Oklahoma Writing Project launches 2014-2015 Write-to-Win program

(Norman, Okla.) – The Oklahoma Writing Project has launched its Write-to-Win program for 2014-2015. The program consists of multiple opportunities for students and teachers, including a writing contest, conferences, and the summer institute for teachers.

Teachers and students are invited to submit entries for the OWP Write-to-Win contest, which is open to students in grades preK-12 and teachers. Entries can be submitted for poetry, narratives, and essays across curriculum areas. Winning writing is published in an anthology, and the authors are honored at a spring conference in March. There is no charge to enter this contest.

“As a parent of a former participant in the Oklahoma Writing Project’s Write-to-Win contest, I can personally attest to the fact that the benefits of this program extend well beyond the contest itself,” said Dr. Brad Benson, Director of Fine Arts for Norman Public Schools.

“Having a published piece in the anthology, having a chance to personally interact with successful authors, the entirety of the experience is very valuable. The whole writing process also helped with confidence in composing college entrance essays, and I have no doubt of the effects that carried through the university experience and entrance into the job market. This program makes a positive difference for students,” Benson added.

Keep Calm and Write On is the title of two statewide conferences that will be held specifically for teachers in January. These one-day conferences are designed to help teachers prepare their students for the state writing assessment. Classroom teachers who are part of the Oklahoma Writing Project professional learning community will present hands-on, interactive instructional strategies for conference participants.

Each year the OWP holds a summer institute for teachers. The 2015 institute will be held in June. “OWP believes every student deserves a good teacher of writing,” said Audra Plummer, the Oklahoma Writing Project the Co-director for Teacher In-service.

Attending the summer institute was a “career-changer for me because it empowered me to embrace writing in my classroom and share what I was learning with other teachers,” said Shelly Unsicker-Durham, a 7th and 8th grade language arts teacher at Central Junior High in Moore and a winner of the 2007 Milken Education Award for teaching excellence.
The OWP, part of the National Writing Project’s network of educators working together to improve the teaching of writing in the nation’s schools and in other settings, has been housed on the University of Oklahoma’s Norman campus since 1978. The project provides high-quality professional development programs to teachers in a variety of disciplines and at all levels, from early childhood through university.

“Our focus is on developing the leadership, programs, and research needed for teachers to help students become successful writers and learners,” said Priscilla Griffith, a professor in the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education at OU and Director of the Oklahoma Writing Project.

Information about all Write-to-Win events and other OWP programs and activities is located on the OWP website at owp.ou.edu.

Terry Phelps, a professor at Oklahoma City University and an Oklahoma Writing Project teacher consultant, prepares to lead students on a writing marathon on the OCU campus.