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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Winners Announced in Buono's 11th Annual School Poetry Contest *Students tackle the question "If you could be anyone in Italian history, who would you be?"*

(Long Beach, CA June 2009) The joys and challenges of being artists and historians, inventors and athletes, and equally as important – being the every day person who makes a big difference in their community – were the kinds of personas that elementary and high school students took on as they created poems for Buono's Authentic Pizzeria 11th Annual Cultural Poetry Contest. Thousands of 3rd through 5th and 10th graders from 17 Long Beach and San Pedro schools took on the challenge of writing poetry about the person they would most want to be in Italy's rich history and culture.

After hundreds of poems were judged, **Lily Katnic** of Seventh Street School and **Heaven Ocampo** of Mary Star of the Sea High School earned the coveted Poet's Choice Award in their grade categories. **Ian Showler** of South Shores Magnet earned the overall Kid's Choice Award. **Casey Nyguen** of Holy Innocents Catholic School and **Desiree Garcia** of St. Lucy School of Long Beach took the 2nd place spot in their grade categories for Poet's and Kid's Choice Awards respectively. In addition to being a champion poet, Desiree's artwork appears as the cover design for the poetry booklet and she earned 1st place at her school for her poem entry.

The core of this year's theme, "It's a Carnevale" comes from an Italian tradition whose roots are from the 11th century – fitting for Buono's 11th anniversary of the contest. Carnevale is a festival throughout Italy in which attendees wear masks in part to celebrate the equality among people. In one town, the celebration includes "Battaglia delle Arance" where people throw 400 tons of oranges. Other towns, such as along the Tuscany Coast, include giant allegorical paper maché floats and medieval-like jousting tournaments take place.

"We felt the theme 'Carnevale,' was important as students have a world of positive role models to draw from and they also have their own unique qualities to make our world a better place. Challenging the students to research the Italian heritage and also their own hopes and dreams proved to make for a very successful and special competition this year," shares Buono's General Manager/Owner Frank Buono.

Numerous community volunteers with a zest for poetry helped judge all the entries and selected the top five at each school. Published poet and recently retired English professor, Dr. Gerald Locklin, served as the Poet's choice judge. Locklin says, "I can sense once again the enthusiasm that this competition engenders in the young entrants, and everyone who learns something more about the glories of Italian culture is truly a winner."

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Buono's 2009 Poetry Contest Winners
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The Kid's Choice Award winners were selected by Blaire Smith, a highly creative youngster whose mother, Leslie Smith, is credited with helping Buono's develop the annual contest 11 years ago.

All student winners are being congratulated in person by Buono's general manager/owner Frank Buono who is busy throughout May and June handing out trophies, award certificates, and Buono's gift certificates during on campus assemblies and classroom visits. Pizza parties are also being held in the classroom of each first place winner. Artwork from 4th grader **Annika Del Arenal** of South Shores Magnet was selected to adorn the back cover of the booklet. **Isaac Fernandez**, whose artwork captured the essence of Michelangelo, was chosen to appear on page four of the booklet that is distributed throughout participating schools and to customers at Buono's three area restaurants.

"We are delighted this educational experience has brought so much joy to the children and their families." concludes Buono. Plans are underway for a unique 12th anniversary contest to kick-off with a few new twists in early February 2010.

Buono's Authentic Pizzeria, a southern California tradition since 1973, has restaurants in Long Beach and San Pedro. For more information about the annual school poetry contest contact Frank Buono at (562) 427-8665 or go to www.BuonosPizza.com.

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