

Detroit Public School Students Join America's Thanksgiving Parade



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Of all the dramatic floats that will travel the route of America's Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit this year, just one has the distinction of being designed by a middle schooler.

Lesly Nunez submitted the winning entry in the Skillman Foundation's annual float design contest. Her drawing, "Community Garden," was reinterpreted into a parade float, complete with giant strawberries, asparagus, sunflowers and a smiling girl in a sunhat (presumably Nunez) at the center.

Nunez says the drawing – and now the float – represent her dream neighborhood.



(See more photos of the float [here](#).)

Nunez is a student at Clippert Academy, a middle school in southwest Detroit. Clippert continually produces talented artists -- or at least excellent float designers; a student from the school has won Skillman's parade float or balloon design contest each of the last five years.

"We salute the Skillman Foundation for its commitment to 20 years of making dreams come true for America's Thanksgiving Parade," said Tony Michaels, president CEO of the Parade Company, in a release. "Every year it warms our hearts to be able to honor and recognize these incredibly talented students and create memories for a lifetime for the children, parents and teachers all involved."

Nunez and her family will join Skillman CEO Carol Goss for a ride on the float Thanksgiving morning.

She won't be the only DPS student taking part in the parade. While Nunez is lending visual delights to parade watchers, the Detroit Public Schools' All City Marching Band will add the sounds of trumpets and drum kits to the festivities.

The All City band hasn't played together in more than half a decade, due to funding restraints. But earlier this year, the Detroit Public Schools Foundation [provided an initial investment for instruments and band start-up costs](#) with the help of a \$560,000, five-year grant from First Student, a transportation company.

The band's performance in Thursday's parade marks their triumphant return to the tuba-and-majorette scene. The band is directed by Willie McAllister, Detroit Public Schools' Director of Fine Arts Education. Band members, who come from schools across the city, have been holding rehearsals at Martin Luther King High School.

So if you're headed down to the parade, keep an eye out for Nunez's whimsical float and an ear out for the big brass of the All City Marching Band.