

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Virginia Student Selected as Section 2 Recipient of NFHS National High School Heart of the Arts Award**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: John Gillis

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 13, 2017) — **Christian Ellis**, a senior at Woodbridge (Virginia) Senior High School, has been selected the 2017 Section 2 recipient of the “National High School Heart of the Arts Award” by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

The National High School Heart of the Arts Award was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of education-based activities. This is the fourth year that the National High School Heart of the Arts Award has been offered.

In order for him to earn a specialty diploma, Ellis – a special needs student – was required to take five theatre courses and to participate in many co-curricular performing arts activities. As part of that, he had starring roles during the past year in productions of “Shrek: The Musical” (played the donkey), “A Christmas Carol” (played the “Ghost of Christmas Present”), and the title character in Shakespeare’s “Othello.”

Because of his talent in the arts, Ellis was placed by the faculty into advanced-level courses Poetry 1 and Nonfiction 1. Through that experience, he has distinguished himself as an exceptional poet and as a writer of creative non-fiction. Among his accomplishments and recognitions, his work was published in the Eddas literary/art magazine, he was selected to perform an original poem at the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority’s Red Carpet Showcase, and he was selected as a competitor in the Virginia High School League Creative Writing Contest.

However, Ellis' biggest project this year was writing and directing a play entitled "Krystelle." The play was commissioned by a community artist whose children attended Woodbridge Senior High School. The play centers around a young girl – a dancer – who suffers from cancer for two years but manages to survive. The artist who commissioned the play helped a similar young girl get through cancer spiritually and psychologically by using the arts to give her hope.

### **About the Award**

The NFHS divides the nation into eight geographical sections. The states in Section 2 are Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS Heart of the Arts Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members.

While the national winner will be recognized June 29 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, the section winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year.

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### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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