FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LAKE ERIE REGION STUDENTS ADVANCE TO REGIONAL POWER OF THE PEN WRITING TOURNAMENT

Qualifying 7th- and 8th-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, 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 district tournament is both a team and an individual competition.

Team award winners in the 7th grade at the District 2 tournament are:
1st Place – Hudson Middle School, Hudson, coached by Mike Fejes
2nd Place – Revere Middle School, Bath, coached by Connie Tartara
3rd Place – Ballard Brady Middle School, Pepper Pike, coached by Jenna Drozd

Team award winners for the 8th grade at the District 2 tournament are:
1st Place – Ballard Brady Middle School, Pepper Pike, coached by Sarah DiBenedetto
2nd Place – Hudson Middle School, Hudson, coached by Mike Fejes
3rd Place – Mayfield Middle School, Mayfield Heights, coached by Shannon Saunders

7th grade top individual award winners are:
1st Place – Clara Rauschert, Revere Middle School
2nd Place – Manasvi Gurajala, Solon Middle School
3rd Place – Quinn Little, Mayfield Middle School
4th Place – Amarachi Udeh, Ballard Brady Middle School
5th Place – Merci Ewen, Communion of Saints School
6th Place – Brian Gunzler, Ratner Montessori School
7th Place – Olivia Merolla, Revere Middle School
8th Place – Autumn Lewis, Hudson Middle School
9th Place – Anders Beckman, Shaker Heights Middle School
10th Place – Alma Saltzman, Mandel Jewish Day School
11th Place – Mirabelle Hattier, Communion of Saints School
12th Place – Sophie Daniel, Hudson Middle School

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

1st Place – Abigail Xiong, Solon Middle School
2nd Place – Panka Karman, Ballard Brady Middle School
3rd Place – Vivian Qi, Ballard Brady Middle School
4th Place – Adonis Wazni, University School
5th Place – Ian Broihier, University School
6th Place – Lauren Williams, Mayfield Middle School
7th Place – Sophie Lang, Ballard Brady Middle School
8th Place – Ayesha Faruki, Memorial Middle School
9th Place – Selina Li, Hudson Middle School
10th Place – Sarah Holbrook, Shaker Heights Middle School
11th Place – Elizabeth Thompson, Hudson Middle School
12th Place – Elizabeth Balazs, Mayfield Middle School

In addition, the following students earned Best of Round honors: 7th graders Olivia Merolla of Revere Middle School, Amarachi Udeh of Ballard Brady Middle School, and Clara Rauschert of Revere Middle School, and 8th 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.*

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