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CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR THE BOOK ANNOUNCES STATE WINNERS FOR LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST

The California Center for the Book, housed at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) and affiliated with the Library of Congress, announced three winners for the annual “Letters About Literature” writing contest. Winners Augustine Chemparathy from John Baldwin School in Danville, Francesca Libutti from Pioneer Junior High School in Upland and Sarah Zarrin from Saratoga High School in Saratoga will all advance to the national competition.

Ms. Chemparathy’s, Ms. Libutti’s and Ms. Zarrin’s letters were all chosen by a distinguished panel of California judges including authors Michael Jaime-Becerra, Cecil Castellucci, Firoozeh Dumas, Dima Hilal, Susanne Pari and Dana Reinhardt, Director of the California office of Poets and Writers Cheryl Klein, Santa Monica Public Library teen librarian Shana Johnson and retired middle school teacher Susan Gibb. The three winners are among thirty finalists in California and represent each of the three competition levels: Level 1 for grades 4 through 6, Level II for grades 7 and 8 and Level III for grades 9 through 12. The three California winners received cash prizes and \$50 Target gift cards and will advance to the national competition where the top prize includes a \$500 Target gift card plus a \$10,000 Letters about Literature Reading Promotion Grant for their community or school library.

To enter the competition, readers from grades 4 through 12 wrote a personal letter to an author, living or deceased, explaining how his or her work changed their view of the world or themselves. Somewhat more than 4,400 California students entered this year. Students selected authors from any genre – fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. This year’s award ceremonies will take place Sunday, June 8 at 2 p.m. at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library in San Jose.

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target Stores sponsors the “Letters About Literature” national program. Additional state sponsors include the California School Library Association, the California Teachers Association and the Children’s Literature Council of Southern California.

The California Center for the Book is supported by the United States Institute of Museum and Library Services, under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. It is housed in GSE&IS’s Department of Information Studies.

Minneapolis-based Target serves guests at 1,591 stores in 47 states nationwide by delivering today's best retail trends at affordable prices. Target (NYSE:TGT) gives more than \$3million a week to its local communities through grants and special programs. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs.

The UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) includes two departments - the Department of Education and the Department of Information Studies. Together, the two departments embody the school's commitment to understand and improve educational practice, information policy and information systems in a diverse society. GSE&IS's academic programs bring together faculties and students committed to expanding the range of knowledge in education, information science and associated disciplines. Its professional programs seek to develop librarians, teachers, administrators and information professionals within the enriched context of a research university.