



A child's drawing on pink paper. At the top, there are two clouds, one purple and one pink. Below them is a yellow sun with rays. In the center, a girl with long hair, wearing a red shirt and yellow pants, is walking. To the right is a house with a brown door and two windows. The word 'Home' is written above the house. To the left, there is a structure with a red roof and yellow interior, possibly a school or a community center. The letters 'A' and 'H' are visible in blue. A hand is holding a silver marker, drawing on a white piece of paper in the foreground. The white paper has a yellow sun with rays drawn on it. A clear plastic cup with colored pencils is on the left. A green pencil is on the bottom left.

# Reflections from Refuge

The world as I see it - Refugee Children's Art

Created by the CHAT Team

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The world as I see it - Refugee Children's Art

Designed by Sarah Sdringola

## **Mission**

To foster the health and well-being of immigrant and refugee communities through the education, arts, advocacy and access to care.

## **Vision**

To build a healthy community that is self-sufficient and meets the everyday challenges of living in a diverse society.

**First Edition**

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# Introduction

By Dr. Aisha Siddiqui, Director and Founder of CHAT

Culture of Health-Advancing Together (CHAT) is a non-profit organization founded in 2015 with a mission to improve the health and wellbeing of immigrants and refugees through a multifaceted, public health approach. CHAT strives to facilitate acculturation for a community that faces social isolation and significant barriers to success. We foster a climate of trust to empower the immigrant and refugee community and improve their lives through social determinants of health.

At CHAT, we believe that art engagement improves the social determinants of health by building individual resilience and nurturing communities. Art is a powerful advocacy platform for refugees to realize their potential, communicate their stories, and raise community awareness. Creative self-expression is a focus of CHAT's programs that uses the power of the arts to cross language and cultural barriers and serve as an educational tool.

*Aisha Siddiqui*

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Aisha Siddiqui, DrPH, MPH

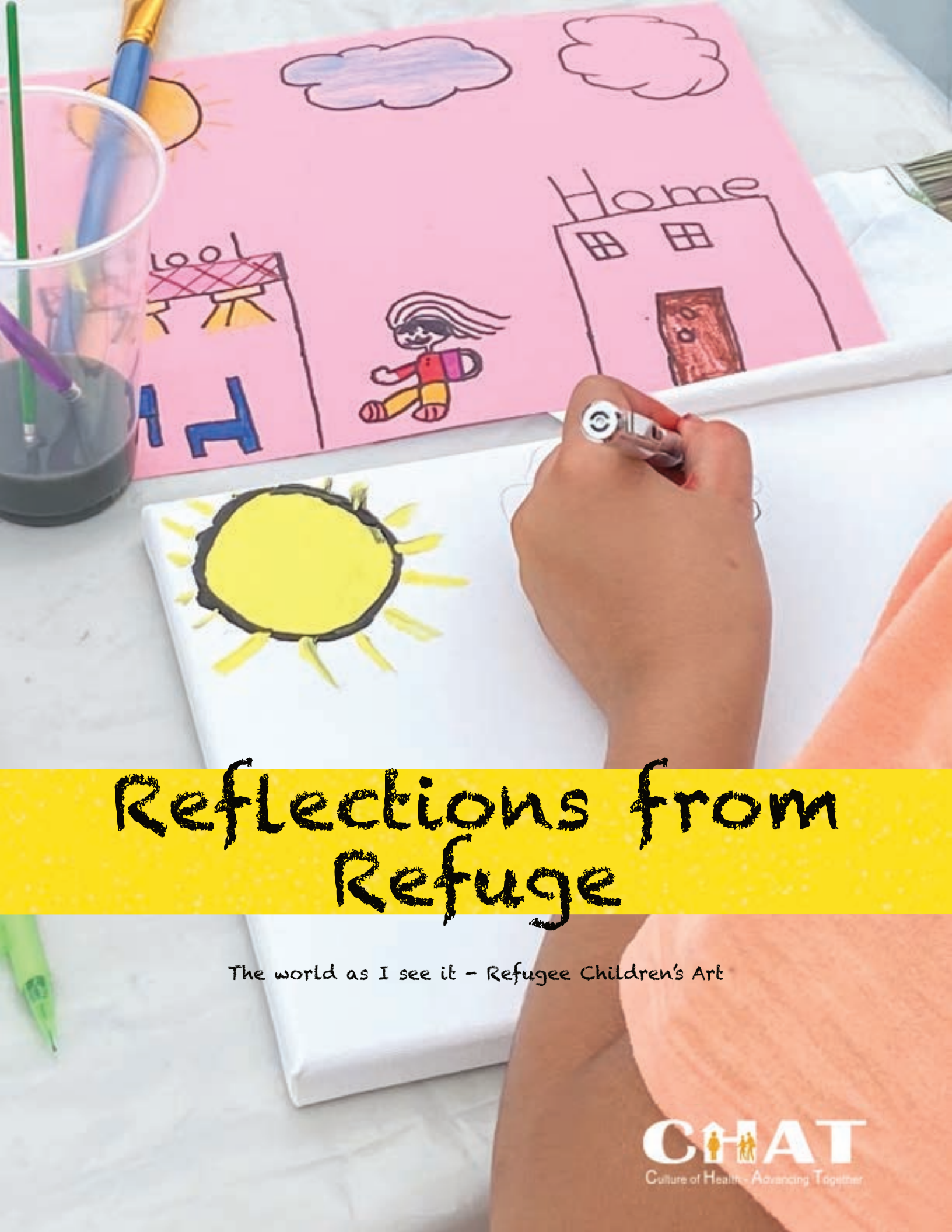
# About the Artwork

The artwork found in this book is a collection of paintings created by CHAT Academy students. Each piece was inspired by their love for the land they left behind and the new home they are settling in, giving a unique look into their experiences.

Please enjoy this untouched exploration of immigrant and refugee children's art.



This picture was taken outside the CHAT office, which sits in the heart of the community we serve.



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"There is no  
right or wrong  
in art."

Sapna, 10, CHAT Student



## Sajad, 8, Afghanistan

“My country is Afghanistan and I don't like when people was hating each other. I miss my house, my grandma, and my grandpa. I miss them. I miss my friends. But, I like that in Houston people don't hate others and bully others.

“Painting makes me feel good.”

اسم من سجاد است





## Hasanat, 11, Afghanistan

“My parents are from Afghanistan, but I was born here. It’s very good there. There is a lot of positive stuff about Afghanistan, but everyone focuses on the negative. The best thing about my country is the food and their places like parks and restaurants. The best thing about Houston is their music.

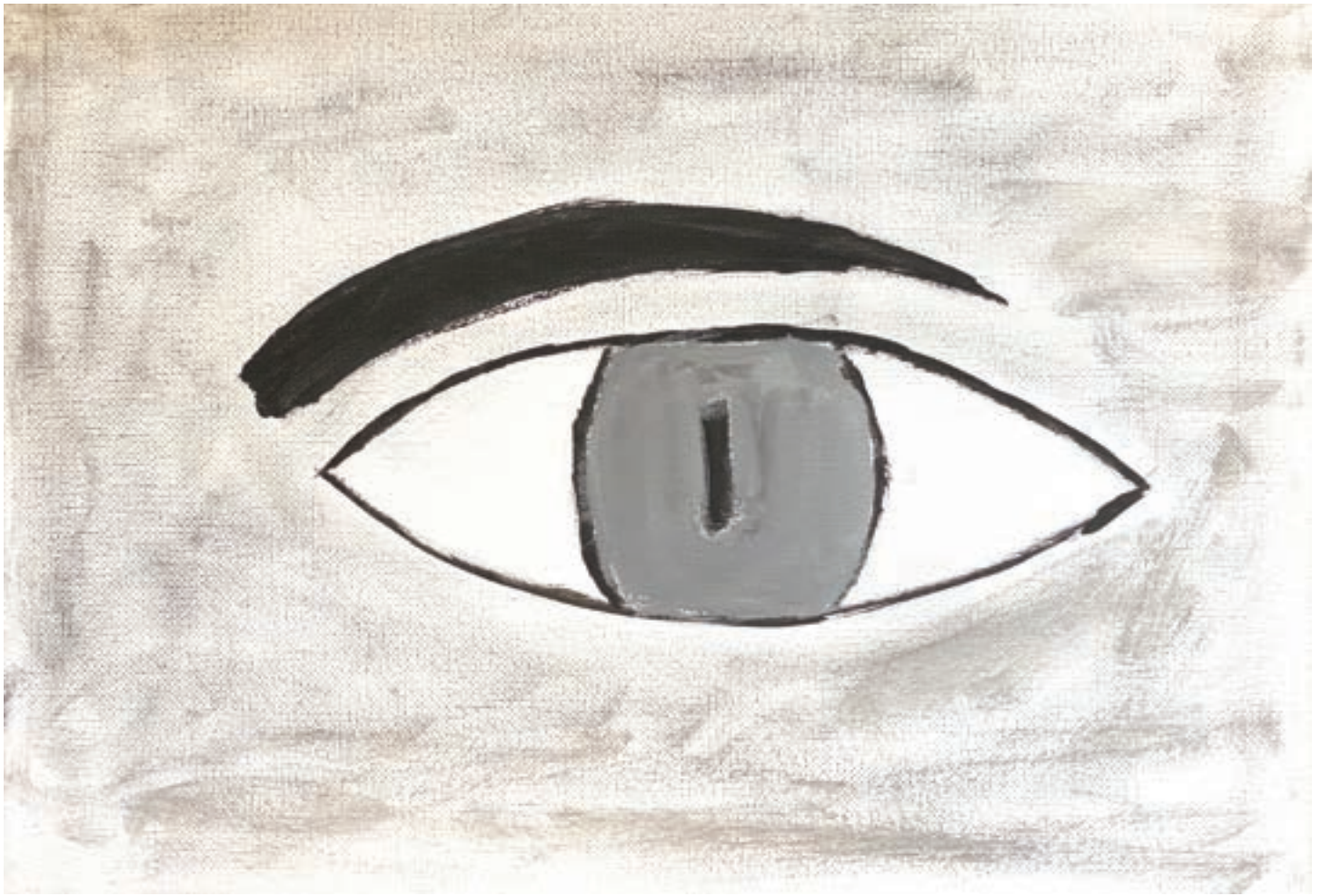
“Art means a bunch of colors and paint and creative stuff.”

اسم من حسنات است



Hasanat, 11, Afghanistan





Hector, 14, Guatemala

“My family is from Guatemala. Guatemala looks like a normal place to me, but there are less opportunities over there because not many people can get a lot of money to give education to their children. I don't really miss anything from my country because I feel good living in Houston.

“To me, art means the way you express your feelings to others.”

Mi nombre es Hector





Ahmad, 10, Afghanistan

“My family is from Afghanistan and it was fun. I miss most the fruits from the trees. My favorite thing about Houston is I get to ride my bike and play outside.

“Art means colors and drawing.”

زما نوم احمد ده







The more the  
the more things  
The more the  
the more Place





Aminata, 13, Mali

“I was born and raised in Houston Texas! My parents are from Mali , west Africa, and I don’t really remember what it was like, but it was really fun traveling over there. So much happy people. Something that I miss a lot in my country is playing with the kids over there. They’re so nice and they are so playful. I also miss the food, it’s so good, like fresh and everything.

“Art means a lot to me to be honest because art can define everything in life. For example, like if a deaf person can’t talk or describe, there is always art that can help. It’s really hard for me to explain but art means a lot to me.”

Je m’appelle Aminata



Aminata, 13, Mali





## Zohra, 11, Afghanistan

“My country is Afghanistan. It has hills, trees, big apartments to see everywhere and it is good! The thing I miss most about my country is my family and school, but my favorite thing about Houston is CHAT.

“Art can never be wrong.”

اسم من زهره است





Samiullah, 13, Afghanistan

“My family is from Afghanistan. Afghanistan is nice and the food is good. The best thing that I miss is soccer, but my favorite thing about Houston is soccer.

“Art means to me that I can be relaxed. “

اسم من سمع الله است





Muzhda, 12, Afghanistan

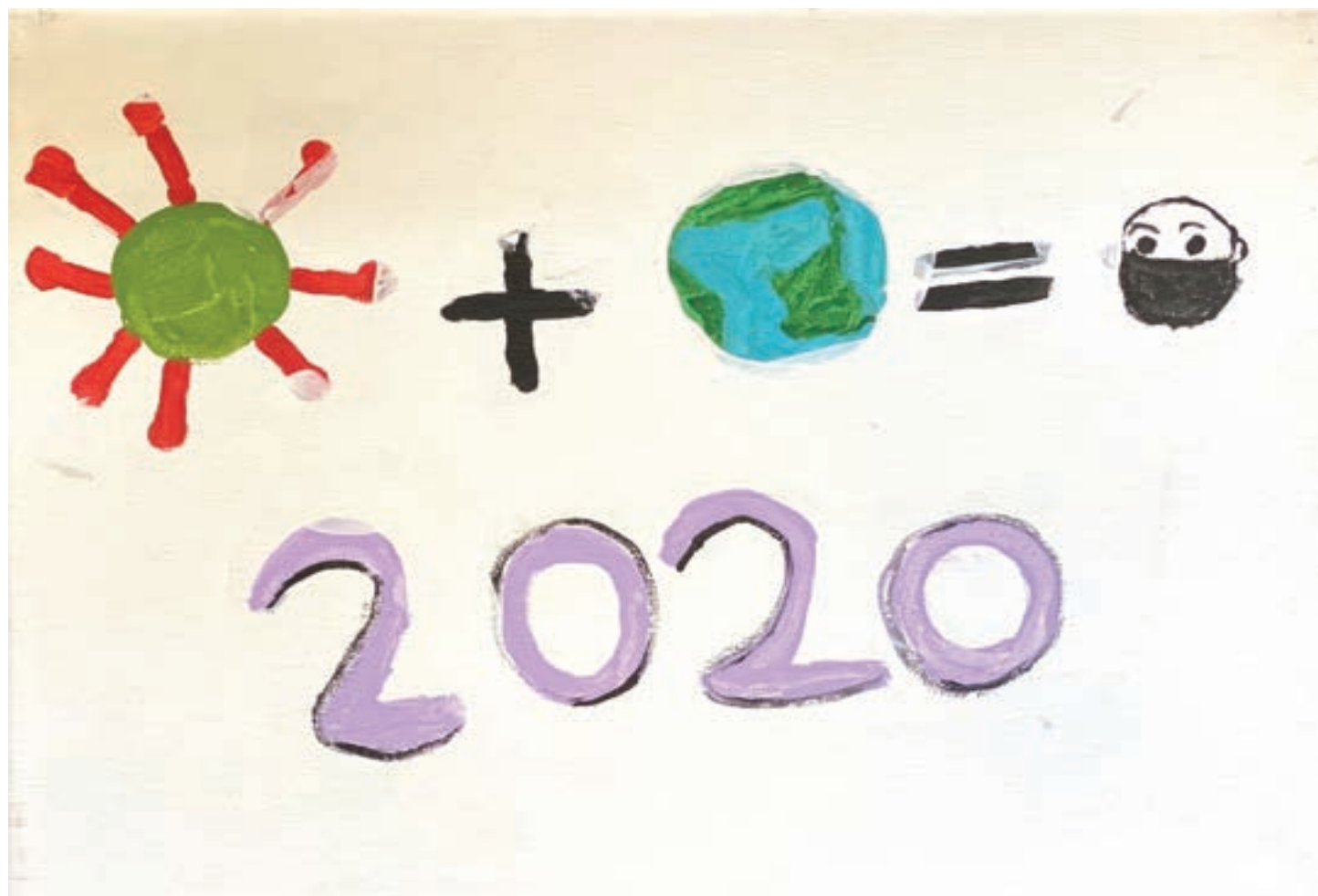
“My family is from Afghanistan. It was fun there because the food was good, I liked the weather, and I had a lot of friends. The best part was playing with my cousins. I live in Houston now and the best thing about it is I have new friends and I go outside.”

“Art is really fun. Whenever I am bored I draw or do art. I find art peaceful. Art is one of my favorite things to do when I am bored.”

زما نوم مزده دی



Muzhda, 12, Afghanistan





Anonymous

Anonymous





Anonymous



Anonymous





# About the Quilt

By Regina Martinez, CHAT Program Coordinator

“There is no right or wrong in art,” quoted from one of our students, Sapna, who is from Afghanistan. She has been able to express her interest in the arts at such an early age because of CHAT.

This quilt project enabled our CHAT students to express their stories by designing their own fabric squares. The quilt represents **sacrifice, courage, and vulnerability**, which are characteristics that our students share and, combined, make them strong. This quilt was created to signify their journey to Houston, and each decorated square expresses their voice on how far they have come. Together, creating a mosaic of different families across the world, they come to the community of Gulfton and call CHAT one of their homes.

This quilt was a collaboration between CHAT students, volunteers, and staff in an effort to continue to provide more resources for our community.







# Acknowledgments

The CHAT Team would like to thank *Dr. Aisha Siddiqui* for creating a safe space where children can freely express themselves through art.

We would like to give a big thank you to *Southwest Management District* and *Community Health Choice* for sponsoring this book.

Thank you, *The Univeristy of Texas Medical Branch*, for supporting CHAT through the printing of this book.

We would also like to thank all of the *professional artists, actors, and musicians* for the years of collaboration and dedication to our community.

Additionally, CHAT would like to thank all of its *staff* for helping to create this book and making this project come to life.

Last but not least, we would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the *children* who shared their stories and inspired us through their wonderful artwork.

شكرا لك

Merci

شكريه

Thank You!

Gracias

مننه

متشكرا

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Culture of Health-Advancing Together



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**CHAT**

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