



**Sandy Amador-Olarte, 12, Gr. 7, Britannia Elementary School, Vancouver**

“Growing up with anxiety has been my greatest struggle. DAREarts often dared me to step out of my comfort zone. It was scary, but empowering...I did what I thought was the impossible. DAREarts taught me to use my inner leader to make a positive difference around me. I see my classmates who are struggling and I try my best to reassure them that they're going to be alright. My long term goal is to simply think positive. I'll keep replacing a negative thought with a reassuring thought.”



**Emilie De Caen 25, BSc., University of Toronto, Toronto**

“Growing up I was extremely shy. DAREarts provided me with a supportive environment where I could use my arts skills in fun ways plus learn important life skills such as confidence and communication. DAREarts in fun ways. This platform gave me courage to take risks and develop my interpersonal skills. Now as a young adult, I DARE on a regular basis and in 2014 I used my discovered leadership abilities to start my own karate school. I am currently applying for MBA programs. I plan to start my own community centre dedicated to youth outreach.”



**Omar Hafidh 16, North Albion Collegiate Institute, Rexdale**

“I was raised in Kenya by my grandma, my aunties and uncles. When I was 5, I came back to Toronto. School here was hard because I knew only Swahili until I learned English. DAREarts helped me with working with different people, making new friends and being independent. Now when friends are about to make a bad decision, I give them another solution. My goal is to be an architect or work in construction or the military. I have always wanted to join the military, travelling the world to help anyone who needs it.”



**Sylvia Prodhan 16, Bloor Collegiate Institute, Toronto**

“Growing up, many things complicated my childhood. I grew up held to impossible standards, and I was scared to admit that the closest people in my life may not have been the best people. I've always been outspoken, especially for what's right and wrong. DAREarts exposed me to adults who lead me to a myriad of beliefs and causes rather than pointing me to one specific thing. Because DAREarts provided me with the structure that I needed as a kid, I continue to speak out for what's right and wrong.”



**Tyler Shewaybick 16, Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre, Webeque First Nation**

“The life challenges I've gone through is bullying when I was in elementary. I used to be getting punched and called names. DAREarts helped me be around the people I didn't use to hang around with and today I am friends with the people who used to like bullying me. DAREarts really helped the youth in Webeque who were disrespecting me and other people. I like to connect my culture and attend any kind of an event. I share information about my culture with the DAREarts team that comes here.”



**Aidan Soostar 16, Don Mills Collegiate Institute, Don Mills**

“I was identified as dyslexic when I was in grade 2. I was picked on so much that I finally stopped asking questions. By the time I got to middle school, I had lost all my confidence. DAREarts was a safe environment that let me be me. My parents noticed a change in my attitude right away. Having a learning disability doesn't mean I'm not smart. I learn differently. I am not embarrassed by it anymore and DAREarts has a lot to do with that.”



**Mariba Douglas, 24, U of T, Scarborough**

**2018 DAREarts Patina Prize:** Mariba graduated from DAREarts in 2009 and, with DAREarts' helping hand, is completing her undergraduate degree at U of T. Finances have always been very tight but Mariba is doggedly determined! With a Jamaican heritage, she knows what extra fight she must put in to succeed. This also drives her to prepare for a career that will most effectively help other racialized youths to successfully tackle their own challenges. The Patina Prize will help her post-graduate studies.