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**Southland College Prep Speech Team Takes High Honors in IHSA Speech Tournament Finals**

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RIGHTON PARK, ILL - March 14, 2015-Fifteen members of the Southland College Prep Charter High School's speech team turned in impressive performances during the recent [Illinois High School Association](#) (IHSA) Illinois State Speech final tournaments.

Southland College Prep's individual event participants tied Marian Catholic High School for fourth place in the IHSA state finals.

"This is Southland's best finish to date and is an extraordinary accomplishment for a new school's only fourth appearance in a state speech tournament," said Cheryl Frazier, Director of Forensics and Theater at Southland College Prep.

Senior Erik Thomas, 18, of Matteson, took second place in the state in Poetry Reading. He had been the first place champion in the same event in the Southwest Suburban Sectional tournament last month.

Thomas, together with Janessa Colquitt, a 16-year-old junior from Country Club Hills, earned third place in the state competition for Dramatic Duet Acting, an event in which they placed first in the Southwest Suburban Sectional.

Colquitt also placed third in the state in Oratorical Declamation, the same event in which she took second place in the Sectional.

Deiarah Wright, 17, a senior who resides in Matteson, placed third in the state in Humorous Interpretation after having been named first place champion in the Southwest Suburban Sectional tournament.

Southland's Performance- in- the- Round 10-member team, the Southwest Suburban Sectional champion, placed fifth in the state tournament with its performance of a dialogue segment from playwright Chadwick Boseman's hip-hop influenced production, "Deep Azure."

Southland College Prep's Performance in the Round team is comprised of:

Seniors Jarrett Exum, 18 of Richton Park and Coretta Franklin, 18, of Park Forest;

Juniors Zadok Dean III, 17 of Country Club Hills and Anthony Harris, 16 of Matteson;

Sophomores Kapri Echols, 16 of Matteson, Kristen Carter, 16, of Olympia Fields, Tyler McCullar, 15 of Matteson and Tyrin Lane, 16, of Matteson;

Freshmen Alayna Hester, 14, of Matteson and Katlyn Barksdale, 15, of Matteson.

Takiyah Brown, a 15-year-old sophomore from Richton Park, is the student director of the Southland Performance- in- the- Round team.

"The speech team's accomplishments are nothing less than phenomenal, "said Dr. Blondean Davis, Southland College Prep CEO.

"For a small, five-year-old secondary public charter school to place this strong against scores of seasoned speech teams from throughout the state of Illinois, many with large numbers, is a significant accomplishment of which we are very proud.

"The team and their coaches, led by Ms. Cheryl Frazier, Director of Forensics and Theater, is truly one of Southland's centers of excellence," she said.

Three members of the Southland College Prep Speech team, Eric Thomas, Janessa Colquitt and Charnnia Jones, a 17-year-old junior from Richton Park, were among 20 finalists out of a total field of 700 students to compete in the August Wilson Monologue Competition Chicago finals held at the [Goodman Theatre](#) earlier this week.