

## Kansas Students Named State Winners in 2008 Letters About Literature Project

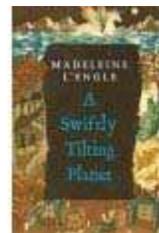
by Roy Bird, Director, Kansas Center for the Book

A 6th grade student, a 7th grade middle school student, and a junior high school student have taken top honors in the 2008 Kansas Letters About Literature reading and writing initiative sponsored by the Kansas Center for the Book (KCFB). Judges, who were KCFB Fellows or 2007 Kansas Notable Book authors, recommended the letters of these students and the State Librarian selected them as winners. These three winning essays advance for national competition.

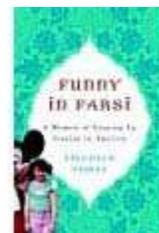
Jamie Yearout, Stilwell, won the Level I, grades 4-6, competition with her letter to Ann M. Martin, author of *A Corner of the Universe*. Corinne Andresen, Oxford Middle School in Overland Park, won the Level II, grades 7-8, competition with her letter to Madeline L'Engle, author of *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*. And Ammarah Usmani, who is a student at Wichita East High School, won the Level III, grades 9-12, competition with her letter to Firoozeh Dumas, author of *Funny in Farsi*.



Letters About Literature is a reading and writing program of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, presented in partnership with Target Stores. To enter, young readers write a personal letter to an author explaining how his or her work changed their view of the world or themselves. Readers can select authors from any genre—fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. The program has three levels: elementary, middle school, and high school. The contest encourages young readers to explore his or her personal responses to a book, then express those responses in creative, original ways.



Almost 1,300 Kansas students in grades 4-12 submitted letters to the initiative this year. A total of 106 were pre-selected as Kansas semi-finalists by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Over 56,000 students from 50 states submitted letters this year.



Kansas state winners each receive a certificate, a cash award, plus a \$50 Target gift card. Recognition and awards will be made at the state winners' schools, and other semi-finalists from their schools will also be acknowledged. Their letters will be posted to the Center for the Book website when all the official permissions have been received.

Congratulations to the 106 semi-finalists from Kansas and the three state winners, Jamie, Corinne, and Ammarah.