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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**May 8, 2017**

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## **WQED ANNOUNCES LOCAL FINALISTS OF ITS PBS KIDS WRITERS CONTEST**

*Public Invited to Vote May 12 – 19, 2017 for the Kid’s Public Choice Winner at [WriteOnKids.Org](http://WriteOnKids.Org)*

PITTSBURGH – Today, WQED announced the finalists of its 2017 [PBS KIDS Writers Contest](http://PBSKids.org) made possible locally by the [EQT Foundation](http://EQTFoundation.org). Partnering with WQED on its Writers Contest this year was [West Virginia Public Broadcasting](http://WestVirginiaPublicBroadcasting.org) (WVPB), and [PBS 39](http://PBS39.org) (WLVT) serving eastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey, and [WPSU](http://WPSU.org) in State College, serving central Pennsylvania. **Twenty-six finalists were chosen from more than 1,000 stories received from throughout Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, and Delaware.**

From May 12-19 the public is invited to vote for the “Kid’s Public Choice Winner.” All finalists’ stories will be available to read and listen to via WQED’s Writers Contest page at [www.writeonkids.org](http://www.writeonkids.org).

The 2017 Finalists are:

### **KINDERGARTEN**

- Aarav Parthiban, age 5 of Pittsburgh
- Abigail Mascaro, age 5 of Gibsonia, PA
- Anthony Pavlik, age 6 of Venetia, PA
- Sammuell Davidson, age 5 of McKeesport, PA

### **FIRST GRADE**

- Aryan Kazimi, age 7 of Pittsburgh
- Chayun Bliss Lee, age 6 of University Park, PA
- Ella McConville, age 7 of Sarver, PA
- Max Seekford, age 7 of Allison Park, PA
- Rocco Romano, age 7 of Venetia, PA

### **SECOND GRADE**

- Brock McMullen, age 8 of Greensburg, PA
- Connor Dickey, age 8 of Pittsburgh
- Riley Philage, age 7 of Pittsburgh
- Sol Lee, age 8 of State College, PA

### **THIRD GRADE**

- Alex Klein, age 9 of McMurray, PA
- Areesha Nouman, age 8 of Cleveland, OH
- Clare Troll, age 9 of Somerset, PA
- Isabelle Ciletti, age 8 of Finleyville, PA

### **FOURTH GRADE**

- Dagny Haglund, age 10 of Pittsburgh
- Elly Strittmatter, age 10 of Bridgeville, PA
- Jackson McMullen, age 10 of Greensburg, PA
- Marielle Wilson, age 10 of Irwin, PA
- Regan Mazur, age 9 of Eighty Four, PA

### **FIFTH GRADE**

- Caraline Sommer, age 11 of Jefferson Hills, PA
- Caroline Troll, age 11 of Somerset, PA
- Jocelyn Walters-Vrabel, age 11 of Cheswick, PA
- Maximilian Marcieski, age 11 of Irwin, PA

Winners of WQED's Writers Contest will be announced at the Winners Celebration on Sunday, May 21 at WQED's Fred Rogers Studio and awarded prizes including the opportunity to record their winning story. Their recordings will be broadcast on [iQKidsRadio.org](http://iQKidsRadio.org) and featured on [Saturday Light Brigade](#) (SLB) Radio in the summer of 2017. Winners' stories will also be made into an original puppet play which will be performed at the Celebration by Pittsburgh Puppet Works.

WQED President and Chief Executive Officer Deborah L. Acklin says the Writers Contest continues to directly impacts children's well-being and future success.

"Every year WQED is a proud participant in the PBS KIDS annual Writers Contest because it underscores our commitment to the success of children in Pennsylvania, and elsewhere including West Virginia and Ohio," said Acklin. "The process of creative writing has been proven to not only support the building of key academic skills but to help improve a child's self-confidence, creativity and imagination. WQED congratulates its finalists and celebrates all of the talented students who entered this year's contest."

To learn more about the contest, visit [pbskids.org/writerscontest](http://pbskids.org/writerscontest).

### **About WQED**

**WQED** changes lives by creating and sharing outstanding public media that educates, entertains, and inspires. It is the parent company of WQED-TV (PBS); WQED Create; WQED WORLD Channel; WQED Showcase; WQED PBS KIDS Channel; Classical WQED-FM 89.3/Pittsburgh; Classical WQED-FM 89.7/Johnstown; the Pittsburgh Concert Channel at WQED-HD2 (89.3-2FM) and online at [www.wqedfm.org](http://www.wqedfm.org); local and national television and radio productions; WQED Interactive ([www.wqed.org](http://www.wqed.org)) and iQ: smartmedia, WQED's Educational initiative ([www.wqed.org/edu](http://www.wqed.org/edu)).

### **About The EQT Foundation**

**EQT and the EQT Foundation** are committed to the social and economic vitality of our operating regions. For more than a decade, the EQT Foundation has made a difference by supporting local programs and initiatives that involve education, community and economic development, the arts, and the environment. Together with a variety of non-profit organizations, the EQT Foundation develops strong partnerships that enrich the diversity and viability of our communities, sustain the principles of continuous learning, and focus on environmental protection efforts.

### **About West Virginia Public Broadcasting**

**West Virginia Public Broadcasting** nurtures personal growth, promotes civic responsibility and inspires lifelong discovery through high-quality programming and services. West Virginia Public Radio, West Virginia PBS, [wvpubcast.org](http://wvpubcast.org) and Ready To Learn® are all services of West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

The Friends of West Virginia Public Broadcasting is a 501(c)3 organization responsible for receiving donated funds from individuals for annual membership to West Virginia Public Broadcasting. Friends serve as ambassadors in their communities on behalf of West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

All of the licenses for West Virginia Public Broadcasting are held by the West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority, an agency of the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, Kay Goodwin, Secretary.

### **About PBS 39**

**PBS39** is a community-owned public television station licensed to Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, PA, serving eastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey. PBS39 is owned and operated by the Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation. PBS39 has the potential to reach 6 million people in our viewing area. PBS39 educates, inspires, informs and entertains while stimulating and disseminating the exchange of ideas for community enrichment.

### **About WPSU**

**WPSU Penn State** is a collection of innovative writers, storytellers, teachers, producers, designers, and technicians — using 21st century tools and media to bring information,

education, and entertainment to our viewers, listeners, and larger communities throughout Pennsylvania and beyond.

We are leading edge public broadcasters — producing original, local content and providing your favorite programs commercial-free on public radio and television, to engage the minds and spirits of our neighbors and make connections between the region and the world.

We create meaningful and memorable films about important social, academic, and community stories to help stimulate conversation and discovery.

We improve learning experiences, through design of high-quality, dynamic content in a variety of formats, to aid learners of all ages in their educational journeys.

### **About Saturday Light Brigade**

**SLB Radio Productions, Inc. (SLB)** uses radio and audio to encourage, amplify, share and archive the ideas, stories, and feelings of children, youth and families. SLB believes in radio and audio because these technologies enable a sense of intimacy, engagement and self-directed imagination that is often lacking in other media, while also promoting opportunities for privacy (given that children need not be photographed), equal access (audio has fewer barriers for participation than other media), and sharpening of important life skills (i.e., speaking and listening, imagination, creative expression, and critical thinking, respect for others, confidence and cooperation, and technical curiosity).

### **About PBS KIDS**

**PBS KIDS**, the number one educational media brand for kids, offers all children the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television, online, mobile and community-based programs. Kidscreen- and Webby-award winning [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org) provides engaging interactive content, including the PBS KIDS video player, now offering free streaming video accessible on computer- and mobile-device-based browsers. For more information on specific PBS KIDS content supporting literacy, science, math and more, visit [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom), or follow PBS KIDS on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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