FOR RELEASE
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Photos and drawings available on request

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Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, & Westchester students win trips to places they love

HYDE PARK, NY – Students who entered Teaching the Hudson Valley’s writing contest delighted us with their impressions of—and feelings about—places in our region. In the coming months many of their poems and essays will be published on our blog. In the meantime, we are pleased to introduce the top-scoring authors in Writing about Place. They will have an opportunity to introduce their classmates to the places they wrote about with expenses paid by THV.

“In 2016 the National Park Service is celebrating its centennial by encouraging everyone to Find Your Park,” said Sarah Olson, superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt-Van Buren National Historic Sites. “This year’s Writing about Place entries depicted a wide range of local treasures from a sculpture park to a community pool to the Hudson River itself. Their poems and essays are wonderful expressions of the instinct many of us share to find places that comfort, inspire, and provide meaning.”

Each student’s work was read by a panel looking for evocation of place, a vivacious voice, and mastery of conventions appropriate to age and development. Readers included local teachers, educators from historic sites, and representatives of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, NYS DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program, and THV. Elementary students were asked to submit poems, while secondary students wrote essays.

“Connecting young people with parks, historic sites, and other significant places is important to the future well-being of our region,” said Mark Castiglione, director of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and Greenway Conservancy. “Families and teachers who encourage students to really look at their surroundings foster an appreciation for ‘place’ and nurture a desire to preserve our culture and history. For that, they have my 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. Support was provided by Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Friends of John Jay Homestead, Oblong Books and Music, and the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. Public, private, and homeschooled students throughout the 11-county Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area are eligible to participate. This year’s winners are:

**ELEMENTARY**

Valerie Nielson’s poem about the Hudson River placed first. Her classmate, Olivia Drossos, placed third with her poem about the Wallkill River. Both are students at Walden ES, Orange County. Their class plans to visit Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park and the Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum and will receive a gift certificate from Oblong Books and Music. Asa Miller, Haldane ES, Putnam County, placed second. He wrote and drew about Fishkill Farms and will introduce his class to the farm.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Archie Lakhman placed first with *Sunshine, salt marsh, and sand shrimp: My visit to the Marshlands Conservancy in Rye*. He attends Hommocks MS in Westchester County and will visit the Marshlands with his fellow sixth graders. Second and third places went to Skyler Fountain and Tyler VanDeBogart, seventh graders at Millbrook MS, Dutchess County. Skyler wrote *The Town of Washington Pool* and Tyler, *Baseball Diamond, LaGrange*.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

The Beacon Park by Ada Johnston describes the City’s Memorial Park and placed first. Second place went to Dear Future Grandma, Brandon Rein’s exploration of Chadwick Lake Park in the Town of Newburgh. Ada and Brandon will receive gift certificates from Oblong Books and Music. Placing third was Therese Fischer’s essay about Storm King Art Center. All three are ninth graders at Newburgh Free Academy in Orange County. They and their classmates will visit Storm King Art Center.

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**NEXT CONTEST**

Details about the 2016-17 contest will be published on THV’s website, www.TeachingtheHudsonValley.org, in July or August. Entries should be written in September or October and will be due in November.

**ABOUT THV**

Launched in 2003, Teaching the Hudson Valley helps educators and students discover and appreciate the region’s natural, historic, and cultural treasures.

THV programs foster collaboration between schools and informal learning sites, such as museums and historic site, through field trip grants, professional development opportunities, a free on-line collection of K-12 lessons and activities, support, and technical assistance.