

2026-27 NATIONAL ARTS CONTEST

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

MY KIND OF COMFORT

Your story. Your art. Your comfort.

What brings you comfort?

Create something that shows what comfort looks, sounds, means, or feels like to you. Your idea might come from a favorite place, a meaningful tradition, an activity you enjoy, a person or community that supports you, or a quiet moment where you can simply be yourself.

SUBMIT YOUR ART	LOCAL JUDGING	ART SHOW & AWARDS
Now through Friday, January 15, 2027	Tuesday January 26, 2027 (Closed to the public)	Friday, January 29, 2027 SHA School Age Center 5:30-6:00 p.m. Community Art Viewing 6:00-7:00 p.m. Awards Presentation

Open to youth ages 6-18

Choose a category, create original work, and tell us what "My Kind of Comfort" means to you.

1. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Youth ages 6-18 may participate. Your age group is based on your age as of January 1, 2027.

AGES 6-9	AGES 10-12	AGES 13-15	AGES 16-18
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Group entries: Collaborative entries may include up to six youth. For national submission, the age group is based on the age group represented by the majority of the artists in the group.

2. CHOOSE YOUR CONTEST CATEGORY

APPLIED ARTS	Functional art that combines creativity and design. Examples: jewelry, woodworking, fashion design, furniture design.
DIGITAL ARTS	Art created or presented using digital technology. Examples: animation, music production, graphic design, filmmaking, photography.
LITERARY ARTS	Creative expression through writing. Examples: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, speeches/prose, scriptwriting.
PERFORMING ARTS	Performance using voice, movement, instruments, or acting. Examples: dance, original music, spoken word, acting.
VISUAL ARTS	Art that uses visual elements such as color, shape, texture, and form. Examples: drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, pastel.

Important: Your entry should fit the category you choose and connect clearly to the theme “My Kind of Comfort.”

3. CATEGORY LENGTH & FORMAT LIMITS

DIGITAL ARTS	Films and other media may be up to 7 minutes.
LITERARY ARTS	Up to 2 typed, single-spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent. Handwritten work is allowed, but it should not exceed the same length.
PERFORMING ARTS	Individual performances may be up to 3 minutes. Group performances may be up to 5 minutes. <i>Video Submissions can be uploaded to YouTube and submitted to: brent.m.tokumi.naf@army.mil AND nicholas.j.andrews2.naf@army.mil</i> Subject line: “BGCA Arts contest submission, Last, Name” entry form attached must be attached

4. ENTRY RULES - READ BEFORE YOU CREATE

Your work must be original and created by you.

YOUR ENTRY SHOULD:

- ✓ Be created entirely by the youth participant.
- ✓ Clearly connect to the “My Kind of Comfort” theme.
- ✓ Include a 2-5 sentence Artist Statement.
- ✓ Use your own ideas, creative choices, and artistic voice.

NOT ELIGIBLE:

- ✗ AI-generated work
- ✗ Cartoon characters
- ✗ Copyrighted material, including published songs, films, images, literature, or other content created by someone else
- ✗ Art kits
- ✗ Ready-made patterns
- ✗ Tracings
- ✗ Follow-the-dots projects

Artwork created outside CYS: A parent/caregiver or professional must verify that the artwork was created entirely by the youth participant.

5. YOUR ARTIST STATEMENT

Every entry must include a short Artist Statement of 2-5 sentences. It should help the judges understand what your work means, why you created it, and what inspired you.

WHAT?

What is your artwork about?

WHY?

Why did you choose this idea?

COMFORT?

How does it connect to “My Kind of Comfort”?

Sample Artist Statement

“My piece is called ‘Sunday Morning.’ I painted the kitchen table where my family eats breakfast together. That time makes me feel calm and connected because everyone slows down and talks. For me, comfort is being together in a familiar place.”

Privacy tip: Do not put your first or last name in the artwork title or Artist Statement.

6. BEFORE YOU TURN IT IN

- ☐ My artwork is complete and is my own original work.
- ☐ My entry clearly connects to “My Kind of Comfort.”
- ☐ I selected the correct contest category.
- ☐ My work follows the time/page limit for my category, if applicable.
- ☐ I wrote a 2-5 sentence Artist Statement.
- ☐ My required Camp Zama CYS entry materials are complete.
- ☐ If I created the work outside CYS, the required adult/professional verification is complete.

7. WHAT WILL THE JUDGES LOOK FOR?

Judges will score entries in five areas. Use these questions to review your work before you submit it.

THEMATIC ACCURACY	Does your work clearly connect to “My Kind of Comfort” and fit your chosen category?
DISPLAY / AUDIO QUALITY	Can the artwork, recording, or performance be seen or heard clearly? Is the presentation detailed and easy to understand?
ARTISTIC MERIT	Does your work show control, intention, and thoughtful use of artistic techniques?
CREATIVITY	Does your individual voice come through? Did you make creative choices that feel personal and meaningful?
ORIGINALITY & SKILL	Is the work original, and does it show the skills you have developed in your art form?

8. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE LOCAL CONTEST?

Local entries will be judged on January 26, 2027. Category winners will be recognized at the Camp Zama Community Art Show & Awards Presentation on January 29.

Local winners may be selected to advance for national consideration. BGCA accepts only one entry per age group, per category, per organization for the national contest.

If your piece advances: CYS staff may photograph, scan, record, or otherwise prepare the entry for the required digital national submission.

COMMUNITY ART SHOW & AWARDS

Date: Friday, January 29, 2027

Location: SHA School Age Center

5:30-6:00 p.m.: Community Art Viewing

6:00-7:00 p.m.: Awards Presentation

Families, friends, and community members are invited to celebrate our young artists.

LOCAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Deadline: Friday, January 15, 2027

Turn in your completed artwork and required Camp Zama CYS entry materials by the local deadline.

Questions: Parent Central Services - DSN 263-4125 | COMM 046-407-4125

9. 2027 BGCA NATIONAL ARTS CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Youth Name: _____ Youth Age (Age when artwork was created): _____

Parent Name: _____ Parent Email(s): _____

Parent Number: _____

If currently enrolled in any of the following programs, please select all that apply:

___ Camp Zama CDC ___ Sagamihara (SHA) CDC ___ School Age Center ___ Camp Zama Youth Center

___ Arnn Elementary School ___ Zama American Middle/High School

___ My youth is not registered in any of the above programs

___ Home School ___ Japanese School

Statements of Understanding, please initial each statement:

___ I understand that if my youth wins, in order to have their work submitted to the National Level, my youth must be registered as a MyFuture.net Member through BGCA *(This process will be completed by Camp Zama CYS)*

___ I understand the following work is not eligible to be entered into the Art Contest:
-Art Kits, Ready-made patterns, tracings, follow-the-dots, cartoon characters, and copyrighted materials (e.g., songs, films, or any other content produced by someone other than the youth)

___ I understand that my Youths artwork may be used by CYS/MWR and/or the BGCA for marketing, promotional, or other purposes without the need for further permission. I will not receive any monetary compensation for such use. I will retain ownership if my artwork and will be credited where possible.

Parent/Guardian Print Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

APPLIED ARTS	DIGITAL ARTS	LITERARY ARTS	PERFORMING ARTS	VISUAL ARTS
Jewelry Making Woodworking Fashion Design Furniture Design	Graphic Design Digital Music Digital Photography Digital Storytelling	Fiction Nonfiction Poetry Scriptwriting	Dance Music Spoken Word Theatre	Drawing Painting Sculpture Pastel

Category of choice: _____ (Submit this page with your submission)