

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #295 (2004-2005)

May 23, 2005

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: PENCILS FULL OF STARS

ASD Goals: Increase student academic achievement; and establish and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment by offering reinforcing extracurricular activities.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The idea for a poetry booklet penned by students began in 1970 when Northwood Elementary School first grade teacher Bell Benton set out to collect student poetry to present at the District's Fine Art Festival. Astonished with the number of submissions, Ms. Benton compiled the collection and titled it, "Pencils Full of Stars."

Each year since, with the help of the Poetry Committee, the booklet has been published to allow Anchorage elementary students the opportunity to see their creativity in print. Now in its 36th year of publication, it is believed to be the longest continually published poetry anthology in Alaska. This year's publication contains 200 poetry selections from 60 classrooms of 30 elementary schools.

The year's Poetry Committee members include: Carol Dahl, Melinda Dale, Lori Davis, Beverley Fonnesbeck, Louise Gallop, Celeste Long, Jeanie Heginbotham, Keith Perrins, Margaret Phillips, Jamie Stein, and Magel Toyofuku.

Louise Gallop will present certificates to this year's Gold Nugget winners. The five winners are: **Flynn Plumlee** and **Kristin Winkle** of Rogers Park Elementary School, **Paige Akers** and **Noel Villegas** of Taku Elementary and **Jennifer Joo** of Baxter Elementary School.

In addition to the publication of their poetry, some students are honored with other special awards, such as the Margaret Mielke Memorial Poetry Award to Promising Young Poets. This award is given in honor of the late Margaret

Mielke, the first poet laureate of Alaska. Trudy Keller, a Mielke family member, will make these presentations.

This year's Mielke Award winners include elementary students: **Nick Alexander** of Muldoon Elementary, **Amanda Pugh** from Northern Lights ABC, **Melissa Beard** of Scenic Park Elementary, **Agnes Hong** of Tudor Elementary, and **Paige Akers, Rick Lisenby, Katie Melbourne, Nancy Chavez,** and **Chrissy Clark** from Taku Elementary School.

Five years ago, another award was added to honor the late Bell Benton who was a creative inspiration to so many students. The Bell Benton Memorial Poetry Award honoring excellence in poetic expression will be presented by Gretchen Van Hove from the Eta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International, a society of women educators.

The winners include: **Imani Carmon** of College Gate Elementary, **Ashley Ann Groesbeck** of Muldoon Elementary, **Rachel Zafren** of Rogers Park Elementary, **E.J. Tung** from Sand Lake Elementary, **Leslie Rogers** of Scenic Park, **Paige Akers** of Taku Elementary and **Shiloh Brady** and **Alexis Penny Ospina-Wicks** from Girdwood.

It is requested that the School Board recognize these young poets whose creativity and imagination inspired these awards.

CC/ME/LN

Prepared by: Lori Nakanishi, Communications Specialist

Approved by: Michelle Egan, Director, Communications