STUDENT WRITERS WIN CLASS TRIPS TO HUDSON VALLEY PLACES

HYDE PARK, NY – “Students who submitted entries to this year’s Writing about Place imagined being trees, super heroes, statues, and more. They shared personal connections to urban parks and formal gardens, mansions and mountains,” said Scott Keller, acting director of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. “Their writing reminds us that our region is full of places that provide solace and inspiration, shaping our identities and sense of community.”

THV will share students’ poems and essays in the coming weeks on THV blog. In the meantime, we want to introduce the top-scoring authors in this school year's Writing about Place. Their classes will receive trips to the places they wrote about.

HIGH SCHOOL – MILLBROOK AND NEWBURGH

In Stone Faced, Alice Rosi-Marshall imagines herself as a statue in the gardens at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. “Since I was eight years old, I have found refuge in the Vanderbilt Gardens,” she wrote. “…. [what] fascinated me most…was the statue of the woman forever dancing underneath her brick archway.” Ms. Rosi-Marshall is in grade 10 at Millbrook High. English teacher Maureen Ackerman submitted the poem along with work by other students.

Redwan Arosh, a freshman at Newburgh Free Academy, conjured the life of a tree in an essay titled The Beauty of Bear Mountain. Mr. Arosh explores how a tree might look and feel in each season, describes the ebb and flow of visitors, and contemplates a tree’s role as “a home for birds and squirrels” and a source of oxygen for humans. English teacher Virginia McCurdy submitted Mr. Arosh’s work as well as essays by other students in the Newburgh Enlarged City Schools.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – OVERLOOK PRIMARY, ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Second graders eager to visit the zoo at Bear Mountain State Park won the elementary school trip with drawings and research on animals they expect to encounter there. Yessenia, for example, described a bald eagle’s “pointy yellow beak,” while Zitlaly speculated on how porcupines use their “sharp claws.” Sucheta Baichwal and Lily Cheung teach English as a New Language at Overlook Primary School (Arlington Central Schools) and involved their students in Writing about Place.

No middle school award was made this year.

PRAISE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Three or more panelists read each student’s work looking for evocation of place, a vivacious voice, and mastery of conventions appropriate to students' ages and development. Readers included local teachers and environmental educators along with representatives of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, NYS DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program, Putnam History Museum, Environmental Cooperative at Vassar Barns, and THV.

“Connecting young people with parks, historic sites, and other significant places is critical to retaining our country’s sense of history and protecting its natural wonders,” said Larry Turk, superintendent of the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt-Van Buren National Historic Sites. “My hat is off to teachers, families, and youth leaders who encourage children and teens to develop an appreciation of ‘place.’ Thanks to all!”

Public, private, and homeschooled students throughout the 11-county Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area are eligible to participate in Writing about Place.

ABOUT THV

Launched in 2003, Teaching the Hudson Valley is a program of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and Greenway Conservancy; Roosevelt-Vanderbilt-Van Buren National Historic Sites, National Park Service; Hudson River Estuary Program, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation; and Hudson River Valley Institute/Marist College. THV helps educators and students discover and appreciate the region’s natural, historic, and cultural treasures.