

## Third Annual Gathering of the Art and Mind Contest in Connecticut

Mika Deshotel

April 21, 2018



About 50 participants gathered in the Great Room of the University of Bridgeport on Saturday evening, April 21st, to partake in the 3rd Annual Gathering of the Art and Mind Contest. The contest, featuring original songs, speeches, videos, and art by people of all ages and abilities, focused on the theme Hyojeong (heart of filial piety), asking participants to consider how they express a love for their family and lineage.

Overall, 12 entries were submitted, covering mainly the two categories of original art and song. Contestants varied in age and location, ranging from an elementary school student as young as 7 years old to adults 55+, and pieces were submitted from as far as Arizona and Brazil, as well as parts of New York State. First place winners received \$100 and second place, \$75.

Four original songs were performed during the program, along with a recitation of an original poem shared by an elder in the local community. Mrs. Nora Spurgin gave the welcoming remarks, putting emphasis on God's love through the beauty we see in the creation around us and how we are meant to share that beauty with others through our own expressions of it. Yuji Torikai, a local Young Adult leader, served as emcee, and Pastor Mika Deshotel shared about True Parents and how this event served also to commemorate their 58th Wedding Anniversary. Following the judging and awards, an exciting raffle was held, raffling donated items from local businesses and artists.

"Although we had a smaller organizing committee this year, I can see that our event is growing in its reach and reputation," said Pastor Mika Deshotel, who is co-pastor of the Connecticut Family Church along with her husband Abe. "Increasing our reach and importance on our surrounding communities is really important to us, as we want to show people substantially what creating a heavenly culture in the arts really looks like. This all started based on the emphasis and example of our True Mother and we want this event to be a way to help people connect more deeply to our True Parents work and vision."