# â€˜Poetry Out Loudâ€™ in 14 Oregon High Schools

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

The Oregon Arts Commission, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, will bring the Poetry Out Loud program to fourteen high schools and more than 1,700 students across Oregon this year. The program, now in its second year in Oregon, involves the memorization and recitation of classic poetry and culminates in a statewide competition. Poetry Out Loud has grown from four schools in Oregon during the 2005-06 school year to 14 in 2006-07. Nationwide, more than 200,000 students are expected to participate.

Each participating school will hold a school wide recitation contest, with the winner eligible to compete in the state competition to be held March 10, 2007 in Salem.

Oregonâ€™s participating schools are: (* denotes participation in the 2005-06 contest)

Ashland High School, Ashland Beaverton High School, Beaverton Summit High School, Bend 4J Night High School, Eugene The Center for Advanced Learning, Gresham* Hood River Valley High School, Hood River* Nestucca High School, Nestucca Veritas School, Newberg Metropolitan Learning Center, Portland* Northwest Academy, Portland* Oregon School for the Deaf, Salem Salem Academy Christian School Academy of Arts and Academics, Springfield Woodburn Arts & Communications High School, Woodburn

Oregonâ€™s state champion will advance to the Poetry Out Loud National Finals, to take place on April 30--May 1, 2007 in Washington, D.C.

During last yearâ€™s pilot program, students from four Oregon high schools competed for the statewide championship. Michael Santiago, from The Center for Advanced Learning and Reynolds High School was Oregonâ€™s 2006 Oregon Poetry Out Loud Champion, representing the state in the National Finals and advancing to the final round of 12 students and a $1,000 scholarship prize. â€œI learned that writing brings people together a lot more than we think it does,â€• said Santiago. â€œPoetry is such a means of communication and can bring people together from all different parts of the county and different backgrounds. Itâ€™s something we all have in common that we can talk about.â€•

Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry â€“ recitation and performance. The program builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement and the aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills and build self-confidence.

â€œLearning great poetry by heart develops the mind and imagination.â€• said Dana Gioia, chairman of the

National Endowment for the Arts. â€œIt isnâ€™t just an arts program. By immersing themselves in powerful language and ideas, the students will develop their ability to speak well, especially in public. This is a skill they will use in the workplace and the community for the rest of their lives.â€•

The Oregon Arts Commission, the NEA and the Poetry Foundation have partnered to sponsor Poetry Out Loud this year. The Arts Commission has developed an Oregon Curriculum Guide that will be used to connect Poetry Out Loud classroom activities to Oregonâ€™s Content and Performance Standards in Language Arts and the Arts/Drama.

For further information on Poetry Out Loud, contact the Oregon Arts Commission at 503-986-0082, or visit the National website at www.poetryoutloud.org.

About the Oregon Arts Commission

The Oregon Arts Commission believes that the arts and culture are touchstones of community and civic life and that it is essential to preserve, stabilize and develop their central role in Oregon. The 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 the 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 Commissionâ€™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, federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available at www.oregonartscommission.org.

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