FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos available on request.

Writing about place, K-12 contest winners

HYDE PARK, NY – Teaching the Hudson Valley (THV) is pleased to announce the winners of its second annual K-12 “Writing about Place” contest. Each winning author will host his/her classmates or family on an all-expense paid trip to the place they wrote about or another site of cultural, historic, or natural significance in the region. Elementary school students submitted poems; middle and high school students wrote short essays. Winners are:

Elementary school

Ava Jolley, grade 4, Pequenakonck ES, North Salem, Westchester County, Ichabod’s Recollections; her class will visit Washington Irving’s home, Sunnyside. Tristan Brideweser, grade 4, Chester ES, Orange County, Minnewaska the Majestic; his class will visit the John Jay Homestead with bus service provided by Friends of John Jay. Diego Sanchez, grade 4, St. Peter’s, Poughkeepsie, The Bardavon; his class will visit the Poughkeepsie Farm Project at Vassar College. Christian Zuklis, grade 4, JDWR IS, Arlington, Dutchess County, A Haiku: Summer in Pleasant Valley’s Community Garden; he will receive a family pass to visit the Mohonk Preserve.

Middle school

Preston Button, grade 6, Fox Hill School, Walden, Orange County, The Wallkill River; his class will visit a site to be determined. Dalton Demers, grade 8, Dover MS, Dutchess County, Nature’s Secret Wonders; his family will receive four day passes to Olana State Historic Site. Heather Graham, grade 7, West Point MS, Orange County, My Favorite Place in the Hudson Valley; her family will tour the Horace Greeley House in Chappaqua courtesy of the New Castle Historical Society. Sabina Vail, grade 6, Warwick MS, Orange County, Bethel Woods; her class will participate in a program with educators from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies.

High school

Claire Houston, grade 10, Poughkeepsie Day School, The Forgotten Land, about Fishkill
Reformed Cemetery; her class will receive a field trip to be determined. **Maia Baskerville**, *My Bookish Paradise*, about the Montgomery Free Library, and **Vladimir Beagué**, *Sarah Lane Park*, grade 12, **Orange-Ulster BOCES Career and Technical Education Center**; their class is preparing for a sail on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. **Megan Carney**, grade 11, **Yorktown HS, Poets’ Walk Park**; her class will participate in a special program with Scenic Hudson’s educator, Susan Hereth. Scenic Hudson manages Poets’ Walk.

**CONTEST DETAILS.** THV sponsored the contest as part of October’s National Day on Writing sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Writing Project, and others. Students throughout the 11-county Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area were eligible for the contest. The [Hudson River Foundation](https://www.hudsonriverfoundation.org) provided special support for the contest.

Each student’s writing was read by a panel of 3-6 people including a retired teacher and representatives of THV, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, John Jay Homestead, NYS DEC’s Hudson River Estuary program, and Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites. Readers looked for evocation of place, a vivacious voice, and use of conventions appropriate to each student’s age and development.

Only writing about places of cultural, historic, or natural significance was eligible for prizes, but all students will receive feedback on their work. Winning submissions will be published on THV’s blog, but other work that was considered “strong” will be considered for publication as time and space permits.

“It’s always heartening to see that young people are visiting and learning about our many important resources,” said Mark Castiglione, acting director of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and Greenway Conservancy, “caring for these cultural, historic, and natural treasures is really critical to our region’s future and knowing them is the first step.”

“Connecting people with parks, historic sites, and other significant places is central to the mission of the National Park Service,” said Sarah Olson, superintendent of the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, “and as we prepare for NPS’s centennial in 2016 we are even more eager to help students create and share memorable experiences.”

**PRIZES.** In addition to trip support provided by THV, the following groups contributed prizes: [Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies](https://www.caryinstitute.org), [Friends of John Jay Homestead](https://www.johnjayhomestead.org), [Hancock Shaker Village](https://www.shakervillage.org), [Hudson River Sloop Clearwater](https://www.sloopclearwater.org), [Mohonk Preserve](https://www.mohonk.com), [New Castle Historical Society](https://www.nchistoricalsociety.org), [Olana State Historic Site](https://www.olana.org), [Poughkeepsie Farm Project](https://www.2016.pfp.org), and [Scenic Hudson](https://www.scenic-hudson.org).

**ABOUT THV.** Launched in 2003, Teaching the Hudson Valley helps educators and students discover and appreciate the natural, historic, and cultural treasures of the Hudson Valley. THV programs foster collaboration between schools and informal learning sites and include a free online collection of K-12 lessons and activities, field trip grants, professional development opportunities, resources, support, and technical assistance for teaching about our region.