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## For Immediate Release

### L.A. County's Selah Johnson Takes Top Spot at 2025 Poetry Out Loud State Finals Yuba and Sutter County Champions Performed Well

Marysville, Calif., March 19, 2025 – This past weekend, Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture (YSAC) staff attended the Poetry Out Loud state finals competition in Sacramento at the Capitol Annex Swing Space. What a joyful and resonant symphony of unique voices reciting poems written over the past several centuries. Our two county champions, Angeleek Viola – Sutter County and Devon Giardini – Yuba County, performed splendidly and received Certificates of Recognition from their State Senator, Megan Dahle.

Selah Johnson of Los Angeles County was chosen as this year's [California Poetry Out Loud](#) state champion. The 17-year-old high-school junior from The Archer School for Girls received first place in the statewide recitation competition held March 16 and 17 in Sacramento. She will go on to represent the state of California at the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest beginning May 5 in Washington, D.C.

The 2025 California Poetry Out Loud State Finals marked a milestone 20th anniversary for the program, which inspires youth to engage with poetry through memorization and performance. This year, students from 48 counties competed for the prestigious state title, showcasing their talent and passion for the literary arts. In honor of this landmark anniversary, Senator Ben Allen [presented a special resolution](#) on the legislature floor on March 17, recognizing two decades of California Poetry Out Loud's impact on students across the state. The program's top three finalists were in attendance to accept the resolution, highlighting the profound influence of poetry in education and self-expression.

YSAC has been hosting an annual Poetry Out Loud recitation competition for local high school students almost since the inception of the national program. It was begun in 2005 by the National Endowment for the Arts under the direction of former California State Poet Laureate, Dana Gioia. On Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture hosted its 2025 Poetry Out Loud competitions for both counties at its Sutter Theater Center for the Arts during which Angeleek and Devon were chosen as County Champions.

For additional information about this and other Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture programs and events, call 530-742-ARTS or write to david@yubaustterarts.org.

**About YSA:** Yuba Sutter Arts is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide arts programming, education, advocacy, assistance and service to artists, organizations and residents of Yuba and Sutter Counties. The local affiliate for Yuba and Sutter of the California Arts Council, its programs include Arts in Education, Veterans Initiatives in the Arts, Arts in Corrections, Very Special Arts Festival, Center Stage Youth Performing Arts, Convergence Theater Co., the Yuba Sutter Big Band, the Yuba-Sutter Youth Choir and many more.

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