

Lake Country Classical Academy student wins National Freedom 250 Art Contest

OCONOMOWOC — Lake Country Classical Academy announced fifth-grade student Mila Kavelaris has been named a national winner in the Freedom 250 American Heroes Student Art Contest for her portrait of American music icon Johnny Cash, created in honor of America's upcoming 250th anniversary.

Earlier this year, students in grades 3-12 from across the country were invited to participate by creating an original two-dimensional artwork depicting an American hero. Each submission also included a written artist statement explaining the inspiration behind the work and its significance.

Mila earned top honors in the Upper Elementary Division, selected by a panel of artists and educators who evaluated entries based on artistic excellence, technical skill, creativity, adherence to contest guidelines, and the quality and meaning of the accompanying artist statement. Notably, Mila was the only student from Wisconsin chosen as a national winner.

"Johnny Cash is my American hero," said Mila. "His story was inspiring because he was a famous musician who stood up for those less fortunate and used his career to inspire others. He also sang faith songs toward the end of his life, which truly inspired me."

For her winning submission, Mila drew Cash in the style of Chuck Close and the Photorealism movement. She said she was drawn to the style because of its dramatic effect, strong contrast, and bold appearance. "Ironically, Cash was known for wearing black outfits, and Close was known for drawing in black and white," she explained.

To create the piece, Mila used pencils of varying shades, a kneadable eraser, and cotton swabs for blending. In a creative touch, she even used a glow-in-the-dark star from her bedroom ceiling to help create the stars featured in the artwork.

"We are incredibly proud of Mila's achievement," said Kami Joy, head of Lower School at Lake Country Classical Academy. "Her artwork reflects both artistic talent and a

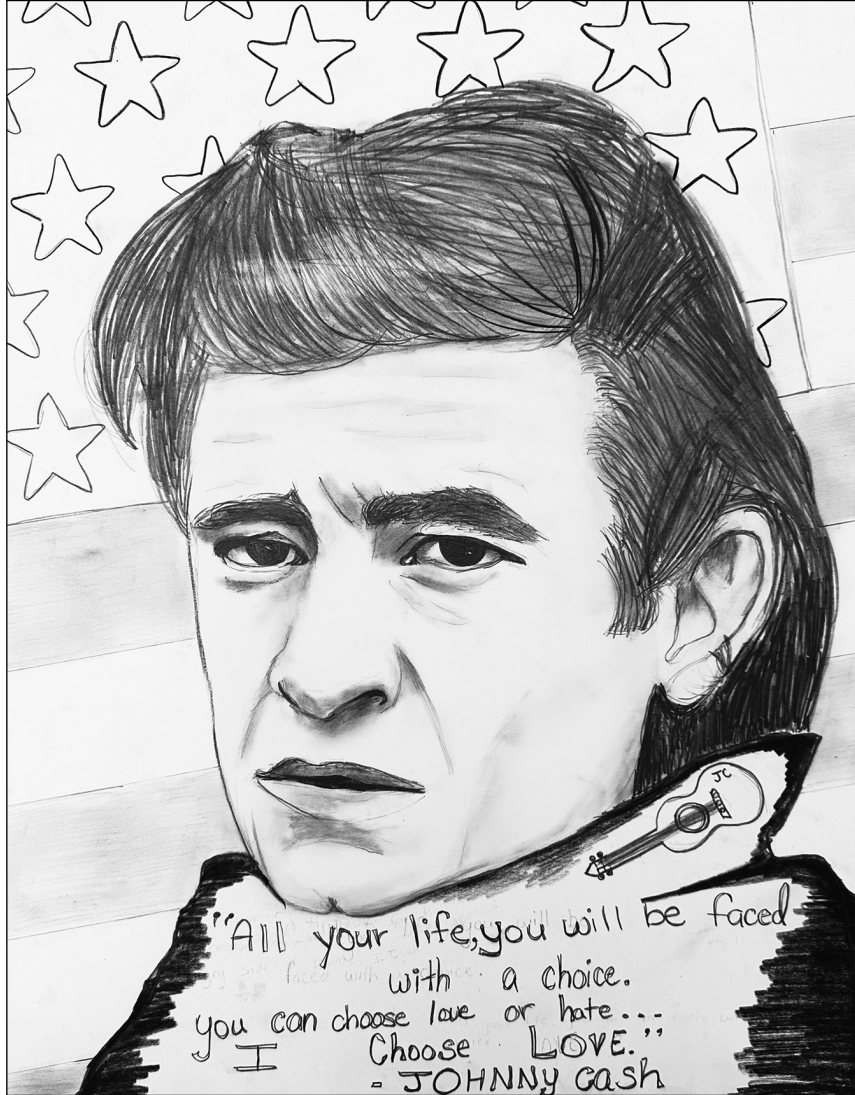


Photo courtesy of Lake Country Classical Academy

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thoughtful appreciation for the individuals who have helped shape our nation's history."

As a national winner, Mila will receive a travel stipend to attend the Freedom 250 celebration in Washington, D.C., where she and a guest will participate in the student art

exhibit and awards ceremony during President Donald Trump's Great American State Fair in July. Her artwork will be displayed alongside other winning entries from students across the nation.

"Johnny Cash was a great part of our history," Mila said.