

National Homeownership Month Kids' Art Contest

Alabama Housing Finance Authority
Communications: Special Event Marketing

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Alabama Housing Finance Authority

Creating Home: National Homeownership Month Kids' Art Contest

Category/Subcategory: Communications/Special Event Marketing (NEW)

To celebrate National Homeownership Month in June 2022, the Alabama Housing Finance Authority hosted a statewide kids' art contest. We invited children between the ages of 5-18 to submit an original art piece in any medium to illustrate their answer to the question, "What does home mean to you?"

From June 1-30, parents helped their children upload their completed creations to a dedicated site. During the voting period July 1-8, Facebook users selected their favorite entry simply by liking a photo in the gallery. We urged contestants to encourage their families and friends to vote, increasing positive publicity and word-of-mouth for AHFA.

Many submitted happy depictions of family cookouts, game nights, and sheltering under a family-sized umbrella, dominated by hearts, rainbows and pets. Others poignantly expressed their fears of homelessness, family trauma, and Covid-19. All provided valuable insight and versatile imagery for a variety of uses.

The top three prize winners earned deluxe art kits ordered from Amazon at minimal expense, plus Visa gift cards ranging from \$50 to \$250. We were so impressed by the quality of the entries in general that we increased our budget to award each entrant a \$10 Visa gift card. We ordered customized gift cards printed with our art contest logo to keep the materials coordinated.

Though the window of contest operation was relatively brief, the results benefitted AHFA all year long. The month-long submission period and week-long voting were followed by in-person visits to award the top three vote-getters. At those prize presentations, we met each winner and a parent at a local restaurant, treated them to lunch, took photographs, and gathered additional material and commentary for longer profile pieces.

Our total investment of approximately \$1,000 generated a wealth of evergreen material – social media posts and a greater online presence, success story profiles for digital and printed publications, and more. Some of our staff's favorite submissions were enlarged, framed, and hung in our office just before our next board meeting, adding a cheerful display to the main hallway. We also used the entries as the artwork and theme for our 2022 Annual Report, "Creating Home." In that annual report we showed how AHFA's palette of programs reaches statewide, illustrating the difference we make for adults and for children who get to grow up in safe, secure homes that their parents can afford.

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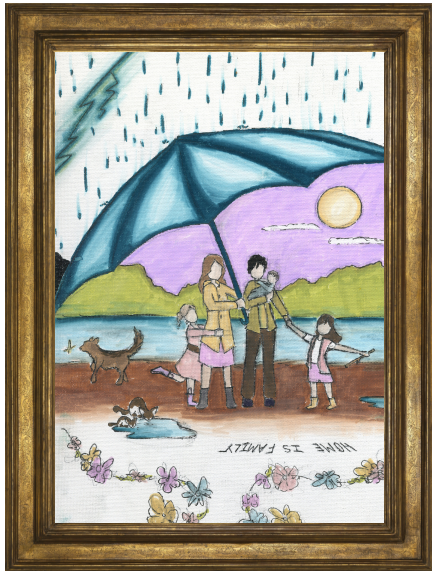
The AHFA Kids' Art Contest represented an efficient use of resources, in terms of both time and expense. Two months of art contest set-up, execution, and follow-up generated 12 months of content, success story leads, and increased name recognition. We used the Woobox web application to host the gallery of submissions and to administer the entry and voting processes because it met our needs affordably. We ensured that upon entering, parents consented to our use of their child's information and artwork, granted us rights to copyright the material, and released us from any liability. Reports generated by Woobox showed more than 9,000 visits to our contest, which represents extremely high traffic for us. To promote the contest, we emailed a series of five announcements to our existing customers and contacts like our state's Habitat for Humanity affiliates. On average, these messages were sent to 7,700 individuals, and garnered open rates as high as 40 percent.

Our chief objectives were to bring awareness to National Homeownership Month, kick off the summer with a fun activity for kids, promote AHFA to the general public, and generate contacts and content for future digital and print projects. All of these goals were met.

This contest is easily replicable by any state HFA seeking to broaden its audience, gather content for future publicity and projects, and add a lighthearted touch to its slate of offerings. In fact, we are replicating our own activity for the current year.

Originally intended to be a one-time project, the art contest was so successful that we are making it an annual event. Thus we have revamped the logo slightly for 2023, keeping the same color scheme but making it easier to update each year. This year's prize packages will include arts-and-crafts subscriptions from Kiwi Crate and deluxe art sets so that winners can continue to develop their creative skills. We look forward to working with young artists and mining this year's content to further promote AHFA programs and generate goodwill in the year to come.

Selected Entries



Award Presentations



1st place:
Aundrea Woods, age 9, Pinson

First-place winner Aundrea Woods of Pinson presented a piece of artwork that portrayed home in a way that was unexpected--a picture of a house that was broken. When she was asked to explain her picture, she said, "My daddy doesn't live here anymore and I feel like I'm in the middle."

Aundrea admits that spending time with each parent is difficult and wonderful all at the same time. She was asked, "If your artwork could talk to other kids your age, what would it tell them?" Woods responded by saying, "If your mom and dad are split apart, don't be sad. It doesn't matter 'cause you still have family and you are still loved."

While home can mean many different things to different people, at its heart, it means the same thing: a soft spot to land, a haven of protection, and an oasis of comfort.

Thank you to nine-year-old Aundrea for shedding a positive light on a negative, yet quite common, reality.



2nd place:
Makenzie Deanes, age 9, Madison

So, what does "home" mean to second-place winner Makenzie Deanes of Madison? She had much to say about her masterpiece that she turned in for the art contest. First, she mentioned that her favorite color is turquoise and that she used colored pencils for shading.

When asked to describe her artwork, she said, "This is a picture of my house and my family and how we roll." Makenzie explains what each word written on the house means:

- Togetherness: "I love my family and I am very thankful."
- Love and Peace: "Our love and when we go to sleep."
- Good Times: "When we have fun together making TikTok videos, cooking out, jumping on our trampoline, and playing games. P.S. I win most of the time!"

When asked how her picture makes her feel inside her heart, she said, "I'm proud of it. I'm really happy to have the opportunity to be in the art competition. I feel happy inside to make others feel happy and be inspired by my picture."



3rd place:
Emma Jane Howell, age 8, Mobile

Our third-place winner, Emma Jane Howell, is a gymnast from Mobile and a middle child with two brothers.

If Emma Jane is not crab walking, doing cartwheels, or spending time with her cousins, you will find her playing with her dog Cash.

When describing her artwork she said, "The bubble around my head is a 'thinking bubble.' I am thinking about my home and my family."

Emma said that she used color crayons and markers to create her picture and that her favorite color is blue, just like the sea. You can tell she loves her family very much by the big, beautiful, red heart she drew in the center of her house. Emma mentioned how she feels safe in her home with her family and that her favorite time is game night.

Emma Jane's "thinking bubble" is a great reminder that home is, "a place of love, safety, comfort, and fun."



Stay Tuned: Kids' Art Contest Coming Soon! - YouTube



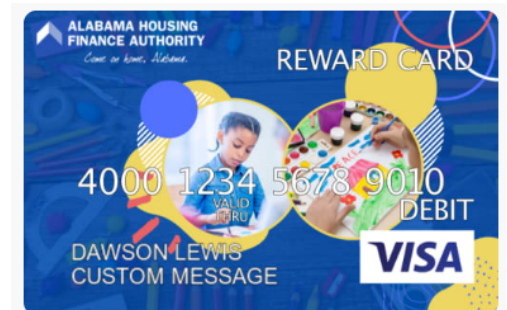
2022 Logo



2023 Logo



Gift Card Design



Social Media Examples



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alabamahfa AHFA thanks everyone who entered our first-ever Kids Art Contest to celebrate Homeownership Month, a national observance held each June. The artwork is terrific. We are pleased that so many young artists showcased their talents.

Congratulations to the winners!

1st place: Aundrea Woods, age 9, Pinson
 2nd place: Makenzie Deanes, age 9, Madison
 3rd place: Emma Jane Howell, age 8, Mobile

We invited children in Alabama, ages 5 to 18, to submit an original art piece that illustrates their answer to the question, "What Does Home Mean To You?" Each winner will receive a gift card and deluxe art kit.

Thanks also to everyone who participated by voting. Continue to enjoy their excellent art at <https://woobox.com/u3zwo9>.

#AHFA #ComeOnHomeAlabama
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JULY 11, 2022

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alabamahfa We are pleased to announce the release of our FY22 Annual Report and financial statements.

The disruption from the pandemic of the past three years has created significant challenges and offered important opportunities for all of us. No facet of life or industry is emerging untouched, and our work in affordable housing is no exception. Nevertheless, we achieved widespread coverage this year, helping improve housing situations for Alabama homeowners and household renters in all 67 counties.

Our 2022 Annual Report displays a gallery of portraits highlighting some of the submissions received this year in our first kids' art contest, designed to celebrate National Homeownership Month. Their colorful entries illustrate the difference we make in communities across Alabama, both for the adults and for the young ones who get to grow up in safe, secure homes that their parents can afford. We look forward to continuing to fulfill this mission in the year ahead.

View AHFA's FY22 Annual Report at <https://express.adobe.com/page/8h2ZO8Ne2m4gB/>.

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