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**REGIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS
ANNOUNCE LOCAL WINNERS OF 15TH NATIONAL
READING RAINBOW CONTEST**

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania and **CHARLESTON, West Virginia**—Winners for the 15th Annual READING RAINBOW Young Writers & Illustrators Contest have been announced by WQED and West Virginia Public Broadcasting (WV PBS.) Thirty-two 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners as well as honorable mentions and judges' choices in grades kindergarten through third were chosen.

With support from EQT Corporation, WQED and WV PBS were two of 95 public television stations to participate in this year's Contest. Entries from Kindergarten through third grade are first judged at the local level, with local winners advancing to the national competition.

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This year's contest garnered over 1,200 entries, a record for WQED and WV PBS. The Contest encourages children to use their imaginations and apply their writing and artistic talents by creating original storybooks. This year's winners, listed below, created original "books" featuring tales of bugs, a blueberry, a trailer and a windy city among others.

WQED WINNERS:

KINDERGARTEN

First Place:

***A Blueberry Problem* by Ella Reets Haney of Washington, PA**

Second Place:

***The Tooth Fairy* by Makenzie Steiner of McDonald, PA, South Fayette Elementary**

Third Place:

***The Boy and the Balloons* by Sarah Plotz of Bethel Park, PA, Washington Elementary School**

Honorable Mention:

***My Birthday at the Zoo* by Mira Bernat of Lower Burrell, PA, Stewart Elementary School**

FIRST GRADE

First Place:

***Windington: The City of Big Winds* by Patrick Lowe of Washington, PA**

Second Place:

***My New Pinky Do* by Raegan Gouker of Liberty Boro, PA**

Third Place:

***The Bird's Wish* by Shreyas Naidu of Pittsburgh, PA**

Honorable Mention:

***The Story of Rocky's Life* by Abigail Dawley of Pittsburgh, PA**

SECOND GRADE

First Place:

***The Perfect Pet* by Theresa Marie Heidenreich of Pittsburgh, PA, Kerr Elementary School**

Second Place:

***A Rainforest Adventure* by Safiy Yusuf Khan of Pittsburgh, PA**

Third Place:

***Little White Bird and Little Mouse's Adventure* by Hannah Kim of Pittsburgh, PA, Kerr Elementary School**

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Honorable Mention:

***Lovebug* by Cassie Dzubinski of McMurray, PA**

THIRD GRADE

First Place:

***The Art Club* by Alexa Reider of New Castle, PA**

Second Place:

***Chester the Viking* by Sead D. Niksic of Pittsburgh, PA**

Third Place:

***The Teeny Tale of Tiny Tess* by Catherine Mary Deegan of McMurray, PA**

Honorable Mention:

***One Little Spider* by Nathan Predajna of Wyano, PA**

WV PBS WINNERS:

KINDERGARTEN

First Place:

***The Magic Flower and the Fairy* by Raine Fritz of West Union, WV**

Second Place:

***Emily Plays* by Rylie Naff of Beckley, WV**

Third Place:

***The Fifty Pirates Had a Treasure Hunt* by Donovan Wolford of Henlawson, WV**

Judges' Choice:

***My Mini Hamster* by Amanda Ward of Craigsville, WV**

FIRST GRADE

First Place:

***Bugs* by Orion Wille of Aurora, WV**

Second Place:

***The Magic Butterfly* by Madeline Blankenship of Princeton, WV**

Third Place:

***Grandma Susie's Old Trailer* by John Cowger of Beckley, WV**

Judges' Choice:

***The Perfect Snow* by Michelle Grisinger of Leon, WV**

SECOND GRADE

First Place:

***The Secret World of Princesses and Fairies* by Bilen Kifle Zerie**

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of Huntington, WV

Second Place:

***The Lonely Flower* by Gracie Moore of Kenova, WV**

Third Place:

***Mr. Smith and Baby Deer* by Alexis Hoffman of Charleston, WV**

Judges' Choice:

***The Boy Attacker* by Madison Michels of Liberty, WV**

THIRD GRADE

First Place:

***Titi's Travels* by Michaela Oren of Pineville, WV**

Second Place:

***The Purple Llama* by Cora McKean of Dry Fork, WV**

Third Place:

***The Baby Bunny* by Kirsten Thompson of Fort Gay, WV**

Judges' Choice:

***My Perfect Dream* by Hunter Gorby of Chester, WV**

The winning stories may be read online at www.wqed.org/education/tr and www.wvpubcast.org/education.aspx?id=9669

WQED will honor local winners at the [Carnegie Library's Summer Reading Extravaganza](#) on Sunday, June 7 at 2 p.m. at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Main in Oakland. The event will include a presentation of awards by WQED's storyteller The Queen of Hearts and many free activities for families and children of all ages. Awards include books, gift cards to local bookstores, art and writing tools as well as Reading Rainbow materials.

WV PBS celebrated with winners on Saturday, May 16 at the West Virginia Public Broadcasting studios in Charleston, WV.

Nationwide, the Contest involves more than 35,000 children each year. Conducted by the acclaimed PBS television series **READING RAINBOW** with major funding from Country Inns and Suites by Carlson, Inc. and The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, it is produced by WNED-TV/Buffalo and Smarterville Productions LLC. The Contest is public television's longest running and most successful outreach effort.

The illustrated stories of national Contest winners and a sampling of local winners from previous years are displayed on **READING RAINBOW's** Web site at www.pbskids.org/readingrainbow . By August the newest winners – those from the 15th Annual Contest - will be posted. The website also features fun, engaging activities and games for kids and information about **READING RAINBOW** for parents and teachers.

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READING RAINBOW airs weekdays on WQED at 2:30 p.m. and during the school year on WV PBS on Wednesdays and Fridays at 1:30 p.m.

READING RAINBOW is a registered trademark of WNED-TV, Buffalo and is co-produced by WNED-TV, Buffalo and Smarterville Productions LLC. Support for **READING RAINBOW** has been provided by Country Inns & Suites by Carlson Inc. and The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. Now in its 26th season on PBS, **READING RAINBOW** has garnered more than 250 awards, including 26 Emmys (ten for “Outstanding Children’s Series”), a prestigious Peabody, nine CINE Golden Eagles, nine Parent’s Choice Awards, and six international Prix Jeunesse Awards.

WQED Pittsburgh, honored with the 2007 and 2006 Mid-Atlantic Emmy® Award for Station Excellence, was founded in 1954 as the nation’s first community-supported broadcaster. WQED creates, produces and distributes quality programs, products and services to engage, inform, educate and entertain the public within its community and around the world. WQED Pittsburgh is one of the first broadcasters in the country to be fully high-definition (HD) in its studio and field production capabilities. It is the parent company of WQED-TV (PBS); WQED: The Neighborhood Channel; WQED: The Create Channel; WQEX-TV (A ShopNBC affiliate); Classical WQED-FM 89.3/Pittsburgh; WQEJ-FM 89.7/Johnstown; local and national television and radio productions; WQED Interactive (www.wqed.org); and The WQED Education Department.

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 and Ready To Learn® are all services of West Virginia Public Broadcasting.

EQT Corporation is an integrated energy company with an emphasis on Appalachian area natural gas activities, including production, gathering, processing, transmission, storage and distribution. Through the Equitable Resources Foundation, the Company makes positive, ongoing contributions to the regions where its employees live and work, and uses its resources strategically to promote the growth of strong, livable communities—an essential component of the Company’s long-term business success.

NOTE TO WORKING PRESS: If you would like to schedule an interview with one of the WQED winners of the 15th Annual Reading Rainbow Young Writers & Illustrators contest at the Summer Reading Extravaganza on Sunday, June 7, please contact Maria Pisano at 412-622-1459 or mpisano@wqed.org

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