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PRESS RELEASE

Alameda County's Stephanie Bucuroaia to compete at California Poetry Out Loud Finals

**Castro Valley High School student named Alameda County champion,
continues to statewide competition on March 18 and 19 in Sacramento**

Oakland CA – (March 16, 2018) – Stephanie Bucuroaia, an 11th grader at Castro Valley High School, took first place in the 2018 Alameda County Poetry Out Loud competition on Feb. 14 in downtown Oakland. Bucuroaia will represent Alameda County at the upcoming state finals.

The California Poetry Out Loud State Finals will be held March 18 and 19 in Sacramento. The first round is scheduled to take place at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 18, at the Crest Theatre. Round two of the event begins Monday, March 19 at 8:30 a.m., in the Assembly Chambers at the state Capitol. Selected students will compete in a third and final round on the same morning immediately following the second round of the competition.

The winner of the statewide event will move on to represent the Golden State in the national finals, April 23-25 in Washington, D.C.

At the Alameda County competition, Bucuroaia recited *El Olvido* by Judith Ortiz Cofer and *Let Us Consider* by Russell Edson. "Community events like this are based on the Arts Commission's belief that the arts and creativity are an essential part of every successful and thriving community," said Arts Commission Director Rachel Osajima. Alameda County Chief Deputy Auditor-Controller Melissa Wilk added, "The student participants awed the judges and the audience with their inspired delivery of powerful poems."

Begun in 2005, this year's state competition will be the 13th production from the California Arts Council. An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Out Loud encourages high school students to learn about poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. California's Poetry Out Loud is the largest event of its kind in the U.S., and has grown steadily since its inception. This year's competition series encompasses 46 counties, 261 schools, and 783 teachers, reaching nearly 73,000 students across the state.

"California Poetry Out Loud is an exciting display of the potential of our state's young people, the power of spoken word, and how wonderfully the project builds agency in our youth," said Anne Bown-Crawford, Director of the California Arts Council. "It is rewarding to see confidence and creativity ignite so powerfully in each of our county champions. The program is truly a testament to arts education as a categorical imperative for the future successes of both our students and our state."

Event details for the 2018 California Poetry Out Loud State Finals can be found at the California Arts Council's Poetry Out Loud webpage at <https://tinyurl.com/PoetryOutLoud2018>.

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The mission of the California Arts Council, a state agency, is to advance California through the arts and creativity. The Council is committed to building public will and resources for the arts; fostering accessible arts initiatives that reflect contributions from all of California's diverse populations; serving as a thought leader and champion for the arts; and providing effective and relevant programs and services. Learn more at www.arts.ca.gov.