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EASTERN REGION STUDENTS ADVANCE TO POWER OF THE PEN STATE TOURNAMENT

NORTH CANTON, OH — March 14, 2022 — North Canton educational nonprofit Power of the Pen on Sunday announced the results of the Eastern Region Tournament hosted virtually by Lake Elementary on February 26. Concept Homes 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 St. Michael School, Canton, coached by Kara Stuhlmiller.

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

1st Place – Northwest Middle School, Canal Fulton, coached by Jessica Ventosa

2nd Place – Edison Middle School, Massillon, coached by Meagan Patron

3rd Place – St. Michael School, Canton, coached by Kara Stuhlmiller

Team award winners for the 8th grade are:

1st Place – Jackson Memorial Middle School, Massillon, coached by Victoria Kerr

2nd Place – St. Michael School, Canton, coached by Kara Stuhlmiller

3rd Place – Tuscarawas Valley Middle School, Zoarville, coached by Jen Gardner

7th grade top individual award winners are:

1st Place – Sophia Hoffman, Dover Middle School

2nd Place – Layla Affolter, Northwest Middle School

3rd Place – Alyssa Morman, St. Michael School

4th Place – Alexandra Pappalardo, Canfield Village Middle School

5th Place – Adalyn Sell, South Range Middle School

6th Place – Olivia Waldron, Lincoln Middle School

7th Place – Madison Gladstone, Claymont Middle School

8th Place – Paityn Weekley, Jackson Memorial Middle School

9th Place – Kasey LaVoie, Northwest Middle School

10th Place – Beata Prosser, St. Michael School

11th Place – Isabel Lombardi, St. Michael School

12th Place – Laurel Jackson, Canfield Village Middle School

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

- 1st Place – Sami Ward, Tuscarawas Valley Middle School
- 2nd Place – Laurel Balcom, Jackson Memorial Middle School
- 3rd Place – Maggie Johnson, Jackson Memorial Middle School
- 4th Place – Pressley Grzybowski, Oakwood Middle School
- 5th Place – Tessa Palmer, Claymont Middle School
- 6th Place – Lukas Snyder, Northwest Middle School
- 7th Place – Caylee Fitzpatrick, LaBrae Middle School
- 8th Place – Catherine Dieringer, Canfield Village Middle School
- 9th Place – Aubrey Elliott, Indian Valley Middle School
- 10th Place – Elliott Nussbaum, East Canton Middle School
- 11th Place – Aleksia Jakoby, Edison Middle School
- 12th Place – Kala Kirtley, Tuscarawas Valley Middle School

In addition, the following students earned Best of Round honors: 7th graders Ella Rennecker of Canton Country Day School, Miciah Capers of Lincoln Middle School, and Kasey LaVoie of Northwest Middle School; and 8th graders Sarah Reynolds of Tuscarawas Valley Middle School, Mikenna Slayman of Jackson Memorial Middle School, and Tessa Palmer of Claymont Middle School.

Kasey LaVoie of Northwest Middle School won a Platinum Pen award, which means that Kasey's 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 Eastern Region includes Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Mahoning, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Stark, Tuscarawas, and Washington.

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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