

Highlights Foundation Launches Visual Arts Exhibit

Boyd's Mills, Pa. – The Highlights Foundation unveiled its 2018 Visual Arts Exhibit on Saturday, March 17, with a reception at The Highlights Foundation retreat center honoring children's illustrator Shadra Strickland.

“We're deeply honored to present the inspiring artwork of Shadra Strickland,” said George Brown, director of customer experience, “and to have it serve as a source of creativity and encouragement for writers and illustrators throughout the year.”

Ms. Strickland is the illustrator of more than a dozen books for young readers. Her latest picture book is *A Child's Book of Prayers and Blessings: From Faiths and Cultures Around the World* (Simon & Schuster, 2017) with prayers compiled by Deloris Jordan. Ms. Strickland created nine spreads and 10 single-page illustrations using linocut, a unique hand-printed reduction linoleum printmaking technique.

Original illustrations from Ms. Strickland's book will remain displayed at the Highlights Foundation conference and retreat center throughout the year for visiting writers, illustrators, and guests.

While introducing Ms. Strickland, Highlights Foundation Program Director Alison Green Myers told a story of students visiting the art installation prior to the exhibit's opening. “They pored over the images, then shared words like ‘faith,’ ‘children,’ ‘love,’ ‘family,’ ‘praise,’ ‘proud,’ and ‘prayer’... Without words on the pages, they found the words that belong to this book within the power of Shadra's art.”

Ms. Strickland won the Ezra Jack Keats Award and the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award in 2009 for her illustrations in *Bird*, written by Zetta Elliott. A year later, she won the NAACP Image Award as a contributor to *Our Children Can Soar*. Her illustrations for

Loving vs. Virginia appeared in the 2016 Society of Illustrators juried exhibition of original artwork.

“[In *A Child’s Book of Prayers and Blessings*] I focused on the things that connect us all: Things like nature, creativity, and celebrating our differences,” said Ms. Strickland.

“Thank you, Shadra, for making the Highlights Foundation a more beautiful place to engage in the important craft of creating books for children,” said Ms. Green Myers.

The Highlights Foundation offers a wide range of workshops and retreats for writers and illustrators at its retreat center located just outside of Honesdale, PA. For more information, visit www.highlightsfoundation.org or call toll-free at 877-288-3410.