



**Michigan Humanities Council**

*Michigan People, Michigan Places  
Our Stories, Our Lives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 26, 2009**

Contact: Scott Hirko, [shirko@mihumanities.org](mailto:shirko@mihumanities.org), 517-372-0029 ext. 25

## **4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL POETRY OUT LOUD STATE CHAMPIONSHIP**

*24 high schools in Michigan to participate – most in program history.  
State winner awarded \$200 and trip to national finals in D.C.*

- DATE: Saturday, March 7, 2009
- TIME: 12:30 - 4:00 p.m.
- WHERE: Forum Room, State Library of Michigan, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing
- WHAT: *Poetry Out Loud* state championship
- COST: Free to the public. Limited seating on a first-come, first-served basis.

(LANSING)-----The Michigan Humanities Council announces the fourth annual *Poetry Out Loud* recitation competition to be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009, from 12:30 – 4 p.m. in the Forum Room at the Library of Michigan in Lansing. Students from 24 Michigan high schools will compete (below is a list of schools, teachers, and participating students). Participants will each recite two poems and be judged on: physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, level of difficulty, evidence of understanding accuracy, and overall performance. The state winner will receive \$200 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete for the national championship April 27-28, 2009. The state winner's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The runner-up in the state competition will receive \$100, along with \$200 for his or her school library. The top four finishers at the state championship will also be invited to participate in the 47th Annual Michigan Youth Arts Festival, from May 7-9, 2009, in Kalamazoo.

In 2009 – its fourth year – Michigan's *Poetry Out Loud* will have its greatest participation with 24 schools and more than 1,000 students involved. *Poetry Out Loud* encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. Since October, Language Arts/English teachers at participating schools have prepared students to compete at the school level and advance to the state finals.

"*Poetry Out Loud* consistently demonstrates the opportunity for students to connect poetry to culture and use poetry as a powerful tool for expression," said Jan Fedewa, Executive Director of the Michigan Humanities Council. "The Michigan Humanities Council is pleased to partner with these organizations to bring *Poetry Out Loud* to Michigan high school students."

"We have heard again and again that once students internalize a couple of poems they really like for the *Poetry Out Loud* program, they feel empowered to explore many other literature works, even if they previously had little or no interest in poetry," said Maryrose Flanigan, Program Manager for the National Endowment for the Arts.

(more)

“*Poetry Out Loud* succeeds by helping students develop public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage,” said John Bracey, Executive Director of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

“We are pleased to be partners of this incredible program and look forward to the transformative power of poetry and oration merged into the performances at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival,” said Kim Dabbs, Executive Director of the Michigan Youth Arts Association.

In last year’s Michigan competition, 86 percent of student participants who evaluated the program developed their own interpretation of poems; 85 percent stated they saw a connection between poetry and everyday culture; 82 percent understood that poetry could be a powerful tool for expression.

Charles White from Forest Hills Central High School in Grand Rapids won the 2008 Michigan *Poetry Out Loud* championship and advanced to the final championship round of 12 students from across the country. Sarah Harris from Holt High School was the state champion in 2007. Travis Walter from Holt High School won the state championship in 2006.

*Poetry Out Loud* is a Michigan Humanities Council partnership program with the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Library of Michigan, and the Michigan Youth Arts Association.

The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is a private, non-profit organization funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

#### FACTS AND FIGURES FROM 2007-2008 MICHIGAN’S *POETRY OUT LOUD*

- 906 students in Michigan participated and returned evaluations.
- 18 teachers participated and returned evaluations.
- Teachers provided 153 hours of their time in addition to 163 hours of classroom time.
- Over \$100,000 in prizes were awarded to students and schools at state and national levels.

Students who returned evaluations reported the following about *Poetry Out Loud*:

- 86% developed their own individual interpretation of poems.
- 85% saw connections between poetry and everyday culture.
- 82% understood that poetry can be a powerful tool for expression.
- 68% understood that poems meet different purposes and were led to explore challenging and unfamiliar poems.
- 67% were more confident in their public speaking from reciting poetry.
- 58% could understand and explain different poetic elements.

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## 2009 MICHIGAN POETRY OUT LOUD Participants

	SCHOOL	CITY	STUDENT NAME	TEACHER NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL	Number of Participating Students
#	<u>Participating</u>						
1	Alba Public Schools	Alba	Kristi Leitow	Judith Zimpfer	231-584-2000 x 125	zimpferj@gmail.com	50
2	Big Bay de Noc School	Cooks	Tyler Root	DeeDee Thill	906-644-2773 x 127	ddhermes@dsisd.k12.mi.us	n/a
3	Bradford Academy High School	Southfield	Glennika Hubbard	Melissa Hedgcock	248-351-0000, x 2045 or 248-515-7046	mhedgcock@bradfordacademy.com	269
4	Carman-Ainsworth High School	Flint	Zaire Jackson	Amanda Sauvie	810-591-3240 x 5477	asauvie@carman.k12.mi.us	500
5	Cass Technical High School	Detroit	Daniel Bellomy	Marilyn McCormick	313-263-2000 x 3026(w), 313-530-5812 ©	MMccass103@aol.com	20
6	Cleveland Intermediate High School	Detroit	Robin Ballard	Monique L. Guest-Schuh	313-492-8849(c) , 313-399-4256 (H)	momskorner@aol.com	n/a
7	Dansville High School	Dansville	Jessica Kean	Pauline Lee	517-623-6120 x281	leepauli@msu.edu	100
8	Forest Hills Central High School	Grand Rapids	Lauren Treiber	Sarah Scobell	616-493-8700	sscobell@fhps.us	250
9	Gull Lake High School	Richland	Emily Nott	Karen McConnell	269-488-5020	kmccconnell@gulllakecs.org	n/a
10	Holt High School	Holt	Miles Green	Nicholas Mourning	517-699-7443	nmourning@hpsk12.net	100
11	Houghton High School	Houghton	Katie Zutter	Julie Antilla	906-482-0450 x 1850	jantilla@houghton.k12.mi.us	300
12	Leelanau School	Glen Arbor	Taylor Maddox	Norman Wheeler	231-334-5890	nwheeler@leelanau.org	20
13	Madison Academy	Flint	Stephen Staten	Dawn Corbray	810-624-3189	dcorbray@madison-academy.org	n/a
14	North Branch High School	North Branch	Anabel Guerrero	Rene DeRyckere	810-688-3001 x 2186	rderyckere@nbbronzos.net	50
15	North Muskegon High School	North Muskegon	Emily Apman	Michael Schanhals & Toni Seyferth	231-719-4110	schanhmi@nmps.k12.mi.us, seyferto@nmps.k12.mi.us	50
16	Owosso Christian School	Owosso	Chelsea Stewart	Betty Melrose	989-723-4510	bbmelrose@verizon.net	9
17	Petoskey High School	Petoskey	Kelly Robbins	Glen Young	231-348-2135	young.gd.t@petoskeyschools.org	130
18	Portage Central High School	Portage	Katie Corbit	Janet LaVasseur	269-323-5316	JLvasseur@PortagePS.org	158
19	Portage Northern High School	Portage	Kimberly Grabowski	Nancy Nott	269-323-5737	NNott@PortagePS.org	104
20	Roosevelt High School	Wyandotte	Kelly Stec	Rob Keast	734-759-5162	Robert.Keast@wy.k12.mi.us	200
21	Saline High School	Saline	Kelsey Tillman	Carolyn Kreple	734-429-8000 x 2351	kreplec@saline.k12.mi.us	365
22	Southeastern High School	Detroit	Deaira Littles	Angelia Mahone	313-866-4500 x 4792	amahone2@aol.com	n/a
23	University Preparatory Academy H.S.	Detroit	Desiree Marion	Cassie Williams	313-874-4340	ag4935@wayne.edu	n/a
24	Ypsilanti High School	Ypsilanti	Ashley Brown	Karen Siegel	734-714-1007(w), 734-995-0981(h)	knappsiegel@me.com	n/a