



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White Encourages Students to Enter “Letters About Literature” Contest

SPRINGFIELD – Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White is urging students in grades 4-12 to enter the 2012 “Letters About Literature” (LAL) contest, a national reading and writing competition sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and the Illinois Center for the Book in partnership with Target.

"Every year students across the nation read books and write letters to authors describing how a particular book made an impact on their lives," said White. "For the past four years, Illinois has led the nation in entries submitted by students. Our students enjoy this contest, and I hope thousands of Illinois students will once again participate. ‘Letters About Literature’ demonstrates that books can inspire and touch the lives of our young people."

There are three levels of participation: Level I for grades 4 - 6, Level II for grades 7 & 8 and Level III for grades 9 - 12. LAL awards prizes on both the state and national levels. Each state has its own panel of judges who select the top essayists in the state. State winners receive a \$50 Target gift card, and the opportunity to advance to the National level. At a ceremony hosted by Secretary White, Illinois winners receive their awards and read their entries.

On each competition level, a panel of national judges for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will select six (6) National Winners (2 per Level of Competition) and twelve (12) National Honorable Mention Winners (4 per Level of Competition). The National Winners will receive a \$500 Target gift card, and each winner will secure a \$10,000 LAL Reading Promotion Grant in their name for his or her community or school library, so that others can experience personal relationships with authors and the stories they tell. The National Honorable Mention Winners will each receive a \$100 Target gift card, and each winner will secure a \$1,000 LAL Reading Promotion Grant in their name for his or her community or school library. The community or school library selected for the National Winners and National Honorable Mention Winners is at the winner’s sole discretion.

Entries must be postmarked by **January 6, 2012**. State winners will be announced in May 2012. For more information about the competition, contact Bonnie Matheis at 217-558-2065 or bmatheis@ilsos.net. Information can also be found at <http://illinoiscenterforthebook.org>.

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