



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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For More Information Contact:

Pat McGuckin

Henry Haupt

Jesse White Announces Illinois Winners Of 2008 Letters About Literature Contest

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has announced that students from Buffalo Grove, Norridge and Skokie have been selected as the Illinois winners of the annual Letters About Literature contest presented by The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, in partnership with Target Stores and sponsored by the Illinois Center for the Book.

The Letters About Literature contest is a national reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Participants write a personal letter to an author, explaining how his or her work changed their views of the world or themselves. Readers may select authors, living or deceased, from any genre--fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. The Illinois Center for the Book (www.illinoiscenterforthebook.org) appointed judges who selected the top essayists on three competition levels. This year's winners are:

- Competition Level I, Grades 4-6, Nikki Rhum of Buffalo Grove for her letter to author Dan Millman about his book *The Peaceful Warrior*. Nikki attends Twin Groves Middle School in Buffalo Grove.
- Competition Level II, Grades 7-8, Joey Romano of Norridge for his letter to Betsy Byars about her book *The Summer of the Swans*. Joey attends James Giles School in Norridge.
- Competition Level III, Grades 9-12, Amy Nathan of Skokie for her letter to Mitch Albom about his book *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Amy attends Ida Crown Jewish Academy in Chicago.

"These three talented young readers were among nearly 4,800 Illinois students who took part in this year's contest, giving Illinois more entries than any state in the nation," said Secretary White, who also serves as honorary chair of the Illinois Center for the Book. "Though only these three students will advance to national competition, all of the students who took part are winners, because they are developing a lifelong love of reading and learning."

The three Illinois winners, who now advance to national competition, will meet Secretary White at an awards ceremony in the Secretary of State's Chicago office later this year. They will receive several awards, including a \$50 gift card from Target and a \$150 check from the Illinois Center for the Book. Winners also receive a plaque signed by Secretary White.

Judges for The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will select six National Winners (2 per Level of Competition) and twelve National Honorable Mention Winners (4 per Level of Competition). The National Winners will receive a \$500 Target Gift Card, plus each will win a \$10,000 LAL Reading Promotion Grant for their community or school library. Additionally, the National Honorable Mention Winners will each receive a \$100 Target GiftCard and a \$1,000 LAL Reading Promotion Grant for the community or school library of their choice.

Approximately 56,000 young readers across the country participated in this year's Letters About Literature competition. Minneapolis-based Target serves guests at 1,591 stores in 47 states nationwide by delivering today's best retail trends at affordable prices. Target (NYSE:TGT) gives more than \$3 million a week to its local communities through grants and special programs. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs.