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**NEW MEXICO STATE CHAMPION WILL TAKE PART IN THE FINALS OF
*POETRY OUT LOUD: NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST***

Santa Fe, NM – Stav Gold, a senior at La Cueva High School in Albuquerque, will represent New Mexico in the national finals of *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* April 25-27 in Washington DC.

Gold, 18, beat out eight other finalists on Sunday, Feb. 21, in the 5th Annual New Mexico State Finals of *Poetry Out Loud*, sponsored New Mexico Arts, the state arts agency and a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Gold receives \$200 and an all-expense paid trip with chaperone to Washington DC to represent New Mexico at the national finals. His school will receive a \$500 stipend to purchase poetry books for the school library.

“I want to congratulate Stav Gold whom I’m sure will do a great job representing New Mexico in the national finals,” said Loie Fecteau, executive director of New Mexico Arts. “All of our student competitors are to be commended. By participating in *Poetry Out Loud*, our students learn and use valuable literary and communication skills that will serve them well the rest of their lives.”

The other participants in the state finals included runner-up Savannah Armijo, 15, a sophomore at Clovis High School, Clovis; Joseph Ulibarri, 17, a senior at Bloomfield High School, Bloomfield; Kaitlyn Frederick, 16, a junior at Carlsbad High School, Carlsbad; Emily Rossen, 16, a sophomore at Clayton High School, Clayton; Selene Campos, 14, a freshman at Deming High School, Deming; Nicole Bartlett, 16, a junior at Oñate High School, Las Cruces; Will Liakos, 15, a junior at Roswell High School, Roswell; and Mayra L. Mendoza, 18, a senior at Santa Teresa High School, Santa Teresa.

“We had more than 1,800 students and 39 teachers in New Mexico take part in *Poetry Out Loud* at the school level this year from across New Mexico,” Fecteau said.

Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by building on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement and the popularity of rap music. Through *Poetry Out Loud*, students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. The contest also seeks to address decreasing reading rates among young people, as cited in a recent NEA study *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence*. Now in its fifth year of national competition, *Poetry Out Loud* has inspired hundreds of thousands of high school students to discover classic and contemporary poetry.

“*Poetry Out Loud* encourages students to begin a love affair with words, ideas, and imagination that will inspire them throughout their academic journeys and their careers,” said Rocco Landesman, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Poetry Out Loud encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance and is the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Poetry Foundation. New Mexico students were among the more than 300,000 students nationwide who took part this year at the classroom level.

“The public recitation of great poetry,” said John Barr, President of the Poetry Foundation, “is a way to honor the speaker, the poem, and the audience all at once. *Poetry Out Loud* brings new energy to an ancient art by returning it to the classrooms of America.”

The *Poetry Out Loud* National Finals will take place in Washington DC at George Washington University’s Lisner Auditorium on April 26 and 27 during the final days of National Poetry Month. On April 26, students grouped in three geographic regions will compete in semifinal competitions. Twelve students (four from each region) will advance to compete in the National Finals on April 27. Judges will evaluate each student performance on criteria including physical presence, articulation, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty, and accuracy. Both events are free and open to the public.

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[New Mexico Arts](#), a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. *New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.*

The [National Endowment for the Arts](#) is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. *Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation’s largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases.*

The [Poetry Foundation](#), publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. *It has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring the best poetry before the largest possible audience.*