

# EXPRESS

# *yourself*

## SHOWCASING THE CREATIVE TALENTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

NACC believes that the voices of young people must not only be elevated in the context of child welfare cases and in the courtroom but must also be heard through their creative expressions and valuable artistic contributions to culture and society. NACC is excited to feature these talents in *The Guardian*. If you have a poem, story, artwork, or another creative medium you'd like to showcase here, please email [Kristen.Pisani-Jacques@NACCchildlaw.org](mailto:Kristen.Pisani-Jacques@NACCchildlaw.org).

### Dear DACA

*by Ivory Bennett*

An old man once told me about the American dream.  
 He was barefoot and shucking white corn.  
 His back was bent from years of hard work,  
 and his fingers read of routine and war.  
 He told me about borders and bridges,  
 cultures crossing over one another.  
 He told me about jungles and judges —  
 the only difference between the two was  
 one was of God and one wasn't.  
 He told me about loss and of love,  
 and planting seeds that you may never see grow.  
 He told me about investments in self,  
 and investments in what will come long after you're gone.  
 He told me to search for my purpose with  
 my fingers and with my heart.  
 "The first step," he said, "is to be courageous  
 and just. That is the only way to start."  
 This man, he shared with me a dream  
 deferred, as he looked me in my eyes.  
 He told me, "Take action, dear child, and  
 arrive at these things you have heard."



**Ivory Bennett, M.Ed.** (she/her/hers) is a published millennial author currently working in Dallas, Texas as a dual-accredited English teacher and a cheer coach at a Title 1 Collegiate Academy. She is a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania native and former foster youth with 17 years of lived experience. Outside of work, Ivory is a national equity advocate for education and foster care. Holistic health and well-being are integral pillars of her personal and professional pedagogies. Ivory is a member of NACC's National Advisory Council on Children's Legal Representation.

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## Law school doesn't teach you this

by *TyAsia Nicholson*

When you see me, what do you see?  
 Do you see all the obstacles I have achieved  
 Or do you see the stigma placed on me  
 The labels .... Will you believe?  
 Will you believe what they say?  
 Will you believe there is more than one way?  
 Before Lawyers for Children all I did was wait  
 Before I use to wait for a call, wait for a knock,  
 because people didn't speak much they just watched  
 Watched me fall  
 Watched me trip  
 Watched me in a situation I didn't pick  
 I had no control I was scared  
 But I'm not another statistic  
 Knowledge is what they feared  
 No one wanted me to know  
 They wanted to take control  
 But Lawyers for Children let my mind be blown...

Blown with consistency and honesty  
 It can change a lot  
 I hope you take from this meeting and don't stop  
 Lawyers can change lives  
 Advocating for what's right  
 Let me tell you there are many lonely nights  
 Nights we try to prevent  
 Try to give our children all the time we can  
 Remember trauma becomes a child's best friend  
 You can make a difference  
 You could change a life  
 You are here because you want to do what's right  
 Microaggressions are not okay  
 The statistics has to change  
 And I'm here to say,  
 My lawyer helped me find my way.



**TyAsia Nicholson** is a freelance writer, poet, social media influencer, young parent leader, and advocate. She is currently pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice at John Jay College with a double minor in Criminology and Human Services. Ms. Nicholson works in partnership with Lawyers for Children in NYC serving as their Youth Ambassador in addition to being a mentor for parenting youth in foster care. Additionally, she founded and launched a website that provides information, resources, and affordable activities for young families in NYC. Ms. Nicholson is passionate about breaking generational curses and supporting young parents in embracing their identities and making changes that they want to see.



TyAsia Nicholson co-presented NACC's June member webinar, *Breaking Stigma and Changing the Narrative: Strategies for Supporting Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care*. [Click here to watch!](#)