



Edwardsville Student to Represent Region at State Poetry Recitation

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Jacoby Arts Center hosted the sixth annual regional Poetry Out Loud contest on Saturday, February 2 in the auditorium at Alton High School in Alton. Eight students from Alton High, Edwardsville High, and Jersey High competed.

Connor Ashlock of Jersey Community High School took top honors and Emily Swanson of Edwardsville High School placed second in the regional competition. Due to other commitments, Ashlock is unable to participate at the state contest of Poetry Out Loud; therefore Swanson will be the region's sole representative 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, Ashlock performed A Psalm of Life by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; Swanson performed Annabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe. In round two, Ashlock's poem selection was The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus and Swanson performed Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll.

Other students competing were Anissa Reinoso and Elixxa Warner of Alton High School; Nicole Doornink and Ryan Serfas of Edwardsville High School; and Kari Jo Alexander and Taylor Lott from Jersey High.

At the end of the event, the regional winner and runner-up with award certificates and their cash prizes. The winner and runner-up's schools, Jersey Community High and 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 Dr. Geoff Schmidt, a member of the English

faculty at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, along with Liz Burns. Burns is the Assistant Director of Reid Memorial Library at Lewis and Clark Community College.

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 at the Hoogland Center for the Arts in Springfield on the afternoon of Friday, March 8. 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 Crockett at 618-462-5222 or 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.



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. Jacoby Arts Center receives support from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.