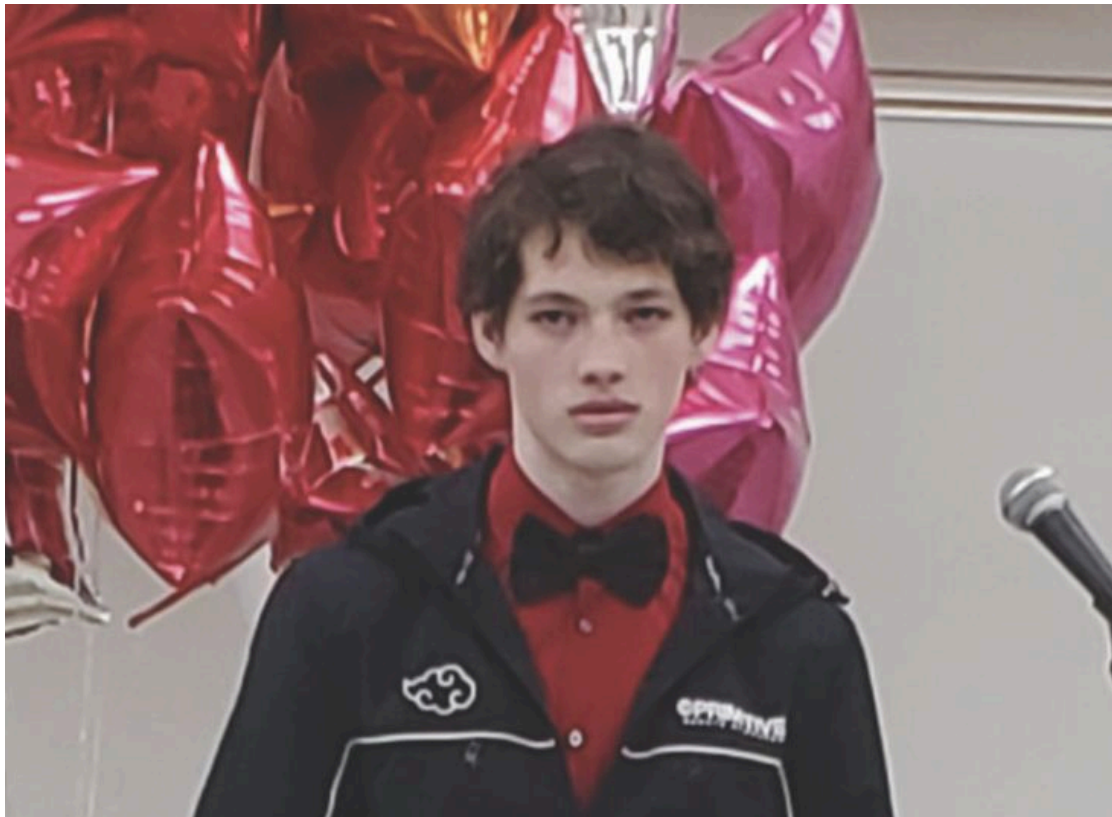


O'Sullivan wins Del Norte Poetry Out Loud title

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Sunset High School student Kevin O'Sullivan is the newest Del Norte County Poetry Out Loud Champion. As champion, O'Sullivan will be competing in the California Poetry Out Loud state finals virtually March 11. Winners will be announced on Wednesday, March 16.

Poetry Out Loud is a national competition for high school students to learn about poetry through memorization, performance and competition. Students are challenged to study, memorize and recite poems from a curated anthology of more than one thousand classic and contemporary poems found online at poetryoutloud.com.

O'Sullivan progressed through classroom competition, school-wide competition and then to Del Norte's fourth annual County Competition, held earlier this month. As Del Norte County's current Poetry Out Loud Champion, O'Sullivan will compete via pre-recorded video in California's state finals against more than 50 other county champions, all hoping to move forward to the National Finals in April.

“Del Norte County is fortunate to have teachers, volunteers and teaching artists dedicate time and energy to bringing Poetry Out Loud into our high school classrooms,” says Patty Brunsing, board member of Del Norte Association for Cultural Awareness, which coordinates the program. “This is an excellent program that helps high school students build confidence, public speaking skills, and learn that their words can have impact and meaning.”

This is the fourth year in a row that a Sunset High School student has been awarded the title of Del Norte County Poetry Out Loud Champion. The previous Del Norte County Champions have been Yanahlea Robinson (2019) and Alex Armstrong (2020 and 2021).

At the state level, students must prepare three poems each from the Poetry Out Loud anthology. O’Sullivan will be reciting “Not Waving but Drowning” by Stevie Smith, “Amor Mundi” by Christina Rossetti, and “Acquainted with the Night” by Robert Frost. These poems can be viewed at poetryoutloud.com.

“The goal for next year is to have even more students participate in the program,” said Brunsing.

“The program is open to all high school students, including homeschooled students. Students whose schools are not participating, but who wish to participate in Poetry Out Loud, should reach out to DNACA so we can work with them as well.”

DNACA, the California Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts have brought Poetry Out Loud to Del Norte county since 2018. DNACA’s funding for Poetry Out Loud programs helps pay for program-related materials and allows teaching artists to coach participating students, help them understand the poems, and work on their recitations.

For information on Poetry Out Loud, visit poetryoutloud.org. To learn more about DNACA visit DNACA.net.