

Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County
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For Release

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS JOIN *POETRY OUT LOUD*
CONTEST FOR THE FIRST TIME**

County-wide competition on Feb 23

Contra Costa County high schools will be participating in the *Poetry Out Loud* national recitation contest for the first time this year. *Poetry Out Loud* is an arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to the county and state competitions, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, DC.

This exciting new program, which began in 2005, helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. It was developed by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, and is administered locally by the California Arts Council and the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County (AC5).

This is the first year *Poetry Out Loud* is being offered in Contra Costa County and six high schools are participating. They are **Antioch High and Deer Valley High in Antioch, Miramonte High in Orinda, Mt. Diablo High in Concord, Pittsburg High in Pittsburg, and Salesian High in Richmond.**

Students will recite works they selected from an anthology of nearly 500 classic and contemporary poems. Judges evaluate student performances on criteria including articulation, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty, and accuracy.

Representatives from each school will attend the county competition, presented by AC5 on Saturday, February 23 at 7 pm, at the Schoolhouse Cultural Center in Pleasant Hill. The winner will represent CCCounty at the California finals. The event is free and open to the public.

To learn more about the Contra Costa *Poetry Out Loud* contest, contact AC5 or visit www.poetryoutloud.org.

About AC5: The County Board of Supervisors established the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County in 1994 in response to a growing interest in arts advocacy on the part of artists, educators, the business community and county officials. AC5's mission is to support artists and arts organizations in the County and to forge strong partnerships between the arts community and such stakeholders as the Board of Supervisors, municipal governments, community-based organizations, regional business community, and educational institutions. More information on AC5 and its activities is available at www.ac5.org.