



# YOUTH NEWS

EDUCATING COMMUNITIES ABOUT THE NEED FOR PEOPLE TO CONSIDER BECOMING FOSTER/ADOPTED PARENTS AND MENTORS WITH INSPIRATIONAL, MOTIVATIONAL, AND OUTSTANDING STORIES

## *Happy Holidays*

How do you celebrate this time of year?



# Youth News

Educating communities about the need for people to consider becoming foster/adopted parents & mentors.

From city to city and coast to coast, our focus is FAMILY  
**Foster Adopt Mentor in Investing in Lives of Youth**

Youth News magazine is a way to celebrate the good news of youth. Youth News provides fostered, adopted, kinship cared and mentored youth with real on-the-job training skills. Youth are paid as they learn how to produce this publication for the general community. Donations for ad space is how we pay youth in training. The "Dove" logo is a symbol we use as a message of good news. Our goal is to bring Outstanding, Inspirational and Motivational stories to encourage people to open their hearts and support youth.

Freelance writers and contributors, teen/adult writers, editors, sales, photographers, and marketing support are needed. Youth News highlights the accomplishments of young people near and far. If you have a story and want to share it with others, please email us at [admin@whalers-creation.us](mailto:admin@whalers-creation.us).

Donations are accepted at [www.whalers-creation.us](http://www.whalers-creation.us).

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# A MESSAGE FROM

## *the Editor-in-Chief*



My name is Loney Nguyen, (pronounced Lonnie Win, pronouns She/Her/Hers). I am a licensed clinical social worker with over 12 years of lived and professional child welfare experience. It is a great honor to serve as the Editor-In-Chief for Youth News Magazine.

Serving in this capacity has come full circle for me. As a teenager growing up in the child welfare system, I sought all the opportunities that I could to gain the skills that I needed to be self-sufficient and thrive. I discovered the non-profit organization, WHALER's Creation, and began participating in their programs. I have always credited my professional development through the skills training offered at WHALER's Creation. As I grew and pursued my education,

I began serving the organization in various capacities. It was the start of an impassioned career working with youth, and it has become the driving force in my mission to support and empower youth to advocate for themselves and show youth how to make a difference in their own lives. This principle is at the heart of my work as a social worker.

I understand the power of positive mentorship in the lives of youth. This magazine builds self-esteem, confidence, and open doors to provide career and educational opportunities for youth in order to encourage bright and successful futures. Our editorial team consists of students and young professionals who are passionate about pursuing their careers in media arts. They are young leaders and I am proud to be able to mentor them as they develop their own brand and discover their niche in the industry.

The world is changing in unimaginable ways, leaving many young people to question how their futures might unfold during such challenging times. My goal as Editor-In-Chief is to help build a supportive community around youth as they develop the skills to educate readers on things that are relevant and impactful in their lives. It is with your readership and contributions that this is made possible.

Thank you for supporting our magazine. I hope you enjoy the read!

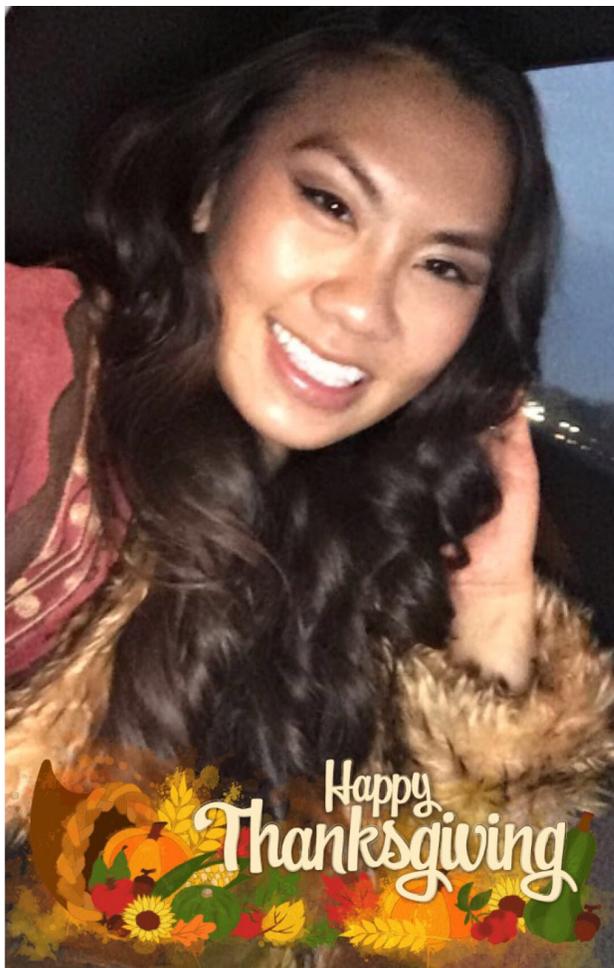
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rony D. Rosenc". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

# It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year ... or Is It?

A Foster Care Alumni Perspective on the Holiday Season  
Written by Loney



The Fall season generally kicks off the holiday season. As Halloween ends, folks put away their jack-o-lanterns, ghouls, and goblins, and exchange them for Christmas trees, reindeers, and snowmen. This joyous season typically kicks off with Thanksgiving, a North American tradition for families to come together to reflect on blessings while gorging on a traditional turkey or a more culturally appropriate feast and ending with Christmas, Ramadan, Kwanzaa, and other festive holidays where families come together to reflect on the year. It is the busiest travel day of the year, as family members near and far try their best to make it "home."



For youth in foster care, this is typically the most difficult time of the year, especially for youth living in congregative care and treatment facilities where there are restrictions on visitation and leaving the premises. While there are organizations such as "Toys for Tots", which is focused on providing gifts to little ones with Santa's magic, teenagers and young adults are often left behind during these holidays.

That is why non-profit organizations such as WHALER's Creation hosts holiday events specifically for teenagers and young adults where former Board Chair and Restaurant Owner Donnell Long hosts Christmas dinners with the season's most wanted gifts. In Maryland, the Ready By 21 initiative focuses on preparing older youth towards adulthood which also includes end of the year celebratory events. These events are a way youth can spend the holidays with one another and have fun.

It's time to normalize creating our chosen families, and making new traditions. Trendy holiday events like "Friendsgiving" allows friends to celebrate the best parts of holidays together without the anxiety and stress that family of origins can bring. Remember, you can't choose the family you're born into, but you can create the family you cherish life's special moments with.



Happy Christmas!

Baden

SPALDING  
NBA



## About Loney

Loney pronounced (Lonnie) is a licensed clinical social worker, professional model, and servant leader. Loney is the Director of Programs for WHALER's Creation and serves as Editor in Chief of Youth News magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation. An expert in youth engagement, she has over 13 years of lived and professional child welfare experience in Maryland, and 7 years supervisory experience in the District of Columbia. An international Queen, she was crowned Miss Baltimore United States, 2019 and Miss Vietnam DC, 2014 respectively. When she is not competing in pageants, she volunteers her time as a local/national pageant judge, coach, and teaches life skills & etiquette classes to encourage positive self image that ignites the Royal Queen/King in youth and adults.

# Adjusting to Foster Care

Written by Lenna

Children and families caring for them are greatly impacted by the foster care experience as it relates to physical and social health. Being taken away from all you knew is a traumatic experience, and being put in a new environment could cause stress on the body. Common health problems as a result of foster care include anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), etc. When it comes to social problems, foster youth can feel like outsiders. For example, when in school and asked to draw a family tree, foster youth may feel conflicted. They may not be able to trace back to their biological family even if they wanted to or they may have a closer bond with their foster family, with whom they associate themselves and want to create one on their own. Next, not just the child but the parents of foster youth also have a hard time adjusting. The child might freeze or act up behaviorally, and the parent may not know what to do. Foster parents need to understand that it is hard for foster youth to fit in with new people in a new place. Foster youth of all ages need to know they can be heard in their community.

They have a voice and can speak up for what is right, how they feel, and what would help them settle into their new communities. Lastly, foster parents should honor and respect the story of foster youth, not ignore, make stories, or force youth to share if they do not want to. This will anger, confuse them further, or make them feel uncomfortable. Foster parents should take their time to get to their youth and be patient. The foster care experience is an adjustment for all those involved however, it does not always have to be negative if everyone works together.



## About Lenna

Lenna is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience. She does not shy from argumentative pieces and hopes audiences open their minds to different viewpoints from her writing.



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# Single Man Adopted 5 Siblings to Keep Them Together

This story was written by Sarah Young (@sarah\_j\_young)  
(Independent.co.uk)



Robert Carter, from Ohio, was just 12-years-old when he was placed in a foster home and split from his eight siblings. After realizing the emotional trauma that it caused him, Carter decided to become a foster parent himself. When he began fostering three brothers in December 2018, Carter was told the siblings had been separated from their two sisters.

He promptly contacted the girls' foster parents and set up a play date so the siblings could be reunited. "The kids saw each other and started hugging and crying and wouldn't let go. That was the moment I said 'okay I'm going to take all five'," he said. "I know the pain of being separated too well and I could not let that happen to them."

After successfully bringing them together, Carter took things a step further by adopting all five children as his own, ensuring that they will never be separated from one another again.

Now, he is the father of Marionna (10), Robert Jr. (9), Makayla (8), Giovanni (5), and Kiontae (4) after he adopted them on October 30th. Carter said that some people expressed concern that he was too young or that he would find bringing up five children difficult, but he insists that he is enjoying every moment of it.

"A lot of people think it's hard if you're by yourself or don't have a house, but it's a lot easier than people think it's going to be and kids need parents whether it's two or one," he said, adding that he was nervous something could go wrong right up until the adoption was complete.

"After it was finalized, I just cried because it was over and I didn't have to worry about if they were going to be moved or would have to suffer anymore," he explained. "I woke up the next day feeling relieved, at peace and blessed to have these kids."

The Carter family is now looking to buy a home and a GoFundMe has been set up to help them raise funds. So far they have raised almost \$300,000 to help reach his goal of homeownership. Robert said he's been overwhelmed by the support people have shown.

"I can't even explain how unbelievable it is, just to have support and people sharing our story to bring awareness to the fact that we still have so many kids that need homes."

[Click here to view their GoFundMe page.](#)



(Hamilton County JFS Adoption & F SWNS)



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# My Blended Holiday Traditions

Written by Lenna



My family has a unique tradition, coming of Polish descent. Living with my mom for the holidays is fun. We celebrate it the same way she did as a kid, original Polish traditions. First, on the night of Christmas Eve, the family and family friends get together and have a small feast consisting of fish and Polish food such as pierogi (Polish dumplings). Also, before the meal, each person at the table is handed a piece of communion and you hand it around to each other with a blessing. Next, on Christmas Eve my family will take a few presents to the relative's house and open the rest when we all wake up on Christmas morning. On the other hand, a tradition that we have done that is not part of the Polish in us is watching a lot of Christmas movies each Christmas night. More specifically, we watch the movie ELF every Christmas. Lastly, we always enjoy the holidays whether that is by drinking hot chocolate by the tree while watching a movie or having good blessings at dinner. Happy holidays to all!



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# My Diwali/Deepawali Experience

Written by Amulya Rayabhagi

Diwali is known as the festival of lights, but it's much more than just lighting diyas (lamps). It is the time where family and friends can gather to spend time with each other after a long time. It is a universal holiday celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and even Buddhists. Even though we have different reasons why we celebrate this holiday, we all can agree on the fact that we love to celebrate this with our family. We wear our finest clothes, make various rangoli designs, make delectable sweets, and lastly illuminate our houses both inside and outside. The best part, however, is lighting fireworks.

Despite it being the best part of celebrating, we choose to light diyas instead of fireworks since it is more eco-friendly and reduces air pollution in our community. We decorate our homes accordingly with rangoli, flowers, diyas, and occasionally torans (a type of decoration we hang, usually at the entrance of the house). Similar to decorating a Christmas tree, we decorate our homes together as a family to bond with each other and, in doing so, feel a sense of accomplishment after we are finished.



After decorations, we prepare traditional Indian sweets such as halwa, laddoo, barfi, peda, Gulab Jamun, payasam shrikhand, karanji, and many more. The children help their mothers cook food, helping them bond with their mothers, and by doing so, gain valuable life skills which they can use to survive. Next, we dress up in our new clothes as Diwali is a symbol of a new beginning and is like the Chinese New Year. We conduct Lakshmi Pooja because Goddess Lakshmi, who is the Goddess of wealth and prosperity, is worshipped on this day.

Lastly, we light fireworks as it creates a spectacle of noise and light, which helps to scare away evil spirits and celebrate the victory of the good over evil. We can choose to do this by inviting friends and family and dance to songs to celebrate Diwali. We sometimes organize potlucks where each guest contributes a dish to the array of dishes. I enjoy spicy food the most as it excites the body and increases metabolism, which helps in breaking down other foods.

Every culture has its way of celebrating their holidays, but holidays don't just exist because they represent a person's individuality. They also bring a sense of belonging and closeness with their family, community, and society.

## **About Amulya**

Amulya is a Contributing Writer for Youth News Magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation. Amulya enjoys helping people of all ages from teaching seniors technology to teaching elementary kids on concepts that they don't understand and teaching other students to code. In her free time, she likes to play sports, code, graphic design, read, and write novels. Her ambition is to be a scientist with a focus on neuroscience, and genetics. She is passionate about standing up for what she believes in and volunteering where it is needed!

# *Paradise Place*

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# My Culture & My Family Holiday Experience

Written by Keisha Mitchell

Culture to me is defined as a consistent unit formed together through love, time, uniqueness, recreation, and excitement! As we approach the holiday season, all I can think about is my unit and how it was formed through a cultural aspect!

In my family, the holidays are huge. We all come together to celebrate a time of relaxation. To us, the holiday season demonstrates the wind down of a long year filled mostly with hard work, and little play.

This form of relaxation means music, food, laughter, and jokes. Music plays a huge part in our connection at holiday family functions. There's just something about being free and dancing with the ones you love all while hearing them hype you up with one word. That one word is "ayeeee". Once you hear that word it's like something in your body is activated to groove even more. Next thing you know you look up and everyone is smiling, laughing, eating, and just genuinely enjoying the moment for what it is!

This to us is what we call a precious moment. All the riches in the world could never bring forward the happiness that family does when everyone gets together!

As I conclude, family time is everything during the holidays! If there was anything I'd change, it'd be to have my grandmother Sheila here to celebrate with the family! Special shoutout to her, and Rest In Peace, happy heavenly holidays grandmommy, and happy holiday to you all and to all a goodnight!



**About Keisha Mitchell**

Keisha Mitchell is an inspirational author, writer, poet, and creator. She self-published her first book titled, DO BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER? at the age of 20. Keisha chooses her words wisely as she believes that her greatest power comes out through the use of words. Her favorite line to use, "What you speak is what you seek." As a registered nursing student, Keisha is dedicated to using her voice to advocate for improving health and wellness within the minority community.

# *FROM FOSTER to Fame*



**Cher**  
**Singer/Actress**

**Rosie Perez**  
**Actress**



# TEENS TALK

Written by Lenna

The movie ELF is essential since we are moving closer to the holidays. The movie brings a smile to everyone's face, if it is through the protagonist, Buddy (Will Ferrall), in New York not being able to control himself, or him in the North Pole feeling at home with Santa. In conclusion, go watch this incredible film directed by Jon Favreau on your next Christmas night.



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# *Story Time*

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# Ask Lillie

**Dear Lillie,**

Here we go again, I've been married for 12 years and my husband has had more than one affair while we were married. Every time he promises he will never do it again. I just found out he has someone pregnant and she is six months. The last time I knew he cheated was a year ago. I felt we were in a good place. Now, I'm really ready to hurt him. What should I do?

So Brokenhearted

**Dear Brokenhearted,**

He has a problem, you may not be able to do anything about his unfaithfulness. You have to do what is best for you. It's hard for me to say what you should do. Just remember whatever you decide he will have a life long connection with the two of them.

Wish you the best,  
Lillie

**Dear Lillie,**

My daughter exceeds in everything she does. It's hard sharing with friends and family because they think I'm bragging whenever I share her another accomplishment. I'm not but they are beginning to make comments like: "wow what would you expect?" I share stories with them like they share stories with me about their kids. The only difference is my daughter just excels in school, sports, dance, saving money, testing, and anything else she does. I mean she is just amazing. My question is, How can I share my daughter's many accomplishments without bragging?

Thank you,  
Proud Mom

**Dear Proud Mom,**

It sounds like you are very proud of your daughter. Perhaps you could hold back on sharing everything she does. It may be helpful if you just listen and not respond with something outstanding your daughter has accomplished. If you are doing that it may come off in the wrong way. Encourage your daughter to keep up the good work just hold back on sharing sometimes. A little can go a long way.

Cheers to the super achiever,  
Lillie

# *Need Advice?*



In need of some good sound advice from a straightforward great-grandmother?

Submit your question to: [admin@whalers-creation.us](mailto:admin@whalers-creation.us)

The views and opinions expressed in "Ask Lillie" are those of Lillie, a mother of five children, 12 grandchildren and 15 great-grand children does not necessarily reflect the position, policy or agreement with Youth News, a FAM Cares magazine.



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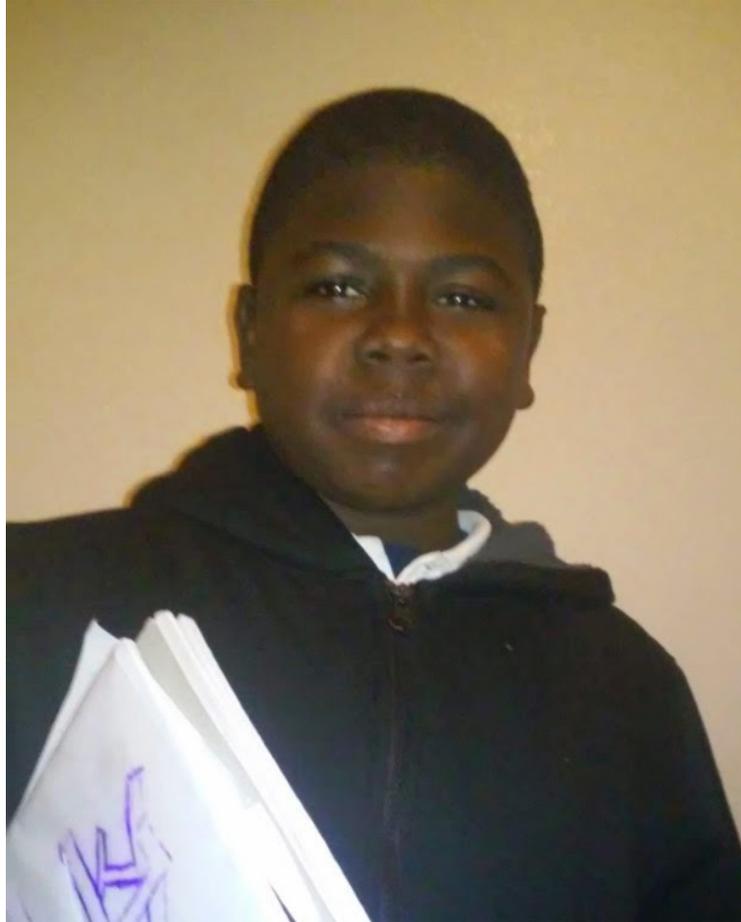
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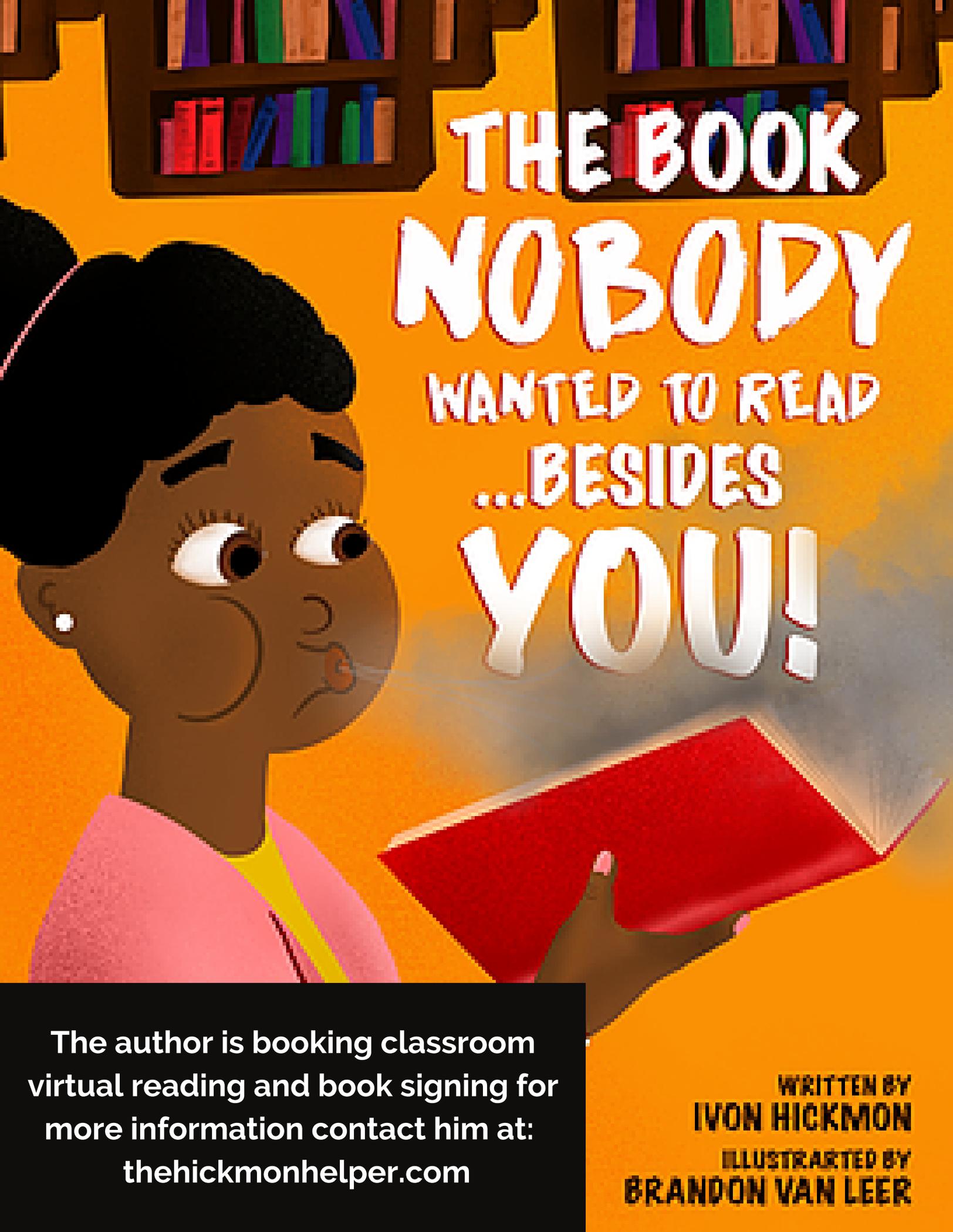
# YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: JUH'MARION BOYD



Juh'Marion, "The Gentle Giant" is a perfect example of an astounding young man who leads by example. He is a compassionate and amazing role model to his 8 siblings and 5 cousins that were adopted by his Grandmother.

Juh'Marion is a 6'2, 17 year-old sophomore in high school. This self-taught musician learned to play music by ear, and plays drums for his Church Youth Department. At only 12 years-old he was the only kid on an adult drum line. Being the only male figure in his home, Juh'Marion stepped up to lead his younger sibling. He wakes up early to ensure that they are all ready for school every day. A self taught barber, Juhmarion also gives back to his community by giving free haircuts.

JUH'MARION YOU ARE AMAZING AND WE ARE PROUD TO PUT THE  
SPOTLIGHT ON YOU!



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WRITTEN BY  
**IVON HICKMON**  
ILLUSTRATED BY  
**BRANDON VAN LEER**

Form **1040** Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service  
**U.S. Individual Income Tax Return**, 2015, ending

For the year Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2015, or other tax year beginning

Your first name and initial Last name

If a joint return, spouse's first name and initial Last name

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City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code. If you have a foreign address, also complete spaces below (see instructions).

Foreign country name Foreign province/state/county

**Filing Status** Check only one box.

1  Single  
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3  Married filing separately. Enter spouse's SSN above and full name here. ▶

4  Head of the household  
5  Qualifying widow(er)

**Exemptions**

6a  Yourself. If someone can claim you as a dependent, do not check box.  
b  Spouse  
c **Dependents:**

(1) First name	Last name	(2) Dependent's social security number	(3) Dependent's relationship to you

# Robert Hackney

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Adjusted Gross Income

18 Farm income

19 Unemployment compensation

20a Social security benefits

21 Other income. List type and amount in column 21 through 21. This is your

22 Combine the amounts in the far right column

23 Educator expenses

24 Certain business expenses of reservists, performing artists, fee-basis government officials. Attach Form 2106

25 Health savings account deduction. Attach Form 5329

26 Moving expenses. Attach Form 3903

27 Deductible part of self-employment tax. Attach Schedule SE

28 Self-employed SEP, SIMPLE, and qualified plans

29 Self-employed health insurance deduction

30 Early withdrawal of savings

31

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33

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Information provided by Networking Statistics

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## YOUTH NEWS

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### **Founder/Publisher**

La' Toria Kern

### **Director of Programs & Editor -in-Chief**

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### **Design Lead**

Rachel Carey

### **Contributing Writer/Editors**

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Keisha Mitchell

Amulya Rayabhagi

Lenna

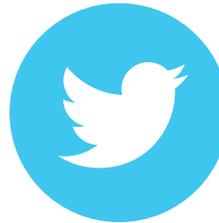
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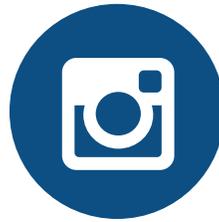
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Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Category \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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Why are you nominating this youth?

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From city-to-city, coast-to-coast, and nation-to-nation, we are striving to make a difference in the lives of youth. Youth News features outstanding, inspirational, and motivational stories about foster care, adoption, and mentoring. May these stories encourage you to consider becoming a foster/adoptive parent or mentor.

Thank you,  
La' Toria

# Youth News - Black Card Gifts

Created by: FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation

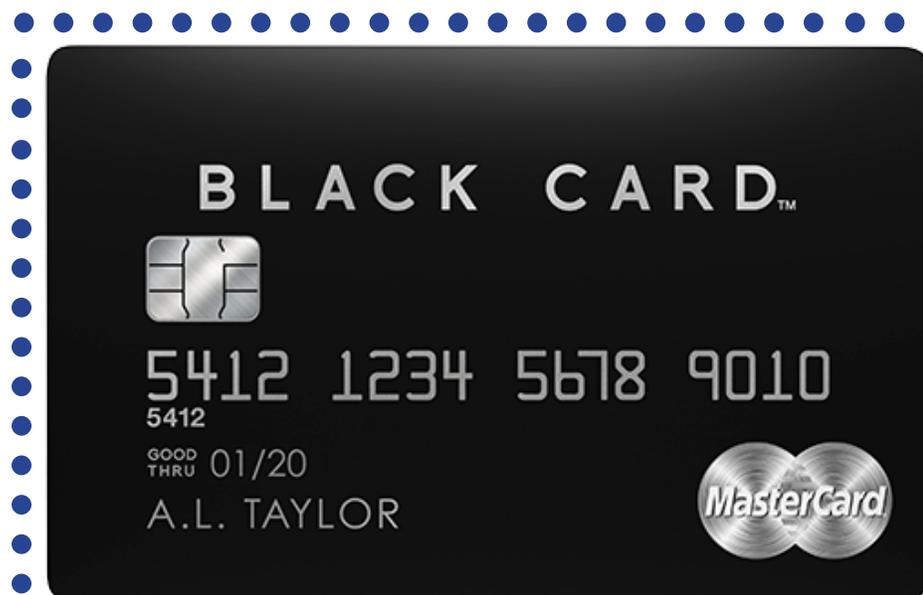
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[admin@whalers-creation.us](mailto:admin@whalers-creation.us)!**

**Business Talk 8:00am-10am PST**

**Story Time: 5:30pm-8:30pm PST**

**Classical Music: 9:00pm-11:00pm PST**

**Inspirational Music all day Sundays**

# **KFAM Youth Radio**



**From city-to-city & coast-to-coast our  
focus is FAMILY  
Foster Adopt Mentor Investing in Lives  
of Youth  
[whalers-creation.us](http://whalers-creation.us)**