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**5TH GRADE WIDE**  
*Poetry Slam!*

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2015 – 2016 POETRY ANTHOLOGY

Featuring Poetry Slam Finalists from  
Wildwood's Partner Elementary Schools

**WILDWOOD**  **PARK**  
for the arts



## ABOUT WILDWOOD'S ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Wildwood Park and neighboring schools, Chenal Elementary, Robinson Elementary, Baker Elementary and Roberts Elementary, are partners in a year-long, in-school residency program supported by the Arkansas Arts Council, June Hoes Williams, and Deltic Timber. Students, kindergarten through fifth-grade, experience a curriculum of creative expression and environmental awareness with explorations through history, literature, music, theatre, visual art, world cultures, and science.

Arts in Education artists are in week-long residencies throughout the year and work alongside classroom teachers to incorporate the arts through a cross-curricular approach, expanding the school's campus into outdoor classes at Wildwood Park. Since the first residency was launched at Chenal Elementary during the 2010-2011 school year, Wildwood has grown the program to include additional schools, Robinson Elementary and Roberts Elementary. Baker Elementary most recently joined the partnership during the 2013-2014 school year.



[www.wildwoodpark.org](http://www.wildwoodpark.org) | 501-821-7275 | 20919 Denny Rd, Little Rock, AR 72223

## ABOUT ARTS IN EDUCATION ARTIST CHRIS JAMES

Chris James is a professional spoken word artist, playwright, author and teaching artist. He has been involved in Arts in Education since 2009. He is affiliated with organizations such as Thea Foundation, Arkansas A+, Wildwood Parks for the Arts, Arkansas Learning Through the Arts, Pulaski County Special School District, Pine Bluff School District, Pulaski County Youth Services and many more. Chris James has worked with hundreds of students throughout Arkansas. He has orchestrated school-wide and district-wide poetry slams and stage plays with schools and organizations. Chris is the Executive Director of two amazing programs; Poetry Saves Lives and The Roots Art Connection. He is also a member of nationally known poetry slam team, Foreign Tongues who ranked 2nd place in the world's second largest poetry slam in 2014(Southern Fried Poetry Slam).

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Baker Elementary - Chenal Elementary  
Roberts Elementary - Robinson Elementary

## *Pollution*

### ***Annabelle Ridlon***

Baker Elementary

Pollution takes the life away from people and animals,  
like a war that last for years at a time.

Pollution looks like a cloud of smoke,  
devouring the air that gives us life.

Pollution sounds like a bubbling volcano,  
ready to erupt, ready to destroy multiple  
cities.

Pollution tastes like the gooey substance  
that comes from the bathroom pipes.

Pollution makes you feel like you're stuck in sticky and  
stretchy tar.

Pollution is a river of tears created by the animals that  
suffer from it.

Pollution keeps the skies gray, not blue. Pollution is a  
lake turning black, thick with oil. Pollution becons  
bargaingly to quench its thirst for blood, in exchange for  
transportation. It's terribly traumatic to trust pollution.

A lot people say, "Don't cry over spilled milk," but pollution  
is not a part of that. We can stop pollution if we try hard enough.  
Don't be a couch potato, and put an end to this paralyzing poison  
that pollutes the Pacific, called pollution.

*Life is like a Puzzle*

**Chase Buffington**

Baker Elementary

Life is like a puzzle.

sometimes it's easy,

Sometimes it's hard.

When you are born you start a new puzzle.

Your new puzzle pieces are scattered.

But as you get older, they start to connect.

Some puzzles tell stories like a happy family or a man going  
to the moon in a rocket ship.

Do you want 100 piece puzzle that's easy or do you want  
1,000 pieces?

Challenge yourself.

You choose

Your pieces.

## *Daydreams*

***Eva Warner***

Baker Elementary

Bouncing bunnies bringing berries  
To my treehouse filled with fairies  
Oh, how fun it would be  
If they found reality

Talking dogs and silly frogs  
Wearing socks with polka-dots  
The seal that keeps them all within  
Starts to break when class begins

We learn and work and study all day  
Sometimes I just need to get away  
As classmates scurry to and fro  
I lose connection and off I go

Throughout the journey from here to there  
My daydreams take me everywhere  
From lollipop valleys to chocolate tipped mountains  
To rose pedal gardens and soda pop fountains

Each adventure fills me with glee  
My daydreams are very important to me



## *Attack of the Sweaters!*

### **Hoyoung Park**

Baker Elementary

The sweater towers above all clothing. He's notorious for crashing Christmas parties.

He's like a time bomb waiting to blow. When the bomb comes out, it's like expanding heat in the arctic snow.

He's coiled spring waiting to jump. He goes on your torso. That's when his fuzz itches more. The expanding heat is like angry bees on your back.

Then, the glorious, T-shirt saves the day. She drives him away into the deep depths of the closet. He's gone for the summer. Polar fleece won't be back.

Now and then, the sweater speaks to me, in the deep dark closet, he lies angrily. Sometimes, I hear thumps and bumps and an occasional, "LET ME FREE!"

But now I can know he rests in captivity. Now all I need is some underwear!

After that, an online website was my main repair. I got reliable clothes, and they got their share.

But remember! The sweater was ALWAYS there!

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*Hope*  
**Mary E. Prather**  
Baker Elementary

Hope is the sun after a dark night,  
After the rain, the sun shines oh-so-bright.  
Hope is your friend's voice after a scary trip.  
When you feel your heart is about to rip!

Hope is the spring flowers after a winter as cold as ice,  
a scent that is alive and nice.  
Hope is the Happy Helping Hand of a friend,  
When it feeds to your pain, there is no end.

Hope is life, hope is love,  
Hope is fragile, like a dove.  
Hope is risky, hope is daring,  
Hope is what will stop your crying.

Hope says, "I can!" Throughout the day, be it  
March, April, June, or May!

You simply can't survive without hope,  
Without it, you couldn't cope.  
Don't dismiss this as simple words,  
I'm just letting my hope be heard

*Smoking*  
**Myricle Mullinix**

Robinson Elementary

As you put the cigarette in your mouth, you can feel vines slowly wrapping around your wrists. The cigarette takes on a human form as you hear it whisper "I'm going to change your life."

Why do you smoke? Are cigarettes supposed to make you feel calm?  
Or do you think they make you look cool?

You could have chosen to do something else, but instead you risked your life trying to "relax". Why not take a bubble bath instead? Or spend the afternoon shopping or climbing a tree?

Why risk everything for a puff of smoke?

Do you know that smoking one cigarette can get you hooked immediately? Do you know that your teeth may fall out and that you will lose friends, because no one wants to talk to someone with bad breath.

You can't give any excuses. There's no one to blame. No one made you light the match and put the cigarette to your lips. No one forced you to be a teen smoker. You did that on your own.

It hurts me to see you smoking. You're going to make your younger siblings want to smoke too. I think you should feel really bad and just STOP!

Smoking is a silent killer. You will never get to enjoy life to the fullest before you die. You know what you did and what you did was wrong. No more excuses...Just stop smoking.

*The Book of Life*  
**Christian Carter**  
Robinson Elementary

What is life? What does it mean to live?

Well...your life is a story that you will write with every action, chain reaction and consequence. For example, something that you think is small like smoking a cigarette could lead to a BIGGER consequence like suicide.

Just think about it! If you hadn't smoked one cigarette, you never would've stolen money to buy more. Then you never would've been put in jail feeling worthless and committing suicide. Instead, you could've invented something life changing. But we will never know, because you made a bad choice.

Your life can be the shining star of your school or your family. OR it could be the one that is dying out faster than others. So don't make your life a game, but more like an opportunity of a lifetime.

Shine bright! And fill your life with what matters most to you, because in the REAL game of life, you don't get a rough draft. Once you take your last breath, you fully publish your book to God and wait to see what he has to say.

Don't waste your time trying to redo, erase and revise or you won't be able to experience the finer things in life.

Don't worry about trying to fix your mistakes by yourself, because if you make a mistake, you have forgiveness.

So...write your story well from beginning to end...Live a little...and laugh a lot, because in life, you don't get a rough draft.

Your life is a book...and your book is your life.

## Curtain of Darkness

***Braxton Blaty***

Robinson Elementary

As the cherry tree was cut down by the culprit of death, the light quickly faded away. The whole world's curtain seemed to close. There was nothing people could do but just watch and stare.

The curtain of darkness encased us like a pack of hungry wolves hunting down a small deer. The wind became a bullet train tearing through the city destroying everything we had built. Trees stood tall and tried to withstand but eventually gave in and chopped themselves down for lumber.

Homes and building shook in line as the city became engulfed with raging fires. The city seemed to melt down and run like lava as buildings offered themselves as a new platform for destruction. It was impossible to help...Impossible to understand...and almost impossible to watch.

After the roar of the wind, the curtain of darkness created images of confused and grief stricken humans coming out of hiding. No matter who you met, you were greeted by the same glassy stare as if we were no longer people, but an army of mindless creatures.

The darkness lifted almost as quickly as it fell. I stared at the once beautiful city that had been destroyed in an instant.

Cherry blossoms drifted silently and beautifully in the wind. Instead of feeling hopeless, I felt hope in the aftermath.

## *Love*

***Ella Bisbee***

Robinson Elementary

Love is the word of a bird called a dove. When you hold the golden hands of your perfect match, her smile unlocked the hatch. So your heart turns the dial of undenial.

As you remember your first date, You see your paths cross due to fate, Thoughts drift to those of love...

Love is the end of long nights staring at the brightest star in your sports car. Her eyes shine through the night, to show you the light. Some say it's all a dream, but your relationship is the beam that holds the whole team.

When she's afraid to fly, you propel her to the sky, and tell her to close her eyes. No one can pull ya'll apart, it's obvious you stole her heart. It was hard to contain your glee as you bent down on one knee asking her to be your one and only.

Quickly she said yes. Then she waited and waited for the perfect dress. It's inexplicable of how irresistible this girl makes you feel. On a quiet Summer day, you pray and you pray for a good honeymoon around mid-June.

Now you cheer for children who are now here, growing ear to ear.

As you sit and rock, you look at life and life looks back at you. Ya'll settle down and have a nice chat about what would have happened if her smile hadn't unlocked the hatch.

*The Pound*  
**Collin Galloway**  
Robinson Elementary

Wandering around the mean, monstrous, monstrosity of a world, LOST, abandoned by my owner. When all of the sudden...SNATCH!

I was swooped up into the air like a devil grasping me in its huge claws and thrown into the back of a truck. Out like a light! I woke up...everything sore...starving for food...trapped in a cage.

One sniff. Two sniffs. I've never been here before but it's as disgusting as a rat throwing up on a dead rat.

Curled up inside the cage, I lay whimpering, surrounded by terrible people and the sound of dogs barking like wild lions roar in the jungle.

Shoppers come in two by two looking for a pet just like me. I got up, adrenaline bursting through my bones barking like a thousand infuriated oxes as if to say, "Pick me. *I'm a Doberman.*" They picked me up and said "This is the one!"

At least that's what happened in my dream, but in reality I saw a needle searching for its prey "sssss" like a snake seeks a mouse. In an instant, I was gone.

HELP STOP ANIMAL ABUSE!!



*Loving You*  
**Zachary Gimbert**  
Robinson Elementary

The sound of love makes me full of all my years of emptiness.  
The touch of love fills my heart of hope and proudness.  
From 0-100.

You are a beautiful angel from heaven.  
It is like I'm the battery and you're the charger that charges me up.  
We are meant to be together.

You are the only love for me.  
If you decided to leave, I would die if it was the only way to get back  
with you.

When I am alone, without you I am nothing.  
You are the only person that can make it go away.

It is you that is the center of the universe.  
I will always love you dead or alive.  
Together we are united, and united we are full.

## *Encampment*

**Michelle Gong**

Roberts Elementary

I can see their dirt and grime smeared faces;  
the sadness and hunger in their eyes.  
Feels like the sharpest crack of a whip,  
Lashing onto your back

I see them; our fellow brothers and sisters,  
Being treated like an enslaved person, an animal.  
I see their bruised and swollen hands.  
But they are not afraid;  
Their ugly yellow stars stand out like an island in the middle of  
the ocean.

I see their pain and suffering has left a mark,  
But it doesn't break them down.  
The pain they have endured  
sounds like a cry of an abandoned baby  
Left alone without anyone.

But they stand, as stoically as a wall  
They are not defeated.  
You see their worn and battered clothes,  
They hand on their sallow bodies like a limp rag.  
Their faces are tired and thin.  
But they stand full of courage and hope.

They are a boundary.  
They block off what is being done to them like a force field.  
They are fighting a battle between good and evil.  
They replace that fear that was supposed to consume  
And destroy them with a hope that shines brighter than the  
midday sun.

They have enough strength in their souls to turn the universe  
upside down.

They can resist.  
They bloom; bright and beautiful.  
On the outside they may seem broken or beaten down  
With their faces bloodied and bruised,  
But on the inside, they shine bright.

As bright as a thousand shimmering stars in the sky.  
They will fight on to stop the insanity.  
They will fight.  
Their hope will lead the way  
And even as they are forced down, they will not stop.  
They will diminish all of the darkness.  
They are not afraid, because they have hope.

## *Death*

***Leigh Johnston***

Chenal Elementary

Death, what is it?

Is it a gateway into another life?

An escape from this world to another?

Do we wander the Earth as lost souls,  
watching friends and family go throughout life?

Or are we reborn into a new body,  
no recollection of our former selves?

Sometimes I wonder if there really is a heaven,  
or if it's just a figment of our imaginations.

Death is inevitable, so why should we care?

But, the thing is, we should care about what happens to our souls  
after we leave this world.

Do they move on like a leaf in the wind,  
nowhere to go, letting another force take them away?

Now that I think about it, maybe we shouldn't think about the  
afterlife and let these thoughts consume us.

We should just live life to the fullest.

Death, don't worry about it.

*The Forest*  
**Samuel Chapin**  
Chenal Elementary

My forest will relieve you from your bad thoughts.  
The rushing water in the creeks are filters that will  
clean you of your regrets.  
The birds will chase your fears far, far away.  
Raccoons will snatch up your stress in the blink of an eye.  
All of your doubts will be blown away in the wind.  
Your bad memories will be covered up by the vines.  
Deer will stamp all over your negativity.  
Squirrels will grab your worries and bury them fast.  
Once you enter my trees, your mind will be cleared,  
so enjoy your time here while it lasts.

## *Divorce*

**Conor Williams**

Chenal Elementary

Parents fighting and babies are crying. Children yelling stop, stop, the next door neighbor calling the cops. While the cops are gone, everything is wrong.

Throwing chairs, pulling hair, slamming doors, nobody ignores. The fight is hurting my ears while I am reading. Tears splashing on pages like a pool party. The pages screaming Yay Yay, I go beside my bed and start to pray. Mom crying, dad is finding, finding [something] to throw, I'm yelling to my mom, we got to go.

I'm crying, begging to God that I need help to [put] this family back together like a puzzle. When I looked up God gave me that piece to be strong in this family no matter what happens while this family is apart. So when I sleep I imagine being the strongest son in this sorrow family.

While time past it went by fast. Week by week, day by day. The words I say is three words, I love you. Now when I said week by week, I meant I only get to see my dad with just one peek.

Yeah, I love him and He love[s] me too, but when I say goodbye I see red skies. This is a poem of a boy named Conor who lived a divorce-affected life.

## *Stand Up to Bullies*

### ***Madison Wall***

Chenal Elementary

A Punch would up in my face.

It felt like a metal bulldozer plowing through my jaw.

I knew people were watching like hawks.

I knew they were hideous hyenas hackling horribly as I got pummeled.

I didn't think anybody would save me from this terrible nightmare.

Except I was wrong.

An angel of a child came and pushed my attacker down, and pulled my  
little mouse of a body up.

The icy feeling I just had was replaced by a warm, happy sensation. A  
few seconds ago, I thought that I would be dead meat for those animals,  
but as soon as this child asked me if I was okay, I was like a whole new  
person.

My broken bones as well as my broken heart were mended like magic.

This kid saved me, and we had never even met.

We were friends for life and helped others who couldn't help themselves.

We were invisible. Bullying is like getting burned, but standing up to  
someone is like putting out the fire with cool water.

That is the power of standing up to bullies.

## *The Depression Bully*

***Maegan Hall***

Chenal Elementary

Depression is a bully, constantly pushing and pulling me. It makes my days worse as the month go by. It seems that the depression bully screams at me, telling me I'm a loser and nobody will ever like me. I didn't want to believe it.

My depression despises my good days. So, the next day, it knocks me down again and again and again. The depression bully is talking over.

When I went to school, I felt so lonely, like a baby doe searching for its mamma. I felt like a piece of paper, kept being torn and torn apart until I was nothing.

Depression was like a frog, hopping from day to day, picking and choosing when to jump on the lilly pad of my emotions. I felt like a ball of clay being smushed together by hurtful words. The depression bully is taking over.



*This is the Life of a Single Mother*

**Janae Reynolds**

Chenal Elementary

Tears stream down her face like a river from the pain  
that's piercing her soul like a bullet.

No one knows how she is when she's alone  
how hard she struggles to stop  
the ferocious fire of depression  
burning in her head.

One reckless mistake leave[s] her with the pain  
she's fighting now.

A child in high school by the age of 25.

She sleeps softly from a night of crying constantly.

Bearing the burning betrayal of a boy who broke her heart.

This is the life of a single mother.

Thank you to Chris James for  
sharing his talents with our students.

Thanks to our Sponsors!

**The Kerr Foundation, Inc.**

**June HoesWilliams**



Wildwood Park for the Arts enriches the lives of Arkansans of all ages by creating community through nature and the arts. Wildwood provides opportunities for lifelong learning, engages the imagination and celebrates the human spirit through encounters with nature and a full spectrum of the cultural arts: performing, horticultural, visual, literary, culinary, the wellness arts and more. A 105-acre park, gardens and 625-seat theatre complex make Wildwood one of our state's most valuable natural and cultural resources.

Create ~ Recreate ~ Celebrate!



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