



# MEDIA RELEASE

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**Photos:** Submitted photos of Joan Song and Sandro Ditta  
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## **Two Students Earn National Merit Semi-Finalist Honor**

*Congratulations to Bend Senior High's Sandro Ditta and Summit's Joan Song*

Two Bend-La Pine Schools' students have earned top academic recognition as National Merit Semi-Finalists. Sandro Ditta, of Bend Senior High School, and Joan Song, of Summit High School, are among more than 190 students in Oregon to earn this prestigious distinction from the National Merit Scholarship Program.

"These two students deserve recognition for their commitment to academic excellence and we are proud that they call Bend-La Pine Schools home," said Superintendent Shay Mikalson.

### **About Sandro Ditta:**

Sandro is passionate about becoming a filmmaker. He plans to attend college at University of California Los Angeles or the University of Southern California where he wants to study filmmaking.

"Growing up, that medium has had such a big influence on who I am. I want to influence people in the same way," said Sandro.

Sandro spends time outside of school working an after-school job. He has volunteered to help students with special needs and he has been active in theater.

"My favorite thing about Bend High is the sense of community here. Everyone is really accepting of one another. It's really easy to be yourself here," said Sandro.

### **About Joan Song:**

Joan loves academics as well as the arts and plans to pursue a career that can incorporate both. She is currently planning to major in economics or marketing and minor in media studies.

Joan plays clarinet in band and is the editor-in-chief of The Pinnacle, Summit's award-winning student newspaper. She loves writing and has won numerous awards for her poetry. Joan also loves to lift weights and kickbox and she speaks Korean and German.

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“My favorite thing about Summit is that we have a lot of opportunities to develop new knowledge and the ability to challenge ourselves and take hard classes,” said Joan.

### **About National Merit Program**

Of the more than 1.6 million high school students who took the Preliminary SAT (PSAT), 16,000 - about 1 percent - are recognized as National Merit Semifinalists. The nationwide pool represents the highest scoring entrants from each state.

Finalists from this group will be selected in February. To become a finalist, the semifinalist and his or her high school must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about the semifinalist’s academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received. Finalists will be considered for National Merit Scholarships, which will be announced in the spring of 2018.

For more information about the program, visit [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).

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