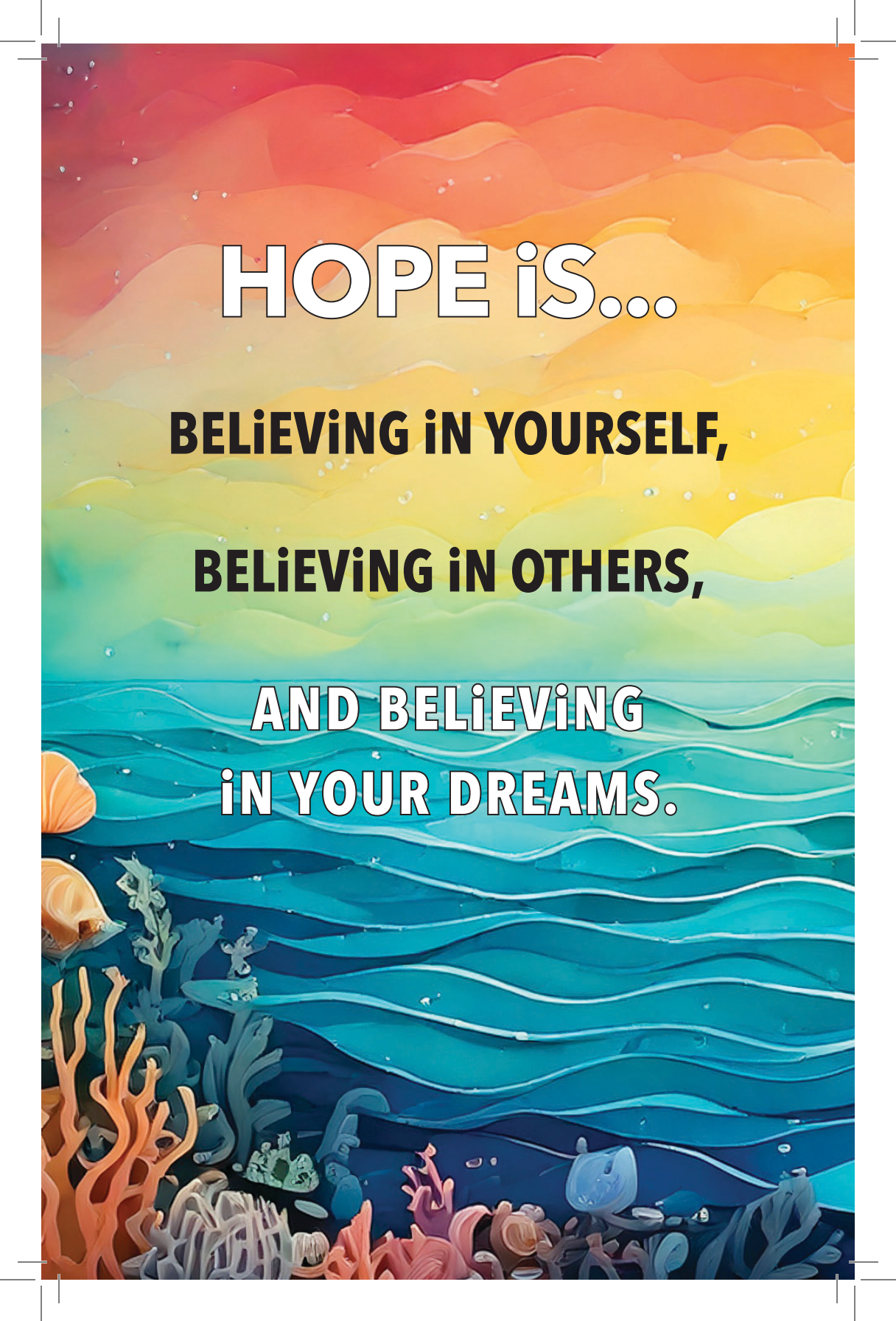




ANCHORED IN HOPE

camphopeamerica.org



HOPE is...

BELIEVING in YOURSELF,

BELIEVING in OTHERS,

**AND BELIEVING
in YOUR DREAMS.**





WELCOME TO CAMP HOPE AMERICA

We are so excited that you're here. This week, you'll meet new friends, try fun activities, and discover new things about yourself. As you meet new people, you'll notice that some are like you, some are different, and that's what makes camp special. You'll also get the chance to try activities you've never done before. With all this newness, do your best to keep an open mind.

This summer, our theme is "**Anchored in Hope.**" Being anchored means staying steady and strong, even when life feels uncertain, challenging, or confusing. It's about finding courage within yourself and remembering that you are never truly alone.

Think about it: roots anchor a tree, keeping it strong through storms. A boat uses an anchor to stay safe and in place, even when the waves try to push it away. Imagine a kite, soaring high but held steady by the string in your hand, no matter how strong the wind blows.

Being anchored doesn't mean you won't sway – it means you have what it takes to stay grounded, safe, and connected to what matters most.

Throughout the week, you'll hear stories from four amazing **Hope Heroes** who show what it looks like to stay anchored. Their stories remind us that being anchored means believing in yourself, asking for help when you need it, and never giving up.



- **Troy Vincent** chose courage and kindness, even after going through hard times.
- **Nicole Snell** became confident and brave and now helps others find their strength.
- **DJ Johnson** learned to stay strong with the help of caring adults and now gives back to her community.
- **Carlin Isles** worked hard, believed in himself, and reached the goals he set.

This week, you'll discover your own anchors, the things that help you feel strong, hopeful, and confident. You'll face challenges, cheer for others, and learn more about the person you want to become.

At Camp HOPE America, hope means believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams. It means your future can be brighter than your past, and you have the power to help make that happen. Your **Hope Circle**, which is your cabin group, and your Camp HOPE America friends are here to cheer you on and help you discover new pathways.

Let's dive in and make this an amazing week filled with courage, fun, and hope!



TROY VINCENT

He/Him

STATE: New York

FAVORITE COLOR: Orange

FUN FACTS: He loves being a grandfather,
his favorite team is the 76ers,
and he enjoys going on walks.



My choices matter.

Troy froze after he saw his mom being beaten by her boyfriend. Scared and confused, he noticed that everyone around him seemed to know what was happening, yet no one said anything. Did that mean it was okay to live like this? Troy's mom was a teenager when he was born. He was raised primarily by his grandparents, but his mom was still in his life. Troy's mom was abused by her boyfriend, who was also the father of Troy's little brother. One day, his mom was beaten so severely that she had to go to the hospital. When she returned with her face in a cast, neighborhood kids mocked her. Troy spent an entire year feeding her through a straw because it was the only way she could eat. He felt embarrassed, helpless, and **isolated**. Something wasn't right. The chaos at home weighed on him, and he didn't want to continue living in despair.

At age 10, Troy started earning money by selling sweet potatoes, string beans, and cabbage from the back of a truck. There was a park and garden on his block where he learned teamwork and community. He was a dreamer, **aspiring** to become a professional athlete. Despite the challenges at home, he drew inspiration from his mom's **resilience** – her ability to pick up the pieces and start over every day.

At 16, Troy learned that responding to violence with violence only created a bigger storm of emotions. He began to understand that choices had **consequences** that could last a lifetime. Troy experienced a transformation in church where he discovered unconditional love and the power of understanding. He realized that while he couldn't change what happened to his family, he could choose what kind of person he wanted to be by choosing every day to encourage and support others. He knew his anchor must be love, courage, and community.

Troy worked hard to reach his goals. He excelled in sports and worked hard in school to earn a college scholarship to play football. He eventually reached the National Football League (NFL) where he played for four different teams and was given one of the NFL's highest awards. Today, Troy continues his work with the NFL and runs a foundation called **Love Thy Neighbor** Community Development & Opportunity Corporation (LTN) with his wife, promoting leadership, character development, mentoring, and community support for young people. He envisions a world where everyone feels valued, supported, and included.

Now, Troy uses his voice and platform to fight for those without one. He wants young people to know that they can create safe and healthy families, and that their actions can ripple out to make communities safer. He challenges everyone to stand up against disrespect, to refuse to tolerate jokes about violence, and to model healthy relationships. Using violence is a choice – you can choose differently. Troy anchors himself in hope, encouraging young people to ask for help, speak up, make a difference, and find the hero within themselves.

It's never too early to start. Will you accept Troy's challenge to help create a safer and better world for everyone?

EXPAND YOUR MiND

Isolated: to be alone, left out, or kept apart.

Resilience: adapting when things change, learning from hard things and trying again; continuing to move forward after challenges; not giving up.

Aspiring: to have a strong dream or a goal.

Consequences: the result of your actions; what happens after you do something.

DROP YOUR ANCHOR

Talk it Out



Troy understood that finding pathways to reach his goals would help him to achieve his dreams. Every time we practice a skill, we improve. Remember, the definition of hope is believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams. It means your future can be brighter than your past, and you have the power to help make that happen. Now, let's practice our hope skills. What is one thing you would like to learn to do at camp this week?

This week, I want to _____

THIS IS YOUR GOAL.

Why does this goal matter to you?

It matters to me because _____

THIS IS YOUR "WHY."

When we stay connected to why we want to accomplish a goal, we are more likely to keep doing the hard work that it often takes to reach that goal.

How determined are you to reach your goal? (circle one)

I am **not going to try.**

I am going to try to make it happen.

Let's go. I am ready – **I've got this.**

THIS IS YOUR WILLPOWER.

The more determined we are, the more motivation we will have to keep going when things get tough.

What is one step (no matter how small) that you can take to move toward your goal?

One step I will take toward my goal is to _____

THIS IS YOUR PATHWAY.

This means the way that you will get to your goal.

It's okay if your goal needs to change, that happens!

Remember that hope is supported by others.

This week, we will cheer for each other.

CHART YOUR CREATiViTY

Troy learned character traits, like strength, from his grandparents. As a teenager, he made the choice to be loving and kind while supporting and encouraging others. Think about the character trait or skills that you will need to help navigate life. I am or will be....

Here are a few examples of character traits:

Adventurous

Enthusiastic

Hard-working

Brave

Fair

Helpful

Caring

Flexible

Honest

Creative

Friendly

Imaginative

Curious

Funny

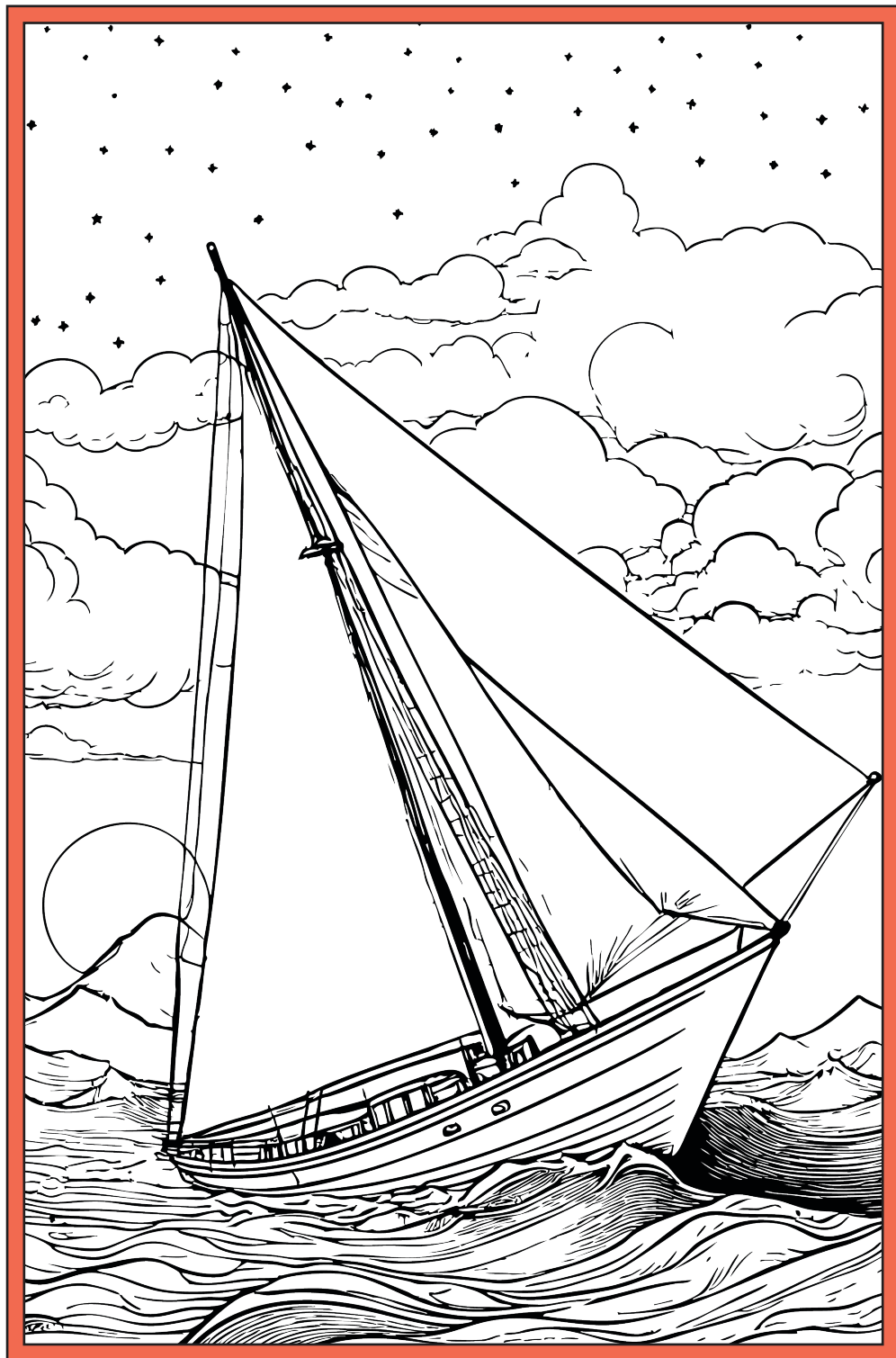
Kind

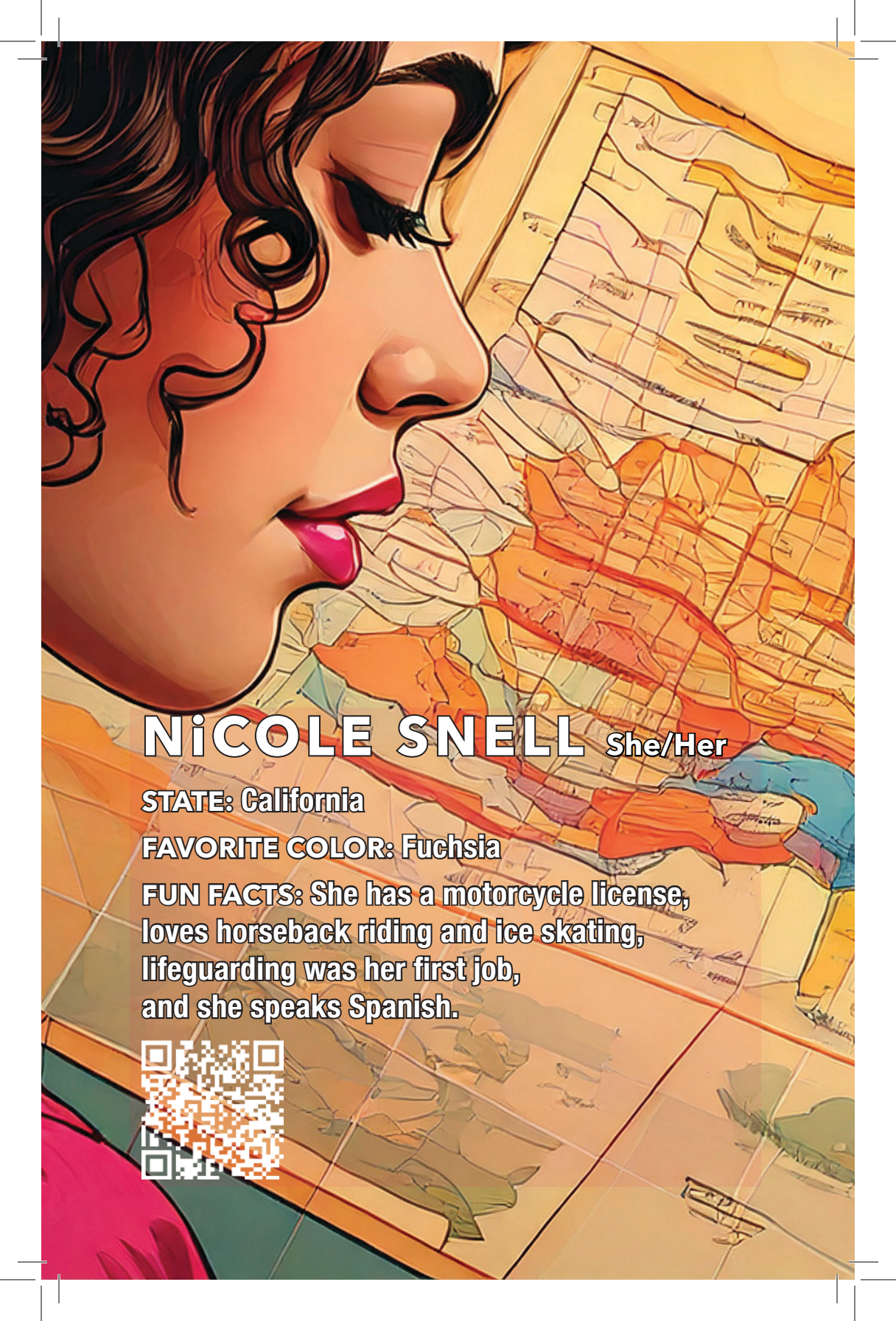
Determined

Generous

Patient

Sails use the power of wind to move a boat forward. In the sails of the boat on the next page, write the character traits you will need to help move you forward. On the other sail, write down one of your goals.





NICOLE SNELL

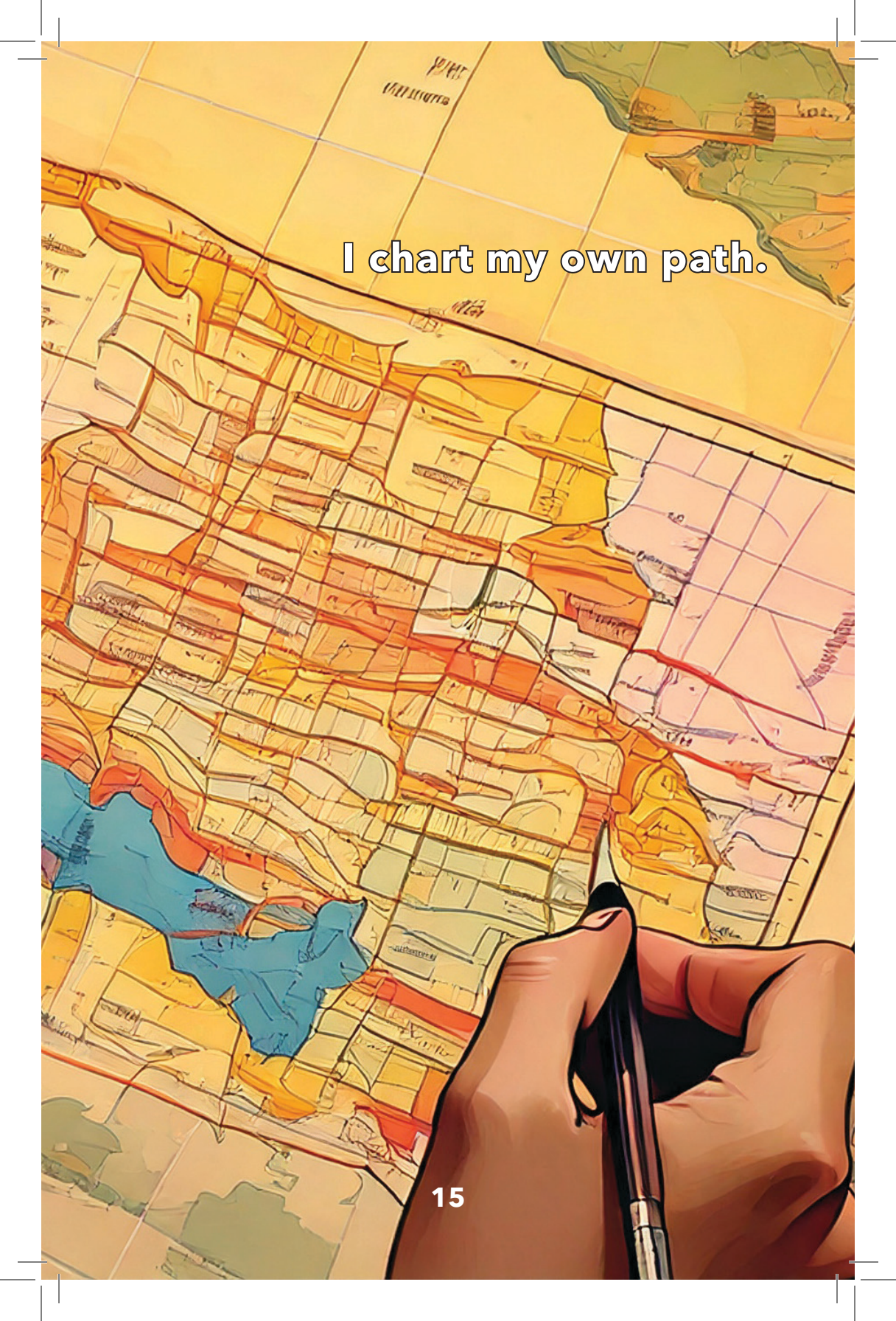
She/Her

STATE: California

FAVORITE COLOR: Fuchsia

FUN FACTS: She has a motorcycle license, loves horseback riding and ice skating, lifeguarding was her first job, and she speaks Spanish.



A hand holding a pen is shown in the bottom right corner, drawing a red line on a stylized, colorful map. The map features a grid of yellow and orange squares, with blue areas representing water and green areas representing land. The text "I chart my own path." is written in white with a black outline across the upper middle of the map. The overall style is artistic and illustrative.

I chart my own path.

When Nicole visited her aunt and uncle in the mountains, it was a **refuge** filled with joy, safety, and encouragement. Her aunt taught her to embrace happiness, explore the outdoors, and allow nature to lift her spirit. When Nicole walked through the forest, she felt **anchored** to nature. She would take in the movement of the trees, the wind on her face, and the smells in the air. Being outside helped her dream as big as the night sky and escape hard times at home, even if only for a little while.

Nicole's home life was far less peaceful than her time in nature. Her parents divorced when she was six years old and being shuffled back and forth between their houses made stability feel impossible. Her half-sister, Michelle, became her lifeline, teaching her to read, ride a bike, and cope with stress through exercise and spending time outdoors. When Nicole's mom remarried, her life got harder. Her stepfather and other half-siblings abused her. She told her mom, but nothing changed, and she was made to feel like it was her fault. Feeling hopeless, Nicole didn't know who else to tell.

Nicole always felt like people put her in a box, like they thought they knew everything about her and where she would go in life. Her dad was Black, her mom was White, and she never fully felt like she belonged anywhere. She faced abuse, **racism**, and abandonment, and she knew that she needed to leave her small town and build a different life for herself.

She worked hard in school and felt proud of what she achieved by herself. She turned to after-school activities and played sports to process what was happening in her family and in her mind. All that focus earned her an academic scholarship to college and her big step toward freedom!

After college, Nicole got a great job in TV production and enjoyed it for a while. When she felt like she wanted to do something to help other people, she switched to **advocacy**. Starting over was scary and sometimes she felt like a failure. It felt like she was at the bottom of a ladder with no idea how to climb it. However, nature anchored her. Determined to push herself, she set out on a long, solo wilderness hike. It was physically and emotionally grueling, but she finished it. And she learned something life-changing: she could do hard things. She didn't have to be the fastest or the best. She just had to keep moving forward on her own path.

Today, Nicole loves her work! She has a company called **Girls Fight Back**, and she teaches self-defense skills and wilderness safety skills. She wants you to anchor yourself in confidence and trust your own problem-solving skills. You are worthy. If one person can't help you, find someone else. You don't need to know everything or wait for the perfect moment to chase your dream. You just have to keep trying, or you might miss out. By steering your own ship, you can **chart** a brighter future.

EXPAND YOUR MIND

Refuge: a safe place to protect you from danger or trouble.

Anchored: something that keeps you feeling safe, strong, and steady when things are tough. Like when boats use an anchor to hold them in one spot without drifting away.

Racism: when someone is treated differently because of the color of their skin, culture, or background.

Advocacy: to make sure everyone's voice is heard, to speak up and support an idea or person.

Chart: to lay out a plan. A picture or map that shows information in a way that is easy to see and understand.

DROP YOUR ANCHOR

Talk it Out

Nicole's goal was to spend time in nature where she felt anchored. She did this by playing outside as a kid, and later as an adult by going on long outdoor adventures. She says,



**“There isn’t going to be one perfect time.
Just do it. Make a plan and adjust as you go.”**

What is one adventure you hope to go on? _____

Nicole's older half-sister taught her so many things about the world. Who is one person you can look up to or ask for help?

Confidence was important to Nicole. It means believing in yourself and knowing you can do something even if things get hard. When was a time that you were confident and believed in yourself? _____

*Don't worry – if you can't think of anything yet,
there will be plenty of time here at camp where
you will believe in yourself and try new things.*

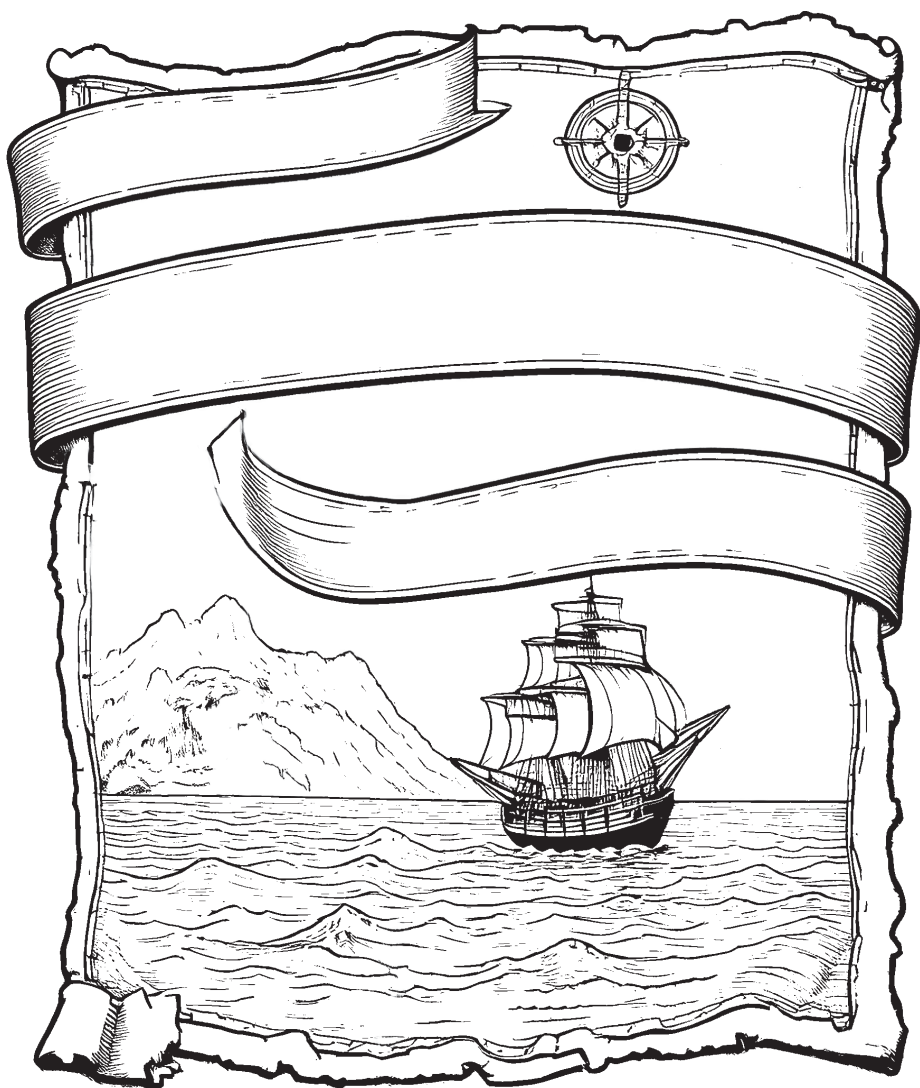
CHART YOUR CREATiViTY

Chart a brighter future by steering your own ship.

"Steering" means to guide or direct towards something.

To chart is to lay out a plan or create a map of where you'd like to go. Like the captain of your own ship, chart your journey.

On the ribbon below, write a goal that you hope to steer towards.

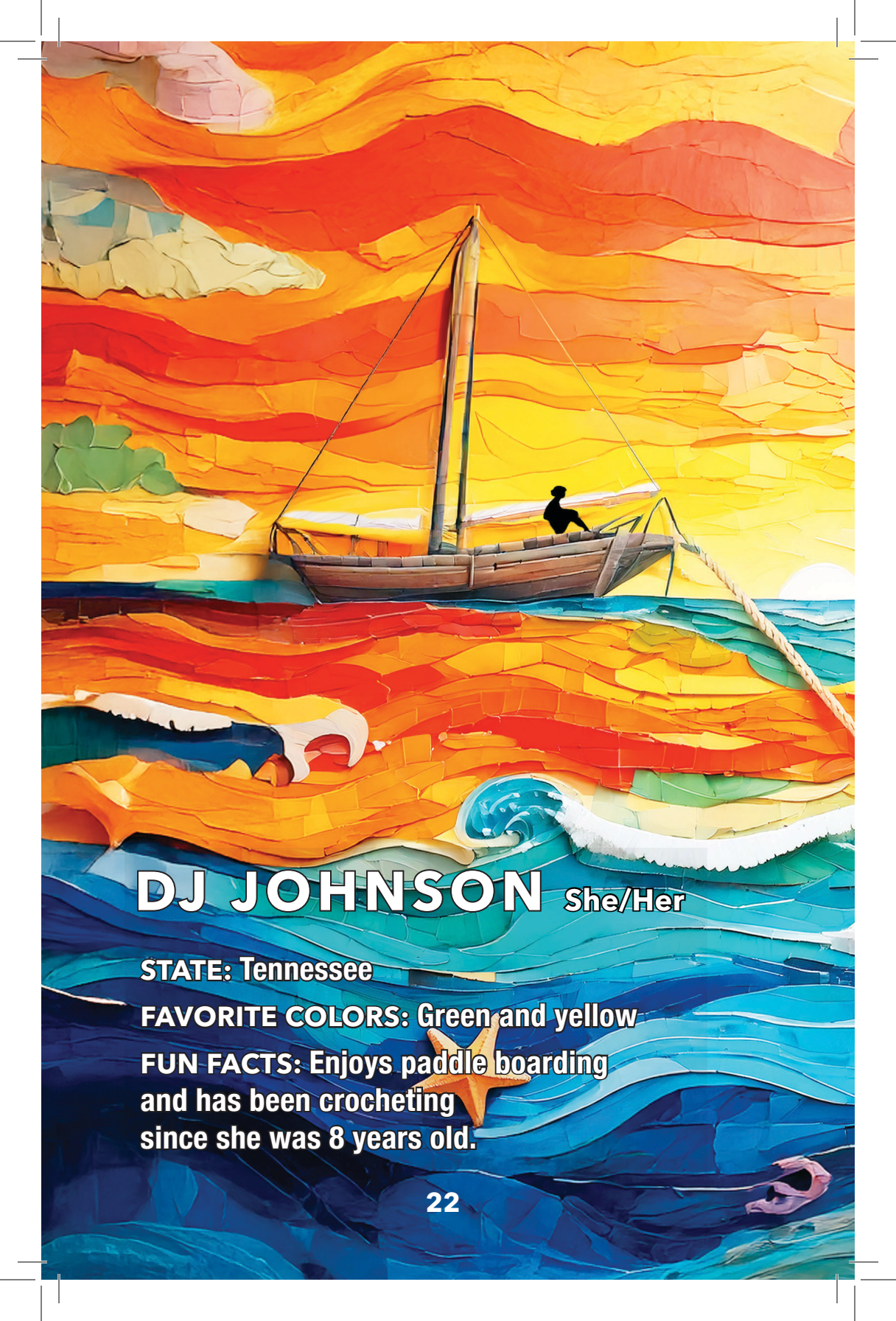


I SPY... AND COLOR



How many do you see on both pages?





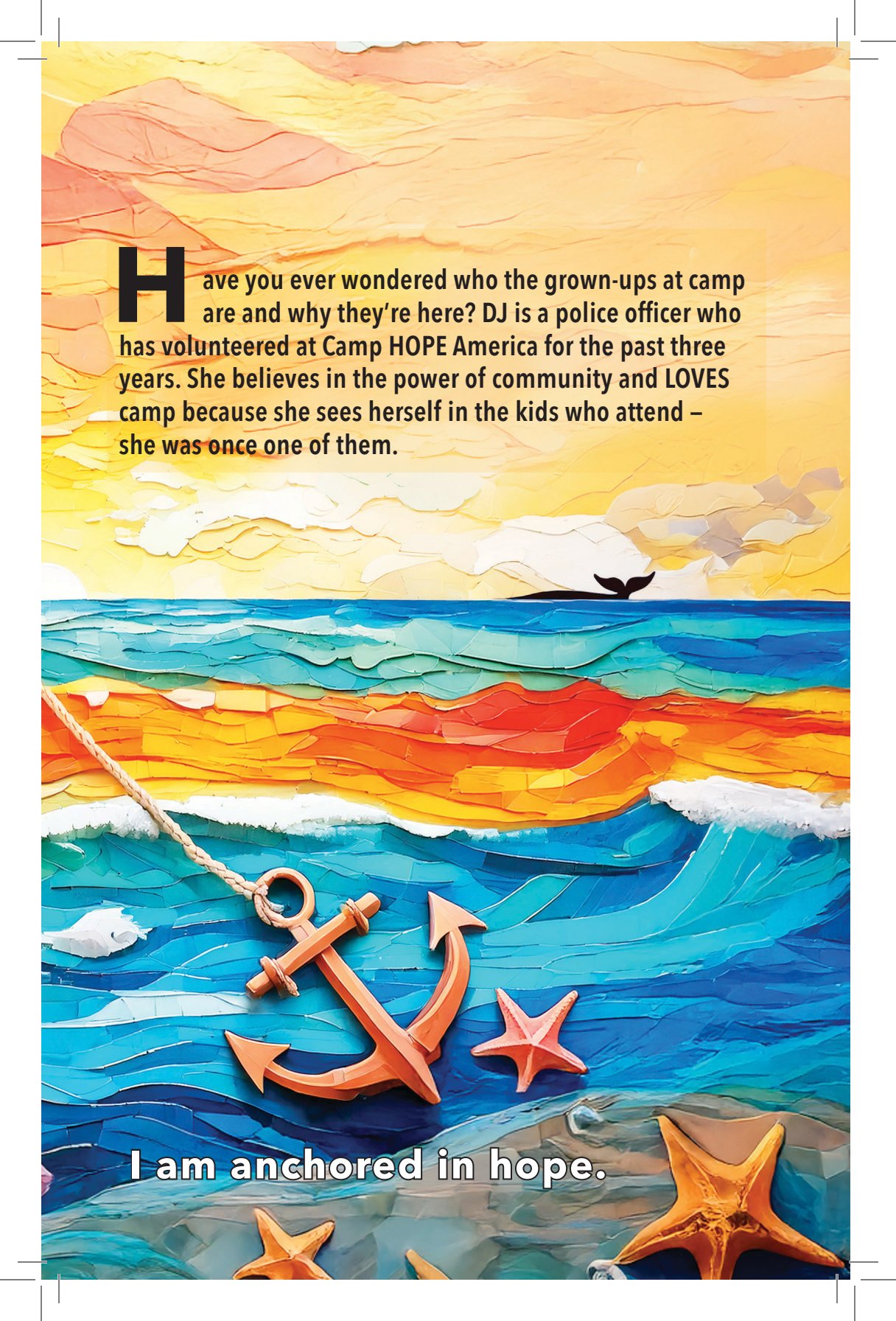
DJ JOHNSON

She/Her

STATE: Tennessee

FAVORITE COLORS: Green and yellow

FUN FACTS: Enjoys paddle boarding
and has been crocheting
since she was 8 years old.



Have you ever wondered who the grown-ups at camp are and why they're here? DJ is a police officer who has volunteered at Camp HOPE America for the past three years. She believes in the power of community and LOVES camp because she sees herself in the kids who attend – she was **once** one of them.

I am anchored in hope.

DJ didn't realize how chaotic her family life was as a child because it was all she knew. She thought it was normal. Her dad was physically and **emotionally abusive** to DJ and her sister and she did not know she could tell someone what was happening at home.

Her dad struggled with **mental health** challenges, and DJ and her sister lived in constant fear. DJ didn't understand abuse at the time and thought her mom was "safe" because there wasn't physical violence between her parents. However, her dad needed professional help to get better.

One morning when DJ was eight, her dad made oatmeal for breakfast. But when she and her sister went to take their first bite, they realized it was full of carrots and onions-yuck! When they didn't eat it, their dad erupted in rage. DJ's mom decided to leave.

DJ's dad made her and her sister choose which parent they would live with. DJ felt responsible for her dad and afraid of what would happen to him if he were all alone. She chose to stay with him and her sister went with their mom. Her dad said she would never see them again, but thankfully, that wasn't true. Eventually, her mom and sister returned home, but things didn't improve, and money was tight.

At school, a kind staff member introduced DJ to horseback riding. She also helped DJ get her first job; providing **mentorship** and love. DJ also had a neighbor who was a former police officer. He noticed that things were difficult and would help by leaving groceries outside their door. One night, after another incident, he helped them get out of their home. After that, another safe and trusted adult allowed DJ to live with her until she graduated from high school.

Through the kindness of these adults, DJ learned that what happened to her was not her fault. It didn't define her. She also learned more about mental health and began to understand her dad's struggles.

DJ once believed that becoming an adult would mean complete control and that life would finally be easy.

But even as she finds new pathways, her past still shows up sometimes. DJ stays anchored through exercise, therapy, and taking time to recharge.

Today, DJ wants to be the safe, trusted adult she once needed. She recently bought her first home and dreams of creating a place for people who need love, safety, and support. As a police officer, DJ now trains new recruits and hopes to join a special investigation unit focused on helping families impacted by abuse.

DJ wants you to know that hope is a real anchor. Believing in yourself and in the possibility of better days builds the resilience you need to weather life's storms.

EXPAND YOUR MIND

Emotional Abuse: being put down, ignored, or made to feel bad. Not all abuse is physical; it can also be emotional or verbal. Being abused is never your fault.

Mental Health: a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It can impact how you think, feel, and act.

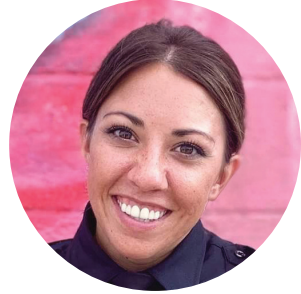
Mentorship: guidance, advice, and support given by a safe and trusted adult, a mentor.

DROP YOUR ANCHOR

Talk it Out

When DJ was little, she had a neighbor who was blind. He would come over and play with them. He would always say,

“We must endeavor to persevere.”



She now knows this means you must try your best to keep going – she thinks of his words often.

Even when things are hard, what keeps you going? _____

You are resilient, strong, and determined – you are worth it.

DJ had a community of people who helped look out for her – who is in your community? _____

DJ had a goal of making a safe space and owning her own home. She succeeded – and did this by pursuing a career and saving money. It was hard work. Share a time you had to work hard to reach your goal. Maybe it was finding a lost shoe, working on an art project, or practicing a sport. What did you learn?

P.S. Don't forget, you always have your Camp HOPE America community cheering you on!

CHART YOUR CREATiViTY

Y B G L Y C C K G A
P E A C F O G O A L
A L N C O M U L G C
T i C W N M i W F X
H E H F W U F M U L
W F O B W N Y Y T W
A U R i U i E S U B
Y N Z X C T L E R V
A H O P E Y F L E B
O U D R E A M F K B

COMMUNITY

MYSELF

DREAM

PATHWAY

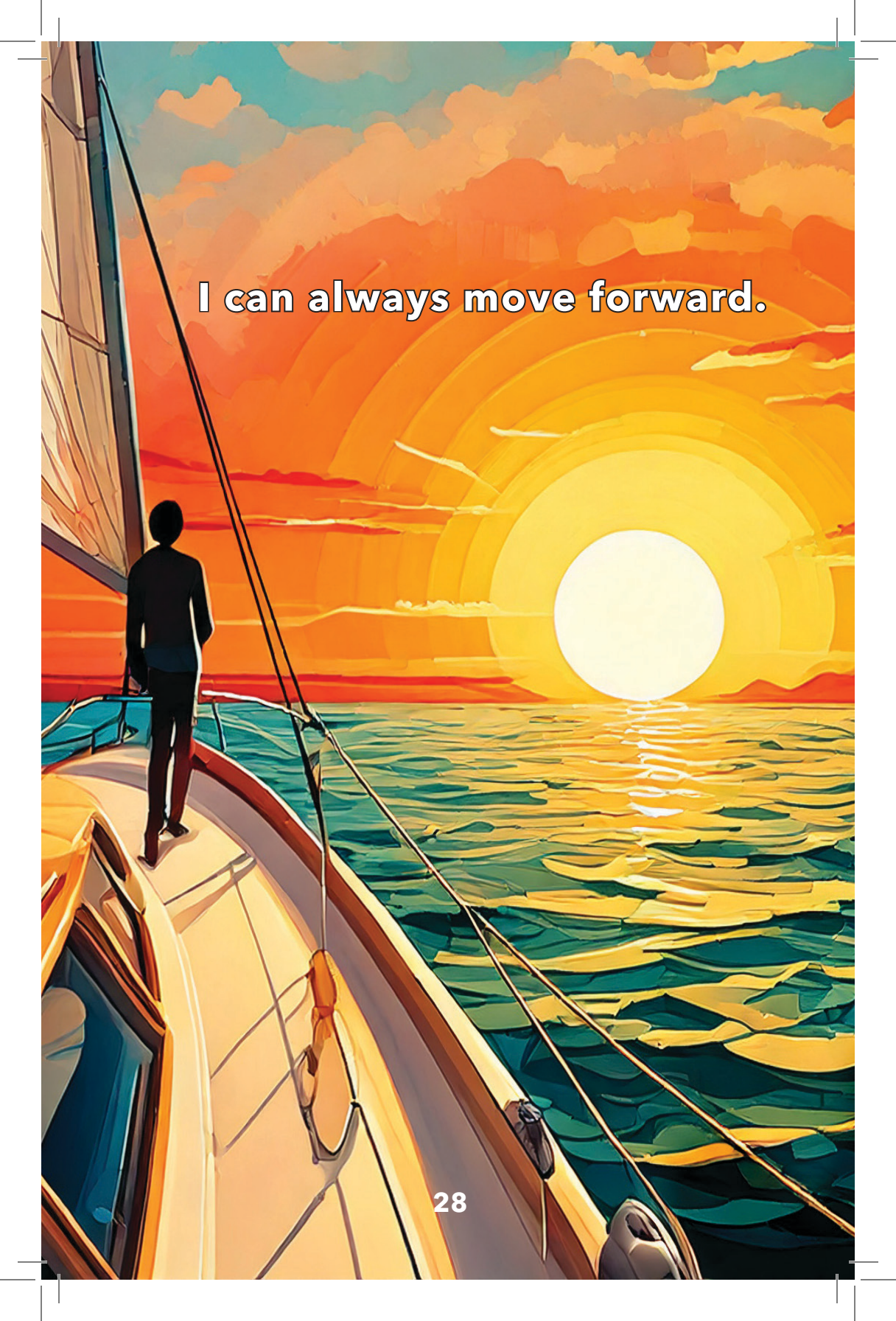
BELIEF

HOPE

FUTURE

ANCHOR

GOAL

A stylized illustration of a person standing on the deck of a boat, looking out at a vibrant sunset. The sun is a large, bright yellow circle on the horizon, with a rainbow arching over it. The sky is filled with orange and yellow clouds, and the water is a mix of blue and yellow. The boat's deck and railing are visible in the foreground.

I can always move forward.

CARLIN iSLES He/Him

STATE: Ohio

FAVORITE COLOR: Black

FUN FACTS: Likes to sing,
enjoys studying the science of sprinting,
and is a big movie guy.



ON YOUR MARK... GET SET... Carlin anchored himself into the starting blocks – waiting, steady, ready. GO! When the whistle blew, he exploded onto the track and ran for his life. All he could think about was running fast, far, and leaving his troubles behind.

When Carlin was 6 years old, he was playing in the yard with his twin sister when police cars rolled up to their apartment. Officers stormed inside, brought their mom out in handcuffs, and placed her in the back of the patrol car. Carlin remembers breaking free from the adults holding him and his sister, sprinting to the car, and handing his mom a flower he picked from the grass. The car drove away – and that was the last time he ever saw her.

Before that day, Carlin and his family had drifted from shelter to shelter, sometimes sleeping in their car – always bouncing around, often feeling hopeless. Foster care didn't make things better. He and his sister were beaten, forced to fight each other, and even fed dog food. This should never happen in foster care; it should be a safe place for kids. The future felt so **bleak** – what was there to look forward to? Carlin prayed and dreamed of something better. Soon after, he and his sister were adopted by loving parents who already had two children. Maybe this was the safe **harbor** he had been waiting for. They showed him that hope is something everyone needs.

While his home life improved, school was not easy for Carlin, especially with reading. He dreamed of being an athlete and needed to do well in school. Sports could be a path to a better life for him. One day, his neighbor noticed that he was a fast runner and encouraged his adoptive dad to put him in sports. Immediately, Carlin made a personal commitment to be the best that he could be. He worked hard in school and studied the bio-mechanics (the science of movement) of athletes.

Carlin was popular in high school and he stayed out of trouble. He knew that he needed to be responsible for his own life, so he anchored himself in his speed, discipline, and determination. Protecting his gift was the only way forward.

After he graduated, Carlin dreamed of going to the Olympics. He met someone who believed in him who helped him get into a special training program for athletes preparing for the Olympics. Even though he had little money, worked multiple jobs, and spent his nights couch-surfing, he jumped at every opportunity, found more mentors, and practiced relentlessly. He discovered the sport, rugby, along the way.

Carlin became the fastest rugby player in the world, he made the Olympics! He starred in ads for Nike and Red Bull, and inspired people everywhere with his willpower. Since he knew sports weren't enough for lifetime success, he went back to school and earned two degrees in just two years. Carlin anchors himself in the knowledge that **perseverance** leads to success. His adoptive mom once told him, "Don't be a people pleaser – people will always find a reason to dismiss you."

He wants you to know that you don't need to fit in to be okay. Your gifts and dreams make you unique. You are one of a kind. Love yourself. Be **authentic**. Ignore negative voices inside your head or from other people. Protect your dreams and keep moving. And be brave enough to ask for help.

Today, Carlin works at a District Attorney's Office in Ohio. He continues learning, improving, and dreaming big. Maybe he'll open a sports performance gym. Maybe he'll take another shot at the Olympics. Maybe he'll write a book. Who knows? What he does know is that you need hopes and dreams to overcome doubt in your mind. Find your way! There is always a pathway forward; you must keep looking.

EXPAND YOUR MiND

Bleak: empty, gloomy, not cheerful, or without hope.

Does anyone remember what hope means?

Harbor: a safe and protected spot (often used for boats where they can dock and anchor).

Perseverance: to keep trying and not give up if it is hard.

Authentic: to be real, genuine, or true.

DROP YOUR ANCHOR

Talk it Out

Carlin's goal was to be the best. How did he do this? He listened and learned from others, he studied, he found others who believed in him, and he stayed focused. What kind of hard work do you need to do to reach your goals?



Remember what is important to you and keep it as a guide. Carlin believes that if you love yourself and know your worth, you will always be on the right path. He says,

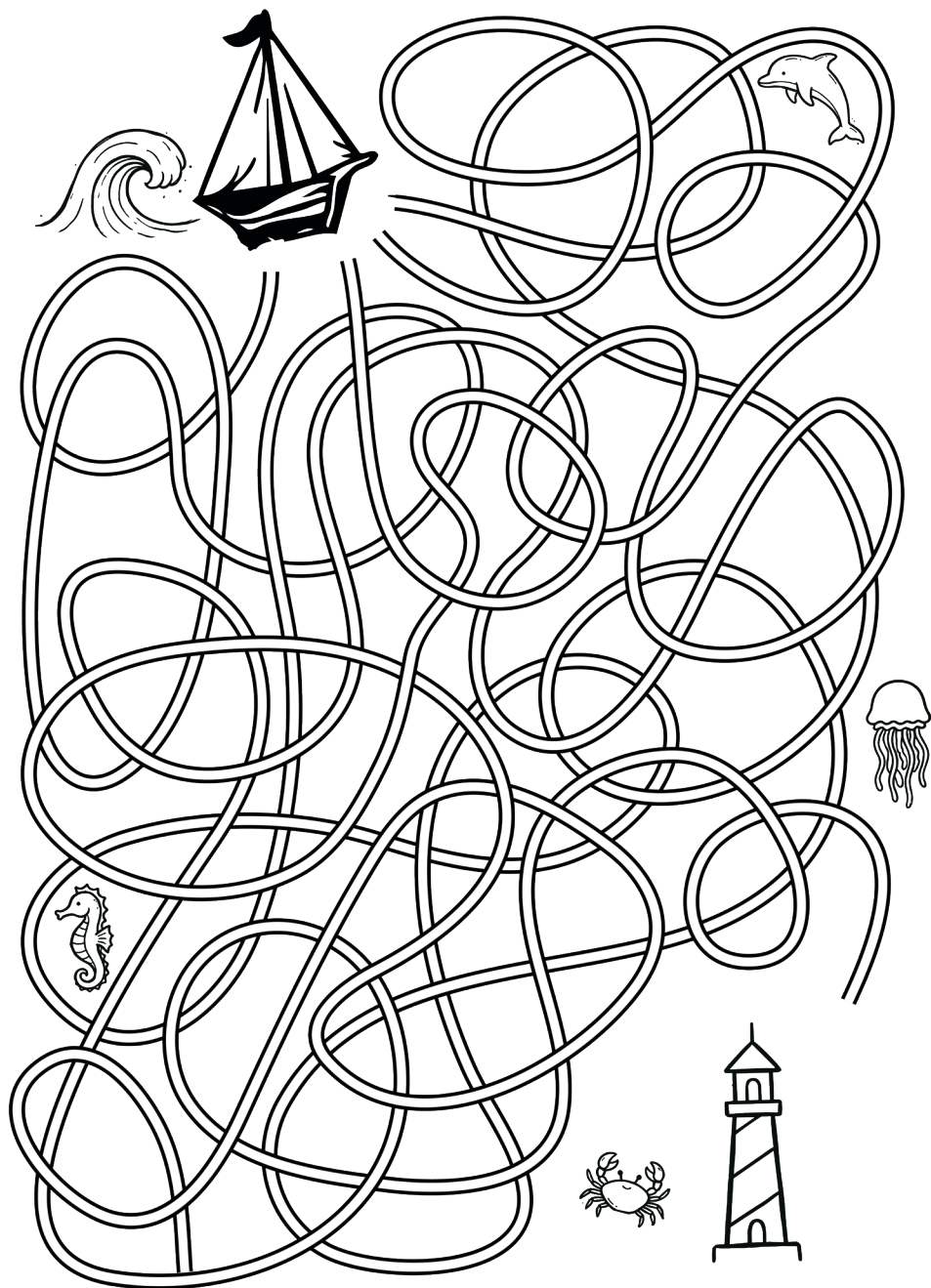
**“When the sun comes out again,
you’ll be right where you need to be.”**

Share a time you had a challenge and had to find a pathway.

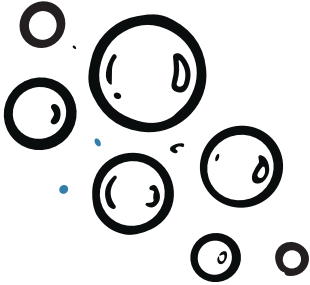
Carlin's life has been an adventure. Carlin kept believing in himself and others believed in his dreams. He says communication is the key. This is not always easy. When we feel stressed – what are some healthy ways we can relieve stress? Be creative! _____

CHART YOUR CREATiViTY

Help the boat reach the lighthouse.



MINDFULNESS IDEAS

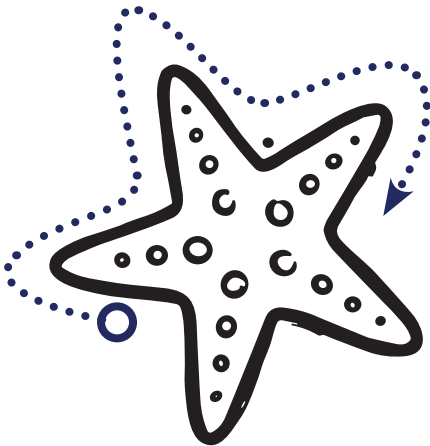


BLOW BUBBLES

Imagine that you are blowing bubbles – blow the biggest bubble you can!

NAME THREE THINGS

1. Name something you can **see**.
2. Name something you can **hear**.
3. Name something you can **feel**.



HAND BREATHING

Extend one hand like a starfish, and with the index finger of your other hand, trace the outline of each finger and thumb. Inhale as you move up and exhale as you move down.

GOODNIGHT SONG

The sun's gone down, it's time to go
Tomorrow will be great, I know
Let's celebrate and give great thanks
For all that we have done today

Tonight, I'm safe, I am at peace
And look at all these friends surrounding me
Let's go to sleep and dream sweet dreams
Tomorrow, hope will rise again!

The sun's gone down, it's time to go
Tomorrow will be great, I know
Let's celebrate and give great thanks
For all that we have done today

Tonight, I'm safe, I am at peace
And look at all these friends surrounding me
Let's go to sleep and dream sweet dreams
Tomorrow, hope will rise again!
Tomorrow, hope will rise again!





Anchored in Hope High Adventure Curriculum © Camp HOPE America

Camp HOPE America is a program of

ALLIANCE for
HOPE
INTERNATIONAL