



Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, Inc.

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April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

As a **National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2008**, on behalf of our board of directors, our network of 76 regional affiliates, and the creative youth across the nation who are motivated to high levels of achievement by participating in our programs, we urge you to increase financial support for our nation's Federal Cultural Agencies, to promote arts in education within the U.S. Department of Education; and to pass tax legislation to promote charitable giving to nonprofit organizations. Our nation's cultural and economic future depends upon the development of the creativity, innovation and imagination of future generations.

Unlike the path to medicine, law or business, there are few fool-proof, prescribed routes for artists and writers. It is a constant challenge for creative people to find their way.

The **Alliance for Young Artists & Writers** was formed in 1994 to administer The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and to build a network of support for young Americans for whom creativity and innovation is a life path. The Alliance brings together a community for creative youth with resources to encourage, connect and empower these young Americans believe that there is no limit to where their creative journey can take them.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the only comprehensive annual national assessment of visual and literary arts education and achievement in the United States. Arts, education, and philanthropic leaders throughout the country commend the nationally recognized work of The Awards as showcased in the national catalog/anthology annually. Through a network of regional affiliated programs, the Alliance is a catalyst for advocacy and funding on behalf of arts education and high achievement at the local and national level.

- The **authentic voice of young artists and writers validates the efforts of teachers**, community youth development programs, and national organizations who advocate for creative development opportunities for our nation's youth.
- The Awards program engages emerging young artists and writers and their dedicated teachers in a **rigorous process** that catalyzes incipient talent, hones technical skills, and develops the creative potential of the **next generation of leaders, visionaries and entrepreneurs.**

Since 1923, more than 13 million of America's most talented junior high and high school students (grades 7-12) have created works of art and writing, hoping for the critical recognition bestowed by The Awards. More than 2.5 million of these students have shared in more than \$3 million in scholarships to continue to develop their creative skills. Cy Twombly, Philip Pearlstein and Robert Redford know what it feels like. And so did Truman Capote, Sylvia Plath, Zac Posen and Richard Avedon, because they also received recognition through The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. In addition to these and other well-known artists, recipients of the coveted Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Gold Key can be found throughout the creative industries.

Federal programs leverage the state and local support needed to help support creative development so our teenagers can nurture and master their creative talents and skills. We urge you to support legislation that develops our most precious resource. We feel that now more than ever before our nation and the world need their vision and talent.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Bise
Associate Director, Alliance for Young Artists & Writers