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40 NORTH ANNOUNCES POETRY OUT LOUD EASTERN ILLINOIS FINALS

Champaign County - 40 North | 88 West – Champaign County Arts Council – announce the Eastern Illinois regional competition for Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest. The competition, presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, is part of a national program that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. On February 18 more than twelve high school students from six local high schools will participate in the Poetry Out Loud Eastern Illinois finals at Krannert Center of the Performing Arts. The winner and runner-up of this competition will advance to the Illinois State Finals in Springfield, IL on March 14, where two winners will advance to the National Finals in Washington, DC, on April 29-30, 2014, where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed.

At the regional competition, Poetry Out Loud contestants recite works they selected from an anthology of more than 700 classic and contemporary poems. The anthology, a website (www.poetryoutloud.org), a teacher's guide, and media samples of poetry recitation were created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation as free educational resources for high school students and teachers.

Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by building on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement and the popularity of rap music among youth. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. Now in its ninth year of national competition, Poetry Out Loud has inspired hundreds of thousands of high school students to discover classic and contemporary poetry. To find out how to get involved in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest, visit www.poetryoutloud.org.

Featured speakers and participants will be:

- **Robert Ramirez**, 40 North board member and Associate Professor of Theatre at UIUC, a Master Ceremonies
- **Janjay Knowlden**, 2013 Poetry Out Loud Illinois State Top 5 Finalist

WHEN: February 18, 6pm

WHERE: Krannert Center, Stage 5

Attendance is free and open to the public. Any further information, contact Amanda Baker at 217-363-3795

40 North | 88 West

With the mission of cultivating creativity in Champaign County, 40 North | 88 West is dedicated to fueling the growth and well-being of our creative community by nurturing its arts, culture, and education. Through information, advocacy and collaboration, 40 North empowers artists, arts organizations, businesses and the community at large. For more information on 40 North, visit www.40north.org.

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