

Announcing Virginia's 2019 Letters About Literature Winners *Annual Student Writing Competition Honors Young Writers Across the Commonwealth*

May 6, 2019—Charlottesville, Va.—**The Virginia Center for the Book**—a program of Virginia Humanities—announced the 2019 winners and honorable mentions of the **state-wide Letters About Literature writing competition** for students in grades 4-12. Now in its 26th year, the contest **encourages students to read a book, poem, or speech and write to that author** about how the book affected them.

During the 25th anniversary **Virginia Festival of the Book** in March, the Virginia Center for the Book honored the following 2019 Letters About Literature winners and honorable mentions. The Letters About Literature Celebration—held Saturday, March 23, 2019, at the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library in Charlottesville—featured student readings and awards, as well as **honorary guest speakers Robbi Behr and Matthew Swanson**, the author-illustrator creators of *The Real McCoys*; *Everywhere, Wonder*, and other award-winning books for young readers.

Out of hundreds of entries received from across Virginia, the selected state-wide winners are:

- Level I (grades 4-6): **David de Costa** (Alexandria, VA)—*Just My Luck* by Cammie McGovern
- Level II (grades 7-8): **Lucy Rowe** (Richmond, VA)—*Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld
- Level III (grades 9-12): **Stephanie Annis** (Woodbridge, VA)—*Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes

State winners received a cash prize as well as a book donated in their honor to their school library, and will proceed to national judging, hosted by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, for the chance to read their work at the **2019 National Book Festival** in Washington, D.C., on August 31, 2019.

In addition, honorable mentions were awarded to:

- Level I (grades 4-6):
 - **Vivienne Huang** (McLean, VA)—*Out of My Mind* by Sharon M. Draper
 - **Alexander Szara** (Falls Church, VA)—*Howtoons* by Saul Griffith and Nick Dragotta
 - **Jack Tanner** (Falls Church, VA)—*Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
 - **Lawson Watt** (McLean, VA)—*Crenshaw* by Katherine Applegate
- Level II (grades 7-8):
 - **Alexia de Costa** (Alexandria, VA)—*The Art of the Possible* by Edward Keenan
 - **Morgan Dixon** (Richmond, VA)—*The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green
 - **Ava Jung** (Richmond, VA)—*To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han
 - **Maya Parker** (Afton, VA)—*The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
 - **Luke Wang** (Clifton, VA)—*Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
- Level III (grades 9-12):
 - **Meg Anderson** (Arlington, VA)—*Artisan Breads Every Day* by Peter Reinhart
 - **Porter DuHadway** (Falls Church, VA)—*All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot
 - **Theresa Lam** (Falls Church, VA)—*Only Child* by Rhiannon Navin
 - **Raleigh Perkins** (Woodbridge, VA)—*My Absolute Darling* by Gabriel Tallent

About Letters About Literature: The annual Letters About Literature writing contest for young readers is coordinated nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, which promotes the contest through its affiliate Centers for the Book, state libraries and other organizations. For more details, visit Read.gov/Letters.

About the Virginia Center for the Book: A program of the Virginia Humanities, the Virginia Center for the Book works across the Commonwealth to unite communities of readers, writers, artists, and book lovers. Through year-round programs and partnership initiatives, the Center recognizes the enduring power of literature, storytelling, and the book arts to engage in public dialogue and promote intercultural understanding. As an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, the Center works within a network of affiliates to promote books, reading, literacy, and the literary life of Virginia. To learn more, visit **VaBookCenter.org**.

About Virginia Humanities: Virginia Humanities connects people and ideas to inspire engagement and deepen mutual understanding. As the state humanities council, Virginia Humanities reaches millions in its estimated annual audience through festivals, grants, fellowships, digital initiatives, teacher institutes, radio programs, podcasts, apprenticeships, and school programs. Headquartered at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia Humanities endeavors to serve Virginians in every corner of the Commonwealth. To learn more visit **VirginiaHumanities.org**.

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