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40 NORTH | 88 WEST ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF POETRY OUT LOUD REGIONAL CONTEST

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY — 40 North is pleased to announce the winners of the Eastern Illinois regional contest for Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest. The **regional runner up is Champaign Central High School student, Cedric D. B. Jones**, who performed “The Bones Of My Father” by Etheridge Knight and “I, Too” by Langston Hughes. **The regional champion is Champaign Central High School student, Jonlyn Miller**, who performed “First Poem For You” by Kim Addonizio and “And Soul” by Eavan Boland. The competition, presented in partnership with the Illinois Arts Council, 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, nine high school students from four area high schools participated in the Poetry Out Loud Eastern Illinois regional contest at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to a regional and state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, DC. Some 375,000 students from more than 2,000 high schools nationwide took part in the 2012–2013 Poetry Out Loud program.

The students recited works they selected from an anthology of more than 650 classic and contemporary poems. Judges evaluated student performances on criteria including voice and articulation, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty, and accuracy. Teachers introduced poetry recitation in the classroom using materials created by the NEA and the Poetry Foundation, including a standards-based Teacher’s Guide, a website, a Learning Recitation DVD, and a CD featuring poetry recitations by well-known actors and writers such as Anthony Hopkins and Rita Dove.

The two regional winners will advance to the Illinois state contest on March 14 in Springfield, IL. Each champion at the state level will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, to compete for the national championship, April 29-30, 2014. The school of the state champion will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry books.

To learn more about the Illinois Poetry Out Loud contest, visit www.poetryoutloud.org.

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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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