023 جمع شدیم و تصمیم گرفتیم برنامه‌ای به نام تغییر کن! را برای زنان و دختران جوان از جامعه پناهندگان بسازیم.

به عنوان تسهیل کننده، این برنامه و برای 9 ماه، این شانس را یافتیم که با دختران پناهنده باهوش و سخت‌کوشی از جوامع مختلف پناهندگان، در میلوکی ملاقات کنیم. این دختران علیرغم تفاوت‌های قراولتی که دارند، تلاش کرده‌اند از طریق ایجاد مهارت‌های رهبری به درک متقابل و همکاری با یکدیگر برسند. هر یک از سخنرانان میسران که به طور جمعی با دختران انتخاب کردیم، آنها رهبرانی فوق العاده بودن هر کدام در بخش خودشان و کار کردن با آنها فوق العاده بود.

انها طوری در مورد کار، زندگی خود صحبت می‌کردند که گویی شما در حال خواندن کتابی دلچسب هستید. من شانه‌ها بونم که چگونه این دختران در شنیدن سخنرانان غرق می‌شدن.

ما همچنین فعالیت‌های هنری را ترتیب دادیم و هنرمندان میسران را در این برنامه دعوت کردیم، که به دختران فرصت یادگیری یک «زیلی» دیگر را فراهم کرد - زبانی از هنر، که دعوت به گفتگو و تفاهم می‌کند.

رهبران و هنرمندانی که برای ملاقات با دختران انتخاب و دعوت شده بودند، علاقه واقعی خود را به دانش و مهارت‌های رهبری دختران نشان دادند، که مهارت‌های جدیدی را که آنها یاد می‌گرفتند، بیشتر کرد.

من معتقدم رهبران کسانی هستند که یاد می‌گیرند چگونه به خود و همچنین به دیگران کمک کنند تا کار درست را انجام دهند.

رهبران یا تعیین مسیر و برداشتن اولین قدم، چشم اندازی را مطرح می‌کنند و هنرشان خلق چیزی جدید است. در حالی که من سال‌ها رهبر دختران و زنان در جلسه خود بوده‌ام، اما از طریق کار در گروه خانه و برنامه تغییر کن!

من متقاعد شدم که ما به زنان و دختران رهبری بیشتر نیاز داریم اگر می‌خواهیم شاهد تغییر مثبت در این جهان باشیم و صلح را برای نسل آینده خود تضمین کنیم.


مریم درانی
تسهیل‌گر برنامه تغییر کن و کمیته راهبری پناهنده‌گان اخلافه در لیندن

Maryam Durani, message in Dari

Participants

Nastaran Ahmadi*
Sarah Bahindulwa
Sonjida Begum
Shazia Bibi*
Lidya Gebrekidan*
Niyat Gebrekidan*
Sesen Gebrekidan*
Madina Iqbalzada*
Marwa Iqbalzada*
Khaterina Kimbakimba*
Parmina Malang
Anuar Begum Nur Hasan
Murio Ibrahim

Raha Ibrahim
Bibi Juhara Mohammad Jaafar
Khatera Nazari*
Hsar Eh Cree Paw
Josephine Pinky*
Mary Ronaldile*
Nazmenah Shinwari*
Zeagol Shinwari*
Paw Mu To
Veronica Veronique*
Kisanet Yosief*
Tigisti Yosief*
Yosan Yosief*

* Included in publication



Guest Artists

Brenda Cárdenas, poet, 2010–2012 Milwaukee poet laureate

Zuhal Feraidon, Afghan, artist

Khatera Nazari, Hazara Afghan, poet

Claudia Orjuela, Colombian, Lynden art and nature educator

Yuliia Shevtsova, Ukrainian, graphic designer

Gabrielle Tesfaye, Tigrayan/Jamaican, visual artist

Ashley Xiong, Hmong, businesswoman and embroidery artist

Guest Leaders

Kobra Amiri, chef/tailor

Risa Berg, social worker, Milwaukee Public Schools

Marta Carrión, Rotary Club of Milwaukee–Amigos After Hours

Frey Faris, Rotary Club of Milwaukee–Amigos After Hours

Amitha Gone, educator, Milwaukee Public Schools

Yalda Habibi, lawyer

Angela Rester, Rotary Club of Milwaukee–Amigos After Hours











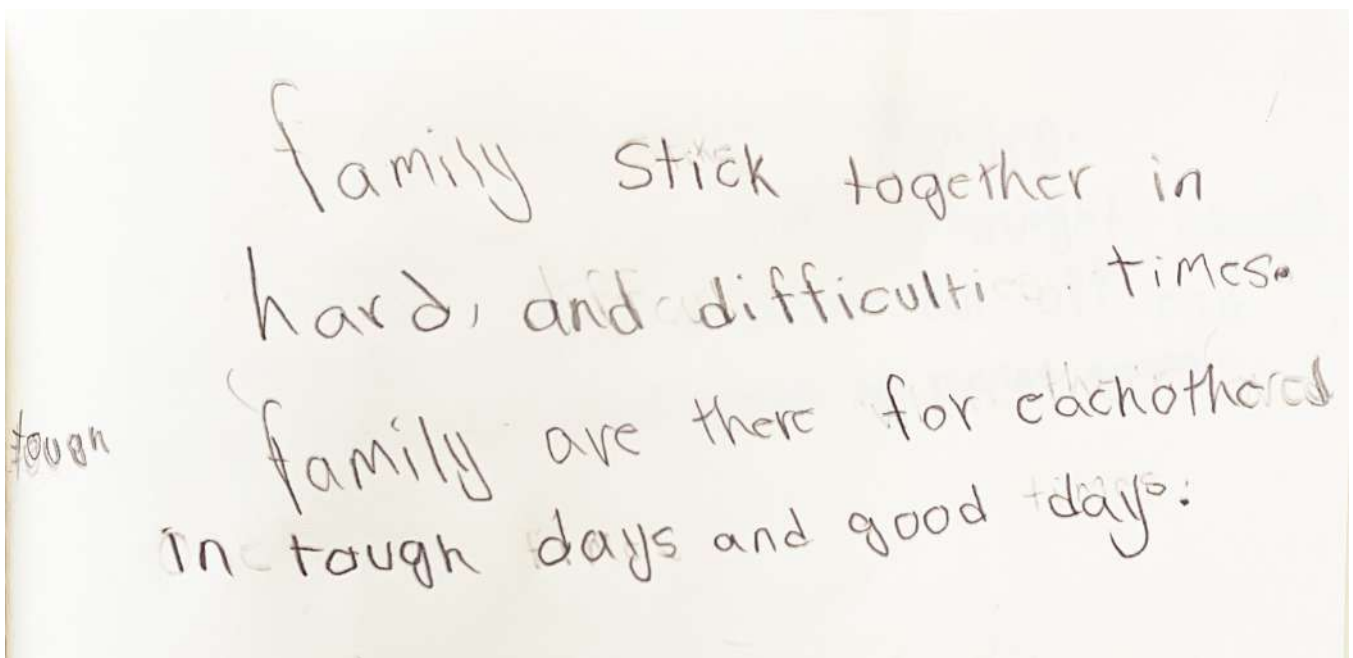
Khaterina Kimbakimba

Age: 15, 2 ½ years in the US

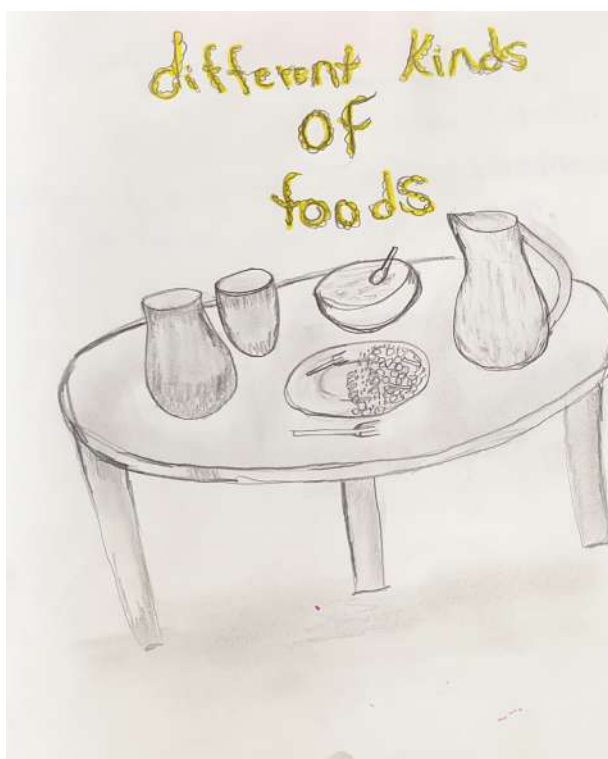
School: Milwaukee High School
of the Arts / 9th grade

Origin: Congolese, Zambia and
Democratic Republic of Congo

“Blue and green are colors I like to wear.”

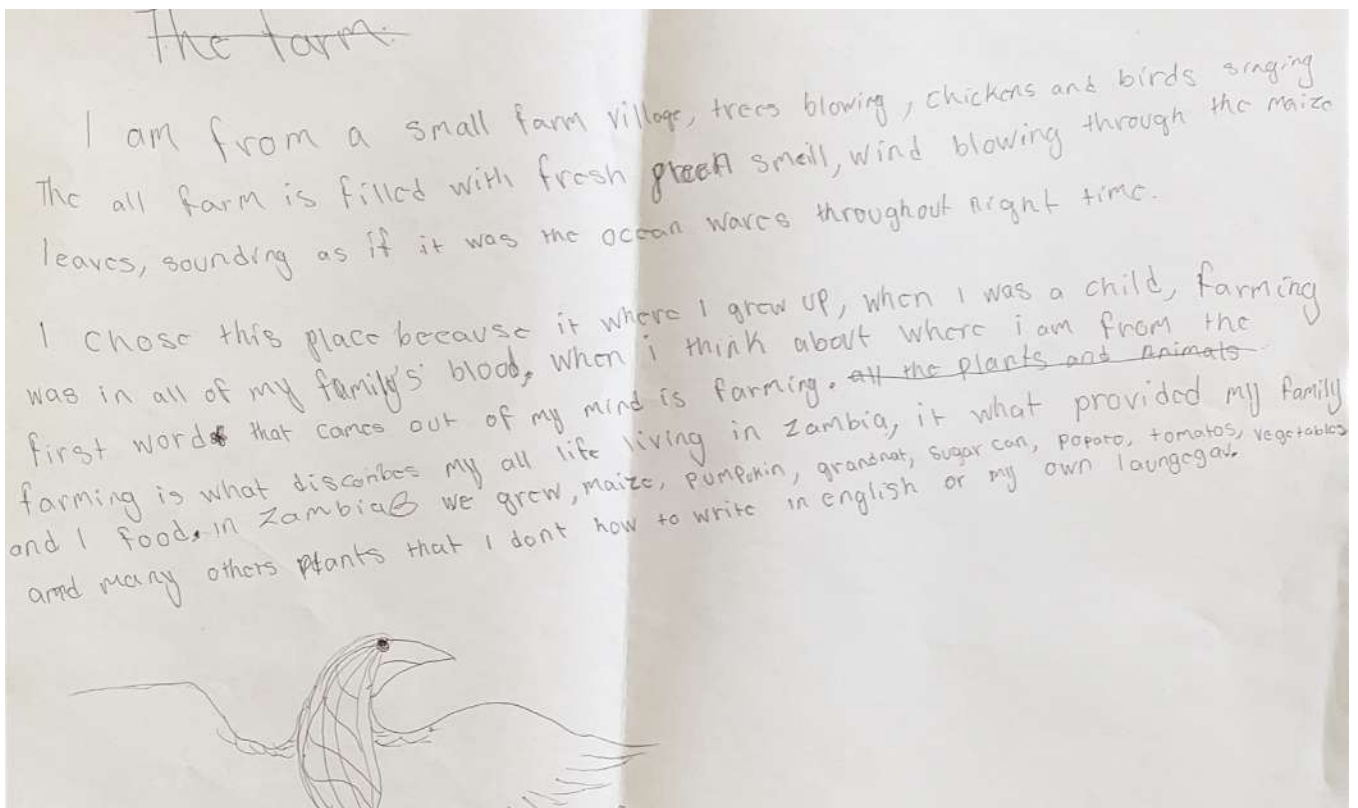


"This symbolizes the forest but can also be like a pheasant."





"This picture symbolizes where I'm from. It's about my home country and the farms we used to build."



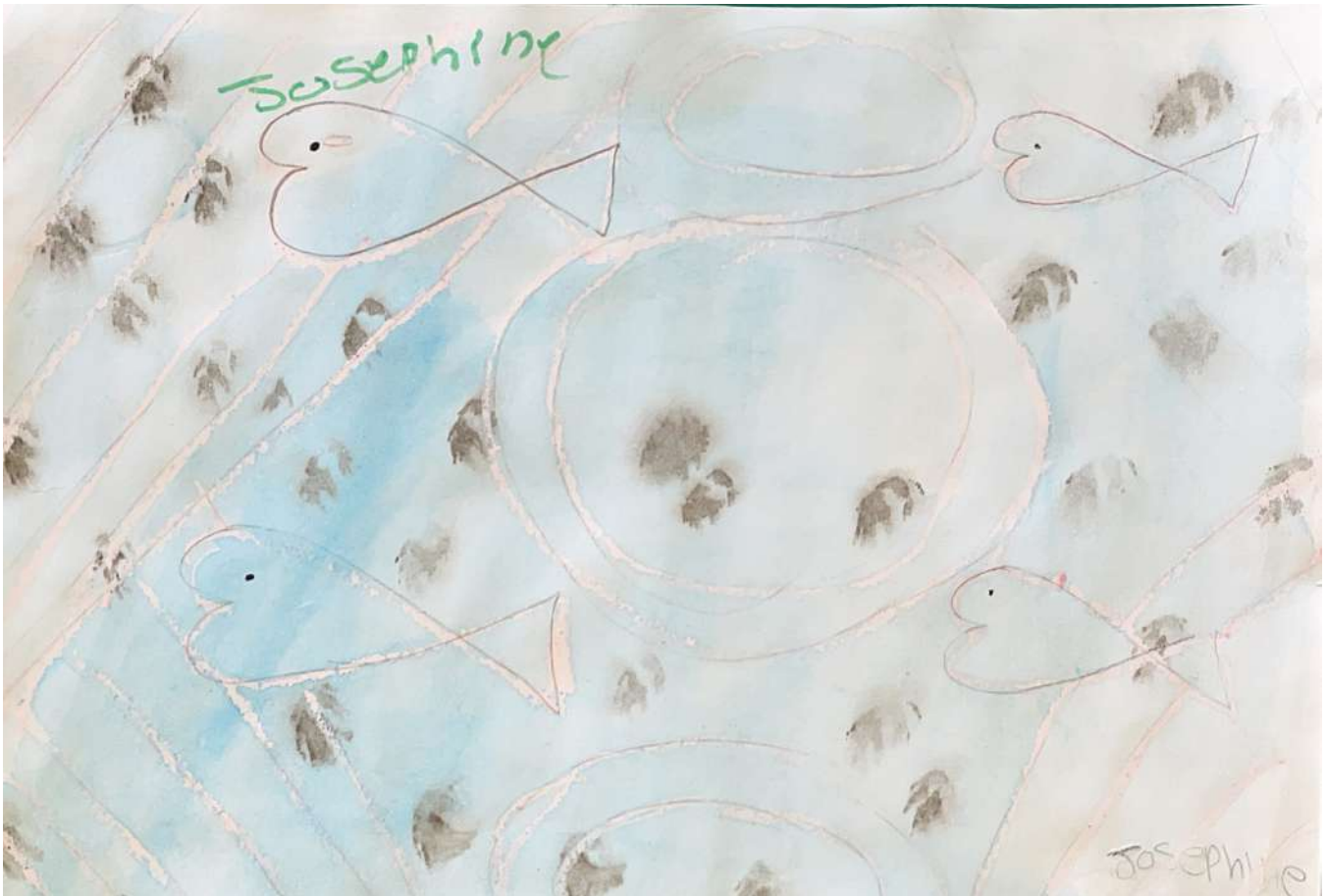


Josephine Pinky

Age: 17, 2 ½ years in the US

School: Bradley Tech High School /
11th grade

Origin: Congolese, Zambia and
Democratic Republic of Congo





**“It’s colorful, and it’s me,
and it’s about enjoying yourself.”**





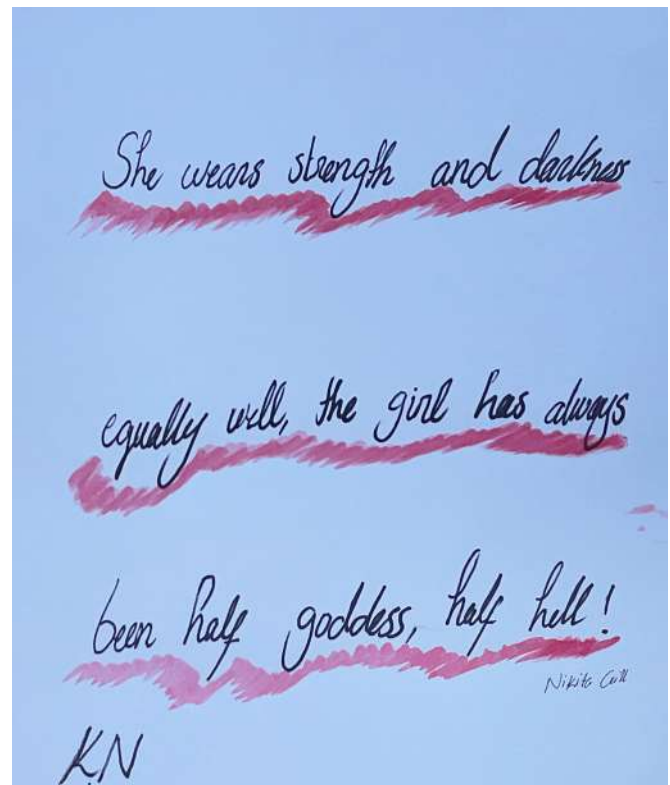
Khatera Nazari

Age: 24, 3 years in the US

School: UW-Milwaukee /
bachelor's degree student

Origin: Hazara, Afghanistan

**"Sometimes you
may be down, you
may not feel okay,
it's okay to be sad
and take your time
and be easy on
yourself."**





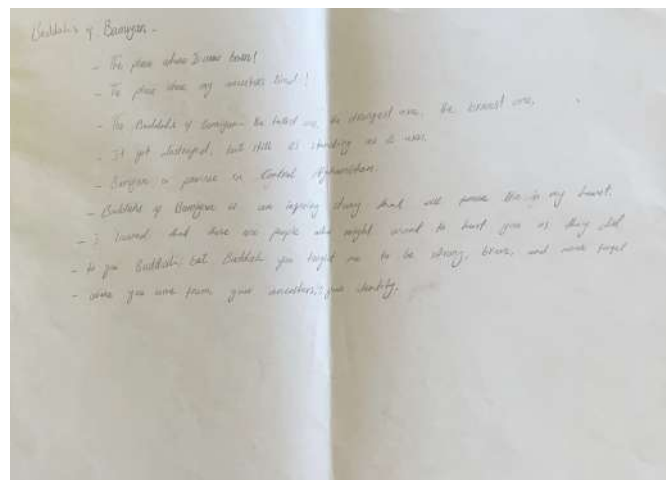
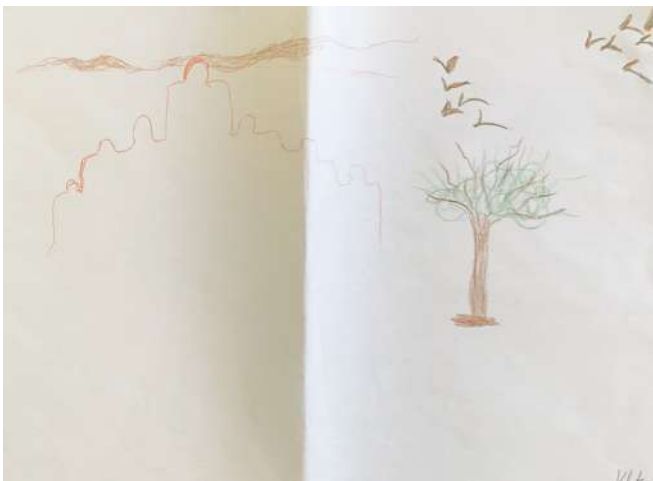
"I wrote my name in Dari, Arabic, and 'broken English.' I like my name because my dad chose it. I did three months of calligraphy study back home."



"I did this artwork because I'm from Afghanistan and it's a country where women do not have their rights as they want to. This is a message for the women of Afghanistan to resist, and not give up."



"We went outside. It was the start of fall, leaves were falling."



"This is about Bamian, where I'm originally from. I was reading a book by an author from Bamian and I wrote my thoughts about Bamian at that moment. Bamian is where I was born, that's where my ancestors lived, it shows that I am Indigenous to Afghanistan."

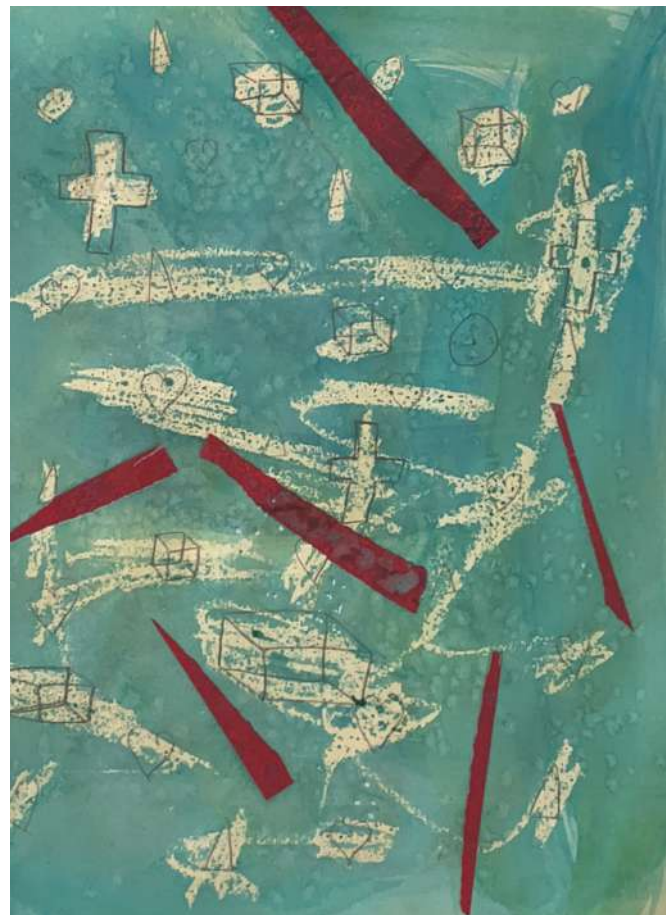
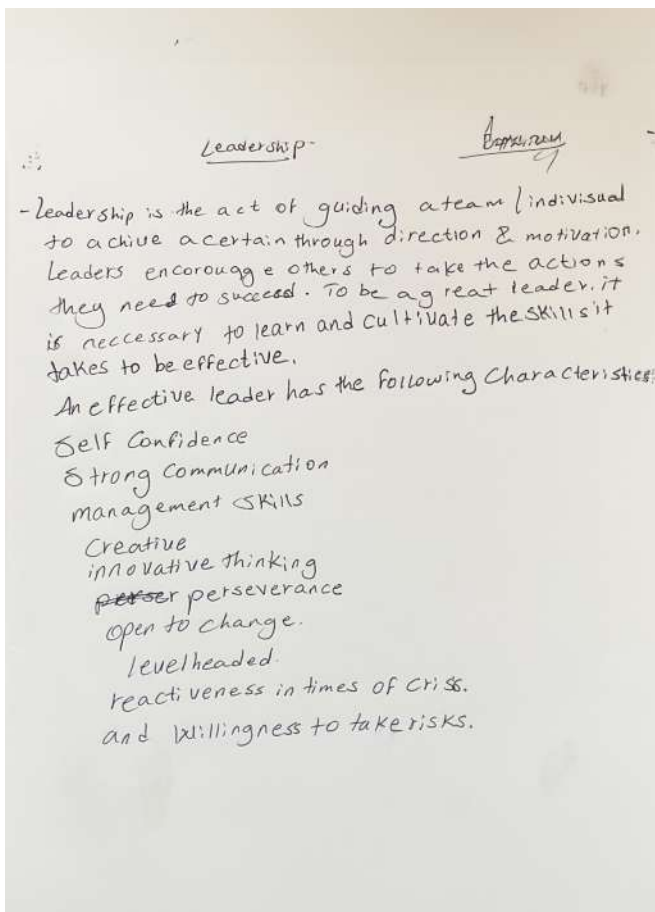


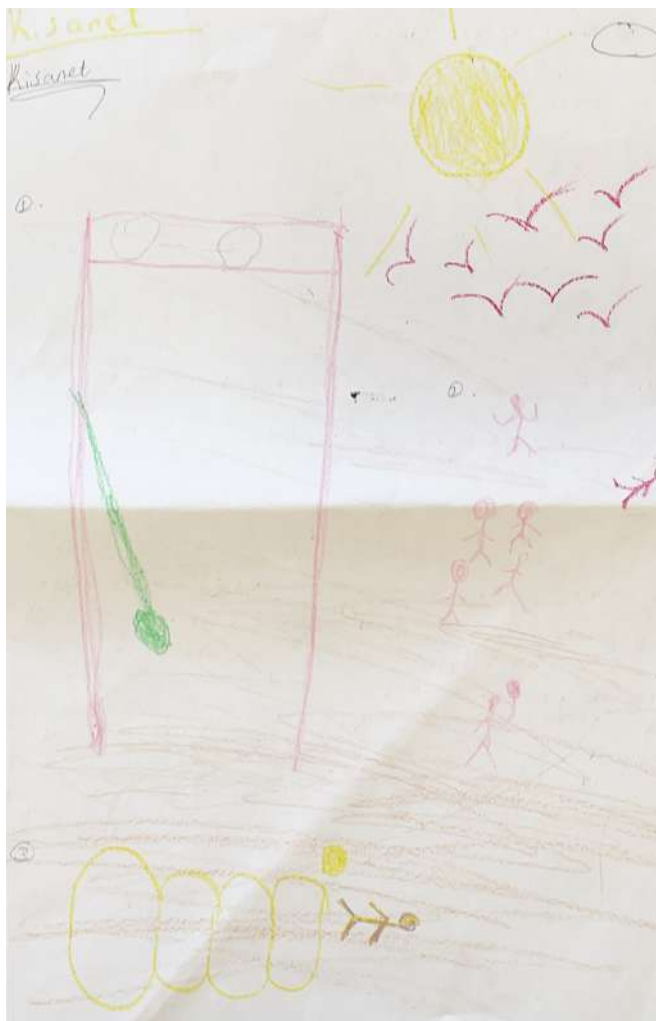
Kisanet Yosief

Age: 17, under 1 year in the US

School: South Division High School /
9th grade

Origin: Eritrean, town of Segeneyti,
Eritrea





① The number one that I draw is we called in our country figo figo it is remind me ~~my~~ My neighborhood my childhood. it we make the ball with a sock we fill something inside the sock and then we add a rope and we tie the rope with the pole. and we kick the ball when we kick the ball it doesn't has to touch our body except our foot.

② The second one is a tempo. we also make the ball with a sock. when we play 2 people must have stand in the opposite side and the rest of teams will play in the 2 peoples. one person throw the person to the other side and the players have to run quickly to the person that help she doesn't have the ball. if the ball touch any body from the players the person have to be disqualified from the game. and then when the other players touch the ball with their hands to hitting back to the person that throw the ball 3 times the person that disqualified from the game comes back and play again.

③ the last one that ~~remind me~~ ^{remind me} my childhood game is a mayas mayas. this game is we play with 2 or more people. we make 3 or 5 small oval shapes and we draw one big circle that linked together. one person started and they must have a little thingy stone. and we put on the first oval shape and we kick it. when we kick the stone it must have to stop on the inside of the shape if the stone stop on the line you will be lose. There are different types and shapes of this game but I like and played this one more.



Lidya Gebrekidan

Age: 22, under 1 year in the US

School: MATC / High School diploma student

Origin: Eritrean, Eritrea

“I like the
embroidery of girl
power.
It is easy to see but
it’s hard to do.”





"Time plays an important role in our life. It cannot come again or return."



"The first house is the most memorable."

This place was my childhood house the house's name called Ago in my native language.

My feeling for it is really hard that I can't be forgotten. I used to be the home of love when it was raining the other house or room was making a sound of lightning and thunder it was making a sound but this Ago was made of glass. It was safe & not bad we were sleeping there peacefully and happily with our grandmothers. I really miss that time it was the best of bests childhood time for me.

I have loved it that I want to go back and build it again to relive that best and unforgettable time of my life.

"How can I forget my old life when my grandmother was telling me her all experience that she faced in her life & the story of our old culture."

Also....

My bicycle is the only thing that I want to ride again because, it was the my first & my best thing that I had dreamed to have.

And the reason behind that was that I thought it was the hardest thing to be ridden until I learned how to ride it by myself after that my happiness for knowing how to ride & teach my siblings was really endless. After that I get to go everywhere at any time I want to go.

Finally all I want to say is that being bilingual is so helpful. People had changed with time and is forgetting their real meaning...

"Never compare yourself to others because you never know what others have experience in their life."

"Love the life you live to live the life you love!"



Madina Iqbalzada

Age: 16, 2 ½ years in the US

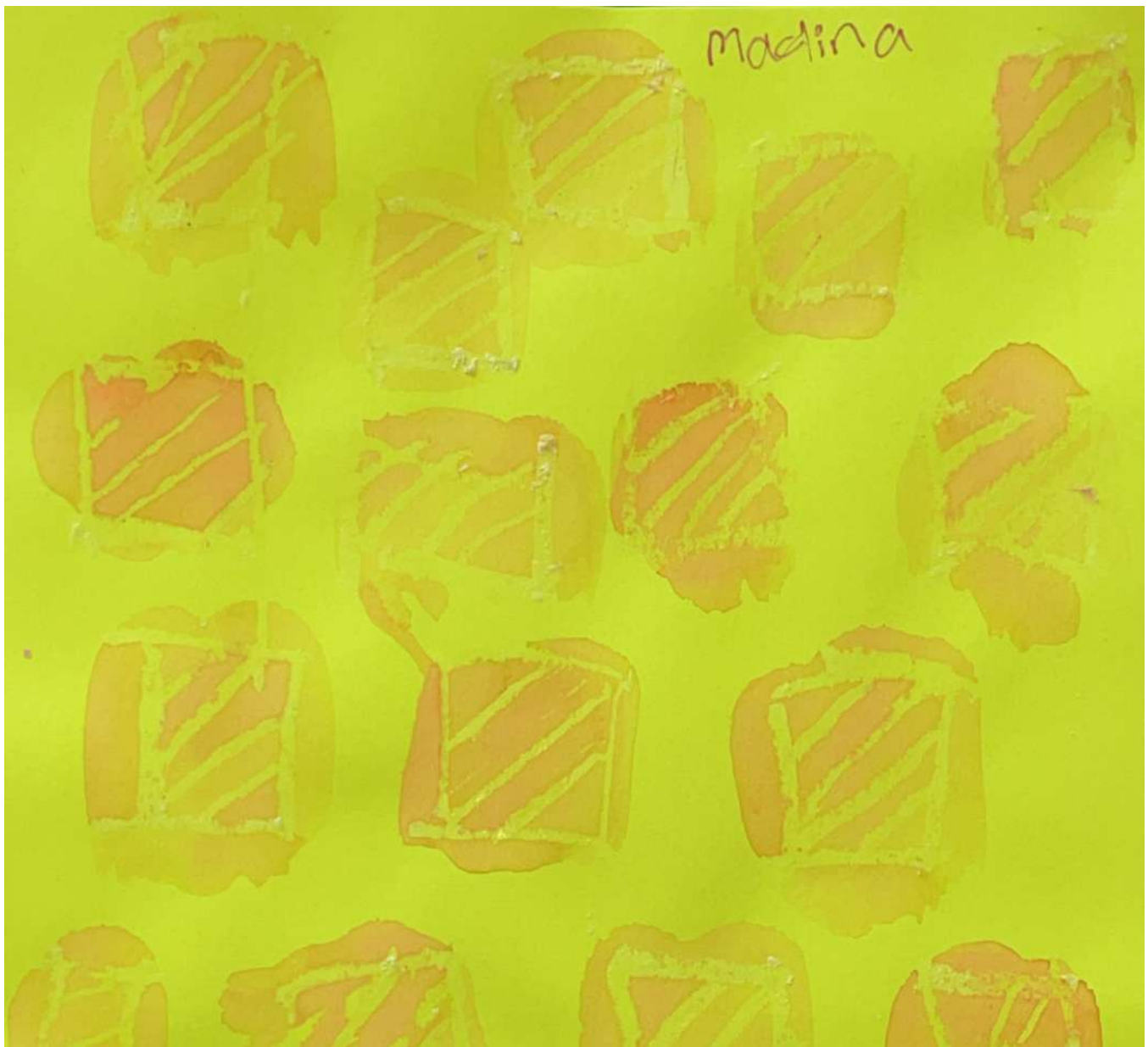
School: Pulaski High School /
10th grade

Origin: Hazara, from the capital
city of Kabul, and Maidan Wardak
Province, Afghanistan

Wish to see one day

"I decided to draw this with wax and watercolor because it's one of my favorite trees, which is a date tree. I've actually never seen this tree in my life, and I wish to see it one day in real life."





the picture I drew in the back of this paper is the picture of my school that always is in my mind and I can't never forget also always the sound of girl talking in school is in my eyes the thing I like about that school it was the care I really like the care of my school. I was in that school about four years and I have a lot of memories from there and I know we all have a lot of our school.

the thing I remember from last time.

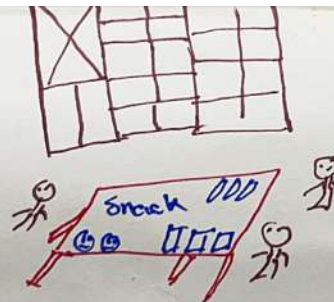
1. work in group



2. Share 3 interesting



3. Have break time.



4. Have time to talk with friend





Marwa Iqbalzada

Age: 14, 2 ½ years in the US

School: Milwaukee Academy of
Chinese Language / 8th grade

Origin: Hazara, from the capital
city of Kabul, and Maidan Wardak
Province, Afghanistan

**“I play violin, that’s why I drew a clef,
and I love to read books.”**



My home country the yard of my home is special because
me and my grandfather gave the plant water afternoon
and the sound of bird was amazing the sun shine
was so beautiful and amazing place ever. And with my
beautiful dress eating the fruit Peach and chair.
And my Mom cooked with those vegetables that we growing
those vegetables with my grandfather and I will never forget.

Marwa

Leadership Make your Father
is important to you. And when
you look at your leader and
you get the energy from your
leader. I think leader is like
that what about you!

And also leader make you what
do you want for your country.

And a lot of challenge to your
life.



Mary Ronaldile

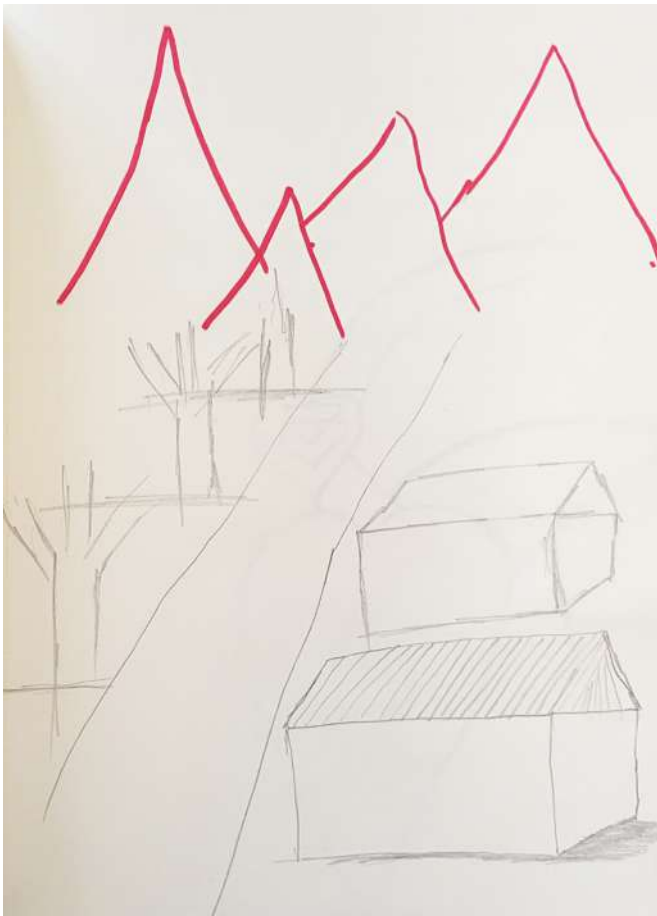
Age: 23, 2 ½ years in the US

School: Aspen Dental / studying to be a certified dental assistant

Origin: Congolese, African/Black American

The depth of the ocean

“This drawing represents the hardship of women. Someone might seem happy or smiling on the outside, but deep down, tears might be rolling. The lesson is that you don’t have to judge someone based on their appearance, because they might be going through something or facing difficulties”.



The beauty

They say a smile
is the best healing of heart
the best healing of mind

beauty is

they say beauty lays in the eyes
of the behold, but i will say
beauty is feeling that beauty
the butterflies that flies in
the berries of the beautify
family.

the brightness of smiles that lays
in everyone cheeks makes the happiest
family exist under the sun of the maker
even when with they smiles you
cannot see the surface darkest innermost
of the heart coz they believe that the
smile is the best healing of the heart
and mind. . . .



Nastaran Ahmadi

Age: 14, 2 ½ years in the US

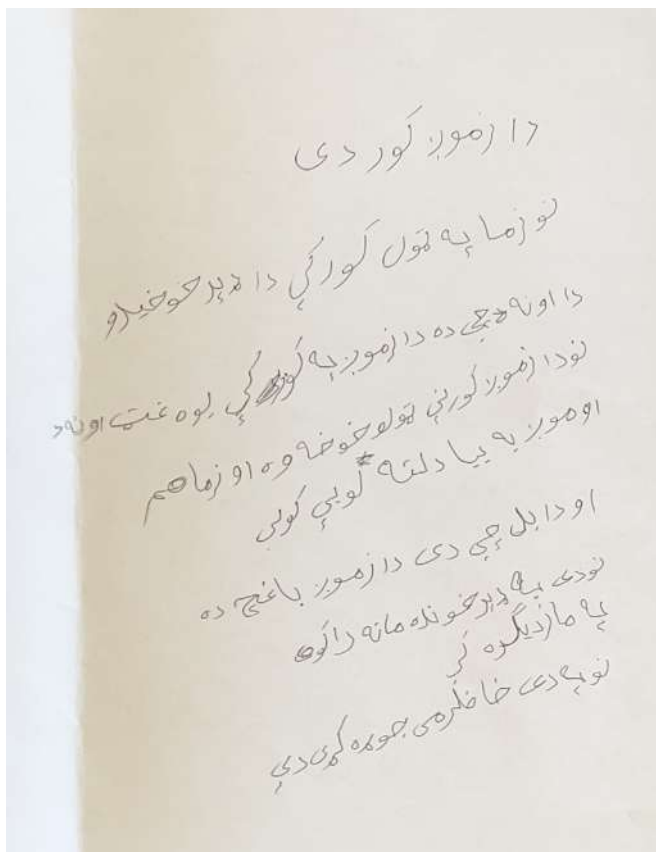
School: Humboldt Park School /
8th grade

Origin: Persian, city of Bamyan,
Afghanistan

“I like short hair and I like to be kind
a lot.”



“I wrote my name in my language.
I like my name because my uncle
picked it for me.”



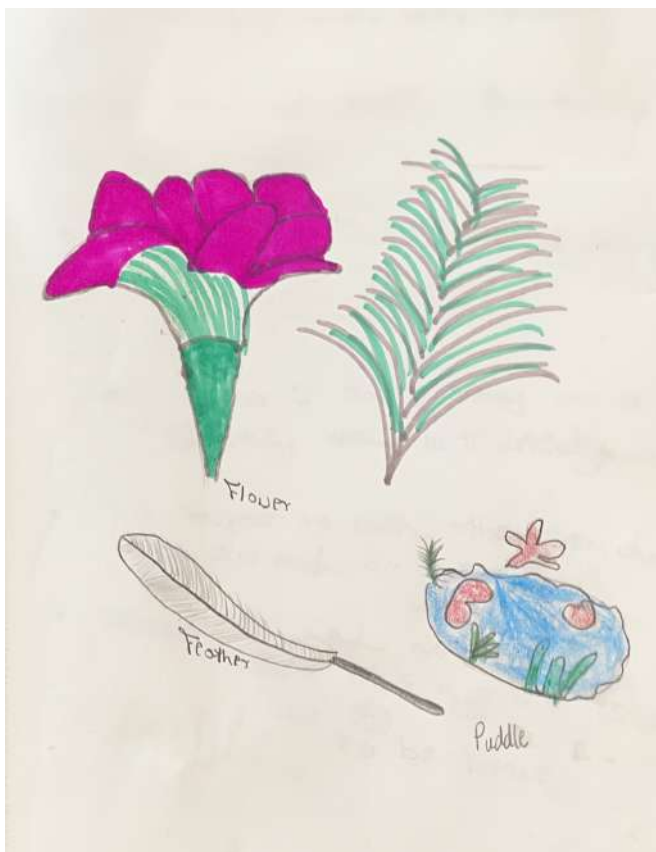
Nazmenah Shinwari

Age: 17, 2 ½ years in the US

School: Hamilton High School /
11th grade

Origin: Pashtun, from Shigal District
in Kunar Province, Afghanistan





Niyat Gebrekidan

Age: 16, under 1 year in the US

School: South Division High School / 9th grade

Origin: Eritrea, Eritrea

“We drew flowers outside, it reminds me of my childhood.”





Sesen Gebrekidan

Age: 20, under 1 year in the US

School: South Division High School /
11th grade

Origin: Eritrea, Eritrea

“It’s fall, my favorite
season.”





Leadership is ability of an individual or a group of people to influence and guide followers or members of an organization, society or team.



I went live with my family
 I live this house because This a big house
 is my dream

This house I remember my Grandmother and Grandfather

It ~~reminds~~ reminds me. when she beating me and Scolding me
 When I don't do the dishes and I remember
 when we play together and that

I remember Our Old house
 when we are together with Grandma
 and Grandpa I miss them and our old
 house



Shazia Bibi

Age: 18, 2 ½ years in the US

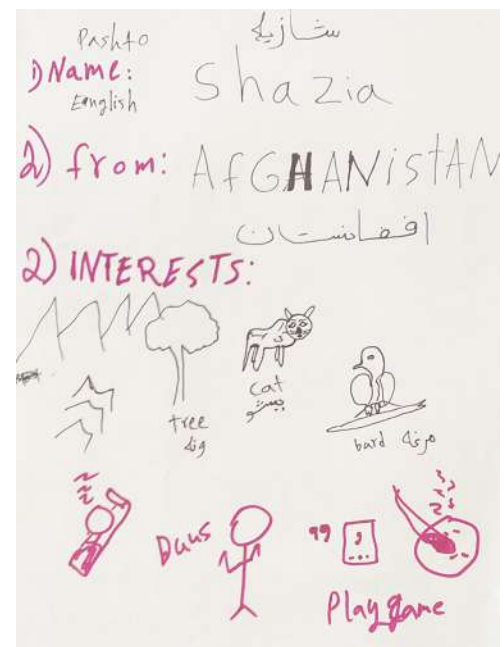
School: Bradley Tech High School /
11th grade

Origin: Pashtun, from the city of
Khōst, Afghanistan

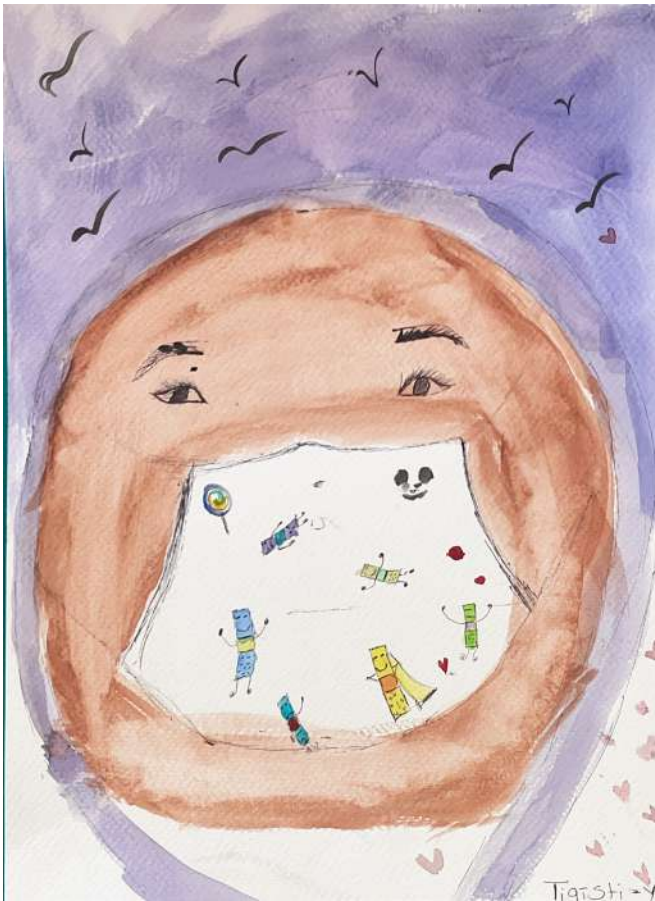
**“This is the sky at nighttime. I love it in
Afghanistan in the summer: we sleep
outside and look at the night sky.”**

“I wrote my name and my country and
words about myself.”

“My native language is Pashto.”







Tigisti Yosief

Age: 15, under 1 year in the US

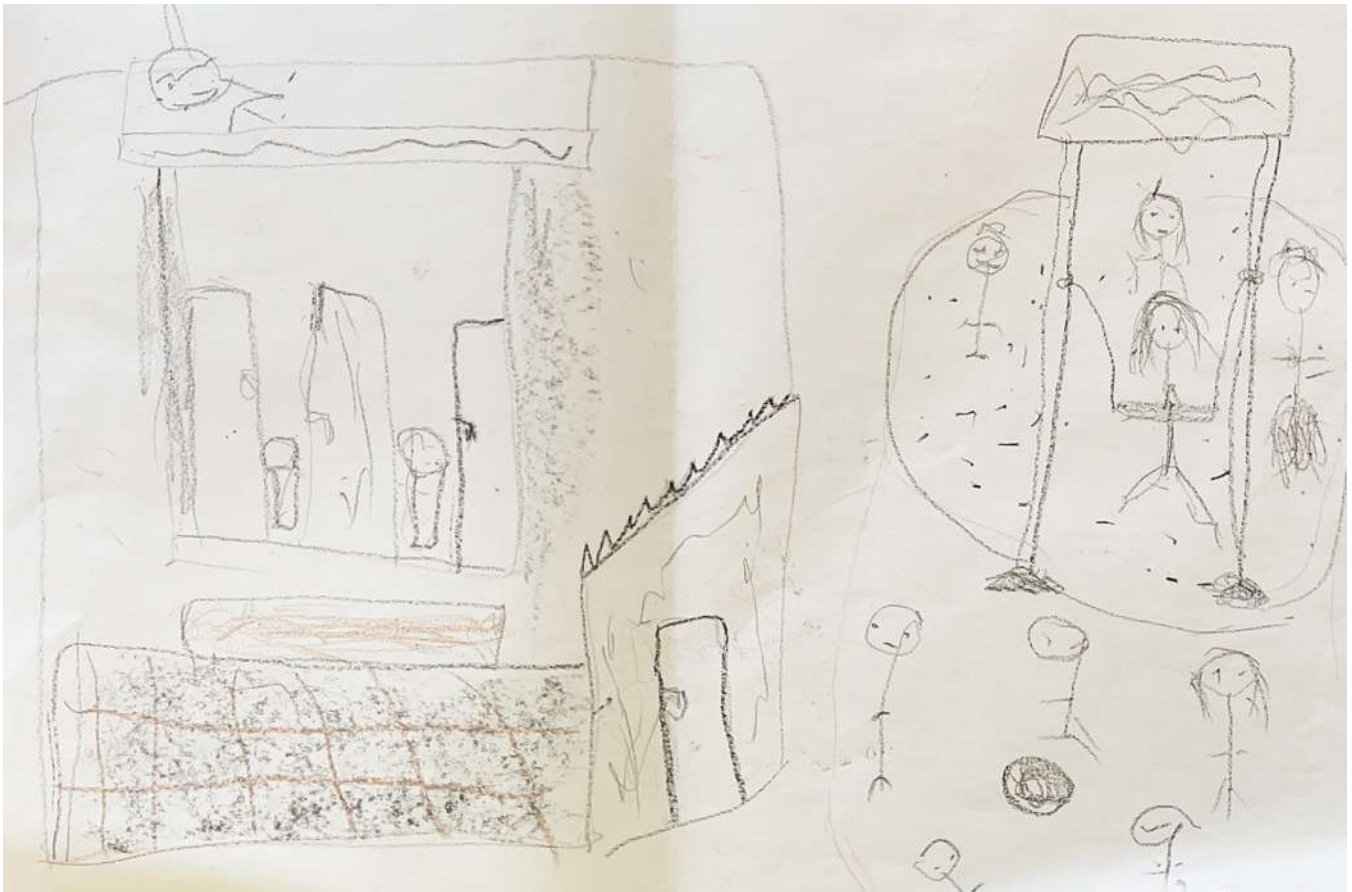
School: Humboldt Park School /
7th grade

Origin: Eritrean, from the town of
Segeneyti, Eritrea

"I drew myself.
I like this one because it's cute."







"This was my home in my country. I was playing with my friends and my sisters."

• the first that I drew is my house. It was important to me because I was living in that house with my mom and my sisters and my sister was smiling when I was in that house. My favorite thing from my house is my bed and when I'm sitting and watching TV with my sisters or my friends.

• The second that I drew is pole, and why I drew that because when I was about 10 years old I was playing in that pole with my friends. We tie string on it and we can play with it and we can see some one to push in our back then we start to play. And also we play soccer too in that place. I really really love that that place and it was our local park.

Tigisti - Y



Veronica Veronique

Age: 18, 8 years in the US

School: Washington High School /
12th grade

Origin: Congolese, from the
Democratic Republic of Congo &
Nyarugusu, Tanzania

**"I drew myself because I love myself.
This is the best thing that I ever did in
my life."**



1 Leadership I love working with people ♥
and leadership helped me a lot ♥

2 working into groups ♥

3 Working together ♥

4 it means a lot to me ♥

5 I wanna do it over and over ♥

6 working with people is a good thing ♥

my Dad is my leader I look up to him ♥

♥
God is my leader He lead me Everywhere



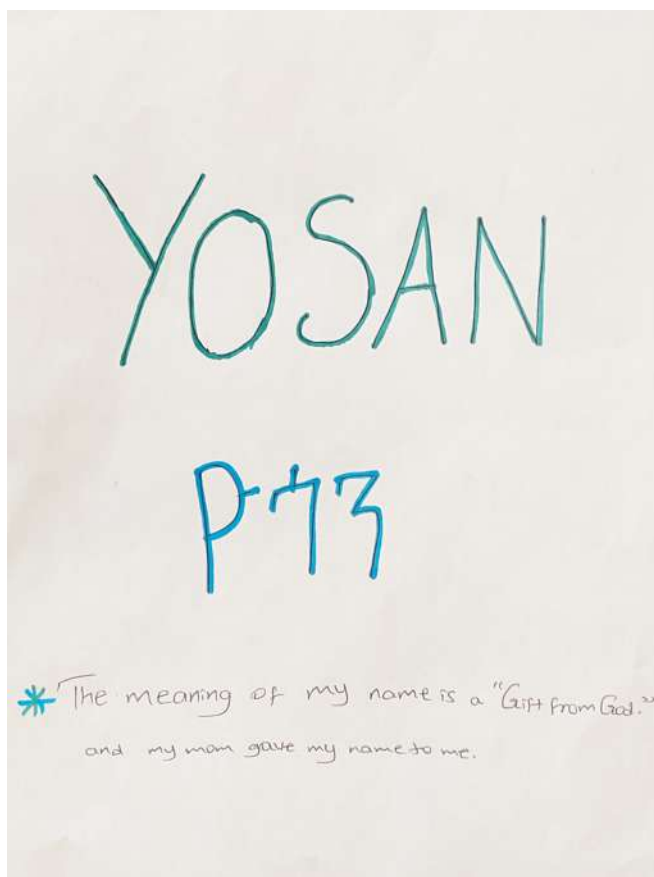
Yosan Yosief

Age: 20, under 1 year in the US

School: South Division High School /
9th grade

Origin: Eritrean, from the town of
Segeneyti, Eritrea

**“I love my name.
The meaning of my
name is ‘a gift from
God’ and my mom
gave it to me.”**





"I added a sunflower to girl power because I like sunflowers."





Zeagol Shinwari

Age: 15, 2 ½ years in the US

School: Hamilton High School /
9th grade

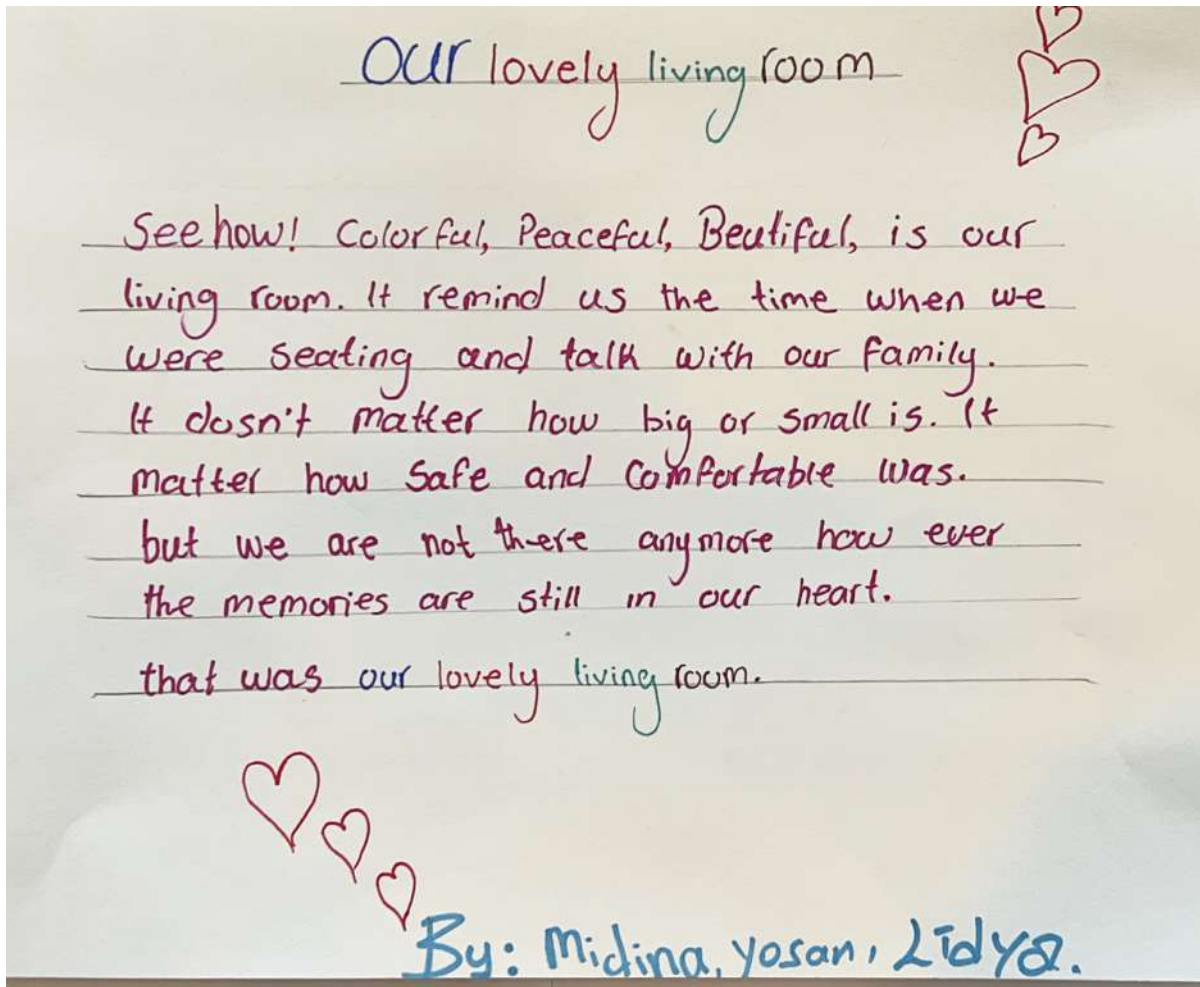
Origin: Pashtun, from Shigal District
in Kunar Province, Afghanistan

“I like this because I drew myself.”



Group poems

Madina/Yosan/Lidya



"We wrote about a living room. We described it with a poem.
We enjoyed collecting all the ideas from all of us."

Mary/Nastaran/Veronica

The Unity by Mary, Nastaran, Veronique

My family loves me so much.

My family are so nice people, and people loves my family.

In the evening my mom cooking and I help her.

I make salad: cucumbers, onions, peppers.

And my dad and my mom and my sister and my brother they are sitting at the table and we enjoy the food.

We like going and eat too much.

They say beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. But I will say beauty is a feeling that beautifies the butterflies that flies in the bellies of the beautiful family.

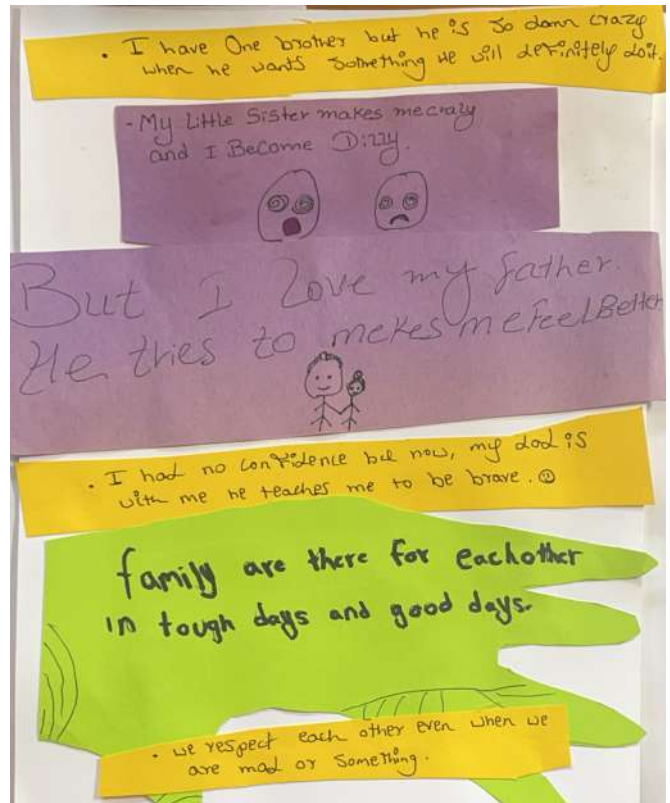
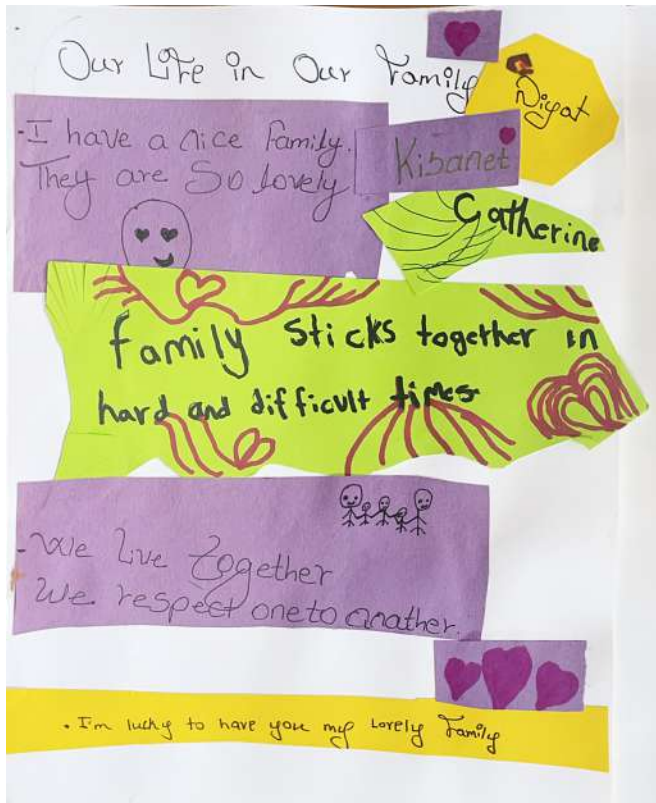
We love celebrating Christmas.

The brightness of smiles that lies in everyone's cheeks makes the happiest family exist under the sun of the maker.

Even ~~when~~ ^{with} the smiles you cannot see the darkest, innermost of the heart because they believe that the smile is the best healing of the heart and mind.

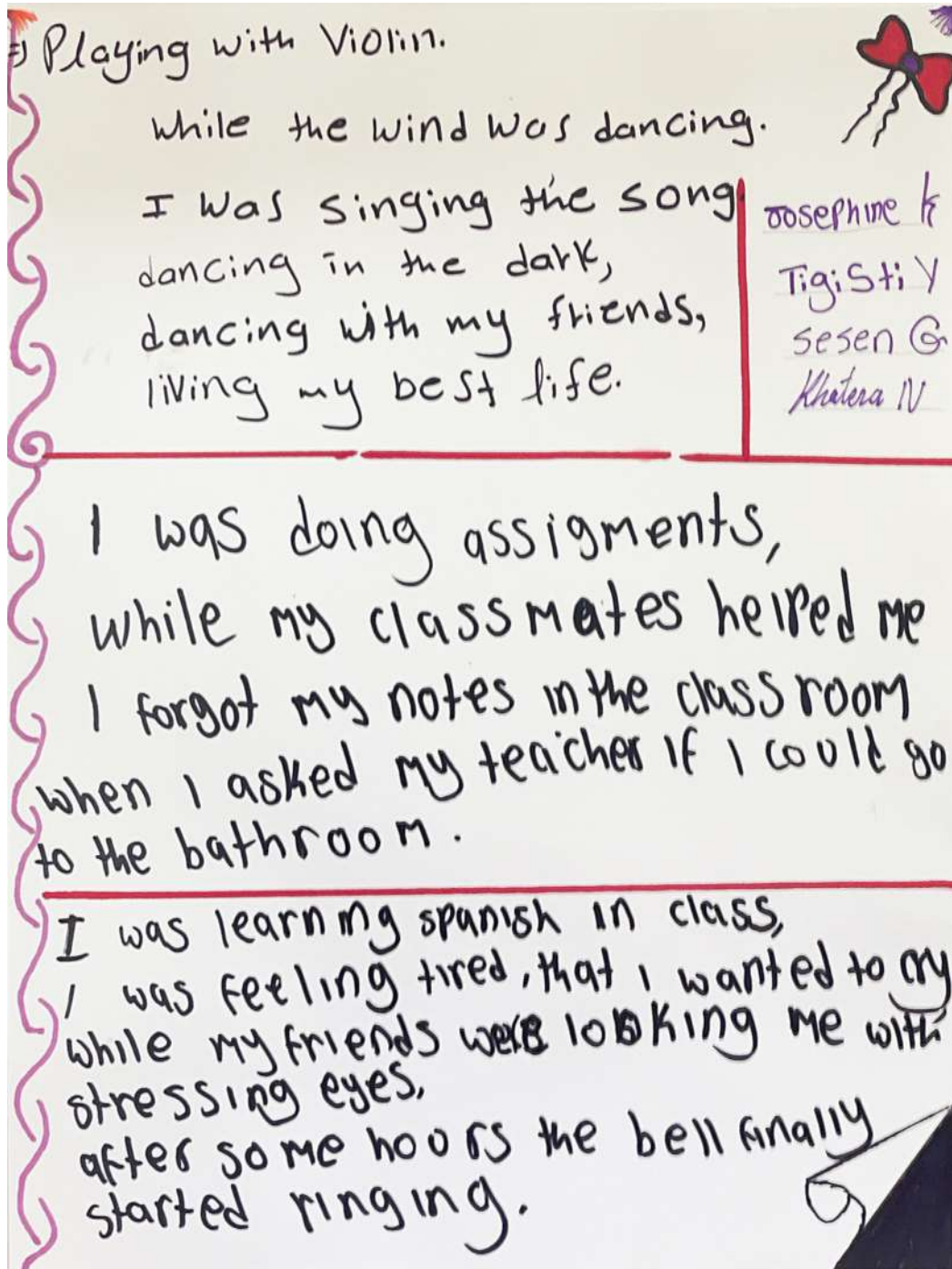
"Working in the group was fine. It was easier to talk about what we were going to write together. I loved working in the group."

Niyat /Khaterina /Kisanet

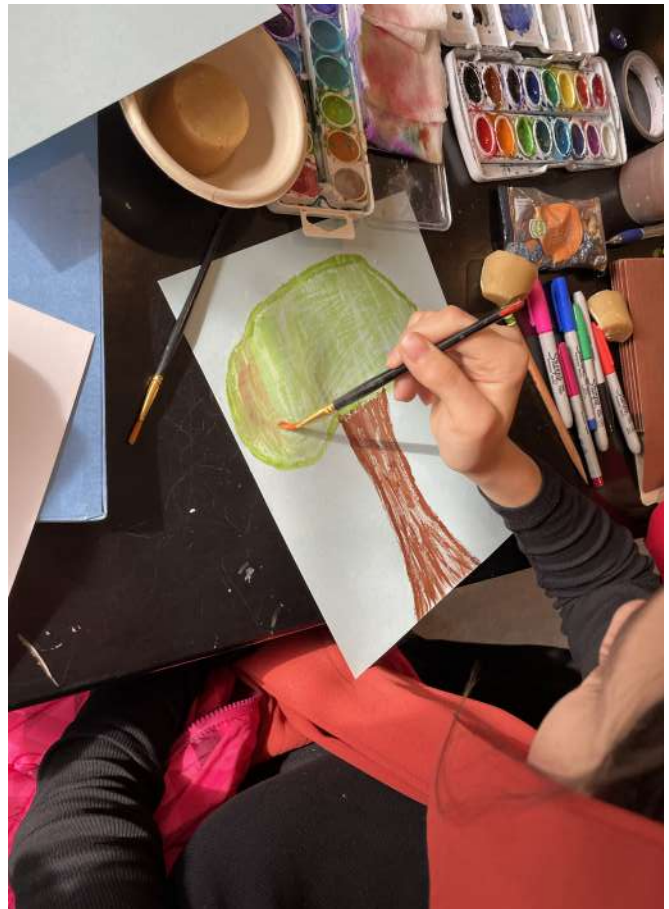


"It is a poem about family, 'Our Life in Our Family.'"

Tigisti/Josephine/Sesen/Khatera



"We learned how to work in a group with different people with different backgrounds. It helped us learn something about something we didn't know."









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