

I MATTER



Project Coordinator: Isabella Hanson | Cover Art: Tyciara Carr

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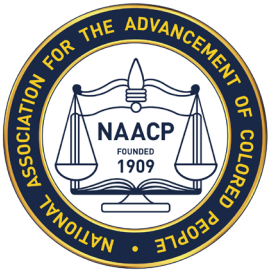


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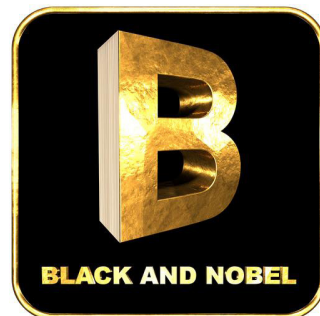
Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

AP



AFRICAN AMERICAN
MUSEUM IN PHILADELPHIA

—Alliance for
**BLACK
JUSTICE
IN POLAND**



"I MATTER" JUDGES



**ROBERT
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DAVIS**
Little League Trailblazer



**MALCOLM
JENKINS**
NFL



**ISABELLA
HANSON**
I Matter, Founder

INTRODUCTION

'I MATTER' is an important concept that stems from how we view ourselves and the need to feel valued.

Each of us wants and should be valued: valued at home, valued at work, and valued within all realms of society. When we truly value one another, we create an environment of respect, kindness, and understanding, strengthening our relationships and creating a sense of belonging.

When we are not valued, our voices are not heard, and our needs and concerns are overlooked, contributing to inappropriate outcomes. Imagine you are a patient being ignored and devalued – resulting in inadequate or biased healthcare. This healthcare disparity is linked to the racial, social, economic, and environmental disadvantages that affect many marginalized communities.

Martin Luther King said: "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane." However, it goes beyond "inequality" and achieving health equity, which requires valuing everyone equally while addressing the avoidable inequities (such as access, literacy, etc) created by historical and current injustices within our country

When we matter to each other, we develop empathy, respect, and a love for one another. We listen, understand, support, and recognize that we are all different. Differences should not create division or disparities but collaboration and compassion for one another.

I MATTER brings together the works of many phenomenal young artists and poets who collectively advocate for equity—the right to be valued in their society despite our views and convictions. Thank you to all the great expressions of thought, convictions, and displays of deep emotions that resulted in this outstanding and inspiring new edition.



Dr. Velma Scantlebury,
American Transplant Surgeon



Kwame Alexis
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

WAKE UP! EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Isabella Hanson | Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania

Wake Up!
Everything Old is New Again

Bulah v. Gebhart, Brown v Board, then Little Rock Nine
Now, in suburban school districts, our families have to constantly
recertify we still live within the lines
Can you send another copy of that lease?
Can you provide extra - extra proof that *you* live here?
These questions aren't happenstance, they are by design

Wake Up!
Everything Old is New Again

Black Wall Street in Tulsa reduced to ashes in 1921
Today, there is no venture capital equity access for America's
Native Son
Why do we receive less than 1% of the billions of venture capital
funds?
But we got the Super Bowl Halftime show - majority owners in
the NFL: None

Wake Up!
Everything Old is New Again

From our own Colorism like the shameful brown paper bag test
To social media comments on the hair of Simone Biles must be
addressed

I felt the damage when people came for our Olympic Queen
Do you think MLK envisioned this self hate when he had his
great dream?

After the Thirteenth Amendment, there were Black Codes and
Jim Crow in return

These oppressive laws mandated where we could study, live,
work and how little we could earn

Today, we have Project 2025 scheming to create laws to set
back the clock

Inclusive education, immigration justice and reproductive rights
all would be blocked

No D.E.I.

No D.O.E.

Just comprehensive restrictions on women's rights and our
equality

Wake Up!
I need you to see that
Everything Old is New Again

THE BEAUTIFUL GARDEN

Kai X. Boulware | Las Vegas, Nevada

Nipsey Hussle said, "I seen it, I thought it, I dreamed it,
I did it."

I see past the discrimination

I dream past the years of oppression and

I do chase my dreams.

Tupac preached about a rose that grew from concrete.

It sprouted petals when no one
seemed to care

Just as I spread my wings and carry on

Beyond teachers that doubt me and think my
blackness makes me a slacker

Beyond peers that tease

I excelled beyond expectations placed
on me with great ease

I am the rose in the concrete.

My roots are strong

The roots of resilience, culture, and a thirst for justice.

I have sprouted

I will spread my seeds in the streets and in the seas
and in the sky so that my fellow

flowers in concrete can spread their petals as well
so we can blossom in times of
adversity

When we are told no

When we are told we can't

When we are told to take the easier route

I am determined to grow

I bear the strength of the flowers before me who have the
strength to succeed

fathers

aunts

grandmothers

parents

All watering their seed just as theirs was watered.

I will march on past the tyranny of naysayers

Those who wish to chop me from the stem and to stomp on
my beautiful petals

My classmates who joke and tease

My teachers who don't believe.

I have the capacity to dream

To plan

To succeed

I matter





Samuel Akinyanbola
Port Harcourt, Nigeria



Tyciara Carr
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tyciara Carr

ECHOES OF RESILIENCE

Niranjana Marri | Glen Allen, Virginia

In shadows cast by history's light,
Where MLK fought the noble fight,
Against the wrongs to make them right,
I matter.

Through streets where our sisters' and
brothers' footsteps blend,
For rights that should not need defend,
For lives we shouldn't have to mend,
I matter.

In classrooms where young minds are
told
Of only certain stories heroic and
dauntless,
And not black stories brave and bold,
I matter.

Beneath the weight of prejudice' stare,
In every unfair judgment bare,
Injustice met with grace and care,
I matter.

In art that paints the soul's deep hue,
In music where our spirits flew,
In every line of verse that's true,
I matter.

For Rosa's seat, for Malcolm's speech,
For every dream within our reach,
For those we've lost,
I matter.

With every step on Selma's road,
With every burden, every load,
In every code we've cracked and
showed,
I matter.

For every tear that's been wept,
For promises not yet kept,
In hearts where quiet courage slept,
I matter.

Let every voice in chorus sing,
From mountaintop let freedom ring,
In unity our hope we bring,
I matter.

NOT BLACK

Ava Diaz | Yonkers, New York

In hues of life, I see your pain,
Not black, but I can feel the strain.
In every tear, in every sigh,
Your worth shines bright, I won't deny.

Your history, your strength, your voice,
In your triumphs, we all rejoice.
Injustice stains the path you tread,
But hope and love are never dead.

Though I may not wear your skin,
I stand beside, through thick and thin.
Your lives, your dreams, they matter so,
In unity, our spirits grow.

Together, we will forge the way,
For justice, peace, a brighter day.
Your story's etched in hearts so true,
Black lives matter, and I stand with you.



Adriana Melanson
Rockledge, Florida



Ibrahim Wone
Los Angeles, California

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Seemela Katlego | Tzaneen, South Africa

Black Lives Matter, a cry that still resounds
Though freedom was won, equality's yet to be found
We fought for the chains to be broken, for the vote to be cast
But systemic racism remains, a weight that will not pass

We thought we'd reached the mountaintop, but the climb is not done
For though we're free in body, our souls are still not won
From racist slurs to systemic oppression, the battle's far from over
We'll keep on fighting, until our freedom's truly discovered

We'll rise up, our voices loud, our message clear and bright
We'll challenge the biases, and shine a light on what's right
For we are the descendants of slaves, of warriors and of kings
And we won't rest until our freedom's true, and our future's wings

ECHOES OF HARLEM

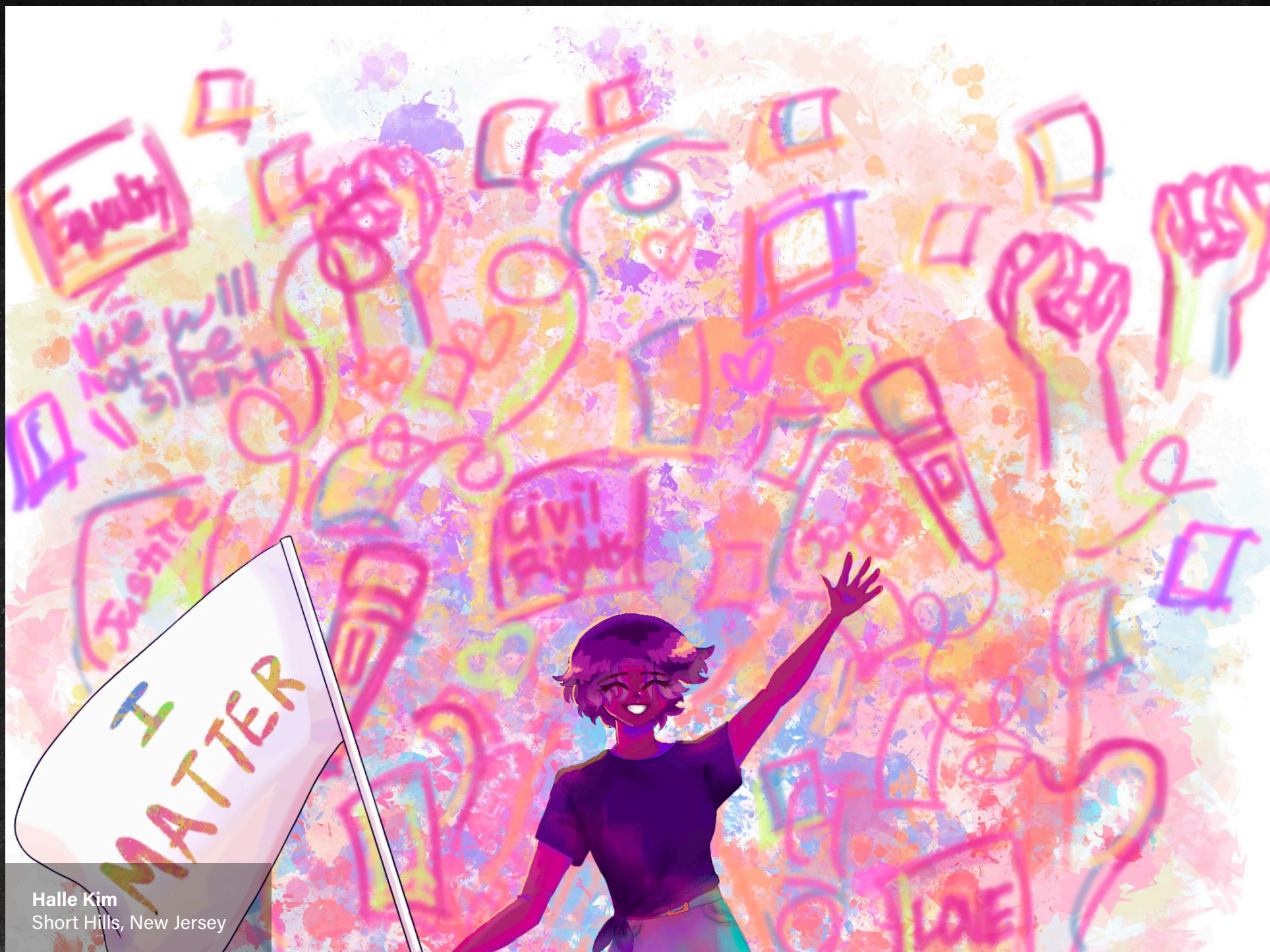
Christian Drake | Cleveland, Ohio

In the quilt of these streets, stories are stitched with care,
African American culture, a patchwork rich and rare.
Each corner sings with the jazz of bygone days,
Melodies of strength that the wind still plays.

Sidewalks whisper of heroes, their shadows tall,
In the dance of the struggle, they refuse to fall.
Graffiti cries in colors, a voice that won't be stilled,
In the gallery of the open, with determination filled.

Black Lives Matter, a beacon that fiercely shines,
A testament to lives that redefine the lines.
It's the roar in the quiet, the fire in the night,
A symphony of voices, rising for what's right.

So let this poem be a lens, through which you see,
The soul of a culture, unyielding and free.
For woven in the fabric of this urban theater,
Are the vibrant threads of life, in every meter.



Halle Kim
Short Hills, New Jersey

SHADOWS OF EQUALITY

Zeena Maryam | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

In shadows cast by history's pen,
A poignant tale, again and again.
Equality's plea, a resounding call,
Black lives matter, one and all.

Skin-deep differences, fading away,
Unity blooms in the light of day.
Silent screams, now voiced with might,
For justice, equity, a shared birthright.

In shadows cast by history's weight,
A call for justice, undeterred fate.
From pain and sorrow, strength refined,
Black Lives Matter, a truth enshrined.

Stand together, break the chain,
Let compassion and understanding reign.
No color defines the worth we hold,
Black lives matter, let equality unfold.

LIGHTS IN OUR HEART

Juwon Hwang | Mission, British Columbia

The heart of the city is filled with cacophony,
Ambivalent emotions, a mix of fury and agony,
Quaking with fear for justice's sake,
Unforgiving despair, a call to awake.

In this place,
No peace in the world's embrace,
Voices changed since Trayvon Martin's case,
Brittle hearts broken, a miserable space.

George Floyd, a man now passed away,
Caught in a store, on the street he lay,
Enduring nine minutes, a display of dismay,
Now gone, his memory forever will stay.

Through the dark, dissent over lives taken in vain,
Remembering Martin Luther King Jr., amidst the pain,
Lives honored in our prayers' chain,
Memories of bleakness, a lasting stain.

With the light, hands raise signs, worn and torn,
Awaiting a societal change to be born,
Shouting for lives unjustly shorn,
Hoping innocence remains unsworn.

Echoing off buildings, through windows ajar,
Reverberating in minds, near and far,
Penetrating hearts, healing each scar,
Calling for societal change, raising the bar.

Loving taste of equality, a dream to pursue,
Fair smell of justice, in morning dew,
A shared theme of love, in hearts true,
Will it ever be real, this vision anew?

Beneath the moon and sun, we stand together,
In the quest for justice, relentless as ever,
Echoes of our ancestors, wise and clever,
In our unified voice, injustice shall sever.

Dreams of our children, in a world free and fair,
Where the color of skin, no longer a snare,
Hand in hand, with strength to spare,
In the march for equality, none can compare.



Nguyen Hoang Thien Kim
Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam



Yu Meng Ko
Tokyo, Japan

PHILLY GUN VIOLENCE

Jaleeyah McIntosh | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Philly violence is not great. Philly violence is not okay.

Young kids are losing their lives to gun violence day by day.

Dajuan Brown

Nazeem Rain

Teryn Johnson

Isya Stanley

Neko Rivera and Ruby Corchado were victims of gun violence.

It's not the fact that all of the kids are dying from gun violence,
it's the fact that all of those kids are kids of color.

Philly violence is not great. Philly violence is not okay.

Guns are everywhere and it's not okay.

When are you all going to tell yourselves that this is not okay?

I am scared, don't you all get that?

I am scared to walk alone,

I am scared to walk to the park

I am scared to walk home.

Day by day I think to myself, am I going to be okay?

Philly, we have to do something about this because this is not okay!

CRY OF LIBERATION

Adriana Pittman | Hampton, Virginia

African Americans
born in a land of opportunity.
But facing discrimination
And a lack of unity
Woven into the fabric of our nation's History.
A constant battle for equality and human rights

We marched we sang.
Through the pain and the tears
We refused to let hatred and injustice reign.
Our mission clear, to conquer our fears.

Their afraid of us because who we are and how
Our hair grows towards the stars.

We are the descendants of Gods, Kings and Queens
Our resilience, a part of our genes
Our heritage, a rich tapestry of strength.
We need to unify to go to great lengths.

We are doctors, lawyers and leaders.
We are mothers, daughters and teachers.
Our talents and achievements cannot be denied.
We are a force to be reckoned with, all across the tide.

We are more than statistic, or a headline in the news.
We are human beings, with so much to lose.
Our lives hold value, just like any other.
We deserve to be treated like sister and brother.

Black lives matter it's not just a phrase.
Its a reality we continue to face.
But we will keep fighting, we will persist.
Until our existence is no longer dismissed.



Paige Ho
Taipei, Taiwan

