



SDAC ANNOUNCES POETRY OUT LOUD: NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST

High school students invited to compete in poetry recitation contest

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation have once again partnered with the South Dakota Arts Council to support 2016 Poetry Out Loud, a FREE high school program which encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and recitation. This dynamic program helps high school students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, learn about their literary heritage, and compete for more than \$100,000 in awards.

"To memorize and recite a great poem of the past or present," said Robert Polito, President of the Poetry Foundation, "is to 'own' it in the most personal way -- in your body, your breath, and your spirit. Recitation is an interpretive act that is also creative and self-transformative..."

Schools are invited to participate in classroom and school-wide contests, a preliminary video round of competition, advancing to a state competition on March 21. The South Dakota state champion will advance to the National Finals, May 2-4 2016, in Washington, DC.

Additionally, free, standards-based curriculum materials are available for use by participating schools. These materials include an online poetry anthology containing more than 800 classic and contemporary poems, a teacher's guide, lesson plans, posters, and video and audio on the art of recitation. Schools are welcome to download these resources at www.poetryoutloud.org.

How to get involved in Poetry Out Loud

High school teachers who are interested in participating in Poetry Out Loud should know that the program takes one to three weeks of classroom time, and may be incorporated with existing poetry units. High schools that wish to be part of the official Poetry Out Loud program must contact Rebecca Cruse, POL program director at the South Dakota Arts Council to participate. All South Dakota high schools, alternative schools, and home schools are eligible to take part in the official Poetry Out Loud program. The SDAC will make every effort to accommodate all students who would like to participate.

Poetry Out Loud awards

Students who participate in the official Poetry Out Loud program may be eligible to compete in the state and National Finals in 2016. Each state champion will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, to compete for the national championship. The state champion's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The first runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. Poetry Out Loud will award a total of \$50,000 in cash and school stipends at the National Finals, including a \$20,000 award for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion.

Important dates to remember for the 2015-2016 POL season:

- Feb. 16 – video entries for regional competition postmarked
- Feb. 26 – notification of which students will advance to state competition
- March 21 – state competition in Sioux Falls
- May 2-4 – POL National Finals

The South Dakota Arts Council also partners with South Dakota Public Broadcasting, the Aberdeen Area Arts Council and the Sioux Falls School District on POL programming.