



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2011

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Winners named at statewide MLK oratorical contest

Columbus — Ohio students inspired by the lessons and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. presented original speeches on his teachings during the 12th Annual Statewide MLK Oratorical Contest held today in Columbus. Thirty-six regional contest winners from grades kindergarten through 12 spoke before family, friends and judges at the King Arts Complex.

Speakers were judged on performance, originality and composition. The following speakers placed first, second and third in their respective divisions:

Senior Division (grades nine through 12) First place – Caitlyn Merkel, School of Multiple Intelligences, Lima; second place – John Merkel, School of Multiple Intelligences, Lima; third place – Yusuph Mkangara, Columbus Alternative High School, Columbus.

Junior Division (grades six through eight) First place – Joel Yirenkyi, Woodward Park Middle School, Columbus; second place – Oladapo Olobatuyi, Woodward Park Middle School, Columbus; third place – Courtney Clemens, Shawnee Middle School, Lima.

Intermediate Division (grades three through five) First place – McKenna Hensley, Avalon Elementary School, Columbus; second place – Brooklyn Anderson, Central Primary School, Cleveland; third place – Merri Merkel, North Middle School, Lima.

Primary Division (grades kindergarten through two) First place – Landin Schumacher, Shawnee Elementary School, Lima; second place – Jaylyn Tinker, Central Primary School, Cleveland; third place – Thomas McBride, Central Primary School, Cleveland.

First-place finishers are invited to speak at the 2012 Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration on Jan. 12. The celebration and speech contest are sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission. The commission is housed in the Equal Opportunity Division of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.

"Ohio is fortunate to have such outstanding young people who have an appreciation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy," said Stacey Brinkley, chair of the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission.