



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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WHITE ENCOURAGES STUDENT READERS TO ENTER “LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE” CONTEST

SPRINGFIELD—Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White is urging students in grades 4-12 to enter the 2008 Letters About Literature (LAL) contest, a national reading and writing contest sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and the Illinois Center for the Book in partnership with Target. The contest combines reading and writing, two skills that will benefit students for the rest of their lives.

“Every year thousands of Illinois students join students from across the nation in writing letters to authors, living or deceased, describing how a book impacted their life,” said White, who also serves as honorary chair of the Illinois Center for the Book. “Anyone who has read these moving letters can see how literature truly inspires and touches the lives of our young people.”

There are three levels of participation - Level I for grades 4, 5 & 6, Level II for grades 7 & 8 and Level III for grades 9 - 12. Beginning this year, each of six national winners will receive a \$10,000 grant for their school or community library for reading promotion for children and young adults. Also new this year is the addition of 12 national honorable mentions. Each national honorable mention will receive a \$1,000 grant for reading promotion for their community or school library.

Each participating state will select a winning letter for each competition level. The winners of each state will receive a \$50 gift card from Target and other prizes from the Illinois Center for the Book, as well as go on to the national judging where two national winners and four national honorable mentions will be selected for each competition level. Along with receiving a grant for the community or school library, the national winners will also receive a \$500 gift card from Target and the national honorable mentions will receive a \$100 gift card.

The deadline to enter the 2008 Letters About Literature competition is December 14, 2007. State winners will be announced in March 2008 and national winners will be announced in May 2008.

Official how-to-enter guidelines and entry coupons can be found at the LAL website, www.loc.gov/letters. To receive a free copy in Adobe of the LAL teacher’s guide, which includes lesson plans, blackline masters, and assessment checklists, teachers should contact the national project director at lettersaboutlit@epix.net.

For more information about the competition, contact Bonnie Matheis at 217-558-2065 or bmatheis@ilsos.net. Information about the Illinois Center for the Book can be found at www.illinoiscenterforthebook.org.

Target sponsors Letters About Literature as part of its national reading initiative, “Ready. Sit. Read!,” which is aimed at fostering a love of reading among children at an early age. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs.

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