

Students vie for Poetry Out Loud state championship, March 9

Local News

Posted by:

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Olympia--With lines honed and many hours of rehearsing under their belts, 13 Washington high school students will compete in the state finals for Poetry Out Loud, on Saturday, March 9. The poetry recitation contest, sponsored by the Washington State Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, will take place at Tacoma's Theatre on the Square, 901 Broadway, from 1 to 5 p.m. The winner advances to the national finals in Washington, D.C., April 29 - 30.

"It's wonderful to see what these students have achieved to make it to the state finals," said Arts Commission Executive Director, Kris Tucker. "Memorizing poetry is a challenge made more difficult by preparing to recite on stage in front of a live audience. I encourage everyone to come watch this free event, and promise an inspiring day."

In addition to a trip to Washington, D.C., the winner of the state final will receive \$200, and his or her school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The second place finalist will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The state finals follow regional competitions held over the past few months through partnerships with Eastern Washington University, Allied Arts of Yakima Valley, Educational Service District 112 in Southwest Washington and Educational Service District 189 in Northwest Washington. The Washington State Arts Commission hosted the Puget Sound regional competitions. The regional winners who will be competing at the state final are:

Viva Becker from Sehome High School, Bellingham
Garnet Burk from Annie Wright Schools, Tacoma
Ben Caldwell from Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, Vancouver
Anup Chamrajnagar from Stadium High School, Tacoma
Mennah El-Gammal from Northshore Junior High School, Northshore
Ashlyn Gibbs from Naches Valley High School, Naches
Emily Greenough from Eisenhower High School, Yakima
Annabeth Guzman from Delta High School, Richland
Margot Lewis from Bellingham High School, Bellingham
Meghan Mulcahy from Olympia High School, Olympia
Abigail Ridgeway from Cedar Tree Classical Christian School, Ridgefield
Langston Ward from Mead High School, Spokane
Tom Zbyszewski from Liberty Bell High School, Winthrop

More than 350,000 students across the country are participating in Poetry Out Loud this year as part of a national arts education program that encourages students to learn about acclaimed works of poetry. Washington State has been represented at the annual competition for the past seven years.

A total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends will be awarded nationally this year, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the National Champion.

In addition to the student recitations, the state final event will include a brief appearance by Washington State Poet Laureate Kathleen Flenniken as well as Sam Green, the state's inaugural Poet Laureate, 2008-2010.

Visit www.poetryoutloud.org for more information on this national program or visit www.arts.wa.gov to learn more about the state competition.

Established in 1961, the Washington State Arts Commission collaborates with artists and arts organizations statewide to conserve, promote and develop artistic resources. For more about the Arts Commission, visit www.arts.wa.gov