



## **Madison Giddings Wins College's First Ever Poetry Competition**

The first ever Poetry Competition held at Havering Sixth Form College was a huge success attracting more than 50 entries of a very high standard.

Organised by the English Department and held just before the summer break, the contest was titled Love Poetry and students were competing for the coveted Budding Poet Award.

Ten finalists were chosen to read and perform their poems aloud in a heartfelt manner to an audience. Some of the presentations were very emotive and the readings really brought the poems to life.

Although the writing had to be about love, most of the finalists avoided the classic stereotype and went for the polar opposite by using their poems to represent love in its varying forms – difficult love, departed love, love lost and remembrance.

There was an incredible variety among the 10 finalists, both in their poems and presentations and backgrounds, celebrating the real diversity of the College.

The winner, Madison Giddings, was chosen to receive the award by the judges for her sophisticated poem entitled *The Gallery* which played with the audience and was presented in a very creative manner.

Madison, who is in her second year at the College and is studying A Level English Language, English Literature, Media Studies and General Studies, said: "I was shocked but really happy to have won. I spent a lot of time editing and re-editing a poem that was, quite frankly, rubbish, so I started a new one and just let go – ignoring spell-checker – and just seeing what I came up with.



"This is how *The Gallery* was formed. I am more proud of it than anything else I have done. Winning this competition has given me a big confidence boost to get my work out there and follow my ambition of being a writer."

The runners-up were Oliver Dingli and Oghosa Ovienriobi. All finalists were awarded with a certificate and praise from the English department for their bravery and poetic skill.

*Mark Higgins, Subject Sector Leader - Languages and Literature, said: "The staff involved in this exciting competition were very impressed with the quality of the poems. It was very enjoyable to hear the short-listed poems being read by the young writers and I'm sure they will all continue to write poetry and further develop their undoubted talent."*

Organisers Muntaha Begum and Kathleen McBride said the day was a huge success and will help to raise the profile of poetry across the College. They hope next year to involve partner schools and the wider community in what is sure to become an annual event.

Click on the presentation link to view Madison's winning poem.