



ART & ESSAY CONTEST

CONTEST
WINNERS

2

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2

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ART & ESSAY CONTEST

Created By: Evelyn Eskam, Grade 1, Marines

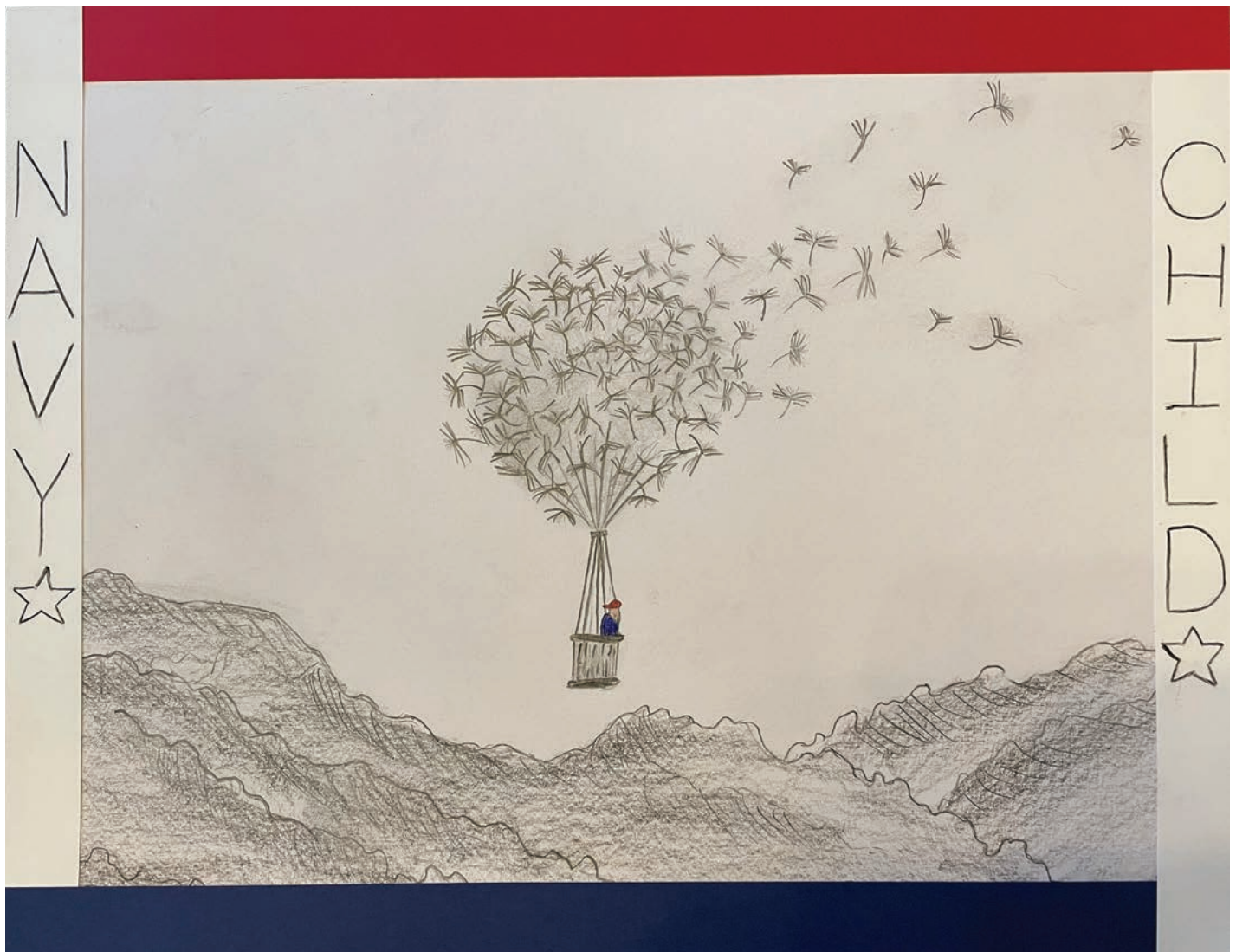


ARTWORK

AGE
6-7

ART & ESSAY CONTEST

Created By: Luke Roberson, Grade 3, Navy



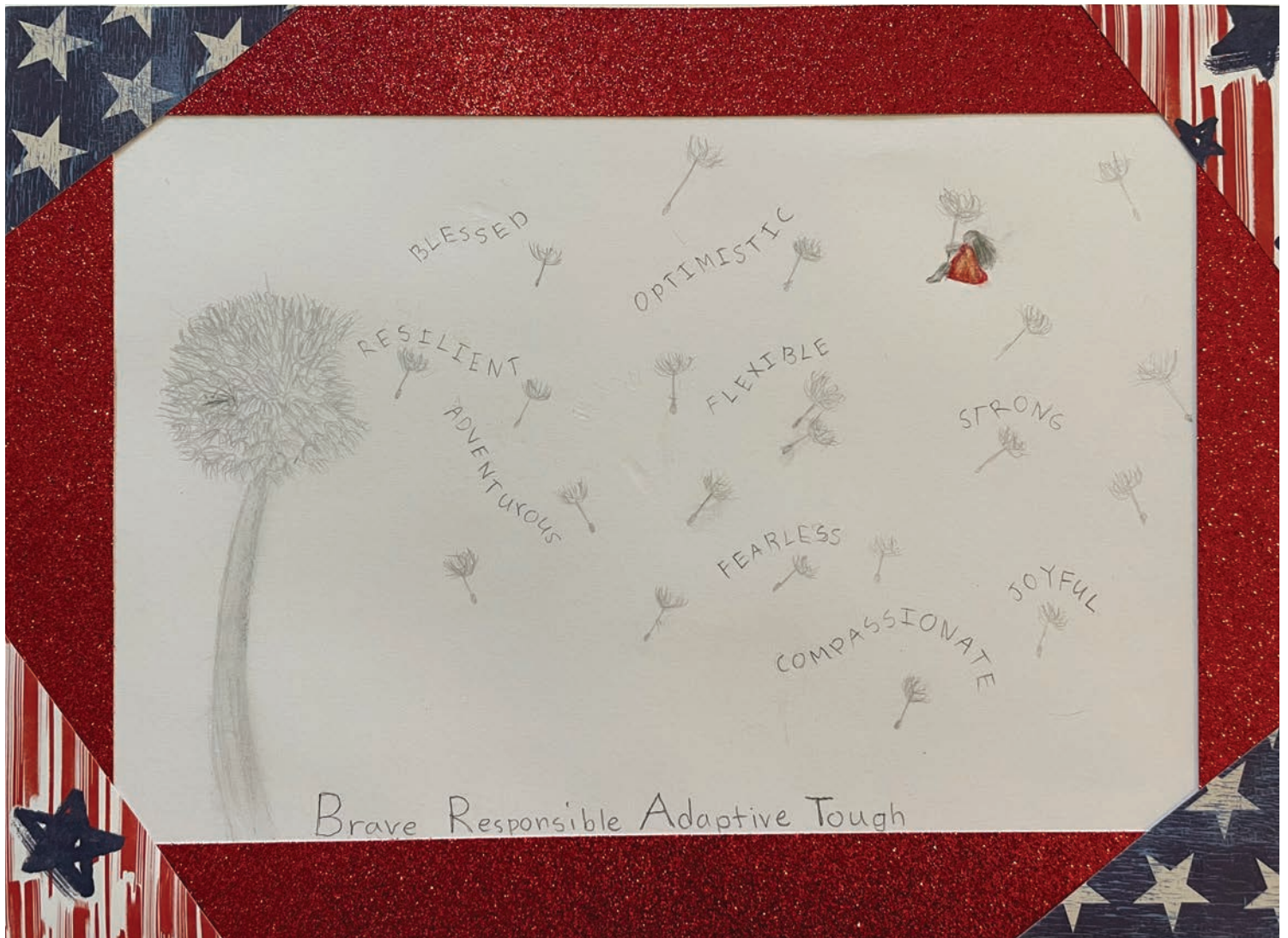
ARTWORK

AGE

8-9

ART & ESSAY CONTEST

Created By: Zoie Roberson, Grade 5, Navy



ARTWORK

AGE

10-12

ART & ESSAY CONTEST

ESSAY

Created By: Maddy Peterson, Grade 2, Marines

Will the winds of change blow?
Inspiring me to grow, I will miss you.
Nothing stays the same,
Don't be afraid.
Soon I'll see you again.

One of us left.
Fear not the winds of change, best friends we are.

Cherish our old memories.
Hold on tight.

As best friends we will navigate the winds of change.
Never forget, change is part of life.
Get ready to have fun again.
Embrace the winds of change.



Maddy P.

AGE

6-7



ART & ESSAY CONTEST

ESSAY

Created By: Mason Wolf, Grade 3, Air Force

The Winds of Change

Blow the winds of change.
Adventure whistles in the winds of change.
New places, new bases
Thoughts wonder in the winds of change.
Will I be accepted or rejected?
Distance whimpers in the winds of change.
I'm sad to be missing my dad.
Gratefulness worships in the winds of change.
Praising Him, we are together again.
Blow the winds of change.

AGE

8-9



ART & ESSAY CONTEST

ESSAY

Created By: Evelyn Diddams, Grade 5, Marines

Winds of Opportunities

When I fly on wings of change, it can be hard, scary, and difficult. The hotel that awaits me is cramped, stuffy, and boring. In a hotel, it is a trial to make new friends, as I most often just sit around. Therefore, I get lonely with no friends to keep me busy. It is always some time before we meet new people. I greatly miss my family and home, where I knew friends, teachers, and school-mates. I absolutely abhor unpacking; movers in and out of my house is quite the ordeal. Even worse, before I was homeschooled, I had to switch schools, which always terrified me. Although change brings hardship, moving to new places offers new adventures and opportunities.

My experience as a military child has helped with the changes of moving; I've learned to make the best of every situation. I moved to Japan when I was seven years old. During my trip to Tokyo, I dressed in a traditional kimono with my Japanese friend, Kiki, and we walked around town. In order to travel around Japan, we took advantage of riding the Shinkansen, also known as the bullet train, which is the fastest train in the world. At Japanese resale store, we loved the impossibly low prices. The Japanese culture truly set them apart from anywhere else we have lived. We appreciated their centuries old castles immensely, as they were different from American historical landmarks that I have seen like the Washington Monument and The White House. Most of their foundations were twenty to thirty feet high, and they were all handmade. It was spectacular. We also fed koi fish in the garden ponds all over the country. In Iwakuni, we scoured the beach for sea pottery, which is unique to Japan. Now, here in North Carolina, we appreciate the change of hunting for shark teeth. When we move to Okinawa this summer, I am looking forward to the singular opportunity to go ziplining through the jungle.

Since 2012, when I was born, my family and I have been taking advantage of wherever we are. We used the location of San Diego, my first duty station, to visit their famous zoo, Disneyland, and the beaches. Additionally, when we moved to Annapolis, Maryland, which was the nation's first capital, we were able to see the Naval Academy. During our time in Quantico, Virginia, we were close to family, therefore we saw them quite a bit. Likewise, my fourth home in Iwakuni, Japan, provided the chance to see the Kintai Bridge and its cherry blossoms. While living there, we went to other cities in Japan like Nara and Kyoto. In Nara, we fed their sacred deer, and one even stole my younger brother Silas' bagel right out of his hand! He was so surprised. During our once-in-a-lifetime trip to Kyoto, we were able to visit the famous Golden Pavilion known as Kinkakuji. We now live back in the USA, where we traveled to Mt. Vernon to see George Washington's old home this past summer. Over the course of eleven years, we have used the opportunity to fly on the winds of change by taking advantage of wherever we are.

AGE

10-12



ART & ESSAY CONTEST

ESSAY

Created By: Sydney Morgan, Grade 7, Marines

Wind's Course

Some call them the winds of change
I prefer typhoon
My life is just as varying
As the phases of the moon

Daddy and the changing winds
Are quite well acquainted
In his happy, hardworking heart
They're embraced instead of hated

He's had to leave us quite a lot
Always people to save, wars to be
fought
But the longer he gets to stay
The more it hurts when he goes away

The world knows his sacrifice
Oh, but what of mine
All the hundred tears I've shed
All the many times I've cried
Just when I start to settle in
We're off on another move again
House-hopping many times
I'm no stranger to saying goodbye

Sometimes I try to fight the winds
Not willing to let go
But, I always end up facing forward
Riding with the flow

But, then, perhaps it's better for me
Than an idle life of pure consistency
I'm the better for each one of my trials
Maybe that makes it all worthwhile

Some people seem to be just stuck
Nothing to do, sitting ducks
They stand with their eyes
glued to the floor
If they cared to look up,
they'd see so much more

Like me, they'd see
winds of change are blowing
And through the clouds,
the sun is showing
My joy doesn't depend on knowing
Precisely the wind's course

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13-14



ART & ESSAY CONTEST

ESSAY

Created By: Alyss Valerio, Grade 12, Marines

As I start my watches timer, the gun goes off, and I'm running from my fears of the past, for that release, and to see that smile on my dad's face at the end. My heart hammers in my head while my heart beats a mile a minute as I move to that finish line at 3.1 miles. The sun beams on my beautiful black skin as mud splashes onto my legs, but the crossing of that finish line is what I long for, to feel free. Yet, happy moments aren't everlasting, and now it's my turn to face that hill head-on with all I have.

Around the age of two, a tragic series of events unfolded, culminating in my parent's divorce and the court's determination to grant my dad sole custody. It wasn't easy raising a 2-year-old daughter at the age of 28 on his own. While a truly loving father, a military man often forgets that little girls aren't meant to be treated as warriors in training. Life lessons were articulated in barked orders rather than moments of tenderness, but the word "sorry" was not too far behind.

Even with a great childhood with just a father as a parent, I could never get over the thought of me being a possible reason behind the divorce. I sprint from that fear because I am a coward and can't face that truth, at least not yet. But as a marines daughter, I sure as hell can run this race ahead.

All I want is to finish, but I can't. My legs ache, my arms don't push me as they should, and I'm mentally exhausted; I'm tired, but all I need to do is finish this hill, and it's all an easy road ahead, but why is it so challenging, why is it so difficult to face the truth?

Avoiding the pain and holding on to the only thing I have left of my mother—hate, I avoid the problem as long as possible. Ignore the hill, and life will go on smoothly, right? Wrong, another hill is ahead, one steeper, demanding all I have to give, so I push forward because what else can I do? I need to finish so I face the inevitable truth that is to come.

My mind flashes back years to that long, slow drive in my dad's silver Toyota Tundra. It was the moment when I realized why the picture-perfect black-Hispanic family split. An emotional hostage for so long, I allow my dad's words to permeate the hard exterior I've perfected to protect myself from the pain. Like little bullets, my mom's indiscretions pierce my heart one shot at a time. Never having a chance to form a real mother-daughter relationship with my mom, I hoped that maybe there was at least that spark that all children

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have with their mothers, but that idea was ruined as his story unfolded. Anger plagued me; although I realized I wasn't the reason for the divorce, I realized that my mother was never the mom I longed for. Instead, God gave me a father that made up for that hole my mother left in me. The hate that filled me and weighed me down for so long was finally lifted off me to move on.

Past events are lifted off my shoulders, and I'm now lighter; my heart is pounding, my head throbbing, and my mouth craving a cup of cold water, but I'm finally up the hill. My dad is there on the other side of that finish line, his arms open wide, all I have to do is run, and I'll be right there. I run until I'm in the warm embrace of my father. I've faced my fears, ran through my past, and ran that hill like the kick-ass marines daughter that I am to be able to say I've moved on.

AGE

15-16



ART & ESSAY CONTEST

ESSAY

Created By: Steve Muro Jr, Grade 12, Air Force

Temporary Duty

No one tells you the life of a Military Child. No one tells you the friends you'll lose, the fights, the anger, or the disappointment and frustration of being a Military child. The phrase "Home is where the heart is" has never applied to me. More like "Home is where the Air Force puts me". My Dad used to always be on TDY (temporary duty) and would be gone for weeks, or months at a time. We are on TDY too. The Air Force just likes to call it a PCS.

Personal Change of Station. That occurred for me every 3 years. 3 years to say hello and good-bye. I won't write about all the awful things, however, because we "Military Brats" are built stronger than any steel hull of a battleship, or any C-130. We move, and the thrust from every fighter jet blows us in different directions and to different opportunities. We may lose friends, but we just make more. Lightning strikes countless times for Military kids. Opportunities left and right. I do not dwell on my past; I fly to my future. I miss my friends, and my schools in California were better, but I move on. I make the best of every situation I can, rebuilding my foundation every single time. When I move, I'm broken only slightly now and am rebuilt even stronger, waiting for every challenge that comes my way, knowing that I am an unstoppable force of knowledge and experience bred from the United States Air Force. I've taken my adversity with a grain of salt, and await my future. I am ready for my future; the Air Force won't control me anymore. When I move, I'll be free to make my own decisions and stay and move wherever I please, and I know that because of the experience of moving 11 times, that won't be very hard for me. It won't be a rough start, but a clean takeoff. A clean slate for me and others who know and live the military lifestyle. Every time we move, we dig our roots into where we're placed and grow even stronger than where we were previously.

In the fall of this upcoming year, I will be attending the University of Arizona. For the first time in my entire life, I am moving because of my own free will. It may not be my last move for the rest of my life, but it is my first independent move. Through the constant change in my life, I have learned to adapt and evolve to my new environment, and being a military dependent has shown me far more than I could imagine.

AGE

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