

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LAKE ERIE REGION STUDENTS ADVANCE TO  
REGIONAL POWER OF THE PEN WRITING TOURNAMENT****Qualifying 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade writers competed in the recent  
District 2 tournament hosted virtually by University School**

NORTH CANTON, OH — February 14, 2022 — North Canton educational nonprofit Power of the Pen on Saturday announced the results of the Lake Erie Region District 2 tournament hosted virtually by University School on January 29. The Lander Circle Kiwanis Club sponsored the tournament.

In the Power of the Pen district tournament, 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students competed in a series of extemporaneous rounds of creative writing tasks, each in response to an open-ended prompt. The district tournament is both a team and an individual competition.

**Team award winners in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade at the District 2 tournament are:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Hudson Middle School, Hudson, coached by Mike Fejes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Revere Middle School, Bath, coached by Connie Tartara
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Ballard Brady Middle School, Pepper Pike, coached by Jenna Drozd

**Team award winners for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the District 2 tournament are:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Ballard Brady Middle School, Pepper Pike, coached by Sarah DiBenedetto
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Hudson Middle School, Hudson, coached by Mike Fejes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Mayfield Middle School, Mayfield Heights, coached by Shannon Saunders

**7<sup>th</sup> grade top individual award winners are:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Clara Rauschert, Revere Middle School
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Manasvi Gurajala, Solon Middle School
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Quinn Little, Mayfield Middle School
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place – Amarachi Udeh, Ballard Brady Middle School
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place – Merci Ewen, Communion of Saints School
- 6<sup>th</sup> Place – Brian Gunzler, Ratner Montessori School
- 7<sup>th</sup> Place – Olivia Merolla, Revere Middle School
- 8<sup>th</sup> Place – Autumn Lewis, Hudson Middle School
- 9<sup>th</sup> Place – Anders Beckman, Shaker Heights Middle School
- 10<sup>th</sup> Place – Alma Saltzman, Mandel Jewish Day School



11<sup>th</sup> Place – Mirabelle Hattier, Communion of Saints School

12<sup>th</sup> Place – Sophie Daniel, Hudson Middle School

**8<sup>th</sup> grade top individual winners are:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Abigail Xiong, Solon Middle School

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Panka Karman, Ballard Brady Middle School

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Vivian Qi, Ballard Brady Middle School

4<sup>th</sup> Place – Adonis Wazni, University School

5<sup>th</sup> Place – Ian Broihier, University School

6<sup>th</sup> Place – Lauren Williams, Mayfield Middle School

7<sup>th</sup> Place – Sophie Lang, Ballard Brady Middle School

8<sup>th</sup> Place – Ayesha Faruki, Memorial Middle School

9<sup>th</sup> Place – Selina Li, Hudson Middle School

10<sup>th</sup> Place – Sarah Holbrook, Shaker Heights Middle School

11<sup>th</sup> Place – Elizabeth Thompson, Hudson Middle School

12<sup>th</sup> Place – Elizabeth Balazs, Mayfield Middle School

In addition, the following students earned Best of Round honors: 7<sup>th</sup> graders Olivia Merolla of Revere Middle School, Amarachi Udeh of Ballard Brady Middle School, and Clara Rauschert of Revere Middle School, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders Ayesha Faruki of Memorial Middle School (Mentor), Isabel Siegel of Shaker Heights Middle School, and Ishan Bhatt of Ballard Brady Middle School. In addition, Adonis Wazni of University School received a Director's Choice award.

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, plus about the top 50% of writers in each grade level, will advance to the Lake Erie Regional Tournament virtually hosted by Hudson Middle School on March 5. They will be joined by regional qualifiers from the recent District 1 tournament virtually hosted by Lake Erie College. Qualifying students from the Lake Erie Regional Tournament will advance to a 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](http://powerofthepen.org).*

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