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STUDENTS WIN TRIPS TO PLACES THEY LOVE

HYDE PARK, NY – “This year’s Writing about Place entries depicted a wide range of treasures from forests and ponds to the manicured landscapes of local mansions,” said Scott Keller, acting director of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. “The students’ poems and essays remind us of the many places in our region that can provide us with comfort, inspiration, and a sense of community.”

Students who entered Teaching the Hudson Valley’s writing contest delighted readers with descriptions of – and feelings about – significant places in our area. In the coming weeks we'll share their poems and essays on THV blog. In the meantime, we are pleased to introduce the top-scoring authors in Writing about Place.

This year’s results are a bit unusual as the winners in each category are all from the same school. Teachers and students will choose which of the winning places they will visit with expenses paid by THV.

HIGH SCHOOL

Paradise in the Hills by Sydney Corwin is a dreamy evocation of the landscapes at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site in Hyde Park. Najiyah Williamson’s A Plum of a Place introduces readers to Kowawese Unique Area at Plum Point, an Orange County park. Luke Ramjug dares us to keep up as he climbs Mount Beacon in Let Me Take You to a Mountain. These ninth graders are students of Virginia McCurdy at Newburgh Free Academy, Newburgh Enlarged City School District, Orange County.
MIDDLE GRADES

In *Sweet Wine Berries* India Braine reflects on how Knox’s Headquarters State Historic Site seems to change depending on the season and her age. Emma Byrne paints a picture of a 1,400-year-old forest in *Black Rock*, a poem about the 3,870-acre forest and biological field station maintained by the Black Rock Forest Consortium.

*Bull Pond* by Narelle Nailor finds the writer “sitting on a rock” thinking she’s the luckiest person in the world. Bull Pond Recreation Area is a community center at West Point. All three writers are fifth graders at Cornwall Central Middle School, Orange County, and students of Patricia Young.

ELEMENTARY

Second graders at *Riccardi Elementary School* in Saugerties, Ulster County, submitted acrostic poems where an initial letter in each line spells out the subject. Top scores went to *Cantine Fun Time* by Lauren Quirk, *Kelder Farm Fun* by Ava DiCicco, and *Glasco Mini Park* by Anthony Bertorelli. Cantine Field and Glasco Mini Park are managed by the Saugerties Village Dept. of Parks and Recreation. Kelder’s Farm is a 200-year-old family farm in Kerhonkson. These young poets are students of Frances Murphy.

PRAISE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Each student’s work was read by a panel looking for evocation of place, a vivacious voice, and mastery of conventions appropriate to their age and development. Readers included local teachers, along with representatives of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, NYS DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program, and THV.

“Connecting young people with parks, historic sites, and other significant places is important to the future well-being of our region and our nation,” said Larry Turk, superintendent of the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt-Van Buren National Historic Sites. “Teachers and families who foster an appreciation for ‘place’ and encourage students to preserve our culture and history have my sincere thanks!”

THV sponsors *Writing about Place* as part of the annual National Day on Writing organized each October by the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Writing Project, and others. Public, private, and homeschooled students throughout the 11-county Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area are eligible to participate.