

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Rice Memorial High School's Maggie Fitzgerald Wins Vermont Poetry Out Loud Competition *Anna Van Dine of Harwood Union High School Places Second***

**Montpelier** – Maggie Fitzgerald, a senior at Rice Memorial High School, took top honors at the Poetry Out Loud State Finals, held at Vermont PBS on March 17. Fitzgerald was one of 10 finalists representing schools from across the state.

Fitzgerald secured the State championship by expertly reciting three poems with poise and fine-tuned interpretation. Anna Van Dine, a senior at Harwood Union high School, was the second place winner. The finals competition will be aired on Vermont PBS on Friday, April 29 at 8:00 p.m.

Fitzgerald will now advance to the National Finals in Washington, D.C., on May 3 and 4. She will receive \$200 in addition to an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., for herself and a chaperone. Rice Memorial High School will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. Van Dine will receive \$100, plus \$200 toward poetry books for Harwood Union High School.

Students from 53 high schools – champions from every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands – will compete for a total of \$50,000 in scholarship awards and school stipends at the National Finals. The National Champion will receive a \$20,000 college scholarship.

“More than 5,400 Vermont high school students participated in the Poetry Out Loud program this year, the largest number in the program’s 11-year history,” said Erika Lowe, Vermont Arts Council education programs manager. “Poetry Out Loud gives students an opportunity to explore the spoken word through some of the best poetry ever written, and to discover the power of public presentation.”

The Poetry Out Loud program was created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, and is administered statewide by the Vermont Arts Council. Now celebrating its 11th year in Vermont, Poetry Out Loud has inspired hundreds of thousands of American high school students to discover and know by heart classic and contemporary poetry.

**MEDIA NOTE:** Maggie Fitzgerald is available for both taped and live interviews and recitations. Please contact Erika [Lowe](mailto:elowe@vermontartscouncil.org) to make arrangements. Attached please find photos of Maggie Fitzgerald and Anna Van Dine (mandatory photo credit: Sam Simon Imagery). More information about the 2016 Vermont Poetry Out Loud Competition is available [here](http://www.vermontartscouncil.org). For other images and information, please contact Kira Bacon, communications and outreach manager / 802.828.5422 / [kbacon@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:kbacon@vermontartscouncil.org).

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a state where everyone has access to the arts and creativity in their life, education, and community. Through its programs and services, the Council strives to increase public awareness of the positive role artists and arts organizations play in communities and to maximize opportunities for everyone to experience the arts. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. [www.vermontartscouncil.org](http://www.vermontartscouncil.org).

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