

# The results are in!



## NAMI NJ Expressive Arts 2025 Mental Health Poetry Contest

### Announcing the Top 3 Poets:

*Neha Mishra - The Places Clarity Lives*

*Madeline Schleifman - My Testament to Time*

*Monica Shah - Through the Fog*

*Thank you all, poets and voters, for your participation!*

We thank all participating poets and 299 voters for another successful NAMI NJ Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Mental Health Poetry Contest with the theme: "What prompts clarity for you?"

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## Top Ten Poems

[Download All Poems](#)

- 1st Place: [The Places Clarity Lives](#) by Neha Mishra  
2nd Place: [My Testament to Time](#) by Madeline Schleifman  
3rd Place: [Through the Fog](#) by Monica Shah  
4th Place: [Clarity](#) by Victoria Stecky  
5th Place: [Affirmations](#) by Megha Sood  
6th Place: [I free my mind](#) by Mwikali Words  
7th Place: [The Road to Acceptance](#) by Beth Bressman  
8th Place: [You're gonna be someone.](#) by Jasmine Ellis  
9th Place: [Chandelier](#) by Noah Park  
10th Place: [To distill water](#) by Maria Xu

## Congratulations to all!

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NAMI NJ thanks all voters for their enthusiastic support and encouragement.  
This contest cannot happen without you. Below are some voter comments:

*All of these poems are wonderful - deeply personal and heartfelt.*

*Love the diverse ways in which each poet approaches this topic!*

*What a treat to read these creative works of art.*

*Poems are exceptionally poignant and heartfelt this year. Poets expressed their thoughts eloquently. Excellent work!*



*They were all amazing pieces of artistry, which I enjoyed tremendously.*

*Love these poems! So beautiful and inspiring.*

*The author demonstrates feelings that I can't seem to put into words.*

*It was so hard to pick the top places, they are all so amazing, a tribute to the feelings that exist within those who struggle with mental illness. I feel blessed to have NAMI.*

*Everybody did an incredible job!*

## Meet the poets!



You are invited to attend the **NAMI NJ 2025 Annual Meeting** on **Saturday, June 21st**, where the top poems will be displayed and read. You will also have the opportunity to meet the poets! [Register here](#)

In observance of April as the National Poetry Month and May as the Mental Health Awareness Month, NAMI New Jersey hosts the Annual NAMI NJ Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Mental Health Poetry Contest since 2014, with enthusiastic response from our community. [View previous contests](#)



Poetry is an expression of the soul as unique as every individual who puts the pen to paper. We at NAMI NJ Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Network maintain that any creative expression of an individual is a poem whether it rhymes or not; whether it is one word or pages long. We feature a Poetry Corner on the NAMI NJ website, with a virtual poetry workshop, and the Annual Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Mental Health Poetry Contest held every Spring.

**NAMI New Jersey Dara Axelrod Expressive Arts Network**  
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