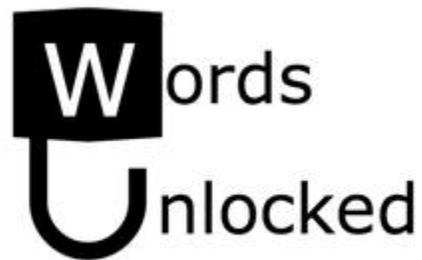


## Hickey Student Receives Poetry Recognition

May 2013

**Words Unlocked** is a month-long poetry initiative for young people held in juvenile facilities. The project is sponsored by the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings (CEEAS). According to the CEEAS team, "Far too many young people are locked up around the country. Through this initiative, we intend to ensure that their words are not."

Marcus at the Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School won second "judge's choice" place in the Words Unlocked initiative. "The boys and I read poetry to start every class," said Laurie Precht, the media specialist at the Hickey School. "We talked about different forms of poetry, such as haiku, tanka, free verse, and concrete poetry."



April is National Poetry Month. Throughout April, Hickey students wrote poetry, memorized poems by established poets, and had a poetry slam in the media center. According to Ms. Precht, the final, poetry-month activity included a review of the poetry they had written in class or on their own.

"The boys selected the poems they wanted to submit to the contest, and then held their breath," said Ms. Precht. "Every day, someone asked me if I had heard about the winners. When I announced the news, the boys seemed happy the school had been represented."

Here is a link to the list of winners: <http://wordsunlocked.wikispaces.com/WINNERS>. Look for *Black White I Am Both*. The title is a hotlink to the text of Marcus' poem. For more information about Words Unlocked, visit the site: <http://wordsunlocked.wikispaces.com/>

According to Ms. Precht, "The best part was seeing the kids who had never written poetry before try their hand at wordsmithing.

"When they finish their poems, they usually say, 'I'm not a poet!' and now I can say, 'Yes you are! Here's the proof!' They get a great look in their eyes when they realize that they can write," said Ms. Precht.