



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Victoria Cordova
Houston Public Media
832-842-5866
vcordova@houstonpublicmedia.org

Vicky Charleston
Houston Public Media
713-743-5380
vcharleston@houstonpublicmedia.org

Winners of 2019 Houston Public Media PBS KIDS Writers Contest

Twenty-five students were first-time finalists.

HOUSTON – (May 20, 2019) – Nearly 350 students from across greater Houston experienced the art of writing and illustrating their own story as part of Houston Public Media’s annual PBS KIDS Writers Contest. This year marked 23 years of fostering an appreciation for learning and creative writing through this early childhood literary competition.

On Saturday, May 18, thirty-six children, in grades kindergarten through third, were celebrated as finalists at an awards ceremony at The Children’s Museum of Houston. Twenty-five students were first-time finalists.

The first place winners from each grade and their story titles are:

- **Kindergarten – Bella Wang (Pine Forest Elementary in Humble) – “Hailey the Hedgehog”**
- **First Grade – Ziyah Moore (Everest Academy in Stafford) – “The Little Firefly”**
- **Second Grade – Atharv Gupta (St. Mark’s Episcopal School in Houston) – “Houston’s Harvey Heroes”**
- **Third Grade – Emma Goto (The Branch School in Houston) – “Mina, My Little Sister”**

All finalists were honored with medals at the event, and first place winners had the opportunity to read their stories to the audience. Special guest speaker and local children’s book author Varsha Bajaj shared some of her writing experiences with the students.

“It’s inspiring to see the imagination and creativity of these young writers,” said Lisa Shumate, associate vice president and general manager at Houston Public Media. We hope this experience fosters a life-long love of storytelling and encourages students to become comfortable with the writing process – from brainstorming and drafting to revising and editing.”

According to Texas Public Education Information Resources, only 40% of third graders in Texas were reading at grade level in 2018 and only one in three students were ready for college upon graduating high school. Houston Public Media is committed to a strong focus on early literacy to



ensure that every student can read by the third grade as well as reach other critical developmental milestones.

For a complete list of finalists and their stories, visit www.houstonpublicmedia.org/writerscontest.

###

About Houston Public Media

Houston Public Media is a service of the University of Houston and supported with financial gifts from the community. Houston Public Media combines broadcast and digital assets to serve residents of Southeast Texas with quality local news and entertainment and national programming from NPR and PBS. With a combined weekly audience of more than 1.5 million, Houston Public Media is committed to delivering content that expands minds and possibilities with trusted information.