

Letters About Literature Announces the 2007 State Winners

by Roy Bird, Director, Kansas Center for the Book

An eight-year-old home schooled student, an eighth grade middle school student, and a sophomore high school student have taken top honors in this year's Kansas Letters About Literature reading and writing initiative sponsored by the Kansas Center for the Book (KCFB). Judges, who were KCFB Fellows or authors, recommended the letters of these students and the State Librarian selected them as winners. These three winning essays advance for national competition.



**Grayce McAllister Received
Certificate from Governor
Kathleen Sebelius**

Grayce McAllister, from Americus, won the Level I, grades 4-6, competition with her letter to Susan Wojciechowski, author of *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey*. Francesca Hutton, who attends the Independent Middle School in Wichita, won the Level II, grades 7-8, competition with her letter to Daniel Handler, writing as Lemony Snicket, author of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. And Jamie Allan, who is a student at Ottawa High School, won the Level III, grades 9-12, competition with her letter to Theodore Geisel, writing as Dr. Seuss, author of *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* This was the second Ottawa High School winner in a row, both students of teacher Angie Flax.

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 that response in a creative, original way.

In Kansas, over 1,400 students in grades 4-12 submitted letters to the initiative this year. A total of 134 were pre-selected as Kansas semi-finalists by the Center for



***Jaime Allan Received Certificate
from Governor Kathleen
Sebelius***

the Book in the Library of Congress. Over 56,000 students from 50 states submitted letters this year.

Grayce and Jamie came to the Capitol on Thursday, March 22, 2007, to meet with Governor Kathleen Sebelius and receive certificates honoring their achievements, signed by the Governor and State Librarian Christie Brandau. They and their families also received a tour of the State Library and a special tour of the Capitol building.

Kansas state winners each receive a certificate, a cash award, plus a \$50 Target gift card. Recognition and awards will be made at the Kansas Authors Dinner at the annual library Tri-Conference at Topeka's ExpoCenter Thursday, April 12, 2007, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Congratulations to the 134 semi-finalists from Kansas and the three state winners, Grayce, Francesca and Jamie.