



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Winners named at statewide MLK oratorical contest

**Columbus** — Ohio students inspired by the lessons and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. presented original speeches on his teachings during the 11th Annual Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest held today in Columbus. Thirty-eight regional contest winners from grades kindergarten through 12 spoke before family, friends and judges at the King Arts Complex.

Speakers were judged on performance, originality and composition. The following speakers placed first, second and third in their respective divisions:

**Senior Division (grades nine through 12)** First place – Pierre Robertson, Charles F. Brush High School, Cleveland; second place tie – Caitlyn Merkel, Lima Senior High School of Multiple Intelligences, Lima, and Brandon Warren, Shawnee High School, Lima; third place – Olivia Phifer, Maumee Valley Day School, Toledo.

**Junior Division (grades six through eight)** First place – John Merkel, Lima North Middle School, Arts Magnet, Lima; second place tie – Courtney Clemens, Shawnee Middle School, Lima, and Serita Coles, Woodward Park Middle School, Columbus; third place – Keona Williams, Woodward Park Middle School, Columbus.

**Intermediate Division (grades three through five)** First place – Taylor Wynne, Greenview Upper Elementary School, South Euclid; second place – Merri Merkel, Lima Heritage Elementary School, Arts Magnet, Lima; third place – Dabrienne Slayton, Carylwood Intermediate School, Cleveland.

**Primary Division (grades kindergarten through two)** First place – Micaiah Moore, Lima Heritage Elementary, Arts Magnet, Lima; second place – Lotith Savardekar, Thomas Elementary School, Columbus; third place – Landin Schumacher, Shawnee Elmwood Elementary School, Lima.

First-place finishers are invited to speak at the 2011 Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration on Jan. 13. The celebration and speech contest are sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission. The commission is housed in the Equal Opportunity Division of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.

“Dr. King would be proud to see part of his dream realized through the talented, diverse young people of Ohio who are participating in this oratorical contest,” said Stacey Brinkley, chair of the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission.