



For Immediate Release

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### **Nine Oregon high school students advance to March 9 state Poetry Out Loud competition**

Salem, Oregon – Regional Poetry Out Loud competitions held in Medford, Portland and Salem Saturday identified the nine Oregon high school students who are invited to compete for the 2019 state title on Saturday, March 9. Three finalists were selected from each regional competition.

Poetry Out Loud is a national contest for high school students, organized in Oregon by the Oregon Arts Commission in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. Participants memorize and present poems, practicing public performance skills while exploring the complexity of poetry.

The winners of the Southern Regional Contest, hosted at Rogue Community College, are: Aynika Nelson, Brookings-Harbor High School, Brookings; Megan Southard, Bonanza High School, Klamath Falls; and Hannah VonHolle, Logos Public Charter School, Medford.

The three top finishers from the Portland Regional Contest, held at Lewis and Clark College, are: Christina Brennan, Oregon Connections Academy, Mill City; Belise Nishimwe, St. Mary's Academy, Portland; and Kaiden Randall, West Linn High School.

Finalists selected at the Central Regional Contest at Salem's Allied Video Productions Studio are: Nicole Coronado, Lakeridge High School, Lake Oswego; Amy Jarvie, Oregon School for the Deaf, Salem (2018 state runner up); and Gabriella Shirtcliff, Summit High School, Bend.

"As we have come to expect over the 14 years of *Poetry Out Loud* in Oregon, the caliber of performances was impressive and made selecting only three finalists from each region a challenge," said Deb Vaughn, the Arts Commission's arts education/Poetry Out Loud coordinator.

The State Contest is scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. in Loucks Auditorium at Salem Public Library (585 Liberty Street SE). The winner will be invited to advance to the national Poetry Out Loud competition, scheduled for April 29-May 1 in Washington, D.C.

**Editor's note: Photos and bio information are available upon request.**

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of Business Oregon (formerly Oregon Economic and Community Development Department) in 1993, in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission's expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development.

The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available online at: [www.oregonartscommission.org](http://www.oregonartscommission.org).