

2025

# Girl Power Contest Winners

**Congratulations to the 2025 Girl Power Contest Winners!  
First Place and Honorable Mention winners were selected  
in the following categories:**

**Elementary School**

**Middle School**

**High School**

**Adult**

**The contestants were asked to address the following question:**

**The media we consume plays a powerful role in shaping confidence, ambition, and self-worth, especially for young girls and women, by providing representation, positive role models, and stories that challenge stereotypes. What kind of media (TV shows, social media content, YouTube series, movies, books, etc.) would you create to inspire, uplift, and empower girls and women in the community?**

# Table of Contents

---

## Elementary School Division

- **First Place: Victoria Lever (Pages 1-2)**
- **Honorable Mention: Alexandra Eum (Pages 3-4)**

---

## Middle School Division

- **First Place: Federica Albanese (Page 5)**
- **Honorable Mention: Sarah Liu (Pages 6-7)**

---

## High School Division

- **First Place: Ansuya Bisbey (Pages 8-9)**
- **Honorable Mention: Isabelle Harry (Pages 10-12)**

---

## Adult Division

- **First Place: Natalie Jean (Page 13)**
- **Honorable Mention: Arwa ElBoraei (Pages 14-50)**

**Victoria Lever**  
**2025 Girl Power Contest**  
**First Place – Elementary School Division**

## The Her-Story Podcast

### Episode 1: Oprah Winfrey and Malala Yousafzai

Ruby: Hello everyone, welcome to the Her-Story Podcast. I'm Ruby Bridges.

Coy: I'm Coy Mathis. Ruby and I are interviewing women from around the world!

Ruby: Not just any women. We'll be interviewing inspiring women who have helped young girls be confident and try new things.

Coy: Women like us!

Ruby: That's right! Today we'll be interviewing two awesome women. Please welcome Malala Yousafzai and...

Coy: Oprah Winfrey. Welcome to the show!

Malala: Thank you for inviting me.

Oprah: Me too, I LOVE talk shows!

Ruby: I loved watching your shows!

Coy: We'll be asking you a couple questions. Remember, answer honestly and feel free to express your opinion.

Ruby: First question: what do you say to people who believe in stereotypes?

Oprah: I tell them to go outside and look around. The world is filled with women who are doctors, writers, and politicians. We can be anything. Look at me! I'm a famous talk show host and BILLIONAIIRRRRRRRE!

Malala: We can end stereotypes with our words and actions. I fought against the Taliban, won a Nobel Peace Prize, and changed how the world thought about 16 year old girls.

Ruby: Take that stereotypes, ka-pow!

Coy: Next question: what do you say to all the young girls who are dreaming of becoming a lawyer, doctor, or another job that maybe seems impossible?

Malala: I would tell them to not just dream, act! If you want to be a doctor, go learn about medicine. Study, go to med school, and try your hardest. Same goes for anything else you want to do.

Oprah: I agree! Don't let failure or other people stop you from what you love. If you set your mind to it, the sky's the limit!

Coy: That's a great way to put it.

Ruby: Now for the last question. What word would you use to describe women and why?

Oprah: Powerful! Women come together to form a wonderful community that empowers everyone around them. That power changes the world! Women are in space, writing novels, and making scientific breakthroughs.

Malala: I would choose "beautiful". To look at the things women have accomplished is a fantastic sight. Women of all different ages, races, and cultures come together to form this wonderful, diverse team. That is true beauty.

Ruby: Wow...

Coy: That. Is. AWESOME!

Oprah: Thank you!

Malala: My pleasure.

Coy: It has been wonderful having you here today. Thank you so much. Listeners, be sure to come back for two new amazing women, Michelle Obama...

Ruby: And Jane Goodall!

Coy + Ruby: This is the Her-Story Podcast!



Alexandra Eum  
2025 Girl Power Contest  
Honorable Mention – Elementary School Division



Girl Power Contest 2025



Alexandra Eum, Age 9 (3rd Grade)

*Positive Impact of Social Media on Women Owned Businesses*

I love to bake and decorate different desserts, especially cupcakes. Not only do I like to bake, but I also enjoy eating desserts at local bakeries. One local bakery that comes to mind is **Sweets by Caroline**. Caroline is the owner and baker for a pop up bakery known for its french macarons, cakes, and Asian inspired baked goods. My mom would follow her social media page to see when and where her next pop up bakery will be. For a pop up bakery and an online business like Sweets by Caroline, I realized social media plays an important role.

So, being a fan and customer of Sweets by Caroline, I decided to interview the owner and baker Caroline to see how she used social media platforms to build and promote her business. I wanted to share and highlight her story on social media to reach and empower other young girls that they can be successful business owners too and that social media can be used positively for starting and promoting businesses. I would like to do a series on the internet called “Girl Empowerment” series interviewing and highlighting local female owned bakery businesses such as shown below, and eventually start a podcast on this series:



Sweets by Caroline#GirlEmpowermentSeries1



Pop-up Bakery known for tasty macarons, cakes, and Asian inspired desserts.  
Support her at <https://sweetsbycaroline.com/>

Question for Caroline, Chef-owner of Sweets by Caroline:

What impact did social media have on your bakery business?

Her Answer:

I feel that food is very visual and people eat with their eyes first! Social media has helped me grow my business tremendously! Through Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, my website - these are all ways that I have used social media to promote my business and showcase my work! You never know who will see your posts and how far it will go. I started just posting for fun and it just took off from there, gaining more traction, and I began to build my brand , show people who I was and what I enjoy creating. Creating reels such as: behind the scenes and pop up videos, I am able to engage with my audience and continue to build my brand!

The next local bakery I would like to interview and highlight is the highly popular Sunday Morning Bakehouse located in North Bethesda, whose owner is also named Caroline.



Sunday Morning Bakehouse#GirlEmpowermentseries2  
Support her at <https://www.sundaymorningbakehouse.com>

**\*\*Coming Soon\*\***



**Federica Albanese**  
**2025 Girl Power Contest**  
**First Place – Middle School Division**  
***From Invisible To Unstoppable!***

This video has been created as an entry for the "2025 Girl Power Contest". It shows how women can turn hardships into opportunities. Through this skit, the young creator hopes to inspire girls and young women to believe in their dreams and to find unconventional ways to overcome challenges and obstacles. Remember: when the world says "There is no space for you", build your own stage! Never give up!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIH7kcoq6gA>



**Sarah Liu**  
**2025 Girl Power Contest**  
**Honorable Mention – Middle School Division**

**The Media We Need: Empowering Girls and Women Through Representation**

By Sarah Liu

From a young age, we are shaped by the stories we read. Media can give girls and women confidence, ambition, and self-esteem. However, many forms of media have perpetuated restrictive stereotypes for decades, depicting women with outdated gender roles. That has to change. We require media that inspires all of us, from young children to the elderly.

**Authentic Representation Matters**

Mainstream media present a narrow view of womanhood—excluding various backgrounds, body types, identities, and capabilities. To encourage young girls, they must be able to relate to the characters they read and watch. I would create a TV and book series with diverse lead characters—girls who are scientists, sportswomen, artists, and leaders. Girls with different identities. These girls would be from different cultures and experiences and show that brilliance is not limited by external circumstances. Realistic representation allows girls to see themselves, so they think that their dreams are attainable and real.

**Positive Role Models Who Lead and Inspire**

The media I would create would have strong female heroines who persevere in the face of adversity with determination and courage. They would not be flawless, because no one is. They would fail, adapt, and persevere—just like humans do. A YouTube program could feature young women sharing their own stories about working in STEM, business, politics, and pretty much everything. A social media platform could share real-life, realistic heroines—ancient women, modern-day activists, and women pioneers who are making a difference in the world. By placing a spotlight on real and fictional role models, young girls would be encouraged to do the same, knowing that they too could lead and be the change makers.

**Stories That Challenge Stereotypes**

Breaking harmful gender stereotypes is necessary in recreating society's perception of women and, more importantly, women's perception of themselves. My creations in the media would break old ideas—such as the idea that women must choose between career and family. I would produce narratives in which girls are heroes, ambition is a virtue, and kindness is a strength, by employing powerful stories. An animated show could follow a young girl who

dreams of becoming an astronaut despite being discouraged by society and depict perseverance and self-belief.

### **Combining These Ideas**

To combine these ideas, I would create a multimedia platform named "HerStory Unfolds," with digital comics, short stories, interviews, and podcasts celebrating girls and women. By sharing more empowering stories—stories that inspire, uplift, and give women hope—we can create a world where girls see no limitations and chase their dreams fearlessly. "HerStory Unfolds" would be a place where girls not only can access uplifting material but also contribute their voices to it, becoming part of a greater community that creates confidence, growth, and a sense of belonging. Through this platform, our goal would be to spread the message that every girl's story is powerful, unique, and deserves to be heard.



**Ansuya Bisbey**  
**2025 Girl Power Contest**  
**First Place – High School Division**

For me, one of the biggest challenges as a girl is confidence and empowerment. In today's world, so many career fields and spaces are still dominated by men, and the media reinforces this by giving men more coverage and including harmful stereotypes. Whether it's movies, shows, or even news outlets, women often appear as side characters or are celebrated only when they break into male-dominated fields- as if their presence is the exception, not the norm.

I believe real empowerment starts with education and representation- not just including women for the sake of appearing inclusive, but truly normalizing their presence in all spaces. The media should reflect the reality that women belong everywhere: in labs, kitchens, classrooms, boardrooms, and beyond. And we need to keep having these conversations- not just once during Women's History Month, but in everyday moments, in content people actually watch and enjoy.

The media I would create is a TV cooking/baking show. But this wouldn't be just about recipes- it would be about stories. Each episode would have a new host and guest, with the host changing in age every time- from a bubbly young girl to an older, wise woman- so that different perspectives and experiences are shared. While they bake together, the host would ask the guest about her life: her work, her passions, her struggles, and her advice. The conversation would be the focus, but the baking includes a fun aspect and viewers can learn a new recipe or two!

The guests would come from all walks of life: a NASA astronaut, a small business owner, a beloved teacher, a single mom- the real superheroes of our world. The goal would be to show that women can be strong in many different ways. They don't have to be the loudest or most decorated in the room to be powerful. And hearing these stories in a casual, positive environment would make the conversations feel warm and inspiring, rather than heavy or forced.

This show would give people the chance to learn from women's experiences in a fun, honest way. It would uplift girls by letting them see that they don't have to fit one mold to be successful or respected. Representation isn't just about who's on the screen- it's about how they're seen. And I want young girls to grow up seeing women who look like them, sound like them, and inspire them to be confident in themselves.

**Isabelle Harry**  
**2025 Girl Power Contest**  
**Honorable Mention – High School Division**

**"Let Her Be Heard"**

*by Isabelle Amarachi Harry*

She was born into silence—  
a hush wrapped in pink,  
stitched tight with expectations  
and warnings disguised as love.

The world handed her a mirror  
that only showed her what she lacked.  
She stared into it for years  
and thought maybe invisibility  
was the shape of survival.

She learned early:  
Girls like her were not written into legends.  
They were footnotes.  
Margins.  
Soft targets for hard things.  
Decorations in someone else's war.

She watched stories unfold  
where heroes had jaws like stone  
and skin like snow,  
where girls were rescued,  
not rising—  
*never rising.*

But in the marrow of her being,  
something stirred—  
not a whisper,  
not a flame,  
but a fault line.

And one day,  
she cracked.

Not broken.  
**Opened.**  
Like thunder splitting sky.  
Like a scream blooming into song.

She did not ask the world for a stage  
she built one from the bones  
of every time they told her "no."

She lit it  
with the fire they tried to shame out of her.  
She stepped forward,  
a mosaic of every silenced girl stitched into her skin.

She created mirrors that reflect more than flaws  
they show galaxies in stretch marks,  
battlefields behind brown eyes,  
cathedrals in crooked smiles.

She makes space:  
for the girls who speak in poems and pause,  
for the ones who weep in bathroom stalls  
but rise anyway,  
for the ones whose voices crack  
because they are carrying generations  
inside a single sentence.

She dreams content that wraps like armor  
books that name pain but do not worship it,  
films where joy is not earned through suffering,  
feeds full of brown girl light,  
where softness doesn't have to mean sacrifice.

She says:  
I am not a subplot,  
not your tragedy wrapped in ribbon.  
I am thunder's daughter.  
I am the ink that rewrites inheritance.  
I am the earthquake you felt but could not name.

And this time,  
this time  
I do not dim to make you comfortable.  
I do not shrink to fit your frame.

I write in blood and boldness,  
I film in fire and full color.  
I speak not just for myself  
but for every girl buried under "almost,"  
"too much,"  
or "not enough."

This time,  
I take up space like sky  
loud, endless,  
and utterly  
unapologetic.

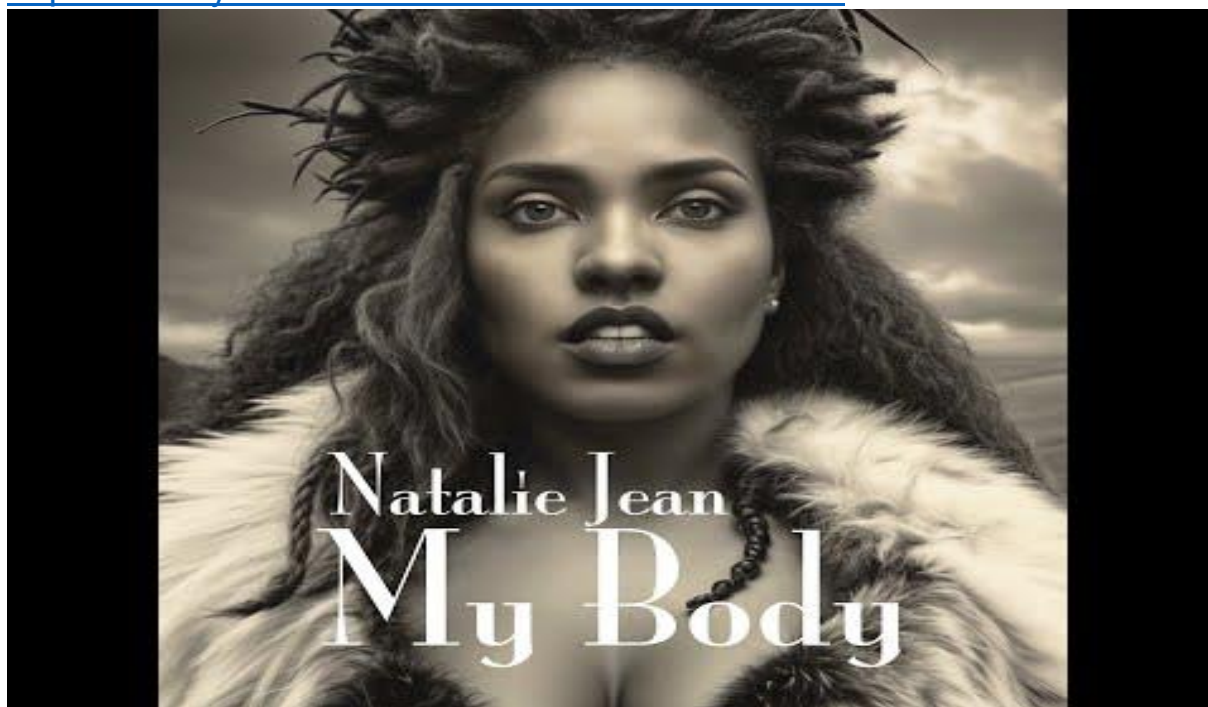
Growing up, I rarely saw girls who looked like me at the center of the story. If we were there at all, we were muted, flattened into stereotypes, tragedies, or background noise. I wrote “Let Her Be Heard” as a reclamation. This poem is for every girl who’s ever felt erased, misunderstood, or small. It’s a love letter to our voices, our rage, our softness, and our survival.

I believe the media has the power to shift what girls believe is possible. We deserve stories where we lead, where we thrive, where we are not “empowered” by others, but powerful on our own. Through this poem, I imagine a world where girls don't have to wait for permission to take up space, they already own it.



Natalie Jean  
2025 Girl Power Contest  
First Place – Adult Division  
*My Body*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2aZvLXRVX0>



**Arwa ElBoraei**

**2025 Girl Power Contest**

**Honorable Mention – Adult Division**

***The Girl Who Unleashed Her Potentials and Flew***

**Please enjoy and excerpt from *The Girl Who***

***Unleashed Her Potentials and Flew* in the**

**following pages.**



**The Girl Who Unleashed  
Her Potentials and Flew!**

Arwa Khadr ElBoraei

The  
Girl Who Unleashed  
Her Potentials and Flew!

Arwa Khadr Elboraei

Copyright © 2024 by Arwa Khadr Elboraei

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods without the prior written permission of the publisher. For permission requests, solicit the publisher via the address below.

[artist.arwa.elboraei@gmail.com](mailto:artist.arwa.elboraei@gmail.com)

Printed in the United States of America



Mommy, Daddy! I have a surprise! Look at what I have drawn to display at the school art gallery tomorrow!





Oh, sweetheart, it's wonderful! You're so talented, and we're super proud of you!

Wow! That's beautiful! You're a great artist! We're so proud of you!





Why did you ruin a paper?

This is funny!

This painting resembles hastily scribbled lines.

**School Art Gallery**





Today at the school gallery, some kids made fun of my painting. I felt disappointed when I heard their mean comments. I worked hard on it, hoping it would show my creativity. Now, I feel embarrassed and unsure about my art and don't feel like sharing it anymore.




Sweetie, I know it hurts to hear those comments but remember, your painting is unique because you made it. Not everyone will like it, but that's okay. Keep painting and having fun. Your art is fantastic, and we're so proud of you!






Don't let those comments get you down, honey. Every artist gets some negative feedback. What matters is that you love what you do. Keep painting and stay true to yourself. We believe in you and your talent!





I want to be  
an artist.





That's fantastic!  
Becoming an awesome  
artist is about having fun  
and learning.



# ROAD-MAP

## ART MAP




ART JOURNEY

PLAN




Let's make a special plan just for you, okay?





First, we'll start with fun art lessons. Your teacher is like a superhero who knows all about colors and lines. Pay close attention and have a blast!



Guess what? To become an even better artist, you can join extracurricular and summer art courses!



Extracurricular activities are like going on an art adventure with friends. You get to learn new tricks and improve your skills while having a blast. So, are you up for the artistic journey?







Yes, I am.





Let's take a selfie  
to remember the  
beginning of your  
art journey.



How did Lily's journey in discovering her artistic talents make you feel?

Can you recall a moment in the story where Lily faced a challenge, and how did she overcome it?

In what ways has the story motivated you to explore your creative side?

How did the different steps in Lily's artistic adventure, such as art lessons and self-learning, inspire you?

Which part of Lily's artistic journey was the most exciting or surprising?

## Reflection #1



How might Lily's story impact other children reading the book?

## Reflection #2

How does the book emphasize the importance of practice and perseverance in achieving artistic goals?

Were any specific lessons or messages from the story resonating with you?

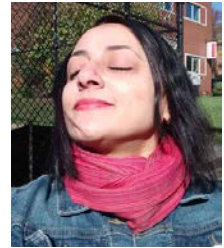
How might Lily's journey influence your approach to learning and expressing creativity in the future?

What aspects of Lily's creative process are most relatable to your experiences?



## About the Author

Arwa Khadr ElBoraei, an accomplished storyteller and artist, draws inspiration from her diverse experiences, international travels, and deep self-reflection. With a background in international human rights law and development, Arwa's unique perspective enriches her narratives. Her fiction goes beyond traditional storytelling, prompting introspection and inviting readers on a journey of self-discovery. Beyond her writing, Arwa showcases her artistic talent in oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, blending realism with abstract beauty. A recipient of prestigious scholarships, including the Fulbright and Chevening, Arwa's academic achievements and service have been recognized. Her professional journey spans roles in international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Explore her visual art on Instagram and TikTok. Arwa Khadr ElBoraei is a versatile individual dedicated to storytelling, painting, accessory design, and a deep connection with nature. Her work and life are committed to the highest human values and principles.



Are you an aspiring artist looking to pursue your passion? Look no further than "The Girl Who Unleashed Her Potentials and Flew," this artistic journey of Lily is a heartwarming tale that will inspire and guide you on your quest for self-discovery. Join Lily, a young artist, on her enchanting journey of creative exploration as she learns the value of art lessons, self-directed learning, and self-expression.

This captivating story transcends age and resonates with anyone passionate about developing their abilities. It encourages you to embark on this artistic odyssey, offering a roadmap for unleashing your creative potential and unlocking limitless possibilities. With each step marked by accolades, you can foster growth and self-discovery. Celebrate your artistic achievements and invest in a timeless addition to your educational library. Start your journey of self-discovery today with Lily, and unlock your limitless potential as a budding artist.

