

## **“Different and Proud”**

**By: Evan S.**

Honourable Mention: Grade 7–8

We are different, you and me,

in many ways, so you see.

Segregation was a problem for you.

Let's get rid of it faster than your running shoes.

Maybe my ancestors enslaved “your kind”,

but I just want you to be a friend of mine.

You had different seats, washrooms, and water fountains,

but just for you, I would climb a mountain.

However, both of us are human, you and me.

Maybe we're not so different, so you see.

## **“I Will”**

**By: Mirayah S.**

Winner: Grade 7–8

I am not just a chapter, tucked between worn out pages  
of history. I am the ink that refused to fade, the voice  
that refused to break. I am not a trend. Not a moment.  
Not something you only remember in February.  
I am the proof that we survived what was meant to  
end us. The rising voice of those who came to defend  
us. My name carries stories older than textbooks.  
My truth isn't something you misread or mistook.  
I was not dim in spaces built without my light.  
I was not born to whisper where my truth  
deserves to roar. Generations stand behind me.  
That is why I do not bend. Their blood is my  
beginning, not my end. I was meant to stay,  
and I will.

**“The Next Ten – Our Village”**

**By: Avery Q.**

Honourable Mention: Grade 4–6

I see a mural when I go to class,  
I saw faces in colour from future and past.

Grandma said “we dreamed so you could begin”.  
Now I keep her wish, in the next ten.  
I carry that wish in the words that I write,  
In walking through Ajax with my head held up high.

We are more than a month, we’ve always been.

In the past,  
Right now.  
And in the next ten.

## **“Carrying the Past Forward”**

**By: Yajushi T.**

Winner: Grade 4–6

What will happen,  
If the world learns to listen  
To the people who need to be heard?

If rather than rushing forward,  
Or ignoring bright ideas,  
People reflected on the past,  
The years before recognition.

Progress would be stronger,  
If we look at the past.  
Imagine what could be today  
If every voice had been asked.

Just because our skin doesn't match,  
Our thoughts didn't match,  
Our dreams didn't match,  
We didn't focus.

But now,  
We must move forward,  
shaped, not stopped, by our past.

In the next ten,  
We build together with stronger goals,

Lifting each other, turning mistakes into hope  
And planting strength.

Our dreams echo, unseen no longer,  
Ambitions shaping every step we take.