FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2017

CONTACT:
Phyllis Kennedy, Program Coordinator
(505) 476-0520, (800) 879-4278 (statewide)

POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST
NEW MEXICO STATE FINALS
March 12, 2017

Santa Fe – Join seven New Mexico high school students at 1 p.m. on Sunday March 12, 2017 at the St. Francis Auditorium of the New Mexico Museum of Art., as they compete to become New Mexico’s state champion in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. This year marks the 12th Annual New Mexico Poetry Out Loud event.

Santa Fe radio DJ, Michelle Laflamme-Childs, who manages New Mexico Arts public art program, will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Special guest artists Hakim Bellamy, Albuquerque’s first poet laureate, and state Senator Bill O’Neill of Albuquerque, a published poet, will perform original works. Admission to the event is free and open to the public.

“Poetry Out Loud, at its core, is about the power of poetry,” said Jane Chu, chair of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which sponsors the event across the country in partnership with the Poetry Foundation and state arts agencies, including New Mexico Arts. “By memorizing these poems, students are internalizing the beauty of the arts and developing a deep personal connection with our shared literary heritage. The NEA is proud to work with our state partners and the Poetry Foundation to make this opportunity available to students throughout the country.”

Since Poetry Out Loud began 12 years ago, more than 10,500 New Mexico high school students have participated in this exciting program. This year, 1202 students and 19 teachers took part at the classroom level across New Mexico.

Schools winners participating in the 2017 New Mexico State Finals include: Lizzy Enos, age 15, Bosque School, Albuquerque; D’Nessa McDaniel, age 17, Highland High School, Albuquerque; Michelle Zhou, age 17, La Cueva High School, Albuquerque; Daimon Sisneros, age 18, Maxwell Municipal Schools; Juan Andres Rodriguez, age 18, Public Academy for Performing Arts, Albuquerque; Verona Gomez, age 18, Oñate High School, Las Cruces; and Julia Johnson-Jaramillo, age 17, Taos High school.

“Poetry Out Loud is often the beginning of a lifelong love of poetry in a young person’s life,” said Poetry Foundation President Henry Bienen. “I’m reminded of Emerson’s encouraging words to Whitman—‘I greet
you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a
start.’”

The state winner will receive $200, plus $500 for their school library for the purchase of poetry books. In
addition, the state champion will receive an all-expense-paid trip, with an adult chaperone, to Washington, DC, to
compete at the National Finals in May. The National Champion receives $20,000 in prizes.

“After ten years and almost three million students later, Poetry Out Loud has created a new generation of
poetry readers and lovers who are proof that poetry is a lively and important presence in the classroom
and in the culture,” Bienen said.

Poetry Out Loud encourages the nation’s youth to learn about great poetry through exploration,
memorization, and performance. The inspiration for this program is to promote poetry in both the
classroom and the community. Performers are judged on physical presence, voice and articulation,
appropriateness of dramatization, evidence of understanding, and accuracy.

This year’s judges for the New Mexico State Finals include New Mexico Arts Commissioner Tom Maguire of
Santa Fe; poet Debbi Brody of Santa Fe; Debra Haaland, a published writer, of Albuquerque and Pueblo of
Laguna; and former Navajo poet laureate Luci Tapahonso. Jessica Helen Lopez, an adjunct faculty member
of the University of New Mexico’s Chicana and Chicano Studies Department, is the 2017 event coordinator
for New Mexico’s Poetry Out Loud program.

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation and
state arts agencies. The New Mexico portion of the national poetry recitation contest is sponsored by
New Mexico Arts, a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

The New Mexico Museum of Art is located at 107 W. Palace Ave. in downtown Santa Fe. For more
information, contact Phyllis Kennedy, New Mexico Arts, at (505) 476-0520 or (800) 879-4278
(statewide), or email phyllis.kennedy@state.nm.us.

###

New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.

National Endowment for the Arts Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. For more information, visit www.arts.gov

Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring the best poetry before the largest possible audience. For more information, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org