



*From the Desk of NEA Chairman Jane Chu*

Are you looking for a new way to interest your students in poetry?

Since 2005, more than 12,000 schools, 50,000 teachers, and 3.3 million students have discovered the power of Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest. This program provides free, easy-to-use materials that encourage high school students to learn about classic and contemporary poetry through memorization, performance, and competition.

The competition starts in the classroom with students choosing poems to memorize and recite from an online anthology of more than 900 poems. Students advance to school-wide contests, then regional and state finals. By participating in the program, your students have the chance to win an all-expenses-paid trip to the national finals in Washington, DC, in April 2018. In total, Poetry Out Loud will award more than \$100,000 to state- and national-level winners and their schools.

But beyond gaining an appreciation for poetry, time and again high school students tell us what an impact Poetry Out Loud has had on their lives, from developing their self-confidence to giving them the tools to express themselves. Samara Elán Huggins from Mableton, Georgia, the 2017 Poetry Out Loud National Champion, participated in the program all four years of high school and credits the program for teaching her she has the confidence and presence to command a room. “I would never have expected myself to be able to speak to more than one person and convey such strong emotions and ideas and messages,” she said. “But I’m capable of that, and I appreciate this program for helping me find that out.”

The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to partner with the Poetry Foundation and the state arts agencies to make this program available in all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Visit [poetryoutloud.org](http://poetryoutloud.org) to learn more about this program and connect with your [state Poetry Out Loud coordinator](#) to take part in the 2017-18 program.

Jane Chu  
Chairman  
National Endowment for the Arts