FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 18, 2015

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POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST
NEW MEXICO STATE FINALS
February 22, 2015

Santa Fe – Join ten New Mexico high school students at the St. Francis Auditorium of the New Mexico Museum of Art on Sunday February 22, 2015 at 1 p.m., as they compete to become New Mexico’s state champion in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. This year marks the 10th Anniversary of Poetry Out Loud. Award-winning Navajo poet, Esther Belin, is scheduled to perform. Admission to the event is free and open to the public.

“Since Poetry Out Loud began 10 years ago, some 9,000 New Mexico high school students have participated in this exciting program,” said Governor Susana Martinez. “These students represent the best our state has to offer and I am proud of all of them – and their teachers – for doing their part to embrace and promote literacy in our state.”

The New Mexico competition was held statewide and ten schools are sending students to the state finals. Schools winners participating in the state final include Vivian Li, Bosque School, Albuquerque; Michelle Zhou, La Cueva High School, Albuquerque; Lucas Smathers, Public Academy for Performing Arts, Albuquerque; Alex Wiesel, Southwest Secondary Learning Center, Albuquerque; Andrew Pierce, Carlsbad High School, Carlsbad; Isacc Ramos, Deming High School, Deming; Ryan Szeto, Hiroshi Miyamura High School, Gallup; Brad Martinez, Oñate High School, Las Cruces; Katie Delgado, Los Alamos High School, Los Alamos; Rachel Patty, Raton High School, Raton. This year’s judges include New Mexico Arts Commissioner Tom Maguire, poet Debbi Brody, UNM professor and poet Lisa D. Chavez, and poet Heming Xu. Also in attendance will be Justine Haka, Program Associate for the Poetry Foundation in Chicago.

“Ten years ago, we launched the first national Poetry Out Loud competition, and since then, nearly 2.5 million high school students have discovered the art of poetry recitation,” said National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu. “Together with the Poetry Foundation, state arts agencies, local arts
organizations, schools, and teachers, we are thrilled to encourage the next generation of poetry ambassadors."

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

**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 Department of Cultural Affairs.

"To memorize and recite a great poem of the past or present," said Robert Polito, President of the Poetry Foundation, "is to 'own' it in the most personal way – in your body, your breath, and your spirit. Recitation is an interpretive act that is also creative and self-transformative. Celebrating its tenth anniversary, Poetry Out Loud is now a vital aspect of the American educational landscape. It has enhanced the ways poetry is taught in schools and has created many future readers of classic and contemporary poetry. Perhaps the ultimate triumph of Poetry Out Loud is this realization of Whitman’s dream of ‘great audiences’ for ‘great poets’.”

**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, level of complexity, evidence of understanding, and accuracy.

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.

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**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.

The **National Endowment for the Arts** is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation’s largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases.

The **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.