



For Immediate Release

NATIONAL STUDENT POETS PROGRAM LAUNCHES

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers
Announce Program to Recognize, Encourage High School Poets

Washington, DC (November 21, 2011) -The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) have partnered with the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers to create the National Student Poets Program, the country's highest honor for youth poets whose original work exhibits exceptional creativity, dedication to craft and promise. Five outstanding high school poets will be selected annually for a year of service as literary ambassadors for poetry, encouraging a wide range of youth to explore and develop new creative capabilities.

"What you learn through reading and writing poetry will stay with you throughout your life," [said First Lady Michelle Obama](#), Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, to hundreds of students at a poetry workshop sponsored by the White House. "It will spark your imagination and broaden your horizons and even help your performance in the classroom."

The National Student Poets Program draws on the expertise of each partner, reflecting the national imprimatur of the President's Committee, IMLS's community-based network of libraries and museums that will link the national student poets with audiences and resources in their neighborhoods, and the Alliance's long-standing work with educators and creative teens through the prestigious Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Each year, the five National Student Poets will be chosen from a pool of outstanding writers, grades 9-11, who have received a national Scholastic Art & Writing Award for poetry. A national panel of literary luminaries, including Poet Terrance Hayes, Kenyon Review Editor David Lynn, Alice Quinn, Executive Director of the Poetry Society of America, and Robert Casper, Head of the Poetry and Literature Center at the Library of Congress, will evaluate and select the National Student Poets.

During their year of service, the National Student Poets will promote the appreciation of poetry and the importance of creative expression through readings and workshops at libraries, museums and schools in communities in the five different regions represented by the awardees. The National Student Poets will

be announced next summer and introduced at the Library of Congress's National Book Festival in Washington, DC in September 2012. Each National Student Poet will receive an academic award of \$5,000 and an acknowledgement of their accomplishment. It is anticipated that these young poets will work with poet mentors and serve as a resource for the U.S. Department of Education and the Library of Congress during their one-year tenure.

"I am pleased that we will be able to showcase the creativity of promising young poets at local libraries and museums; they are perfect places for finding, following and sharing your passions," said IMLS Director Susan Hildreth. "I know from my own experience with the poet laureate program in San Francisco and California's statewide program that this work is powerful and that it will delight and inspire student-peers, professionals and the community."

For the past 18 months the President's Committee has focused on the arts and humanities critical role in building creativity-rich schools, and in preparing students for success in the knowledge and innovation economy.

"This is a wonderful extension of our work documenting and promoting the benefits of arts education for all our country's children," said Rachel Goslins, Executive Director of the PCAH. "As the data consistently shows, students who are engaged with the arts do better in school and in life. We can think of no better way to demonstrate these benefits than by engaging a class of talented and promising student poets to work with their peers and lead by example."

The finalist pool for the National Student Poets will first be determined through blind adjudication completed by jurors of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards - the nation's longest-running, most prestigious scholarship and recognition program for student achievement in the visual and literary arts. More than 185,000 submissions representing every state apply annually through Alliance affiliates. Since 1923, the Awards has identified the early promise of American cultural luminaries including Truman Capote, Sylvia Plath, Joyce Carol Oates and others who won the Award when they were teenagers.

"We are honored that the National Student Poets Program will offer the creative young people who participate in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards yet another opportunity to learn about and advocate for the importance of the literary and creative arts," said Virginia McEnerney, Executive Director of the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. "The National Student Poets' work will give greater visibility to the voice and perspective of today's youth."

More information on the National Student Poets Program can be found at www.artandwriting.org.

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The National Student Poets Program is an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, in coordination with the Library of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education. Academic awards are provided by the Bernstein Family Foundation. More information on the National Student Poets Program can be found at www.artandwriting.org.

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues. Its core areas of focus are arts and humanities education, cultural exchange, and community revitalization. First Lady Michelle Obama, like other first ladies before her, serves as honorary chairman of the committee.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is an independent federal grant making agency dedicated to creating strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The IMLS works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development.

The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, identifies teenagers with exceptional artistic and literary talent and brings their remarkable work to a national audience through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Each year, the Alliance partners with 115 regional affiliates across the country to bring the program to local communities. Since 1923, nine million students have been recognized through exhibitions and publications and have shared in more than \$25 million in awards and scholarships.

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