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**POWER OF THE PEN ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF DISTRICT WRITING TOURNAMENT
HOSTED VIRTUALLY BY ST. RAPHAEL**

NORTH CANTON, OH — February 21, 2022 — North Canton educational nonprofit Power of the Pen on Sunday announced the results of the Northern Ohio Region District 2 tournament hosted virtually by St. Raphael on February 5. St. Raphael Home and School sponsored the tournament.

In the Power of the Pen district tournament, 7th- and 8th-grade students competed in a series of extemporaneous rounds of creative writing tasks, each in response to an open-ended prompt. The district tournament is both a team and an individual competition.

Team award winners in the 7th grade are:

1st Place – Birchwood School of Hawken, Cleveland, coached by Lorraine Tzeng and Mayson Haydar

2nd Place – Rocky River Middle School, Rocky River, coached by Melissa Stickney

3rd Place – St. Raphael School, Bay Village, coached by Kimberly Hirsch

Team award winners for the 8th grade are:

1st Place – Birchwood School of Hawken, coached by Lorraine Tzeng and Jennifer Seward

2nd Place – North Royalton Middle School, North Royalton, coached by Randal Radtke

3rd Place – Olmsted Falls Middle School, Olmsted Falls, coached by Lisa MacAleese

7th grade top individual award winners are:

1st Place – Ayat Jaffar, Birchwood School of Hawken

2nd Place – Melanie Cesa, St. Albert the Great

3rd Place – Gracie White, Brooklyn School

4th Place – August Marcellino, Sts. Joseph and John

5th Place – Isabella Rezny, North Royalton Middle School

6th Place – Nathan Shanaman, Bellevue Middle School

7th Place – Nataly Shenouda, St. Paul Lutheran

8th Place – Elliana Chrisman, St. Albert the Great

9th Place – Joshua Gordon, Birchwood School of Hawken

10th Place – Eloise Nottingham, St. Raphael School

11th Place – Manya Raina, Birchwood School of Hawken

12th Place – Addison Miles, Olmsted Falls Middle School

8th grade top individual winners are:

- 1st Place – Areesha Nouman, Birchwood School of Hawken
- 2nd Place – Nyah Palmer, North Royalton Middle School
- 3rd Place – Isabella Bixler, Birchwood School of Hawken
- 4th Place – Liberty Kirkland, Olmsted Falls Middle School
- 5th Place – Caroline Van Raalten, Rocky River Middle School
- 6th Place – Kaylee Smith, Bellevue Middle School
- 7th Place – Piper Ermin, Columbia Middle School
- 8th Place – Alice Jones, Bay Middle School
- 9th Place – Caroline Creutz, Bethany Lutheran School
- 10th Place – Ella Jenkins, St. Mary of the Falls
- 11th Place – Amy Willard, St. Paul Lutheran
- 12th Place – Kellie Riley, North Ridgeville Academic Center

In addition, the following students earned Best of Round honors: 7th graders Chloe Schulz of Bay Middle School, Ayat Jaffar of Birchwood School of Hawken, and Annabelle Wissman of Rocky River Middle School, and 8th graders Nyah Palmer of North Royalton Middle School and Isabella Bixler of Birchwood School of Hawken.

Areesha Nouman of Birchwood School of Hawken received a Director's Choice award.

Power of the Pen, one of Ohio's largest educational enhancement programs, seeks to positively impact academic achievement of the state's middle schoolers by helping young people find and develop a creative voice uniquely their own.

All of the individual award winners, plus about the top 50% of writers at each grade level, will advance to the Northern Regional Tournament virtually hosted by Baldwin Wallace University on March 12. They will be joined by those who advanced from District 1 in the January 22 tournament in Cleveland Heights. Qualifying students from the Northern Regional Tournament will advance to a state tournament May 12-13 at Otterbein University.

The Northern Region includes Crawford, Erie, Huron, Lorain, Richland, and most of Cuyahoga counties.

Power of the Pen is Ohio's original interscholastic creative writing program for middle schools. 7th- and 8th-grade students in Ohio compete in a series of district, regional and state competitions by writing creative responses using provided prompts. The 501(c)(3) organization was founded in 1986 by the late Lorraine B. Merrill and has since become one of the state's largest educational enhancement programs. About 3,000 students participate in tournaments each year, while in-class supporting materials are provided for nearly 300 middle schools in Ohio. Support for the 2021-2022 academic year has been provided by Ohio Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. For more information, visit powerofthepen.org.

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