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Spencertown Academy Announces 2021 Young Writers' Contest Winners

Spencertown, New York— Spencertown Academy Arts Center announces the winners of its sixth annual Young Writers' Contest. Held in conjunction with the Academy's Festival of Books (which will be virtual this year), the contest was open to writers in grades 9 through 12 attending school or homeschooled in Columbia County, NY and Berkshire County, MA.

“Spencertown Academy has proudly offered this competition since 2015. Our goal is to encourage creative writing by high school students. This year's contest attracted 38 talented young writers,” says Jill Kalotay, Academy board member and co-chair of the Festival of Books. “The judges reported that it was not an easy process of elimination. Many of the stories that did not make the final cut had real merit—especially in their attempt at creativity and originality. Kudos to all the participants!”

The contest was judged by accomplished authors and publishing professionals, including David Cudaback, Liz Diggs, Carol Essert, Alan Gelb, Doris Iarovici, and Elaine Khosrova..

The top three winners in each category received cash prizes (\$250, \$150, and \$100 respectively) and were invited to read their work on a Zoom gathering for friends and family. The winning stories and essays are now published on the Academy's website: www.spencertownacademy.org.

Fiction/Short Story Winners

Final works in the fiction category were selected by Doris Iarovici. Her recent book, *Minus One*, is a collection of short stories. Her writings have appeared in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, among others. She is a psychiatrist at Harvard University Health Services.

First Place: Sasha Truax, New Lebanon High School senior, “Chocolate Chip Cookies”

Second Place: Samantha Saavedra, Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School sophomore, “Liam Henderson”

Third Place: Mattie Vandiver, Berkshire Waldorf School senior, “The Science of Friendship”

Honorable Mention: Jin Fernbacher, Berkshire Waldorf School sophomore, “A Single Orange”

Nonfiction/Essay or Memoir Winners

Winners in this section were chosen by Alan Gelb whose work in marketing communications in higher education led to his book, *Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps*. His latest work is *Having the Last Say: Capturing Your Legacy in One Small Story*.

First Place: Dezjuan K. Smith, Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School junior, “Everything Under the Sun, Maybe”

Second Place: Amanda Roberts, Chatham High School junior, “Below the Surface”

Third Place: Phoebe Hebert, Chatham High School senior, “The City”

Founded in 1972, Spencertown Academy Arts Center is a cultural center and community resource serving Columbia County, the Berkshires, and the Capital region. Housed in a landmark 1847 Greek Revival schoolhouse, the Academy is located at 790 State Route 203 in Spencertown, New York. For more information, please contact info@spencertownacademy.org.