A child's drawing of a landscape. At the top right is a yellow sun with radiating lines. Below it are green mountains. The middle section consists of horizontal bands of color: yellow, orange, red, and purple. The bottom section is a dark blue band above a green band. The drawing is done with thick, textured strokes.

**2025
Three2Six
Poetry ⊕ Art
Collection**

COMPILED BY JUSTINE KIMBALA



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Acknowledgments

Thank you to Silvy-Li Matthews for collecting the artwork for the booklet, and to Adam Potterton for editing the text. Please note that poems have been edited minimally to keep them as authentic as possible.

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“Painting is silent poetry,
and poetry is painting that speaks.”

Plutarch

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Dedication

These poems and artwork are dedicated to Mrs Helen Marx, who was like a mother to us at Dominican Convent School. We are also grateful to the staff of Dominican Convent School who welcomed us and made our stay possible and comfortable: the drivers, the security guards, the kitchen staff, the cleaners, the ground staff, the maintenance manager and staff, the administrative staff, the nurse, the sports coaches, the teachers, the deputy principal, and the principal.



Introduction to the 2025 Three2Six Poetry ⊕ Art Collection

The children's voices come to life in the poems and art that follow, revealing the complexities of their experiences, the challenges they face, and the dreams they hold for the future. Through their words, we witness their individual and collective resilience, their strength to adapt, and their capacity to imagine a better life.

For children, the journey is also one of reflection and recognition. In doing so we hope to enable them to carry the lessons learned in Three2Six forward through life.

The stories below speak of resilience and hope, as well as the impact that education has on their lives. The past students' stories serve as testimony to the programme's long-term influence and illustrate how the seeds of education planted within Three2Six have blossomed into futures of promise, leadership, and community engagement.

Justine Kimbala | Project Coordinator



A POEM ABOUT MYSELF

by Zinhle

You know my skin colour,
But you do not know my personality.
You see my eyes,
But you do not know my favourite thing.
Some things are personal,
Deep within my being,
Sometimes you call my name,
But you do not know what comes after.

THE BEAUTIFUL TEACHER

by Ayanda

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
I saw a beautiful teacher,
Who brought me to school.
Her name is Ms. Justine,
With long hair and eyes that shine,
A glowing face,
And a kind, warm grace.
She teaches us well,
And always says,
“If you don’t understand,
Just ask me, always.”





6

THE BEAUTIFUL TEACHER

by Ayanda

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
I saw a beautiful teacher,
Just like you.
With beautiful eyes,
Colourful hair and a smooth face,
These are the things that make you,
Even more beautiful, with grace.

SO PEACEFUL, IN FULL

Nice and tall,
Full of kindness and beautiful thoughts,
Might be strict,
But she can also be a mist.
She is tough and rough,
Yet safe and kind,
From her insides,
We will never forget.
Your loving, kind, caring voice,
We will be together.





IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

The people that I love,
My mama is an angel,
She loves me more than anyone.
My brother is close to my heart,
He is like a god.
My best friend, I love a lot...

THE SKY

by Kagiso

The sky is blue,
The sky is beautiful,
I feel like going to the sky,
The sky is my friend.



MY DOG

by Joyce

My dog is my strength and all that I want,
It makes me smile every day, all the time.
When I think about it, I feel nice and focused in school,
It's my courage, my beauty, and my kindness.

Never give up, never lose hope,

Never give up, never lose hope.

Always have faith; it helps you to focus.

Trying times will pass, as they always do.

Just have patience, your dreams will come true.

So put on a smile, and don't feel pain.

Know that it will pass,

Because time does pass,

And strength you will have.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Iphile

Dear Minenhle,

Please, my friend, don't feel bad about failing your L.D. test. I'm sure that if we study together, you'll do better next time, just like with the Math test. So, don't give up, keep pushing forward, and one day, you'll be at the top of the class. We are a team; let's work together and get through this, once and for all. I love you so much.



JUSTINE

by Ayanda

~~~~~  
Justine, a person of love,  
Your beauty makes others jealous.  
I imagine you as my mother,  
I wish that you and I could go away.  
I will steal you from Marie,  
But anyway, I will always love you.  
A beautiful smile makes you even more beautiful.

## 8 A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Nelly

~~~~~  
No matter where you are in life, know that there is hope for a brighter tomorrow.
You are not alone. You are stronger than you think and braver than you feel.
Hold on to hope, and never let it go.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Divine

~~~~~  
Hope is the ability to see a light despite all the darkness.  
Hope's gentle light, in the depths of darkness, remains a spark, a beacon that sustains a flame.  
Though it flickers, it does not fade, illuminating paths through life's uncertain shades.



## A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Marda

~~~~~  
Hope is a desire accompanied by expectation or belief in fulfilment.
You must carry it in your heart.
Don't say, There is no hope.
For you are wrong.
Hope is everywhere: in homes, schools, and outside, anywhere.
We get hope from our teachers, moms, dads, and older siblings.
Hope is something that comes from inside your heart.
Always have hope, because hope can help you succeed in life.
With hope inside, nothing is impossible.



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A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Minenhle

~~~~~  
I always have hope, for I believe good things can happen, that anything is possible.  
I believe in miracles, and I believe in God.  
So, I tell you, always have hope and never doubt yourself, for you are great.  
Believe in yourself, for God loves you.

## A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Jotham

~~~~~  
When all is said and done,
When all is lost but hope,
When all flee from you,
Don't despair, for then you are free.
With but your counsel,
Call on yourself and the One above.
He shall lead you through the maze,
And those below will marvel at your success.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Orely

~~~~~  
I have hope,  
That everyone can cope.  
I have a feeling,  
That is healing.  
This year is quite a hooray!  
That's what I can say.  
Yes, it's about school, but it also sounds cool.

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## A MESSAGE OF HOPE

by Johanna

~~~~~  
Hope is like sunlight,
Bringing joy and shining bright.
Even when the skies are grey,
Hope will chase the dark away.
Hope is like a little seed,
Giving us the strength we need.
With care, it starts to grow,
With kindness, love, peace, and help.
Hope is strong, so hold on tight.
Hope is something you wish for or trust.



MY HAIR

by Ayanda

~~~~~  
My hair identifies me,  
The hair that makes my day bright,  
The hair that makes a girl beautiful,  
The hair a girl needs.  
Red is the colour of love,  
Gold is the colour of royalty,  
Both stand out to show who you are.



## HOPE

by Brandon

~~~~~  
When pain cracks through the pavement
And smoke of sorrow fills the air.
When skies cast stares of uncertainty,
And the winds of change blow through your hair.
Tomorrow brings a brighter day,
A Day to start anew.
The sun will rise again,
To shine its light on you.

LOVE, HOPE, AND BRAVERY

by Theodore

~~~~~  
Love, bravery, and hope will help you get up and keep running.  
Never lose hope, always love, and never give up.  
Some give up on hope, but others keep it and show it.  
People hope, and some don't even know hope, but we need to show it.  
Hope is something you need to understand.  
Everyone deserves to know the message of hope and to believe in it.

## HOPE

by Barbs

~~~~~  
Hope is the future.
Hope for good health,
Hope for a good education,
Hope to be a graduate.
I hope to be successful,
I hope for a better life,
Hope for love and joy,
I hope to help others.
I hope for a peaceful world,
I hope to own my own company,
And I hope to have a lot of money.
Hope is a feeling for tomorrow.

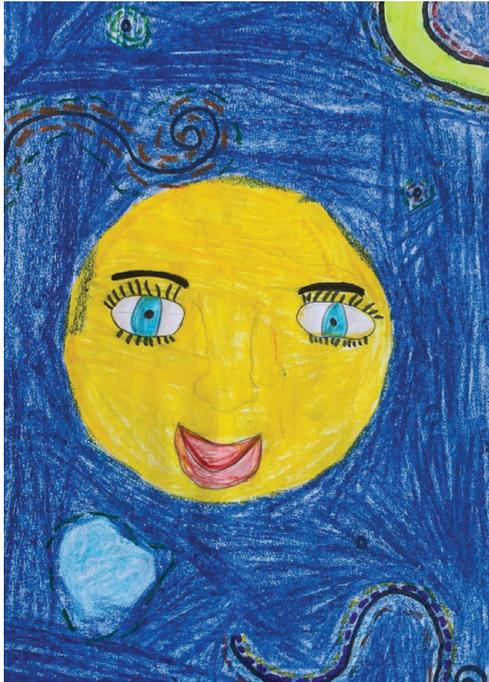
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BUTTER SANDWICH

by Well

Peter had a butter sandwich,
But the butter was too bitter.
So, Peter bought more butter,
To make a better butter sandwich.



MY BEST DAY

by Kalongo

One day, I was walking with my friend,
Then we saw a little puppy.
Me and my friend wanted to talk
To the puppy and play with it.

POEM ABOUT MY JOURNEY IN 326

I am an African girl, proud and tall,
From Three2Six's doors, my story unfolds.
I walk through Three2Six's doors, where knowledge is power.
Seven years of learning, fun, laughter, friendships formed,
Memories made, and above all, divine intervention.
Teachers guided me with patience and care,
Schoolmates and volunteers became family beyond compare.
I celebrate my heritage, embracing my roots with pride,
My culture, my identity, to keep.
My Three2Six journey continues; it is a ray of hope.
Three2Six Project, I am so proud of you,
You are a precious symbol of hope and a beacon of faith in my life.
An African girl rising, unbound and free because of you,
My journey continues, wide and carefree.



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WELCOME, CHRISTINE

Though just a visit, not to stay,
We're thrilled to share this bright, brief day.
In South Africa's embrace, so warm,
May you feel at home, safe from harm.
In our project's work, your hands will meet
The dreams and hopes we keep so sweet.
For in this time, though short it be,
You are part of our community.
Welcome, Christine, for now and here,
To memories made that we'll hold dear.

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BIG TEDY

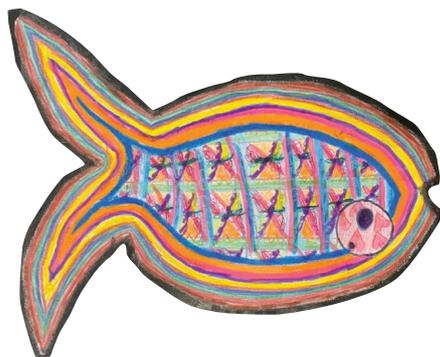
by Jason

One day, Big Tedy was
A bully at school, always
Beating other kids. But one day,
The bully's father came
To the school, and the father
Beat him. He stopped
Being a bully. He was good,
Tedy at school no longer a bully.

A POEM ABOUT THE OCEAN

by Zinhle

~~~~~  
The ocean is blue, but it can  
Change colours, colours that  
Say my name. Sometimes,  
The ocean feels lonely, but  
The wind comes and blows the  
Water. The waves move left and right,  
But the water is still lonely.  
When the sun comes, it heats up  
The water, and the ocean says,  
"Thank you, Sun."  
The water comes with  
Honey and plenty of money.



## MY BEAUTY

by Ange

My beauty, my beauty, that's who I am.  
My beauty, my beauty, it defines who I am.  
The brown, dark eyes. The short, black hair.  
The girl with a beautiful face that's me.  
I was born as a beautiful girl,  
And that's why it shines from the inside and outside.  
Don't let anyone judge you for your beauty,  
Because you are always beautiful, inside and out.  
Never change yourself for someone,  
Because you are beautiful.  
Even if you don't agree, you are beautiful.

## LOVE

by Micaela

Love  
We don't play with love.  
Love is something  
You shall not play with.  
Love is for everyone.  
You shy...

## THE STUDY NIGHT

by Esther

There was a girl, called Nobuthle,  
And Lovely, who loved to sit in the grass.  
It was a study night, so Nobuthle  
Said, "Let's learn and watch the study night."  
Lovely said, "Okay, I love to watch the study night."  
So they laid in the grass softly,  
And started watching the stary night,  
Remembering the TV.

## TOM AND HIS BLACK DOG

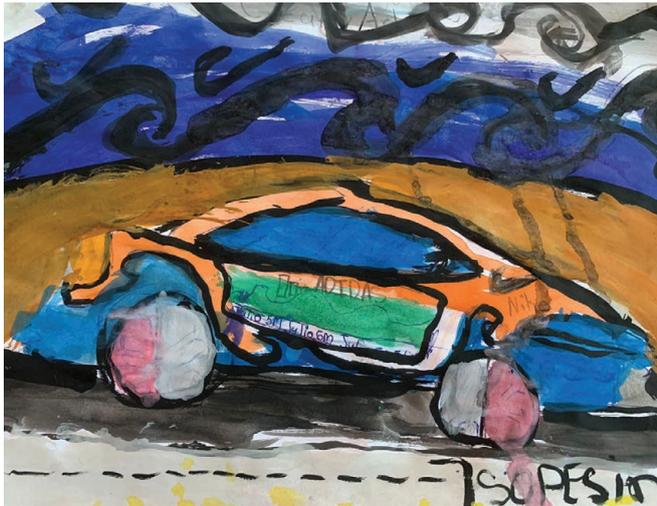
by Siyabonga

Tom runs away from his  
Black dog and he saw a  
Horse standing in front  
Of the road, causing  
Traffic, and I...



## HOPE

Hope's gentle flame, a beacon bright,  
In darkest night, it shines with light.  
A whispered promise, a heart's desire,  
A chance to dream, to aspire.  
With every fall, hope's gentle voice says,  
"Rise, stand tall." It guides us through life's pacing pace,  
And fills our souls with a warm, safe space.  
Hope.



## TOGETHER WE ARE FREE

In a world where everyone's different,  
With many paths we see,  
We must remember one small truth:  
No one is free till we all are free.  
If one is bound by chains unseen,  
And struggles day by day,  
We must extend a helping hand,  
And show a brighter way.  
For freedom isn't just for one,  
It's something we must share,  
To lift each other when we're down,  
And show how much we care.

We stand together, hand in hand,  
No matter who we are,  
For when we fight for everyone,  
Our light shines like a star.

So let us be the voice of hope,  
For all humanity,  
And work to build a better world,  
Where everyone is free.

## A WORLD OF FREEDOM

Imagine a world where everyone's kind,  
Where no one's left alone behind,  
A place where everyone can be,  
Happy, safe, and truly free.  
When one is hurt, we all must care,  
Stand up, speak out, be always there,  
For every person, large or small,  
Deserves their freedom, one and all.  
We come from places far and wide,  
With different stories, dreams, and pride,  
But in our hearts, we're just the same,  
Deserving love, respect, and name.  
So let's unite and make a stand,  
Together, we can lend a hand,  
To build a world of unity,  
Where everyone can live freely.  
No one is free till all are free,  
This is our truth, our destiny,  
With love and justice, we will fight,  
For freedom's everyone's birthright.

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## The stories of two of our students

### **MINENHLE**

My name is Minenhle and I was born on the 8th of February, 2012, in Johannesburg. When I was two years old, my mother took me to stay in Zimbabwe, but at the age of three, I returned to South Africa to live with my mother again.

I attended Sunshine Pre-School and completed my Grade R in 2017. However, in 2018, my life took a difficult turn. I was about to start Grade 1 but my parents were unable to afford the school fees because they were unemployed. There was no money to pay for my education, and I had to stay home throughout

January. It was painful to watch other children going to school while I stayed behind.

In February 2018, my mom's neighbour, who later became her best friend, told her about the Three2Six Project at Observatory Girls' School. The following day my mom and I went to the school. We met Mrs Ndebele, a teacher at Observatory Girls and the coordinator of the Three2six Project. After my mom explained our situation, Mrs. Ndebele asked for my name. She was impressed and immediately offered to take me in, saying she would give me a trial. My mom was relieved as we left, hopeful for the future.

## DENZEL SHUMBA

My name is Denzel Shumba, and I am 20 years old. So far, my journey has been exciting, and I can see where it's headed. I have a promising future, especially through Judo For Peace.

Before that, life wasn't the same. I faced many difficulties, including not having the chance to go to school after leaving the Three2Six Project. For a while, I would just sit at home. At the age of 15, I started working at a construction site, but the people there said I was too young to work and I had to stop. That's when I started attending Judo with Roberto Orlando, and I've been doing it ever since. The Judo journey hasn't been easy, but I have kept pushing forward.

After five years of practice, I earned my brown belt, and not long after, I received my black belt. That's when things started to change. I began working at the Dojo in Alexandra. From there, I attended various reference courses, which led to me being awarded provincial preference.

Through the competitions I've participated in, I've won 26 medals. I've competed in national and international tournaments, including the SA Open. Judo For Peace has allowed me to explore South Africa, including Gqeberha, Cape Town, and Durban.



I feel very proud of myself because, despite many challenges in the streets, I've been able to take care of myself and stay safe. The resilience I learned through Three2Six has helped me overcome the challenges life has thrown my way.

After leaving Three2Six, my studies stopped at Grade 6, and I was unable to continue. I would be very happy to start over, study, and work towards my matric like other young people are doing. Why not even aim for university?

The most challenging part is dealing with the documents I need to continue my education.

# End note: Poems of Hope

These poems are filled with hope.

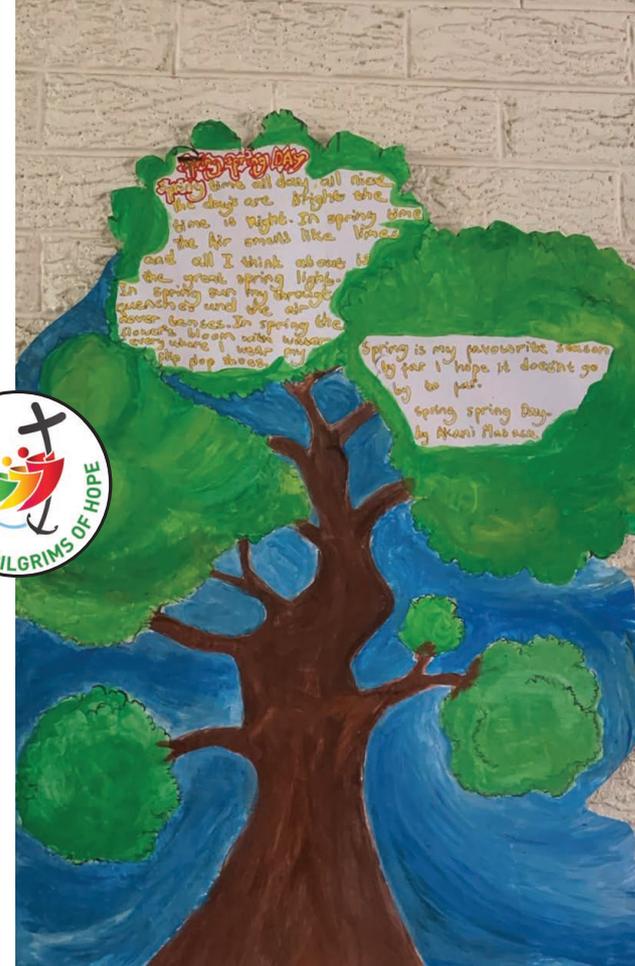
## 2025 is the Jubilee Year of Hope.

In line with ancient tradition, the Pope proclaims a Holy Year, a Jubilee, every twenty-five years. This special Holy Year that begins on Christmas Eve and ends at Epiphany in 2026, is, in essence, the Church offering a year of hope, especially for those living on the margins.

The year calls Christians to action. Pope Francis called for “signs of hope” in the Jubilee Year, including the desire for peace in the world, openness to life and responsible parenthood, and closeness to prisoners, the poor, the sick, the young, the elderly, migrants and people “in difficult situations”. Pope Francis has called on affluent countries to forgive the debts of countries that would never be able to repay them and address “ecological debt”.

The Jubilee offers a fresh start, an opportunity to change direction. It is a call for Christians to play our part, “to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind”.

**Mark Potterton** | Director



# About Three2Six

## Our Goals

Three2Six's major goal is to provide quality bridging education for refugee and migrant children, and to support them in integrating into public schools.

- The full-time Three2Six school builds on its success as a project school since 2008.
- Three2Six has improved the lives of over 2 500 vulnerable children and provided access to public schooling.
- Refugee and migrant children, who otherwise would be out of school, have been given an opportunity to continue to learn and a chance to enter the public school system.
- Children and their families have been provided with support as well as encouraged to integrate more fully into South African society.

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## Who we teach

The refugee and migrant children we teach live on the edge of the eastern Inner-City suburbs of Johannesburg, an area characterised by its mix of local and foreign communities. The children and their families live in flats, factories, warehouses, and abandoned houses that are not maintained, in areas of the city neglected by the authorities.



A few of the challenges and barriers to education children face as a result:

- With high unemployment, competition for scarce resources in these densely populated areas is a source of tension, discrimination, and hostile and xenophobic attitudes towards foreign nationals.
- The limited access to state and private social services in these areas is also a challenge for foreigners as priority is given to South African nationals.
- Lack of documentation is often inhibits access to essential services, and language has also been found to be a significant limitation in securing access.

- A common barrier to education is a lack of space or overcrowded classrooms, with many refugee children in local schools that may already be at, or are over, their capacity.
- Difficulties moving around the city because of expensive transport, a lack of documentation and fear of physical, sexual, xenophobic or gender-based violence.
- Refugee children experience displacement and trauma differently, but many need assistance as they begin school for the first time or attend school again after a prolonged absence.

Refugees in Johannesburg face a higher cost of living than those in rural settings. They rely on social services and NGOs wherever they can, and make ends meet among limited livelihood opportunities. Some children may also be expected to work rather than attend school.

Parents struggle to provide basic needs for their families, and it is difficult for them to prioritise education for their children, especially when school fees and other costs are expected.

The support they receive in their classrooms is essential in maintaining their interest in and ability to continue school.

In this context, refugee and migrant children face great difficulties in accessing mainstream schooling.

## Our work

We see the classroom as a second home for students, where they spend a significant amount of time with their teachers. For this reason, it is important to create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment, one that promotes the children's growth and development.

The Three2Six Project addresses the issue of access to education by providing primary education to refugee children, preparing them for their transition into state schooling and supporting them during their transition, thus assisting them to further integrate into South African society.

Through advocacy activities with our partners (e.g. Jesuit Refugee Services, Lawyers for Human Rights), the Project also works towards addressing the challenges of discrimination and xenophobia, as well as advocating for the rights of refugee children, especially their right to an education.



## SUPPORT THREE2SIX

If refugee education is a cause that is close to your heart, get in touch with us today. We will explore ways for you to get involved in the project. Here are some examples:

- Volunteering
- Helping us fundraise
- Organising events and/or activities
- Advocating with us to amplify the voices of refugee children and their daily challenges
- Offering operational support with the various aspects of the project (e.g. communications, monitoring and evaluation).

### **Be a change maker with us and contribute to a child's life tomorrow!**

Our advocacy, communications and stakeholder engagement officer will be happy to talk to you about these options. Get in touch with her at [advocacy@three2six.co.za](mailto:advocacy@three2six.co.za) Otherwise, something that you can do now in the comfort of your home is follow our activities on social media, sign up for our newsletter ([www.three2six.co.za](http://www.three2six.co.za)) and tell your friends and family about us.

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### **You can also make a financial contribution to us in various ways:**

Via Snapscan by scanning this QR code on the Three2Six website

### **For people based in South Africa, via EFT, using the banking details below:**

Bank: First National Bank

Branch: Eastgate | Branch code: 257 705

Account number: 62312243405

Swift code: FIRNZAJJ

### **For people based in the United States, use the banking details below:**

Bank: J.P. Morgan Chase

Bank code: 021000021

Account name: Sacred Heart Marist Observatory

Account number: 298386118



In the final weeks at Dominican Convent School, Silvy-Li Matthews, the art teacher, had the idea of creating a mural that would allow each student to leave their mark on the school. Class by class, the children painted their hands and pressed them onto the wall.



A Grade 8 student, Cadet, painted the school's name and the year in the centre. The mural now stands as a lasting reminder of these students' time at a school with a 116-year history.

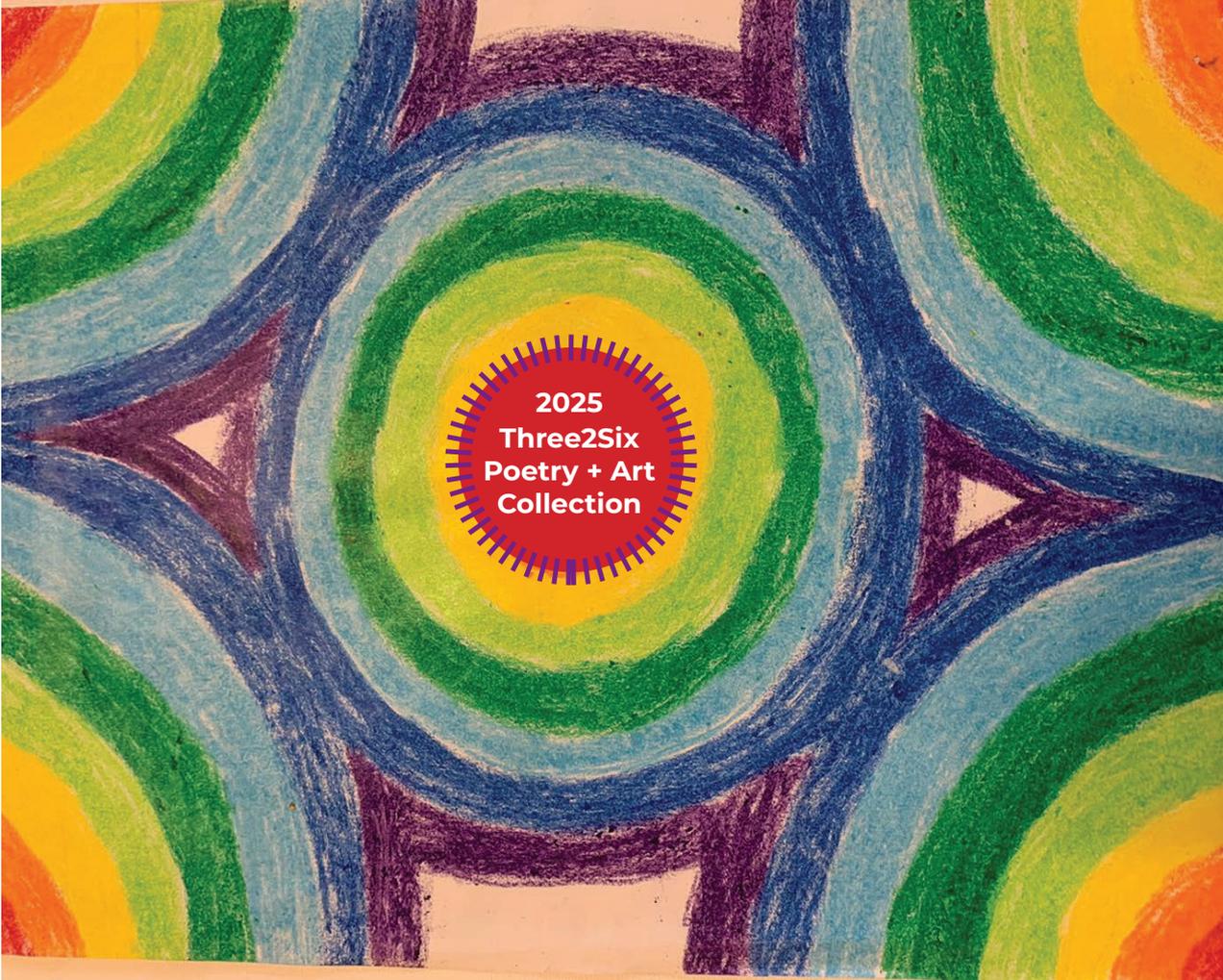


**Ms Silvy-Lee Matthews, Ms Precious Mareya, and the students leaving their mark**



**THREE2SIX**  
Refuge Children's Education Project

 **terre des hommes**  
Help for Children in Need



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