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West Virginia Library Commission
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West Virginia Honors Children Who Celebrate Their Favorite Authors with “Letters About Literature”

Charleston, WV. In a ceremony in the State Culture Center on Wednesday, May 29, West Virginia showed its appreciation to a group of young West Virginia readers who wrote letters to their favorite authors in a program called Letters About Literature, a national writing challenge for students in grades 4 through 10.

“The young writers we honor today have demonstrated, through their writing skills, how much literature impacts the lives of everyone, said John Paul Myrick, Library Development Director of the West Virginia Library Commission and Coordinator of the West Virginia Center for the Book. “We may not immediately recognize it, but literature impacts many of the things we do, say, think and feel daily. Literature reflects our culture, our thought, and our destiny as a state and nation.”

Young readers participate in Letters About Literature by writing letters to the authors of their favorite books, fiction or non-fiction, explaining how the author’s work has been important to them personally. Entrants, who must be at least nine years old, are grouped for evaluation: Level 1, grades 4-6; Level 2, grades 7-8, and Level 3, grades 9-10.

More than 49,000 students across the nation competed in 2013. This year in West Virginia, 553 students submitted letters to the competition. Six judges from across the state evaluated the letters and awarded top honors, honors, honorable mention and notable mention awards to 168 entrants.

Top honors winners received \$100 each. Honors winners received \$50 each. Prize money was provided by the West Virginia Humanities Council. State winners go on to the national competition, where the top prize is \$1,000.

One student won top honors for each of the three levels. Level 1 winner Kennah Salmons of Crum Middle School wrote to Lois Lowry about her novel *Number the Stars*: “Your book has inspired my life since I was just an adolescent girl. It has helped me through a lot of struggles and many challenging toils.”

Level 2 winner Mckenzi Olonko of Princeton Middle School wrote to James Patterson about his novel *Witch and Wizard: The Gift*: “All in all, I loved your book and look forward to more. With this book I learned and found out about a lot that happens in life.”

Level 3 winner Althea Wheaton of The Linsly School wrote to John Green about his novel *Looking for Alaska*: “It was around fourth grade when I discovered words. The way they fit together so perfectly in a sentence, then sentences forming into paragraphs, and paragraphs forming stories. I wasn’t sure of much, but I was sure that I was going to be a writer.”

West Virginia Poet Laureate Marc Harshman was the featured speaker at this year’s Letters About Literature ceremony. “Books have opened doors throughout my life,” Harshman said. “And all those journeys started at the little door of the library.”

Karen Goff, Secretary of the West Virginia Library Commission, presented awards to the winners.

The West Virginia Center for the Book, in partnership with the West Virginia Humanities Council, sponsors Letters About Literature annually in West Virginia. The awards ceremony is held each spring in Charleston.

The West Virginia Center for the Book, an affiliate of the National Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, strives to foster an appreciation of the literature that shapes our lives daily. Through programs such as Letters About Literature, it helps West Virginians further appreciate books and literature while promoting our state’s rich literary heritage.

The West Virginia Center for the Book is a project of the West Virginia Library Commission, which encourages lifelong learning, individual empowerment, civic engagement and an enriched quality of life by enhancing library and information services for all West Virginians. Find more information at: www.librarycommission.wv.gov.

Level 1 (Grades 4-6)

- Top Honors, Kennah Salmons , Crum Middle School, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- Honors, India Chahar, Mercer Elementary School, *Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant
- Honors, Kaitlyn Steidley, Princeton Middle School, *Eight Keys* by Suzanne LaFleur
- Honorable Mention, Adele Gulley, Hurricane Middle School, *Charlotte’s Web* by E.B. White
- Honorable Mention, Autumn Gouveia, Weirton Heights Elementary School, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume
- Honorable Mention, Bryce Mutterback, Princeton Middle School, *Gathering Blue* by Lois Lowry
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Paden City Elementary, *Jeremy Lin: Rising Star* by James Buckley Jr.
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor

- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Hamilton Middle School, *Moonlight on the Magic Flute* by Mary Pope Osborne
- Honorable Mention, Sydney Daniels, Hurricane Middle School, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- Honorable Mention, Teagan Kuzniar, South Middle School, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell
- Notable Mention, Morgan Bailey, Glen Fork Middle School, *Hush, Hush* Series by Rebecca Fitzpatrick
- Notable Mention, Hannah Rose, Hurricane Middle School, *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hurricane Middle School, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K. Rowling
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hurricane Middle School, *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor
- Notable Mention, Sarah Fresquez, Hurricane Middle School, *Warriors* by Erin Hunter
- Notable Mention, Lauren Duespohl, Hurricane Middle School, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hurricane Middle School, *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hurricane Middle School, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- Notable Mention, Riley Daugherty, Hurricane Middle School, *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss
- Notable Mention, Hannah Short, Hurricane Middle School, *Green Eggs and Ham*, Dr. Seuss
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hurricane Middle School, *Ramona's World* by Beverly Cleary
- Notable Mention, Chloe Demuth, Hurricane Middle School, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hurricane Middle School, *Warriors: Into the Wild* by Erin Hunter
- Notable Mention, Adam Cook, Hurricane Middle School, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry

- Notable Mention, Joe Muto, Hurricane Middle School, *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
- Notable Mention, Jordan Ruby, Hurricane Middle School, *The Magic Treehouse Series* by Mary Pope Osborne
- Notable Mention, Timothy Kinder, Bruceton School, *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Bruceton School, The works of Shel Silverstein
- Notable Mention, Makennzee Savage, Bruceton School, *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo
- Notable Mention, Sierra Blankenship, Chamberlain Elementary School, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days* by Jeff Kinney
- Notable Mention, Aaron Kesler, Chamberlain Elementary School, *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan
- Notable Mention, Blake Phillips, Chamberlain Elementary School, *Wild Life* by Cynthia DeFelice
- Notable Mention, Taylor Smith, Crum Middle School, *Heartland: Taking Chances* by Lauren Brooke
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- Notable Mention, K.J. Engasser, Johnson Elementary School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Alden Smith, Johnson Elementary School, *Crookedstar's Promise* by Erin Hunter
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Lashmeet-Matoaka Elementary School, *The Mystery of the Missing Money* by Paul Moxham
- Notable Mention, Kayla Bassoff, Midland Elementary School, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K. Rowling
- Notable Mention, Emma Buck, Mount Lookout Elementary School, *Bad Kitty Meets the Baby* by Nick Bruel
- Notable Mention, Kayle Marie Crites, Mount Lookout Elementary School, *A Perfect Time for Pandas* by Mary Pope Osborne
- Notable Mention, Nachele Probst, Paden City Elementary School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

- Notable Mention, Jacob Bolen, Paden City Elementary School, *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau
- Notable Mention, Elizabeth Lafferty, Paden City Elementary School, *Poppy* by Avi
- Notable Mention, Henry Lipscomb, Princeton Middle School, *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, South Middle School, *Another Earth* by Patrick Carman
- Notable Mention, Elizabeth Sims, South Middle School, *Love, Aubrey* by Suzanne LaFleur
- Notable Mention, Destinee Smith, Smithville Elementary, *Finding Zasha* by Randi Barro
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Elementary School, *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Middle School, *Raising Dragons* by Bryan Davis
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Elementary School, *Mercy Watson to the Rescue* by Kate DiCamillo
- Notable Mention, Chloe Sotomayor, Spencer Middle School, *The Hunger Games Series* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Bridgeport Middle School, *The Batboy* by Mike Lupica
- Notable Mention, Malachi Hinton, Weirton Heights Elementary School, *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say
- Notable Mention, Elizabeth Mullen, Weirton Heights Elementary School, *Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life* by James Patterson and Chris Tebbets
- Notable Mention, Leah Graham, Weirton Heights Elementary School, *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo

Level 2 (Grades 7-8)

- Top Honors, Mckenzi Olonko, Princeton Middle School, *Witch and Wizard: The Gift* by James Patterson
- Honors, Cassandra Griffin, Spencer Middle School, *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick
- Honors, Emily Duncan, Hayes Middle School, *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow

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- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Harper's Ferry Middle School, *Outside Beauty* by Cynthia Kadohata
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *The Harry Potter Series* by J.K. Rowling
- Honorable Mention, Cody Prince, Crum Middle School, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Middle School, *More Than Anything Else* by Marie Bradby
- Honorable Mention, Elijah Akers, Winfield Middle School, *The Watsons Go To Birmingham* by Christopher Curtis
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Pleasants County Middle School, *Wonderstruck* by Brian Selznick
- Honorable Mention, Kayla Jude, Crum Middle School, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *Venola in Love* by Cheryl Ware
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Middle School, *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick
- Honorable Mention, Samantha Ravita, Spencer Middle School, *The Allegra Biscotti Collection* by Olivia Bennett
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *Deadline* by Chris Crutcher
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *The Girl With the Silver Eyes* by Willo Davis Roberts
- Notable Mention, Tia Ainsworth, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *Welcome Home Jellybean* by Marlene Shyer
- Notable Mention, Kristina Mantle, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *My Thirteenth Winter: A Memoir* by Samantha Abeel

- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Harpers Ferry Middle School, *Danger on her Doorstep* by Rachelle McCalla
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Pleasants County Middle School, *The Crippled Lamb* by Max Lucado
- Notable Mention, Hannah Knight, Pleasants County Middle School, *Heart to Heart* by Lurlene McDaniel
- Notable Mention, Leland Brown, Hayes Middle School, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp* by Rick Yancey
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hayes Middle School, *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hayes Middle School, *The Alchemyst* by Michael Scott
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hayes Middle School, *Carter Finally Gets It* by Brent Crawford
- Notable Mention, Tommy Kasey, Hayes Middle School, *A Troubled Peace* by L.M. Elliott
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hayes Middle School, *West Side Story* by Irving Shulman
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Hayes Middle School, *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- Notable Mention, Liz Sowards, Hayes Middle School, *The Dying Breath* by Alane Ferguson
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Harman School, *All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Alexis Salmons, Crum Middle School, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss

- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- Notable Mention, Austin Stacy, Crum Middle School, *Maximum Ride* by James Patterson
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Crum Middle School, *Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper
- Notable Mention, Elizabeth Warner, Bluefield Middle School, *Early Sunday Morning* by Barry Denenburg
- Notable Mention, Cassie Denison, Winfield Middle School, *Life as We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer
- Notable Mention, Allison Smith, West Preston Middle School, *Rachel's Tears* by Beth Nimmo
- Notable Mention, Kayla Cramer, West Preston Middle School, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Notable Mention, Allison Slider, West Preston Middle School, *The Harry Potter Series* by J.K. Rowling
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School, *A Season of Gifts* by Richard Peck
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Middle School, *The Harry Potter Series* by J.K. Rowling
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Middle School, *Judy Moody and the Bad Luck Charm* by Megan McDonald
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Spencer Middle School, *Butterfly Kisses* by Bob and Brooke Carlisle
- Honorable Mention, Savannah Smith, Bluefield Middle School, *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment*, by James Patterson
- Honorable Mention, William Ward, Spencer Middle School, *A Child Called It* by Dave Pelzer

Level 3 (Grades 9-10)

- Top Honors, Althea Wheaton, The Linsly School, *Looking for Alaska* by John Green

- Honors, Name Withheld, South Charleston High School, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
- Honors, Name Withheld, South Charleston High School, *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Anne Frank
- Honorable Mention, Abby Miller, The Linsly School, *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
- Honorable Mention, Amber Morris, Washington High School, *The Last Song* by Nicholas Sparks
- Honorable Mention, Bonnie Walton, Washington High School, *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Washington High School, *Black Hawk Down* by Mark Bowden
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, Wirt County High School, *The Holy Bible* by God
- Honorable Mention, Lucas Facemire, Nicholas County High School, *Waiting for the Fall* by Mike Casazza
- Honorable Mention, Name Withheld, South Charleston High School, *The Host* by Stephenie Meyer
- Honorable Mention, Sydney Hale, Magnolia High School, *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett
- Honorable Mention, Tyler Easley, Bluefield High School, *Slut! Growing Up Female with a Bad Reputation* by Leora Tanenbaum
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- Notable Mention, Katie Gedeon, The Linsly School, *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch
- Notable Mention, Cheyenne Scherich, The Linsly School, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, The Linsly School, *The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls
- Notable Mention, Katie Smith, The Linsly School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Sung Bok Yoo, The Linsly School, *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, The Linsly School, *Chosen* by Ted Dekker
- Notable Mention, Colin Kelly, The Linsly School, *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway

- Notable Mention, Drew Bastian, The Linsly School, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick
- Notable Mention, Carinna Ferguson, The Linsly School, *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, The Linsly School, *Night* by Elie Wiesel
- Notable Mention, Derrick Blain, The Linsly School, *The Harry Potter Series* by J.K. Rowling
- Notable Mention, Joanna Blake, Magnolia High School, *Somebody Everybody Listens To* by Suzanne Supplee
- Notable Mention, Troy Boughner, Magnolia High School, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket
- Notable Mention, Davianne Croasmun, Magnolia High School, *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett
- Notable Mention, Bri Ritz, Magnolia High School, *Hana* by Lauren Oliver
- Notable Mention, Amanda Theodoro, Magnolia High School, *A Walk to Remember* by Nicholas Sparks
- Notable Mention, Cedar Sands, Magnolia High School, *My Brother Made Me Do It* by Peg Kehret
- Notable Mention, Seth Conley, Nicholas County High School, *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard
- Notable Mention, Brooklyn Butcher, Nicholas County High School, *Perfect* by Ellen Hopkins
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Nicholas County High School, *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- Notable Mention, William Miller, Nicholas County High School, *Shelter* by Harlan Coben
- Notable Mention, Ryan Parker, Nicholas County High School, *Running Loose* by Chris Crutcher
- Notable Mention, Gabrielle Pike, Nicholas County High School, *I am a Soldier Too: The Jessica Lynch Story* by Rick Bragg
- Notable Mention, Maggie Sebert-Sweeney, Nicholas County High School, *Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant

- Notable Mention, Maria Stear, Nicholas County High School, *Improving Your Serve* by Charles Swindoll
- Notable Mention, Michael Miller, Scott High School, *The Alex Rider Saga* by Anthony Horowitz
- Notable Mention, Jacob Mosteller, Scott High School, *The Tell-Tale Heart* and Other Writings by Edgar Allen Poe
- Notable Mention, Meredith Howell, Scott High School, *Beastly* by Alex Flinn
- Notable Mention, Lindsey Cook, Scott High School, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- Notable Mention, Jay Milam, South Charleston High School, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Notable Mention, Rhiannon Schmitt, South Charleston High School, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, South Charleston High School, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, St. Albans High School, *Scars* by Cheryl Rainfield
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, St. Albans High School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, St. Albans High School, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, St. Albans High School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, St. Albans High School, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, St. Albans High School, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- Notable Mention, Kiana McIntosh, Washington High School, *The Chemical Garden Trilogy* by Lauren DeStefano
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Washington High School, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Washington High School, *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Washington High School, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry

- Notable Mention, Jackson Hepner, Washington High School, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Washington High School, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series* by Rick Riordan
- Notable Mention, Karina Salmeron, Washington High School, *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher
- Notable Mention, James Brookes, Washington High School, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Washington High School, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, School not given, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Wirt County High School, *Abandoned Farmhouse* by Ted Kooser
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Wirt County High School, *The Time Keeper* by Mitch Albom
- Notable Mention, Name Withheld, Wirt County High School, *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt