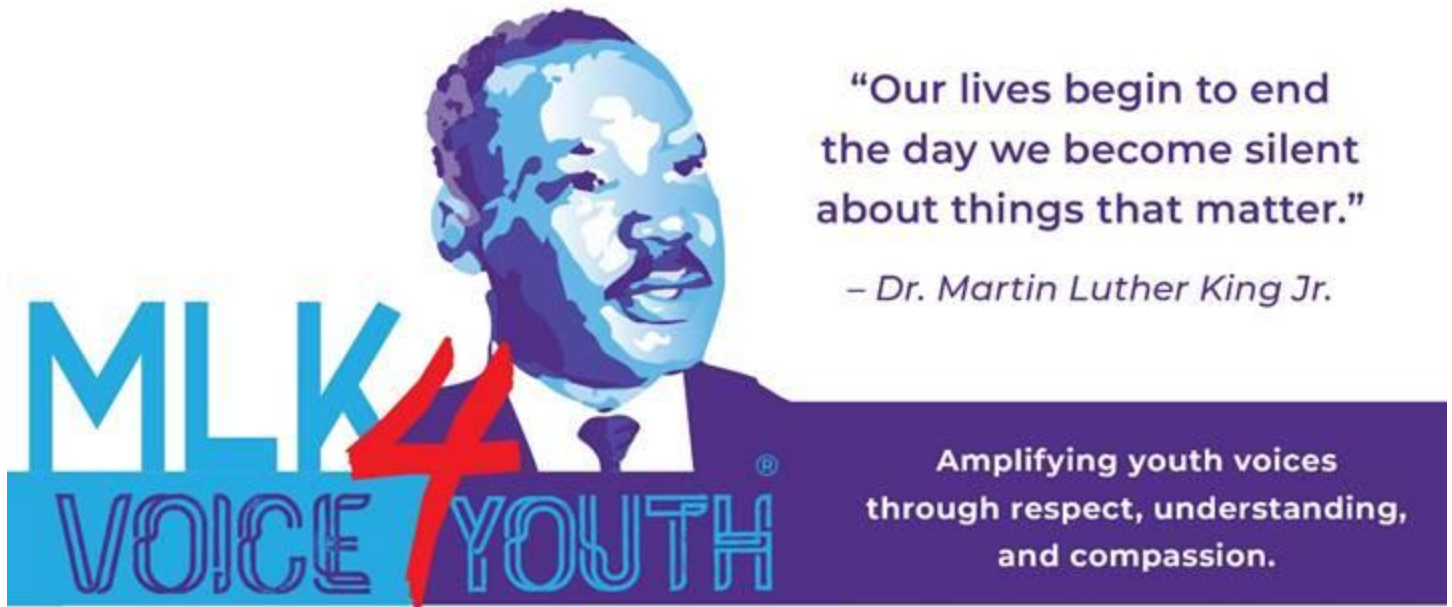


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH – FINALS – An Extraordinary Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

CONGRATULATIONS SRIJAY!

First prize \$2,000 WINNER – SRIJAY CHENNA, Grade 10, The Charter School of Wilmington

MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH, a statewide, spoken word contest for Delaware teens, on Sunday, March 6th, celebrated 7 years encouraging youth to speak up in pursuit of change. Youth, guided by Dr. King’s message of hope and change creatively expressed their views on current issues and shared how Dr. King’s legacy speaks to them today. Seven finalists did a fabulous job impressing judges, the audience, and their peers as they shared their powerful and passionate messages.

For the second year in a row, a student from The Charter School of Wilmington, sophomore Srijay Chenna, took the \$2,000 top prize. His powerful and inspiring piece was titled, “A Voice’s Legacy to Last Forever.”

According to Srijay, change is possible “by determining our representation in government. The power to choose who will hold the power for change lies in our hands.” He continued with a quote from Dr. King, “The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by human beings for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison people because they are different from others.” He went on to say, “it is our job to use the vote and make sure that those prisons are destroyed ... through a united front of voters educated in fact rather than influenced by the allure of lies. Because the Voice (Dr. King) reminds us... “Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”

On behalf of CEO Mark Newman of Chemours, this year’s first prize sponsor was presented to Srijay by Delaware’s First Lady, Tracey Quillen Carney and 2018 2nd Prize winner, Lester Fair. Second prize of \$1,000, sponsored by WSFS Bank and presented by Vernita Dorsey and Herb Broadwater went to Tyonna Jervey, Grade 11, Lake Forest High School. Third prize of \$500 sponsored by the Rotary Club of Wilmington and presented by Kathryn Jakabcin, went to Imani Wulff-Cochrane, a senior at St. Georges Technical High School. The 4 other

finalists, all freshmen, were: Olunifemi Anawo, Sussex Central High School; Aadi Chinchalkar, Charter School of Wilmington; Ololade Olubowale, Tatnall School; and Alexandra Simon from Tower Hill School.

This year, thanks to New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer, the school of this year's winner, Srijay Chenna, The Charter School of Wilmington, will also receive \$500 which will be presented to Principal Angeline Rivello, on Thursday, March 10th at 10 AM.

Sunday's judges were:

Vernita Dorsey, *Senior Vice-President, Director of Community Strategy, WSFS Bank*
Lester Fair, *2018 MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH, 2nd Prize Winner*
Shannon Griffin, *Senior Policy Advocate, ACLU, American Civil Liberties Union, Delaware*
The Rev. Dr. Lawrence M. Livingston, *Assist. Professor, Africana Studies, University of Delaware*
Senator Sarah McBride, *First Senate District*
Dr. Keith Pettiford, *Gamma Theta Lambda Education Foundation, Inc.*
Luis Santiago, *Vice President, Bank of America*

Kaamilah Diabaté, 2016 MLK winner when she was a sophomore at Howard High School, did an amazing job as Master of Ceremonies as did The Christina Cultural Arts Center Drumline and the Choir School of Delaware who performed during the intermission while this year's winners were determined.

Before presenting the awards, Jane Rubini, Founder of the contest, announced that for 2023, in addition to students in grades 9 through 12, students in grades 7 and 8 will be eligible to compete. As well, given the situation in Ukraine, Jane asked members of the audience to contribute to the Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) who are actively working through the [Action by Churches Together Alliance](#) (ACT Alliance), in the border areas of Poland and Hungary providing needed assistance to the people of Ukraine. A total of \$370 was raised.

MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH *is supported by:*

Chemours
The Grand Opera House, Inc.
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New Castle County, Matt Meyer Executive
The Osburn Family
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Lambda Education Foundation, Inc.
Kenny Family ShopRites of Delaware
The City of Wilmington, Office of the Mayor
The Rotary Club of Wilmington
Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice
The Episcopal Church in Delaware
YWCA Delaware

Registration for MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH 2023 opens International Peace Day, September 21st.

For more information, visit: www.facebook.com/mlkvoice4youth