

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WESTERN REGION STUDENTS ADVANCE TO POWER OF THE PEN STATE TOURNAMENT**

NORTH CANTON, OH — March 21, 2022 — North Canton educational nonprofit Power of the Pen on Sunday announced the results of the Western Region Tournament hosted virtually by Wittenberg University on March 5. The tournament was made possible with the support of the Turner Foundation of Springfield.

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

The top prize in the tournament is a rotating Regional Sweepstakes trophy. **This year's Sweepstakes winner** is Oakwood Middle School, Oakwood, coached by Mindy Hoffer and Ann Whitehair.

Teams are also honored at each grade level. **Team award winners in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade are:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Jacob Coy Middle School, Xenia, coached by Kristina Minton

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – St. Charles Borromeo, Kettering, coached by Becky Mueller

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Ankeney Middle School, Beavercreek, coached by Carol Brown

**Team award winners for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade are:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Versailles Middle School, Versailles, coached by Megan Keiser

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Oakwood Junior High, Oakwood, coached by Ann Whitehair

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Northridge Middle School, Springfield, coached by Emily Comer

**7<sup>th</sup> grade top individual award winners are:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Ruxandra Paslaru, Oakwood Junior High

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Molly Schoen, St. Albert the Great

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Sadie Gobrail, Oakwood Junior High

4<sup>th</sup> Place – Reese Chilcote, Shawnee Middle School

5<sup>th</sup> Place – Sam DeHart, Twin Valley Community Local

6<sup>th</sup> Place – Claire Von Duhn, Versailles Middle School

7<sup>th</sup> Place – Harpreet Kaur, Miami Valley School

8<sup>th</sup> Place – Lukas Heitbrink, Tippecanoe Middle School

9<sup>th</sup> Place – Terra Choi, Global Impact STEM Academy

10<sup>th</sup> Place – McKenna Morris, Global Impact STEM Academy

11<sup>th</sup> Place – Alyssa Klenda, Jacob Coy Middle School

12<sup>th</sup> Place – Usayd Ashraf, Ridgewood School

**8<sup>th</sup> grade top individual winners are:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Mila Trulock, Northridge Middle School



- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Avery Baldosser, Akeney Middle School
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Margaret Wittman, St. Albert the Great
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place – Alyssa Geyer, Madison-Plains Junior High
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place – Lucy McClure, Tippecanoe Middle School
- 6<sup>th</sup> Place – Avery Anderson, Tippecanoe Middle School
- 7<sup>th</sup> Place – Elliott Farr, Ridgewood School
- 8<sup>th</sup> Place – Ella Gustin, Van Buren Middle School
- 9<sup>th</sup> Place – Paige Gehret, Versailles Middle School
- 10<sup>th</sup> Place – Elli Stammen, Versailles Middle School
- 11<sup>th</sup> Place – Ava Keel, Triad Middle School
- 12<sup>th</sup> Place – Georgia Sosebee, Miami Valley School

In addition, the following students earned Best of Round honors: 7<sup>th</sup> graders Grace Jung of Global Impact STEM Academy, Alyssa Klenda of Jacob Coy Middle School, and Claire Von Duhn of Versailles Middle School; and 8<sup>th</sup> graders Mila Trulock of Northridge Middle School, Elle Roth of St. Albert the Great, and Avery Baldosser of Ankeney Middle School. Lili Kiewitz of Montessori School of Dayton won a Director's Choice Award.

Ella Gustin of Van Buren Middle School, Matilda Prizler of Oakwood JHS, and Mary Cunningham of Ridgewood School each won a Platinum Pen award, which means that their writing has been selected for publication in the *Book of Winners*.

Wittenberg University awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to 8<sup>th</sup> grader Mila Trulock of Northridge Middle School. Terry Janssen of Shawnee Middle School received the Sara T. Landess Outstanding Teacher Award from the Turner Foundation of Springfield. The Dayton Kiwanis Foundation presented the Randy Kramer Award for Writing Excellence to 8<sup>th</sup> grader Lili Kiewitz of the Montessori School of Dayton. The Dayton Kiwanis Foundation also honored Brittasha Thompson and Bridget Hughes of Tippecanoe with the Outstanding Teacher 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 at the tournament, plus at least the top 20% of the writers at each grade level, will advance to the state tournament May 12-13 at Otterbein University.

The Western Region includes Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Mercer, Miami, Montgomery, and Preble 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](http://powerofthepen.org).*

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