



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

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### For More Information Contact:

Pat McGuckin

Henry Haupt

### Jesse White Announces Illinois Winners of 2010 "Letters About Literature" Contest

SPRINGFIELD – Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has announced that students from Lake Forest, New Lenox and Athens have been selected as 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 and the Illinois State Library.

The "Letters About Literature" contest is a national reading and writing competition for students in grades 4-12. Participants read a book and write a personal letter to an author, explaining how the book changed their views of the world or themselves. Students may select authors, living or deceased, from any genre--fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. The Illinois Center for the Book ([www.illinoiscenterforthebook.org](http://www.illinoiscenterforthebook.org)) appointed judges who selected the top essayists on three competition levels.

This year's winners are:

- Level I, Grades 4 – 6, **Carra Wu of Lake Forest**, who attends fifth grade at Deer Path Middle School in Lake Forest. Carra wrote to Frances Hodgson Burnett, author of *A Little Princess*.
- Level II – Grades 7 & 8, **Jana Mudrock of New Lenox**, who attends 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Martino Jr. High in New Lenox. Jana wrote to Jay Asher, author of *Thirteen Reasons Why*.
- Level III – Grades 9 – 12, **Allyssa Brown of Athens**, who is in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at Athens Community High School. Allyssa wrote to Sarah Dessen, author of *Lock and Key*.

(Read the winning essays at <http://www.icftb.org/projects/projectse.html>.)

"These three talented young readers were among more than 6,300 Illinois students who took part in this year's contest," said Secretary White. "For the third year in a row Illinois had more entries than any state in the nation. I am proud of all of the students who took part, because they are developing a lifelong love of reading and learning."

The three winning students will receive a tour of Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield, a plaque, a U.S. Savings Bond and a \$25 Target Gift Card. An awards ceremony will be held in May at the State Library for the three winning students, their families and teachers.

The Center for the Book was established in 1977 as a public-private partnership to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. The Illinois Center for the Book was established in 1985 as an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Illinois Center for the Book works to nurture and connect readers and writers, and honor Illinois' rich literary heritage.

Target sponsors Letters About Literature as part of its national reading initiative, "Ready. Sit. Read!," which is aimed at fostering a love of reading among children at an early age. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs.