



DON'T HIDE IT, FLAUNT IT®
Celebrating a World of Differences

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KIDS FLAUNT CONTEST KICKS OFF NATIONWIDE

Summit, New Jersey - September 21, 2018. Don't Hide it, Flaunt It (DHIFI, Inc.), a New Jersey-based non-profit organization, announces the kickoff of its annual Kids Flaunt Contest in collaboration with Scholastic. **Now in its fourth year, Kids Flaunt is available to 4th grade classrooms in all public and private schools nationwide: www.scholastic.com/flauntit.** **Inspired by the DHIFI theme, “The things that make me different make me, me,” the Kids Flaunt Contest is aimed at empowering kids who feel different to share their personal stories while inviting their classmates to recognize what makes them unique.** The program – specifically designed for 4th graders’ social-emotional development - combats intolerance and builds empathy. **After an engaging classroom activity where students identify and explore their differences together, teachers guide them in expressing these ideas through essays, artwork, and/or poetry. 2018 marks the first year that the art and poetry components are available.**

DHIFI Founder and President Meg Zucker was born with ectrodactyly, a condition leaving her with shortened forearms, one finger on each hand and one toe on each foot. Two of her three children share her condition. Meg created DHIFI after her oldest son was bullied on the playground by a group of 4th graders because of his difference. DHIFI’s mission is to advance acceptance, understanding, tolerance and mutual respect for a person's blatant or invisible difference.

In describing the success of Kids Flaunt, Meg explains:

“Over the years we have received thousands of essays from kids about their visible and invisible differences. Examples have included being short, wearing glasses, having red hair or a birthmark. Others have written about having anxiety, being dyslexic, having allergies or being adopted. We are extremely excited to open this year’s contest to visual art and poetry, which not only harnesses children’s creativity, but also is more inclusive of a variety of learning and communication styles.”

The 2017 contest winner was 9-year-old Roman Hathaway from Indiana, for his powerfully written and courageous account of living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Tourette Syndrome. His mother Jennifer Hathaway describes his experience with Kids Flaunt as

transformative: “Roman’s apprehension to share his challenges with his classmates had been based on fear that setting himself up as ‘different’ would be more embarrassing than beneficial. But his fear visibly changed to pride as he was writing. Because the Kids Flaunt Contest challenged Roman to share his story, he found a new sense of confidence with his friends, and the burden of internalizing his feelings had been lifted.” Roman’s essay is available to readers online at <http://www.donhideitflauntit.com/made-just-right-roman-hathaway-age-9/>.

Prior winners include Callia Kanaaneh of California (2015) for her story about how a sibling’s difference of autism sets her family apart, as well as Rayyan Sayeed of Illinois (2016), who bravely shared his experience being bullied because of his Muslim faith.

Kids Flaunt is funded by the RBC Capital Markets and Morgan Stanley, whose crucial support makes this programming available to hundreds of thousands of students throughout the country. In its first three years, the program reached an estimated 190,000 participants.

DHIFI also offers community outreach and speaking engagements, corporate diversity programs, and other partnership opportunities. For more information on Kids Flaunt and other programs, visit donhideitflauntit.com.

To learn how to enter the contest and for complete rules, visit: www.scholastic.com/flauntit. Educators must submit entries on behalf of student entrants. One Grand Prize winner will be selected and three First Prize winners will receive prizes, plus classroom books and magazines for each contest winner’s teacher. The deadline for the contest is November 21, 2018. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Void where prohibited.