

For Immediate Release:  
June 3, 2021

For More Information Contact:

**Jesse White Announces Winners of “Letters About Literature in Illinois” Contest**  
*Winners from Arlington Heights, Hinsdale and Skokie*

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White announced that students from Arlington Heights, Hinsdale and Skokie are the Illinois winners of 2021 “Letters About Literature in Illinois” contest. The reading and writing contest for students is sponsored by the Secretary of State’s office, the Illinois State Library and the Illinois Center for the Book.

“Reading gives a child a greater chance to succeed for a lifetime,” said White. “The young writers who entered this competition demonstrated how literature impacts so many lives.”

To participate in the competition, students in grades 4-12 must read a book or poem and then write a personal letter to the author explaining how the book changed their view of the world or themselves. Students may select to read fiction or non-fiction works from living or deceased authors. To make this competition a true learning experience, it is important that students are allowed to select books that which resonate with them.

The 2020 “Letters About Literature in Illinois” winners are:

- Level I, Grades 4-6: **Alexander See** of Arlington Heights wrote to author Kate Messner about her book, “The Brilliant Fall of Gianna Z.” Alexander is a student at Patton Elementary School in Arlington Heights. His letter was submitted by his teacher, Carrie Cioni.
- Level II, Grades 7-8: **Sophia DiPasquale** of Hinsdale wrote to author Naoki Higashida and David Mitchell about their book, “The Reason I Jump.” Sophia attends Clarendon Middle School in Clarendon Hills. Her letter was submitted by her teacher, Jen McCredy.
- Level III, Grades 9-12: **Sarah Friedman** of Skokie wrote to Jean-Dominique Bauby about her book, “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.” Sarah attends Ida Crown Jewish Academy. Her letter was submitted by her teacher, Tirza Kahan.

Each winner will receive a \$200 check from the Illinois Center for the Book and a plaque signed by Secretary White. To thank the winners’ teachers for their support of Letters About Literature, each school will receive a \$100 check from the Illinois Center for the Book to purchase books for their school library.

Read the winning essays at  
[https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center\\_for\\_the\\_book/letters.html](https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center_for_the_book/letters.html).

###