

Edwardsville High Teens Win Regional Poetry Out Loud Recitation Competition

February 14 2011 8:45 AM

ALTON, IL – (February 12, 2011) The Jacoby Arts Center hosted the fourth annual regional Poetry Out Loud contest on Saturday, February 5 at Lincoln Middle School in Edwardsville. Nine students from Alton High, Edwardsville High, Jersey High, and Beck Area Career Center of Red Bud competed.

Ryan Harrison of Edwardsville High School took top honors, as he had done previously in 2009. Bailey Cote, also from Edwardsville High School, placed second in the regional competition. Harrison and Cote 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, Harrison performed Dog by Lawrence Ferlinghetti; Cote performed Scary Movies by Kim Addonizio. In round two, Harrison's poem selection was On Pickiness by Rodney Jones and Cote performed Silence by Thomas Hood. Other students competing were Kayla Silvey of Edwardsville High School; Tina Robinson from Beck Area Career Center in Red Bud; Connor Henderson, Alexandria Endsley, and Jordan Broyles from Alton High School; and Alyssa Alexander and Travis Trisler from Jersey High.

At the end of the event, the 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 Janet Riehl, a nationally published author and poet currently residing in St. Louis; and Dr. Jeffrey Skoblow, a member of the English

faculty 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. This year, state funding support was also received from the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation and regional support was received from the Gannett Foundation.

Illinois' state-level championship takes place in Springfield on March 11. 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 jac.melissa@sbcglobal.net. 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.

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