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**CONTACT:** Alysha Suryah: [alysha.suryah@maryland.gov](mailto:alysha.suryah@maryland.gov); 410-767-6542

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**MARYLAND STATE ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES “POETRY OUT LOUD” STATE WINNER  
Madison Harris wins for the second year in a row!**

**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND** — Madison Harris, a tenth-grade student from Indian Creek High School in Anne Arundel County, has been selected as the [Poetry Out Loud](#) (POL) Maryland state champion for the second consecutive year. Madison was among nine finalists who competed in the statewide competition at the Baltimore Museum of Art in Baltimore City on Saturday, March 16. POL is administered through Maryland State Arts Council’s [Arts in Education](#) program.

During the competition, Madison recited “Nothing To Do” by James Ephraim McGirt; “Hanging Fire” by Audre Lorde (video available [here](#)); and “Black Matters” by Keith S. Wilson. Madison, who placed 3rd nationally last year, will advance to the 2024 POL National Finals in Washington, DC, from April 30 to May 2, where she will compete among other state finalists for the title of POL national champion.

“The power of this program is truly incredible,” said MSAC Executive Director Steven Skerritt-Davis. “As students examine and interpret great works of poetry through their own lens, we see their confidence and abilities to express their own viewpoints grow, and their interpretations often give those around them new insights, too. Congratulations to Madison and all of the competitors!”

Second place was awarded to Madilyn Tribbitt from Oakdale High School in Frederick County, and third place went to Abisola Asante from River Hill High School in Howard County. The other finalists included Elaine Casey from Gerstell Academy (Carroll), Fiona Guo from Pocomoke High School (Worcester), Jay Henry from Wilde Lake High School (Howard), Imari Owens from Gerstell Academy (Carroll), Ana Pantoja Alfaro from Brookewood School (Montgomery), and Yasmin Roach from Wilde Lake High School (Howard).

The Maryland state champion receives \$1,200 in combined prize funds from the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA) and MSAC. The winner’s school also receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry materials. The first runner-up receives \$600 in combined prize funds and \$200 for their school. At the National Finals, POL provides a total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends, with \$20,000 given to the national champion.

POL is co-sponsored by the NEA and [The Poetry Foundation](#). This year’s Maryland state competition was produced by [DewMore Baltimore](#).

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### **About the Maryland State Arts Council**

Founded in 1967, MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland Department of Commerce that plays an essential role, ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts. MSAC advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland. To do this, the agency awards grants to not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations for ongoing arts programming and projects, awards grants to individual artists, and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. MSAC receives its funds in an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland and from grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Council may also receive contributions from private, non-governmental sources. For more information, go to [msac.org](http://msac.org).

### **About Poetry Out Loud**

Poetry Out Loud (POL) is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. POL is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Foundation, and state and jurisdictional arts agencies. For more information, go to [poetryoutloud.org](http://poetryoutloud.org).