



2025-2026 School Year

Theme: **I wish you knew...**

Visit PCYS.ORG for ideas on how to work with this theme.

What is it?

Voices of Today is an annual imagery, poetry, and photography contest offered by Payne County Youth Services.

Who can participate?

Any 6th through 12th grader in Payne County.

How much does it cost?

It's **FREE**, just like all services offered by PCYS!

Why should I participate?

Glad you asked!

- **You'll have your art displayed in the community!** (With parent/guardian permission, of course.)
- **You could win!** In each category a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner will be chosen from each school and grade level (so you'll be competing only against students in the same grade and at the same school as you). There will also be a "Best in Show" awarded in each category - this prize goes to the *overall* best entry in imagery, poetry, or photography (all schools/grade levels compete for this award).
- **Your voice matters!** Youth art presents an important and unique opportunity for the community to connect with young people. Show the community what **you** think, how **you** feel, what's important to **you** through your submission!

What are the rules?

Here are the basics – additional, important details are listed on the back of this page.

- All submissions must be original to the artist. No copyrighted or previously published work is allowed.
- Categories: Imagery (drawing, painting, comic art, digital art, collage), Poetry, Photography
- Entries are due in school or at the PCYS office no later than December 15th, 2025.
- Entries must address this year's theme: **I Wish You Knew...** (you can add an explanation if you like).
- Formatting for all categories:
 - ☐ Submissions must not exceed the dimensions of 18"X24" (note: standard poster board is 22"X28").
 - ☐ Artwork must be completed on a paper product or canvas (no frames allowed).
 - ☐ Any piece submitted that is not on paper/canvas (wood, glass, metal, etc.) will not be judged.
 - ☐ Submissions should be mounted on heavy paper/poster board/cardstock/matboard and must be ready for display at the time of submission.

IMPORTANT DETAILS:

- **TURN IN YOUR SUBMISSION NO LATER THAN FRIDAY DECEMBER 15, 2025.**
 - ☐ Submissions may be turned in to designated staff at the school site, dropped off at the OSU Museum of Art at 720 S. Husband St. in Stillwater, or delivered directly to Payne County Youth Services at 2224 W. 12th Ave, Stillwater, OK 74074
 - An image of the submission and permission form may be submitted electronically via email to kims@pcys.org.
 - ☐ Submission must be **received** by a school/OSUMOA/PCYS before close of business on 12/15/2025.
 - ☐ Artwork submitted/received after the deadline will not be admissible.
- EACH ENTRY must have a signed parent/guardian permission form attached (to the back) and the appropriate box checked in the “Artwork Information” section of the form before the piece can be publicly displayed.
 - ☐ **Art submitted without the permission form will be accepted and judged but will NOT be displayed publicly or used for publicity purposes unless written permission is obtained.**
- Each artist may submit up to three entries per category (maximum number of entries if entering in all three categories = nine).
- Be sure to address the theme I Wish You Knew... - The artist is welcome to include a “Description of Submission” to explain how their piece addresses the theme if the artist would like to do so.
 - ☐ Description of Submission should be no more than 1-3 sentences long and should be secured to the back of the piece.
- Submissions will be displayed in select locations in Payne County beginning in January 2026.
 - ☐ Once all submissions are received, we’ll let you know where to look for (and show off) your piece!
 - Please make sure a parent/guardian email address is included on your permission form to receive this information or
 - check the PCYS website, Facebook, or Instagram page for updates on display locations.
- The artist may choose to have their artwork returned to them after the contest or to donate their piece to PCYS either to be auctioned off at a fundraising event or to be displayed indefinitely at a PCYS facility.
 - ☐ Artwork that is not donated may be picked up at the PCYS office between May 4th and May 16th, 2026.
 - ☐ Entries turned in by a school or that list a school and teacher name on the entry form, will be returned to that school/classroom for distribution to participants.
 - ☐ Any and all proceeds from donated artwork will directly benefit services provided to the community by PCYS.

Note: PCYS will take reasonable precautions to protect the artwork; however, PCYS is NOT liable for any lost, stolen, or damaged submissions. All artwork must be original and not in proximity of a recognizable copyrighted work. Artwork found to be in violation of copyright laws will be removed from the competition.

Email kims@pcys.org with questions about this program.

We can't wait to see your art!



Prompts for the theme “I Wish You Knew...”

Are you thinking about entering the Voice of Today Art, Poetry, and Photography contest but you’re not sure how to address the theme? You’ve come to the right place. As you read through the information below, remember to put your own, unique twist on your submission! The ideas listed below are just prompts to get you thinking about how YOU want to conceptualize your submission.

For 6th through 8th Graders:

- Is there a special part of your life that you wish others knew about? Maybe you have a hidden talent that you wish you could share with the world?
- Consider this an opportunity to share “the real you.” You could use your entry as an exploration into what’s beneath your public persona. Do you wear one “mask” at home, and another “mask” at school, with friends, or on social media?
- Unspoken feelings: You might want to use your art to convey feelings, emotions, or ideas that are difficult to put into words.
- Maybe you’ve noticed something unique or amazing about someone you care about, and you don’t think others notice – perhaps you could convey what you see through art?

For 9th through 12th Graders:

- Change is a big part of adolescence. Consider using your entry to explore the struggles and triumphs of metamorphosis, growing up, and becoming your own person.
- The public versus private self: Use your art to discuss the masks people wear in certain aspects of life – What are they showing? What are they concealing?
- Navigating societal pressures is another part of being a teenager – What do you wish the world knew about the pressures you face regarding school, social media, or the future?
- What is an individual identity? Use your art to deconstruct the idea of identity – What layers do you encounter? What role do those layers play in the overall idea of personal identity? How are those shaped (or not) by the person’s environment?

We hope these prompts help to spark your own, creative thoughts about this year’s theme, “I Wish You Knew.” If you’re still struggling, start by deciding who is the “you” in “I Wish YOU Knew...”? Who is the “I”? Different points of view can lead to new and interesting ideas and identifying the perspective of the piece you want to create is a great starting point. Remember, you are the artist! You are in charge of what hits the canvas, page, or lens. We want to know what you wish we knew, and, as always, **we can’t wait to see your art!**



United Way
of Payne County





2025-2026 Theme: **I Wish You Knew...**

Visit PCYS.ORG for ideas on how to work with this theme.

ARTIST INFORMATION

This completed form MUST accompany EACH submission.

Artist first and last name:

Age:

Email address:

Mailing address:

School name:

Grade:

Teacher/facilitator's name:

Teacher/facilitator's email address:

Parent/guardian first and last name:

Parent/guardian phone:

Parent/guardian email address:

ARTWORK INFORMATION

Title of submission:

Entered as (select one category): ☐ Art/Imagery ☐ Poetry ☐ Photography

Description of submission:

Date and location submitted:

COPYRIGHT RELEASE

As a contestant, I hereby grant consent to Payne County Youth Services, Inc. the exclusive right and permission, in respect of the original artwork that I have submitted to the Payne County Youth Services, Inc. Art, Poetry and Photography Contest, to display the artwork on a display board and to be displayed in various local communities within the Payne County area.

If I am selected as a contest WINNER, I hereby consent to Payne County Youth Services Inc. the right and permission to use, publish, and reproduce and display in any and all media now or hereafter known throughout the promotion of the contest at the agency. By my signature I grant permission to Payne County Youth Services, Inc., to publish in all print and electronic media, the artist's name, age, and city as per parental permission. In any of the winning categories, Payne County Youth Services, Inc. maintains the exclusive right to declare no winner and withhold prizes if no artwork of merit is found. I understand that all artwork submitted to the Art, Poetry and Photography Contest will be returned to the artist (unless the artist chooses to donate it to PCYS).

I wish to donate my artwork to PCYS for possible indefinite display at a PCYS facility. ☐

I wish to donate my artwork to PCYS to be sold or auctioned at a PCYS fundraiser. ☐

Parent/Guardian/Adult signature and date: _____

This release is not required for contest entry but **is** required for public display and/or publication when the artist is a minor.

Artist's signature and date: _____

Originality Confirmation: I declare that the artwork submitted to the Payne County Youth Services, Inc. Art, Poetry, and Photography Contest is my own original work and not copied from any existing artwork.

Artist's signature and date: _____

The deadline to hand in artwork is 12/15/2025. Please turn in artwork to your school or you may drop off at the PCYS office: 2224 W 12th Ave., Stillwater, OK. Please call and ask for Kim Shenold at 405-377-3380 for additional information or email kims@pcys.org.

SCHOOL SITES: If you receive a submission, contact Kim to pick it up at your convenience. Thank you!