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LAKE ERIE 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 Lake Erie Region Tournament hosted virtually by Hudson Middle School on March 5. The Hudson Kiwanis Foundation and the Hudson PTO sponsored the tournament.

In the Power of the Pen regional tournament, 7th- and 8th-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 Ballard Brady Middle School, Pepper Pike, coached by Jenna Drozd and Sarah DiBenedetto.

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

1st Place – Hudson Middle School, Hudson, coached by Mike Fejes

2nd Place – Revere Middle School, Bath, coached by Connie Tartara

3rd Place – Shaker Heights Middle School, Shaker Heights, coached by Sara Lambert

Team award winners for the 8th grade are:

1st Place – Mayfield Middle School, Mayfield Heights, coached by Shannon Saunders

2nd Place – Hudson Middle School, Hudson, coached by Mike Fejes

3rd Place – Ballard Brady Middle School, Pepper Pike, coached by Sarah DiBenedetto

7th grade top individual award winners are:

1st Place – Sofie Autero, Communion of Saints School

2nd Place – Manasvi Gurajala, Solon Middle School

3rd Place – Clara Rauschert, Revere Middle School

4th Place – Anya Ustin, Ruffing Montessori School

5th Place – Jerry Du, Hudson Middle School

6th Place – Eliana Fieldman, Mandel Jewish Day School

7th Place – Rin Lam, Revere Middle School

8th Place – Ellie Spencer, Kirtland Middle School

9th Place – Duy Tran, Hudson Middle School

10th Place – Keira El-Hayek, Kenston Middle School

11th Place – Karen Hill, Kirtland Middle School

12th Place – Anders Beckman, Shaker Heights Middle School

**8th grade top individual winners are:**

- 1st Place – Isabel Siegel, Shaker Heights Middle School
- 2nd Place – Anshul Sharma, Ballard Brady Middle School
- 3rd Place – Purva Punyam, Mayfield Middle School
- 4th Place – Sophie Lang, Ballard Brady Middle School
- 5th Place – Elizabeth Balazs, Mayfield Middle School
- 6th Place – Julienne Shanks, Cornerstone Christian Academy
- 7th Place – Elizabeth Thompson, Hudson Middle School
- 8th Place – Vivian Qi, Ballard Brady Middle School
- 9th Place – Kenzie Ryan, Mandel Jewish Day School
- 10th Place – Kiersten Chaney, Chagrin Falls Middle School
- 11th Place – Emily Kurland, Mandel Jewish Day School
- 12th Place – Vishaan Patel, University School

In addition, the following students earned Best of Round honors: 7th graders Clara Rauschert of Revere Middle School and Jerry Du of Hudson Middle School; and 8th graders Isabel Siegel of Shaker Heights Middle School and Ayesha Faruki of Memorial Middle School. Isabel Siegel and Ayesha Faruki also won Director’s Choice awards.

Platinum Pen award winners are Payton Winters of Perry Middle School, Ishan Bhatt of Ballard Brady Middle School, Marie Cain of Chagrin Falls Middle School, Ayesha Faruki of Memorial Middle School, Isabel Siegel of Shaker Heights Middle School, and Adonis Wazni of University School. The Platinum Pen award is given to students whose writing has been selected for publication in the *Book of Winners*.

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 Lake Erie Region includes Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, southeastern Cuyahoga and northern Summit 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.

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