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Harriet Beecher Stowe Center Announces Winners 2018 Student Stowe Prize

Hartford – The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center Board of Trustees has named **Zyahna Bryant** of Charlottesville High School (Charlottesville, VA) and **Wes Gobar** of University of Virginia (Charlottesville, VA) as the 2018 recipients of the Student Stowe Prize for writing for social justice. The Stowe Center will confer the awards at the Stowe Prize Big Tent Jubilee September 5, 2018.

The winning students will also appear at an Action Fair September 5, 3-4 PM at Hartford's Immanuel Congregational Church, 10 Woodland Street. The students will be joined by 2018 Stowe Prize winner Matthew Desmond as panelists at a free public program on September 5 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the same location.

“We are pleased to honor two young people who, in the tradition of Harriet Beecher Stowe, use words to change the world,” said Katherine Kane, Executive Director, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center. “They are an inspiration to us all, showing that one person can make a difference.”

The Student Stowe Prize recognizes outstanding writing that motivates action for positive social change by United States high school and college students.

Bryant is a junior at Charlottesville High School. Her winning entry, “Change the Name of Lee Park and Remove the Statue,” a petition to Charlottesville city council, helped spark the town's movement to remove Confederate statues.

Gobar, a senior at University of Virginia, wrote “What It's Like to Be a Black Student When White Supremacists March in Your College Town” published on Vox. In his winning entry, Gobar described his experiences when white supremacists rallied at the University of Virginia in response to efforts to remove Confederate statues. Both students' entries can be accessed at HarrietBeecherStowe.org.

Student Stowe Prize winners were selected from dozens of entries received from across the United States. Submissions were reviewed by the Stowe Center's Teacher Advisory Committee and selected by the Stowe Center Board of Trustees. Advisory Committee members are: Mary Collins, author and English professor, Central Connecticut State University; Elizabeth Devine, social studies teacher (retired), Hall High School; Eugene Leach, American Studies professor emeritus, Trinity College; Wendy Nelson-Kauffman, U.S. History and social action teacher, Metropolitan Learning Center; Stacey Queen, education associate, Amistad Center for Art & Culture; Anthony Roy, social studies teacher, Connecticut River Academy; and Tracey Wilson, social studies teacher (retired), Conard High School.

The Big Tent Jubilee

The two student winners will be honored at the Stowe Center's Big Tent Jubilee on Thursday, September 5, 2018 when Stowe Prize winner Matthew Desmond will accept the 2018 Stowe Prize for *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.

The Big Tent Jubilee will be held on the grounds of the Stowe Center and is a fundraiser supporting the Center's education programs promoting civic engagement. The Hartford is Legacy Presenting Sponsor of the event.

Tickets to the Big Tent Jubilee may be obtained by calling 860-522-9258 x305. The \$175 ticket includes cocktails, dinner and awards presentation. The \$300 ticket also includes a cocktail reception with Matthew Desmond and the student winners.

Zyahna Bryant is a student activist and community organizer who works on issues of racial justice in Charlottesville, VA. Her primary focus is on the achievement gap and equal access for students of color. She founded the Black Student Union at her high school and is a member of the Charlottesville Youth Council. At age 12, she organized her first demonstration, a rally for justice for Trayvon Martin and other unarmed black lives lost to police violence. Zyahna has been featured on CNN and in *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *The New Yorker Magazine*, and *Vice News*. She was recently awarded the 2018 Washington, D.C. Princeton Prize in Race Relations.

Wes Gobar is a native of Fredericksburg, Virginia. He will graduate from the University of Virginia in May 2018 with majors in Government and History. Through the Distinguished History Major Program, he has written an undergraduate history thesis on the 1887 Thibodaux Massacre. At UVA, he

served as President of the Black Student Alliance, a peer advisor for incoming African American students, a member of the Cavalier Marching Band, and a member of the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society. As BSA President, Wes was a consistent advocate for racial justice and led student efforts to respond to the terrorist events of August 11-12, 2017. Wes has published work in *Vox Media*, the *Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*.

Matthew Desmond is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Princeton University. He is the recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, the American Bar Association’s Silver Gavel Award, and the William Julius Wilson Early Career Award. A Contributing Writer for the *New York Times Magazine*, Desmond was listed in 2016 among the Politico 50, as one of “fifty people across the country who are most influencing the national political debate.” Desmond is also the author of the award-winning book *On the Fireline* and coauthor of two books on race.

Harriet Beecher Stowe recognized the injustice of slavery and was compelled to put pen to paper to write *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The Student Stowe Prize winners carry on Stowe’s work by fighting for social justice in our time. The prize is awarded annually. The Stowe Prize and Student Stowe Prize are integral to the Stowe Center’s mission to inspire social justice and positive change.

Award History

2011 Stowe Prize	Nicholas Kristof & Sheryl Wu Dunn	<i>Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide</i>
2012 Student Stowe Prize	Hannah Morgan Tess Domb Sadof	Topic: Homelessness Topic: Bullying
2013 Stowe Prize	Michelle Alexander	<i>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness</i>
2014 Student Stowe Prize	Donya Nasser Madeline Sachs	Topic: Women in Leadership Topic: Juvenile Justice
2015 Stowe Prize	Ta Nehisi-Coates	Writings in <i>The Atlantic</i> including "The Case for Reparations"

2016 Student Stowe Prize	Nina Sachs Martese Johnson	Topic: Women's Rights Topic: Racial Injustice
2017 Stowe Prize	Bryan Stevenson	<i>Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption</i>
2018 Stowe Prize	Matthew Desmond	<i>Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City</i>
2018 Student Stowe Prize	Zyahna Bryant Wes Gobar	Topic: Confederate Statues Topic: White Supremacy

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center is a museum, program center and research library at 77 Forest Street in Hartford, CT. The Stowe Center is open year round for tours and programs. The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center preserves and interprets Stowe's Hartford home and the Center's historic collections, promotes vibrant discussion of her life and work, and inspires commitment to social justice and positive change. For the most up to date information, follow on Twitter <http://bit.ly/1qpOzCQ>.

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