



PRESS RELEASE

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State Council on the Arts

ALASKA POETRY OUT LOUD WINNER FROM LATHROP HIGH SCHOOL

Lakeidra Chavis, a senior at Lathrop High School in Fairbanks won the Alaska State Poetry Out Loud Finals Tuesday night in Juneau, competing against eight other finalists from across the state. Lakeidra will receive an all expenses paid trip as Alaska representative for the national finals in Washington DC, April 27 - 29. Her school will also receive \$500 to purchase poetry books.

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. The program is funded by The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation with help from the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

Information on *Poetry Out Loud* is available from the Alaska State Council on the Arts at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/Aksca/> and at

Alaska State Council on the Arts, 161 S. Klewin St., Anchorage, AK 99508
907/269-6610 or 1-888-278-7424, www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca

www.poetryoutloud.org. The national winner will receive over \$20,000 in college scholarship support.

Kaylee Miltersen, a senior at Chugiak High School, was runner up, earning \$200 for poetry books for her school. The other state finalists were: Kendra Fleharty from Frank Degan School, Unalakleet; Katrina Greenlief, Thunder Mountain High School, Juneau; Trevor Pruitt, Revilla High School, Ketchikan; Erica Kelly, Delta High School, Delta Junction; Whitney Winders, Colony High School, Mat-Su; Kirsten Rawding, Thorne Bay School, and Jess Andersen, Unalaska City Schools, Unalaska. While in Juneau, the students were also encouraged to meet with their legislators.

Ben Brown, Chairman of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, opened the night introducing First Lady Mrs. Sean Parnell who "recited" a poem by Billy Collins in American Sign Language.

Poetry Out Loud judges this year were: Sherry Simpson (UAA professor and writer from Juneau, Alaska), Derrick Burlson (UAF professor, NEA fellow in Poetry and published poet), Dave Kiffer (Mayor of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and poet), Seth Kantner (commercial fisherman and best selling author of *Ordinary Wolves*), and Richard Dauenhauer (UAS professor, translator, and the 7th Poet Laureate of Alaska).

The State of Alaska had a 100% increase in participation this last year with over 4,700 students participating, representing over 40 school districts across the state. "Poetry Out Loud encourages students to begin a love affair with words, ideas, and imagination that will inspire them throughout their academic journeys and their careers," said Rocco Landesman, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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The mission of the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) is to foster the development of the arts for all Alaskans through education, partnership, grants and services. ASCA is a division of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and is governed by eleven council members appointed by the Governor. It is supported with general funds appropriated by the Alaska State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support for arts education programs from the Rasmuson Foundation.