



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

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# NEWS

For immediate release

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## **COMMISSION ON CULTURE & TOURISM ANNOUNCES *POETRY OUT LOUD* PARTNERSHIP WITH SAINT JOSEPH COLLEGE, CAROL AUTORINO CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

**HARTFORD, Conn. (December 9, 2009)** – The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism is pleased to announce its partnership with Saint Joseph College, Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities in West Hartford, to implement Connecticut's 5<sup>th</sup> annual *Poetry Out Loud* (POL) program.

The Carol Autorino Center, under director Dr. Robert Smith, will collaborate with CCT on this year's Poetry Out Loud program support student instructional activities and the Connecticut state finals competition. All POL professional development workshops for teachers will take place in the Center's Bruyette Athenaeum, with the state poetry recitation finals in Hoffman Auditorium on March 16, 2010.

"We are thrilled to engage in this partnership" said Karen Senich, CCT Executive Director. "This [partnership] extends an already great opportunity for Connecticut high school students and teachers, who participate in POL, to gain from the Center's educational and programmatic expertise, academic connections, and top-notch facilities."

Since the 2005-06 school year, students from high schools across Connecticut have benefited from *Poetry Out Loud*, a program sponsored by The National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation. This free recitation program encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance, which help students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about our literary heritage. Participating teachers receive free multimedia educational materials to augment their curriculum and engage in classroom, school-level, and state competition.

The program is now underway. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, fifty teachers from twenty-two Connecticut high schools attended workshops presented by noted Connecticut poet Dick Allen, and Laura Sheehan, Artist Director of greater Hartford's Capital Classics Theatre. Teachers are now preparing their students for live poetry recitation contests in their respective schools, supported by Connecticut artists-in-residence.

"Poetry out Loud provides training especially important to today's students" said Dr. Smith. "With the high speed of communications technologies, POL provides a deep encounter with language that assimilates and strengthens critical skills which apply across the curriculum—reading, writing, and speaking, of course, but also thinking, listening, and questioning."

School Champions will return to Saint Joseph College in February with their teachers for workshops conducted by Connecticut artists in preparation for the state final in the Bruyette Athenaeum's Hoffman Auditorium in March.

### **2009-2010 Poetry Out Loud program includes:**

#### Teacher Professional Development Workshop – November 5, 2009

This full-day workshop provides curriculum materials, promotes understanding of the role of recitation in teaching poetry, public speaking, and presentation skills, and prepares teachers to conduct POL in their classrooms.

#### Teaching Artist in schools – December 2009-January 2010

Artist visits provide face-to-face interaction and dialogue between POL students and a professional writer, poet, or theater artist.

#### School Champion Workshop – February 24, 2010 (snow date February 25th)

School champions, runners-up, and their teachers work side-by-side with professional artists in honing poetry recitation and competition skills in preparation for the state finals.

#### State Finals Competition – March 16, 2009 (snow date March 17<sup>th</sup>)

School champions compete for the honor of 2010 Connecticut *Poetry Out Loud* State Champion, and the opportunity to represent Connecticut in the National Finals in Washington, DC in April. State POL Finals will be held in the evening so that competitors' families, teachers, and fellow classmates may attend.

For more information about Poetry Out Loud, please visit [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

To learn more about Connecticut's Poetry Out Loud Program and to find out how your school can participate contact Dr. Robert Smith: (860)231-5529 or [rsmith@sjc.edu](mailto:rsmith@sjc.edu)

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### **About the National Endowment for the Arts**

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest national funder of the arts, bringing great arts to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. For more information, please visit [www.nea.gov](http://www.nea.gov).

### **About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org).

**About the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism**

The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism brings together tourism, history and the arts. Its mission is to preserve and promote Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the state. For more information, log on to [www.cultureandtourism.org](http://www.cultureandtourism.org).

**About the Saint Joseph College**

Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy to provide higher education opportunities for women, Saint Joseph College is a four-year undergraduate college serving women from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions. Responsive to the evolving educational needs of the community, SJC also offers both women and men graduate degree programs in many fields, a Weekend Program for Adult Learners, professional certificate programs relevant to today's workforce, and other continuing education opportunities.