

# Girls Write Now Mentees Win Big in the 2009 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

NEW YORK, N.Y., May 28 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Girls Write Now (GWN), New York's first and only creative writing and mentoring program for high school girls, is proud to announce that 14 of the winning entrees in the prestigious Scholastic Art & Writing Awards-including a national award-were written by this year's talented mentees! (See below for a complete list of winners.)



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This year's wins bring the grand total of GWN mentees who have won Scholastic awards to an incredible 33; it also marks the third consecutive year that GWN members have been among the winning entrants. Several GWN mentees (Samantha Diaz, Clio Contegenis, and Nadia Simir) each won multiple 2009 awards; other mentees added Scholastic keys to previous years' wins.

For Samantha Diaz, a regional win was a stepping stone to the national stage: In addition to regional keys for her poetry, a short story, a drama piece, and her general writing portfolio, she won a national silver key for two of her poems,

Forty GWN mentees submitted a total of 78 pieces in all nine categories, including five general writing portfolios, to this year's program. "Our girls continue to gain invaluable experience by applying to the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards each year," said GWN co-founder and executive director Maya

Nussbaum. "Creating and editing pieces, formatting them to meet the Scholastic submission requirements, and meeting the entry deadlines help prepare them for the many types of writing assignments they'll face in college and their professional lives. When they win, the validation they receive from an objective-and especially such a prestigious-source, changes the girls' attitudes about themselves and the trajectory of their writing lives."

GWN's partnership with the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers (the nonprofit branch of Scholastic) has grown in strength over the years, as GWN has helped bring the contest to students from public high schools and low-income neighborhoods, while Scholastic generously provides space for GWN workshops.

"Every year, our judges are amazed by the quality of work put forward by Girls Write Now mentees," said the senior manager of the Alliance's national programs Alex Tapnio. "We applaud the work of GWN because of their approach not only to teach writing to students, but to provide role models in the writing industry for underserved girls."

On Wednesday, June 3, the national award winners will be feted at a gala held at Manhattan's Prince George Ballroom and World Monuments Fund Gallery.

### **Congratulations to all of GWN's 2009 award recipients:**

#### **NATIONAL SILVER KEY WINNER:**

\* Samantha Diaz, *Impossibilities, Hotel Rooms* (Poetry)

#### **GOLD KEY WINNERS:**

- \* Clio Contogenis, *Pop Pop* (personal essay/memoir)
- \* Samantha Diaz, *Impossibilities, Hotel Rooms* (poetry)
- \* Samantha Diaz, *Writing Portfolio General*
- \* Shira Engel, *Riding Unicorns* (short short story)
- \* Suyapa Martinez, *Un-Locking Emotion* (personal essay/memoir)
- \* Reema Sharma, *Writing Portfolio General*

#### **SILVER KEY WINNERS:**

- \* Clio Contogenis, *All We Best Strangers Have Mommy Issues* (personal essay/memoir)
- \* Samantha Diaz, *A Grave Mis-Steak* (drama)
- \* Samantha Diaz, *Promises* (short story)
- \* Emma Fiske-Dobell, *I Can't Live Without You Anymore* (short short story)
- \* Meghan McCullough, *Out the Window* (personal essay/memoir)
- \* Nadia Misir, *On Going to School in the City* (personal essay/memoir)
- \* Nadia Misir, *Untitled* (short short story).

### **About Girls Write Now**

Girls Write Now Inc. (GWN) is New York's premier creative writing and mentoring non-profit organization, matching bright, creative teenage girls from the city's public high schools with professional women writers in the community since 1998. Through weekly one-to-one mentoring, monthly group

genre-based workshops, and quarterly public readings, their mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment where low-income, at-risk girls can expand their natural writing talents, develop independent voices, and build confidence in making healthy choices in school, career and life. The organization has recently been featured in The New York Times and on NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams.

Supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Girls Write Now has been chosen as a Coming Up Taller Semifinalist by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, distinguishing it as one of the top arts- and humanities-based programs in the country serving youth beyond the school hours.

More information: [www.girlswritenow.org](http://www.girlswritenow.org).

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