



**iWitness™**

**SELF: Self-empowerment through Lifelong Learning and Fulfillment**



The  
**Carrie Meek**  
Foundation



# ABOUT

The Creativity and Self Summer Workshop, hosted by the iWitness: Institute for Visual Journalism at FIU, culminated in an inspiring showcase of artistic expression from rising 9th to 12th graders in Greater Miami Dade County. Over two transformative weeks, students harnessed the power of music, writing, and visual arts to explore their identities and forge a more profound sense of self-worth and purpose.







**Edouard Duval-Carrié**, artist  
iWitness Meeks Speaker Series

Guided by a passionate team of mentors, participants engaged in hands-on instruction, enriching discussions, and invigorating guest lectures from luminaries like jazz musician Marcus Strickland, author Dave Barry, and visual artist Edouard Duval-Carrié.



**Marcus Strickland**, jazz musician  
iWitness Meek Speaker Series



**Dave Barry**, humorist/author  
iWitness Meek Speaker Series



## My Miami

by Pharell Jolly

I come from dreadlocks and goldgrillz,  
Where marijuana is in the air.  
I speak with the voice of Dade County.  
I stand with hip-hop, content creators, and athletes.  
The sound of ablurr is music to my ears.  
Who would I be without Miami?  
Where would I be without Miami?  
To love me is to love my city,  
But you can't forget about sports—  
That is the key to this town.  
I walk with Nikes on my feet,  
And my smile is powered by sports and music.  
I am Pharell.  
I am an athlete.  
I am a dreadlocker.  
I am a Florida boy.



## Vanilla Cake and Courage

by Josie Mateo

I come from my mom's delicious vanilla cake,  
and people arguing about the price of rent.  
Where colorful graffiti is in the air.  
I speak with the voice of my mom and my dad.  
I stand with intelligence, power, and courage.  
The sound of rain dripping down a window is music to my ears.  
Making art makes me happy.  
To love me is to love yourself.  
To know me is to know my feelings.  
But you can't forget about music,  
that is the rule.  
I walk with making songs and making friends,  
And my smile is powered by my family.

## Oh Music

by Isabella Barrera

Oh music,  
You are better than life.  
And better than my moms rice.  
You are my air  
Oh I swear  
I breath you  
I feel you  
I love you.  
I'm a fool for you  
Your a lovely force  
Oh i swear  
I'd jump off a cliff for you  
Into the deep sea blue.  
Just for you.  
All for you.  
Every Moment we are apart  
If feels like a dart  
Into my heart.  
I swear  
I wish nothing more but to inject you into  
my veins  
Into my brian,  
With chains  
Oh music.  
When i die  
Which I inevitably will.  
Will you be by my side?





## Spices and Seasonings

by Briana Pean

I come from spices and seasonings.

Where legume, griot, soup joumoun and Kompa are in the air

I'm speaking with the voice of a young Haitian American girl

Through the drought, hurricanes, and terror, I stand by my  
people like the rainbow in every storm.

The sounds of the songs from the Chants D'Esperance

Is like honey dripping from my ear

I question my identity, and my mind tends to wander

Like words being mixe-matched because of dyslexia

Where would I be without the one who formed me in my mother's womb?

Who would I be without God?

If you truly love me, you will climb the mountain til we get to the very top

This journey won't be easy so just count 1, 2, 3, and be my rock.

Don't forget my people fought for their freedom.

Just as Joseph did being locked up, he was beaten, mistreated, and twisted like  
a twizzler

Yes, my people are free indeed but with every step they

Take it like the chains are starting to come back

Let's make it clear: we won in 1804 and still are in 2024.



## Grace

by Bella Raymond

I come from grace and being kind,  
Where love is in the air.  
I speak with the voice of motion.  
I aspire to stand with eternal life.  
The sound of life is music to my ears.  
Who would I be without You?  
Where would I be without You?  
To love me is to love everyone from Him.  
To know me is to know a bit of Him.  
But you can't forget about grace —  
That is the key for everything else.  
I walk with grace in my steps.  
And my smile is powered by Him,  
and the smiles of those I love.  
Affirmation to his nation.  
I am brilliant.  
I am confident.  
I will graduate from college  
I WILL ACHIEVE MY DREAMS!  
Though I may be foreign  
I'm with grace and gentleness  
Hear my love in the air.  
Humans are sheep.  
And let me tell you,  
As lost and naïve is me, the human sheep  
When I weep. I know you'll comfort me.





The gallery exhibition celebrates the diversity of each student's artistic expression, inviting the community to witness the vibrant tapestry of creativity woven by these young talents.



## **Mí i Ami**

by Mariana Robertson Cruz

I come from America and the Caribbean,  
Where the spread of culture is in the air.  
I speak with the voice of my ancestors that came before me.  
I stand with democracy, and freedom, and justice.  
The sound of joy is music to my ears.  
Who would I be without my family?  
Where would I be without my independence?  
To love me is to love an artist.  
To know me is to know creativity.  
But you can't forget about my history—  
That is the reason I am here today.  
I walk with pep in my step,  
And my smile is powered by joy and happiness.  
I am awesome, creative, amazing,  
And inspired by and will continue to inspire many.

## **Jerk Chicken and Coconuts**

by Anderson Ellis

I come from jerk chicken and coconuts,  
Where Jamaican patties are in the air.  
I speak with the voice of my ancestors.  
I stand with truth, justice, and hope.  
The sound of Asmr is music to my ears.  
Who would I be without Fortnite?  
Where would I be without GameStop?  
To love me is to love gaming.  
To know me is to know Jacob,  
But you can't forget about Nirwan—  
They are real treasure.  
I walk with Jordans in my steps,  
And my smile is powered by friends and family.  
I am Anderson.  
I am proud of who I am.





The students' unique voices and perspectives shine through as they navigate self-discovery and societal awareness through their artistic endeavors.





I come from rambutan and guanabana trees.  
Where the spice and dancing is in the air.  
I speak with the voice of coconuts  
I stand with orchids and Bayahibe roses  
Who would I be without my culture?  
Where would I be without mi familia.  
To love me is to love the wind.  
To know me is to know the rain.  
But you cannot forget about America,  
My home and birthplace.  
I walk with sea water in my steps  
And my smile is powered by beaches and ceviche.  
I am Latino,  
Free and proud.

- Jancarlos Mateo

BreakThrough Scholar 2024







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