

For Immediate Release

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Arizona High School Student to Compete at National Finals of Poetry Recitation Contest

Poetry Out Loud National Finals will be held in Washington, D.C., May 2-4, 2016

PHOENIX, AZ (April 19, 2016) Hunter Hazelton, a senior at Betty Fairfax High School in Laveen, will represent Arizona at the 11th Annual Poetry Out Loud national finals competition in Washington, D.C., May 3-4, 2016.

A program of the **National Endowment for the Arts** and **The Poetry Foundation**, Poetry Out Loud is a poetry recitation competition delivered in high schools in all 50 states and three territories through partnerships with State Arts Agencies. Arizona's Poetry Out Loud program is managed by the **Arizona Commission on the Arts**, an agency of the State of Arizona, with support from regional partners, University of Arizona Poetry Center and Phonetic Spit.

Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure that begins at the classroom level. Winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to a regional and/or state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals. This year, more than 317,000 high school students nationwide participated in the program. 53 state champions—representing every state, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—will compete at the national finals.

The top finalists and their schools will receive \$50,000 in awards, including a \$20,000 college scholarship for the National Champion.

2016 Poetry Out Loud National Finals

The Poetry Out Loud semifinals will be held in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, May 3 at Lisner Auditorium at The George Washington University. Nine finalists will advance to the national finals, also held at Lisner Auditorium, on Wednesday, May 4.

Poetry fans who can't attend the live event can cheer on their state champions with a live, one-time only webcast of both the semifinals and the finals. For more information on the event, webcast, or viewing parties, visit www.arts.gov or call 202-682-5606.

About Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry—recitation and performance. Poetry Out Loud invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage. For further information regarding Poetry Out Loud, visit www.poetryoutloud.org.

About the Arizona Commission on the Arts

One of 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies across the United States, the Arizona Commission on the Arts is a 49-year-old agency of the State of Arizona and a leading force in the creative and professional development of Arizona's arts sector. Through robust programs, research initiatives and strategic grantmaking, the Arts Commission catalyzes arts-based partnerships that strengthen Arizona communities through the arts.

We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.

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For more information on the Arizona Commission on the Arts or Arizona Poetry Out Loud, please visit www.azarts.gov/pol or contact Steve Wilcox, Communications and Research Director, Arizona Commission on the Arts, at (602) 771-6536 or swilcox@azarts.gov.

To request this or any other agency publication in an alternative format, contact the Arts Commission offices at (602) 771-6502.

Images available upon request.