



Henry Ford Academy

SCHOOL for Creative STUDIES

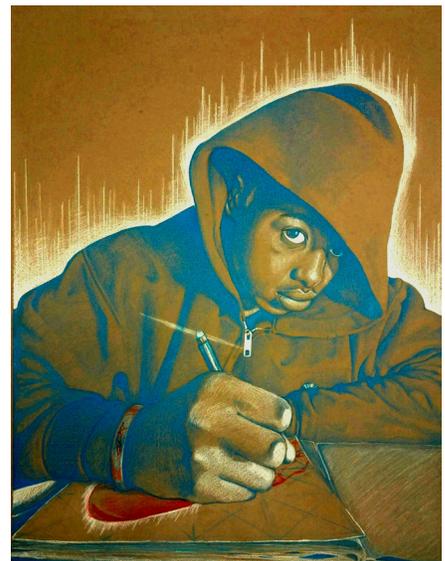
Contact: Lisa Kreinbring  
Henry Ford Learning Institute  
[lisa@hfli.org](mailto:lisa@hfli.org) or 248-259-4066

## Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies Senior Wins National Gold Medal in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

**DETROIT, April 12, 2017** – Habacuc Bessiake, a senior at Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies, has been awarded a National Gold Medal in the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for his self-portrait drawing, "For the Greater Good...00:01." Bessiake is the first student from the tuition-free Detroit art & design middle/high school to receive a Scholastic National Gold Medal.

This year, more than 330,000 works of art and writing were submitted to the program. Less than 1% were recognized at the national level. Bessiake and other students from around the country who have won highest honors have been invited to attend a ceremony at the world-famous Carnegie Hall on Thursday, June 8. Only one other student attending a school in the city of Detroit won a Scholastic National Gold Medal in visual arts this year.

At the regional level, Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies students won a total of 21 awards; Bessiake earned seven of those awards, including a Gold Key Portfolio. His Scholastic National Gold Medal piece is a part of that portfolio, in which he uses self-portraits to explore self-control and the dynamic between anger and calm. "Growing up in a large family with many aggravating younger and older siblings, I learned the importance of self-control pretty fast. Now, as I become closer to adulthood, I still find that the ability to manage and carry oneself is a characteristic of great value," said Bessiake. "The portfolio series counts down from '00:08' to represent the time bomb in the chest of anger, which causes the conflict of the story.



My Scholastic National Gold Medal work is the last piece in the series, which is time-stamped '00:01' and depicts self-restraint and calm.”

“Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies is immensely proud of Habacuc Bessiake, his achievements in this year’s Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, and the dedicated teachers who have supported his growth. With looming cuts to the arts, he and his artwork serve as a compelling reminder of the importance of arts education. Art and design can change a child’s life,” said Curtis L. Lewis, Ph.D., principal of Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies. Bessiake chose the school for its art & design focus. He is currently vice president of the school’s chapter of the National Art Honor Society, and was recently awarded a scholarship to attend the world-class College for Creative Studies in the fall.

Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies was founded in 2009 by the College for Creative Studies and Henry Ford Learning Institute with the express dual purpose of providing students with an intense art and design focused experience and equipping them with the academic, social, and creative problem-solving foundation to thrive in post-secondary education and careers of their choice.

### **About the Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies K-12 District**

The Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies K-12 District is comprised of two art & design charter schools serving more than 1,200 students -- Henry Ford Academy: Elementary School (K-5, opened 2012) and Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies Middle/High School (6-12, opened 2009). Both are Thompson Educational Foundation 90/90 schools authorized by Grand Valley State University, governed by Public School Academies of Detroit, and managed by Henry Ford Learning Institute (HFLI), a non-profit that exists to redesign how we learn. Learn more at [www.hfaelementary.org](http://www.hfaelementary.org) and [www.schoolforcreativestudies.org](http://www.schoolforcreativestudies.org).