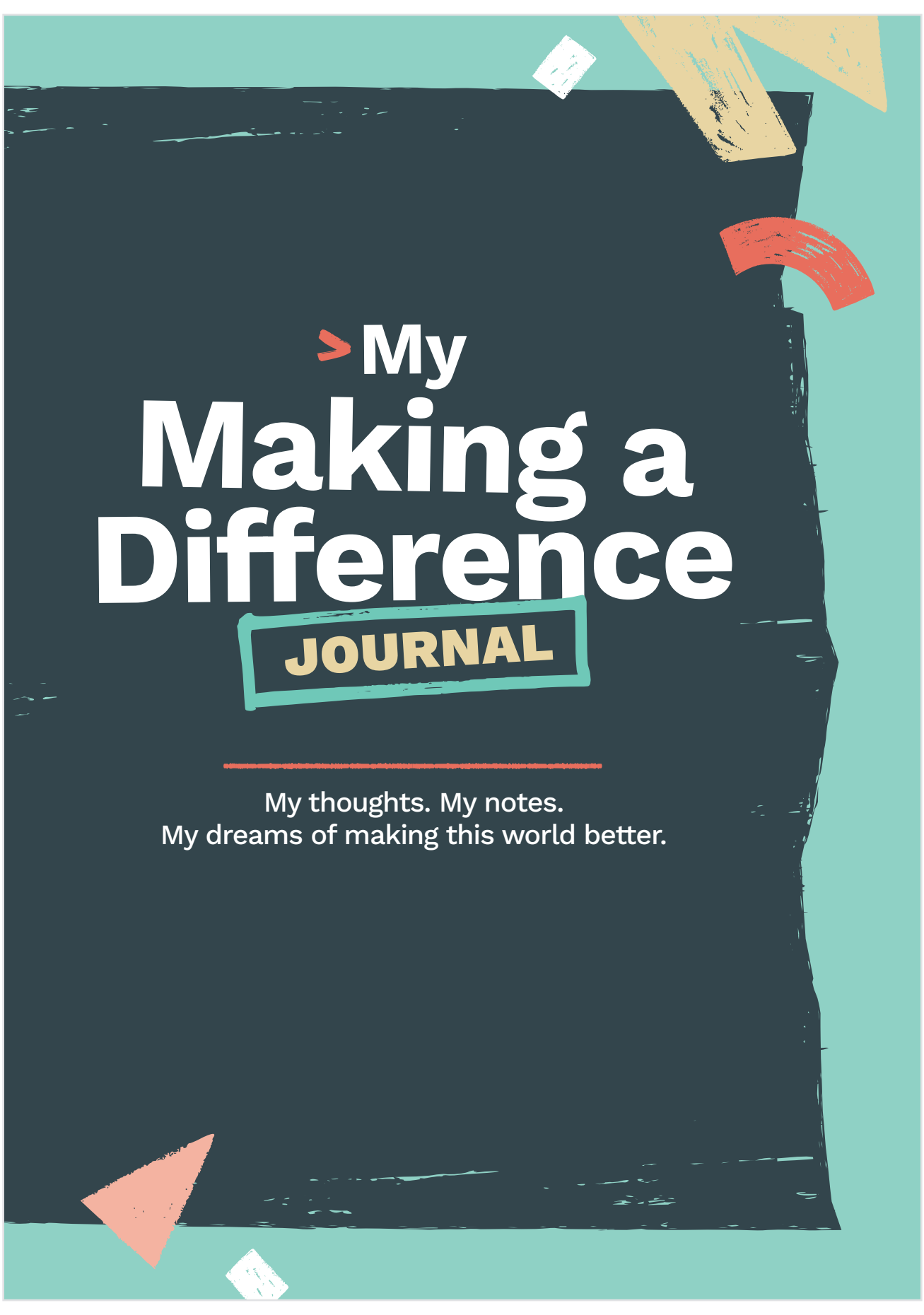




> My Making a Difference JOURNAL

My thoughts. My notes.
My dreams of making this world better.



ISTEP

**Iowa Students Together
Empowering Peers**

ISTEP got its start by helping Iowa youth understand the dangers of tobacco and nicotine. But now we're doing even more to address common issues today's youth are facing, like mental health matters, substance use, bullying and more. It's how we're helping create healthier young adults and communities in our state.

Together, we're so much better.

Year:

Life **in** Progress

This journal is your place to jot down your feelings, hopes, dreams and even frustrations. So you can process what's happening in your life now — and then one day look back to reminisce about the person you used to be.

All About Me

Name/nicknames: _____

Grade: _____

Favorite song: _____

Favorite food: _____

Favorite place: _____

More About Me



How I'm making a difference in the world:

How I inspire others:

Three words that describe me:

1.

2.

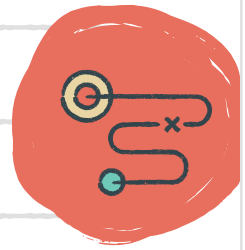
3.

The people I can count on:

Something that makes me happy: _____

Something I'm good at: _____

Something I'm learning: _____



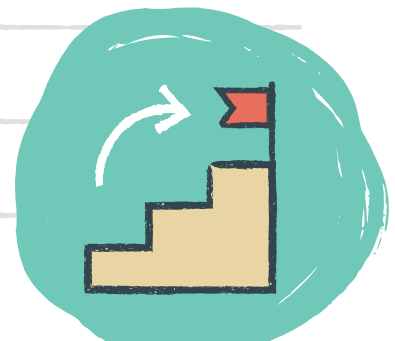
Something that makes me laugh: _____

Something that's hard/makes me sad: _____

A goal I have: _____



Where I see myself in 5 years/10 years: _____



Getting rest.

**Making a
difference.**

**Putting down
the electronics.**

Drinking water.

Breathing fresh air.



**Putting my mental
health first.**

**Surrounding myself with
people who lift me up.**

**Fueling with
healthy food.**

**Saying no to
nicotine (and other
gross substances).**

Moving my body.



No one's perfect.

Mistakes are ok.

It's ok to let things go.

It's ok to say "no."

Believe in yourself. Your friends do.

Small steps lead to powerful changes.

No matter your pace, you WILL get there.

You're allowed to fail. It's all part of learning.

**Your mental health is as important
as your physical health.**

Questions to Connect with Someone New

- ▶ What song are you listening to on repeat right now?
- ▶ What are your favorite bands?
- ▶ What's your favorite movie?
- ▶ What's something you're excited about this year?
- ▶ What's your favorite comfort food?
- ▶ If you could be any animal, what and why?
- ▶ If you could go anywhere, where and why?
- ▶ What helps you when you're stressed?
- ▶ What's your favorite memory of being younger?
- ▶ Where's your favorite place?
- ▶ What's your perfect day?
- ▶ How do you make a difference in the world?
- ▶ Why do others look up to you?



What Matters Most to You?

Circle your top three and then write why.

Kindness

Loyalty

Creativity

Humor

Growth

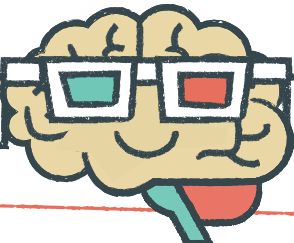
Courage

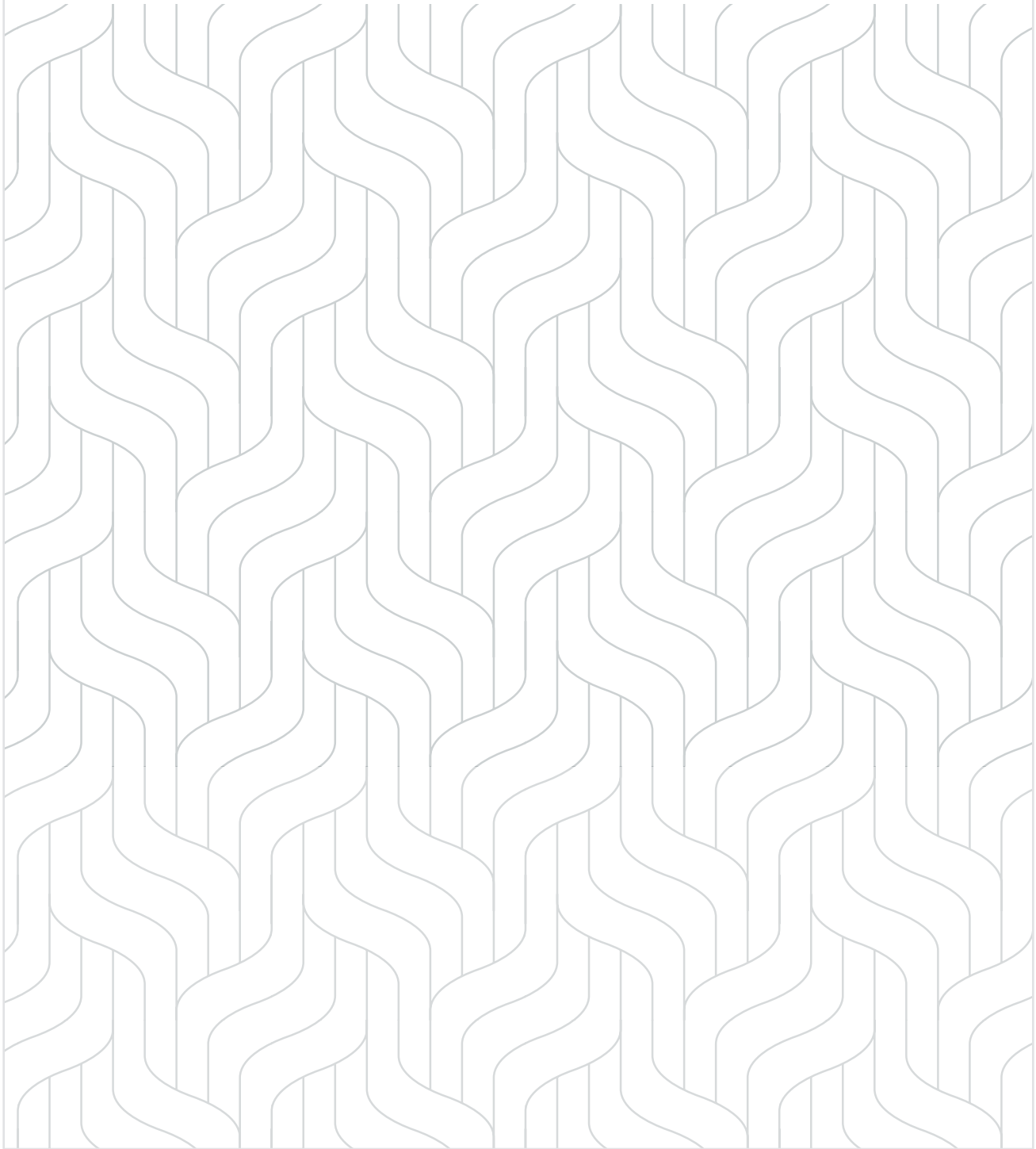
Honesty

Respect

Helpfulness

BRAIN BREAK





GOOD THINGS ▶ Tracker

You're one amazing human!

Check a box every time you:

Help someone

Try something hard

Show kindness

Take care of yourself

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Make someone laugh

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Empower your peers

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Show someone compassion

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Yearly Goals

You

Can

Do it!

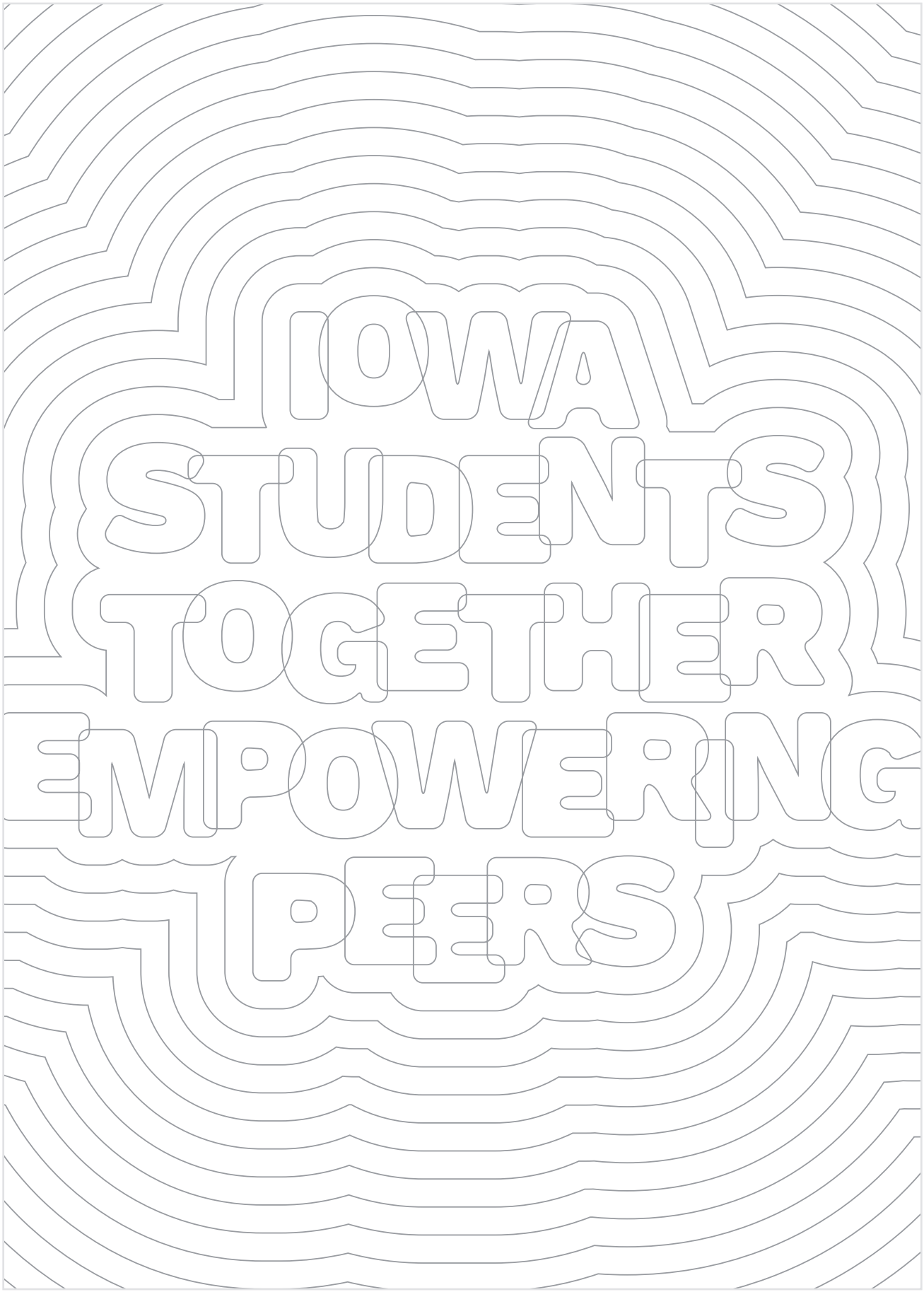
Personal:

Family:

Friendships:

School:

Health:



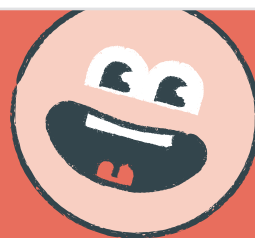
IOWA
STUDENTS
TOGETHER
EMPOWERING
PEERS

I'm Awesome. I Know It. This Page Is Gonna Show It.

These are some moments I'm super proud of this year:



Compliment someone



Sit with someone new

**Say "hi!"
when you pass
someone
in the hall**

**Write your
parent a quick
"love ya" note**

▶ **Make Someone**
SMILE

**Here are some ways you can
brighten someone's day:**



Help a classmate

**Do something
kind without
being asked**

Thank a teacher or adult

Help a family member



So... That Didn't Go as Planned

**Sometimes life doesn't go exactly how you want.
But in the end, it can make you stronger...and wiser.**

Something that didn't go like I wanted it to this year:

> What I learned from it and will try next time:

Here's a mistake I made that affected someone else:

> What I learned from it and will try next time:

One time I really procrastinated:

> What I learned from it and will try next time:



Stressed Out?

Breathe In These Tips

Pause.

Take deep breaths.

Step back and reflect.

Ask for help.

I give myself permission to:

- ▶ Rest
- ▶ Make mistakes
- ▶ Ask for help
- ▶ Start over
- ▶ Be sad
- ▶ Treat myself
- ▶ Set something aside and deal with it when I have the energy

REMINDER:

**You can't control everything.
And that's ok.**

**These are the
people who make
my life better:**



**Here's a super
special someone
who's made
a difference in my
life and how:**



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And that's ok.**

Have You Ever Felt Really Overwhelmed?

Next time, try this mindfulness technique that uses your five senses to help calm your thoughts.

5 First, identify 5 things **you can see.**

4 Next, 4 things **you can feel.**

3 Now, 3 things **you can hear.**

2 Then, 2 things **you can smell.**

1 And finally, 1 thing **you can taste.**



This exercise helps tell your nervous system that you're safe and is designed to help relieve anxiety.

Remember: You're amazing, and you can do hard things.

Worried About Someone?

If you or someone you know is dealing with depression or suicidal thoughts:

- ▶ Don't ignore it.
- ▶ Talk to them and listen.
- ▶ Let them know you're here for them.
- ▶ Ask an adult for help.

Always Remember to ASK



Acknowledge

Support

Keep in Touch

Your Life Iowa Is Here for You, 24/7

You can always reach out to Your Life Iowa for confidential help with anything you're facing.

Chat YourLifelowa.org

Call (855) 581-8111

Text (855) 895-8398



Need Help Quitting Vaping or Other Tobacco Products?

Join the thousands of other teens taking their lives back with free, confidential support from My Life, My Quit™.

MY LIFE[★]MY QUIT™

Text “Start My Quit” to **36072** for instant support.

Chat with a quit coach at mylifemyquit.com.

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

If you're ever feeling depressed or experiencing suicidal thoughts, 988 is another way to connect with someone who can help.

Text Call or text **988**

Chat 988lifeline.org





The Best Things in Life are Free

Things that make me smile:

Things that inspire me:

Things that help me calm down:

Things I want to accomplish someday:

Ways I am true to myself:

Ways I'm there for others:

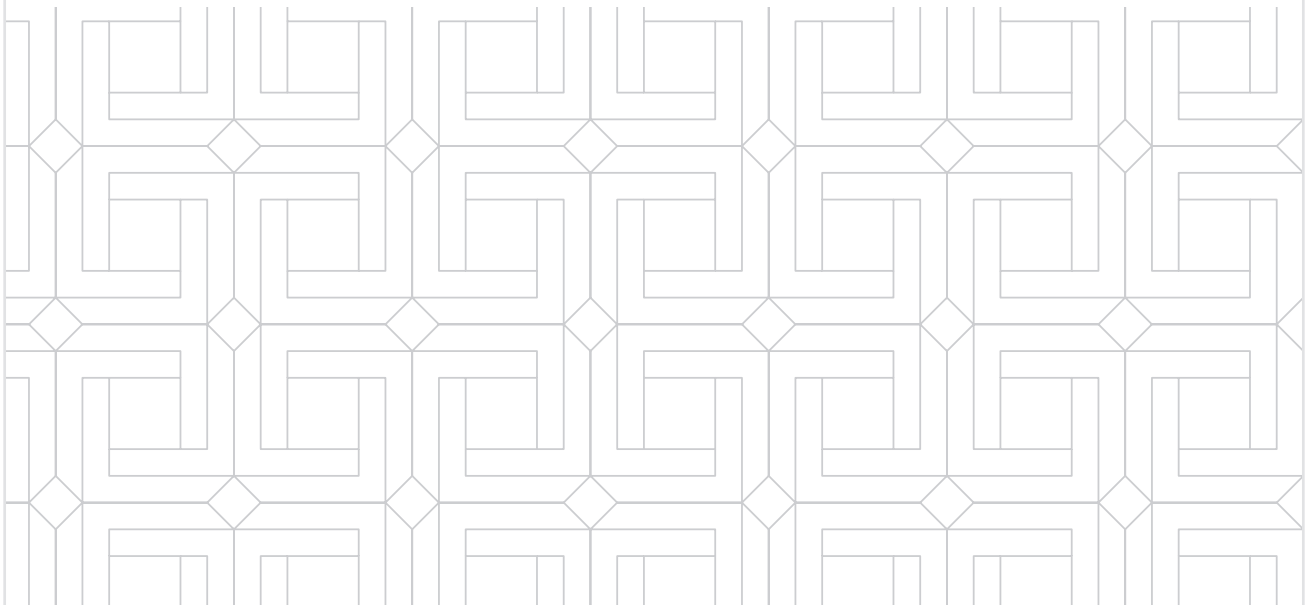
Ways I help others live their best life:

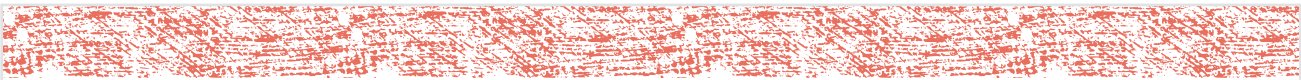


Standing Up for Myself — and Others

Bullying is never okay. That's why it's important to safely intervene when someone is being bullied or get help from a trusted adult.

Here's how I'll stand up against bullying:



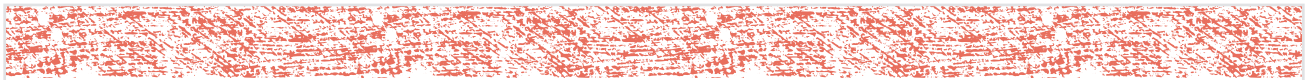


Reflections About This Year

I learned: _____

I helped: _____

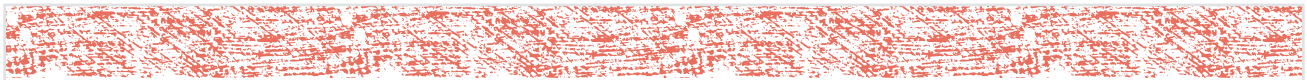
I grew by: _____



I hung out most with: _____

I showed courage when I: _____

I helped someone by: _____



I kept going even when: _____

My biggest accomplishment was: _____

My favorite memory was: _____

Final thought:

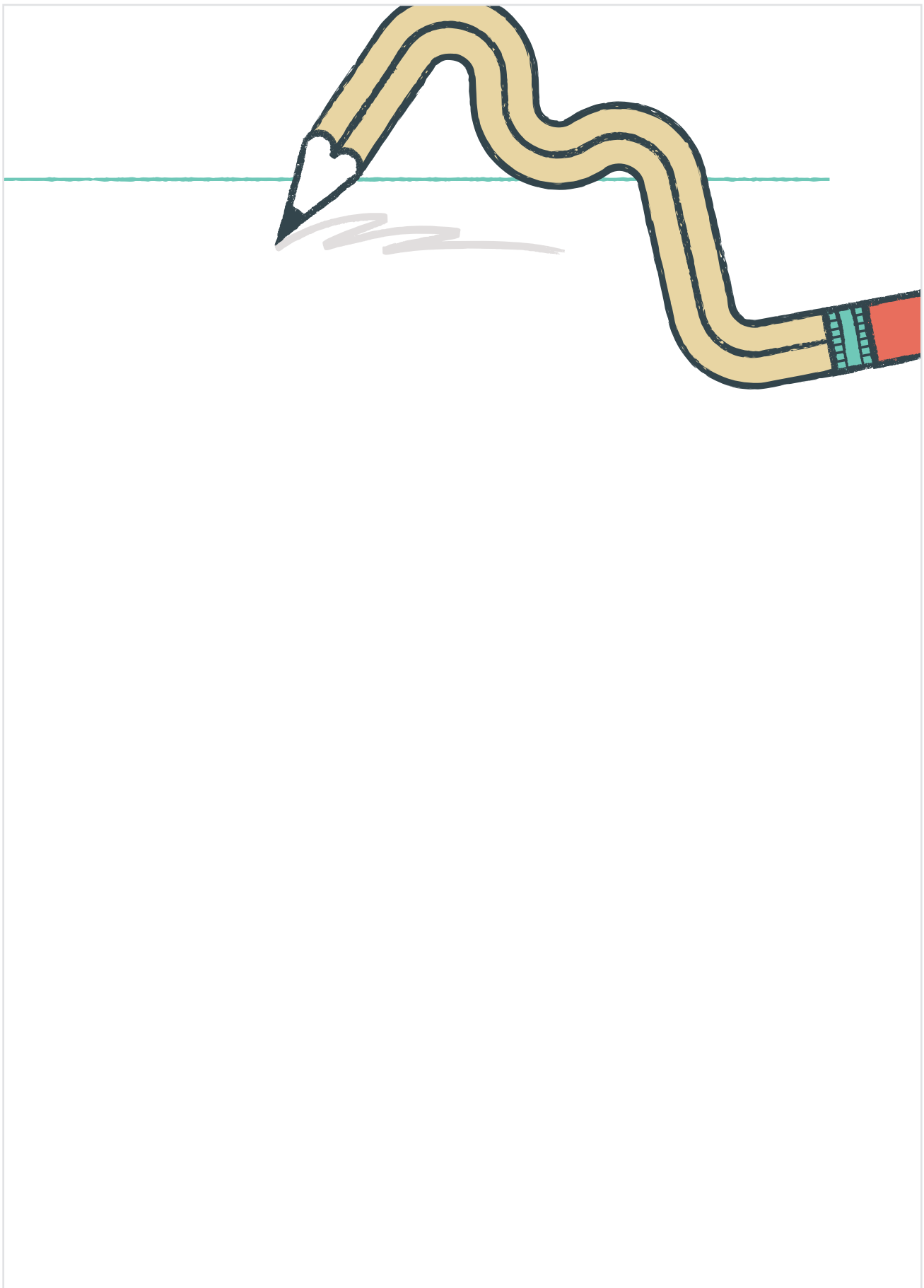
Empowered Youth Empower Youth

Now get out there and make a difference!



Daily Doodles







Notes



IOWA[™]

Department of Health
and Human Services

ISTEP

Iowa Students Together
Empowering Peers

06/2026