

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 14th Annual Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest held today in Columbus.

Twenty-one 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 – Larry Fulton, Hawken School, Pepper Pike; second place – Olivia Velasquez, Pandora-Gilboa High School, Ottawa; third place – Jaylin Cody, Charles F. Brush High School, Lyndhurst.

Junior Division (grades six through eight) First place – McKenna Hensley, Arts Impact Middle School, New Albany; second place – Merri Merkel, Lima Liberty Arts Magnet School, Lima; third place – Anirudh Vijayshankar, Solon Middle School, Solon.

Intermediate Division (grades three through five) First place – Olivia Moore, Hilltop Elementary School, Beachwood; second place – Osita Anekwe, Mansion Day School, Reynoldsburg; third place – Bre'Anna Walker, Avalon Elementary School, Columbus.

Primary Division (grades kindergarten through two) First place – Isaiah Manning, Clinton Elementary School, Columbus; second place – Brooklyn Barnes, Mansion Day School, Blacklick; third place – Malcolm Pierce, Clinton Elementary School, Columbus.

First-place finishers are invited to speak at the 2014 Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration on Jan. 16 in downtown Columbus. The celebration and oratorical 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.

“These impressive young people expertly wove Dr. King’s timeless messages into their own words. Just like Dr. King, they will go on to inspire their generation and generations to come,” said William T. Green, chair of the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission.