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NLMUSD celebrates young artists at PTA 'Reflections'

Morrison Elementary Student Advances to State Art Show

Morrison Elementary School fourth-grader Leilani Lafarga's artwork is headed to Sacramento after she won first place for her photograph at the annual PTA Reflections regional competition, landing her a spot in the state finals.

Leilani, who placed first in the photography category, was honored Tuesday, Feb. 25, along with 41 other Norwalk-La Mirada Unified students whose artwork was part of the Benton Middle School PTA "Reflections" showcase. The students were awarded for bringing the "Reflections" theme – "Believe, Dream, Inspire" – to life through film production, dance choreography, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts.

Students performed dance pieces, musical compositions and had their artwork – drawings, paintings and photography – displayed throughout the Benton Middle School auditorium as part of the event. Students who wrote poetry and other literary pieces also read their work aloud.

"The Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District is very supportive of the visual and performing arts," said NLMUSD Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez. "I truly believe that we have some of the most talented students and faculty in the state. Our diverse and varied arts program is what makes our District stand out."

PTA "Reflections" is a nationwide arts appreciation and recognition program sponsored by the National PTA. All students within the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District are encouraged to enter a piece inspired by the year's theme.

Work that best represents the theme then goes on to compete at the regional PTA "Reflections" contest. Winners from that showcase are then considered for an Award of Excellence and an Award of Merit by the California PTA. Winners of the Award of Excellence go on to represent the state at the National level of the "Reflections" program.

Leilani finds out this month if her piece was one of 30 chosen to represent California at nationals.

"She has so many goals and she has accomplished a lot of them," said Leilani's mom, Olivia Alvitre. "We are so proud of her."

Alvitre was one of about 200 other proud parents, family members, teachers and administrators at Benton's "Reflections" showcase, which featured readings from literature winners Omar Sandoval and Kiara Reyes from Morrison, and Trent Beanchump from La Mirada High School; a dance performance by Adalynn Wood from Eastwood Elementary; musical compositions from Ileina Hatori from Eastwood Elementary, Alyssa Rodriguez from Benton and Eden Ramirez from Dulles Elementary; and a film by Los Alisos Middle School's Julia Romo.

"I was absolutely entertained by the great talent our District has to offer," said NLMUSD Board Member Jesse Urquidi. "I always knew our students were special, but I love seeing it first-hand. They are all winners in my book."

Photo Captions

Reflections 1: Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District students pose with their awards of recognition for their work at the annual PTA "Reflections" showcase at Benton Middle School on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

Leilani 1: Morrison Elementary fourth-grader Leilani Lafarga won a spot at the state PTA "Reflections" contest with her photograph after winning first at the regional competition. She was honored at the annual PTA "Reflections" showcase at Benton Middle School on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

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