

Achiever: Samer Abdullah | Young Elementary student recognized in national art contest

BY ELAINE ROOKER JACK • SPECIAL TO THE COURIER-JOURNAL • AUGUST 15, 2010

Samer Abdullah, 10, likes to fish and draw, so when his art teacher, Kristine Larson, told him about the State-Fish Art Contest, he knew he wanted to enter.

Samer is the only winner from Kentucky in the national contest, which selects winners from each state. The contest is sponsored by Wildlife Forever, a conservation organization that seeks to preserve America's wildlife heritage through education, habitat preservation and management of fish and wildlife.

Samer drew a spotted bass. He said he didn't know how to draw a fish jumping at first, but Larson showed him some pictures that helped. "It looked like a 'C;' so I drew a C" and then filled in the body. Samer used crayons on his winning entry.

He lives in the Jacobs neighborhood near Berry Boulevard with his parents Falah Zeedan and Ramziyah Al Zuhairi and older brothers Forat and Mazin and younger sister Malak.

In addition to the picture, Samer had to write a one-page essay about the fish.

Samer came to the United States from Iraq a year ago and has only been speaking English for a short time, so Larson said she was concerned about the essay requirement. But Samer is a good writer, and he did an amazing job, she said.

English "is a little bit hard" to learn, Samer said.

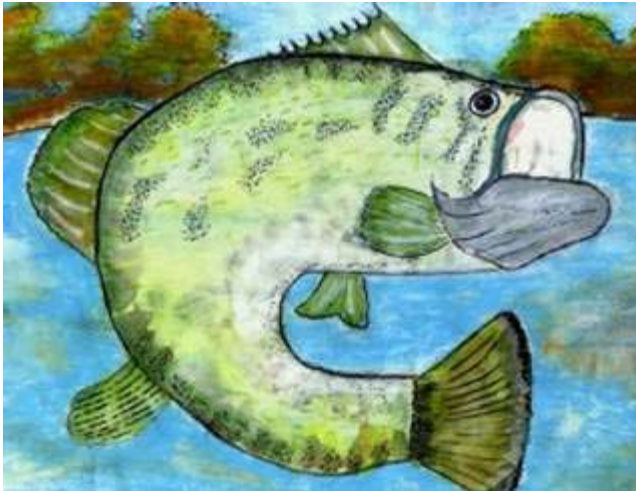
Larson said she suggested the contest to her students because of the state's required core content in ecology. She said the contest, which stressed knowledge of and conservation of natural resources, "dovetailed nicely."

Samer said he likes living in Kentucky and enjoys his school most of all. Last year the fourth-graders went on a camping trip and Samer got to go fishing.

Samer and his family were invited to an awards ceremony in Athens, Texas, in July but were unable to attend.



Samer Abdullah is the achiever.



Achiever Samer Abdullah's artwork.

Samer Abdullah

Age: 10

School: Fifth-grader at Whitney Young Elementary

Hobbies: Soccer, drawing