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# NEWS RELEASE



May 11, 2023

Contact: [Mary Getchell](#), Marketing and Communications Director  
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## Congratulations to Pierce County’s talented teen artists, writers and photographers

**PIERCE COUNTY, Washington** – Pierce County teens shared powerful lived experiences in the Pierce County Library System’s annual Our Own Expressions Teen Writing and Art Contest. In all, 585 teen artists, photographers and writers submitted 748 entries, expressing their passions, dreams and interests.

“I was so impressed with all the short story entries,” said Ray Stoeve, published author and short story judge of the contest. “They ranged from funny to serious and real world to fantasy settings, and many of the teens explored complex topics like trust, death and power. There are so many creative and talented teen writers in Pierce County and I hope to see their books on shelves one day!”

The winning authors and artists will showcase their work at a free public event at the University of Puget Sound, in the Wheelock Student Center at the Upper Marshall Hall, on **Saturday, May 20, 6-8 p.m.**

Stoeve along with Tacoma Poet Laureate Lydia K. Valentine reviewed the writing entries evaluating originality, style, general presentation, grammar, spelling and evidence of skill appropriate for the writer’s age. Artist Dave Sederberg and photographer Daniel Carrillo evaluated the art and photography entries on the basis of composition, evidence of skill appropriate with the age of the artist, creativity and effective use of media.

The Library System is displaying the award-winning work at [expressions.pcls.us](https://expressions.pcls.us) and in copies of the winners’ booklet available at Pierce County Libraries and as an e-book through the Libby app.

“Although this is just the beginning of my journey, I am beyond thankful that I’ve reached this checkpoint,” said Valentina Gutierrez of Fife, who placed first in the drawing category for grades 9-10.

### Drawing Winners

Grades 7-8: 1<sup>st</sup>—Alexis Rosendo, Puyallup; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Victoria Nozdrin, Spanaway; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Karime Briseno Iris, DuPont

Grades 9-10: 1<sup>st</sup>—Valentina Gutierrez, Fife; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Masha Skulskaya, Bonney Lake; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Audrey Skipworth, Bonney Lake

Grades 11-12: 1<sup>st</sup>—Iris Rogel, Bonney Lake; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Charlotte Southworth, Tacoma; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Evelyn Bang, Bonney Lake

### Photography Winners

Grades 7-8: 1<sup>st</sup>—Miren Sansburn, Puyallup; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Abigayel Hone, Vaughn; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Kaeli Kinney, Tacoma

Grades 9-10: 1<sup>st</sup>—Rylan Carter, Tacoma; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Avelina Zhukov, University Place; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Bryce Lovett, Puyallup

Grades 11-12: 1<sup>st</sup>—Logan Hunsicker, Bonney Lake; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Lola Cordero, DuPont; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Laila Fuqua, Puyallup

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## Poetry Winners

Grades 7-8: 1<sup>st</sup>—Dean King, DuPont; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Samara Amstutz, DuPont; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Jonathan Burket, DuPont

Grades 9-10: 1<sup>st</sup>—Samson BeSerra, Federal Way; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Kaiya Whaley, Puyallup; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Yumiko Doi, Fircrest

Grades 11-12: 1<sup>st</sup>—Ian Fisher, Olalla; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Ashtin Roy, University Place; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Jacob Lawty, University Place

## Short Story Winners

Grades 7-8: 1<sup>st</sup>—Lydia Smith, Bonney Lake; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Maya Holmes, Gig Harbor; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Lanaya Villaverde, Puyallup

Grades 9-10: 1<sup>st</sup>—Lyric Milligan, Tacoma; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Jonathan Taylor, JBLM; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Ava Carlson, Tacoma

Grades 11-12: 1<sup>st</sup>—Grace Adam, DuPont; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Rylie Wood, Bonney Lake; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Pedro Call, Tacoma

Thank you to the Pierce County Library Foundation for sponsoring the Our Own Expressions Teen Writing and Art Contest. The Library System encourages teens to continue their creative outlets with virtual and in-person teen library events and classes.

## About Pierce County Library System

The nationally acclaimed [Pierce County Library System](#) serves 655,000 people throughout Pierce County with 19 libraries and online services. The system is the fourth largest in the state and property taxes are the main funding source. People may choose from more than one million books, e-books, audiobooks, movies and other materials. Pierce County Library is committed to directing services in three primary areas: learning, enjoyment and community connection. Its services and programs spark success for Pierce County residents. More than 2 million people visit Pierce County Libraries each year. The Library provides services and programs directly to people in adult care facilities, people who are homebound, and to children in childcare centers and schools. [Pierce County Libraries are located](#) at Anderson Island, Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Fife, Gig Harbor, Graham, Key Center, Lakewood, Milton/Edgewood, Orting, Parkland/Spanaway, South Hill, Steilacoom, Summit, Sumner, Tillicum and University Place. Pierce County Library is an independent municipal corporation and operates as a junior taxing district.

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