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**PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS  
ANNOUNCES 2009 *POETRY OUT LOUD* STATE CHAMPION**

**HARRISBURG** – Molly Stoltz, a Dubois Area School District student from Clearfield County, has been named the winner of the Pennsylvania state finals of the 2009 *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest*.

Stoltz was selected from among 13 regional finalists by a panel of judges in a day-long competition at the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg. Second place went to Luka Glinsky, a home-schooled student from Erie County; and Christian Aponte of Wyoming Valley West School District, Luzerne County, won third place.

“The Commonwealth can be very proud of the outstanding performances delivered by today's contestants, and especially our new state champion Molly Stoltz,” said Pennsylvania Council on the Arts chairman Diane Dalto. “Seeing the talent, self confidence, emotional intelligence, and dedication to excellence exemplified by Stoltz and the other regional winners, offers a boost in turbulent times and instills optimism for a better future.”

As state champion, Stoltz will receive \$200 from The Poetry Foundation and an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to compete for the national championship during the final week of April. *Poetry Out Loud* will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends at the national finals, with at least one \$20,000 college scholarship for the *Poetry Out Loud* national champion.

Each competitor memorized and prepared to perform three poems selected from print and online poetry anthologies. Evaluation criteria included voice and articulation, physical presence, appropriateness of dramatization, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty, overall performance, and accuracy. The 13 regional winners were:

- Christian Aponte, Grade 12, Wyoming Valley West School District – winner for the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit 19;
- Sofiya Ballin, Grade 11, Pleasant Valley School District – winner for Allentown Art Museum;
- Stevie Beisswanger, Grade 12, Southern Columbia Area School District – winner for the Northern Tier Partnership for Arts in Education/ Bradford County Regional Arts Council;
- Luka Glinsky, Grade 12, Homeschool – winner for ArtsErie;
- Mikaela Hornberger, Grade 11, Bellwood-Antis School District – winner for Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art;
- Rachel E. Krantz, Grade 11, Bellefonte Area School District – winner for Galaxy, The Arts in Education Program of Central Intermediate Unit 10;
- Cheyenne Mai Mathis, Grade 10, Mifflinburg Area School District – winner for the Perry County Council of the Arts;
- Rebecca Martinelli, Grade 12, South Fayette Township School District – winner for Pittsburgh Center for the Arts;
- Lauren Peddicord, Grade 11, Dallastown Area School District – winner for Cultural Alliance of York County;
- Zoë Perrin, Grade 12, Covenant Christian Academy – winner for Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association;
- Molly Stoltz, Grade 11, Dubois Area School District - winner for ArtsPath: Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Anne Wechsler, Grade 11, Merion Mercy Academy – winner for Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership; and
- Nadine Zerphey, Grade 12, Warwick School District – winner for South Central PaARTners: Millersville University.

The panel of judges for the event included Pennsylvania cultural leaders, writers, and poets: Clyde McGeary, council member on the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, artist and author; Francesca Fiore, last year's Pennsylvania Poetry Out Loud state champion; Kendria Perry, Miss Pennsylvania 2008; poet Marjorie Maddox Hafer, professor of English at Lock Haven University; and Jeffrey Gabel, founder and executive director of the Majestic Theater at

Gettysburg. JoBeth McKee and Jamie Kasper of the Department of Education served as accuracy judges.

The National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation created the *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* to encourage high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance and competition. 7,000 students in 90 Pennsylvania high schools across the state participated at the classroom level in this year's competition, vying to compete at one of the 13 regional competitions hosted by the PCA's Arts in Education Partners and the Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association.

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts is a state agency under the Governor's Office. Its mission is to foster the excellence, diversity and vitality of the arts in Pennsylvania and to broaden the availability and appreciation of those arts throughout the state.

In 2004, the agency was named among government's top 50 "Best and Brightest" in the Innovations in American Government Awards, a national competition recognizing superior and unique programming initiatives within the public sector. The council started the Pennsylvania Arts in Education Partnership in 1995 to enhance efforts to foster educational excellence through participation in the creative process in schools and community settings. Partners recruit, select, train, place and evaluate artists for residencies in educational environments.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, visit [www.pacouncilonthearts.org](http://www.pacouncilonthearts.org). For further information on Poetry Out Loud, visit [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

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