



State of New Hampshire

Office of the Child Advocate



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Concord: Child Advocate Announces 2021 Magnify Voices Expressive Arts Contest as flagship event for Mental Health Awareness Month.

Moira O'Neill, the State Child Advocate, announced today that the Office of the Child Advocate is a co-sponsor of this year's flagship event marking mental health awareness month. The annual event provides a platform for raising awareness about the experience of living with mental illness.

The Magnify Voices Expressive Arts contest was established in 2019 as the flagship activity during Children's Mental Health Awareness Month to highlight the need for improvement in NH's children's mental health system. Over 100 children have submitted artwork in the past two years. O'Neill encourages children to participate, "Expression through the arts is one of the most healing activities for mental illness. And as much as it heals the artist, it takes all of us on a journey of empathy and relief."

Children in middle and high school (grades 5 - 12) may submit creative expressions of their experience or observations of mental health in New Hampshire. Options include a short film (2 minutes or less); an original essay or poem (1000 words or less); or a design in another medium of expression such as a painting, song, or sculpture. Art pieces will be showcased to help raise awareness, decrease stigma and discrimination, and affect change to ensure socially and emotionally healthy growth for all children in the Granite State. "While children have unique experiences, they need to know that they are not alone. By sharing their stories in creative ways, they can be heard. We are listening," stated O'Neill.

The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2021. A panel of judges with varied expertise will award prize money by grade (5-8th and 9-12th). A celebration event will take place in May (TBD). Visit the [Magnify Voices](#) website for more information including the rules and guidelines, past submissions, and a list of partners and sponsors. For additional questions, email magnifyvoices@gmail.com.

Promotional materials are attached including a flyer and PowerPoint presentation with additional details. Follow [Magnify Voices on Facebook](#) to stay up to date on the latest information.

Please share this exciting contest with school districts, youth-serving organizations, family and friends. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Co-sponsors of the event include: NAMI NH, Reach Teach Love, Riverbend Community Mental Health, Granite State Children's Alliance, Endowment for Health, NFI North, Bureau of Student Wellness, and Youth Move New Hampshire.

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