



# Edwardsville High Teens Win Poetry Recitation Contest

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Both Will Represent the Region at the State Competition in March

ALTON, IL – (March 7, 2012) Jacoby Arts Center hosted the fifth annual regional Poetry Out Loud contest on Saturday, February 11 at Lincoln Middle School in Edwardsville. Five students from Alton and Edwardsville High competed.

Zachary Rimkus of Edwardsville High School took top and Ryan Serfas, also from Edwardsville High School, placed second in the regional competition. Rimkus and Serfas will represent the region at the state competition in March.

Each student competing recited two different poems of which they had chosen from an approved list of poetry classics. For round one, Rimkus performed I Am by John Clare; Serfas performed Ballad of Birmingham by Dudley Randall. In round two, Rimkus' poem selection was Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll and Serfas performed The Tyger by William Blake.

Other students competing were Kelsey Booth, Jordan Broyles, and Julianna Richie from Alton High School.

At the end of the event, Jacoby Arts Center's Executive Director Melissa Mustain presented the regional winner and runner-up with award certificates and their cash prizes. The winner and runner-up's school, Edwardsville High School, also received a cash prize for poetry and literature materials for their classrooms or school library.

Serving as judges for the regional contest were Dennis Grubaugh, city editor of The Telegraph and Mike Montgomery, host/producer of Matinee Madness at Alton's

WBGZ, who is also a retired print media and mass communications professional and educator. Also serving as judges were Liz Burns, Assistant Director, Reid Memorial Library at Lewis and Clark Community College; and Geoff Schmidt, Associate Professor of English at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Poetry Out Loud is a national program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation that encourages youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Illinois' state-level championship takes place in Springfield on March 29. Each winner at the state level will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington to compete for the national championship. The state winner's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. A runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. Additionally, a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends will be awarded to the winners at the National Finals. The National Finals will be held in Washington, D.C., in April.

For more information about the JAC's regional Poetry Out Loud event or to inquire about participating in next year's contest, contact Mustain at 618-462-5222 or [melissa.mustain@jacobyartscenter.org](mailto:melissa.mustain@jacobyartscenter.org). The contest is open to all high school students enrolled in public, private, and home schools. Further details regarding the Poetry Out Loud program are also available online: [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

Jacoby Arts Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster the artistic development and economic success of artists, and to expand accessibility to the arts through programs that promote education, participation and exploration. For more information about the Center, visit [www.jacobyartscenter.org](http://www.jacobyartscenter.org) or call 618-462-5222.