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ST. MICHAEL TEEN WINS NATIONAL ESSAY CONTEST
St. Michael Catholic School library to receive \$10,000 grant in her honor

ST. PAUL, Minn—May 8, 2009—The Minnesota Humanities Center is pleased to announce that Amelia Leurer, a 12th grade student at St. Michael-Albertville High School in Albertville, has been named a national winner of the annual Letters About Literature essay contest.

Leurer was awarded a \$10,000 grant by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and Target to give to the library of her choice.

Locally coordinated and sponsored by Minnesota Humanities Center, Letters About Literature is an annual essay contest that asks students in grades four through 12 to write a letter to an author, living or deceased, describing how the author's work changed the student's view of the world or of him/herself.

Leurer's letter to poet Linda Pastan expressed how the eight-line poem *Caroline* helped her cope with the death of her sister. As a tribute to her sister, Leurer chose St. Michael Catholic School library as the grant recipient hoping they will use the money for something meaningful.

"I attended St. Michael Catholic School from kindergarten to sixth grade," said Leurer. "The teachers and volunteers there have played a huge role in influencing who I am today."

It was announced in April that Leurer won first place in her grade category at the state level in April and then went on to be named a national winner.

Other state-level winners were:

Level I

- First place: Hannah Klingberg, Blaine,
Letter to Patricia Reilly Giff, author of *Willow Run*
- Second place: Julia Jane Marie Braulick, Northfield
Letter to Rick Riordan, author of *The Lightning Thief*

- Third place: Beverly White, Fridley
Letter to Sharon Flake, author of *The Skin I'm In*

Level II

- First place: Margarita Rudenko, Minnetonka
Letter to Jodee Blanco, author of *Please Stop Laughing at Me*
- Second place: Jessie Kanter, Minnetonka
Letter to Mitch Albom, author of *Tuesdays with Morrie*
- Third place: Marissa Knutson, Hugo
Letter to Julie A. Swanson, author of *Going for the Record*

Level III

- First place: Amelia Leuer, St. Michael,
Letter to Linda Pastan, author of *Caroline*
- Second place: Alyssa Hencley, Little Canada
Letter to Edith Wharton, author of *The House of Mirth*
- Third place: Kelsey Preisinger, New Ulm,
Letter to Judy Blume, author of *Blubber*

To read Leuer's letter and others, please visit www.minnesotahumanities.org.

About the Minnesota Humanities Center

Through its emphasis on the humanities, the Minnesota Humanities Center works to build a thoughtful and literate society. A Minnesota-based national center and clearing house for the best in the humanities, the Humanities Center: conducts professional development opportunities; creates and disseminates one-of-a-kind educational resources; partners with other organizations to offer humanities programs statewide; and operates a full-service meeting and event center. For more information, visit www.minnesotahumanities.org.

About the Center for the Book

The Center for the Book was established in 1977 as a public-private partnership to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. For information about its activities and national reading promotion networks, visit www.loc.gov/cfbook.

About Target

Target sponsors Letters About Literature as part of its national reading initiative, "Ready. Sit. Read!," which is aimed at fostering a love of reading among children at an early age. Since opening its first store in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs.