



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Congratulations to Stark Reading Contest Winners at  
Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School**

(ORANGE, Texas) – Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School students **Vincent Hale** and **Connor Alexander** earned first place in Declamation and Interpretive Reading, respectively, at the school-level finals of the 112th Miriam Lutchter Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation, a scholarship program sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation.

On Sunday, March 6, 2016, Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School students competed in the local-level contest, which was coordinated by **Melanie Claybar**, Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School teacher and school director for the Stark Reading Contest. Hale won first place in Declamation with “*Commencement Address at Stanford University*” by Steve Jobs, while Alexander won first place in Interpretive Reading with his presentation of an excerpt from “*The Tell-Tale Heart*” by Edgar Allan Poe. Second place in Declamation went to **Sydney Smith**, with **Kaylee Patillo** receiving second-place honors in Interpretive Reading.

Stark Reading Contest 2016 preliminary participant, **Christopher Cook**, served as the emcee for the Little Cypress-Mauriceville competition. **Kristine Brown**, Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School Assistant Principal, presented awards to the 2015-16 school-level contest winners.

Each second-place winner was awarded \$1,500 in scholarships from the Stark Foundation, while the two first-place winners were awarded \$2,000 in scholarships. The first-place winners from West Orange-Stark High School will go on to compete against the first-place winners from other

participating Orange County public high schools at the County Final of the Stark Reading Contest, which is scheduled for Sunday, April 24, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. at the Lutchter Theater.

The Stark Reading Contest is sponsored by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation as part of its continuing mission to enrich the quality of life in the Orange community and encourage education. The aim of the Contest is to enhance the literary and forensic quality and skills of Orange County public high school students. The Contest has continued annually since its inception in 1904, which makes the 2015-16 school year the 112th annual year of the Contest. In addition to offering educational opportunities and experiences for students at eligible Orange County public high schools, participating students may earn scholarship awards for continued education.

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The 2016 winners of the school-level competition held March 7, 2016 at Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School (Left to Right): Vincent Hale: 1<sup>st</sup> place, Declamation; Sydney Smith: 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Declamation; Connor Alexander: 1<sup>st</sup> place, Interpretive Reading; Kaylee Patillo: 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Interpretive Reading.

For larger or high-resolution images, contact Amanda Adams at [aadams@starkfoundation.org](mailto:aadams@starkfoundation.org).

### **About the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation**

The Nelda C. and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation is a private operating foundation established in 1961 to encourage and assist education and to improve and enrich the quality of life in Southeast Texas.

The Stark Foundation seeks to continue the legacy of its founders through the programs of the Stark Museum of Art, Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, The W.H. Stark House, and the Frances Ann Lutchter Theater for the Performing Arts, as well as through the Miriam Lutchter Stark Contest in Reading and Declamation, a qualified scholarship program for public

high school students in Orange County, Texas. These venues, programs and activities provide the community and region with rich resources and opportunities for study and enjoyment of the arts, nature, history, and culture as well as literary endeavors.